

SPONSOR A REFUGEE

Change the Story

REFUGEE SPONSORSHIP AND RESETTLEMENT HANDBOOK



worldrenew.net/refugees

 **World
Renew**
LIVING JUSTICE • LOVING MERCY • SERVING CHRIST

Leviticus 19:33-34

33 “When a foreigner resides among you in your land, do not mistreat them. 34 The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-born. Love them as yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt. I am the Lord your God.”

New International Version

Welcome!

World Renew is pleased to introduce the *Refugee Sponsorship and Resettlement Handbook*. This Handbook was developed in collaboration with sponsors from across Canada, as well as with several agencies actively engaged in private sponsorship. The Handbook will guide churches, other faith groups, community associations, and co-sponsors in the many activities related to the private sponsorship and settlement of refugees to Canada.

World Renew is a Sponsorship Agreement Holder (SAH) organization and has held a legal agreement with Immigration and Refugees Citizenship Canada (IRCC) to privately sponsor refugees since the inception of the Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program (PSRP) in 1979. Over the years, World Renew has worked with groups across Canada together have sought to respond to the needs of refugees with hospitality, friendship, support, and encouragement. Our mission statement is motivating and compelling:

World Renew will partner with churches, individuals and refugee organizations to facilitate the process of refugee sponsorship to Canada in collaborative activities of love, mercy, justice and compassion and to advocate for refugee rights globally.

Moreover, with all our many sponsoring churches and groups, we draw on the compelling words of Paul's letter to the Galatians: "For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: Love your neighbour as yourself" (Galatians 5:14). World Renew is encouraged by the hard work exemplified by churches and communities over the past 40 years of our program, in sponsoring and helping to resettle refugees – new Canadians – to a new home.

Our hope and prayer is that this Handbook will serve you well in providing relevant resources and information that will assist you in your journey as you welcome and walk alongside newcomers.

Rebecca Walker
Refugee Coordinator
World Renew

A Story of Welcome

My name is Cenaida Chilito and I want to tell the story of how my six children and I have a life we only dreamt of, thanks to the Neerlandia community. My family and I fled from Ecuador to Colombia because of death threats from the military. Life in Ecuador wasn't easy as I was a single mother supporting six kids; my youngest one having cerebral palsy. After some time in Ecuador, we were fortunate to come to Canada as sponsored refugees, though we did not know what to expect.

From the day we arrived in Neerlandia, Alberta, the community was so helpful. They took us to all sorts of appointments, grocery shopping, and even took my kids to school. They were very patient throughout the whole process, especially learning English. People were always more than happy to help us.

Three of my kids now live in Edmonton and have started families of their own. My three youngest kids and I live in Barrhead. We are Canadian citizens now, so we enjoy all the benefits that come with this. The Neerlandia community has never failed to make us feel like we are family. We do not have to live in fear; we live in peace and I know that we have a good future ahead of us thanks to the community of Neerlandia Christian Reformed Church.

Living in such a peaceful country is a dream that the Neerlandia community has made come true. I want to encourage churches that are considering refugee sponsorship. You will be giving others a wonderful opportunity to enjoy the feeling of being free as well as knowing they are safe. You are helping offer a bright future for them and their future generations.



Acknowledgements

First, World Renew wishes to thank the refugees and sponsoring churches that shared their stories, tips, and suggestions. You have lived this journey and we are deeply grateful for your sharing of it in this handbook.

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Lastly, World Renew is deeply grateful to The Adventist Development and Relief Agency (www.adra.ca/about) for generously providing funding support for the development and distribution of this Handbook. What a gift this partnership has been.

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The following items are referenced but not included in the handbook due to their length. Each of them can be found online:

1. [Resettlement Assistance Program Rates, with Provincial Cost Guidelines and Start-Up Costs](#)
2. [Preparing Applicants for an Interview](#)
3. [Month 13 Planning – Resource Kit](#)
4. [Finance Guidelines](#)

List of Acronyms

- BVOR** • Blended Visa Office Referred
- CBSA** • Canada Border Services Agency
- CCB** • Canada Child Benefit
- CCR** • Canadian Council for Refugees
- CCB** • Canadian Child Benefit
- CG** • Constituent Group
- CRA** • Canadian Revenue Agency
- CRC** • Christian Reformed Church
- ESL** • English as a Second Language
- FACS** • Family and Children’s Services
- G5** • Group of 5 (sponsors)
- GAR** • Government Assisted Refugee
- IFHP** • Interim Federal Health Program
- IOM** • International Organization for Migration
- IRCC** • Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada
- JAS** • Joint Assistance Program
- NAT** • Notice of Arrival Transmission
- NGO** • Non-Governmental Organization
- OYW** • One-Year Window
- PA** • Principal Applicant
- PR** • Permanent Resident
- PSRP** • Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program
- RAP** • Resettlement Assistance Program
- ROC-O** • Resettlement Operations Centre in Ottawa
- RSTP** • Refugee Sponsorship Training Program
- SAH** • Sponsorship Agreement Holder
- SIN** • Social Insurance Number
- UNHCR** • The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, also known as the UN Refugee Agency

List of Forms

Refugee Application Forms

Generic Application Form for Canada (IMM 0008)

Schedule A: Background / Declaration (IMM 5669)

Schedule 2: Refugees Outside Canada (IMM 0008 – Schedule 2)

Use of a Representative (IMM 5476)

Sponsor Forms

Undertaking / Application to Sponsor (IMM 5373)

Settlement Plan (IMM 5440)

Sponsor Assessment (IMM 5492)



Why Do We Sponsor Refugees

Personal Reflection by Roy Berkenbosch, recently retired Director of the Micah Centre, King's University College, Edmonton, Alberta

When I contemplate the question, 'why should Christians sponsor refugees?' I am struck by how many good answers spring immediately to mind. Let me name just a few:

First, all refugees, regardless of their place of origin, ethnicity, religious tradition or any other humanly contrived way to mark them as 'other', are nevertheless children of the Creator God, made in God's image, beloved of a compassionate God whose desire for them, as for 'us', is that they flourish. Every man, woman, and child, even though they may have been marginalized, abused, denied basic human rights, deprived of home and citizenship, is nevertheless known by and beloved of God. That makes each of them a sister and a brother. That's a very good reason to spend time, money, energy and every other resource to provide them with every means necessary to establish themselves in a place of safety and security, a place where a flourishing future is possible.

Secondly, I am reminded that Jesus was a refugee and, as a high priest who was 'made like them, fully human in every way', stands in solidarity with refugees throughout time and space. Shortly after his birth, Jesus and his parents had to flee an abusive and tyrannical government that was prepared to practice genocide to preserve power. (Matthew 2:13-15). Jesus, especially as we encounter him in the Gospel of Matthew, recapitulates the experience of Israel, and his exile to Egypt is part of that journey. He reminds us that much of the experience of the Old Testament people of God was as a people who were marginalized, alienated, vulnerable and subject to the powers of the age. Abraham was called to leave his homeland; Jacob left home in fear of Esau's revenge; Israel sojourned in Egypt, wandered in the wilderness, underwent a horrendous deportation and exile; King David lived much of his life on the run, as did the prophets. God's people have a history of being forced to live 'on the move', forsaking, or being denied 'settled-ness' and in that state being forced to rely on the mercies of God expressed through the compassion of others.

Thirdly, and related to the above, Jesus consistently throughout the gospels expresses a solidarity with the poor and marginalized. Jesus not only shares in the experience of the refugee and other marginalized sufferers, but he defines his ministry and priorities in

terms of their release. Most significantly, in Luke's gospel (4:16-19), he begins his ministry with a riveting interpretation of Isaiah 61 where he states that the Spirit of the Lord is upon him, anointing him to proclaim liberty to the captives and good news to the poor. Throughout Luke's gospel Jesus fulfills the prophetic words of Mary in Luke 1, namely that he would raise up the downtrodden and fill up the lives of those deprived. Furthermore, in Matthew 25 Jesus reveals the criteria for judgement: whatsoever you have done to the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you have done to me – whether it be the provision of food and water or clothing, a timely visit, an intervention, a home and shelter, an identity card, a new beginning; what is done for the 'least' is done for Christ. Jesus adds, more ominously, whatever you have NOT done for the least of these, you have NOT done to me. Jesus solidarity with the poor and disenfranchised could not be clearer, nor could his summons to loving, compassionate action be any more straightforward.

Why sponsor refugees? So many reasons, so little time: Christians are called to be compassionate as God is compassionate (Luke 6:36). We are summoned to treat others as we would have them treat us (Luke 6:31). We are told that the perfect sacrifice that God desires is simply that we 'do justice, love mercy and walk humbly with God' (Micah 6:8). We are called to love our neighbor as much as we love ourselves (Luke 10:27) – (and if we ever stumble over the definition of 'neighbour', wondering if perhaps there is some exemption clause for a neighbour we may not like, we need only remind ourselves of the parable of the Good Samaritan, who was 'Good' precisely because he gave no thought to whether the miserable wretch on the side of the road was desirable or undesirable, worthy or unworthy, like him or unlike him. He simply responded in compassion. Scripture is full of reminders that we are to 'love the stranger, for we were once strangers ourselves' (Deut. 10:12)).

Any real encounter with the gospel quickly becomes a summons to a life of radical down-to-the-roots love of God and neighbor. Although these two loves are distinct, they are in the end not different for no one can love God but despise a neighbor. To put it differently, one cannot open the door to God but fail to open the door to the refugee. To make the point even more starkly, to ask, 'why should I love a refugee?' is not unlike asking, 'why should I love God?' That makes the point especially clear.

World Renew believes that supporting refugees through sponsorship and advocacy is an

incredibly tangible and immediate way of expressing love for God and love for neighbours. It is a way of putting our faith into action that can change lives, those of refugees and of those who sponsor them. I have experienced the joy of welcoming refugees into our faith family – it is a both a joy and a gift for which I am immensely grateful.

Why should you sponsor refugees? Why in heavens name, would you not?

The Mission of World Renew's Refugee Program

The mission of World Renew's Refugee Program is to partner with churches, individuals and refugee organizations to facilitate the process of refugee sponsorship to Canada in collaborative activities of love, mercy, justice and compassion as well as to advocate for refugee rights globally.

World Renew was one of the original groups designated a Sponsorship Agreement Holder (SAH) by the Government of Canada at the inception of the Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program (PSRP) in 1979. Since then, World Renew has worked with churches to respond to the many and diverse needs of refugees from around the world providing them with hospitality, friendship, support and encouragement. As a result, thousands of refugees have successfully resettled in Canada through the efforts of World Renew and its partner churches.



Introduction to the Handbook

The *Refugee Sponsorship and Resettlement Handbook* is developed by World Renew for churches, groups, or individuals involved in refugee sponsorship and resettlement. It will be a helpful resource if you are considering sponsoring an individual or family, if you are in the process of sponsoring, or if you are nearing the end of a sponsorship commitment.

Please feel free to share this Handbook widely.

What Is the Purpose of this Handbook?

The purpose of the Handbook is to act as a hands-on guide for the entire refugee sponsorship process. It is designed both for those who are new to sponsorship and for those who have been participating in sponsorship for many years. We hope that this handbook, developed in consultation with many sponsoring groups across Canada, will serve to inform, empower, and inspire you throughout your journey of refugee sponsorship and assist you as you walk alongside refugees as they integrate into Canadian life.

When and How Should this Handbook Be Used?

This Handbook offers resources for every step of the refugee sponsorship process: from the initial inquiry, to the creation of a sponsorship committee, from meeting your sponsored refugees at the airport, to assisting in enrolling their children in school, from helping the newcomers plan for future employment pathways, to planning the final month of support and beyond, this handbook contains helpful resources, tips, checklists, and information to maximize the possibility of successful resettlement.

Use this handbook as your guide throughout your refugee sponsorship journey, and as a tool to plan your work. Photocopy pages as needed, share web links with your congregation, and map out your next steps with this handbook close by.

How do I Navigate through the Handbook?

Throughout the Handbook you will find references to a variety of important refugee sponsorship documents that correspond with the various sections of the Handbook.

Most of these documents are available in the [APPENDIX](#) section of the handbook. Some of the lengthier documents are only available online.

For the sake of easy reference, any document referred to in the Handbook will be marked in the text by its title, **in blue**, and the notation **APPENDIX (with a page number)** or **ONLINE**. Clicking on the title will bring you to the document in the Appendix or online. If you are using a print copy of the Handbook, feel free to request any of the online resources from a World Renew staff person.

A Word About Acronyms

The world of private refugee sponsorship is full of acronyms. We will include the first instance of a term that has an acronym, such as Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), in its full form. For the sake of brevity and flow, all following instances are marked by the acronym. The [List of Acronyms](#) used in this text is found on page 10.



Who Is a Refugee?

Who is a refugee? Well, the short answer is: Refugees are our neighbours. When we think of refugees, we often hear the Biblical call to “welcome the stranger.” And welcoming the stranger is a good first step. However, in this increasingly interconnected world, these “strangers” are our neighbours and we need each other. When one part of a community struggles, the entire community is incomplete and the entire community hurts. Our hope is that this Handbook will help Canadians work with their refugee neighbours for justice.

The United Nations Convention of 1951 states that a refugee is:

...a person who, because of well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his/her nationality and is unable or afraid to ask for protection in that country, or not having a country of nationality, is outside the country where he/she usually lived, and is unable or afraid to return to that country.

A person isn't a refugee by choice. A person is a refugee by the discriminating choices of others.

Durable Solution for Refugees

The UNHCR has identified three durable solutions for refugees: Voluntary Repatriation, Local Integration, and Resettlement to another country.

Voluntary Repatriation is the ideal solution for most refugees—the resettling of refugees back to their country of origin.

For those who cannot return home, a second durable solution is for the refugee to create a new life in their country of asylum. However, if neither of these durable

“To be a refugee means you are in exile. It is a very different experience from being a migrant. Many migrants have come here to get a better standard of living. We have come here because our lives are in danger!”

-sponsored refugee

solutions is possible, refugees may be resettled to a third country, such as Canada.

Refugee resettlement is a last resort solution. Only 1% of refugees worldwide will be resettled outside their country of origin or asylum.

Canada is unique as it is the only country that allows sponsorship of refugees by private organizations and citizens. World Renew is one of over 100 Canadian organizations that have signed a sponsorship agreement with Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC).

World Renew's sponsorship agreement with IRCC allows the Christian Reformed Church (CRC), as well as other churches and groups in Canada, to work together with World Renew to sponsor refugees.



What Is the Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program (PSRP)?

The Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program (PSRP) is a program administered by IRCC and the people of Canada to extend Canada's capacity to resettle refugees from abroad. The PSRP gives Canadians the unique opportunity to play a meaningful role in the welcome and integration of refugees to Canada. Since its beginning in 1979, the PSRP has allowed Canadians to offer protection and a new home to more than 275,000 refugees.

Who Can Sponsor?

World Renew is a Sponsorship Agreement Holder (SAH) organization. With the signed sponsorship agreement with IRCC, World Renew can approve churches and groups to sponsor refugees under its agreement. These sponsoring groups are often referred to as Constituent Groups (CGs).

World Renew's sponsorship agreement also allows it to approve co-sponsors, an individual, groups of individuals, or an organization partly or fully responsible for the financial and settlement aspects of sponsorship, generally in collaboration with a CG.

In this document, we will refer to CGs and co-sponsors collectively as sponsoring groups.

It is important to note that SAHs assume overall responsibility and liability for the management of sponsorships under their agreement.

What Responsibilities Do Sponsors have?

World Renew and the sponsoring group work closely together throughout the sponsorship process. World Renew provides guidance, expertise, and support to the sponsoring groups. The sponsoring group is responsible to provide the social, emotional, and financial support for the refugees upon their arrival to Canada and for the sponsorship period of one year. Privately sponsored refugees arrive in Canada as Permanent Residents. They must settle in the same community as their sponsor.

For more details regarding the roles and responsibilities of SAHs, sponsoring groups, and sponsored refugees, please see the **APPENDIX: “Responsibilities of Sponsoring Groups,” “Responsibilities of the Sponsorship Agreement Holder,” and “Responsibility of Sponsored Newcomers”**.

Groups of Five (G5) and Community Sponsors can also sponsor refugees to Canada. However, these programs do not require the support of a SAH and are therefore out of the scope of this Handbook. Please see the Refugee Sponsorship Training Program (RSTP) website (www.rstp.ca) for further information about G5 and Community Sponsorships.

Who Can Be Sponsored?¹

Persons who meet the United Nations (UN) Convention definition of a refugee may be sponsored by a SAH under the Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program (PSRP). In summary, an application for sponsorship may be submitted if the persons in question:

- are outside of Canada
- are outside of their home country
- have a well-founded fear of persecution in their home country or were seriously and personally affected by civil war, armed conflict, or massive human rights violations in their home country
- have no other long-term solution available to them, i.e. they cannot return to their country of origin and/or they cannot integrate into their country of asylum.

“I want to encourage churches that are considering refugee sponsorship. You will be giving others a wonderful opportunity to enjoy the feeling of being free as well as knowing they are safe.”

-sponsor

World Renew will assess each sponsorship to determine if a person/family is eligible for sponsorship and if an application may be submitted. For approved cases, the sponsoring group will be encouraged to work with the refugees and complete the

¹ Adapted from Canadian Council of Refugees Private Sponsorship of Refugees Toolkit:
<http://ccrweb.ca/en/psr-toolkit/home>

application documents. World Renew will provide guidance and support in the application process and once the application is final, will submit the application to IRCC.

Three Ways Refugees Can Be Sponsored

There are three ways for refugees to resettle to Canada with a SAH organization under the Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program (PSRP):

Sponsor-Referred Refugees

Sponsor-referred refugees are refugees who have been referred to IRCC for sponsorship by a SAH. In most cases, World Renew refers sponsor-referred refugees to IRCC in collaboration with an approved sponsoring group.

Sponsor-referred refugees are often refugees who come to the attention of a sponsoring group through a refugee's family member who lives in Canada. The family member will bring their family's refugee case to a sponsoring group for their consideration for sponsorship. This is why these sponsorships are sometimes referred to as Family Linked Sponsorships. The family members in Canada are referred to as co-sponsor and typically assist with the settlement activities and costs. The CG and the in-Canada family members (co-sponsor) must meet, discuss, and agree on roles and responsibilities for settlement prior to submission of the sponsorship application. These roles and responsibilities will be described on the "[Settlement Plan](#)" (see **APPENDIX** for a sample), a document which must be approved by World Renew prior to the submission of the sponsorship application.

Groups working with co-sponsors must also review the "[Guidelines for CGs working with Co-Sponsors](#)" (see **APPENDIX**). This document must be signed by both the sponsoring group representative and the co-sponsor before World Renew submits the sponsorship application.

The sponsorship period is for 12 months, effective from the arrival date of the refugees in Canada. The refugee family must settle in the community of the sponsor and the sponsoring group.

Blended Visa Office Referred (BVOR)

The Blended Visa Office-Referred (BVOR) program matches refugees identified for resettlement by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) with private sponsors in Canada. It is referred to as “blended” because it is a cost-sharing arrangement between IRCC and private sponsors. The BVOR Program is particularly suitable for churches and groups that have not been approached by a family in Canada to sponsor their relative(s).

Refugees resettled through the BVOR program receive income support from IRCC through the Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP) for six months after their arrival, specifically during months two through seven. Private sponsors pay the other 6 months of support—month 1 and months 8 through 12—and all of the start-up costs. The church/group is also responsible for providing the hands-on settlement support throughout the sponsorship year.



Matching Process

The BVOR program is coordinated by the Refugee Sponsorship Training Program (RSTP), which organizes a matching database of refugee profiles. Profiles are added to the matching database on a monthly basis. These profiles contain basic details about a refugee or refugee family such as their age, country of origin, country of asylum, as well as their level of medical needs. When profiles become available, World Renew is able to select and put on hold up to two profiles that match the specifications of sponsors on its BVOR waiting list. After World Renew places the profile on hold, we will receive an extended profile from RSTP which contains further details about the refugee or refugee family.

“I am so thankful that this family came to us because we weren’t going to quit. I am proud of our committee and our church. We’ve grown as a committee and individually, and it has impacted our lives.”

-sponsor

If your church or group is interested in sponsoring through the BVOR program, we ask that you answer the following questions to help us make a suitable match with a profile in the matching database:

1. What size of family would you like of sponsor?
2. What age of children is preferred?
3. Are medical needs okay?
4. Would you sponsor a woman-headed household?
5. Do you have any nationality preference? If so, which ones?

If we are successful in identifying a case that matches the specifications you sent us, we will forward a profile of the family to your sponsoring group's primary contact who will have 48 hours to confirm if the church or group would like to proceed with the sponsorship. If your sponsoring group chooses to proceed, we confirm with RSTP and then begin the process of filling out the necessary paperwork (Undertaking to Sponsor, Sponsor Assessment and Settlement Plan). Once the paperwork is completed the application is submitted.

Please note that estimating arrival time for BVOR cases is difficult. BVORs generally arrive anywhere from two months to one year after the undertaking is approved. However, there are many factors such as security screening or medical concerns, which can slow the estimated arrival time.

Differences Between Sponsor-Referred and BVOR Sponsorships

- BVOR refugees have already been assessed and have met the Canadian government's resettlement criteria. This means that they are travel-ready. Sponsor-referred refugees must go through the refugee determination process, and pass an interview with a visa officer before being accepted. They also must go through security and medical screening before being declared travel-ready.

"I am so thankful that this family came to us because we weren't going to quit. I am proud of our committee and our church. We've grown as a committee and individually, and it has impacted our lives."

-sponsor

- Because BVOR sponsorships are travel-ready, they have faster processing times than sponsor-referred sponsorships.
- BVOR sponsorships do not require the sponsoring group to have knowledge of a refugee, while sponsor-referred sponsorships are those in which a sponsoring group has knowledge of a refugee or refugee family overseas.
- Sponsoring through the BVOR program costs less than a sponsor-referred application because the Government of Canada provides six months of income support. In both sponsor-referred and BVOR sponsorships, the sponsoring group is responsible for all start-up costs.

Joint Assistance Sponsorship (JAS)

Refugees sponsored under the JAS program have special needs that will likely result in a longer or more difficult period of integration.

Because of this, most refugees that come to Canada through the JAS program receive settlement support from their sponsoring group for 24 months after arrival.

In exceptional circumstances, the government will request that the sponsoring group provide 36

months of settlement support. In this program, the government covers the full cost of sponsorship for the full duration of the sponsorship period while sponsoring groups are required to provide orientation, community, and emotional support as well as ensure access to appropriate services. It is recommended that only groups with previous refugee settlement experience undertake a JAS.

“Sure, the whole process was a bit intimidating and scary, but we did it. As Christians we must do this work – there is no choice. The Bible clearly tells us to welcome the stranger. For me, this experience has been life changing and I would do it all again in a heartbeat.”

- sponsor

The Sponsorship Steps

From the moment of first inquiry about the program to the end of the sponsorship period, there are numerous steps involved in the process of sponsoring refugees. The following section is divided into 6 chronological steps providing details for each step:

STEP 1 • Getting Started

STEP 2 • Application for Private Sponsorship

STEP 3 • Visa Office Processing (applies to sponsor-referred cases only)

STEP 4 • Arrival

STEP 5 • Settlement

STEP 6 • End of the Sponsorship

STEP 1 • Getting Started

Initial Inquiry

There is much to learn when considering a sponsorship. The Initial Inquiry is an important first step in gathering information and facts in order for your prospective sponsorship group to thoughtfully reflect and make an informed decision about sponsorship. World Renew's Refugee Program is available to assist in the decision-making process and provide information and resources to give a comprehensive overview of the PSRP for all those who inquire. Please see **APPENDIX: [“PSRP Overview – Initial Inquiry”](#)** document.

Please share this information with your group to ensure that everyone is informed, engaged, and committed to the sponsorship. **To proceed with the sponsorship, the CG Board or council must officially approve the sponsorship as one of its charitable activities and this must be documented in CG minutes as an approved motion of the board.**

The inquiry phase will often involve several phone or Skype calls and/or in-person meetings to ensure the sponsoring group is aware of the process and of their responsibilities. The sponsoring group is encouraged to contact World Renew as often as needed for information or clarification on any questions.

Case Narrative Form and Identity Documents (Sponsor-Referred)

Once the sponsoring group has reviewed the program overview documents, is familiar with the sponsorship process, and has made the decision to sponsor, the next step is to have the Case Narrative Form completed and submitted to World Renew for review (along with the refugee identity documents). Note that this step is only required for sponsor-referred refugees.

Completing the Case Narrative Form is the starting point for the entire process for sponsor-referred refugees. The questions in the Case Narrative Form are drawn from the Schedule 2 / Refugees Outside Canada (IMM 0008) application form. The answers provided assist World Renew in assessing the strength of the refugee narrative and the applicants' eligibility. If the refugee(s) meet the eligibility criteria, the sponsoring group will receive application instructions from World Renew that provide guidance for the completion of the necessary application forms. If the answers provided on the Case Narrative Form are not clear, or if further details are needed, World Renew will return it with comments and questions to be resolved.

Please do not complete the application documents until World Renew has received and approved the refugee story.

It is very important that the Case Narrative Form be completed by the refugee applicant themselves. They will have an interview later in the sponsorship process and will need to explain their refugee narrative. **For this reason, it is crucial to make sure there are no inconsistencies or contradictions between the interview and written refugee story.**

For details about completing the Case Narrative Form and what Identity Documents to submit, please see **APPENDIX: “[Application Instructions – Part 1](#)”**.

For a list of Case Narrative Form questions, please see **APPENDIX: “[Case Narrative Form – List of Questions](#)”**

CG Readiness Checklist

An important part of moving forward in the process is the completion of the “[CG Readiness Checklist](#)” (**APPENDIX**). The checklist should be completed after the sponsoring group has agreed to continue with the sponsorship and after World Renew has approved the refugee story. World Renew will contact the sponsoring group

representative and review the Sponsorship Readiness Checklist with you. Review of the checklist will ensure that the sponsoring group is aware of key responsibilities, as well as confirm that necessary administrative responsibilities are in place before proceeding further with the sponsorship process.

Forming a Refugee

Sponsorship Committee

One of the most important aspects of organizing for refugee sponsorship is the creation of a refugee sponsorship committee. It is important to note that sponsoring a family or an individual is time consuming. There are many things to do throughout the application process and in the first year of settlement to Canada. These tasks go beyond the capacity of one or two persons to accomplish.

It is important that a core group of five to eight people come together to form a Refugee Sponsorship Committee. From there you may identify a Chairperson, determine sub committees and leads, define roles and responsibilities, and recruit additional volunteers as per the activities of the different sub committees.

Some suggested sub-committees include fundraising, housing and maintenance, transportation, health, employment readiness, and banking/budgeting. Please note that all members of the Refugee Sponsorship committee must have current and up to date vulnerable sector screening. Please see [APPENDIX: "Guidelines for Forming a Refugee Sponsorship Committee."](#)

Volunteer Screening

All refugee-sponsoring groups must have a policy that applies to volunteers working with vulnerable persons. The group is responsible to review their policy and adapt and

"I truly see how God has called each person who serves on our committee. Each has a unique gift to share and contributes to the success of our sponsorship work - some members have gifts in finance, others in spiritual support and friendship. There are more talents than can be named and all work together for the good of our new friends to Canada."

-sponsor

apply it to the refugee(s) sponsored. It is important to note that refugees are considered vulnerable people during their sponsorship year and therefore vulnerable person policies must be extended to the refugee(s) upon arrival and for the duration of the sponsorship period.

In order to adequately implement a vulnerable person policy, it is necessary to carefully screen and interview volunteers. For all volunteers working directly with the newcomers, the sponsoring group is to implement and retain on file the following:

- Evidence that volunteers have read and applied the group policy towards vulnerable persons as it has been adapted to refugee sponsorship
- Completed volunteer application forms
- Reference checks of volunteers
- Vulnerable sector checks of volunteers

Fundraising

A key task for successful refugee sponsorship and resettlement is fundraising.

Providing financially for the sponsorship is a central responsibility of the sponsoring group. Sponsors have successfully organized benefit dinners, movie nights, concerts featuring local musicians, and silent auctions. We encourage you to be creative and to use fundraising initiatives as an opportunity to further engage and inform your sponsoring group about the refugee sponsorship effort.

When to begin fundraising is dependent on a few factors. One factor is the type of sponsorship submitted. For BVOR cases, it is possible that the family will arrive within one year (or sooner) of the application being submitted. Therefore, **it is important to start fundraising during the application process, or when the application is submitted.** For sponsor-referred cases, the processing time is often lengthier. It is possible that the refugees will not arrive for up to two (or more) years after submitting the application, hence a longer time to fundraise. Historically there have been very long processing times for sponsor-referred cases. However, in 2018 the government committed to a 12-month processing time by the end of the calendar year. For BVOR and sponsor-referred cases, the question of when to begin fundraising will depend on the financial resources and capacity of your sponsoring group. For some churches, a few offerings over a one-

year period may be sufficient to raise all the necessary funds. For others it may take a number of initiatives over several months to raise the necessary support. Please assess your situation carefully and ensure that you have sufficient time to raise the necessary funds.



Budgeting for Sponsorship (Sponsor-Referred and BVOR)

To help establish a fundraising goal, and to ensure that your group is fully prepared to proceed with sponsorship, it is recommended that an itemized budget be established early in the refugee sponsorship process. The level of support which sponsoring groups are expected to provide to refugees is at least that of the prevailing Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP) rates in the expected community of settlement. Each province has its own RAP rates. These rates are also used to calculate the assistance that Government Assisted Refugees (GARs) in Canada receive. The RAP rates outline the monthly support required for a sponsorship. In addition to this, there are a variety of Start-Up costs that will be incurred at the beginning of the sponsorship, such as the payment of first and last month's rent, and the necessary furnishings and items needed to prepare a welcoming home. Provincial RAP rate tables and a Start-Up cost table are

available for download on the Refugee Sponsorship Training Program's website:

<http://www.rstp.ca/en/sponsorship-responsibilities/resettlement-assistance-program-rap-rates/>

It is expected that refugees be provided with support that is, at minimum, in line with provincial RAP rates. A sponsoring group's provision of in-kind donations, such as furniture or other housewares, may reduce the overall cost of the sponsorship.

When collecting contributions for a refugee sponsorship, it is important to designate these funds using a general benevolent fund or a fund with a generic name such as 'Refugee Sponsorship Fund.' The fund must not contain the name of the refugee family. Insofar as the sponsoring group is a registered charity, it may raise funds and give charitable tax receipts to those who donate. Note that family members of the refugees cannot receive an income tax receipt for financial contributions to the sponsorship. In addition, refugees cannot contribute financially to their own sponsorship while their case is being processed and before their arrival to Canada. This is a violation of World Renew's agreement with the government.

If you are considering the BVOR Program, please note that although it is a cost-shared program, the cost sharing is not typically 50:50 between your group and the government. The church has to cover all the start-up costs and there are additional costs in sponsorship that the government does not cover. The ratio is closer to 30:70 or 40:60. Therefore, when using the cost table to estimate the costs for a BVOR sponsorship, please consider that the sponsoring group will include more than just half of the 12 months of Income Support as listed on the RAP rates table. For further information on raising support, please see the comprehensive set of refugee sponsorship "[Finance Guidelines](#)" **ONLINE.**

**"I can't put it into words. We've been given our lives back."
-sponsored refugee**

Settlement Planning

Settlement of the newcomers is the responsibility of the sponsoring group and requires good planning to ensure they settle well and receive a warm welcome in their new

home. Even though the actual arrival and settlement of the newcomers may be several years away, it is important that churches and groups think through all that will be required once the newcomers arrive.

As part of your group's settlement planning, we ask that you contact your local settlement and newcomer-serving agencies to find out what programming and resources are available. In particular, we ask that you learn what English language classes are available in your area and what the enrollment process involves. Establishing contact with your local settlement agency will allow you to readily access and refer the sponsored refugee(s) to services when the refugee(s) arrive. Information for settlement services across Canada can be found at: www.rstp.ca/en/sponsorship-responsibilities/settlement-services or www.cic.gc.ca/english/newcomers/services

Contact World Renew for guidance and support in developing the Settlement Plan. Please see the **APPENDIX: "[Settlement Plan](#)"** for a blank version.

You must submit your Settlement Plan to World Renew for approval prior to the application submission.

Keep Your Sponsoring Community Informed

Throughout the process of refugee sponsorship—from the decision to inquire about refugee sponsorship to the point of submitting an application, from the act of welcome at the airport to the end of the formal sponsorship period—be sure to keep your supporting community, whether it be a congregation or a community association, informed and up to date. Let your supporting community know once the decision

"[There were] many meetings, awareness-raising and fundraising events ... and the paperwork. Oh yes, the paperwork. But that moment the kids run down the hallway to greet you as an Uncle or Aunt, or one of the parents deliberately pulls your leg, you know it has all been worthwhile."

-sponsor

is made to sponsor and after the application is submitted. Give updates in a newsletter or during worship or group gatherings. Be sure to provide information about the

refugees' home country, the conditions that forced them to flee, and details about their country of asylum. **Please do this in general terms to protect the identity of the sponsored family prior to their arrival.**

It is important to provide learning opportunities for your group. By keeping your broader support community up to date, you will help to build support, solidarity, and community around the refugee sponsorship effort and for the sponsored refugee family.

For more information, please see **APPENDIX: “[Tips for Keeping Your Sponsoring Community Informed](#)”**).

Respecting the Confidentiality and Privacy of Sponsored Refugees

Although it is very important to engage the congregation/community in the refugee sponsorship process, it is also very important, both from a legal and ethical perspective, to recognize and respect the privacy of the sponsored refugee(s). Prior to arrival, for privacy and safety reasons, do not publish, promote, or distribute the names or any identifying information about the refugee(s) you are sponsoring, either in the church or on social media. Once the refugee(s) arrive in Canada, you should consult with them and get their permission as to what can be shared, how it is shared, and to whom. Be sure that they fully understand what are asking them, and be aware that they may be hesitant to say “no” because of power imbalances.

For a more in-depth look at maintaining Confidentiality and Privacy in the sponsorship, please see **APPENDIX: “[Confidentiality and Privacy](#).”**

STEP 2 • Application for Private Sponsorship

Once the sponsoring group has made the decision to sponsor a refugee, and after the various tasks in Step 1 are complete, the Refugee Program will walk them through the application process and the completion of all the forms. **An email detailing the application process, including information on how to access the application forms, will be sent to the main sponsoring group contact.** Please see **APPENDIX: “[Application Instructions, STEP 2](#).”**

Preparing the Application Documents

It is important to note that different types of sponsorships require different documents to be completed. BVOR and JAS cases only require the sponsoring group to complete the sponsor documents. However, a sponsor-referred case is more involved and requires that the sponsored refugee(s) complete a set of forms (the IMM6000) in addition to requiring the sponsoring group to complete the sponsor documents. Please see the Table below:

Forms to be completed by refugee for <i>sponsor-referred cases</i> (Application Documents)	Forms to be completed by the sponsoring group for sponsor-referred, BVOR and JAS applications (Sponsor Documents)
Generic Application Form for Canada (IMM-0008)	Undertaking/Application to Sponsor (IMM-5373)
Schedule A Background Information (IMM-5669)	Settlement Plan (IMM-5440)
Schedule 2 Refugees Outside Canada (IMM-0008)	Sponsor Assessment (IMM-5492)
Use of Representative (IMM-5476)	Document Checklist (IMM-5437)

REMINDER: Please do not proceed to completing the application and sponsor documents until World Renew has reviewed and approved the Refugee Story.



Finalizing and Submitting the Application Documents

The process of drafting, revising, and finalizing the application documents can take several months. **It is very important that the refugee applicant(s) complete, or directly engage in, the completion of the application documents,** as they will need to speak to what is included on the application documents at the time of interview. World Renew will provide written feedback of the corrections that need to be made to the application documents until they are finalized. It is important that the sponsoring group representative follow-up with the refugee applicant to ensure the corrections are made and sent back to World Renew in a timely manner.

World Renew, like all SAHs, has an annual sponsorship allocation that must be used within the calendar year or it will be lost. If sponsorship allocations go unused, World Renew will receive fewer sponsorship allocations the following year. Only sponsor-referred applications count against World Renew's yearly allocation.

One Year Window

Dependants who are not in the same location as the principal applicant, but intend to come to Canada at some point must be listed as “accompanying” on the application document (IMM 0008 Generic Application Form). All efforts will be made by the visa

office to process their sponsorship request simultaneously with the principal applicant's even if they may not travel to Canada at the same time.

Dependants who are missing or do not intend to come to Canada must be listed as "non-accompanying" on the application document (IMM-0008 Generic Application Form). The individual(s) will have the opportunity to come to Canada within one year of the principal applicant's arrival in Canada through the One Year Window program.

It is very important that all family members are listed on the application. If they are not listed, they will not be permitted to ever come to Canada.

As the sponsor, it is also very important to note that for any dependant listed on an application, whether as "accompanying" or "non-accompanying," you are responsible for all of the dependant's settlement needs for his or her first year in Canada, regardless of when the dependant arrives in Canada.

Housing Search and the Uncertainty of Arrival Times

There is much uncertainty that surrounds attempts to predict when sponsored refugees will arrive in Canada. As a result, it is difficult to plan for housing. However, we recommend that you do not sign or begin a rental agreement until you receive the Notice of Arrival (see Step 4a) from the government. In lieu of this, we recommend that you plan to have an interim housing solution for the first week or two in case the refugees arrive mid-month.

STEP 3 • Visa Office Processing (sponsor-referred cases only)

After World Renew submits the application to the Resettlement Operations Centre in Ottawa (ROC-O), ROC-O will review the application to ensure all the documents have been included in the application and will then send the application overseas to the appropriate Canadian visa post to be processed. It is important to note that most visa posts have large backlogs of refugee cases to process. Applications are processed by visa officers in the order that they arrive at the visa post.

Interview by Visa Officer

As the application moves through the queue, the refugee(s) and World Renew will receive an interview notice from the visa office indicating the date, time, and location of the interview, as well as a request for additional documents to be completed. It is important that the refugees read the interview notice carefully and complete and submit all requested documents outlined in the interview letter to World Renew (in order for World Renew to submit to the visa post). Refugee(s) are to take the original application and identity documents, as well as all the additional requested documents, with them to the interview. All family members must attend the interview.

Note: The decision as to whether or not an applicant is accepted as a refugee, and is eligible to resettle to Canada, is made by the visa officer.

Preparations for Interview

It is important that the refugee(s) prepare for the interview by reviewing their refugee story and all their application documents. It is also important that during the interview, their answers are consistent with their application documents and their refugee story. World Renew will provide interview guidelines at the time of the interview. Please see [“Preparing Applicants for An Interview”](#) **ONLINE**.

Following the Interview

If the refugee(s) pass the interview, they will move to the admissibility stage in which they will receive medical, criminal, and security screening. If they pass all the screenings, the refugee(s) will receive a visa(s) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) will make travel arrangements to Canada). Please note that it can take several months from the time of the interview to finalize screenings, issue visas, and make travel arrangements.

“After I had talked to our family a few months in, and realized that their timing completely coincided with ours, I literally had chills when I realized how God had worked together with everyone involved.”

-sponsor

Processing Times

From the date the sponsorship undertaking is submitted to IRRC it may be a lengthy

waiting period before the visa officer makes a final decision, the visa is issued, and travel arrangements are made. Wait times vary by visa post and there is very little precision in the estimated processing and wait times provided by IRCC. World Renew is your point of contact for inquiries about your case. When appropriate we will follow up on cases and provide updates. Please note that all communication about a sponsorship application is to be directed to World Renew who will follow up with the appropriate agency.

Wait times can be difficult for the refugee(s), the sponsor, and family members in Canada. This is compounded by the fact that wait times are very difficult to predict, making it difficult for World Renew to offer a clear and definitive estimate of arrival time. To manage expectations, it is best to ensure that everyone is aware of this situation from the outset of the sponsorship.

Changes in the Sponsorship Application as it is being Processed

As explained above, processing times can be lengthy. As refugee(s) wait for their application to be processed, marriages can take place, babies can be born, and people can move to a different location. IRCC will sometimes seek to contact the refugee directly during the process. Therefore, it is important to keep phone, email, and street address up-to-date to minimize delays and to ensure timely processing. In addition, if marriages take place or babies are born, there are specific forms to be completed that must be submitted to IRCC.

If changes are made to the application, it is very important to notify World Renew immediately. IRCC must be notified of any changes to the initial application and World Renew has the responsibility to manage the sponsorship and communicate with IRCC and other related agencies regarding any changes in the sponsorship.



STEP 4 • Arrival

Pre-Notification of Arrival Transmission

In August of 2016, IRCC began a pilot project called Pre-Notification of Arrival Transmission (pre-NAT). The objective of this pilot is to provide sponsors with information regarding the status of the sponsored refugee(s) earlier in the refugee resettlement process to assist with arrival preparations. In our experience, these notifications come one to two weeks prior to the NAT. Not all sponsors will receive a pre-NAT.

Notification of Arrival Transmission (NAT)

Once the visas have been issued and travel arrangement made, IRCC will email the *Notification of Arrival Transmission*, (NAT) to World Renew, the primary contact of the sponsoring group, as well as the sponsoring group and/or the co-sponsor (if applicable). The NAT is typically received two to three weeks prior to the date of travel. This is for sponsor-referred, BVOR, and JAS refugees.

The NAT provides information about the arrival of refugees such as date, time, location, flight number, names of persons travelling, any medical concerns, etc. It is important that the sponsoring group read the NAT very carefully. **The sponsoring group is to provide World Renew with the names and cell phone numbers of those who will welcome and pick the refugee(s) up from the airport.**

At the Airport

The airport arrival is a much-anticipated moment for the sponsoring group. When the refugee(s) arrive at the airport, they will go through the landing process with immigration officials. This process takes place at their first port-of-entry, prior to any connecting flights they might have to a final destination in Canada. The landing process takes roughly an hour after the flight has arrived. The sponsor(s) will not be with them during this time. During this process, the refugee(s) should receive their confirmation of permanent residence, their social insurance number, and be registered for the Interim Federal Health Program (Please see **APPENDIX: “[Interim Federal Health Program Fact Sheet](#)”**). **If refugee(s) do not receive these documents upon arrival at the airport, please contact World Renew immediately.**

When the process is complete, an airport official will escort them to the sponsors. There are generally many people at the arrival area, so it is a good idea to make a welcome sign with the newcomers' names in both English and their native language to hold up when they exit the arrival area. This way they will have something to look for in the sea of people at the arrival hall.

Positive first impressions can help build trust between the newcomer and sponsor that will grow during the sponsorship. To ensure that the first few interactions with the newcomers go well, we strongly recommend that you take an interpreter that speaks the refugees' language to the airport with you.

For more advice on preparing for the Airport Arrival, please see **APPENDIX: “[Airport Arrival Guidelines](#).”**



STEP 5 • Settlement

Settlement is a very critical part of your responsibility as a sponsoring group. Your group will provide the welcome, orientation, and day-to-day support as you assist the family in navigating Canadian systems and becoming settled in their new home. Please ensure you contact World Renew with any questions or challenges that you may encounter.

As a sponsoring group prepares to welcome refugees, each individual involved in the sponsorship will have different expectations about what the experience will look like. Similarly, when refugee newcomers arrive in Canada they have their own preconceived ideas about what their new lives will look and feel like. Because of this, it



“The entire refugee sponsorship experience has been a picture unfolding – like a puzzle. Each piece has come together in ways we couldn’t have imagined because we were not able to ever see the picture...until the puzzle was done...”

-sponsor

is important to manage expectations, both before the settlement period, and after the newcomers arrive. For tips on how to manage expectations and have positive interactions with sponsored newcomers, please see **APPENDIX: “[Managing Expectations](#)” and “[Tips for Walking Alongside Sponsored Refugees](#).”**

Early Weeks of Sponsorship

The first few days and weeks of the sponsorship are critical. They will also be the busiest for your sponsorship committee and team of volunteers.

It is important to plan and provide an orientation to life in Canada for the refugees. World Renew has a helpful orientation resource that we encourage

you to use. Please see **APPENDIX: “[Neighbourhood Orientation](#).”** For a second helpful resource, please see **APPENDIX: “[First Weeks Checklist](#).”** This checklist outlines key tasks that need to be accomplished in the first few weeks of the newcomers’ arrival to Canada.

Within the first 24 hours of arrival, we recommend that you assist the newcomers in learning how to use appliances and equipment in their home that might be new to them, such as fire alarms or the dishwasher. Please provide the newcomers with contact information for several sponsoring group contacts. Develop a *warning* system that the newcomers can use to communicate that *help is needed* if they have limited English.

You should also provide a means by which the newcomers can call their family at home to tell them that they have safely arrived.

“The way people have shown up time and time again to help our families through moves, groceries, doctor’s appointments, etc. as been moving. It is amazing how God could see this picture before we even had the pieces in our hands. How beautifully it has been to watch is all come together. God was there - God is there. And, God will continue to be there.”

-sponsor



provide clarity from the outset of the sponsorship

Other Orientation Tasks

Other initial orientation tasks to complete with the newcomers in the first few weeks include:

1. Review the sponsoring group responsibilities
2. Explain and clarify the PSRP and the BVOR Program, whichever is relevant. Often newcomers arrive with different expectations of the program under which they were sponsored. It is important to

3. Outline the responsibilities of the newcomers
4. Explain how the financial support is being provided by your sponsoring group and the government, if relevant (i.e. BVOR or JAS sponsorship)
5. Explain how settlement will take place in connection with the review of the settlement plan
6. Carefully review the budget and have a conversation about how to manage finances. Please see **APPENDIX: “[Tips for Promoting Financial Independence](#)”**
7. Explain health care in Canada. See “Health Related Matters” (below)
8. Provide orientation to the neighbourhood. Please see **APPENDIX: “[Neighbourhood Orientation](#).”**

World Renew will distribute a survey two months into the sponsorship that will help you evaluate how well the sponsorship is going and set some goals for the remainder of the sponsorship. For a copy of the questions that are included in this, please see **APPENDIX: “[Monitoring - Early Weeks Check-in](#).”**

Use an Interpreter

Ensure that an interpreter is present for all discussions with the newcomers. This will help ensure that information and expectations are understood, and that newcomers have the opportunity to ask questions.

Health Related Matters

PHYSICAL HEALTH

Sponsored refugees may arrive in Canada with a medical condition that will need immediate attention after arrival. Some of these conditions may be known by the sponsor in advance of the arrival while others may not. Please note that many refugees will have had limited access to health care services in their country of asylum and possibly in their country of origin as well. It is important to be prepared to assist the refugees you have sponsored in connecting with the medical services and professionals they need shortly after their arrival.

All sponsored refugees are eligible to receive health coverage under the Interim Federal Health Program (IFHP). Upon arrival at the airport, they receive an IFHP Certificate of eligibility. IFHP provides basic coverage until provincial health care coverage is in place, up to a maximum of three months. It is up to the sponsor to help the newcomer navigate the various levels of the Canadian health care system,

including securing a provincial health card, accessing IFHP services, finding a family doctor, and setting up necessary appointments.

Please note, only health care providers that are registered with Medavie Blue Cross are authorized to submit claims for reimbursement. For details about IFHP coverage, including details on how to find a registered IFHP health care provider, please see "[The Interim Federal Health Program Fact Sheet](#)" in the **APPENDIX**.

The refugees you sponsor may also require dental care. Please note that IFHP dental coverage only provides for emergency care for dental conditions involving pain, infection, or trauma. It does not cover ongoing, regular, or routine dental care. Some provinces have programs that offer free dental care to children. See the **APPENDIX** for "[IFHP Dental Benefit Grid](#)".

MENTAL HEALTH, TRAUMA, AND CULTURE SHOCK

Refugees arrive to Canada having fled from very difficult and sometimes traumatic circumstances. Coming to Canada represents a major life change. While sponsors may assume that arrival to Canada would represent the start of a joyful new life, it often represents a separation from family and the abandonment of hopes and dreams they had for life in their home country. It is important to be sensitive to the complexity of emotions that refugee newcomers carry with them to Canada.

This complexity of emotions is often complicated by the culture shock refugee newcomers face in trying to adjust to their new life in Canada. It is important to remember that arriving in a new country can be both disorienting and intimidating. For more information about supporting newcomers through the stages of culture shock, please see [APPENDIX: "Understanding Culture Shock and Providing Support."](#)

"Our church knew we would be helping a refugee family to adjust to life in Canada, but we had no idea how challenging the culture shock would be. The loneliness as well as feelings of alienation and depression were paralyzing for one family member, and we needed to seek professional help."

-sponsor

Some refugee newcomers carry lasting impacts of trauma, which causes them to relive painful memories. For more information on understanding the impact of trauma and providing support to victims of trauma, please see [APPENDIX: “Trauma: Understanding its Impact and Providing Support.”](#)

Acquaint yourself with mental health support services for newcomers in your community and make sure that the refugees you have welcomed are aware of them. Be aware that different cultures have different conceptions, stigmas, and stereotypes about mental health, which may affect your ability to have open and honest conversations about different mental health topics. Above all, recognize your limitations as a sponsoring group. Please do not hesitate to seek out professional advice as you seek to support the mental health and well-being of the sponsored newcomers.

English Language Training vs. Employment

While sponsored newcomers may be eager to find employment upon arrival in Canada, World Renew urges churches/groups to help newcomers prioritize English language learning. Evidence shows that language proficiency is critical to long-term integration and success in Canada. It is important that the sponsored newcomers understand that the sponsorship period is intended to be a time in which they integrate into life in Canada and begin to acquire skills that will set them up for long-term success.

Racism, Discrimination and Religious Intolerance

Canada is a multicultural nation that values inclusion and diversity. But Canada is unfortunately not immune to racism, discrimination and social exclusion. If you are not a member of a visible minority, the existence of these and other forms of xenophobia (the fear of a foreign people group) in this country may not be obvious. Newcomers and ethnic and religious minorities across Canada face forms of intolerance and discrimination every day in both subtle and obvious ways.

There is a good chance that the refugees you sponsor will experience discrimination as they work to integrate into Canadian life. Newcomers to Canada often look, speak, act, and dress differently than those around them. While some Canadians see the diverse

multicultural fabric of our country as a blessing, others perceive it as a threat to their own identity.

For more information on supporting and walking alongside sponsored newcomers experiencing racism, discrimination or religious intolerance, please see [APPENDIX: “Racism, Discrimination and Religious Intolerance”](#)

Planning for “Month 13”

Beginning in month 9 of the sponsorship, your group/committee should begin planning for the transition out of the sponsorship, what is referred to as “Month 13.” Remind the sponsored newcomers of the date that the sponsorship formally ends and discuss the implications of this. You should also work with the newcomers on a needs assessment, so you can determine what types of support will be helpful to them after the sponsorship is complete.

“From the day we landed in Ottawa, our sponsors welcomed us warmly and took care of our family. We lack of nothing. Now we are so happy in Canada and we feel safe.”

-sponsored refugee

See RSTP’s [“Month 13 Planning – Resource Kit”](#) **ONLINE** for a series of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about Month 13, a set of sample sponsorship evaluation questions, and a Checklist of Tasks to complete in advance of the end of the sponsorship.

Monitoring

World Renew will officially check in with your sponsoring group at two points during the settlement year: **month two** and **month nine** after arrival.

At month two, World Renew will ask sponsors to complete a brief early weeks survey. See **APPENDIX: “Monitoring - Early Weeks Check-In.”**

At month nine, a phone conversation will be held between World Renew and a sponsoring group representative. The nine-month check-in will be a reflection on what has gone well, what can be improved, and how the group is planning for the Month 13

transition. For a list of the questions that will be asked during the interview, please see **APPENDIX: “[Monitoring - Nine Month Check-In.](#)”**



STEP 6 • End of Sponsorship

Evaluating the Sponsorship

Evaluating how the sponsorship went once it is over is a great way to find out what worked well, what did not, and how to build on this knowledge for the future. If your group is thinking of sponsoring other refugees at some point in the future, the evaluation will be a great tool to improve your work. Make sure to have everyone in the sponsoring group participate in the evaluation together to get a diverse view. We recommend completing the evaluation no more than one month after the conclusion of the sponsorship in order to provide reflections while they are still present in the minds of your group members.

See “[Month 13 Planning – Resource Kit](#)” **ONLINE** for a sample set of sponsorship evaluation questions.

Celebrate

Mark the anniversary of the newcomers’ arrival and your achievements as a sponsoring group by planning a celebration. You can also include other community members or partners who supported the newcomers and your group.

Continuing the Relationship

After the sponsorship is over you might have become friends with the newcomer(s). You can keep in touch with them, but there is a difference between your role as a sponsor and as your role as a friend after the sponsorship. Be clear about where your responsibilities end, especially the financial ones.

“For me the highlight has been a development of a solid friendship that spans across divides of culture, religion and language. As our guests have gotten used to the different way we live our lives and see our world, we too have learned [about] the challenges they have overcome and how that shapes them and their worldview today. We have learned from one another and we are all richer and wiser from the experience.”

-sponsor

Facing the Unexpected²

Throughout the inquiry and application process, refugee committees learn of the many settlement responsibilities such as finding housing and employment, organizing schooling and English as a Second Language (ESL) classes, scheduling medical and other appointments, and more. In this work, committees can and often do encounter *unexpected* situations due to unforeseen circumstances. Below are a few stories from refugee committee members engaged with sponsorship from across Canada of unanticipated and sometimes difficult developments during their sponsorships that they have experienced.

The purpose in sharing these stories is not to focus on the solutions to each situation but to highlight that **no sponsorship journey follows a predictable path**. Refugee settlement can be complicated.

Sexual, Physical, and Verbal Abuse

When you sponsor refugees, you hope for the best in terms of human relationships both within the refugee family and between the refugees and the committee. However, these expectations are not always met. Consider these two cases:

- a. One refugee accuses another refugee of sexual abuse and informs your committee of the accusations. Even if you are shocked by this information and not sure how to react, you must take the victim's allegations very seriously. You are responsible for both the accused and the alleged victim(s) of abuse. You call Family and Children's Services (FACS) to discuss the case. Some of the family members enter a shelter for a short time. Afterward FACS makes it clear to the refugees that the alleged abuser may not be near other family members.
- b. One of the refugees is verbally abusive to committee members and pent up anger turns to vocalized rage. You confront the refugee about his aggressive behaviour but he refuses to change. Eventually he and his family leave your community. You breathe a sigh of relief because his unwillingness to adopt healthy forms of communication has soured your relationship and is hurtful to all involved.

² Adapted from past World Renew Refugee Sponsorship Handbook as written by Sonya VanderVeen Feddema

Parenting

Welcoming a refugee family with children can be a wonderful experience. It can also present unique challenges. As a sponsor you may encounter cultural family dynamics and parenting styles that differ from Canadian customs and norms. Consider the following situations:

- a. You have welcomed a family of four: mom, dad, and two children, ages 6 and 8. Mom and Dad want to have an evening away with friends and leave their two children at home alone. The 8-year-old takes the 6-year-old to a local park, where a neighbour sees them playing and asks where their parents are. The 8-year-old responds that she does not know and the neighbour calls Family and Children Services, concerned about the well-being of these young children.
- b. While visiting the newcomers' home, the children are playing a lively game of tag. While running through the kitchen they knock a glass bowl onto the floor and it immediately shatters. The child's mother runs over and begins spanking the child repeatedly with a wooden spoon. You consider intervening but do not know what to say.

Canadian child welfare and protection laws are complex and not easy to explain. It can be a challenge to engage newcomer parents in a conversation about these topics without resorting to simple explanations, such as "You can do this" or "You cannot do this." When the need arises to explain why a parent's behaviour might not be acceptable according to Canadian laws and customs, focus the conversation on the well-being of the child rather than simply labeling a parenting approach as *wrong*. Moreover, seek outside help when trying to decide how to approach this type of sensitive topic. In many communities a local settlement organization might offer information sessions for newcomer parents.

Housing

Each refugee committee expects to find housing for the refugees. You count on having that responsibility. However, sometimes housing becomes an unexpected challenge. Consider the following scenarios:

- a. You sponsor a family of refugees that arrive on extremely short notice (which is not uncommon) before you have found adequate housing for them. You arrange temporary accommodations while looking for a longer-term solution. While

attending an English as a Second Language class, classmates inform them about desirable and undesirable places to live in your town. Even though you chose housing within the sponsorship budget, they are dissatisfied and request to move to an apartment in a more expensive part of town. You are concerned they won't be able to afford the apartment once the sponsorship year is complete.

- b. You house an extended refugee family in a spacious home that has two apartments. You soon discover that family members have long simmering hatred for each other and will not (or cannot) live together. When allegations of physical abuse between family members arise, it becomes clear that the lease will be broken and the family will split up, now needing two residences.

Material Goods

Refugee committees also expect to provide necessary material goods for the refugees. This is a task that is easily managed with the help of the supporting community.. However, sometimes this aspect of refugee sponsorship poses unforeseen challenges. Consider the following development:

- a. You have supplied everything that the refugee family needs. Because you want to practice good stewardship and stay within the budget of your church, you collect "gently-used" good quality furniture and household goods from your enthusiastic church fellowship. You assume that the goods will be treasured. However, within a few months, you discover that most of what you contributed was discarded and replaced with brand new items. You wonder why you went to all that effort only to have everything given away. If future needs arise, you question whether you should ask your community to contribute again.

Death

When you sponsor refugees, your thoughts are about *life*, not *death*. All your efforts are geared at helping the newcomers flourish. However, this is not always how events develop. Consider the following two circumstances:

- a. Your committee welcomes a multi-generational family consisting of a grandmother, two of her children, and five grandchildren. Three weeks after they arrive in Canada, the grandmother dies because, unbeknownst to you, she was terminally ill with cancer. Because the family came to Canada through a Joint Assistance Sponsorship (JAS) between the Canadian government and two

churches, the government pays for funeral costs. However, you are involved in funeral planning with government officials, funeral home staff, and clergy. You also support the family through your prayers, empathy, physical presence during the visitation and the funeral, and a luncheon after the funeral. This is an unexpected turn of events.

- b. Your committee deals with tragedy when a refugee child is struck by a car and killed soon after the family arrives in Canada. You and your church community support the family through visits, prayers, and thoughtful gestures. The church and the funeral home pay for funeral expenses.

Please ask refugees how they would like their family member's funeral to look, feel, and sound. Respect their customs and wishes when possible. Arrange to have an interpreter in your meetings to ensure communication and planning is clear.

Lying

When you enter a relationship in good faith, you expect the same in return. You enter refugee sponsorship in a spirit of truth. However, you discover that sometimes this spirit is not reciprocated.

Perhaps if you consider where refugees have come from and what they have had to do to survive, you would not be as shocked or hurt when you discover they have lied to you. Desperate people will do what they need to do to survive. Does that excuse their lying? Of course not. However, it does give you a framework in which to deal with it. If you decide to confront the lies, be prepared for any number of responses: more lies, denial, anger, acceptance, repentance, or a desire to be more truthful in the future.

Physical and Mental Health

You assume that information provided to your committee prior to refugees' arrival would enlighten you about any medical concerns that they have. However, when the family arrives, you discover that some of the refugees have significant physical and mental health challenges. Perhaps the father suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder that makes holding a job difficult or not possible. Maybe a family has a child with severe cerebral palsy. Or perhaps a parent who is legally blind arrives in the care of your committee. You access the services in your community that best meet the needs of each individual. Your committee needs to rethink the time commitment that the sponsorship will take and might call on others to carry some of the unexpected load.

Refusal to Settle in Your Community

When you welcome refugees to Canada, you expect that they will settle in your community. However, in the first few months you may discover that your assumptions were incorrect. Consider this possible development:

As soon as you have your sponsored family settled in the apartment, the teenage boy asks when they can move to a large city. He does not want to live in a small town because he is uncomfortable in a place where few visible minorities live. At school he meets other non-white students and so he is able, for a while, to accept where he lives. But before the end of your year sponsorship, the family once again talks about moving. They want to relocate to a city near their friends that they perceive will have more job opportunities. You try to discourage them from making the move until the sponsorship is complete and the school year is finished but they decide to leave anyway. You do what you can to make the transition as smooth as possible.

Criticism from Church Members

When you participate in refugee sponsorship, you might assume that everyone in your church community will feel the same passion for this calling from God that you do. However, you learn that you are mistaken. Consider this situation:

You are sponsoring a Muslim family. You learn that some people in your church are not in support of the sponsorship. When your brother- or sister-in-Christ confronts you with the belief that the church should only sponsor *Christians*, you try and calmly explain: In the parable of the Good Samaritan, Jesus was not making us consider who our neighbour is, but whether or not we are willing to be a neighbour. As you care for the Muslim refugees, you pray for their daily needs, and for opportunities to discuss faith with them.

Fears

It is common for refugees to be **afraid of dogs**. Since most dogs are strays in countries where there is conflict, it may seem strange to have them in our homes and with our children.

It is also common for refugees to be afraid and anxious of the **police or other authority figures**. Many refugees have had negative experiences with authority and may harbor

feelings of suspicion or mistrust. For this reason, it may not be easy or “natural” to go a person in authority with a concern or problem. It often takes time and encouragement for refugees to believe that the police are here for their safety and care about their well-being.

Culture Clash

When refugees come to Canada, they often find that their cultural values and beliefs differ from those practiced by the majority of Canadians. Even though Canada is a very multicultural country, adjusting to life in Canada can take significant time and present complex cultural challenges. For refugees who formerly lived in societies with clearly defined rules and boundaries, this can be difficult. When they come to Canada, it may seem like the doors have suddenly swung open and all is possible and allowed. Consider this situation: after six months in the country, a young wife tells her husband that she wants to get her Canadian high school equivalency so she can one go to college to fulfill her dream of becoming a nurse. He refuses her permission to do this because he wants her to be a homemaker. Then one day she goes out with some new friends and signs up for adult education courses being offered in the local community centre. She comes home excited! However, when the husband comes home to hear the news, he beats her. When a member of the church comes by to share some information with the husband, he notices the wife’s black eye. When he inquires about her bruises, the husband only says that she was trying to do something “she shouldn’t be doing.”

Tips for Coping with Unexpected Challenges

Unexpected challenges require coping mechanisms that will keep a refugee committee healthy and functioning. The following suggestions are not specific to the problems cited above. Rather, they are general guidelines that can be applied to many difficult situations.

1. **Be Realistic.** Be aware that you will face problems. Don't expect that the sponsorship will be easy; it probably won't be. If it is, you will be pleasantly surprised. Take the long view. If things are difficult, try to picture where the refugees will be in five or ten years in terms of employment, education, assimilation, spiritual life, emotional healing, and wellness.
2. **Communicate.** Clear communication is one of the keys to the development of a flourishing sponsorship and to the functioning of a thriving refugee committee. When communication with the refugees breaks down, either because of misunderstandings due to language or cultural differences, or because of personality clashes, extra effort needs to be made to restore it. The same is true for communication among refugee committee members. The clear articulation of goals, roles, responsibilities, and frustrations are necessary to keeping a common vision alive—the mission of caring for the refugee family no matter what difficulties emerge.
3. **Examine Expectations.** Each refugee committee member enters the sponsorship with some expectations of what will happen. Be aware of the expectations that you have of the refugees. Are they fair and realistic? Are you expecting them to integrate into Canadian life and to become independent faster than they are able to? Alternatively, are your expectations not high enough? Are you doing too much for them so that they don't learn to become independent and, instead, form an unhealthy dependence on your refugee committee? Are you trying to fix all their problems instead of giving them the knowledge and inspiring the confidence they need to become contributors to society? Do you expect the refugees to attend your church and worship with you? Or are you expecting that they will make their own

³ Adapted from past World Renew Refugee Sponsorship Handbook as written by Sonya VanderVeen Feddema.

choices as to where they will worship, if at all?

4. **Access outside Resources.** Just as it “takes a village to raise a child,” so it takes more than a refugee committee to help a refugee family settle in a new land. As problems arise, connect with people who can be of assistance: your pastor, settlement workers, the children's aid society in your area, teachers, refugees who have already settled in Canada, and people from their own culture who live in your community. Each of these people might have valuable input to lighten your load and broaden your understanding.
5. **Take Down Time.** Some members of the refugee sponsorship team will find themselves spending a significant amount of time working with the newcomer(s), particularly in the first few weeks following their arrival. In our experience, we have found that it is very easy for volunteers to get so involved in the work of the sponsorship that they forget to look after their own needs. Scheduling regular check-in meetings for all volunteers can help to ensure that everyone is practicing self-care keeping perspective.
6. **Celebrate.** Celebration hardly seems like a solution to problems, but it can be. Even when you face difficult circumstances, take time to celebrate refugees' birthdays and other occasions. Generous love and small gifts contributed in a party atmosphere can go a long way to forging love, healing wounds, and building trust.
7. **Recognize Blessings.** God sustains, protects, and loves you as you struggle through challenging circumstances with refugees. *He also changes you.* He makes you more open to people from different cultures and ways of life out of the realm of your experience. He shapes you to be more patient when you face adversity with them. Take time throughout the sponsorship to acknowledge and give thanks for this.

God helps you realize that you do not have all the answers and that you cannot fix all the problems. Only He does and only He can. God teaches you to pray fervently, sometimes desperately, as you strive to be “His hands and feet in world.” He makes you aware that ultimately you are serving Him as you serve refugees and newcomers. What matters is that God receives the glory; it doesn't belong to you.

RESOURCES

Helpful Devotional Resources

- “[Devotions](#),” see **APPENDIX**
- “[Scripture Passages](#),” see **APPENDIX**
- “[Prayers](#),” see **APPENDIX**

Additional prayers and devotions, as well as liturgies, children’s messages, and activities, are available on the Centre for Public Dialogue’s website:

<https://www.crcna.org/publicdialogue/resources/refugee-justice-worship-resources>

Education

Many refugee sponsors find that the more they get involved with refugees and newcomers to Canada the more they want to learn. And the more they learn, the more they desire to advocate for the injustices they see in this country and globally.

World Renew, along with a variety of other ministries of the CRC, has developed a workshop entitled “Journey with Me.” Using the true stories of refugees who have come to Canada, the workshop helps participants imagine the challenges, hopes, and fears faced by newcomers as they arrive in a new country and try to understand its culture and navigate its systems. Walking through the workshop provides deep insight into how we might live out the Biblical call to ‘welcome the stranger.’ We highly encourage your group to take part in this 90-minute workshop, which includes a facilitator’s guide detailing how to lead the session.

You can find the “Journey with Me” workshop, as well related skits, Sunday School plans, and worship resources on World Renew’s website:

worldrenew.net/journeywithme

Advocacy

We encourage you to advocate for the rights of refugees, both in your community and internationally. Each of the following organizations does excellent work in the area of refugee advocacy. We encourage you to visit their websites for details about how to speak up and speak out!

- [The Christian Reformed Centre for Public Dialogue](#)
- [Canadian Council for Refugees](#)
- [Amnesty International Canada](#)
- [Citizens for Public Justice](#)
- [Human Rights Watch](#)
- [Office of Social Justice for the Christian Reformed Church](#)
- [United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees](#)

You may also wish to consider talking to your Member of Parliament or local politician. E-mail us at worldrenewrefugee@worldrenew.net if you are looking for assistance in crafting talking points for this purpose. We'd love to help!

Faith and Settlement Partnerships

Every sponsoring group should connect with different organizations in its community for settlement support. World Renew participated in a research project with a variety of other organizations that explored the development of connections, relationships, and partnerships between newcomer serving groups (such as refugee sponsors) and settlement agencies. One of the products of this research project was a Workshop and accompanying Facilitator's Guide entitled "[Faith and Settlement Partnerships: Setting Immigrants and Canada up for Success.](#)" We highly recommend exploring ways in which your sponsoring groups could engage with a local settlement agency to walk through this workshop together.

APPENDIX

Responsibilities of Sponsoring Groups⁴

Refugee sponsorship carries with it a number of moral, financial, and legal responsibilities in relation to the refugees sponsored, IRCC, and other parties. Broadly speaking, the responsibilities of a sponsoring group can be placed in two categories: *pre-arrival* responsibilities and *post-arrival* responsibilities.

Each of these areas requires the sponsoring group to carry out a set of actions or activities that result in positive sponsorship outcomes and experiences. Below are the main duties under these two broad categories.

Pre-Arrival Responsibilities

Sponsoring groups are expected to carry out the following duties in relation to refugees they are sponsoring.

1. **Submit fully and correctly completed refugee sponsorship applications.** To avoid the return of an application and to save time and resources, sponsors are expected to play an active role, with help from World Renew, in properly and fully completing all sponsorship forms and required documents.
2. **Commit to having sufficient resources to support the privately sponsored refugees for the sponsorship period.** When submitting a private refugee Sponsorship Undertaking (IRCC form IMM-5373), the sponsoring group must commit to having sufficient resources to support the privately sponsored refugee(s) for the sponsorship period determined in the Sponsorship Undertaking, which is normally 12 months.
3. **Complete and submit a settlement plan to World Renew.** Details of the plan for supporting the financial and resettlement needs of the sponsored refugees will be outlined in a Settlement Plan (IRCC form IMM-5440) that will be completed, signed, and submitted to World Renew for approval (see **APPENDIX: “[Settlement Plan](#)”** for a sample).

⁴ This resource is adapted from the RSTP website: “Overview of Sponsorship Responsibilities.” www.rstp.ca/en/sponsorship-responsibilities/responsibilities

4. **Maintain contact with refugee applicants and update them** (*does not apply to BVOR sponsorships*). Being in contact with the refugee applicant throughout the process allows sponsors to share information and updates with them. It also enables the sponsoring group and refugee applicant to inform World Renew about any important changes and thus ensure the visa office and ROC-O are notified.
5. **Update IRCC about any changes in family composition** (*does not apply to BVOR sponsorships*). To ensure that the family unit remains intact, sponsors need to inform World Renew and ensure that refugee applicants inform the visa office and ROC-O office about any changes in the family composition of the applicant. Failure to declare changes on time, such as a new baby or spouse, can result in permanent separation of family members.
6. **Ensure refugees are aware of their interview and are present for it** (*does not apply to BVOR sponsorships*). When World Renew informs the sponsoring group of the applicant's interview date, the sponsor is responsible for notifying the refugee applicant as soon as possible and verifying that the applicant is aware of the interview details (i.e. date, location). The group should not assume that the refugee applicant will be informed of the interview day. Sponsors are to confirm with World Renew that the refugee will be at the interview and World Renew will confirm with the visa post.
7. **Prepare refugees for an interview** (*does not apply to BVOR sponsorships*). The sponsoring group must ensure that the refugee applicant(s) prepare for their interview. On the World Renew **WEBSITE** you will find "[Preparing Applicants for An Interview](#)," a helpful set of instructions to assist refugees in readying themselves for their interview.
8. **Work directly with refugee applicants and World Renew to avoid any delay or complication in the sponsorship process.** The sponsoring group should work with the refugee applicant and World Renew to ensure that the sponsorship process goes smoothly. Examples of tasks include following-up on requests to submit

additional documents, updating completed forms, and making any other requested changes to forms. If there are any changes in the sponsoring group (i.e. finances, human resource) which might negatively affect the capacity of the group to carry out its sponsorship responsibility, please inform World Renew immediately. Ideally, the group should recruit new volunteers and reconstitute its resettlement committee or fundraise to collect the required financial resources that will enable it to continue with the sponsorship process. If this is not possible, the group must consult with World Renew.

9. **Screen and train volunteers.** The sponsoring group will exercise due diligence in screening and training volunteers involved with the settlement of refugees. Because resettled refugees are considered *a vulnerable population*, all members of the sponsoring group who will work directly with the sponsored refugees are required to obtain a current Canadian Police Information Centre Check, plus a Vulnerable Sector Verification version of a Criminal Record Check.
10. **Offer a warm reception.** Meet and welcome the refugee(s) upon arrival at their final airport destination and provide transportation for the newcomers and their belongings to the sponsoring group's community.

Post-Arrival Responsibilities

The sponsoring group has a variety of responsibilities related to meeting the basic settlement needs of sponsored refugees upon their arrival in Canada and informing World Renew of their efforts and any challenges that arise in the sponsorship. The following is a brief summary of these responsibilities. These must be carried out in accordance with the Settlement Plan (IRCC form IMM-5440) that the sponsoring group has completed.

1. **Lodging.** Provide suitable accommodations, basic furniture, and other household essentials.
2. **Care.** Provide food, clothing, local transportation costs, and other necessities of life.

3. Settlement assistance and support (see **APPENDIX: “[First Weeks Checklist](#)”** for more detailed overview).

- update IRCC’s online “My Application” platform with Canadian address upon arrival to ensure that PR cards are mailed to the correct address (within 180 days of arrival)
- assist in the completion of required forms including health insurance, social insurance, child tax benefits registrations, etc.
- open a bank account
- facilitate access to English or French language classes
- understand the rights and responsibilities of permanent residents
- facilitate access to employment (recommended later in the settlement year after completion of language classes)
- facilitate access to community support groups, settlement services, and other resources in the community
- register children in school and facilitate access with the school system
- locate and assist in accessing a family physician and dentist
- support empowerment and independence of the sponsored refugees

4. Monitoring. The sponsoring group must inform World Renew at month two and month nine to discuss how the sponsorship is progressing.

At month two, a survey will be distributed asking groups if they have been successful in completing the essential early sponsorship tasks. The survey also provides an opportunity to outline the biggest challenges facing the sponsorship and goals for the remainder of the sponsorship. Please see **APPENDIX: [Monitoring - Early Weeks Check-In](#)** for the list of the survey questions.

At month nine, World Renew will schedule a phone or face-to-face interview with the main sponsoring contact. This interview is an opportunity to discuss the successes and challenges of the sponsorship,, as well as next steps for transitioning out of the sponsorship period. We will help the sponsor do a basic assessment of what types of support the refugee(s) will need once the sponsorship is complete and how those needs can be met. Please see **APPENDIX: [Monitoring - Nine Month Check-In](#)** for the list of interview questions.

If there are any significant challenges during the course of the sponsorship, such as but not limited to, the sponsored refugee(s) being unhappy with the support that is provided or the sponsored newcomer indicating a desire to move outside the community of settlement, the sponsoring group must inform World Renew as soon as possible.

Responsibilities of the Sponsorship Agreement Holder

A Sponsorship Agreement Holder (SAH) is responsible for the following⁵:

- selecting and authorizing of constituent groups (CGs)
- pre-screening to determine whether a sponsorship application may meet sponsorship eligibility and credibility criteria
- ensuring that a Settlement Plan is developed by its CGs and co-sponsors for each Sponsorship Undertaking. This Settlement Plan must be approved by World Renew
- providing information on the expected arrival date for the newcomers as soon as that is known
- ensure that the CG and/or co-sponsor (if applicable) and Principal Applicant (PA) is notified if the Sponsorship Application is returned or refused
- all communication with IRCC and other external stakeholders relevant to the sponsorship
- providing organizational assistance, advice, information, and support to its constituent groups
- monitoring of its constituent groups and co-sponsors (The purpose of monitoring will be to provide support to the sponsor and the refugee in meeting respective commitments and responsibilities.)
- ensuring that its constituent groups and co-sponsors provide basic financial support and care for the sponsored refugee for the duration of the sponsorship period, or until the sponsored person becomes self-sufficient (whichever comes first)
- when issues or problems arise post-arrival, which could lead to possible breakdown (with refugees, CGs, or co-sponsors), the SAH will inform and work cooperatively with IRCC to resolve the situation without delay
- submitting an annual report to IRCC.

⁵ Adapted from Refugee Sponsorship Training Program website: <http://www.rstp.ca/en/refugee-sponsorship/sponsorship-agreement-holders/> and the Sponsorship Agreement Holder's Sponsorship Agreement with IRCC.

Responsibility of Sponsored Newcomers

Expectations are two-way: refugees can expect certain things from sponsoring groups and sponsoring groups can expect certain things from refugees. These expectations help to build healthy relationships, minimize frustration, and maximize positive settlement of all newcomers to Canada. Below are a few expectations for refugees that we recommend you share with them soon after arrival.

- Though we will provide financial help, it is your responsibility to manage your money carefully.
- If you are unable to keep an appointment, immediately inform the person from the sponsoring group who agreed to drive you there.
- Please try your best to be on time for appointments.
- You will receive a list of our phone numbers from the sponsoring group. If you have an urgent need, call us right away. We need time to rearrange our schedules to assist you.
- If you need assistance with anything, please contact us. We are here to help.
- Tell us if you have any special needs (medical or otherwise) so that we can help get the services you need.
- English is the main language in our community. Learning English is very important to becoming independent. All your family members are encouraged to attend language training as soon as possible.
- If you have expectations for continuing education, express them to us. We would love to help make this possible.
- Keep all important documents in a safe place. Note: It may be helpful to provide refugees with a folder or safe box (they may not know where to find these things).
- When going to an appointment with someone from the sponsoring group, be clear about what documents are needed. Never be afraid to ask.
- If you have questions, please ask. We are here to help.

Guidelines for CGs Working with Co-Sponsors

Prior to Beginning a Sponsorship

1. **Recognize that the Undertaking/Application to Sponsor [IMM-5373] is a legally binding document.** The Constituent Group (CG) that signs this document is responsible for the sponsorship and all settlement activities and costs of the sponsored refugee(s) for one year after their arrival to Canada. The CG can name a co-sponsor(s) to assist with the cost and settlement activities of the sponsorship. It is the responsibility of the CG to ensure that all co-sponsors are screened and assessed to ensure that they can carry out all their sponsorship responsibilities.
2. To ensure the co-sponsor(s) has the financial capacity to carry out the settlement activities, it is recommended that the CG request a letter from the co-sponsor's employer stating the dates of employment and annual income. The letter should be on the employer's letterhead. In addition, the CG should request the Annual Summary from the income tax statements going back five years for each of the co-sponsors to ensure that the co-sponsors earn sufficient income to finance the settlement costs. It is at the discretion of the church whether a letter and annual summary are collected from the co-sponsor(s). Please note, the church must exercise due diligence in ensuring that the co-sponsor is well established in Canada. A co-sponsor who has arrived in Canada within the last five years may not have the financial means or knowledge of Canadian systems to carry out their sponsorship responsibilities.
3. The CG and the co-sponsor(s) are to jointly develop a budget based on rates specified in the Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP). It is expected that financial support under private sponsorship is equivalent to RAP rates. This means that you, as the CG and co-sponsor, should provide income support at least equivalent to the RAP rate in the community of settlement in order to fulfill your responsibility as a sponsor. For more information about RAP rates please visit: <http://www.rstp.ca/en/sponsorship-responsibilities/resettlement-assistance-program-rap-rates/>. The budget developed will ensure that both the CG and the co-sponsors understand all the costs associated with settlement. It

will also outline the division of responsibility between the CG and the co-sponsor in covering these various settlement costs.

4. The CG and the co-sponsor(s) are to complete a settlement plan provided by World Renew. The settlement plan will detail areas of settlement responsibility and it is to be signed by the CG and the co-sponsor(s) and submitted to World Renew upon submission of the sponsorship application.
5. The CG and co-sponsor must not collect any funds from the sponsored refugee overseas to be put towards the sponsorship.

Arrival

1. Once World Renew receives the Notice of Arrival Transmission (NAT), World Renew will forward it to the CG. The CG is to contact the co-sponsor(s) to gather the name and cellphone numbers of those who will pick up the newcomers at the airport and provide that information to World Renew. The CG is responsible to ensure that the newcomers are welcomed and picked up at the airport.
2. It is recommended that a representative of the CG be at the airport to welcome and introduce the sponsoring church to the newcomers. If this is not possible and only the co-sponsor will be at the airport, a representative of the church is to meet with the family within two days of their arrival to ensure the family is aware of the churches support in the sponsorship.

Following Arrival

1. Meet with the co-sponsor(s) and newcomers within two weeks of arrival to ensure that items from the 'First Weeks Checklist' are being implemented and that the budget is reviewed with the newcomers. It is very important that the newcomers are aware of the church support in the sponsorship and that the newcomers are aware of the budget for their settlement.
2. Check in with the co-sponsor(s) monthly throughout the sponsorship period. Inquire if there are ways for the church to be supporting the sponsored family. If there are children, ensure that they are settling well in school. If adults can

benefit from ESL classes, ensure they are attending. Assist with problem solving.

3. Check in with the newcomers periodically to ensure they are settling well, that they are living within their budget and to determine if any further support is needed for their successful settlement.
4. Meet with the newcomers and the co-sponsor(s), towards the end of the sponsorship (month 9 or 10). Assess if the newcomers are moving towards independence and employment. Determine if there are additional ways for the church to play a supportive role in helping the newcomers work towards these outcomes.
5. Note that World Renew will contact the Constituent Group at both the 2-month and 9-month points of the sponsorship period to check in. The first check-in will be by way of online survey, and the second check-in will consist of a phone conversation. By signing below, you acknowledge that you have read, understood, and accepted each of the guidelines outlined in this document.

By signing below, you acknowledge that you have read, understood, and accepted each of the guidelines outlined in this document.

Name of Constituent Group

Constituent Group Representative (*print name and sign*)

Date

Co-Sponsor (*print name and sign*)

Date

Settlement Plan – a sample

Below is *a copy* of the Settlement Plan that needs to be completed.

SETTLEMENT PLAN SPONSORSHIP AGREEMENT HOLDERS (SAH)

A - GENERAL INFORMATION

Name of Principal Applicant - Family name	Given name(s)	Date of birth (YYYY-MM-DD)
Name of Sponsorship Agreement Holder (SAH)		

B - SETTLEMENT NEEDS CHECKLIST

* Please identify who will be providing for the settlement needs by checking the relevant box (note: more than one party may provide for the same need).

Settlement Needs	SAH	CG (if applicable)	Co-sponsor (if applicable)
FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE			
ONE TIME START-UP COSTS			
Clothing (winter and other clothes)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Furniture	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Household effects (bedding, linens, kitchen supplies, cleaning products)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
School fees and supplies (if applicable)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Food staples (flour, sugar, rice, spices, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hook-up costs (rental and utility deposits, phone and/or internet installation)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
MONTHLY EXPENDITURES			
Shelter (including rent, electricity, utilities, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Food	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Phone and internet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Transportation (public transit)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pocket money and allowances	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
SETTLEMENT ASSISTANCE			
Meet refugee(s) at the airport and provide transportation to the final destination	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Arrange transportation for the refugee(s) to and from appointments and activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Arrange for permanent housing and temporary housing if needed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Arrange for interpreter services (if applicable)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Apply for provincial health plan and Interim Federal Health (IFH) Program (if applicable)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Apply for Social Insurance Number (SIN), Canada Child Benefit (if applicable), other necessary federal/provincial programs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Assist refugee(s) in finding a family physician and dentist, and to see a health care worker shortly after arrival, if needed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provide orientation (financial and non-financial, e.g., public transportation, banking, shopping, rights and responsibilities, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provide assistance in linking refugee(s) with community activities/groups	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Enroll children in school (if applicable)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Make child care arrangements (if applicable)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Enroll adults in language training (if applicable)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provide assistance in finding employment or accessing support services to find employment (e.g., Settlement Program)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

C- SETTLEMENT NEEDS - DETAILS

*Please give details on plans that your group has made or intends to make to help the refugee(s) settle. All of these questions must be answered in full for this Sponsorship Application to be processed. Please refer to [Guide for Sponsorship Agreement Holders to privately sponsor refugees \(IMM 5413\)](#) as you answer these questions.

1. As sponsors, you must arrange proper housing for the refugee(s) you are sponsoring. Please describe your plans for arranging housing, including the anticipated number of rooms and the anticipated number of any other people who will be living there. If temporary housing will be arranged prior to the refugee(s) moving into permanent housing, please provide details. Please provide the address for planned temporary and/or permanent housing, if known at this time.
2. What support structure (staff or volunteer) will be available to provide the required settlement services? Indicate the names of the individuals that will be volunteering and what tasks they will be assisting with (e.g. arrival, SIN card application, health card application, medical appointments, etc.).
3. Which immigrant settlement assistance agencies will the refugee(s) likely access, and for which services?
4. As sponsors, you must plan and make arrangements for any additional needs of the refugee(s), including medical needs and/or special needs for persons who have suffered trauma and would benefit from crisis support and counselling. Please provide details of how these needs will be met.
5. APPLICABLE ONLY IF THERE ARE NON-ACCOMPANYING FAMILY MEMBERS LISTED ON THE SPONSORSHIP UNDERTAKING Please explain your group's contingency plan for supporting non-accompanying family members who may become accompanying family members or who may come to Canada later under the One Year Window of Opportunity provision.

D - SIGNATURES

SIGNATURES FOR SAH AND IF APPLICABLE, CG:

SAH Signing Authority name (print full name)	Signature	Date (YYYY-MM-DD)
CG Signing Authority name (print full name)	Signature	Date (YYYY-MM-DD)

SIGNATURES FOR CO-SPONSORS, IF APPLICABLE:

Co-sponsor INDIVIDUAL name (print full name)	Signature	Date (YYYY-MM-DD)
Co-sponsor ORGANIZATION Signing Authority name (print full name)	Signature	Date (YYYY-MM-DD)

The information you provided on this form is collected under the authority of the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* and will be used to maintain a record of applications and Sponsorship Undertakings by private sponsors in Canada according to the requirements of the Act. It will be retained in the Personal Information Bank CIC PPU 008 identified in *Infosource*. It may be shared with other organizations in accordance with the consistent use of information under the *Privacy Act*. Under the *Privacy Act* and the *Access to Information Act*, individuals have the right to protection of and access to their personal information. Details on these matters are available at infosource.gc.ca and through the Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship Canada Call Centre. *Infosource* is also available at Public Libraries in Canada.

PSRP Overview – Initial Inquiry

Thank you for your interest in sponsoring refugees with World Renew and for taking the time to have a conversation with us. This document will provide you with key points about private refugee sponsorship, an outline of the three ways refugee(s) can come to Canada under the Private Sponsorship Program, as well as important planning considerations to assist your church or group with its sponsorship.

1. **Key points** for your church or group to know before beginning a refugee sponsorship:

- The sponsored person or family must be resettled to your community.
- The sponsorship period is for one year, effective from the date the refugees land in Canada (with the exception of Joint Assistance Sponsorships).
- All privately sponsored refugees arrive in Canada as Permanent Residents.
- The main responsibility of the sponsoring group is to assist the family with the many activities involved in resettlement. The primary objective of sponsorship is to facilitate a successful adjustment to life in Canada.
- Sponsorship requires a significant investment of resources, time, energy, and emotion. Before you undertake a sponsorship, you should ensure that you understand what this commitment entails.

2. **Different ways refugees can come to Canada through a Sponsorship Agreement Holder (SAH) under the Private Sponsorship Program (PSP):**

A. Sponsor-Referred/Family Linked: Sponsor-referred refugees are refugees that have been referred to IRCC for sponsorship by a sponsoring group via a SAH. Generally these are cases in which someone in Canada approaches your church/group and asks you to sponsor their family member(s) from overseas. In these cases, often referred to as “family-linked,” the family members in Canada typically assist with the settlement activities and costs.

B. Blended Visa Office Referred Program (BVOR): The Blended Visa Office-Referred (BVOR) Program matches refugees identified for resettlement by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) with private sponsors

in Canada. It is referred to as “blended” because it is a cost-sharing arrangement between Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) and private sponsors. The BVOR Program is particularly suitable for churches that have not been approached by a family in Canada to sponsor their relative(s).

Refugees resettled under the BVOR program receive income support from IRCC through the Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP) for 6 months after their arrival, during months 2-7. Private sponsors pay the other 6 months of support, months 1 and 8-12, plus all of the start up costs. The sponsoring group is also responsible for providing the hands-on settlement support throughout the sponsorship year.

Matching Process: The Refugee Sponsorship Training Program (RSTP), a program responsible for organizing a matching database of refugee profiles, coordinates the BVOR program. Profiles are added to the matching database on a monthly basis. These profiles contain basic details about refugee(s) such as their age, country of origin, country of asylum, as well as their level of medical needs. When profiles become available, World Renew is able to select and put on hold up to two profiles that match the specifications of sponsors on its BVOR waiting list. After World Renew places the profile on hold, we will receive an extended profile that contains further details about the refugee or refugee family.

If your church is interested in sponsoring through the BVOR program, we ask that you answer the following questions in order to help us make a suitable match with a profile in the matching database:

1. What is the maximum number of people you are willing to sponsor?
2. Are you okay with individuals with medical needs?
3. Would you sponsor a female-headed household?
4. Would you sponsor an individual (male, female, or either)?
5. Do you have any nationality of preference? Are you willing to consider other nationalities?

If we are successful in identifying a case that matches the specifications you have sent us, we will forward a profile of the family to your church or group sponsorship primary contact who will have 48 hours to confirm whether the church would like to proceed with the sponsorship. If your church chooses to

proceed, we confirm with RSTP and then work and begin the process of filling out the necessary paperwork (Undertaking to Sponsor, Sponsor Assessment and Settlement Plan). Once the paper work is finalized, World Renew will submit the application.

Please note that estimating arrival time for BVOR cases is difficult. BVORs generally arrive anywhere from two months to one year after the undertaking is approved. However, there are many factors such as security screening or medical concerns, that can slow the estimated arrival time.

Differences between Sponsor-Referred and BVOR Sponsorships

- BVOR refugees have already been assessed and have met the Canadian government's resettlement criteria. This means that they are travel-ready. Sponsor-referred refugees must go through the refugee determination process and pass an interview with a visa officer before being accepted. Sponsor-referred refugees must also go through security and medical screening before being declared travel-ready.
- Because BVOR sponsorships are travel-ready, they have faster processing times than sponsor-referred sponsorships.
- BVOR sponsorships do not require the sponsoring group to have knowledge of a refugee, while sponsor-referred cases are those in which a sponsoring group has knowledge of a refugee or refugee family overseas.
- Sponsoring through the BVOR program costs less than a sponsor-referred application because the Government of Canada provides six months of income support. In both sponsor-referred and BVOR sponsorships, the sponsoring group is responsible for all start-up costs.

C. Joint Assistance Sponsorship (JAS): Refugees sponsored under the JAS program are identified as having special needs that will likely result in a longer or more challenging period of integration. Because of this, most refugees under the JAS program are provided settlement support by their sponsoring group for 24 months after arrival. In exceptional circumstances, the government will request that the sponsoring group provide 36 months of settlement support. In this program, the government covers the full cost of sponsorship for the full duration of the sponsorship period while the sponsoring groups are required to provide orientation, community and emotional support as well as ensure access to appropriate services. We recommend that groups have significant refugee settlement experience before undertaking a JAS case. If you are interested in the JAS program, please contact us for more information about the program.

3. Important Planning Considerations

The following list of important planning considerations will assist your sponsoring group with decision-making regarding to sponsorship and help to prepare your sponsoring group to welcome and settle sponsored refugees to Canada and your community. A World Renew staff member will review these steps with you before moving forward with a refugee sponsorship application.

- I. Council Approval:** The sponsoring group Council/Board must pass a motion approving refugee sponsorship. It is important that the sponsoring group Board has approved refugee sponsorship as a mission of the congregation. This must be documented in a motion of the sponsoring group Board.

- II. Refugee Sponsorship Committee:** The church must have a Refugee Sponsorship Committee in place, with different members covering various pre- and post-arrival tasks, including, but not limited to, designated representative, treasurer, housing coordinator, transportation coordinator, in-kind donation coordinator, refugee finance coordinator, education coordinator, and English-language training coordinator. See **APPENDIX: “[Guidelines for Forming a Refugee Sponsorship Committee](#).”**

- III. Finance Guidelines:** World Renew’s sponsorship agreement with IRCC provides information on a variety of financial rules for refugee sponsorship by which sponsoring groups must abide. **ONLINE**, you can find a document entitled “[Finance Guidelines](#).” The document provides guidance on a wide variety of topics related to your refugee sponsorship finances, including, but not limited to, managing donations, transferring funds to the sponsored newcomers, working with co-sponsors, and introducing sponsored newcomers to Canada’s tax system.

The guidelines are organized in a question and answer format. Please ensure you read the document carefully. Do not hesitate to contact the Refugee Program with any questions or concerns.

- IV. Safe Church / Vulnerable Persons Policy:** The sponsoring group must have an active Safe Church or Vulnerable Persons Policy (different churches/groups will have different names for this policy). Newcomers to Canada are considered “vulnerable persons,” therefore it is important that members of the Refugee Sponsorship Committee and volunteers who will be regularly interacting with the sponsored individual/family members have completed a thorough screening, including a Vulnerable Sector check by the police. All volunteers must be trained in accordance with the church policy concerned with protecting vulnerable people. Plan to Protect (www.plantoprotect.com/en/training) offers helpful training opportunities, both in person and online, specific to protecting refugees newly arrived to Canada as vulnerable people. Please do not hesitate to contact them for further information and training opportunities.

- V. Raising and Managing Funds:** While World Renew does not require that your sponsoring group raise a specific amount of money before submitting a sponsorship application, you do need to demonstrate to World Renew that you have a plan to raise the necessary funds. For some groups this will mean holding several church offerings. For others this may involve fundraising events.

The sponsoring group and the co-sponsor(s) must work together to develop a budget based on rates specified in the Resettlement Assistance Program. It is expected that financial support under private sponsorship is equivalent to RAP

rates. This means that the sponsoring group and co-sponsor should provide income support at least equivalent to the amount of the RAP rate in the community of settlement in order to fulfill your responsibility as a sponsor.

Please note that for privately sponsored refugees, BVORs, and JAS cases, the sponsoring group and co-sponsor are responsible all start up costs. For a detailed overview of RAP rates for your area, please visit:

www.rstp.ca/en/sponsorship-responsibilities/resettlement-assistance-program-rap-rates. Please ensure to read the 'Start-Up Costs' under the Documents sidebar on the website.

If you are considering the BVOR Program, please note that although it is a cost-shared program, the cost sharing is not typically 50:50 between your group and the government. The sponsoring group has to cover all the start-up costs and there are additional costs in sponsorship that the government does not cover. The ratio is closer to 30:70 or 40:60. Therefore, when using the cost table to get an estimate for a BVOR sponsorship, please consider that the costs for the sponsoring group will include more than just half of the 12 months of Income Support as listed on the cost table. Please pay special attention to the details about in-kind donations, which may be used to lower the start-up costs of the sponsorship.

The sponsoring group budget must have a separate line item for refugee sponsorship funds. It is important that the line item have a name other than the name of the refugee family to be sponsored. For example, the line item could be named 'Refugee Fund.' Where there is a separate Refugee fund, the sponsoring group raises funds and gives charitable tax receipts to those who donate. It is important to note that family members of the refugees cannot contribute financially to the sponsorship and receive an income tax receipt. In addition, refugees cannot contribute financially to their own sponsorship while their case is being processed and before their arrival to Canada. *This is a violation of World Renew's agreement with the government.*

- VI. Confidentiality and Privacy:** It is very important to recognize and respect the privacy of the refugee(s) you are sponsoring. For privacy and safety reasons, the

names and personal circumstances of the refugee(s) should not be shared outside of the Refugee Committee. Please ensure that the refugee(s) names, photos, or personal details are not shared on social media or in the church. Once the refugee(s) arrive in Canada, please consult with them and get their permission to share any of their information or details. Please see **APPENDIX: “[Confidentiality and Privacy](#)”** for more details.

- VII. Transportation Loan:** Most refugees must take out a loan from the Canadian government in order to cover travel costs. The loan is to be repaid by the refugee(s) after their arrival to Canada. Churches/groups often do help with the loan but it is not required that they do so. It is up to the sponsoring group to what extent, if any, they want to assist in repaying the loan. Please see **APPENDIX: “[The Transportation Loan](#)”** for more details.
- VIII. Settlement Planning:** The main role and responsibility of the sponsoring group is to greet the newcomers at the airport, to welcome them to their new home, and to assist them on their journey of settling and integrating into Canada. Please note that the sponsorship period is for one year. This is a very important role and one that requires planning for the many different activities involved with settlement. A copy of [the Settlement Plan](#) can be found in the **APPENDIX**. Completing the Settlement Plan will help sponsoring groups identify and assign the various sponsorship tasks. In addition to the settlement plan, the sponsoring group should develop a sponsorship budget. The settlement plan document is helpful in itemizing the many activities necessary for settlement that will have costs. The RAP rates are a helpful resource in developing the budget.

For assistance developing the settlement plan, please contact your local settlement service agencies to learn of services and resources available for privately sponsored refugees. We also recommend that you inquire about what newcomer populations are already settled in your community, and what populations are currently being settled. Having the support and community of their local ethnic diaspora can really help newcomers feel at home in Canada. For information about settlement services across Canada, please visit:

www.rstp.ca/en/sponsorship-responsibilities/settlement-services

Participating and supporting refugee(s) in their settlement to Canada is a very important role, one that can bring rich blessings to the newcomers as well as to the sponsoring group.

- IX. RSTP Trainings:** World Renew requires that all members of a group's refugee sponsorship committee review the online training webinar, 'Overview of Private Refugee Sponsorship,' offered by the Refugee Sponsorship Training Program (RSTP). Committee members are also encouraged to review other on-line training webinars offered by RSTP www.rstp.ca/en/resources/videos
- X. Interim Federal Health Program:** This program provides health coverage and benefits that all privately sponsored refugees are entitled to upon arrival in Canada. Please note that Basic Coverage is in place until provincial health coverage begins, while Supplemental Coverage is offered for the duration of the formal sponsorship period. Please also note that IFHP dental coverage only provides for emergency care for dental conditions involving pain, infection, or trauma. It does not cover ongoing, regular, or routine dental care. Please see the **APPENDIX** for the "[Interim Federal Health Program Fact Sheet](#)" and "[IFHP Dental Benefits Grid](#)" for more details.
- XI. Code of Ethics:** We encourage your sponsoring group to adapt the "[Code of Ethics for Groups involved in the Private Sponsorship of Refugees](#)," developed by the Canadian Council for Refugees (see **APPENDIX**). The Code of Ethics provides an excellent foundation of guiding principles with which you can plan and carry out a sponsorship.

Application Instructions – Part 1

Introduction: The process for completing a private sponsorship application with World Renew involves two parts. *Part 1* is to complete the Case Narrative Form and to submit identity documents. Please see below for detailed instructions. The second part involves the completion of the application documents. An information document on how to complete the forms is available from World Renew.

Before proceeding with *Part 2: Completing the Application Documents, World Renew must approve the Case Narrative Form and identity documents.* If your case narrative and identity documents have already been approved but you have not received instructions for *Part 2*, please request these instructions from World Renew.

A. The Case Narrative Form

The first step is for the principal applicant (PA) to complete the Case Narrative Form, which has been provided along with these application instructions. If it has not been provided, please request it from World Renew.

The Case Narrative Form must be returned to World Renew in a **Microsoft Word format**, so that we can add comments and questions using Track Changes.

The questions in the Case Narrative Form are drawn from the Schedule 2 / Refugees Outside Canada (IMM 0008) application form (to be completed in *Part 2*). The answers provided assist World Renew in assessing the strength of the refugee narrative and the eligibility of the applicant(s) to be sponsored.

Important Tips for Filling out the Case Narrative Form:

1. If English is not the first language of the refugee(s), we recommend that the principal applicant answer the questions in the case narrative in their first language and then have them translated into English. The translation **does not** have to be done by a certified translator.
2. Please ensure the names of the applicants in the story are spelled the same way as their names on their identity documents. If possible, it is best to use the

spelling of the name on their passport. If the spelling on the passport is not correct, please let us know and we will include a note with the application.

3. When mentioning family members, including children, on the Case Narrative Form, identify them by name. Do not just write “we.”
4. Please ensure that all questions are answered in as much detail as possible. Please note that the text boxes will expand to allow as much space as is needed.
5. Note that any child 22 years of age or older will need to submit their own story and complete application.

B. Identity Documents

Please request scans or pictures of any identity documents the refugee applicants are able to provide, including but not limited to:

- UNHCR document
- Passport (including a copy of a passport stamp of when they entered their country of asylum, if possible)
- Birth certificate
- National Identification
- Baptism record
- Marriage certificate
- Education or occupation degrees or credentials (not essential to have translated; see below)

The applicant must keep all originals of the documents. Please ensure that the documents are of good quality, not cut off, and do not have any obstructions (i.e. fingers holding the documents or background surfaces). If identity documents are not available, do not worry. However, if they are available they should be included with the application.

Translation of Identity Documents: Any of the above listed documentation that is not in English or French needs to be translated by a certified translator. If you are not sure if a document needs to be translated, please consult with World Renew.

Instructions for Translating Identity Documents:

You **must** send the following for any document that is not in English or French, unless otherwise stated on your document checklist:

- the English or French translation; **and**
- an affidavit from the person who completed the translation (see below for details); **and**
- a **certified** copy of the original document.

Translations may be done by a person who is fluent in both languages (English or French and the unofficial language).

If the translation is not done by a member in good standing of a provincial or territorial organization of translators and interpreters in Canada, you must submit an affidavit swearing to the accuracy of the translation and the language proficiency of the translator. A certified translator will provide both a certified translation and certified copies of the original documents.

The affidavit must be sworn in the presence of:

In Canada:

- a notary public
- a commissioner of oaths
- a commissioner of taking affidavits

Authority to certify varies by province and territory. Consult your local provincial or territorial authorities.

Outside of Canada:

- a notary public

Authority to administer oaths varies by country. Consult your local authorities.

IMPORTANT: Translations must not be done by the applicants themselves nor by members of the applicant's family. This includes a parent, guardian, sibling, spouse, common-law partner, conjugal partner, grandparent, child, aunt, uncle, niece, nephew, and first cousin.

NOTE: An affidavit is a document on which the translator has sworn, in the presence of a person authorized to administer oaths in the country where the translator is living, that the contents of their translation are a true translation and representation of the contents of the original document. Translators who are certified in Canada don't need to supply an affidavit.

After World Renew has reviewed the Case Narrative Form and identity documents, we will let you know whether to proceed with filling in the application documents. It is not uncommon to have to work through several revisions of the Case Narrative form before proceeding to the next part of the application process.

If you receive confirmation to proceed, we will send you instructions for *Part 2: Completing the Application Documents*. Please do not complete the application documents until we have indicated that your case is eligible to move forward.

Case Narrative Form – List of Questions

The following is the list of questions that make up the Case Narrative Form. For a fillable version of the form, please contact a World Renew Refugee Program staff member.

1. Please list the names and dates of birth of all family members included in this application.
2. Please describe in as much detail as possible the specific events that led you to flee your home country. You should include any actions taken against you, your family members, or any others in a similar situation.
For each incident, specify the date (month/year) the event(s) occurred.
If the events were generalized, please describe how they affected you personally or what led to you fearing for your safety.
Please indicate whether you sought protection from the authorities of your country and if not, why not.
3. Please describe in chronological order when exactly you and your family members left your home and what route you took.
4. Explain the mode of transportation you took, the types of vehicles or airlines used, flight numbers, the date of travel, how you paid for travel, etc.
5. If you and your family did not leave together, please explain the route each family member took and the reason(s) why you did not travel together.
6. Please indicate whether someone planned your travel or helped you leave or enter a country and how much you paid.
7. Are you able to return to your home country? If not, why?
8. Since arriving in your current country of residence, have you returned to your country of origin, even briefly? If yes, how many times and under what circumstances?
9. Do you maintain a property, a business, or are you currently employed in your country of origin?
10. In the country where you are living now, do you have the right to work, go to school, or move freely? Are you able to avail yourself of these rights?
11. Are you residing in a refugee camp or in an urban area? Please explain.
12. Since arriving in the country where you currently live, how have you supported yourself and (if applicable) your family?

Application Instructions – Part 2

Introduction: The process for completing a private sponsorship application with World Renew involves two parts. *Part 1* is to complete the Case Narrative Form and to submit identity documents. An information document is available from World Renew for *Part 1*. The second part involves the completion of the application documents. Please see below for detailed instructions.

Before proceeding with *Part 2: Completing the Application Documents*, World Renew must approve the Case Narrative Form and the identity documents. **If you have not completed Part 1, please do not complete the application documents.** Please contact World Renew and ask for instructions for *Part 1*.

Part 2: Completing the Application Documents

At this stage in the sponsorship, we send four different forms to be completed:

- Generic Application Form for Canada
- Schedule A: Background/Declaration
- Schedule 2: Refugees Outside Canada
- Use of Representative Form

As part of *Part 1*, the Case Narrative Form is filled out by the principal applicant (PA). The answers from these questions are copied verbatim by World Renew into Part A of the Schedule 2 form. Please have the principal applicant verify that these answers accurately convey their story.

You must download these forms to your computer in order to work on them. If you try to fill out the forms in your internet browser, you will not be able to save your changes. In order to open the files, you need to have [Adobe reader 10](#) or higher installed.

All answers must be typed into the application forms, not handwritten. IRCC will not accept handwritten forms.

It is best if the sponsor and/or the applicant's family members in Canada complete the forms with the applicant on the phone or video call. You can go through each question and enter the data to complete the forms. As you complete the documents, please verify that all information (dates, locations, etc.) is consistent with the Case Narrative Form. When the documents are complete, please email them to the applicant to verify the information is correct. After confirmation from the applicant that the information is correct, please email the application documents to World Renew to review before the

applicant signs and dates the forms. World Renew can then provide feedback and suggest any necessary corrections.

Dependants who are not in the same location as the principal applicant but intend to come to Canada at some point must be listed as “accompanying” on the IMM008 Generic Application Form. All efforts will be made by the visa office to process their sponsorship request simultaneously with the principal applicant’s even if they may not travel to Canada at the same time.

Dependants who are missing or do not intend to come to Canada must be listed as “non-accompanying” on the IMM008 Generic Application Form. The individual(s) will have the opportunity to come to Canada within one year of the principal applicant’s arrival in Canada through the One Year Window program.

It is very important that **ALL** dependant family members are listed on the application. **If they are not listed, they will never be permitted to come to Canada.**

Sponsors are responsible for the settlement any dependant listed on an application, regardless of whether they are marked "accompanying" or "non-accompanying." Even if a dependant listed on the original application as “non-accompanying” arrives many years after the principal applicant through the One Year Window program the sponsor is still responsible for all of their settlement needs for their first year in Canada.

After all the requested corrections are made and each of the forms are approved by World Renew, the applicant(s) overseas must print, sign, and date the signature page (last page) for each of the forms, scan or take a clear photo of them, and email them to the sponsor. The sponsor must then e-mail these signed and dated signature pages to World Renew. **Once the application is finalized, World Renew will submit the application to Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC). Please do not submit the application to IRCC.**

It is very important that the applicants are engaged in the application process. They must know what is included in the documents as they will need to speak to this information during the interview. It is crucial that there are no contradictions between what is said in the interview and what is written in the application documents. If there are any discrepancies, the applicant may be refused on grounds of credibility.

Please read the next two pages carefully as they provide important information about which forms are required of applicants, along with tips for filling out the forms correctly.

You will also find instructions for filling out the Use of Representative form and specifications for photographs that each refugee will need to provide as part of the application package.

The IRCC website contains part-by-part instructions on how to answer each question on the application forms (Part 2: Complete the Application):

<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/information/applications/guides/E16000TOC.asp#EG64>

Helpful tips when completing the forms

Generic Form

Download the form and save it to your hard drive so you can save your changes and work on it over time. Please ensure that you use the drop down menus. The Generic form is to be completed by the Principal Applicant. If there is a spouse and children, they must be listed as dependants. **If a child is age 22 or older, they will need to complete their own application (Generic, Schedule A, Schedule 2, Use of Representative form).**

The Generic Form must be emailed to World Renew as it has been filled out and saved on the computer, not printed and scanned. The reason for this is that once the generic form has been finalized, it must be validated to produce two pages of bar codes that are required to submit with the form.

‘Application Details’:

Q 1. Select ‘Refugee’

Q 2. Select ‘outside Canada’

Q 5. From the drop-down menu, select the province and city where the PA will settle in Canada. This must be where the sponsor is living.

Skip #6

‘Personal Details’:

Q 1. The PA is to write his/her full name. Please ensure the spelling of his/her name is consistent with the Case Narrative, the information on forms, and that it matches their passport and/or other identity document(s). This is very important.

Q2. If the PA has ever used any other spelling of their name other than what appears on their identity document(s), please include the alternate spelling in this section.

Q 10. Under “status,” select ‘protected person’ if the applicant has refugee status as determined by the UNHCR or by the government in the country of asylum. If they have not been recognized as a refugee, please select ‘refugee claimant.’

Please be aware that having a UNHCR registration certificate is not the same as having refugee status.

‘Contact Information’

Make sure contact information is current and includes as much detail as possible. The visa post will contact the applicant using this information.

Q 1. If the applicant does not have a mailing address in their country of asylum, please write “none” under “street name.”

Q 6. The email address listed must be the PA’s own personal email address. It cannot be the email address of a family member in Canada. If the PA is unable to create their own email address, please provide a brief explanation to World Renew and we will include this with the application. **If you are completing more than one application and the applicants live at the same residence, you may use the same email address.**

If relevant, include the spouse and children who are 21 years of age or younger as dependants. Complete all the questions for each dependant.

Please try to give an answer for “intended occupation” for each applicant to demonstrate his or her motivation to contribute to Canadian society. For dependants of schooling age, you can simply write ‘student.’

After World Renew has reviewed and confirmed that the form is ready to be finalized, we will “validate” the form to produce the bar codes.

Schedule A

- The PA and spouse must each complete their own Schedule A. **If a dependant is 18 years of age or older, they must complete their own Schedule A.**
- When answering questions 8 and 12, please ensure that the dates follow in chronological order. For the most recent date, please write ‘PRESENT’ in the “To”

column rather than a month and a year. It is important that there are no gaps in time.

- Please ensure that the dates are consistent between questions 8 and 12.
- Please ensure that all questions are answered. If they do not apply, write NONE in the space.
- After World Renew has reviewed and confirmed that the document is ready to be finalized, please email Schedule A to the applicant(s) to be signed.

Schedule 2

- The PA and spouse must each complete their own Schedule 2. **If a dependant is 18 years of age or older, they must complete their own Schedule 2.**
- **Part A, Questions 1, 2, and 3 have been filled out for the PA,** based on the answers provided on the Case Narrative Form. Please review and ensure that the answers are accurate. For the spouse and any dependants between the age of 18 and 22, they can write ‘same as principal applicant’ for Part A Questions 1, 2, 3 where their answers are the exact same.
- **Q 7b.** Please have the chart filled out to the best of the applicant’s abilities. There is no standard for each of these language proficiency categories.
- **Q 7d.** List any skills and experience the applicant has that will help them to be successful in Canada. Please note that they do not need to have professional experience; they can also list personal qualities to illustrate their adaptability to a new environment (i.e. resourcefulness, initiative, and motivation).
- **Q 8, 9, 10, and 11.** Please ensure that the applicants fill out these sections with as much information as possible. If they do not know the answer, write “unknown.” If an individual is deceased, write N/A in the fields that are no longer applicable to this individual. **Please note that the + and - symbols on the right side of the ‘email address’ field can be used to add or subtract the number of rows in these tables as needed.**
- After World Renew has reviewed and confirmed that the form is ready to be finalized, please email Schedule 2 to the applicant(s) to have the signature page signed.

Use of Representative Form

Although the IRCC website indicates this form is optional, World Renew requests that the applicant(s) sign it. World Renew will be the representative for the sponsorship and will send the form to you with our information filled in for the applicant(s) to sign. World Renew has relationships with the organizations responsible for refugee resettlement, i.e. IRCC, the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR), and the International Organization for Migration (IOM). Because World Renew manages the

application process with these organizations, it is best that World Renew is the representative for the sponsorship. **Please ensure all questions for the visa office and/or other agencies are directed to World Renew and we will follow up on your query.**

To complete the form, please complete Section A and Section D. Please ensure the PA and spouse, if applicable, sign and date the form.

Photographs

Professional photographs of each family member must be provided with each application. These can be scanned and sent digitally to World Renew. Detailed specifications about what is required can be found here: <https://bit.ly/2pP5jFw>

CG Readiness Checklist

After your CG is ready to proceed with a private sponsorship, there are some important preparations to put in place as you move forward with the sponsorship process. Below is a checklist of the items that World Renew will have discussed with you on the phone. We are offering you this checklist as a reference in your preparations and planning for the sponsorship. Please ensure that you implement each of the items. If you have any questions about the checklist, do not hesitate to email rwalker@worldrenew.net or call 1-800-730-3490.

- Refugee Sponsorship Committee is in place. See **APPENDIX: “[Guidelines for Forming a Refugee Sponsorship Committee.](#)”**
- CG has an active Safe Church, Plan to Protect, or equivalent policy.
- The CG’s Safe Church, Plan to Protect, or equivalent policy has been reviewed by the Refugee Committee and the elements related to Refugee sponsorship have been added as required.
- Refugee Committee members and volunteers directly involved with refugees have received Vulnerable Sector screening. These Vulnerable Sector screening documents are kept on file at the church.
- CG’s insurance company has been notified of intention to sponsor refugees.
- CG board has passed a motion approving refugee sponsorship and the motion is documented in church council minutes.
- All Refugee Committee members respect the confidentiality and privacy of the refugee(s) they are sponsoring, i.e. not releasing names, photos, or personal details about the Principal Applicant / family members prior to receiving permission from the refugee(s). (see **APPENDIX: “[Confidentiality and Privacy](#)”**)
- Fundraising plan has been developed and implemented. Please ensure to budget according to RAP Rates. RAP Rates can be found here:
<http://www.rstp.ca/en/sponsorship-responsibilities/resettlement-assistance-program-rap-rates/>

- Refugee Committee has discussed the settlement planning.
- Refugee Committee has researched and consulted with resettlement agencies and services in the local community (ESL, job readiness), and have asked what populations are already settled in the community, and what populations are currently being settled.
- Refugee Committee has discussed housing/ accommodations including the option of temporary and permanent housing.
- Refugee Committee has reviewed the online training webinar, “Overview of Private Refugee Sponsorship” offered by the Refugee Sponsorship Training Program (RSTP). Committee members have been encouraged to review other online training webinars offered by RSTP (<http://www.rstp.ca/en/resources/videos/>).
- Final destination and closest airport have been identified.
- If working with a co-sponsor, the “[Guidelines for CGs Working with Co-Sponsors](#)” document (see **APPENDIX**) has been reviewed, signed, and returned to World Renew within two weeks of receipt of the document from World Renew.

Guidelines for Forming a Refugee Sponsorship Committee⁶

Completing a refugee sponsorship application and resettling a refugee family requires a significant time commitment. To effectively manage this commitment, World Renew requires its sponsoring groups to organize a refugee sponsorship committee to oversee the different areas of the refugee sponsorship effort. We recommend that your main committee be made up of **a minimum of five members**. A well-staffed committee will usually have the following positions:

- Sponsorship Group Chair
- Treasurer / Finance Coordinator
- Team Leaders (of various subcommittees described below)

Various sub-committees can be set up to focus on specific areas of the sponsorship and resettlement (i.e. housing, transportation, education, fundraising, etc.).

In the early stages of committee formation, the members will discern together who is responsible for each task. Each committee member must be readily available to support the sponsorship effort for the full duration of the refugee sponsorship process.

Each subcommittee should also assign a team leader and several volunteers.

Below is a list of potential committee positions and sample tasks associated with each position.

Sponsorship Group Chair

- Oversee completion of (and act as signatory) for the initial sponsorship undertaking paperwork.
- Assist co-sponsors with completion of refugee applicants' paperwork, where applicable.
- Act as the main point of contact in communication with World Renew.
- Act as committee chairperson ensuring sponsorship goals and obligations are being met.
- Arrange for local training of sponsorship group as it relates to cross-cultural

⁶ Adapted from the SAH Association Guidebook www.sahassociation.com/guidebook

awareness, managing expectations, conflict resolution, code of ethics (see [APPENDIX](#)), working with vulnerable persons, etc.

- Draft a welcome letter with a picture of the sponsoring group members, map of location in Canada, and a brief description of the area and climate to send to the refugee(s) as an initial way of introduction. This is especially important for BVOR and JAS sponsorships.
- Ensure that someone is at the airport to meet the refugee(s) and take them to their new home.
- Provide immediate orientation after arrival. The refugee(s) may have little knowledge of where they are, who has sponsored them, what tomorrow will hold, and how to ask for help or express concerns.

Treasurer / Finance Coordinator

- Help with budget planning, setting up funds, managing disbursements to the refugee(s), and keeping track of donations
- Apply immediately for the Canada Child Benefit (CCB)
- Assist the refugee(s) in opening a bank account
- Help the refugee(s) with budgeting and understanding bill payments, rent and utilities, taxes, currency in Canada, etc.
- Explain the cost of long distance phone calls, using cellphones, phone cards, free VoIP options like Skype, Google talk, etc. NOTE: You need to clarify that vendors in shopping malls *do not* have their best interests at heart, and they should not assume “free phone” means they will not have pay for it through a monthly telephone bill.

Housing and Maintenance

- Secure temporary (if necessary) and permanent accommodations. Help with any repairs that may initially need to be performed, and assist with utility hookups.
- Review basic housing issues, including security/locks, maintenance requirements, appliances, garbage and recycling, sanitation, and the mailbox.
- Make sure the refugee(s) knows who to contact if they have a maintenance request.
- Review tenant rights and obligations with refugee(s).

Transportation

- Assist new arrivals with transportation needs: public transit, driver licenses, understanding Canadian taxi service, etc. For information on funds to help sponsored refugees get to their place of final destination, see **APPENDIX: “[The Transportation Loan](#).”**
- Provide bikes (if the refugee(s) would like to use them), along with helmets and locks and explain the rules of the road.
- Provide the refugee(s) with maps of their new neighbourhood, city, and country.

Furnishings and Clothing

- Arrange winter clothing for the refugee(s) upon arrival at the airport if the weather is cool.
- Bring car seats if needed.
- Prepare the new home so it is move-in ready. Stock the kitchen pantry with culturally appropriate staples, and furnish closets with clothing that is sensitive to both culture and seasonal weather.
- Arrange for furniture and other daily living necessities (kitchenware, toiletries etc.) before the arrival of the refugee(s).

Education

- Enroll refugee(s) in basic English language training. Acquisition of English language skills should have priority over job searching.
- Contact schools and the school social worker (if applicable). Enroll children in a local school and ensure that they receive the necessary academic assessments.
- Contact local library for extra academic support.
- Provide school supplies and school orientation. Explain to parents that they must contact the school if a child is absent.

Housekeeping and Social Needs

- Review basics needs such as what goes in the toilet and what goes in the diaper

pail, keeping the shower curtain inside the tub during showers to prevent spills, how to use a vacuum cleaner and when/how to change the bag, etc. Explain the “why” to ensure complete understanding.

- Review home maintenance tasks such as how to use a plunger and change a light bulb, as well as any other things that might not be familiar.
- Help refugee(s) to find others in the community who are part of their cultural group.
- Find the library, playground, and recreation center and offer a neighbourhood orientation.
- Invite the refugee(s) to social gatherings and take them to a soccer game or other sporting event.

Health

- Apply immediately for provincial health coverage and cards.
- Apply immediately for Interim Federal Health Program (IFHP) coverage.
- Ensure all vaccinations are complete.
- Assist in finding a family doctor, dentist, counselor, and any other professional needed for both physical and mental well-being.
- Explain the 911 emergency service, as well as the role of police in Canada.

Employment

- Apply immediately for social insurance numbers (SINs).
- Contact the local settlement agency for job readiness courses.
- Help those who are ready for employment to understand the job search process, interview process.
- Explain western attitudes about being on time and keeping appointments.
- Ensure that refugee(s) understand employee rights.

Fundraising and Community Support Liaisons

- Help raise awareness, seek out community donations, and organize fundraisers to support the sponsorship effort.

Communication and Interpretation

- Locate interpreters who speak both fluent English and the refugees' main language(s) and arrange for interpretive services.
- Help the other team members to maintain a commitment to not using the refugees' children as interpreters.
- Take pictures of team leaders and create an album with names to help the refugee(s) get to know their sponsors.
- Create a phone reference card with a list of numbers they may need.
- Print helpful picture prompts for both the other teams and the refugee(s) to keep as communication tools. Place the pictures in secure key rings or small books.

Tips for Creating Multi-Church Partnerships

- **Assign one person to be the Chair of the sponsorship committee.** This person should be the main contact for all correspondence with World Renew.
- **Check out the “[Guidelines for Forming a Refugee Sponsorship Committee](#)” document (see APPENDIX).** It is a good starting point for understanding the various volunteer roles that can be shared with the partnering churches.
- **Assign one point-person in each church to be responsible for communicating news about the sponsorship to their respective church.** Use the “[Tips for Keeping your Sponsoring Community Informed](#)” document (see APPENDIX) as a guide for what information is appropriate to share with your church community and how.
- **Decide how and when the partnering churches will communicate with each other.** Ensuring open communication is critical for building trust and partnership. Share news, challenges, questions, and successes as they arise and as they are helpful. All churches will want to feel part of the process and successful settlement.
- **Clearly outline all tasks involved in the refugee settlement process.** During the process of seeking to form a partnership between multiple groups, review “[The Settlement Plan](#)” (see APPENDIX for a sample) to establish responsibilities.
- **Do not create volunteer teams that are too large or numerous.** Since multiple churches are involved, you may want to replicate all the sponsorship activity sub-groups (i.e. housing, transportation, translation) needed for the refugee settlement process *in each church*. This may not be necessary – *more* is not always better. Be mindful of how many different volunteers are working directly with the newcomers to minimize confusion and not overwhelm them.

- **Establish clear expectations around what percentage of the financial contributions each church will make.** This will also help each church set and meet its own fundraising goals. It is not necessary for each church to contribute the same amount, but the amount should be agreed upon and clear.
- **Utilize the same volunteers for repeating tasks that involve face-to-face interactions and accompaniment of the newcomers** (such as giving rides to a doctor's appointment). Consistency will help build trust between the sponsoring group and the sponsored refugee(s).
- **Celebrate your accomplishments together.** Successfully completing a refugee sponsorship is no small task, and it is certainly a reason to celebrate! We encourage your churches to celebrate all you have achieved together. Meet in one of the partnering churches to hear what was most rewarding, what lessons were learned, and what you appreciated most from each other in this partnership. *This is a time of gratitude and prayer.*

The Transportation Loan⁷

What is it?

The Transportation Loan is a loan issued to privately sponsored refugees to cover their cost of transport to their place of final destination in Canada.

Who Repays the Loan?

It is the responsibility of the loan recipient to repay the loan in full by consecutive monthly instalments and in accordance with the repayment schedule. Sponsors may choose to assist with the repayment of the loan, at their discretion, but are under no obligation to do so.

How to Repay the Loan?

The loan recipient will receive a letter from IRCC with an account number and instructions on how to pay. Repayment begins one year after arrival in Canada. There is no interest on these loans.

IRCC establishes a monthly payment plan automatically. However, the entire amount can be paid at any time. Details can be found in the chart below.

Amount of Loan	Repayment Period
0 - \$1,200	Within 36 months of issuance
\$1,200.01 - \$2,400	Within 48 months of issuance
\$2,400.01 – \$3,600	Within 60 months of issuance
\$3,600.01 - \$4,800	Within 72 months of issuance
For loans over \$4,800	Within 96 months of issuance

IRCC Travel Loans Contact:

Monday to Friday, 8:00 am to 4:00 pm
1-800-667-7301 | Please have your loan documents available when you call.
collection@cic.gc.ca

⁷ Adapted from: <http://www.auraforrefugees.org/index.php/toolbox/aura-info-sheets/immigration-loans>

Confidentiality and Privacy⁸

Refugees and newcomers have the right to confidentiality and privacy. Consider how you would like people to treat you and your family and strive to do the same.

Guidelines

- Do not forward the person's names, address, or telephone number to any person or organization outside of the sponsoring group without their specific permission.
- Do not publish photos, names, or identifying information anywhere (social media, church/town newsletter, etc.) without their specific permission.
- Continuously reflect on the power differentials that exist between the sponsoring group and the newcomers. Ensure they understand they can say 'no' to your requests or invitations without repercussions.
- Avoid sharing unnecessary private information about the refugees/newcomers within the sponsoring group. Only discuss matters with people directly involved with that aspect of settlement support.
- If people wish to contact the refugees, ask the person for their contact information and pass it on to the newcomer(s).
- Do not expect settlement agencies and other organizations to keep you completely informed on their work with newcomer(s). Workers are bound by privacy legislation.
- Do not discuss refugees' private issues with anyone unless you have their permission. This includes discussions with other members of the sponsoring group as well as settlement organizations.
- With the heightened media attention on refugee settlement, it is important to act as a mediator and support the best interests of refugees when responding to media interest.

Visits with Sponsored Newcomers

- As a best practice, please apply your church's guidelines to working with vulnerable persons (i.e. Safe Church Policy) to any visits with sponsored refugee(s).

⁸ Adapted from http://auraforrefugees.org/docs/aurainfosheet_privacy.pdf

- Be especially mindful of respecting the refugees' home. Even if they are staying temporarily in a group member's house, or the sponsors are paying the rent, remember it is their space/home, not yours.
- Be mindful of not excluding refugees and newcomers from conversations when they are present, especially conversations about them.
- Call ahead of time to make an appointment before visiting their home. This shows them that it is common practice to call before a visit as well as respecting their privacy.
- When visiting single women, special precautions must be taken. Many women who are refugees have experienced abuse or sexual exploitation and may not trust men. Male volunteers should not visit women alone, especially in their own home.

Code of Ethics for Groups Involved in the Private Sponsorship of Refugees⁹

Preamble

- [Our organization] sponsors refugees because [fill in what motivates your organization: Is it a religious call to help others or seek justice? Or does your community feel an obligation to respond to the needs of others?]
- All refugees have a right to protection and a durable solution. Through sponsorship, we contribute to some refugees securing these rights in Canada, in addition to those refugees resettled by the government.
- Consistent with the purpose of sponsorship, which is to fulfill refugees' rights, we commit to respect and promote the dignity and human rights of refugees, particularly those we sponsor.
- Although we can only sponsor a small number of refugees in need of resettlement, we will respect the principle of non-discrimination in selecting whom we sponsor.
- Recognizing that there is an inherent power imbalance in the relationship between sponsors and sponsored persons, we commit to act in ways that minimize the risk of oppression in the relationship.
- We will seek to promote gender equity, mindful of the need for sensitivity in the cross-cultural setting and in the context of the unequal relationship between sponsors and those sponsored.
- We commit to respect our obligations, including our legal obligations, to protect the rights of sponsored children and other sponsored persons with particular vulnerabilities.

Principles

We commit to respecting the following ethical principles in our sponsorship work:

1. **Right to self-determination.** We will respect and support the right of those sponsored to make their own decisions about their lives.

⁹ Used from the Canadian Council for Refugees (CCR) resource: <http://ccrweb.ca/en/code-ethics-groups-involved-private-sponsorship-refugees> .

[Select, amend, or add sub-points as appropriate to your group:]

- We will inform those sponsored of their right to make their own decisions.
- We will provide those sponsored with relevant information so that they can make informed choices.
- We will support those sponsored in managing their own budgets.
- We will support those sponsored in progressively gaining confidence in making their own decisions as they familiarize themselves with Canadian society.
- We will refrain from making judgments about choices made by the persons we sponsor.
- We will respect the choices of those sponsored about how they wish to be described (including whether they wish to be identified as “refugees”).
- We will respect the right of those sponsored to make decisions regarding questions of faith and religious affiliation.

2. **Right to privacy.** We will respect the right of those sponsored to privacy.

[Select, amend, or add sub-points as appropriate to your group:]

- We will inform those sponsored of their right to privacy.
- We will share personal information as needed, but no further.
- We will consult sponsored persons before publishing information about them.
- We will require sponsors to sign an undertaking to respect our organization’s policy on privacy requirements.
- We will require interpreters to sign a confidentiality agreement, and we will inform those sponsored of the interpreters’ role and duty to respect privacy.
- We will safeguard documentation containing personal information.
- We will respect the privacy of sponsored persons’ homes.
- We will take special care to protect the right to privacy of sponsored children in the school setting.

3. **Competence.** We will respect our duty to act competently.

[Select, amend, or add sub-points as appropriate to your group:]

- We will acquire appropriate cultural and diversity understanding.
- We will screen, train, and supervise volunteers.

- We will assess potential sponsors/constituent groups according to criteria established by our organization.
- We will provide sponsored persons with accurate information on their rights, services available to them, etc.
- We will recognize our own limits and make appropriate referrals.
- We will accept a duty of care to ensure that the basic needs of sponsored persons are met, including mentoring on financial management when appropriate.

4. **Transparency.** We will be transparent in our services towards those seeking sponsorship, those sponsored, and the public.

[Select, amend, or add sub-points as appropriate to your group:]

- We will provide clear and transparent information about how we make decisions on who to sponsor.
- We will provide sponsored persons with detailed information about all matters that concern them.
- We will address complaints through an established complaints mechanism involving a third party.
- We will inform those sponsored of our complaints mechanism.
- We will strive to be open and to make sure information and expectations are clear.

5. **Equity.** We will strive to make our relationships as equitable as possible by being aware of power dynamics and guarding against risks of abuse of power

[Select, amend, or add sub-points as appropriate to your group:]

- We will select refugees for sponsorship based on equitable principles.
- We will carry no expectations of those we sponsor other than those essential for the functioning of the sponsorship.
- We will inform the sponsored persons of expectations and note they are not required to do more (keeping in mind that some sponsored persons may perceive pressure even then that was not the intent).
- We will avoid assumptions based on gender, sexual orientation, age, ability, religion, culture, ethnicity, or nationality.
- We will establish appropriate boundaries in personal relationships.

- We will work to develop trust in relationships.

6. **Financial integrity.** We will maintain integrity in financial and business relationships and avoid actual or perceived conflicts of interest.

[Select, amend, or add sub-points as appropriate to your group:]

- We will not accept gifts that are more than token.
- We will develop and follow a protocol for sharing financial information.
- We will declare potential conflicts of interest to each other and seek solutions to minimize the risk (e.g. involving a third party if a sponsor offers to hire a sponsored person).
- We will require sponsors to sign an undertaking to respect our organization's policy on conflicts of interest.
- We will strive to ensure that sponsored persons do not feel that they are receiving charity from, or are beholden to, individuals.

7. **Concluding a sponsorship.** We will work to ensure a satisfactory conclusion to the sponsorship for all concerned.

[Select, amend, or add sub-points as appropriate to your group:]

- We will prepare sponsored persons for the end of the sponsorship and attempt to address any anxieties in advance.
- We will ensure that sponsored persons are aware of their rights and entitlements, including their entitlement to government benefits and services.
- We will acknowledge the end of a sponsorship and recognize those who contributed to it.
- We will have a clear process for deciding how to re-direct funds remaining at the end of a sponsorship.

Tips for Keeping Your Sponsoring Community Informed

Refugee Sponsorship is a significant undertaking and is most effective when it is supported by the efforts of a community. While not all members of your sponsoring group (i.e. church, mosque, or synagogue congregation) will be able to be directly involved in the settlement and day-to-day support of the newcomers, it is important to maintain open lines of communication with congregation members, many of whom will have generously donated funds or in-kind donations to the sponsorship. Maintaining open lines of communication helps to build support for the sponsorship effort and counters possible conflict or misunderstandings.

Keep Your Sponsoring Group Informed and Engaged

Below are suggestions for keeping your group informed and engaged.

1. **Communicate regularly.** You can do this verbally at the end of a church service or during a community gathering. Or you can do this in print form in an e-newsletter. Be creative and don't wait for people to start asking: "How are things going with the refugees we are sponsoring?" Be proactive.
2. **Designate a committee spokesperson.** It is important to know who is responsible for reporting to the larger group and agree upon how often updates will happen. Without role clarity, communication can be dropped.
3. **Ask for help.** Although you have a refugee sponsorship committee, you can still make special requests for assistance with a specific task or need outside your committee. Don't feel you need to do it all—invite others in from time to time.
4. **Affirm any and all assistance.** A simple "thank you" goes a long way. Whether someone gives money, time, furniture, or something else, all efforts need to be affirmed and named.

Communicate With Your Sponsoring Group If It Doesn't Work Out

Things don't always work out the way we plan. Situations change and the unexpected happens. Regardless of what happens, keep your church informed. Below are a few suggestions:

1. **Less is more.** When you are working through tough times, it may not be helpful or appropriate to share all the details with your church. This is why there is a refugee sponsorship committee! However, it is important to keep communication open to minimize speculation and gossip.
2. **Be honest.** You should never feel the need to lie or mislead. *The entire church body* has committed to the journey, not only you. Tell the truth about what is happening and use your discretion about how much, how often, and with whom information is shared.

Plan for and Meet Opposition to Sponsorship¹⁰

Not everyone will be equally excited about sponsoring refugees. Whether due to differing political ideologies, understanding of fiscal responsibilities, or personal experience, sponsoring refugees can evoke varying emotions and responses. Below are a few suggestions:

1. **Be genuinely curious.** When we don't want to learn, understand, or see the viewpoint of another, we won't. Enter dialogue with an open mind and real desire to understand the viewpoints of others. Even more, enter conversations hoping for clarity and information that may challenge your ideas in a healthy way and encourage positive personal growth.
2. **Don't focus on "winning."** When we enter to win, the dialogue can quickly become polarized and move us to take sides. Open and honest dialogue is not about winning a fight: it is about hearing each other, respecting one another's viewpoints, and believing we can both move to a better place as a result of this interaction.

¹⁰ Adapted from the Do Justice blog "9 Tips for Entering and Sticking with Tough Dialogue"
<http://dojustice.crcna.org/article/crclistens-9-tips-entering-sticking-tough-dialogue>

3. **Talk less, listen more.** When we are passionate, especially when the person we are talking to is not as passionate as we might be, we can get excited and tend to talk faster and fill more of the time. This is normal. However, this can shut down the person we are with or make them defensive. Watch how much you talk and know you will learn more by listening. It often takes courage to share our passions. Work hard to invite people in; help them feel safe; ensure they know you are genuinely curious about their viewpoints. In other words, be quiet.
4. **Be gentle.** Talking about issues that we care about deeply is not easy. Keep in mind that each discussion is just a small piece of broader sharing that needs to happen; remember that sometimes it's okay to just scratch the surface; know that if the dialogue was respectful, seeds have been planted and there will be other opportunities to further our learning journeys.

Airport Arrival Guidelines¹¹

Keep in mind that the newcomers did not leave their home country by choice.

Remember that their feelings may differ from yours and may be a mix of relief at arriving in Canada, but also sadness at leaving their family behind. Meeting too many people at the airport might be overwhelming for the newcomer(s), especially after the long trip they just made. Therefore, it is recommended that a smaller group greet newcomers at the airport. Although the sponsoring group might feel like celebrating, the newcomers probably need rest and calm.

- After newcomers arrive at the airport, it might take some time for them to go through customs (so be patient while waiting). If you are picking the newcomers up at their port of entry into Canada, it will take them about an hour to go through various immigration procedures with Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA). Wait at the passenger pick-up area until the refugees arrive with a reception services representative.
- **Remember to find an interpreter** to attend the airport arrival if language might be a challenge. Newcomers may be overwhelmed by the long trip to Canada, and it can be even more overwhelming if they do not understand the language. An interpreter may ease some of this discomfort.
- **The newcomer(s) may not be aware of your role as a sponsoring group** when they arrive (depending on how much information they have received before departure). Therefore, as a sponsoring group, you should include in your introductions at the airport that you will support them through their settlement in Canada and emphasize that you will be around to help them out when needed. This will help newcomers learn the faces of those who will be able to assist them in the first year. Repeat this information at a later date (i.e. when talking about expectations of the newcomer(s) (see **APPENDIX: “Managing Expectations”**)) as the airport arrival can be overwhelming and it might be difficult to take in all the information.

¹¹ Adapted from AURA for Refugees. www.auraforrefugees.org/index.php/toolbox/aura-info-sheets/airport-arrival

- As a sponsoring group, you will probably want to take pictures with the newcomers when they arrive at the airport. Keep in mind that they may be overwhelmed and tired after a long trip. **If you decide to take pictures, ask the newcomers if it is okay** and only take a few to make the process quick.
- **During the first day, check the Confirmation of Permanent Residence Forms to ensure that all information (i.e. names, genders, dates of birth) is correct.** Contact your World Renew representative if you have any concerns.
- **Upon arrival in Canada, refugee(s) are often asked to provide a mailing address in Canada** to which the Permanent Resident (PR) card will be sent. If this is the case, their PR cards should arrive in a few weeks at their new address (check status here: www.IRCC.gc.ca/english/my_application/status.asp?s=7).
- Newcomers who are not able to provide an address at the airport will be given an IMM-5456 (Address Notification—Permanent Resident Card). The sponsoring group can assist them in completing this form and fax it back to the PR Card Processing Centre at 1-902-564-7317. *To avoid a \$50 processing fee, the refugee's permanent address in Canada must be provided to IRCC within 180 days after entering Canada.*

Managing Expectations¹²

Expectations are perfectly normal. However, problems can arise when expectations about refugee sponsorship are not acknowledged, are unrealistic, or when those who hold them fail to adjust them accordingly.

Newcomers may have expectations about life in Canada – the ‘Canadian Dream’, employment, sending money home, bringing other family members to Canada, and learning English – to name just a few.

Sponsors may have expectations about how the sponsorship should be carried out, what the end results will be, their relationship/friendship with newcomers, and how newcomers will feel towards them. These are just a few examples.

It is the refugee sponsorship group’s responsibility to create a respectful environment that allows for the discussion and acknowledgment of expectations, as well as to manage both group and newcomer expectations and proactively work through differences.

Important Considerations

- How a sponsorship proceeds depends greatly on the individuals involved. No two sponsorships are the same and things do not always go as planned.
- Be mindful not to make assumptions. This is not easy!
- Remember that refugees were forced to flee their home country. Most leave behind family and friends. For this reason, arrival in Canada is often bittersweet and gratitude and happiness may not be demonstrated as sponsors might expect.
- Some refugees do not understand how private sponsorship works.
- A newcomer’s problems are not instantly solved upon arriving in Canada. While certain needs may be met, a new set of challenges arises.
- Explain freedom of religion. You can invite the newcomers to talk about their religion, but it should not be forced and sharing should be left up to them.
- Be mindful when inviting newcomers to religious spaces and events. Take their feelings into consideration.

¹² Adapted from http://auraforrefugees.org/docs/aurainfosheet_expectations.pdf

Conversations with Refugees

Clear, honest, and frequent communication is the key to creating an environment of realistic expectations. It is necessary to discuss expectations and responsibilities with the refugees soon after arrival so that everyone involved has the same understanding of who is responsible for what.

Prioritize information according to the refugees needs. Here are a few items to explain and discuss (this list is not exhaustive):

- Role of the sponsor group (availability, limits)
- Sponsor group members, i.e. how and why group was formed
- Finances and budgeting (see **APPENDIX: “[Tips for Promoting Financial Independence](#)”**)
- Housing: plans for temporary/permanent housing, furnishing, etc.
- Schooling: LINC/ESL, future education plans, additional support
- Employment: explain the sponsorship as a job and that their job is to learn English and they are being supported to do that job. No employment should come at the expense of English language learning.
- Canadian laws and customs, life in the new city/town, connections to resources
- What to do in case of emergency
- Phone and internet
- How to recycle
- Medical and dental needs, IFHP/provincial health plan (see **APPENDIX “[IFHP Dental Benefit Grid](#)”**)
- Rights and responsibilities of Permanent Residents
- When the sponsorship will end, financial self-reliance, and continued friendship
- Any questions and concerns newcomers may have
- Privacy, confidentiality, and open communication (see **APPENDIX: “[Confidentiality and Privacy](#)”**).

Power Imbalance

A power imbalance exists between the sponsoring group and the newcomer(s). Although it is normal, this imbalance can create a sense of obligation that can lead to

negative consequences, resentment, and conflict throughout the sponsorship. Strive to minimize the power difference by:

- Asking questions
- Carefully listening to answers
- Explaining things clearly, often in more than one way, and checking for understanding (not just “yes”)
- Making sure newcomers understand they have the right to make their own decisions
- If you are asking for consent to use names or photos in any communications pieces related to the sponsorship, please ensure that the sponsored refugee(s) you are working with are fully informed and understand what they are consenting to.

Tips for Walking Alongside Sponsored Refugees

Below is a collection of refugee sponsorship good practices gathered from the collective wisdom of the many churches and groups that have sponsored refugees with World Renew over the years. Please use and share them, as is helpful.

1. **Stay humble.** We are all on a learning journey and our worst enemy is thinking we have it all figured out. Ask many questions, share information with each other, and invite in wisdom from others.
2. **Listen deeply.** As you journey with refugees, listen carefully to them. Ask questions, remember that you don't know as much as you think you do, and seek out learning opportunities.
3. **When in doubt, ask.** There is no shame in asking. Please connect with World Renew's Refugee Program staff if you have questions. They are happy to answer any questions you may have and can also connect you with churches and groups who have sponsored refugees in the past, so you can learn from their experiences.
4. **Ensure autonomy.** Refugees are in need, but they want to make decisions for themselves, just as you and I do. Whenever possible, check with the refugees themselves when a decision needs to be made that may impact their lives or future choices.
5. **Invite others in.** Everyone is at a different place in their sponsorship journey. Invite others in to learn from each other and share in the joys and challenges.
6. **Walk alongside.** You are starting a journey that will be a blessing for all involved. It will be in the walking *alongside*, rather than the *leading in front*, that the greatest gifts will be received.
7. **Pray fervently.** Bring all you do to God, for it is through and with Him that great things will be achieved. For some ideas, please see **APPENDIX: "[Devotions](#)," "[Scripture](#)," and "[Prayers](#)."**

First Weeks Checklist¹³

The following checklist, while not exhaustive, gives a broad overview of orientation tasks that your group should aim to complete within a month of when the refugee(s) arrive to Canada. We recommend that you review this list while you are putting together your Settlement Plan and again when your group receives the Notification of Arrival Transmission (NAT).

Immediate

- Ensure that the following documentation was received at airport:
 - Confirmation of PR (paper document)
 - Interim Federal Health Program (paper document)
 - Social Insurance Number (paper document - depends on arrival time and ability to provide final destination address in Canada)
 - Travel document/passport
- Provide food staples/pre-made meals
- Provide a phone card with instructions to allow contact with family and friends
- Provide emergency contact names and numbers.

Within First Week

- Discuss the private sponsorship program and the role of the sponsoring group
- Discuss rights and responsibilities of sponsored refugees (see RSTP resource for more information: <http://bit.ly/2pumon8>)
- Apply for provincial health coverage and card
- Arrange for internet to be set up
- Provide access to cell phone or landline and explain phone plan
- Apply for a Social Insurance Number (SIN) at a local Service Canada location
- Make photocopies of arrival documents and other important documents
- Provide basic orientation to life in Canada:
 - Using local public transit
 - Using of 911 and role of police in Canada - see <http://bit.ly/2pugjXW> for examples of what information to share

¹³ Adapted from the “Refugee Sponsorship Training Program” <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B3BgZ5H0aUw-NXR2cnVCeE43bGRUU2FhSHRHnkldmEzVGZz/view>

- Shopping for groceries
- Navigating around the neighbourhood (See **APPENDIX: “[Neighbourhood Orientation](#)”**).

Finances

- Open a bank account
- Review how funds will be transferred to the newcomer
- Assist the newcomer in setting up an itemized budget
- Apply for a provincial photo ID card
- Apply for Canada Child Benefit (if applicable): <http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/cctb/>.

Health

- Find a family doctor
- Find a local dentist. Note that routine dental care is not covered by IFHP. In some provinces there may be full dental coverage for children. You may be able to access subsidized dentistry through Canadian Dentists for Refugees. For more information, visit <http://canadiandentistsforrefugees.net/patients> (see **APPENDIX** for the “[IFHP Dental Benefit Grid](#)”)
- Complete vaccinations for children and adults
- Find out about counselling and mental health services in the community, if needed.

Education

- Explore public education options for children, if applicable
- Contact school board to schedule an appointment for assessment
- Visit the local public library for academic support
- Schedule a meeting with a School Settlement Worker at the local school with the child and parent, if applicable
- Review the guide to elementary/secondary education for newcomers, if applicable
- Liaise with School Social Worker to obtain school supplies and subsidies, if needed

Language

- Schedule an appointment at the local Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) assessment centre (more info: <http://bit.ly/2ptHDFN>)
- Sign up for a LINC/ESL course
- Look into English conversation circles.

Daily Life

- Visit the local public library and ask about programs for newcomers
- Find out where to shop
- Discuss what to do in case of an emergency
- Explore computer class options, if needed
- Talk about the effects of culture shock, differences in Canadian culture/customs and those of the country of origin, as well as dreams and wishes for their future in Canada

Housing

- Find a permanent place to live (prepare letters of support, if needed)
- Learn about rights and obligations as a tenant
- Purchase tenant insurance

Recreation

- Find the closest community centre and/or recreation centre
- Find out about available recreational subsidies
- Enroll children in swimming classes
- Show Canada's nature, beauty, and outdoors activities

Tips for Promoting Financial Independence¹⁴

One of your primary goals as a sponsor should be the eventual achievement of independence for the refugees you have welcomed to Canada. While this may not happen during the formal sponsorship period, a sponsoring group can do much to assist the newcomer in becoming sufficient. Ensuring that they have a basic understanding of the financial realities of life in Canada, as well as knowledge of how to budget based on the sponsorship funds that are provided to them, will go a long way towards achieving this goal.

To help respect and promote independence, we encourage sponsors to allow newcomers to make their own money management decisions wherever possible. Help them get oriented and accustomed to aspects of finances and money management that might differ from their country of origin or asylum. We recommend that you bring in a professional interpreter for any conversations on finance or money management to ensure mutual respect and understanding.

Early Weeks

It is important to establish expectations around finances early in the sponsorship. Keep in mind that the concept of refugee sponsorship may not be fully understood by the newcomers you have welcomed. Early discussions about finances should include the following:

- How often funds will be deposited in the refugees' bank account
- An overview of the budget that gives a breakdown of how the funds are intended to be used
- A broader discussion of the roles and responsibilities of the sponsor (this should reinforce the idea that the sponsoring group is providing not only financial support but also emotional and day-to-day support as needed).

Some multicultural organizations and settlement agencies offer financial planning and counselling in specific languages. Although you will provide orientation in this area, it is helpful for newcomers to have someone from their own culture – who understands the

¹⁴ Adapted from AURA for Refugees, "The Budget Talk." www.auraforrefugees.org/index.php/toolbox/aura-info-sheets/the-budget-talk

differing cultural perceptions around handling money – provide the bridge into the Canadian way of approaching money matters.

Budget

When developing a budget together with the newcomer(s) it is important to create a clear understanding about their financial situation. In budgeting conversations, please respect the dignity of the newcomer(s). Remember that they have experience managing their own finances in stressful situations. Things to consider in your conversations include:

- Make it clear how, and from whom, they will receive money, as well as the expected cost of expenses. Make sure to include, where applicable, [Resettlement Assistance Program \(RAP\) amounts](#) and [Canada Child Benefit \(CCB\)](#) payments in addition to the baseline budget amounts provided in the Sponsorship Cost Table.
- Creating a chart of the budget with income and expenses might be a useful visual aid.
- Discuss how to pay bills and the importance of paying them on time. It is wise to help with this (at least in the beginning of the sponsorship) until it becomes a routine and your support is unnecessary.
- Discuss public transportation and different options for payment, i.e. a monthly pass, tokens, children's tickets, a weekend family pass, etc.
- Discuss costs related to phones and internet (if applicable) such as long-distance calls, texting, calling abroad, using phone cards, calling online, etc.
- Research affordable phone plans, internet plans, and the cost of phone cards before the newcomer(s) arrive in Canada. Preparing in advance will allow you to discuss alternatives together and decide on the best option. Note: Please remember that the post-paid cellphone system common in Canada is uncommon in other countries and can cause a lot of confusion and frustration with newcomer(s).

Banking

After the newcomers arrive, you will need to go with them to a bank to set up a bank account and get a bank card.

- Do research ahead of time to find a bank with the most benefits and least costs.
- You can confirm with the bank beforehand on what documents are needed to set up a bank account.
- Make sure to teach the newcomer(s) about specific Canadian banking matters, i.e. the cost of withdrawing money from an ATM other than their bank, the cost of paying in a store with the debit card, bank fees, etc.
- Some newcomer(s) will not have ever used cheques, direct deposit, or automatic withdrawals. It is important to explain how these work and, in the case of automatic withdrawals, involve the newcomer(s) in any decisions made to set these up.

Canada Child Benefit

The Canada Child Benefit (CCB) is a monthly tax-free payment for families with children under the age of 18. Visit the Government of Canada website for details on applying: <https://bit.ly/2uDk6aT>

Given that the processing time for the CCB can be several months, we encourage you to assist the sponsored family with an application as soon as possible after arrival.

Warning about Fraud

Be sure to caution newcomers about consumer deals that seem “too good to be true,” especially when it comes to purchasing vehicles, obtaining insurance, and door to door alternative utilities salespersons. Canadian Immigrant has a great article that details the top newcomer scamming threats to be aware of:

canadianimmigrant.ca/slider/beware-of-top-scams-of-the-year-newcomers-vulnerable.

Neighbourhood Orientation¹⁵

During the first days after the arrival, the sponsoring group should give the refugee(s) an orientation to their new neighbourhood to make them feel more comfortable with their surroundings. An orientation can include, but is not limited to, the following:

Food and Shopping

It is good to show the refugee(s) where they can go grocery shopping while keeping their budget in mind. Bulk stores and local produce stores may be much cheaper than the big-chain grocery stores. Ask the newcomers about their preferences and needs when it comes to food, whether it be halal or certain ethnic food items. Helping the refugees stock foods that are familiar can go a long way towards easing the stress around all the new things they face in the settlement process. There might be food items that can only be found in certain stores. Little by little you can also introduce them to Canadian food items either from the grocery store or by preparing a meal for or with them.

Remember that the refugee (s) might be very unfamiliar with cooking for different reasons and might need a lot of guidance with preparing meals, especially in a Canadian kitchen. Cooking on a budget is another good thing to go over.

Shopping might be very different in their country of origin and they might be used to bargaining for prices at the stores. Explain to the refugee(s) the customs around non-bargaining in Canada.

Parks, Trails and Beach Areas

You may wish to provide refugees with a local map and take them to places where they can enjoy the outdoors in their new community.

Transportation

Many refugees are dependent on public transportation. Before arrival, you may want to pick up a public transportation map and a map of the city. To understand how the public transportation system works, it is often easiest to take the refugee(s) around and assist

¹⁵ Adapted from the “Refugee Sponsorship Training Program”

them in learning how to buy and use tickets, how the bus system works, how the subway and streetcar system works, and other things related to the transit system. Keep in mind the limited resources the refugee(s) have to make sure you find the most economical options.

Library

The public library usually gives people access to free services such as borrowing books, music and DVDs, internet access, computer access, etc. Some branches also have computer-learning centres where people can take computer classes for free. For those with a valid library card, some library branches also provide free passes to access various museums, art galleries, and other cultural venues. To learn more, visit your local library about how to apply for a library card. Families will likely need to bring along a valid name *and* address identification.

Clothing

If the refugee (s) arrive in the winter, you must provide some weather appropriate clothing for them at arrival. If new clothes are needed, accompany the refugees to the store and help them find clothes that are appropriate for the weather (and suit their cultural and budgetary needs).

Advise the refugee(s) on how to dress appropriately for the climate local to their area – winter will probably be colder than they have expected. If they arrive during spring or summer, make sure you remember to help them find warm clothes before winter (through either donations or shopping).

Some sponsoring groups get donations in the form of second-hand clothing for the arriving families. *It is important for sponsoring group to be aware that some cultures have different views on second-hand goods.* In some cultures, it is completely acceptable, but in others, it can be seen as an insult to give other people used goods. No matter which culture the refugees belong to, it is a good idea to explain why you are giving them used clothing and explain how this is viewed in Canadian culture.

Laundry

Offer to demonstrate how to operate the washer and dryer, make payments, and use

laundry products. If there are no laundry services inside their unit or the building, it may be necessary to take them to the closest laundromat and explain how the process works.

Place of Worship

Ask the refugee family if they are interested in attending a specific religious place of worship and help them explore their options in your area. Feel free to invite them to attend a service at your church but ensure that they feel no obligation or pressure to do so.

Interim Federal Health Program Fact Sheet

The Interim Federal Health Program (IFHP), funded by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), and administered by Medavie Blue Cross, provides limited temporary coverage of health-care benefits to specific groups of individuals.

Duration of Coverage for Resettled Refugees

The IFHP provides basic coverage (for example, doctor visits and hospital care) for a maximum of three months. This coverage serves as a bridge to provincial/territorial public health insurance plans. The IFHP also provides supplemental coverage (such as mental health services, limited vision care, and urgent dental care) and prescription drug coverage.

Supplemental and prescription drug coverage is provided for as long as the refugee is under government or private sponsorship, with initial coverage being issued for 12 months upon arrival. This coverage may be extended for up to additional 12 months, provided the refugee continues to receive government or private sponsorship for the same period.

Resettled refugees are provided with an IFHP Certificate of Eligibility by the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) upon arrival in Canada at Port of Entry. Where IFHCs cannot be provided upon arrival, coverage should be issued by an IRCC officer shortly after arrival.

Note: It takes two business days from the day the Certificate is issued for the eligibility information to be reflected in the Medavie Blue Cross system.

Finding a Registered IFHP Health Care Provider

To find a health care provider that is registered with Medavie Blue Cross, and accepts IFHP insured clients, please visit the [‘Search IFHP Providers’](#) list on the Medavie Blue Cross website and select your province. Only health care providers that are registered with Medavie Blue Cross are authorized to submit claims for reimbursement. The IFHP Certificate of Eligibility must be presented to health care providers, along with a government issued picture ID, each time a service and/or product is provided in order to confirm coverage.

Processing Claims

After determining a client’s eligibility for the service/product, the health care provider will need to submit the claim for payment directly to Medavie Blue Cross within six months of the date the service was provided. If health care providers would like more information on the claims submission procedures and guidelines, please see the Information Handbook for Health Care Professionals (Medavie Blue Cross). Access the handbook here: <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/outside/arriving-healthcare/practitioners.asp>

Note: *The IFHP is not designed to reimburse beneficiaries directly. If a beneficiary pays for services/products covered by the IFHP, the individual cannot be reimbursed.*

Snapshot of IFHP Benefits

As of April 1, 2016, all resettled refugees, including government-assisted refugees and privately sponsored refugees, are eligible for the same level of coverage under the IFHP. The chart below provides an overview of the IFHP benefits:

IFHP COVERAGE		
BASIC COVERAGE	SUPPLEMENTAL COVERAGE	PRESCRIPTION DRUG COVERAGE
<p>Medical services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Doctor visits ✓ Standard immunizations ✓ Prenatal and obstetrical care ✓ Lab tests and x-rays <p>Hospital services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Emergency room visits ✓ Hospital stays ✓ Medical and surgical care ✓ Diagnostic imaging 	<p>Limited Vision Care:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ One pair of eyewear (glasses and/or lenses every 2 years) ✓ One vision test per year <p>Urgent Dental Care</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Emergency dental exams ✓ Dental x-rays ✓ Extractions ✓ Dentures <p>Mental Health Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Psychological counselling, including services from allied health-care practitioners <p>Assistive devices, medical supplies and equipment.</p>	<p>Prescribed medication and other pharmacy products.</p>

IFHP Dental Benefit Grid

IFHP dental coverage provides coverage for emergency dental care involving pain, infection, or trauma. It is not intended to cover ongoing, regular, or routine dental care.

Services, post emergency exams and radiographs, are limited to emergency relief of pain or infection only. Routine care is not eligible. If the treating dentist considers additional treatment necessary, such as restorations and complicated extractions, a prior approval request must be submitted to Medavie Blue Cross before treatment begins.

Please note that certain services such as root canals, prophylaxis, orthodontic treatment etc., including any procedures that are the initial steps towards these services, are not covered under IFHP dental coverage.

TREATMENT	PRE-AUTHORIZATION REQUIRED	CRITERIA or LIMITATIONS
Oral Exams	NO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emergency examinations are covered no more than once every six months per dental office.
X-rays	NO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☐ One panoramic radiograph limited to once per lifetime. ☐ Periapical and Bitewing radiographs to a maximum of 16 radiographs per lifetime (any combination). <p>**X-rays must be clear, discernible and properly labelled. Digital X-rays are acceptable. Intraoral photographs in addition to X-rays are accepted but must be labelled with macros noted on teeth with decay.**</p>
Caries, Trauma, Pain Control	NO	
Writing or Dispensing an Emergency Prescription	NO	

Amalgam/ Composite Restorations	YES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Covered for severely affected teeth. • Incipient lesions or those not visible on an X-Ray are not covered. • Restorations will be paid on a continuous surface basis only. • Molar teeth are limited to the cost of an equivalent bonded or non-bonded amalgam restoration.
Extractions (simple/ uncomplicated)	NO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simple/uncomplicated extractions do not require pre-authorization. • Limited to GP rate except for Oral Surgeons and Pedodontists.
Extractions (complicated)	YES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All complicated extractions require X-rays for justification. • Limited to GP rate except for Oral Surgeons and Pedodontists.
Denture Relines	NO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited to one upper and one lower per lifetime (LT).
Complete and Partial Dentures	YES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete dentures are limited to one upper and one lower per lifetime (LT). • Partial dentures are limited to one upper and one lower per lifetime (LT). • Partial dentures to replace only posterior teeth are not covered. <p>**All dentures, Complete and Partial, are limited to the cost of transitional denture(s).**</p>
Denture Repairs	NO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited to one upper and one lower per lifetime (LT).
General Anaesthesia	YES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited to 4 units for children under age 13. • Limited to 8 units for age 13 and over. • Limited to GP rate except for Oral Surgeons and Pedodontists.

Understanding Culture Shock and Providing Support¹⁶

There are many tasks involved in the early weeks of welcome that are part of refugee sponsorship. In the midst of the many appointments, orientations, and introductions it is easy to lose sight of the less visible challenges that newcomers face when coming to Canada. Certain aspects of life in Canada may be unfamiliar and intimidating to a newcomer. As a result, many sponsored refugees struggle with *culture shock*, a period of disorientation experienced when encountering a new culture.

Culture shock is a normal part of cultural adjustment and can result in healthy learning. Psychologists have found that culture shock tends to follow four distinct stages (described on the next page). While the pace at which individuals progress through these stages is very individualized, it is helpful for sponsors to have some understanding of what the newcomers are going through in order to provide appropriate support. Keep in mind that it could take several years for an individual to work through the stages of culture shock.

NOTE: The purpose of this section is only to provide basic information. This information is not intended to replace the expertise of trained professionals. If you believe that professional mental health support is needed, please do not hesitate to reach out to the appropriate support services in your community.

¹⁶ Adapted from *RSTP Handbook for Sponsoring Groups*, pp. 80-81

The Four Stages of Culture Shock

STAGE	CHARACTERISTICS	SUPPORT TO OFFER
Honeymoon	An initial reaction of enthusiasm, fascination, admiration, and friendly superficial relationships with hosts. Because refugees have not come to Canada by choice, they may be less enthusiastic.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide orientation and information • Focus on the practical aspects of becoming independent in Canada (i.e. language training, transportation)
Challenge and Crisis	<p>Differences in language, concepts, and values lead to feelings of inadequacy, frustration, and anger.</p> <p>These differences may become an obstacle in making new relationships and challenges in communication can be difficult and lead to loneliness and isolation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate empathy and explain that feelings of anger or frustration are normal and legitimate • Share information about culture shock • Help the newcomer focus on what they are able to do, rather than what they are not • Give opportunities to learn together about cross-cultural communications • Talk through difficult situations and learn how these are dealt with in the newcomer's culture • If you sense they need mental health supports, assist them in finding appropriate help
Recovery	<p>In this stage, the refugees begin to resolve feelings of crisis as they strengthen their language skills and understanding of Canadian culture improves. Factors known to facilitate this include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having a sense of purpose • Being engaged in a community • Having structure in life • Strong social support structures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set aside time to share stories back and forth with the refugees, as their English-language abilities improve • Work with them to seek out meaningful volunteer or work opportunities in the community (ensuring that English language learning is still prioritized) • Walk alongside them as they develop a plan for life in Canada
Adjustment	Refugees find their place in Canada and enjoy Canadian life and culture. Challenges will continue to exist as they develop a new cultural identity.	Continue to provide support and friendship. Walk alongside them as they continue to build a new life in Canada.

Trauma: Understanding its Impact and Providing Support ¹⁷

As a sponsorship volunteer, you may have the privilege of spending significant time with the sponsored newcomers and learning about their life story. During your time together, you may find evidence of trauma that has been experienced. This section is designed to give a basic overview of some of the causes of trauma, some indicators that an individual has suffered a traumatic experience, and ways in which that trauma might be re-experienced day-to-day.

NOTE: The purpose of this section is to provide basic information only and it is not intended to replace the advice and expertise of a professional. If you believe that professional mental health support is needed, please *do not hesitate to reach out to the appropriate support services in your community.*

A traumatic event leaves a permanent or lasting memory on the individual who is experiencing it. People who suffer from a traumatic event may continually relive the experience and perhaps try to avoid reminders of it (as reminders can sometimes provoke significant emotional responses). What one individual finds traumatic, another may not, and how that trauma manifests itself is equally as unique and individualized as the person who experienced it.

There are many outward signs that may indicate an individual is experiencing distress from a traumatic event. Some of the most common indicators of trauma are:

- alienation
- isolation
- shame
- self-hate
- externalized racism
- internalized racism
- fear and anger towards authority figures
- low self-esteem

¹⁷ Adapted from “Helping Students Deal with Trauma Related to Geopolitical Violence and Islamophobia: A Guide for Educators.” *Islamic Social Services and National Council of Canadian Muslims*. www.issacanada.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/ED-GUIDE-ENGLISH-BOOK-WEB-SEPT-15-2016.pdf

- destructive behaviours (substance abuse, sexual promiscuity, criminality, suicidal ideation)
- aggressive behaviours

Understanding the Impact of Trauma

Internally, trauma may be experienced in some of the following ways:

GRIEF

For some refugees, grief is felt and expressed in complicated ways and may not be easily recognized or addressed. Refugees may be grieving the family (parents, children, or friends) they left behind in their home country and the loss of their daily routine. This grief is more than being homesick and may be too painful to talk about with others. The security of being welcomed by a sponsoring community may provide them an opportunity to express their grief. As a sponsor, you may have the opportunity to create healthy spaces for the newcomer to acknowledge their feelings and to express their grief.

MISTRUST

Refugees who have experienced the devastating impacts of war and persecution may struggle to trust others. They may come to Canada from a context in which it was important for them to be able to identify and avoid ‘enemies’ for the sake of security. This may act as a barrier that prevents them from letting their guard down. To build trust, give refugees time to feel secure and open up (do not expect this to happen automatically).

OBSESSIONS

Extended exposure to precarious living situations may mean that refugees arrive in Canada in “survival mode.” You may observe behaviours that reflect this, such as giving gifts that may not be theirs to give or hoarding items. As a sponsor, we encourage you to help refugees develop a sense of security rooted in the belief that life in Canada will present them with the opportunity to begin life anew.

FLASHBACKS

Mundane actions, sounds, smells, or events can trigger reactions due to past

traumatic experiences. A loud bang from fireworks may sound like a bomb exploding or a gun firing. A fence around a schoolyard may be a reminder of a refugee camp or an internment camp enclosure. If the refugee you are sponsoring is triggered by something reminiscent of a traumatic experience in their past, try to provide a safe space to talk and examine what is triggering the negative action. Having adults, youth, and children write stories about their country of origin, their family, and their life before Canada may be a helpful way of processing their experiences and feelings.

STRESS AND ANXIETY

Refugees may experience high levels of anxiety brought on by trauma, as well as adjusting to a new home and the challenges that entails. Anxious children may be fidgety and have trouble focusing. They may also experience anxiety or panic attacks brought on by triggers or feelings of inadequacy of not being on par with peers due to language and cultural barriers. Understanding, patience, and positive encouragement and offers of help can ease anxiety of afflicted individuals. You and your church group can play a healing role and be a comfort by offering a hand of friendship and companionship as they navigate their way through new school, community, social, and work environments.

Providing Support

The following are tips for helping victims of trauma to healing and wellness.

ACKNOWLEDGE that refugees may be experiencing trauma and feelings of marginalization, isolation, and fear for their future.

RECOGNIZE your own judgments and biases, how they may contribute to how you understand geopolitical issues, and the subtle impacts these may have on your interactions with the refugees.

RESPOND in a timely manner to the needs of refugees when/if they are confronted by discrimination, negative world events, or news media treatment of evolving events that affect them.

RESPECT diversity within school, place of work, and the community.

FACILITATE conversations and interactions between people from diverse

backgrounds, cultures, value systems, and faiths.

PROVIDE SPACE for newcomers to speak about their faith and cultural identity as well as their feelings on world events that impact them.

INVITE speakers who can help you understand the challenges that refugees will face and how racism impacts them, your city, and our county.

INFORM yourself and others about the backgrounds of the refugees. Have a database of information on historical events that have impacted their communities (but do not make assumptions about how these events may have impacted them specifically).

ORGANIZE anti-racism events, human rights days, or cultural celebrations in your church to raise awareness, empathy, and understanding.

REACH OUT and be proactive in seeking out community partners and professionals so that when an issue arises you can rely on the support and experience of others as needed.

PREPARE AND EDUCATE all volunteers working with refugees so you are prepared to respond to their needs and decrease the potential for conflict or crisis.

Racism, Discrimination, and Religious Intolerance¹⁸

Canada prides itself on being a multicultural nation that values inclusion and diversity. However, Canada is not immune to racism, discrimination, and social exclusion. If you are not a member of a visible minority, the existence of these and other forms of xenophobia (the fear of a foreign people group) in this country may not be obvious. Unfortunately, newcomers and ethnic and religious minorities across Canada face forms of intolerance and discrimination every day in both subtle and obvious ways.

There is a good chance that the refugees you sponsor will experience discrimination as they work to integrate into Canadian life. Newcomers to Canada often look, speak, act, and dress differently than those around them. While some Canadians see the diverse multicultural fabric of our country as a blessing to be valued, others perceive it as a threat to their own identity.

As a sponsor, there is no way you will prevent all possible forms of discrimination towards the newcomers you are sponsoring. What you can do is be aware whether the newcomers identify it as a big issue or not. Racism, discrimination, and religious intolerance will affect the way in which they form social connections and integrate into life in Canada. Once you have established a comfortable and trusting relationship with a sponsored refugee, try talking about how they feel perceived by Canadians and how this impacts their interactions. Do not feel the urge to apologize for the intolerance of others but do be aware of the ways in which such intolerance can make newcomers feel unwelcome and want to avoid social interactions. To counter this, we encourage your sponsoring group to explore ways to make sponsored refugees feel fully welcomed and embraced by your community. You may consider talking to a local settlement agency or inter-cultural association for ideas on demonstrating welcome and engaging in community efforts that aim to do the same.

¹⁸ Adapted from “Helping Students Deal with Trauma Related to Geopolitical Violence and Islamophobia: A Guide for Educators.” Islamic Social Services and National Council of Canadian Muslims. www.issacanada.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/ED-GUIDE-ENGLISH-BOOK-WEB-SEPT-15-2016.pdf

Monitoring - Early Weeks Check-In

The following survey questions are sent to the sponsorship group approximately two months following the arrival of the newcomer(s).

1. How are the newcomers settling in and adapting to life in Canada?
2. What has been the most enjoyable aspect of the sponsorship so far?
3. What have you found especially surprising so far in your sponsorship journey?
4. Which items from the “[First Weeks Checklist](#)” (see **APPENDIX**) have proven challenging?
5. In what area(s) do the newcomers need the most support, going forward?
6. How is your group prepared to provide this support? Which outside organizations are you aware of that might be able to help you provide this support? Please list them.
7. List 2 goals that your group has for the rest of the sponsorship period.
 - a. GOAL 1:
 - b. GOAL 2:
8. What more would you like to share with World Renew?
9. What questions do you have at this time?

Monitoring - Nine Month Check-In

The following are questions that are asked at the 9-month mark. The goals of these questions are three-fold: to share the learning from the journey, to share what is still needed, and to alert World Renew to areas of concern. All responses are received in confidence and are treated with great respect and care.

Community Resources / Agencies

1. What settlement services and other community supports have you connected with? What has your experience with these services been like?
2. Were the newcomers able to readily integrate into ESL classes? Did the timing of their arrival coincide with the start of the ESL program?

Budgeting

1. Have you found the budget you established to be reasonable so far?
2. What did your sponsoring group or church do to raise funds for the sponsorship? How successful have they been?
3. Were there unanticipated costs? If so, how did you deal with them?
4. Are you assisting the family with their travel loan?

Relationship with Newcomers

1. How would you describe your relationship with the newcomers?
2. Were there any areas of conflict with the newcomer (and co-sponsor, if applicable)? If so, what were they and how were they resolved?

Team and Congregation Involvement

1. How large is the team or committee that is working on this sponsorship?
2. In what ways has your congregation been involved with the sponsorship, i.e. fundraising, settlement, welcoming, etc.?
3. Has there been sufficient volunteer support from the congregation for the sponsorship? Please describe.

Joys and Challenges

1. What have been the highlights of the sponsorship so far for you? Your committee? Your church?
2. What are some barriers and challenges you have faced in your sponsorship journey?
3. What information or knowledge would have been useful prior to the beginning of the process (in hindsight)?

Integration Outcomes and Month 13 Plans

1. Do you believe the newcomer(s) is on their way to becoming independent? Why or why not?
2. What will be their biggest challenges going forward for these individuals? What supports do they have in place to help them with these challenges?
3. Given how the sponsorship is currently going, what type of support do you think the newcomer(s) will be requiring at the end of the formal 12-month sponsorship?
4. What kind of plan do you have for this transition? How have you managed this transition in past sponsorships?
5. Have you prepared the newcomers for possible job loss after the 12 months are over? Have you talked with them about putting away money in case of job loss or other unforeseeable circumstances?
6. What if, after 12 months, they have a car accident and need a new car and or cannot pay the rent because of unforeseen problems? Do you plan to step in to help? If so, what is your plan?

Conclusion

1. How can World Renew better support you in your work, i.e. communication, resources, check-ins, or the like?
2. What else would you like to share with us about your sponsorship experience?
3. What new questions would you like answered before you move further?

Devotions

Being part of a refugee committee can be rewarding and rigorous, exhilarating and exhausting. Regardless of your experience, God is your source of strength and energy. God will be present and faithful to you as you welcome newcomers to Canada. Begin each of your committee meetings in the presence of the Lord who not only rejoices in your acts of service for refugees, but who takes even more pleasure in the fact that you come near to him. Draw wisdom and strength from his Word. Praise him for his faithfulness in a world that seems out of control. Thank him for loving you and all the displaced people in the world. Intercede for refugees. God will be faithful as you carry out your ministry to refugees.

DEVOTIONS #1: Beginning with Our Faithful God

Read Philippians 2:12-13

When Paul admonished the Philippians to, “continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling” (Philippians 2:12b), he based his confidence in God. Paul understood the mysterious and divine process at work in the lives of believers who sought to honour God with acts of mercy and service. He knew that the good works they were doing weren’t initially their own idea. Instead, believers’ good works began with our faithful God nudging, prompting, and urging them to take up various tasks. Paul explained, “For it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose” (Philippians 2:13).

Sponsoring refugees is a way of working out your salvation with fear and trembling. God has worked in you to will and to act according to his good purpose of caring for refugees. He wants you to mirror his role as “a refuge for the oppressed” (Psalm 9:9a). Psalm 82:3-4 describes what that implies: “Defend the cause of the weak and fatherless; maintain the rights of the poor and oppressed. Rescue the weak and needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked.”

What a comfort it is to know that you are sponsoring refugees because it is God’s good idea. He will provide all you need. “The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it” (1 Thessalonians 5:24).

Prayer: Faithful God and refuge of the oppressed, as we begin this good work of caring for refugees, help us to grasp the divine, mysterious way you are working in our lives.

We thank you that our work originated in you. *In Jesus' name, Amen.*

DEVOTIONS #2: God's Faithfulness Reaches to the Skies

Read Psalm 57

There have always been refugees—people seeking shelter from danger, persecution, and war. Long ago, the prophet Isaiah described the anguish refugees feel: “Refugees stream to Zoar, and then on to Eglath-shelishiyah. Up the slopes of Luhith they weep; on the road to Horonaim they cry their loss. The springs of Nimrim are dried up – grass brown, buds stunted, nothing grows. They leave, carrying all their possessions on their backs, everything they own, making their way as best they can across Willow Creek to safety. Poignant cries reverberate all through Moab, gut-wrenching sobs as far as Eglaim, heart-wracking sobs all the way to Beer-elim” (Isaiah 15:5-8, *The Message*).

Thinking about all the refugees who have sought shelter throughout history can be overwhelming and discouraging. The problem is so large. “Why bother trying to deal with issues so far-reaching and wide-ranging?” skeptics may ask.

But you are not one of the cynics who throw their hands up in despair and choose to do nothing. Because you know that “God’s faithfulness reaches to the skies” (Psalm 57:10b), you are willing to do your part to sponsor and resettle refugees. You know nothing is a match for God’s supreme faithfulness. As you care for the refugees you have sponsored, you will witness God’s faithfulness in ways you never dreamed.

Prayer: Dear Lord, guard our hearts and minds with the vision of your faithfulness so that we are kept from discouragement at the enormity of the number of refugees and the problems they face. Use us to make even a few lives better through this sponsorship. May we do so only for your glory. *In Jesus' name, Amen.*

DEVOTIONS #3: Surely the Lord is in This Place

Read Genesis 28:10-22

Leaving home on a long journey can make a person feel vulnerable and afraid. That’s how Jacob felt when he left his home in Beersheba and set out for Haran to find a wife. He didn’t know what he would encounter.

What – or, rather, who – he encountered was beyond his wildest dreams. In fact, the

one whom he met appeared to him a dream. Our faithful God made promises to the deceitful Jacob that he was not worthy to receive. Besides other things, he promised to watch over Jacob wherever he went. When Jacob awoke, he said, “Surely the Lord is in this place, and I was not aware of it” (Genesis 28:16b).

You are on a sponsorship journey with refugees who have experienced their own journeys. God has faithfully watched over them so far. He has also taken care of you. His love for all of you does not depend on your awareness of his faithfulness. But he longs for you to grow in your consciousness of his presence. As the weeks and months of the sponsorship pass, may you increasingly profess, “Lord, we are aware that you are in this place!”

Prayer: Dear Lord, we are blind to your faithful presence unless you give us the eyes of faith to see you. As we care for refugees, help us to feel your nearness. *In Jesus’ name, Amen.*

DEVOTIONS #4: Transformed for God’s Glory

Read 1 Peter 4:7-11

Peter wasn’t the same man when he began his journey with Christ as he was years later when he wrote to Jewish and Gentile Christians scattered throughout Asia Minor about being self-controlled, loving deeply, offering hospitality without grumbling, and using gifts to administer God’s grace in its various forms. He had been sanctified by the power of the Holy Spirit working in him so that his life gradually and steadily became what God intended it to be.

The same process of Holy Spirit activated sanctification is also at work in each of you as you care for the refugees who have come, or will come, to your church community. The Holy Spirit will help you to be clear-minded and self-controlled so that you can pray for them. He will fill you with a deep love that will cover over a multitude of sins and circumstances gone awry. He will give you the energy and conviction to offer hospitality happily and without grumbling. He will encourage each of you to use the particular gifts God has given to you to serve these refugees and to faithfully administer God’s grace to them in different ways. He will take your words and let them be the very words of God. He will give you strength to serve – power that you don’t possess on your own.

Your sanctification will be for God’s glory. He is the faithful one who can and will

transform you into faithful servants.

Prayer: Dear Lord, make us aware of your sanctifying hand on our lives every day. As we care for refugees, help us to act more like Jesus. *In Jesus' name, Amen.*

DEVOTIONS #5: The Battle Belongs to the Lord

Read 2 Chronicles 20:1-18

God is the Rock that will not be moved, the unshakeable foundation of those who put their trust in him. King Jehoshaphat knew that when troubles surged over him like violent waves, his faithful God would not abandon him. So when the armies of the Moabites, Ammonites, and Meunites attacked him, he prayed, in trembling faith, “We have no power to face this vast army that is attacking us. We do not know what to do, but our eyes are upon you” (2 Chronicles 20:12).

Jahaziel, on whom the Spirit of the Lord was poured out, told King Jehoshaphat, “Do not be afraid or discouraged because of this vast army. For the battle is not yours, but God’s . . . You will not have to fight this battle. Take up your positions; stand firm and see the deliverance the Lord will give you” (2 Chronicles 20:15b; 17a).

The battle was the Lord’s then, and it still is today.

As you help to resettle your refugee family, you will experience both joyful and difficult times. No matter the circumstances, remember that the battle belongs to the Lord. He is faithfully working out his purposes for both you and them. Your calling is to be in the place God has ordained for you to be and to watch as he wins his battle in his own time and way.

Prayer: Dear God, we so often worry when we feel powerless or confused about what to do next. As we embrace our calling to care for refugees, remind us that we are standing on you, our Rock and unshakeable foundation. Help us to rest in the knowledge that the battle belongs to you. *In Jesus' name, Amen.*

DEVOTIONS #6: Taste and See That the Lord is Good

Read Psalm 34

The psalmist David invited believers to, “taste and see that the Lord is good” and to acknowledge that “blessed is the man who takes refuge in him” (Psalm 34:8).

Doing good to refugees begins with tasting and seeing that the Lord has been good to you. He has given you salvation through Jesus Christ, the bedrock of your lives for today and eternity. He has given you freedom, education, food, shelter, clothes, jobs, families, a Christian community, health, and much more. Your cup overflows!

Also, God shelters you and gives you refuge. Through you, he will do the same for the refugees he has sent to you.

Because of the trauma, war, hunger, and persecution these refugees have faced, it might be difficult for them to taste and see that the Lord is good. Pray that he will use you to help them to “taste” and “see” the presence, protection, and love of our faithful God.

Prayer: Dear Jesus, you are the light of the world (John 8:12a). Allow your light to shine through us so that when the refugees see our good deeds, they will “taste” and “see” your goodness and will praise your name. *In Jesus’ name, Amen.*

DEVOTIONS #7: Let Love and Faithfulness Never Leave You

Read Proverbs 3:1-6

The Bible is replete with metaphors – word pictures – that help you to better understand your relationship to God and what he requires of you. Usually a word picture makes an abstract concept more understandable. For example, Proverbs 3:3 says, “Let love and faithfulness never leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart.” Of course, you can’t literally wear *love* and *faithfulness* around your neck like a magnificent necklace. Neither can you actually inscribe *love* and *faithfulness* on your heart as if it were a stone tablet. Yet, the word pictures help you to see how God wants love and faithfulness to be an integral part of who you are as his child. You can’t get away from your own neck and heart. God doesn’t want you to get away from love and faithfulness, either.

As you sponsor a refugee family, keep these word pictures alive in your mind. Allow them to spur you onto deeds of great love and faithfulness. As you do so, reflect on Proverbs 14:22b: “Those who plan what is good find love and faithfulness.”

Prayer: Dear Lord, “with you is the fountain of life” (Psalm 36:9a). We thank you for all the word pictures you give us in the Bible which help us to better understand how we can serve you. As we care for refugees, help us to bind love and faithfulness around our necks and to write them on the tablets of our hearts. *In Jesus’ name, Amen.*

DEVOTIONS #8: Faithful Provider

Read 1 Kings 17:1-16

After Elijah told King Ahab that Israel would suffer from a drought for the next few years, God sent Elijah on his way, telling him where to go and what to do. Ravens fed him and water from a brook quenched his thirst. When the brook ran dry, God commanded Elijah to go to the widow at Zarephath – a foreigner – to supply his needs. Elijah must have known immediately that the widow was poor and had limited resources. Maybe he wondered what God was doing.

The widow probably wasn’t too pleased to be asked to feed another hungry person. Was the foreign holy man kidding when he asked for a drink and bread? She might have thought, I’ll give this man an inventory of my meager resources and then perhaps he will understand how ludicrous his request is. The widow told Elijah that the meal she was preparing was to be the last one she would ever make, and afterward she and her son would die.

Elijah said, “Don’t be afraid!” – words that have echoed throughout the Bible from the lips of angels, prophets, and Jesus himself.

The widow must have been shocked by his words. Don’t be afraid when resources are depleted? Don’t be afraid when death is at the door? Don’t be afraid when all hope is gone?

Elijah’s explicit instructions included a promise that would change the woman’s physical and spiritual life. The God of Israel promised that “The jar of flour will not be used up and the jug of oil will not run dry until the day the Lord gives rain on the land” (1 Kings 17:14).

What was the widow's response? Amazingly, she obeyed. She could have told the foreigner that he wasn't welcome, that his words were nonsense, and that she would have nothing to do with him. But she followed Elijah's instructions. She set aside her fear, offered hospitality to the stranger, and learned that our faithful God's multiplication of resources is always enough to meet every need.

By taking care of refugees, you are following the widow's example. You have set aside your fear of caring for the stranger. You have faced your anxiety of not having enough to share. You have obeyed because you know God is faithful. When Jesus returns, you will hear him say to you, "For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in" (Matthew 25:35).

Prayer: God of miracles, multiplier of resources, we trust you to faithfully care for us and the refugees we are blessed to serve. *In Jesus' name, Amen.*

DEVOTIONS #9: A Bruised Reed He Will Not Break

Read Isaiah 42:1-9

Jesus came from heaven to earth in baby-weakness, despite the fact that he was (and is) Almighty Lord of heaven and earth. His kingdom's agenda isn't about grasping power at the expense of the weak and helpless. Rather, he is concerned for the broken, the vulnerable, and the marginalized. About him, the prophet Isaiah wrote: "A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out" (Isaiah 42:3a).

What did Isaiah mean? He meant that "the servant will mend broken lives" (NIV text note for Isaiah 42:3a). "Bruised reeds" and "smoldering wicks" are not disposable in Jesus' eyes just because they are weak, powerless, and unprotected. Because he is faithful, he'll step in "to bring forth justice; he will not falter or be discouraged until he establishes justice on the earth" (Isaiah 42:3b-4a).

All people are weak, powerless, and vulnerable without the embrace of our faithful God, the redemption of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. God mends broken lives. Now he sends you, his ambassadors, to care for others, including the refugees you have befriended. Pass on to them the tenderness and mercy God has poured out on you.

Prayer: God of the broken-hearted ones, use us to show your mercy and kindness to the refugees you have brought into our care. Mend their broken lives through us. Make us faithful as you are faithful. *In Jesus' name, Amen.*

DEVOTIONS #10: Yet, the Hopeful Connecting Word

Read Habakkuk 3:17-18

Yet is a small word with immense, hopeful implications for Habakkuk's life and yours as you reflect on your responsibility to the refugees you are sponsoring.

Habakkuk didn't base his joy on circumstances. He didn't say that he would only be joyful when the fig trees budded, the vines produced grapes, the olive crop thrived, the fields produced bumper crops, and the pens and stalls were filled with sheep and cattle. Instead, Habakkuk's faith in God shaped his response to events, whether negative or positive. He knew that his Saviour was sovereign over everything and faithfully gave him strength to overcome all obstacles. Therefore he rejoiced.

For Habakkuk, yet was a hopeful connecting word.

How can yet be a hopeful connecting word for you as you take up God's calling to care for refugees?

You, too, can rejoice in your Saviour even as you think about the immense problems these refugees have faced. You can joyfully choose to depend on Him – the God of all provision – to give to you so that you can give of your resources to them.

You can ask God to help you to understand how you are connected to them. In his book, *No Future Without Forgiveness*, Archbishop Desmond Tutu wrote, "We are bound together in what the Bible calls 'the bundle of life.' Our humanity is caught up in that of all others. . . We are made for community . . . to exist in a delicate network of interdependence. . . Each person is not just to be respected but to be revered as one created in God's image" (Doubleday, 1999, p196).

When you step out in faith to care for refugees, you will be imitating Habakkuk's faith and boldness. You will also be displaying a profound understanding of your connection to all people in "the bundle of life." You will be rejoicing in God and obeying him, no matter what. You will be saying, in effect, that though the economy isn't always promising, though sponsoring refugees is demanding, though you are already busy, you

will yet obey God who “is known by his justice” (Psalm 9:16a), and whose throne will last forever and ever, with a scepter of justice as the scepter of his kingdom (Psalm 45:6).

Prayer: God of all hopefulness, we rejoice in you because we know that you are sufficient in all circumstances. Our lives and the lives of refugees are in your faithful hands. *In Jesus’ name, Amen.*

DEVOTIONS #11: The Gospel on Five Fingers

Read Matthew 25:31-46

North American secular culture teaches you to take care of yourself first and to look away from the suffering of others, including refugees. But that is not what God has in mind for you: “He who oppresses the poor shows contempt for their Maker, but whoever is kind to the needy honours God” (Proverbs 14:31). By caring for refugees, you are honouring their Maker and yours. By putting others first, for the sake of Christ, you are spreading the gospel and the love of God.

Mother Teresa, in her instructions to members of her religious order, suggested a visually profound yet simple way to remember this truth. She called it the “Gospel on five fingers” – as she liked to say, ‘You - did - it - to - Me’ – one word for each finger. With this, she wanted the Missionaries of Charity to remember the poor – not only to respect the dignity of the child of God in each one, but also to realize the supernatural reality of God’s presence in each one” (*Mother Teresa: Come Be My Light – The Private Writings of the “Saint of Calcutta,”* edited by Brian Kolodiejchuk, Doubleday, 2007, pp. 314-315).

I’d like to invite you to do a simple exercise. Hold your hand in front of you. Touch one finger per word as you say, “You - did - it - to - Me.” That’s “the Gospel on five fingers.” With your hands, you can make a huge difference in the refugees’ lives, doing it for the Lord. With your open hearts, you can embrace those seeking refuge, pointing them to Christ. With your mouths, you can proclaim the faithful love of God that upholds and embraces both them and you.

Prayer: Maker of all, we bow before you, praising and exalting you for allowing us to care for refugees. Give us willingness to learn from their experiences, humility to depend on you, and love to undergird all our endeavours. *In Jesus’ name, Amen.*

DEVOTIONS #12: Rescue the Weak and Needy

Read Jeremiah 38:1-13

Ebed-Melech is a little-known biblical character who obeyed God’s command to “speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy” (Proverbs 31:8-9).

Jeremiah, the prophet, was in prison because he relentlessly spoke God’s word of judgement against his people for deserting him and following idols. The officials wanted Jeremiah silenced because he was demoralizing the soldiers and the people. With the approval of weak-kneed King Zedekiah, Jeremiah was thrown into a cistern. It was so deep that he had to be lowered in by ropes. Though the cistern had no water inside, it was muddy, and he sank into the muck.

Enter Ebed-Melech, a Cushite who was an official in the royal palace. Ebed-Melech was not his name; it was his title, meaning “king’s servant.” Being a nameless foreigner didn’t stop Ebed-Melech from taking action. Boldly, he went to the King and told him of Jeremiah’s plight.

At King Zedekiah’s command, Ebed-Melech took three men with him to free Jeremiah. But what he did next on his own initiative is of great significance. He found some old rags and worn-out clothes, and took them with him to the cistern. He told Jeremiah to put them under his arms to pad the ropes. Then he and the soldiers pulled Jeremiah out of the cistern. Ebed-Melech not only took action when he saw Jeremiah treated unjustly, but he did so with deep compassion, caring about Jeremiah’s comfort.

Jeremiah was not a refugee, but he faced injustice, abandonment, mistreatment, hunger, and pain just as many refugees do today. Like Ebed-Melech, you have compassionately spoken up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of the refugees you are sponsoring.

Prayer: God of justice, help us to faithfully seek justice for those who can’t speak for themselves. Fill our hearts with compassion as, step-by-step, we follow your Holy Spirit’s leading to care for refugees. *In Jesus’ name, Amen.*

DEVOTIONS #13: That the Work of God Might Be Displayed

Read John 9:1-11

Jesus saw a man blind from birth. He didn't just see his physical state, but he saw the man in his entirety, as a whole person who was suffering. Compassion, love, healing, and God's glory were on Jesus' agenda for the man.

What did the disciples see when they looked at the man? Their question to Jesus – “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” (John 9:2) – reveals that their agenda wasn't compassion, love, and healing. Instead, they saw a person whom they thought deserved judgment based on the principle that the rabbis had developed which stated: “There is no death without sin and there is no suffering without iniquity” (NIV text note for John 9:2). Thus, the disciples hoped to lay the blame for the man's blindness at the man's or his parents' feet.

But Jesus would have none of it! Revealing his perfect agenda, he replied, “Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life. As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me” (John 9:3-4a). A preacher I recently listened to summed it up this way: “Don't focus on the cause of this man's blindness, but focus on the purpose.”

In this story, we are challenged to see all people as Jesus sees them. You are sponsoring refugees. When you look at them, do you see them as Jesus does – not just their physical state, but in their entirety, as whole people who are suffering? Do you seek to be compassionate instead of curious about their tormented backgrounds? Are love, compassion, healing, and putting on display the work of God your focus? Do you believe that God will empower you to care for them?

God is writing his story through your response to refugees. Compassion, love, healing, and God's glory are on his agenda for them. Work, watch, and wait as he faithfully accomplishes his purposes.

Prayer: Dear God, you bring renewal and hope to your children. You “bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair” (Isaiah 61:3a). Display your work in the lives of the refugees we are sponsoring. *In Jesus' name, Amen.*

DEVOTIONS #14: Working for Peace and Justice

Read Isaiah 9:6-7; Luke 4:14-21

As sponsors of refugees, you are working for peace and justice. As peacemakers, you can be assured that what you sow in peace will “raise a harvest of righteousness” (James 3:18) because God will faithfully sustain you. What shape might that harvest of righteousness take in your life and the lives of the refugees you are sponsoring?

More than food and shelter, more than water and clothes, refugees long for peace. Peace from the horror of rape. Peace from the fear of being murdered. Peace from the dread of children being sold into slavery. By sponsoring refugees, you are offering them first steps toward peace in their lives. Gently, slowly, and sensitively, you may point them to the Prince of Peace, who told his disciples, “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid” (John 14:27).

By supplying housing, food, community, schooling, and employment, you will introduce stability and peace into the lives of people who have known instability and strife. To sleep in safety, to have sufficient food, to not worry that your children will be harmed, to have work in order to make a living – all these good gifts of God can restore peace to people who have no other options for peace.

As you take up this task, recall Mary’s song about God’s upside-down way of bringing peace to the world: “He has performed mighty deeds with his arm; he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts. He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble. He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty” (Luke 1:51-53).

Prayer: Prince of Peace, make us peacemakers who long for justice. Where refugees have been injured because of war, civil strife, and hatred, use us to bring peace. Thank you for faithfully directing us. *In Jesus’ name, Amen.*

DEVOTIONS #15: Joy on the Journey

Read Ephesians 1:15-23

The book of Proverbs is full of wisdom that encapsulates both God’s truth and an accurate picture of human existence. One proverb states, “There is deceit in the hearts

of those who plot evil, but joy for those who promote peace” (Proverbs 12:20).

As you reflect on pursuing peace by sponsoring and resettling refugees, it is helpful to contemplate the psalmist’s words: “Love and faithfulness meet together; righteousness and peace kiss each other” (Psalm 85:10). What does the psalmist mean? He is giving us an astounding image of God’s merciful dealings with his covenant people. God poured out his love, faithfulness, peace, and righteousness on his children. You are his children. You have received these gifts from him. As his image bearers, you want to pass these gifts on to others, generously extending love, faithfulness, right relationships, and peace to all people, including refugees. God delights in your faithful, joyful response.

All the while, his faithful power will uphold you. That power “is like the working of his mighty strength, which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come” (Ephesians 1:19b-21). What amazing power is available to you as you pursue your calling to love and care for refugees! What incredible joy will be yours as you promote peace on their behalf!

Prayer: Lord of perfect love, faithfulness, righteousness, and peace, fill us with resurrection joy and power as we care for the refugees you have brought to us. *In Jesus’ name, Amen.*

DEVOTIONS #16: Faithful Interceding High Priest

Read Romans 8:31-39

Enthroned at the right hand of God, Jesus – the Prince of Peace and High Priest – is always interceding for you. How can that knowledge comfort you as you obey his call to care for refugees?

There is no one who knows the needs of refugees like Jesus does. And there is no one who knows your needs like he does. He knows refugees through and through, and nothing about you is hidden from his sight. Add to that the fact that he prays perfectly for both them and you. He only asks the Father for things that are according to his will and that will bring him glory. Therefore, anything he prays for refugees and you will ultimately be for your communal good and will point to God.

During the sponsorship period you will probably face problems that seem insurmountable. But don't be discouraged. Allow the truth of Hebrews 4:14-16 to set your hearts at rest: "Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are – yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need."

Prayer: Jesus, thank you for faithfully interceding for us as we undertake this refugee sponsorship. What comfort we experience when we consider your perfect prayers for us and the refugees we are sponsoring. *In Jesus' name, Amen.*

DEVOTIONS #17: Be Faithful In Prayer

Read Romans 12:9-21

Faithful prayer is the necessary foundation for being peacemakers who pass on the peace of Christ to refugees so that they can thrive in peace. Asking God for strength, wisdom, perseverance, love, energy, and patience is necessary for the task. Faithful prayer acknowledges that Jesus is the vine and that you are the branches. It confesses that, in him, you will bear much fruit and that apart from him you can do nothing (John 15:5).

When you seek the faithful Creator through prayer, you will be equipped for every need and circumstance because seeking him is not a hit-or-miss affair – "You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart" (Jeremiah 29:13).

Sponsoring refugees isn't always a comfortable and enjoyable experience. Sometimes it can be very challenging. You might have misunderstandings due to different cultures and languages. You might not agree with the refugees that you welcomed about how funds should be responsibly spent or about the adequacy of the housing you have acquired for them. Maybe the refugees will demand more time and energy of you than you can reasonably manage. Perhaps personality clashes that you never counted on, despite your best efforts, will create tension and disharmony.

For all these reasons and more, faithful prayer is essential – not just prayer at the beginning and ending of your refugee committee meetings, but daily prayers for the

refugee family. Keep your eyes fixed on the Prince of Peace. Bring all your needs to him. He will not disappoint you.

Prayer: Dear God, we realize that when we sponsor refugees, we don't know what we are getting into and we can't predict outcomes. However, we know we can pray to you at any time about anything. How comforting that is! Keep us faithful in prayer *In Jesus' name, Amen.*

DEVOTIONS #18: The Kingdom of Righteousness

Read Isaiah 32:1-8; 17-18

Through the prophet Isaiah, God spoke about the fulfillment of the kingdom of righteousness: "My people will live in peaceful dwelling places, in secure homes, in undisturbed places of rest" (Isaiah 32:18).

For years, the refugees you are sponsoring might have lived in peaceful dwelling places, in secure homes, and in undisturbed places of rest. Then peace fled when war came. Rest vanished. Unrest prevailed. They escaped from their once-secure homes, and crossed borders in search of safety, arriving in refugee camps or other safe places.

Each refugee has a story to tell. God knows each one, including the stories of the refugees you are sponsoring. You might never know their complete stories, but you can imagine the ache of their hardship as they fled their country, possibly terrified of the present and afraid of the future. They might have suffered hunger, danger, violence, and trauma completely outside of your realm of experience.

More important than their personal story is God's story. He is faithfully bringing about the kingdom of righteousness in their lives. And, praise be to God, he is using you to do it! You have believed that "the Lord watches over the alien" (Psalm 146:9). Not only that, but in obedience to God, you have made yourself available to concretely work toward the fulfillment of the kingdom of righteousness in refugees' lives.

Prayer: God of righteousness, we long to see your kingdom come here on earth as it is in heaven. We are amazed at your faithfulness that embraces refugees and us – undeserving, yet loved beyond measure. Help us to act justly and faithfully in all our dealings with our sponsored family. *In Jesus' name, Amen.*

DEVOTIONS #19: An Eternal Refrain

Read Psalm 136

Over and over the refrain – “His love endures forever” – resounds throughout Psalm 136. It’s as if the psalmist cannot get enough of proclaiming the faithful love of God that sustained all things from the creation of the world, to the exodus from Egypt, and to the era of the biblical kings. That Love, which knows no bounds, remembers people in their neediness, frees them from enemies, and provides food to all.

The psalmist spoke of God’s unending love even before Jesus’ birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension into heaven. Imagine if he were alive today. He would be able to add verse after verse proclaiming the ongoing actions of God propelled by his abiding love.

You can do the same. For some time now you have been caring for refugees. God’s faithful love, which endures forever, has framed your entire experience. What verses could you write as a testimony to that truth? Perhaps they might sound like this:

Give thanks to the Lord for he is good.

His love endures forever.

Give thanks to the God of justice, faithfulness, and compassion.

His love endures forever.

Give thanks to God who is a shelter for oppressed refugees.

His love endures forever.

Who gave them housing, food, clothing, finances, and employment.

His love endures forever.

Who provided medical care for them.

His love endures forever.

Who dried their tears when they were homesick.

His love endures forever.

Who brought them into a loving community.

His love endures forever.

Prayer: Dear God, we will never be able to totally grasp your love for refugees and us until we see you face-to-face. Help us to hear the unceasing refrain of your love as you bring it to fruition in our lives. *In Jesus’ name, Amen.*

DEVOTIONS #20: Ending with God

Read Philippians 1:3-11

These devotionals began with a reflection on the truth that the work you are doing for refugees was first and foremost God's idea. What a consolation that is! But even more comforting is the knowledge "that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus" (Philippians 1:6). Again, you are reminded that everything begins, carries on, and ends in Christ.

Not only does God promise that he will bring to completion what he has begun in you, he assures you that he "is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy" (Jude 24). Let your response to his abiding faithfulness reflect Jude's praise: "to the only God our Saviour be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen" (Jude 25).

Prayer: Dear Lord, throughout this sponsorship journey we have witnessed your eternal faithfulness. You have never let us down or disappointed us. Thank you for allowing us to serve you by caring for refugees. *In Jesus' name, Amen.*

Scripture Passages

Below is a list of scripture passages relevant to refugee work. Although this list is not exhaustive, it will get you started. Use them in a bulletin announcement, on a poster, in a Bible study, to start a meeting, or for personal devotions to prepare yourself for this work. The Bible speaks clearly about what God expects of us and in our relationships with our refugee brothers and sisters.

Psalms of Refuge

Psalm 9 “The Lord is a refuge for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble...”

Psalm 16 “Keep me safe, my God, for in you I take refuge...”

Psalm 17 “Hear me, Lord; my plea is just. Listen to my cry...”

Psalm 18 “I love you, Lord, my strength...”

Psalm 31 “In you, Lord, I have taken refuge; let me never be put to shame...”

Psalm 34 “I will extol the Lord at all times; his praise will always be on my lips...”

Psalm 36 “I have a message from God in my heart concerning the sinfulness of the wicked: there is no fear of God before their eyes...”

Psalm 46 “God is our refuge and strength; an ever-present help in trouble...”

Psalm 61 “Hear my cry, O God; listen to my prayer...”

Psalm 71 “In you, Lord, I have taken refuge; let me never be put to shame...”

Psalm 91 “Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty...”

Psalm 118 “Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever...”

Psalm 142 “I cry aloud to the Lord; I lift up my voice to the Lord for mercy...”

Other Scripture Related to Immigration and Refugees

Genesis 1:26-27 “Then God said, ‘Let us make mankind in our image...’”

Genesis 12:1 “The Lord said to Abram, ‘Go from your country, your people, and your father’s household to the land I will show you...’”

Exodus 2:15-22 “... Moses fled from Pharaoh and went to live in Midian...”

Exodus 22:21 “Do not mistreat or oppress a foreigner, for you were foreigners in Egypt...”

Exodus 23:9 “Do not oppress a foreigner; you yourselves know how it feels...”

Leviticus 19:9-18 “When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field...leave them for the poor and the foreigner...”

Leviticus 19:33-34 “The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-born...”

Numbers 15:15 “...You and the foreigner shall be the same before the Lord...”

Deuteronomy 10:18-19 “[God] defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the foreigner residing among you...”

Deuteronomy 24:17-22 “Do not deprive the foreigner or the fatherless of justice...”

Deuteronomy 27:19 “Cursed is anyone who withholds justice from the foreigner...”

Ruth 2 “[Ruth] asked him, ‘Why have I found such favor in your eyes that you notice me – a foreigner?’”

1 Chronicles 29:14-16 “We are foreigners and strangers in [God’s] sight...”

Psalms 146 “The Lord watches over the foreigner and sustains the fatherless and the widow, but he frustrates the ways of the wicked...”

Psalms 147:1-6 “... [the Lord] heals the broken-hearted and binds up their wounds...”

Proverbs 14:31 “Whoever oppresses the poor shows contempt for their Maker...”

Proverbs 22:8-9, 16 “Whoever sows injustice reaps calamity...”

Proverbs 31:8-9 “Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves...”

Isaiah 1:17 “Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed...”

Isaiah 3:14-15 “... ‘What do you mean by crushing my people and grinding the faces of the poor?’ declares the Lord, the Lord Almighty...”

Isaiah 10:1-4 “Woe to those who make unjust laws...”

Jeremiah 7:5-7 “...Change your ways and your actions and deal with each other justly...”

Jeremiah 22:3, 13-17 “This is what the Lord says: Do what is just and right... do no wrong or violence to the foreigner...”

Malachi 3:5 “... ‘I will be quick to testify against... those who deprive foreigners among you of justice, but do not fear me,’ says the Lord Almighty.”

Matthew 2:13-15 “... So he got up, took the child [Jesus] and his mother during the night, and left for Egypt...”

Matthew 25:31-46 “... The King will reply, ‘I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me...’”

Luke 4:14-21 “... The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor...”

Luke 10:25-37 “Who is my neighbour?”

Romans 12:13 “Share with the Lord’s people who are in need...”

Romans 13:1-7 “... The authorities that exist have been established by God...”

Ephesians 2:11-22 “... For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility...”

Hebrews 13:1-2 “Keep on loving one another as brothers and sisters...”

James 2:5-9, 14-17 “... God [has] chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith...”

1 John 3:14-18 “... And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters...”

1 John 4:7-21 "Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God..."

Revelations 15:4b "All nations will come and worship before you, for your righteous acts have been revealed."

Prayers

Prayer #1

All-embracing God, no one is a stranger to you and no one is ever far from your loving care. In your kindness, watch over refugees and exiles.

For those separated from their loved ones when they fled war and conflict, reunite them and give them protection.

Inspire us to make our churches places of refuge for those in search of safety and peace. Help us to show by our words and our actions the welcome you gave to the strangers you met.

We pray this,

In the name of our God who shares divinity with us,
In the name of our God who shares humanity with us,
In the name of our God who unsettles and inspires us,
We give our praise and thanks. Amen.

From the Presbyterian Church of Canada workshop
Making Connections: Staying Rooted in an Uprooted World.

Affirmation of Faith

Leader: It is the will of God that no one should go away thirsty.

All: *It is the will of God that all who ask will receive.*

Leader: It is the will of God that none should be driven out of their homes and communities.

All: *It is the will of God that Christ's love be available to all the world.*

Leader: It is the will of God that we should be light to a waiting and broken world.

All: *It is the will of God that we love the world as Christ has loved us.*

From liturgy: *Offering Hospitality to Refugees* www.crcna.org

Prayer #2

God, our creator and sustainer,
you loved us long before we knew ourselves to be lovable
and love us still.

Give us, we pray, a greater awareness of your love for all people,
and a confidence in the action of your grace in us
and in your church.

Grow in us a greater awareness of the oppression
and acts of greed that create refugees.

Give us the courage to welcome the stranger among us
and the wisdom to speak up on their behalf.

We praise you for your mysterious ways among us:
for your presence in the midst of human affairs
even in ways we do not understand.

By the power of your Spirit, may we grow in the truth that compels us to act justly;
giving expression to the compassion of your son Jesus.

We pray in Christ's name, Amen.

*Adapted from More than Words: Prayer and Ritual for Inclusive Communities by Janet Schaffran
and Pat Kozk. Oak Park, IL: Meyer-Stone Books, 1988, p110.*

Prayer #3

Lord Jesus, you swept away centuries of prejudice and legalism when you reached out and accepted people as they were.

Help us understand that there is not one of us who deserves your grace, yet you grant to us all, whether Muslims, Jews, Christians or non-Christians; whether believers or non-believers; rich or poor; black or white; status or non-status¹⁹; the love of God.

Strengthen us Lord, where we are weak, and give us courage to withstand the seduction of a society obsessed with wealth and power. Help us build bridges instead of erecting barriers. Help us live in peace and harmony with your creation where no one is a stranger anymore.

We pray this,

In the name of our God who shares divinity with us,
In the name of our God who shares humanity with us,
In the name of our God who unsettles and inspires us,
We give our praise and thanks. Amen.

From the Presbyterian Church of Canada workshop
Making Connections: Staying Rooted in an Uprooted World.

¹⁹ "Non-status Indians" commonly refers to people who identify themselves as Indians but who are not entitled to registration on the Indian Register pursuant to the *Indian Act*. Some of them may be members of a First Nation.
www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca

Prayer #4

Holy God, you are a God on the move.
You move in the world and in our lives.
You shape and direct your creation and us.
Your people have always been on the move.
Moses led your people out of slavery in Egypt.
Mary and Joseph fled to Egypt with Jesus to escape the murderous King Herod.
Today people continue to move.
War, poverty, oppression and injustice drive people from their homes and countries.
We pray that you will move with today's refugees and migrants.
Comfort and sustain them.
For all who serve those forced to move in our world, and for all who are on the move.

We pray this,

In the name of our God who shares divinity with us,
In the name of our God who shares humanity with us,
In the name of our God who unsettles and inspires us,
We give our praise and thanks. Amen.

From the Presbyterian Church of Canada workshop
Making Connections: Staying Rooted in an Uprooted World.

Affirmation of Faith

Leader: It is the will of God that no one should go away thirsty.

All: *It is the will of God that all who ask will receive.*

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All: *It is the will of God that Christ's love be available to all the world.*

Leader: It is the will of God that we should be light to a waiting and broken world.

All: *It is the will of God that we love the world as Christ has loved us.*

From liturgy: *Offering Hospitality to Refugees* www.crcna.org

Prayer #5

God of mercy and grace, we see genuine mercy that renews our spirits to right the wrongs in our world, to love the unloved, and to free the oppressed. Deliver us from cheap grace; grace without repentance, grace without the cross, grace without transformation.

By global comparisons, we are people of power and privilege. Too often we have left politics to politicians, preaching to preachers, and the affairs of other nations to fate. We commit ourselves this day to engage in your world, to hear the cries of your people, certain of the presence of your Holy Spirit leading us.

Loving God, help us understand that you are present with us in every encounter with others whose lives have been touched by death. Help us to listen for your voice God, beneath the human word spoken to us. May we be bearers of life and may we know your life-giving love in our lives.

We pray this,

In the name of our God who shares divinity with us,
In the name of our God who shares humanity with us,
In the name of our God who unsettles and inspires us,
We give our praise and thanks. Amen.

From the Presbyterian Church of Canada workshop
Making Connections: Staying Rooted in an Uprooted World.

Prayers of Intercession

Leader or reader:

Let us pray for refugees and displaced people throughout the world. Let us pray for those who have fled (from...) and who are (in...) or other parts of the world.

We especially pray for those known personally to us whom we now name before you (name aloud the people or community group).

We pray for them in their need for the basic necessities of life – shelter and food. Grant that they may have the skills and equipment to build shelters and to grow food.

We pray for ourselves that we can also be like Zacchaeus and welcome people into our homes.

From liturgy: *Offering Hospitality to Refugees* www.crcna.org

Prayer for Women Refugees

by Jane Deren

On the road, seeking safe shelter;
In makeshift tents, feeding children;
In resettlement centers, rebuilding community;
In strange neighborhoods, looking for a compassionate face:
Long lines of women refugees,
Thousands, millions, all searching for that grace called home.

Grant them healing and wholeness, God of the vulnerable.
As you cherished Mary, cherish these women.

Grant us eyes to see them and the will to reach out,
So they may know they are not forgotten
But are welcomed in the global community,
Sisters to us all.

Prayer #6

Almighty and merciful God,
whose Son became a refugee
and had no place to call his own;
look with mercy on those who today
are fleeing from danger,
homeless and hungry.

Bless those who work to bring them relief;
inspire generosity and compassion in all our hearts;
and guide the nations of the world toward that day
when all will rejoice in your Kingdom of justice
and of peace.

We pray this,

In the name of our God who shares divinity with us,
In the name of our God who shares humanity with us,
In the name of our God who unsettles and inspires us,
We give our praise and thanks. Amen.

From *A Prayer for Refugees*. The first two stanzas of the prayer are from
www.cofe.anglican.org/worship/prayers/

For the Courage to Do Justice

O Lord,
open our eyes that we may see the needs of refugees;
open our ears that we may hear people's cries for justice;
open our hearts that we may assist sojourners near and far.

Show us where love, hope and faith are needed.

Use us as ministers of your healing.

Let us not be afraid
to protect the weak because of the anger of the strong,
or to defend the poor because of the power of the rich.

Sustain us so that in these coming days
we may be able to do some work of peace for you.

We ask these things in your blessed name. You taught us to pray...

<http://gbgm-umc.org/umcor/refugees/rworship.stm>

Prayer for Refugees and Victims of War

Lord God,
no one is a stranger to you
and no one is ever far from your loving care.
In your kindness, watch over refugees and victims of war,
those separated from their loved ones,
young people who are lost,
and those who have left home or who have run away from
home.
Bring them back safely to the place where they long to be
and help us always to show your kindness
to strangers and to all in need
Grant this through Christ our Lord.

<http://www.catholic.org/prayers/prayer.php?p=1460>

Call to Worship

Leader: Lord, we are your gathered people, come together to be one with refugees,
asylum seekers, and displaced people whose lives have been dislocated by war,
famine, and injustice. By our presence here, we express our solidarity with them in
their search for a new life, a new home, a new promise.

All: Lord, clear our eyes that we may see the suffering of the refugee.
Open our ears that we may hear the cries of those deep in despair.
Release our feet that we may walk on paths where some comfort we may spread.
Loosen our tongues that we might speak your words of hope and love.
Open our hearts that we may be truly hospitable to the stranger in our midst.

From liturgy: *Offering Hospitality to Refugees* www.crcna.org

Prayer of Confession

Leader: Knowing that our God walks with us in our confusion, our doubts, our failings, our struggles, we now come humbly before God to ask for mercy.

Leader: For the times we fail to offer hospitality to those in our world who suffer injustice, oppression, and poverty, we pray:

Response: *God, have mercy on us and your people.*

Leader: For the times we lack courage to address the causes of injustice, oppression, and poverty, we pray to our God:

Response: *God, have mercy on us and on your people.*

Leader: For the times we give in to despair and resignation when confronted with the injustice of our world, we pray to our God:

Response: *God, have mercy on us and on your people.*

Leader: For the times we allow our fears to triumph over the call to solidarity, we pray to our God:

Response: *God, have mercy on us and on your people.*

All: Merciful God, receive our petitions. Heal the brokenness in our hearts and in our world caused by injustice, indifference, selfishness, and fear. Open our hearts to hear the cries of your suffering people. Support us as we seek to respond in solidarity and with hospitality. Amen.

From liturgy: *Offering Hospitality to Refugees* www.crcna.org

Don't Call Me a Stranger

Don't call me a stranger;
I need to feel at home;
Especially when loneliness cools my heart.

Don't call me a stranger;
The soil we stand on is the same;
But mine is not "the promised land."

Don't call me a stranger;
The colour of my passport is different;
But the colour of our blood is the same.

Don't call me a stranger;
The language I speak sounds different;
But the feelings it expresses are the same.

Don't call me a stranger;
I toil and struggle in your land;
And the sweat of our brows is the same.

Don't call me a stranger;
Borders, we created them;
And the separations that results is the same.

Don't call me a stranger;
I am just your friend;
But you do not know me yet.

Don't call me a stranger;
We cry for justice and peace in different ways;
But our God is the same.

From *Study: Making Room Good Samaritan*.
Comboni Missionaries of the Heart of Jesus, Philippines, 1995 (abridged version).