



Know the Facts

Refugee Sponsorship in Simcoe County

Who is a refugee?

A refugee is “any person who has a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion.”¹ Anyone can become a refugee. No one is a refugee by choice. In 2012, approximately 9% of Canada’s permanent residents were classified as refugees.²



What is re-settlement?

Re-settlement is a sensitive and critical period of time. Each immigrant will experience this period of adjustment differently. Refugees may experience a longer settlement period and may require more supports than other re-settled classifications. Refugees often need:

- Extensive life skills training (personal health, home and community safety, and orientation)
- Language skills training (English/French)
- Settlement counselling and support
- Information and referral to community supports

Types of refugee sponsorship

The decision to sponsor refugees should not be made lightly. It requires commitment, time, and financial resources. Applications for sponsorship can be complex, requiring special attention to detail, with members willing to enter into an official partnership.

Refugees re-settled to Canada may be sponsored by the government and settled through a designated government-funded agency, or privately sponsored. In a private sponsorship, the sponsoring group is responsible for all material and financial support of the refugee(s). Sponsoring groups may include:

Sponsorship Agreement Holders (SAH) and their constituent groups

- SAH are designated organizations that have signed a sponsorship agreement with the Government of Canada (90 in Canada).
- May sponsor refugees themselves or enter into partnerships with eligible constituency groups
- SAH hold all responsibility for sponsorship

Group of Five

- All members must be at least 18 years of age, Canadian citizens or permanent resident, fulfilled previous refugee/family class sponsorships, and act as guarantor that sponsorship obligations will be met

Community Sponsors

- Group, corporation, unincorporated organization, or association
- Must demonstrate ability to undertake sponsorship and fulfill financial and settlement plan obligations

Joint Sponsorship

- Refugees may also be jointly sponsored by any of the above in partnership with the government of Canada (Joint Assisted Sponsorship)

Sponsorship Responsibilities

Reception, orientation, on-going settlement, emotional, and financial support are some of the obligations for the sponsoring group. This exists for the full-term of the sponsorship period (typically one-year or in exceptional cases up to 36 months) or until the refugee is considered self-sufficient. Government-funded settlement supports are available for additional community support, however sponsored individuals are ineligible for social assistance. Default of sponsorship agreements may result in the inability to sponsor subsequent refugees or even Family Sponsorships in the future.

Developing your settlement plan (including budgetary considerations)

Re-settlement begins the day the refugee(s) arrives in Canada, but preparation must begin much earlier. A concrete settlement plan should include the following:

- **Housing and Transportation**
Provide for affordable and sustainable housing options with close proximity to shopping, public transportation, schools, and community supports
- **Shopping and Finances**
Prepare for arrival by furnishing the dwelling with furniture (including bedding for each member), clothing (including seasonal needs), toiletries, kitchen appliances, and cookware. Consideration for culturally appropriate food may need to be arranged. A family budget should be developed and supported by all sponsoring members.
- **Health (including mental health)**
Privately sponsored individuals may be eligible for basic Interim Federal Health (IFH) benefits. Provisions must be made for all ineligible expenses. Understanding the signs and symptoms of mental ill-health is strongly encouraged.
- **Language, Settlement, and other community supports**
Language interpreters may be required (especially for critical life-skills safety orientations). Professional interpretation supports are strongly encouraged in order to mitigate legal risks. Government-funded language classes are recommended and may offer on-site childcare. Settlement agencies can assist with a multitude of needs (including community orientation) and provide avenues for further community integration. Familiarity with housing resource centres, family and community health centres, ethno-cultural and faith-based organizations, and educational institutions are important.

Additional Resources

Refugee Sponsorship Training Program: Handbook for Sponsoring Groups

www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/sponsor/private-rstp.asp

Citizenship and Immigration Canada:

Sponsor a refugee (eligibility, forms, and FAQs)

www.cic.gc.ca/EnGLish/refugees/sponsor/index.asp

Interim Federal Health Benefit Overview

www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/outside/summary-ifhp.asp

Simcoe Muskoka YMCA – Immigrant Services

www.ymcaofsimcoemuskoka.ca/new-to-canada/ymca-newcomers/

Bradford Immigrant and Community Services

www.bradfordimmigrant.com/

Welcome Centre Mobile Services

www.welcomecentre.ca/

Simcoe County Immigration Portal

www.immigration.simcoe.ca

Local Immigration Partnership

www.simcoe.ca/sclip



¹1951 United Nations Refugee Convention

² Citizenship and Immigration Facts and Figures, 2012.