

# Sponsor a Refugee

Sponsoring a refugee family is a concrete way to respond to a humanitarian crisis unfolding overseas. Sponsorship is a commitment of at least two years which includes preparation, application, waiting and helping the refugees to settle after arrival.

Here is a brief overview of the steps you will need to take to sponsor a refugee:

- Form a group with a minimum of 5 people
- Plan how you will fundraise
- Contact the Sponsorship Agreement Holder (religious organization or other agreement holder)
- Meet the criteria set out by the Sponsorship Agreement Holder
- Identify a refugee(s) to sponsor (lists of individuals and families who are ready are updated and published regularly)
- Apply to sponsor
- Continue to fundraise and prepare for arrival
- Upon arrival, assist the refugee(s) to settle during their first year in Canada

## Who is a Refugee:

A *Convention Refugee* is defined as:

- A person who is **outside** of their home country or the country where they normally live
- They **cannot return** to that country because of a well-founded fear of persecution based on: race, religion, political opinion, nationality, or membership in a particular social group.

The **United Nations High Commissions for Refugees** (UNHCR) has three possible ***durable solutions*** for refugees\*:

1. *Voluntary Repatriation*: when the refugee may return home in safety and dignity
2. *Local integration*: when the refugee may remain in the country of asylum with permanent status and rights
3. *Resettlement to a Third Country*: when the refugee is resettled as a permanent resident in a third country, such as Canada.

Private sponsorship is a **solution of last resort**; there must be no other durable solutions for refugee(s) except resettlement. **\*Refugees already in Europe or the USA are not eligible to be sponsored to Canada, as the Canadian government considers them to be locally integrated and therefore have a durable solution.**

## Are We Ready to Sponsor?

To know whether you are ready or close to being ready to sponsor a refugee begin by considering these questions:

*Do you have a diverse team of 5 or more people who are committed to working on this for 2-4 years?*

Your team should include people with experience and resources related to fundraising, communications, administration, housing, hospitality, and employment.

*Can you raise the necessary funds to support a refugee(s)?*

The current estimate for financial support is minimum \$12,000 for an individual and \$30,000 for a family of 4.

*What resources are there in your community to support a positive settlement for newcomers?*

The settlement will be more successful if there are schools, language supports, medical and housing supports, and people from similar backgrounds.

*Are there any groups you should partner with in your endeavors?*

There may be other groups considering partnering, or there may be multi-cultural associations that will assist your group be ready to welcome newcomers in helpful ways and make connections within the community.

*Are there other ways your group can help without actually being sponsors?*

Indeed! There is much needed in terms of advocacy, fundraising, welcoming, learning and hospitality that you can support and still make a difference.

If you are part of a group connected to the United Church of Canada (UCC) considering sponsoring, please be in touch with:

Khwaka Kukubo ([kkukubo@united-church.ca](mailto:kkukubo@united-church.ca))

General Council Office of the UCC

or Bev McDonald ([pharmin@ns.sympatico.ca](mailto:pharmin@ns.sympatico.ca))

Refugee Resource Person for Maritime Conference.

(Due to a great surge of inquiries recently, e-mails may not be answered immediately. Please have patience with us.)

Check the [United Church of Canada website](#) for information on ways you can help Syrian refugees.

### Further resources:

- ❖ A great [information package](#) has been prepared in Nova Scotia by **Immigration Services Association of Nova Scotia (ISANS)**
- ❖ **United Nations High Commission on Refugees:** <http://www.unhcr.ca/>
- ❖ **Refugee Sponsorship Training Program (RSTP)** <http://www.rstp.ca/en/>
- ❖ **Lifeline Syria:** <http://lifelinesyria.ca/>