

Refugee Sponsorship - a snapshot

(adapted from the Refugee Sponsorship Training Program at www.rstp.ca/en)

1. Who is a refugee?

A refugee is someone who has been forced to flee out of fear for their lives and liberty. The technical definition according to the United Nations, is a person who, “owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his/her nationality, and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself/herself of the protection of that country.” All kinds of people are refugees.

2. What is sponsorship?

In order for a refugee to come to Canada, they need a sponsor from Canada to provide both financial support and settlement support for one year as the refugee adapts to life to Canada. The sponsor can be the Government of Canada, a private sponsor, or a combination of the two.

Financial support:

The sponsor agrees to provide financial support for the refugee for one year. As a general rule of thumb, the level of support should be at least equal to that of the prevailing rates for social assistance in the community of settlement. For a general idea, you can check the Sponsorship Cost Table at www.rstp.ca/en/resources/information-sheets.

The financial support of sponsors is given on the basis of need. Refugees are expected to contribute to their own settlement costs from funds they bring to Canada or earn during their sponsorship period.

Settlement support:

Private sponsors normally support the sponsored refugees by:

- providing the cost of food, rent and household utilities and other day-to-day living expenses
- providing clothing, furniture and other household goods
- locating interpreters
- selecting a family physician and dentist
- assisting with applying for provincial health-care coverage
- enrolling children in school and adults in language training
- introducing newcomers to people with similar personal interests
- providing orientation with regard to banking services, transportation, etc.; and
- helping in the search for employment.

3. How is the Anglican church involved?

The Anglican Diocese of Edmonton has been a Sponsorship Agreement Holder (SAH) for over 30 years. As a SAH, the diocese can sponsor refugees itself or work with others in the community to sponsor refugees. This means that every parish in the diocese has the legal ability to sponsor refugees.

4. Types of sponsorship (see reverse)

5. Refugee profiles awaiting Family-linked / Paper sponsorship:

Number of people	Country of Origin	Type of sponsorship	Contact person in Canada
Family of 8	Fled Somalia, currently in Syria	Family / paper-linked	Relative
2 siblings	One sibling in Israel, one in South Sudan	Family / paper-linked	Sibling
A husband and wife	Ethiopian	Family / paper-linked	Sibling
4 siblings (ages 14-18)	Samolian in Ethiopia	Family / paper-linked	Cousin

4. Types of Sponsorship

Type of Sponsorship	Who Selects the Refugee?	Who is Financially Responsible for the Year?	Who is Responsible for the Settlement in Canada?	Recommended?
Family-linked / Paper Sponsorship	The parish (with help from the Refugee Coordinator)	The parish and/or the refugee's family already in Canada*	The parish and/or the refugee's family already in Canada*	Yes. This option enables us to help the maximum number of persons with the least financial impact on parishes. It also affords parishes the ability to be as involved in the settlement process as they would like. See the note below* for details.
Visa Office-Referred (VOR) Sponsorship	The government	The parish	The parish	No. A) The parish is solely responsible for both the financial and settlement support. B) These refugees have already been approved by the government, and will come to Canada regardless of whether they're sponsored by a parish.
Blended Visa Office-Referred (BVOR) sponsorship	The government	The parish 50%, the government 50%	The parish	No. A) The parish is 50% responsible for the financial support, and 100% responsible for settlement support. B) These refugees have already been approved by the government, and will come to Canada whether or not they're sponsored by a parish.
Joint Assistance Sponsorship (JAS)	the government	the government	the parish	No. Only high-needs refugees are sponsored via JAS, which could prove to be very challenging for a first-time sponsor group.

* Many families in Canada have the finances to support an incoming family member who is a refugee, but the sponsorship can only be done through a registered Sponsorship Agreement Holder. Thus, an agreement may be signed between a parish and a family, stating that the family will be entirely responsible for the financial and settlement support of the incoming refugee. If the parish wants, it may also be involved in the settlement process, for example by choosing to provide only the funds for transportation, or to help only with enrolling kids in school. This type of agreement can be tailored to fit the parish's available resources, and a contract should be written up stating the responsibilities of each parties.

It is important to note that, should a family be unable to follow through with the financial support, the parish is ultimately liable. It is recommended that parishes have an emergency fund in place, just in case. Parishes may also partner together to establish this emergency fund.

For more information, two helpful resources are the Refugee Sponsorship Training Program at www.rstp.ca/en or the Guide to the Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program at www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/publications/ref-sponsor/index.asp