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SETTLEMENT  
**HANDBOOK**

FOR SPONSORSHIP GROUPS

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"I was a stranger  
and you welcomed me..."

Associated Gospel Churches

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## CHAPTER 1- PRE-ARRIVAL PREPARATIONS

### Sponsor Training & Screening

Prior to the arrival of a former refugee family (known as newcomers once they arrive in Canada), the Core Team needs to have completed all SAH recommended training, screening, some element of team-led cultural awareness &/or some basic language learning.



### Develop Core Team Support Skills

The Core Team will work together for an extended period – possibly 3 years or more – from the time you start thinking about sponsorship to the time when newcomers launch out on their own.

Some attention to building your group's support skills will increase your effectiveness. This could include listening and communications skills, building your understanding of participation, developing consensus and effective decision-making.

These support skills are Team driven. Your SAH does not have resources to give you but encourages you to pursue activities &/or training that you may be aware of.

### Review the Settlement Plan



After a positive Visa Office Interview determination, teams need to review the Settlement Plan and make any necessary changes. This is a good time to identify or, if previously discussed, confirm what needs to be completed by whom and when.

Housing will need to be explored, conversations with prospective landlords need to happen, but we would still

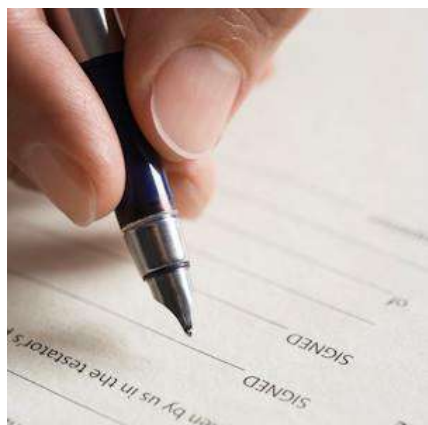
recommend no lease be signed until a Notice of Arrival Transmission (NAT) is received.

Perhaps donated items will need to be collected from the many homes where they have been stored to one temporary storage space. Alternately, waiting a few weeks and then implementing a good plan organizing people and transport to collect items before delivering them to the newly acquired home may be better.

These are the discussions teams need to have as arrival approaches. Thinking through the details and putting together a plan so that as much preparatory work is done beforehand is the main objective.

## Gathering the Forms

At arrival, a number of forms will need to be completed so newcomers can access everything to which they are entitled. Some paperwork is completed at the Port of Entry. The individual on the Core Team responsible for Forms should make a point to check any paperwork newcomers arrive with. If there are any errors (i.e.: name spellings, dates, etc.) the appropriate office will need to be notified for corrections.



Newcomers will need to apply for:

- Social Insurance Numbers (SIN) for every family member
- Provincial Medical Plan
- Canada Child Benefit & Provincial Benefits

Many Settlement Provider Organizations regularly complete these forms for the Government Assisted Refugees they work with. Contact the SPO near you prior to arrival to find out if they will complete these forms as part of their intake process for the newcomers you are expecting to welcome. If you will need to complete these forms with the newcomers on arrival it will be useful to have looked at the forms beforehand:

**Social Insurance Numbers** - Go to <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/sin/apply.html> and follow the prompts. Alternately, you can go to a Service Canada Centre in person with the newcomers and a staff person will complete the application on their behalf. To find an office near you go to <http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca/tbsc-fsco/sc-hme.jsp?lang=eng>

**Provincial Medical Plan** - Information and forms can be found on provincial web sites. Use the following formula to access your province's government website: [www.gov.xx.ca](http://www.gov.xx.ca) where the xx contains the 2-letter abbreviation for your province. The Health Canada website also lists all provincial and territorial Ministries of Health at <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/health-cards.html>. Scroll down to "Provincial/territorial ministries of health."

**Canada Child Benefit** - Information and forms can be found at <https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/campaigns/canada-child-benefit-indigenous.html>

## Prepare the Community

You may want to consider holding a community forum or distributing information about a particular country in your local community to raise awareness. This kind of preparation can be both rewarding and invaluable. While there is always the possibility that newcomers may face discrimination, stigmatization and misunderstanding, making the community aware of the refugees' arrival can help tremendously. Most people are interested in other people and customs, and you can take advantage of this natural curiosity to raise awareness.



Once permanent housing is found, it will be very valuable to let newcomer's future neighbours know a family new to Canada will be moving in shortly. Give the neighbours a contact number from among the Core Team so that if any issues arise (noise, "ignoring" of rules, etc.) then neighbours can call someone on the Core Team to help with communication. If a neighbour's only option is to call the building manager, that may lead to problems that could be resolved more easily by Core Team members.

## Upon Arrival

*"The week before the first family arrived was like a mixture of Exam Week and Christmas! When the plane landed on November 11 and the family walked off, they were met by a group of people who had already invested a great deal of feeling in them, waiting to say 'Welcome!' I have never seen a family come off the plane and look so scared..."*

Mixed emotions surrounding the actual arrival of sponsored refugees highlight how important the first meeting is and how lasting its impression. When you first receive the newcomers, be aware that they might be experiencing a bewildering number of things all at once, including:

- ❖ They may be exhausted and/or scared – they may not even be particularly happy to be in Canada. They have not left their country by choice. Their feelings may be quite different than yours and very mixed.
- ❖ Meeting new people can be exhausting. Carefully choose the people to greet the newcomers at the airport, and keep in mind that having too many greeters can be overwhelming. It may be best to have the Core Team only to the airport arrival. Although you may feel like celebrating immediately after arrival, the newcomers' first need will likely be for rest.

## Quality Assurance Monitoring

Throughout the Settlement Year, all settlement support – both financial and non-financial - needs to be tracked and kept on file for two years beyond the end of the sponsorship period. Sponsors must be able to **demonstrate** that settlement support has been provided should IRCC choose to monitor any particular group. A list of potential documents to collect for Quality Assurance Monitoring is available at <https://www.agcrsi.org/resources/arrival-settlement> in a document called **IRCC Monitoring Documents**.

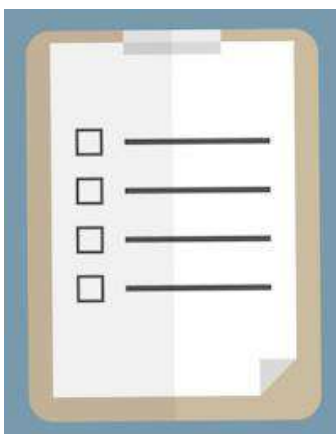
Some examples of Financial Support Documentation include:

- ✓ Copies of e-transfers from sponsors to newcomers.
- ✓ Copy of lease agreement.
- ✓ Receipts for transit passes.
- ✓ Temporary accommodation receipts, if applicable.

Some examples of Non-Financial Support Documentation include:

- ✓ Confirmation of enrolment in language classes &/or completion of language assessment.
- ✓ Note from trainer/teacher to demonstrate attendance in, or completion of workshops, training or orientation sessions.
- ✓ Copy of application for the CCB (Canada Child Benefit) or confirmation of its receipt.
- ✓ Documents demonstrating access to a settlement agency or community resources, such as a letter indicating proof of an initial intake meeting, or an appointment slip.

Please download the complete document and refer to it frequently over the settlement months.





## CHAPTER 2 – CONSIDERATIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL SETTLEMENT

### Our Mindset

During the first year, newcomers learn a tremendous amount. One of our main goals is to help them move from a high degree of dependence to a high degree of independence.

A sponsor's role is that of one who provides the means, supporting newcomers to *equip themselves*, make their own decisions and find out as much as possible about their new environment. Sponsors need to plan to empower the newcomers toward independence right from the beginning. As one seasoned sponsor said,

*"Whatever they choose to do once they are here, is right for them; there is no need for us to micromanage their family. It's not our decision to make."*

Some of the best questions to ask when interacting with newcomers include, "What can I help you with today?" or "What do you need/want to do today? How can I help?"

The first 6 weeks of settlement support are very time consuming. Sponsors need to be aware of this and plan accordingly. Sponsors with flexible work hours or who are retired will be invaluable in these early days.

Be clear with the family when they first arrive about who you are and what your relationship is to them. These same conversations will need to happen many times, quite possibly with every person on the Core Team during the first weeks of settlement. Encourage honesty in your interactions. If this is your first time to sponsor a family, tell them. Knowing this is a first for both of you will be helpful as days go by. If you have sponsored other families, be aware that every family is different and that although you have experience to draw on, you do not want to let that experience create a box that you are unwilling to move outside of.

### Cultural Adjustment

Culture shock is a period of disorientation experienced when encountering a new culture and is a normal part of cultural adjustment. While it can be painful, it usually results in profound learning. Cultural adjustment is typified by the stages described in the chart. Keep in mind that the pace at which people progress through these stages is highly individual, and family members may therefore progress at quite different rates. The process may last three to five years. You can provide specific supports at each stage:

| Stage                | Characterized by   | Support  |
|----------------------|--|--|
| Honeymoon            | <p>An initial reaction of enthusiasm, fascination, admiration and cordial, friendly, superficial relationships with hosts. Refugees have not come to Canada by choice but by necessity and may be less than enthusiastic. On the other hand, resettlement was an elusive solution to the unexpected trauma and resulting persecution they endured. Newcomers may be profoundly grateful.</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide orientation &amp; information.</li> <li>• Focus on the practical aspects of becoming competent in the new situation (i.e. getting around, language training, getting to know sponsors, getting familiar with school routines, etc.)</li> </ul>  |
| Challenge and Crisis | <p>Differences in language, concepts, values, and symbols lead to feelings of inadequacy, frustration, anxiety and anger. During this time, studies show that most people find the most difficult situations to be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• making friends</li> <li>• dealing with someone who is angry,</li> <li>• approaching others,</li> <li>• appearing in front of an audience,</li> <li>• getting to know people in-depth, intimately,</li> <li>• understanding jokes, humour, sarcasm,</li> <li>• dealing with people staring at you,</li> <li>• being with people that you do not know well,</li> <li>• complaining in public/dealing with unsatisfactory service</li> </ul> | <p>Give empathy, friendship and support; accept that anger and frustration are normal and legitimate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share information about culture shock.</li> <li>• Help newcomers to see their competencies.</li> <li>• Provide opportunities for the newcomers to talk about their culture.</li> <li>• Provide opportunities to learn together about cross-cultural communications.</li> <li>• Talk about the most difficult situations. share how these things are dealt with in both your cultures.</li> <li>• Share jokes from your different cultures; talk about why they translate (or not).</li> <li>• Set up a fun time for role plays or role reversals.</li> <li>• If the newcomers are suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder or other psychological problems, help them to access appropriate help.</li> </ul> |

|            |  |  |
|------------|--|--|
| Recovery   | <p>The crisis is resolved as the person learns the language and culture of the host country. Life factors known to reduce stress and aid recovery include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• time,</li> <li>• having a sense of purpose,</li> <li>• being socially or politically involved,</li> <li>• having (employment) opportunities,</li> <li>• maturity,</li> <li>• having strong social support,</li> <li>• having structure in life,</li> <li>• equal or greater status than before.</li> </ul> | <p>You will notice that in a number of these areas, neither you nor the newcomer has any control. In fact, in some areas such as a status, newcomers are likely to be worse off than before. However, there are things you can do to enhance a sense of purpose, belonging, and structure. During this time:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• work with the newcomers to find employment and to map out an employment strategy that will lead to a fulfilling job.</li> <li>• help newcomers to see the positive contribution they are making to your community,</li> <li>• as the newcomers' English abilities increase, set aside more times for storytelling – this is both an opportunity for the newcomers to teach you about their situation, and a way for them to structure/make sense of events.</li> </ul> |
| Adjustment | <p>Newcomers begin to work in and enjoy the new culture, though there may be some instances of anxiety and strain.</p>   | <p>Continue to provide friendship and support, and expect to learn as you walk alongside the newcomers.</p>  |

## Understanding Family Issues

Whenever there is a big change in a family's life, there is stress on the family system. Some circumstances are especially difficult for newcomers. For example, while some mothers stay home to take care of young children, their partners and other family members engage in activities outside the home which allow them to develop competencies, build friendships and get comfortable within the new environment. Watching this, the mother may soon find herself feeling isolated, friendless and depressed. Depression may make leaving the house very difficult particularly when transportation is complicated during the winter weather.

Gender-based cultural norms may differ in Canada from what the newcomers are used to and may add to the stress experienced within the family unit. Making friends outside

of the home and particularly at gatherings with both males and females present may be challenging for some.

Inter-generational issues may also arise. In general, teenagers tend to experience more difficulty adjusting, at least initially, when compared to other family members. They often struggle to fit in with other different sub-cultures of their peers, relate to adults according to new customs, and come to terms with new expectations and different sets of values.

Inter-generational issues and role reversals also occur within newcomer families where young children learn the new language and generally adapt faster than their parents or older siblings. In many situations, parents rely on their children to interpret at important appointments, over the phone, while filling out forms and while shopping. This is more responsibility than children should handle and, at best, inappropriate. Whenever possible, interpreters should be arranged, for example through settlement agencies, to avoid the additional burden on children.

It is also important to orient and inform newcomers about Canadian child protection laws and the definition and legal implications of domestic violence. What may be considered *discipline* in one context might be considered abuse in Canada. It is equally important to be aware of where to turn to for help. Find out whether there is a trauma counseling centre, a community centre, a social service agency, or a women's shelter in your community to which you can turn to for help in a crisis. Provide emergency numbers to the newcomers in their Welcome Binder.

### What can you do?

- ❖ Recognize that you cannot fix the situation. The newcomers will be in a state of flux for a long time and will face cultural and social challenges. Accept that the struggle is normal. Your goal is to be supportive throughout the year.
- ❖ Talk about how family life differs in Canada from the newcomers' country.
- ❖ Highlight the family's strengths and areas of competency. Help them to see how much they are achieving in their new situation.
- ❖ Be especially supportive of women experiencing isolation. Try to help them develop relationships outside the home and to learn English. If necessary, provide extra English tutoring in the home.
- ❖ If a family situation is severe, look into professional counseling with a focus on specialized cross-cultural counseling.

## Non-Accompanying Family Members

If the newcomer family has family members abroad, their first focus is likely on contacting these family members. The family separation may delay the newcomers' ability to focus on their own settlement and may require counseling and support. The Red Cross offers a tracing and reunion service that can be of assistance.

## Post Traumatic Stress, Torture and Healing

Refugees may have experienced traumatic situations of deprivation, violence, and torture. **Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)** is an anxiety disorder that affects people who were exposed to rape, domestic violence, child abuse, war, accidents, natural disasters, political torture and other violent events. Symptoms of PTSD include depression, flashbacks, nightmares, experiences of overwhelming emotions of grief and fear, numbness, avoidance of intimacy, irritability, trouble concentrating and remembering, dizziness, nausea, panic attacks and more.

As a trigger of PTSD, torture affects every part of the person and inflicts deep psychological, emotional and spiritual wounds, in addition to the physical injuries. The **Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture (CCVT)**<sup>1</sup> notes that even though

“torture may be used to obtain information or signed confessions, this is not its primary purpose. Torture is directed towards instilling and reinforcing a sense of powerlessness and terror in victims and the societies in which they live. It is a process which generates a situation designed to destroy the physical and psychological capabilities of survivors to function as viable individuals.”

As a supporter of someone who has survived torture, this is important for you to know. Gaining a sense of control over one's own life is critical to a survivor. Therefore, your support should never *take over* the newcomer's life; it must always result in empowerment.

While all sufferers of PTSD may experience the aforementioned symptoms, victims of torture face additional repercussions. They may be unwilling to disclose information about their experiences, and may feel suspicious, frightened, or anxious to forget what has happened. These feelings may discourage them from seeking the help they need. In addition, everyday situations may throw them into a state of terror. Newcomers may be adversely affected by officials in uniform, signing forms, visiting doctors' offices, being admitted to hospitals or even



<sup>1</sup> <http://ccvt.org/>

encountering staff of government agencies. Many treatment methods are used to aid recovery from PTSD and torture; whatever treatment is recommended, they all have in common an emphasis on restoring a sense of control and safety.

**As a group, there are several important things to be aware of and act on:**

- ❖ PTSD must be dealt with by trained professionals.
- ❖ Love and support are critical for healing to take place. Your group can have a very important role in that.
- ❖ Each person's healing proceeds at its own pace. You have no way of knowing how long it may take for an individual to heal, nor can you judge whether the individual has made enough progress. Your role is to support and encourage, not to judge.
- ❖ Maintain appropriate boundaries. Empathy is appropriate; taking on the emotions as if they were your own is not. Only the individual can heal – it is not something you can do for someone. There is a delicate balance here, which you will need to examine often. If you are providing support for someone in therapy, it may be appropriate at some point to speak with the therapist to find out how to be most supportive and how to maintain appropriate boundaries.
- ❖ Healing is hard work. Do not be surprised if the individual seems exhausted, distant, or overwhelmed.
- ❖ If you are providing support, it is appropriate to find ways to celebrate together the individual's progress and acknowledge his or her strengths and successes.



## CHAPTER 3 – WEEK OF ARRIVAL

### Airport Arrival

The airport arrival is often a much-anticipated moment for the sponsoring group. There are generally a lot of 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 have something to look for in the sea of people at the arrival hall.



- Keep in mind that the newcomers might not have left their country by choice and have many times been forced to leave their family, or parts of it, behind. Remember that their feelings can be different to yours and might even be mixed between relief of arriving to Canada and sadness for leaving their family behind. Meeting too many people at the airport might be overwhelming for the newcomers, especially after the long trip they just made. It is therefore recommended to have a smaller group meeting the newcomers at the airport. Although the sponsoring group might feel like celebrating, the newcomers probably need some rest.
- For people arriving at the airport it might take time to go through customs so be patient while waiting. Wait at the passenger pick-up area until the refugees arrive with an IRIS (Immigration Reception and Information Services) representative if they are arriving at one of Canada's major international airports. Staff at IRIS helps the refugees through the Canadian customs and immigration at the airport. They wear red sweaters and are easily recognizable.
- Remember to organize for a translator to attend the airport arrival if language might be a problem for communicating with the newcomers. It may be overwhelming with the long trip to Canada and then to arrive in a country where they do not understand the language. To have someone speaking the newcomers' language at arrival may ease some discomfort that might exist for the newcomers. (If a translation person cannot be arranged, you might want to try a translation app like iTranslate which can be downloaded for free. Just be aware that these apps are not 100% accurate.)
- If this is a BVOR sponsorship<sup>2</sup>, the newcomers may not be aware of your role as a sponsoring group when they arrive. It depends on how much information they



<sup>2</sup> BVOR = Blended Visa Office Referred. <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/refugees/help-outside-canada/private-sponsorship-program/blended-visa-office-program.html>

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 also emphasize that you will be around to help them out when needed. This way they learn which people will be returning to assist them throughout the first year. This should also be repeated at a later occasion such as when talking about expectations of the newcomers (page 18) as the airport arrival can be overwhelming and it might be difficult to take in all the information given at once.

- Especially in the beginning, it is important not to separate parents and children without the parents understanding or agreement. It might seem more convenient to only bring the parents when going for appointments etc. but this can become an uncomfortable experience for both parents and children. Remember what they have experienced and are experiencing is probably very traumatic and staying together might be a great comfort for them. If there is ever a need to separate parents and children for any reason, make sure that you do it with the parents' agreement.
- As a sponsoring group you will probably want to take pictures with the newcomers when they arrive at the airport. Remember that they are probably very tired after the long trip and are faced with many new impressions at once. If you decide to take pictures, ask the newcomers if it is ok and only take a few pictures to make the process quick.
- During the first day check the Confirmation of Permanent Residence Forms to ensure that all names, gender, and dates of birth are correct. Contact the AGC's SAH Representative if there are any concerns, or if the newcomer arrived with a Single Journey Travel document that was taken away from them. The AGC's SAH Representative may be able to contact Port of Entry to get it back if it is reported immediately.
- Upon arrival in Canada, the newly arrived refugee(s) will be asked to provide a mailing address in Canada to which the Permanent Resident (PR) card will be sent. The sponsoring group will want to provide an address to the refugees before they travel even if the address is that of someone on the Core Team. The address information will be provided to the immigration officers during arrival at the airport. When a Canadian address is provided, their Permanent Resident cards should arrive within a few weeks at the address provided (check status here: [http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/my\\_application/status.asp?s=7](http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/my_application/status.asp?s=7) ).
  - If the newcomers were not able to provide the address at arrival the newcomer's "Representative" or the AGC's SAH Representative can





update the information online

([https://services3.cic.gc.ca/ecas/?app=coanotify&lang=en&\\_ga=1.236556801.1897246572.1412707508](https://services3.cic.gc.ca/ecas/?app=coanotify&lang=en&_ga=1.236556801.1897246572.1412707508) )

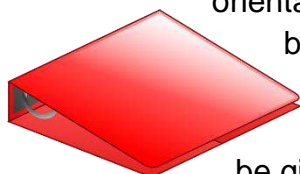
- Newcomers who are not able to provide an address at the airport will be given an IMM5456 (Address Notification—Permanent Resident Card). The sponsoring group can assist them in completing this form before returning it to the PR Card Processing Centre, however you may note that completing the form online is an easier and faster option. **To avoid a \$50 processing fee, the refugee's permanent address in Canada must be provided to IRCC within 180 days after entering Canada.**

## First Day

After picking the refugees up at the airport there are a few things that need to be covered during the first day. Remember that the refugees are probably tired and overwhelmed from travelling so try to keep information to a minimum during the day of arrival. Things that you need to go through during the first day:

### A Welcome Binder

It can be a great benefit to provide the newcomers with a **welcome binder** for their orientation. This binder should be prepared ahead of time. As there will be a lot of information to take in for the newcomers during their first week, having it in written format as well gives them a chance to look over the information whenever they need it. The binder can be given to the newcomers on the first day but do not expect them to look through it right away. After the first week's orientation you can ask them to go back to review the information in the binder.



This welcome binder should contain information such as how to use the appliances in their home, how to call 911, a list of necessary phone numbers, such as the contact information for the members of the Core Team, etc. You can also suggest that they use the binder for all their important paperwork regarding immigration. The information is most easily provided in key points. This binder is not a replacement for providing the information verbally but is a supplement that the newcomers can use as a resource to go back to when needed. **Make sure that it is translated into their language, as well as in English.** If you need assistance with translation, contact a settlement agency which you can find at: <https://www.cic.gc.ca/english/newcomers/services/index.asp>

It is suggested that the group provides a picture of each Core Team member with their name attached as the newcomers can be overwhelmed by all the new people and will want to know who they can trust.

Introduce newcomers to all the members of the Core Team and explain how your team has divided the responsibilities so they will learn who to contact for any particular questions or issue they may have. Having said that, if they contact the “wrong” person for some reason, it should be the Core Team that makes the adjustment, not the newcomers. The “wrong” Core Team member should either contact the “right” person to connect with the newcomer or manage the situation themselves and then report to the rest of the team. Do NOT redirect the newcomer to make another call in those first few weeks.

Meeting Core Team members early in the sponsorship is important even if a family member in Canada will take on most of the support requirements.

Newcomers will need to know how to contact someone on the Core Team at all times. If English or French is poor, you may need to develop a system to communicate when help is needed.

#### Important emotional considerations include:

- Be sure newcomers know how to contact their family overseas after arrival.
- Be sensitive to the emotional ups and downs newcomers will experience. Give them privacy and enough time to rest.
- Be aware of the overload newcomers might experience as they are introduced to many, many new things all at once. Be patient and prepared to explain things as often as needed. Do not assume that the newcomers feel comfortable asking for information or help; be aware of signs of confusion.
- Be sensitive to culture shock and the frustrations of adjustment.
- Be aware of newcomers’ needs to make their own decisions from the very beginning. Never make a decision *for* the newcomers; make the decision *with* the newcomer. Try whenever possible to be a mentor providing alternatives and resources, leaving the final decision to them.

#### Emergency & Medical Assistance

- One of the most important things to do during the day of arrival is to give the newcomers information about how to call 911 in case of emergency as well as providing them with a phone to do so. The sponsoring group also needs to explain the difference between calling 911 and the local police office and provide them that phone number as well.
- Provide information about the nearest walk-in clinic and hospital and explain the differences between the two such as to which one they should go for certain specific services. Check with your local settlement agency or research online to learn about provincial health programs such as Telehealth Ontario or HealthLink BC.



- Provide a list of important phone numbers that the newcomers need, such as emergency numbers and a list of phone numbers to Core Team members who are available 24 hours during the first days after arrival in case of emergency.

### Basic Necessities


- Make sure that the newcomers know how to use appliances, such as shower, toilet, telephone, stove, fire alarm etc.
  - Have easy to make snacks/food/drinks for the first couple of days. You can research and buy food items popular in their country that can make them feel more at home.
  - Provide a small amount of cash for the newcomers.
  - Give them the opportunity to call their family inside and outside Canada. Provide them with a phone card or phone with a phone plan and explain how it works and how much they can call. If the newcomers must buy the phone themselves, take them to a store where they can buy a cheap phone and make sure they get a plan or phone card that suits their needs.
  - Before you leave arrange for a time to meet the next day.
- ✓ For a specific list of tasks that are **required immediately upon arrival** go to page 63.
- ✓ For a specific list of tasks that are **required during the first two weeks** go to page 64.

### Visits and Privacy

During the settlement process it is important to remember your role as a sponsoring group in relation to the newcomers. **It is important to respect the privacy of newcomer families, especially in their own home.** Think about how you would like people to treat your privacy if you were in the newcomer's situation. It is important to continuously reflect on the power differentials that exist between sponsors and newcomers.

One of the more important points related to visits and privacy is the visits with female refugees. Due to the power imbalance between a sponsoring group member and the refugees, no men from the sponsoring group should be alone with sponsored newcomer women, especially in their home. The women may have a history of abuse or have experienced other situations which have led to the lack of trust in men; therefore, it is important to be extra conscious about this. The women may also feel uncomfortable being alone with a man for religious or cultural reasons. **Make sure to always have a woman from the sponsoring group present when a man visits newcomer women.** This is out of respect for the woman. If there are concerns about this ethical practice, please contact the AGC's SAH Representative.

Here are some guidelines on what you can do to guard their privacy:

- Call ahead of time to make an appointment before going to visit the newcomers in their home. This shows them that it is common practice to call before a visit as well as respecting their privacy.
- If people wish to contact the newcomers, then relay that information to the newcomers and help them make the connection if they wish to do so.
- Ask permission before taking photos. 
- Ask for permission before posting anything to social media that refers to or involves them.
- Avoid sharing unnecessary private information about the newcomers within the sponsoring group such as information that you would not like to be shared about yourself. Only discuss matters about the newcomers with people who are directly involved with the settlement support, and private or medical information only with those who need to know. That will not be everyone on the Core Team.
- Do not publish or forward the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of any member of the newcomer family to anyone or any organization outside of the sponsoring group without the newcomers' specific permission.
- Do not discuss the newcomers' private issues with anyone without their permission. This includes discussions with other members of the Core Team as well as settlement organizations.
- [Make sure to include the newcomers in conversations when they are present, especially conversations that are about them.](#) This is important even though their English may not be strong to make them feel included, listened to and understood.
- Do not expect settlement agencies and other organization to keep you completely informed on their work with the newcomers, the workers are bound by privacy legislation.
- Provide protection from media by acting as an intermediary and finding out the interest of the refugees in responding to media.

## Managing Expectations of Sponsors

Core Team and sponsor volunteers may have certain expectations about how the sponsorship should be done and what you imagine the results of the sponsorship will be for the newcomers. It is really important to remember that things do not always go as planned and this might not be a negative outcome. It is good to always keep an open mind as well as to be flexible in doing things differently than what might have been planned from the beginning.

- It is very important for sponsors to be conscious of their own expectations with regards to newcomers, especially when it comes to attending events. When inviting the newcomers to events, you must ask them if they would like to attend the event and not assume so. **Newcomers need to be free to decide for themselves how much they would like to be involved in social gatherings.**
- When it comes to church related events, it is important to explain freedom of expression of religion to the newcomers. They might have been persecuted for their religious beliefs and are afraid to express their beliefs openly. Explain the Charter of Rights and Freedoms (specifically freedom of religion, belief and expression) in an easy-to-understand way with an interpreter present if needed. *See Appendix C.*
- You can invite the newcomers to talk about their religion, but it should never be forced, and it is up to them if they feel comfortable enough to do so. Do not assume that the newcomers have any specific religious affiliation. You can describe what church you belong to and that it is open to people from other religions as well.
- One important aspect of events and social gatherings **is to not single the newcomers out or ask them to speak on the spur of the moment in front of a group of people.** This can be an extremely uncomfortable experience and may make them feel less as if they belong and more of an outsider.
- In all, be conscious of your own expectations. Ask the newcomers before taking them out to a social event and always be aware of the power you hold as a sponsors and how any questions you ask may be seen from the newcomers' perspective. They will feel an obligation to attend events since you are helping them with their new life in Canada. You cannot remove the power imbalance, but by being aware and listening carefully, you can minimize that power difference. Ask questions, explain things clearly and **make sure they understand they are free to say no.**

## Expectations and Responsibilities of Newcomers

It is necessary to **discuss expectations and responsibilities with the newcomers soon after arrival**. This is important so that everyone involved has the same understanding of who is responsible for what. If there is a language barrier you may want to have an interpreter present to avoid misunderstandings. Things to be explained and discussed include, but are not limited to:

- Finances
  - Monthly support to be provided by sponsors including, if applicable, Child Tax Benefit etc.
  - Living expenses – rent, food, phone bill, etc., and what ‘living expenses’ include,
  - Who pays for what (newcomers vs. sponsoring group),
  - Bills – understanding who pays the bills, how much, how to, etc.
  - Travel loan – what is it, how much do they pay each month, when do they pay and how do they make the payments,
  - Savings – if possible,
  - Banking – understanding of bank card, bank accounts, bank fees, cheques, bank machines, etc.
- Schooling/Employment
  - LINC/ESL – importance and requirement to learn English, when & where to sign up etc.
  - Register children for school – how to register, vaccinations, legal requirement for children 6-16, etc.
  - Employment/Work experience – importance of Canadian work experience, possibility of part-time or evening work, volunteering, etc.
- Emergencies
  - What to do in case of emergency

### Newcomer Responsibilities:

- ▶ Pay for the cost of transportation to their final destination in Canada.
- ▶ Repay any immigration loans and other debts they take on.
- ▶ Participate in planning their immediate and long-term future.
- ▶ Keep the Core Team informed of their plans and cooperate with sponsors.
- ▶ Show initiative in adjusting to life in Canada.
- ▶ Contribute to their own finances once they secure employment.
- ▶ Be law-abiding.
- ▶ Become independent.

- How & when to call 911
- Non-emergency options – walk-in clinics, local police, etc.
- Phone, internet & TV
  - Different cell phone plans
  - Cost of cell phone, internet and TV
  - How to call abroad in the most cost-effective way
- Medical & Dental needs
  - Provincial Health care cards
  - IFH-Interim Federal Health coverage
  - Dental

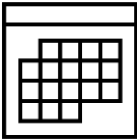
It is beneficial to have the main points above written down in a document that can be left with the newcomers after the conversation. If possible, this will be most helpful if it is **in the newcomers' native language. It is necessary to follow up on everything discussed many times in the days and weeks after** as a reminder and to ensure understanding.

## Communication

Good communication among members of the sponsoring group as well as with the newcomers is significant for a successful sponsorship. Spoken as well as written communication and documentation is important to avoid misunderstandings and to make sure that everyone is on the same page.

- The sponsoring group needs to work as one unit, and not as separate individuals, to create the best possible sponsorship. Therefore, clear communication and documentation will help keep everyone in the sponsoring group updated on what has been done and what needs to be done in the settlement.
 
  - A structured way of sharing information among the sponsoring group members is important to effectively work together as a group and keep everyone informed. One way of sharing information within the sponsoring group is through **Dropbox**, a free file hosting service where the group can create a secured account with a login where you can share documents, pictures etc. Dropbox allows users to create a special folder on each of their computers, which Dropbox then synchronizes so that it appears to be the same folder (with the same contents) regardless of

which computer is used to view it. Every member can therefore access all files in all folders as they will have the same content. Files placed in this folder are also accessible through a website and mobile phone applications. To sign up go to: <https://www.dropbox.com/>

- Another way of sharing information is through **Google Docs/Google Drive**. This is a free, online service offered by Google. It allows users to create and edit documents online so it can be accessible on any computer. This is a step-by-step guide on how to access Google Drive: <https://support.google.com/drive/answer/2424384?co=GENIE.Platform%3DDesktop&hl=en>
- We recommend that you use one of the above file sharing tools if you do not have another alternative. We do not recommend that online communication is done through email *only* as it is important to have a record to go back to and it can easily become disorganized and confusing.
- After spending any time with newcomers, sponsors should **send an update** email to the others on their team describing the time spent together, and any details or incidents that others will either enjoy or should know about. It takes time but will save much grief and miscommunication as your team attempts to work as a single unit. This will help to keep everyone up to date on what is going on and it is a great way to share the moments of joy. Someone on the Core Team (admin/secretary) should be responsible to print important emails to keep on file by date.
- You will also want to create an **on-line calendar** that will be specifically for the **Core Team** to track appointments, birthdays, events, visits, etc. of the newcomer family. This can be done easily with Google calendar or another platform with which team members are familiar. It needs to be one that all Core Team people have access to view and edit as needed. This is not a calendar for the family to use; it is a calendar for the Core Team to keep track of appointments, visits, and who is doing what when with the family. 
- When receiving questions or requests from the newcomers, **it is a good rule of thumb not to give promising answers without consulting with the rest of the sponsoring group members**. Not saying yes or no in the moment will help to make sure no promises will be made that the sponsoring group members may not be able to fulfill later. Instead of saying a direct 'yes' or 'no' you can give answers such as "I will look into that and get back to you" or "I will check with



the others and talk to you once we have an answer.” It is important that the newcomers don’t get mixed messages or lose trust when people are not able to follow through on promises.

- When explaining things for the newcomers it is important to make sure that what you have explained has been understood. People may nod, respond ‘yes’ to questions, or give a general response simply to be polite. This does not mean they have comprehended the message. Here are some tips for creating better communication:
  - Write down key points in both English and the newcomers’ language, or if possible, ask them to write down the key points themselves.
  - Ask the newcomers to repeat key points back to you.
  - Review key points together several times over several days, both orally and by reviewing the welcome binder.
  - Always invite them to ask questions.

## Immediate Medical Needs

Newcomers may have medical needs that should be looked at soon after arrival. For this they can use a walk-in clinic or visit a community health center. Remember that they might need an interpreter, so see if you can find a clinic with staff that speaks their language or arrange for an interpreter to accompany them. Google translate can be used in an emergency but be aware that it is not a reliable translation app for important communication. Inform the newcomer that they need to bring their Provincial Health Card or IFH card with them every time they go to seek medical attention.



Most newcomers complete application forms for IFHP and Provincial Health cards at the port of entry (POE). Sponsors should look at the interim paperwork to ensure names and personal information are correct. If that did not happen at the POE, then sponsors will need to help newcomers complete those forms, so they have access to medical care as soon as possible. Contact your SAH representative if you need help with that.

## Interim Federal Health Program (IFHP)

If newcomers did not complete application forms for IFHP at the POE, than it is important to apply for IFHP as soon as possible to receive medical coverage for newcomers in the period prior to qualifying for provincial health care coverage and for the extended benefits included in the IFHP (i.e.: basic dental coverage).

If the newcomers are sponsored through the Blended Visa Office Referred (BVOR) program, the application for IFH will be done during their Resettlement Assistance

Program (RAP) interview with IRCC. At least one member from the sponsoring group needs to be present at that interview.

### Applying for the IFHP Program:

If this form was not completed at the POE, newcomers must fill out an IFHP application form once they arrive in Canada. The application requires a photograph which must fit the requirements exactly or the form will not be accepted. If the form is accepted, newcomers will begin to receive IFHP coverage immediately.

- A guide to the IFH application can be found [here](#).

To learn about the services that the IFHP covers, visit [Interim Federal Health Program: what is covered?](#) for downloadable pdfs of Basic Coverage, Supplemental Coverage, Dental Benefit Grid and Prescription Drug Coverage.

Beneficiaries of the IFHP can get health-care services or products in Canada from health-care providers who are registered with Medavie Blue Cross. For a list of registered health-care professionals in your area, visit [Medavie Blue Cross](#).



Newcomers must inform the healthcare provider prior to receiving the service that they have coverage under the IFHP and therefore healthcare providers will need to send their bill to Medavie Blue Cross. Newcomers must provide the doctor with the Interim Federal Health Program Certificate they received from IRCC. To ensure validity, the doctor will take the papers and run a check by phone or online.

The eligibility or coverage type is based on the particular immigration status. The initial period will be no more than 12 months from the time of arrival in Canada but can be extended for cases receiving government support. (i.e.: JAS<sup>3</sup> cases)

- For more in-depth information on how to apply for an IFH extension please refer to: [Guide 5568 - Application for Interim Federal Health Program Coverage \(IFHP\)](#)

*Be aware that the regulations for IFHP change quite often and **we might not have been able to update the information in this document to reflect current policies**. If you have any questions or concerns about IFHP, please visit the Guide 5568 listed above for the most up-to-date information.*

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<sup>3</sup> JAS = Joint Assistance Sponsorship. <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/refugees/help-outside-canada/private-sponsorship-program/joint-assistance-program.html>

## Provincial Health Coverage

Newcomers should also apply for health insurance from their provincial government as soon as possible upon arrival in Canada. In most provinces, each family member will receive their own health card with a personal health identification number. The exception is Manitoba, where only adults receive health insurance cards and children are placed under their parents' card. Be sure to recommend to the family that they carry their health insurance card at all times in case of an emergency.

Application forms are available from your province's ministry of health online or in person.

When applying for a health insurance card, the newcomer will likely need to provide identification such as:

- Proof of Citizenship or eligible Immigration status.
- Proof of Residency in the province.
- Support of Identity.

Be sure to take note of which proofs are required in your province when researching online.

## Provincial & Territorial Photo Cards

In Canada, Provincial drivers' licenses have been the primary form of government issued photo ID used by Canadians. However, many Canadian residents do not drive. In recent years most Canadian provinces have begun to produce photo ID cards for Canadians who do not drive.

By having a Photo Card, the newcomers will not need to carry their Permanent Resident card with them and can keep it safely at home instead. *A person cannot have a driver's license and a Photo Card at the same time.* This is an official identification card and can be used as valid proof of identification in day-to-day business transactions. See provincial specifics below.

### British Columbia

<https://www.icbc.com/driver-licensing/getting-licensed/Pages/Apply-for-an-enhanced-licence-ID-or-BCID.aspx>

### Alberta

<https://www.alberta.ca/get-id-card.aspx>

### Saskatchewan

<https://www.sgi.sk.ca/non-driver-id>



### Manitoba

<https://www.mpi.mb.ca/Pages/apply-for-id-card.aspx>

### Ontario

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/ontario-photo-card>

### Quebec

As of 2021 Quebec does not have a photo card for non-drivers. Residents can use their Quebec health insurance cards as ID.

## Social Insurance Number (SIN)

If the immigration services at the airport helped the newcomers fill in the application for the SIN card at arrival, you do not need to go to a Service Canada Centre. Otherwise, an application for a SIN card needs to be done either in person at a Service Canada Centre or on-line at <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/sin/apply.html>



Find a Service Canada Centre near you by searching for "Service Canada Centre" online.

The applicant needs to provide **primary & secondary documents** at the time of application.

### Primary Document:

The primary document is an official document that proves his or her status in Canada. The document has to be an original. If the name on this document is different from the name the client currently uses, they will also need to provide a **supporting document**.

One of the following primary documents can be used for permanent residents:

- **Permanent Resident Card** issued by IRCC.
- **Confirmation of Permanent Residence** accompanied by a travel document (i.e. a foreign passport),
- **Status Verification**, also known as "Verification of Status". This document is only acceptable to amend a SIN record or to confirm an existing SIN.

### Secondary Document:

The secondary document must be a valid document issued by a Canadian government (federal, provincial or territorial) or be a foreign passport. The following information must appear on the document:

- legal name (surname and given name), and
- date of birth

### Supporting Documents:

A supporting document is required if the name on your primary document is different from the one you are currently using or different from the name on your secondary document. Your supporting document must be an original, legal document, written in English or French, indicating the name you currently use.

- Certificate of marriage, record of solemnization of marriage or marriage statement (or a similarly titled document, depending on the issuing authority) to support your family name after marriage. (Note: This does not apply to Quebec residents, regardless of where they were married after April 1, 1981).
- Divorce Decree, certificate of Divorce or Decree Absolute issued in accordance with the Supreme Court of Canada for the dissolution of a marriage to support the family name requested on the SIN record when it does not appear on the primary document.
- Legal change-of-name certificate or court order document issued in accordance with provincial name change legislation.
- Adoption order certified by a Canadian Court (applies to adoptions in Canada only).
- Notarial certificate, also called notarial adoption certificate, issued by the country of origin of a child adopted abroad and used by the adoptive parents to have the SIN issued in the adopted child's Canadian name.
- Request to Amend Record of Landing issued by Immigration, Refugees & Citizenship Canada and used to amend a Record of Landing or a Confirmation of Permanent Residence document.

### Important Notices:

- There is no fee to apply for a Social Insurance Number (SIN).
- On March 31, 2014, Service Canada began issuing SINs in paper format only (confirmation of SIN letter). **Production of the plastic SIN cards has stopped.**
- Original proof of identity documents are required to apply for a SIN; photocopies are not accepted.

If everything is in order, the applicant will receive their SIN during their visit.

At some point in the weeks following, make sure that you explain to the newcomers the importance of the SIN number, why they have it, how it needs to be kept confidential

and should only be provided to those who are authorized to use it etc. More information can be found here:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/sin/reports/shared-responsibility.html>

## Housing

When looking for permanent housing before the arrival of the newcomers, the landlord will probably ask one of the sponsoring group's members to sign as a guarantor. A Core Team member(s) could sign temporarily, or if the landlord agrees, sponsors could instead provide a letter from the church or from the Canadian family, explaining how the sponsoring group will support the newcomers during the year of the sponsorship. When arranging for permanent housing, either before or after arrival, **choose housing that the newcomers will be able to afford themselves once the sponsorship is over.** This provides more comfort and security for the newcomers and as a sponsoring group you will not need to worry about assisting them with finding other housing at the end of the sponsorship.



If permanent housing is not arranged before arrival it should be done as soon as possible together with the newcomers. Even after they have arrived and can sign the lease, the landlord might ask for a letter from the church as well. It is good to have a letter prepared ahead of time. If the landlord asks for proof of income from the newcomers, you can provide them with a letter from your sponsoring group indicating your financial support throughout the year. If the newcomers are being given government support from the Resettlement Assistance Program (BVOR sponsorships), you can provide a print-out of the breakdown of their monthly payments and may be able to ask for a letter confirming this support from IRCC.

Many newcomers who come to Canada, especially people who have lived in refugee camps, are often used to living in close quarters with each other. For them it might not be a problem for several people to share one bedroom, especially if that can lower the rent for them.

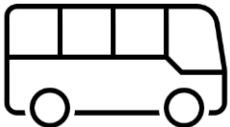
However, in Canada, there are usually by-laws regulating occupancy standards. Sponsors need to be aware of occupancy standards in their local municipality. The Core Team member responsible for housing will need to spend some time to research tenancy issues and laws in their area to be informed prior to looking for housing for newcomers and to adequately inform fellow Core Team members.

Many newcomers arrive mid-month and may require temporary housing for a few days or weeks. Temporary housing could be Air BnB, hotel, or shared space with a sponsor. Sponsors should have a plan for temporary housing should it be needed.

## Neighborhood Orientation

During the first days after arrival, the sponsoring group needs to give the newcomers an orientation in their neighborhood to make them feel more comfortable with their surroundings. An orientation can include but is not limited to:

- **Food and shopping:** Ask the newcomers about their preferences when it comes to food, such as halal or certain ethnic food items. Stocking food that they are used to 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. Show the newcomers where they can go grocery shopping while keeping their budget in mind. Bulk stores and local produce stores can be much cheaper than the big-chain grocery stores. Look for an inexpensive grocery store in their area.
  - Remember that the newcomers might be very unfamiliar with Canadian appliances and cooking for different reasons. They might need a lot of guidance with preparing meals. You can also teach them how to cook on a budget.
  - Shopping might be very different in their country of origin and they might be used to bargaining on prices at the stores. Explain to the newcomers the customs around “getting good deals” in Canada – i.e. watching for sales, looking through flyers, coupon shopping, Checkout 51, etc.
- **Parks and green areas:** Since many newcomers live in apartments it is nice to show them areas where they can enjoy the outdoors.
- **Transportation:** many newcomers are dependent on public transportation. Before arrival you might want to pick up a map of the public transportation and a map for the city. To understand how the public transportation system works, it is best to **go with** the newcomers on the bus - assist them as they learn how to buy tickets, how much they cost, how to get from their home to their ESL classes, the medical clinic, their dentist. This will take several trips, but you want to build their independence so that in the weeks ahead, they can make these
 





trips on their own. Keep in mind the limited resources the newcomers have and make sure you find the most economical options.

- Cycling may be a viable option in your community. Check with newcomers before purchasing bicycles on their behalf.
- **Library:** the public library usually gives people access to free services such as borrowing books, music and DVD's, internet access, computer access etc. Some branches also have computer learning centers where people can take 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 and ask about how to apply for a library card. Families will likely need to bring along ID with their name AND address for identification.
- **Clothing:** if the newcomers arrive in the winter, you must provide some weather appropriate clothing for them at arrival. If they require new clothes you should go with the newcomers to different stores so they can buy clothes appropriate for the weather that also suits their cultural needs and budget.
  - Advise the newcomers on how to dress appropriate for the climate; winter will probably be colder than they have expected. If they arrive during spring or summer, make sure that you assist them with acquiring warm clothes for the winter either through donations or by helping the newcomers to buy them.
  - Some sponsoring groups get donations in the form of second-hand clothing. 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 newcomers belong to, it is a good idea to explain why you are giving them used clothing and how it is seen in the Canadian culture. Explain the benefits of second-hand clothing in term of money savings.
- **Child Care:** Find out about childcare options in your community. Keep in mind access to public transit, proximity to ESL classes, cost, and cultural sensitivity. Parents may be uncomfortable leaving their children with strangers and may only participate in programs where childcare is on site. For parents to attend ESL classes, childcare may be one of their first needs.



## Financial Matters

It is good to have a discussion about financial matters during the first week of arrival. Assist the newcomers to understand how they can make the most of their budget by showing them discount stores, second-hand and bargain stores. Help them compare prices between different stores so that they get an idea of where they can save money.



Even if you have the skill to provide newcomers with financial literacy there are multicultural groups that offer these services in their first language. If possible, it can be helpful to have someone who understands cultural ways of handling money, in addition to the discussion with the sponsoring group, to provide advice on Canadian finances. These are discussions that will need to be repeated several times over the course of a family's first few months in Canada, and the sponsoring group should not leave the entire responsibility with anyone outside of the group.

### Budget

When developing &/or reviewing a budget together with the newcomers it is important to create a clear understanding about their financial situation.

- It needs to be clear from whom and how they will receive money as well as how much their expenses are expected to be. Make sure to include, where applicable, Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP), Canada Child Benefit (CCB) and provincial benefits for which they may be eligible.
- Creating a chart of the budget with income and expenses might be a useful visual aid.
- Explain how to pay bills and the importance of paying them on time. It is a good idea to help with this at least in the beginning of the sponsorship until they can do this on their own.
  - Creating a video of someone paying a real bill on-line may be useful as they can stop, start, or review different parts as needed. The goal is independence. The challenge is finding the best way to achieving this.
- Explain public transportation and different options for payment such as monthly pass, tokens, children's tickets, and weekend family pass etc. Some cities have offered free monthly passes to "refugees." Before arrival, make inquiries to know if your town/city has any such option.
- Explain costs related to phones and internet (if applicable) such as long-distance calls, texting, calling abroad, using phone cards, calling online, etc.

- Newcomers usually have loved ones overseas. Although WhatsApp is commonly used, it may not be available for some family members. Ensure their phone plan allows for international calling and an economical way for them to be in touch with their loved ones.
- Some companies (i.e.: Telus, Salvation Army) provide refurbished phones, computers, or laptops to newcomers. Before the newcomers arrive, sponsors need to research what is available in the community. Ensure every adult in the family has a phone that works in Canada. A laptop or tablet with a keyboard should also be considered essential. It will be useful for ESL learning and employment searches.
- It is a good idea to do research on affordable phone plans, internet plans, and cost of phone cards before the newcomers arrive. You can thereafter discuss the alternatives together with them to decide on the best option. It is important to remember that the post-paid cell phone system common in Canada is uncommon in other countries and can cause a lot of confusion and frustration with newcomers.

### Taxes

- Explain necessary information about Canada's taxation system.
  - Explain HST, GST and PST otherwise it might be confusing when the price they pay in the store is different than originally stated.
  - At some point, sponsors will need to explain how to file taxes and that salary earned is not equal to take-home pay. This conversation may be better to leave until they are more settled in Canada and will undoubtedly need to occur more than once.

### Banking

Soon 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.

- Talk to bank managers pre-arrival to find out whether any banks in your community have cross-cultural sensitivity or expertise.
- Do research ahead of time to find a bank with the most benefits and least costs.
- You can confirm with the bank beforehand what documents are needed to set up a bank account.



- Make sure to teach the newcomers about specific Canadian banking matters such as the cost of withdrawing money from an ATM other than at their bank and the cost of paying in a store with the debit card, bank fees, etc.
- Most newcomers 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 newcomers in any decisions made to set these up.
- Islamic people generally do not use interest bearing accounts. Be sure to make space for that conversation before locking a family into a “great” account.

### Canada Child Benefit (CCB)

Many Settlement Provider Organizations<sup>4</sup> (SPOs) will help newcomers complete these forms, as they work with Government Assisted Refugees (GARs) and are familiar with the process. If there is no SPO in your community, sponsors will need to ensure newcomers complete the forms and send to their appropriate tax centre.

The Canada Child Benefit (CCB) is a tax-free monthly payment to eligible families to assist them in the cost of raising children under the age of 18. Included with the CCB is the National Child Benefit Supplement (NCBS), a monthly benefit for low-income families with children under 18. To be eligible for the CCB all the following criteria must be met:

- you must live with the child, and the child must be under the age of 18;
- you must be primarily responsible for the care and upbringing of the child;
- you must be a resident of Canada; and
- you or your spouse or common-law partner must be a Canadian citizen, a permanent resident, a protected person, or a temporary resident who has lived in Canada for the previous 18 months, and who has a valid permit in the 19th month.



**To apply for the CCB the applicant must have a SIN number.**

The sponsoring group can assist the newcomers to apply for the CCB by sending a completed Form RC66, *Canada Child Benefits Application*. You can find the application here:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/forms-publications/forms/rc66.html>

<sup>4</sup> SPOs are in most Canadian cities. Search for “Settlement Provider Organization in \_\_\_\_\_” your community or area to find one near you.

A proof of birth for the child needs to be attached to the application if CRA<sup>5</sup> has not previously paid benefits to anyone for this child. Attach clear photocopies of both sides of all pages of the Record of Landing or Confirmation of Permanent Residence issued by IRCC.

Schedule RC66SCH, *Status in Canada/Statement of Income* must also be completed and attached to the application. This form is for people who have not filed an income tax return yet. You can find the application here:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/forms-publications/forms/rc66sch.html>

To find the address of the tax centre to mail your child and family benefit forms see:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/child-family-benefits/address-tax-centre-mail-your-forms.html>

It is important to inform the family that in order to continue to receive the CCB, they must file their income tax and benefit returns for every year, even if they have no income to report.

### Provincial Benefits

The Canada Revenue Agency administers provincial benefit programs as well. You do not have to apply separately for both the federal and provincial benefit - the Canada Revenue Agency will use the information you have submitted for the CCB to determine your eligibility for provincial benefits.

More information about child and family benefits can be found online at:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/services/taxes/child-and-family-benefits.html>

## School Registration for Children and Youth

It is not uncommon for children's (and adult's) birthdates on ID to be different than their actual date of birth. Sometimes this is because the actual date of birth is unknown; sometimes it is due to a lazy clerk in a government office. January 1 is a common birthdate in the refugee world!

This may become an issue when registering children for school if the parent wants their 7-year-old to be in grade two when their ID shows the child as 6 years old.

If a parent is adamant, sponsors will need to facilitate a conversation between the school and newcomers to come to a solution. Schools may be willing to make an exception, understanding that the official birthdate is incorrect. However, there are

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<sup>5</sup> Canada Revenue Agency

significant future complications for the family if their ID does not match their school records. School administrators can explain these issues to parents & sponsors. Parents need to be aware of these complications to determine if it is worth the trouble, particularly as the trouble may be biggest after the 12 months of settlement support is completed.

We strongly recommend newcomers **use the birthdate on a person's official ID**, even if it results in taking an extra year to complete their schooling.

### Full-day Kindergarten

Research your province's Ministry of Education to know if full-day kindergarten is available in your area, and to know what ages can register. Many communities also offer before and after school programs. These are optional and are usually offered for a fee. Financial assistance is available for families who qualify. Kindergarten is a good way to integrate newcomer children into the Canadian society which might ease the transition into the school system. It also gives them an opportunity to be surrounded by English speaking adults and children.

It is worthwhile to contact the school newcomers will attend prior to the family's arrival. Let the administration know they are a newcomer family, what you expect their language facility to be, and ask how the family should register, and how they would like to manage the "first day".



Sponsors should plan to go with the family to the school for several days, both to morning drop-off and afternoon pick-up. The interactions with school staff and teacher on these days should gradually shift from being sponsor led to being newcomer led. As often as possible, make room for the newcomers to respond to questions. Sponsors should only answer questions if newcomers are

unable to do so. If school staff speak to sponsors *about* the newcomers in their presence, this will be an opportunity for sponsors to redirect school staff to speak directly with the newcomers.

Soon after arrival, and perhaps even before the children start attending, you should sit down together with the newcomers and provide information about the Canadian school system. That education is compulsory between the ages of 6 to 16 is not the case in all countries. Other things to talk about with the newcomers are homework expectations, school trips, school lunches, vaccinations etc. The Canadian school system might be very different from where they have previously lived, or they might never have attended school at all.

Many schools have special language training for children who do not speak English or French as their first language. It is possible students can get help from teachers who specialize in working with newcomers. They may also get help to develop their literacy skills. Ask what resources may be available in your school district.

### Elementary School

When you have located the local school children will attend, call the school to ask what the required documents for registering are as well as the best time to go to register. It may be helpful to get the registration form ahead of time and fill part of it in.



### Secondary School

Again, call the expected high school before the family arrives to ask what is needed for registration. It is possible students will need to visit a Newcomer Reception Centre or a Settlement Provider Organization to have their English language and mathematics skills assessed. This assessment will help schools offer you the supports needed as they begin studying in Canada.

### Vaccinations for School-age Children

Students who attend school in Canada are required by law to be immunized against measles, mumps, rubella, diphtheria, tetanus and polio. Parents need to provide their school-age child's immunization record or a valid exemption form with the community Public Health office. There are some exceptions to vaccinate children such as medical, religious, or philosophical reasons. Exemptions may be obtained by completing the required form available on-line or from your local community Public Health office.



All vaccinations needed for school are free of charge. This can be done by a family doctor or medical walk-in clinic for immunization required for school. If the person does not have a provincial Health Card or if there is difficulty booking an appointment with a doctor, an appointment can be made at a public health clinic. Parents/guardians are required to provide their child's immunization records to their local public health unit as well as to update the information when they have received additional vaccinations. You can search for Public Health Units near you online.

Many community agencies can assist with immunizing school age children. You can find community agencies at [www.settlement.org](http://www.settlement.org).

### Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP)

RAP is the program our government uses to fund newcomers who arrive through either the BVOR or JAS sponsorship programs.

### Blended Visa Office Referred (BVOR)

BVOR sponsorships provide blended support from both Canadian sponsors and the Canadian government, making these more affordable for Canadian sponsors. In the BVOR model, all refugee families are identified by UNHCR and are referred to the Canadian government as families that are in particular need of resettlement. Sponsors provide all settlement and emotional support as well as all start-up costs but only 6 months of financial support. The government provides the other 6 months of financial support through the Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP)

Once the Notice of Arrival Transmission (NAT) indicating the refugees' arrival date is sent to the sponsor and local IRCC office, a RAP officer will email the sponsor shortly after to make arrangements for registering the sponsored refugees for RAP.

Depending on the location of the sponsor, an in-person orientation meeting may be conducted, or the necessary documents may be mailed to the sponsor for completion and returned to the local IRCC office in order for the first RAP cheque to be released to the refugee. *It is the responsibility of the sponsor to explain to the refugee how the income support will be provided over the year, and to help them manage their budget.*

More information regarding sponsor questions about the BVOR program and sponsor support is available at <http://www.rstp.ca/en/bvor/how-can-i-sponsor-a-refugee-to-canada/>

### Joint Assistance Sponsorship (JAS)

JAS sponsorships are typically a “high needs” situation in which Canadians provide full settlement & emotional support to a refugee family that has been identified by IRCC and the Canadian government provides full financial support – all start-up and all monthly financial support. Typically, JAS sponsorships last for 3 years.

Through the JAS program the newcomers receive full financial support from the government. Before the newcomers can start receiving their payments, they need to attend a RAP meeting with a RAP officer. Members of the sponsoring group responsible for the financial guidance must attend the meeting together with the newcomers.

During the RAP orientation the newcomers will sign a RAP agreement which is a binding contract that describes the roles and responsibilities of a recipient and RAP benefits. The agreement will be fully explained to the newcomers during the RAP meeting. The newcomers must fully understand their roles and responsibilities and the terms and conditions of the client agreement before they sign it and receive their first cheque. They will also receive a copy of the agreement. It is the sponsoring group's responsibility to provide an interpreter at the meeting for JAS cases. It is very important

for the newcomers to understand the RAP agreement and so IRCC requires an interpreter if the newcomers are not fluent in English or French.

RAP clients will receive RAP payments through direct deposits to their bank accounts for the period of RAP eligibility or until recipients become self-sufficient, whichever comes first. They will receive their first payment in person at their RAP orientation and may receive the next cheque by mail if it is too close to the end of the month for the direct deposit to be created by IRCC.

If there is a change in the financial situation of the clients during the sponsorship period, a new RAP assessment may be necessary. Therefore, the clients have the responsibility to notify the IRCC RAP counsellor of any changes as soon as possible by submitting a Client Report Form which is provided at the meeting.

## Interpreter/Translator

If the newcomers' English is limited, an interpreter might be necessary when

communicating about important issues with the newcomers, such as explaining medical services, banking, tax benefits etc. As mentioned earlier you might also need to arrange for an interpreter to attend the arrival of the newcomers at the airport if you expect language difficulties. Searching for an interpreter should be done before the arrival. It might also be necessary to translate important documents such as contracts or documents regarding medical issues. Some of these translations can even be done ahead of time in order to ease the settlement process once the newcomers have arrived in Canada.



What to think about when finding an interpreter/translator:

- When searching for an interpreter, consider age, gender, and political sensitivities.
  - Since you might discuss personal matters, is the interpreter's gender and age appropriate?
  - If the interpreter is from the same country as the newcomers, is the interpreter from a group that has historical hostility with the newcomers' group?
  - Does the interpreter have an understanding of refugee situations and issues?
  - Is the interpreter easily available on short notice?
  - Does the interpreter understand the need for strict confidentiality?



- Settlement agencies may help you find an interpreter that is appropriate for your purposes.
- You could also search for “Language Services” or “Newcomer Services” in your province/community to see what other resources are available near you.



## CHAPTER 4 – FIRST MONTH

### Medical Attention

Sponsors will need to explain the Canadian medical system for the newcomers. Explain provincial health coverage and IFHP and what each encompasses<sup>6</sup>, what family doctors are, how walk-in clinics work and where the nearest one to their home is, where the nearest hospital for emergencies is, etc. The newcomers might have had very limited access to medical care and need to be informed about different ways of accessing it and what they have to pay for and what is free. Be aware that some medical costs will NOT be covered by either IFHP nor Provincial Health Insurance (i.e.: chiropractic care) and be prepared to help the newcomers understand what is covered and what is not.

If sponsoring newcomers with special medical needs, do research ahead of time to understand their needs, sources of special equipment, care, and support.

### Family Doctor

It is a good idea to register the newcomers with a family doctor as soon as possible after arrival. Make sure that you assist the newcomers in finding a doctor that suits their needs. The doctor's office would preferably be located in their area or on a common bus route, and if possible retain staff that speak the newcomers' native language. You should also ask the newcomer if they prefer a female or a male doctor. Global News did a segment in March 2020 about how to find a family doctor in each province. That story is available here: <https://globalnews.ca/news/6604759/find-family-doctor/>

### Dentist

The expanded IFH program covers only essential and emergency dental care. An emergency service is one that is necessary to alleviate pain, infection, hemorrhage, and oral trauma. Essential dental services are covered only after an emergency service has taken place and serious dental problems remain. Some services must have prior approval.



- Check your area. Some communities (i.e.: Toronto Public Health) offer free dental services to eligible children and youth (0-17 years), adults enrolled in selected Public Health programs, and seniors (65 years and older). Assessment for eligibility must be done in person at a recognized dental clinic. The type of

<sup>6</sup> IFHP link available in "[Resources](#)" section of this Handbook.



## English Language Education

It is very important that newcomers start English classes as soon as possible. A strong knowledge in the English language will improve their chances of getting a decent job, applying for school and interacting with the community.

Confer with settlement providers in your community to familiarize yourself with ESL



### English as a Second Language

<sup>7</sup>options in your area. Newcomers will be given an assessment test before a program with the appropriate English level is recommended. The assessment test is free. Newcomers or sponsors will have to make an appointment before the newcomers can go.

LINC (Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada) offers both full- and part-time classes and some centers have free child-minding. Most locations with child-minding accept children between 18 months and 6 years of age but there are a few that accept babies from 6 months of age. There are often options for daytime or evening classes. Newcomers need to provide the staff with any requirements they have such as child-minding, wheel chair accessibility etc. at the time of their assessment.

YMCA Language Assessment & Referral Centre may be another option for ESL. Go to <https://www.ymcanguages.com/en/YMCA-Language-school/Home> for more information.

Most LINC program providers require the newcomer to bring an original immigration document at the time of assessment. Acceptable documents for permanent residents are:

- Record of Landing (IMM1000),
- Confirmation of Permanent Residence (IMM5292 or IMM5509) or
- the Permanent Resident Card.

## Childcare

If the newcomer family includes young children, it is good to research different options for childcare in the community before arrival.

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<sup>7</sup> English as a Second Language

In the beginning, the parents will probably stay at home with the children until they have adjusted but if they start looking for a job during their sponsorship period, the sponsoring group needs to assist them in finding affordable childcare. Keep in mind cost and access to public transit. The childcare costs need to be affordable enough so that the children can stay in the same place after the sponsorship ends.

The parents may be uncomfortable leaving the children with strangers so this may require discussion ahead of time. For parents who attend English classes such as LINC, childcare may be one of their first needs. Many organizations that provide LINC classes do also have childcare available on site but space availability and the age of the children they accept may be different from site to site.



Childcare in larger cities is available in many licensed childcare centers and through licensed home childcare agencies working with approved home care providers. Children served by licensed childcare range in age from infant to school age.

Look online to find licensed childcare options in your community.

#### Fee subsidy:

Fee subsidy helps families in financial need with the cost of childcare.

To apply for fee subsidy, *generally* the parent must:

- Live in, be moving to, or be an employee of the city offering the subsidy.
- Be employed, in school or in a training program. Even if the newcomer has not started work or school, they can still apply to get on the waiting list.
- File an income tax return and show the Universal Child Care Benefit (UCCB), and the most recent Canada Child Tax Benefit statement (CCTB). Alternatively, the Revenue Canada Notice of Assessment (NOA) or Notice of Reassessment may be used.

Although these are the general requirements to apply for subsidized childcare, *new immigrants may apply before having filed their first tax return.*

#### Keeping your fee subsidy:

Once they have started receiving their childcare fee subsidy, there are some important things to know. To maintain the subsidy newcomers must:

- Pay the fees to the childcare program directly and on time.

- Newcomers must pay the fee for the days their child is absent from the program including vacation, illness, and all statutory holidays if the absence is more than 35 days per year, per child.
- If newcomers have questions about their fee or if they think the bill is not correct, they should contact their assigned caseworker immediately.
- If there is a change in newcomer's fee, they must pay the new fee.
- If it is determined that newcomers received a childcare subsidy that they were not entitled to, they must repay the funds paid on their behalf.

Make sure to report any changes in newcomer's status including:

- Employment or school.
- Maternity or paternity leave.
- Marital status.
- Address.
- Phone number.

**Important:** newcomers must call the caseworker to report a change to income only if they receive:

- A Revised Canada Child Benefit or Provincial Child Benefit statement, where the Family Income shown is **more than** the amount indicated on your previous statement.

Or

- A Notice of Reassessment from Canada Revenue Agency where the amount of income on line 236 is **more than** the amount of your previous assessment.

## Settlement Services

Settlement services will help newcomers settle and adjust to their new life in Canada. Settlement services are often free, and they are always confidential.



A settlement agency is a great resource and will assist with many different needs. To access support from a settlement service and other community organizations, call ahead &/or go with the newcomers to connect them directly with a person at the agency. Although you may feel capable of providing the newcomers with

comparable support, keep in mind that newcomers may make friends and important contacts through different programs and groups they meet.

Settlement services include:



## CHAPTER 5 – DURING THE YEAR

### Finances

#### Transportation and Admissibility Loans

The Government of Canada requires all refugees to repay their medical exam and transportation costs in coming to Canada. This cost is covered by issuing loans to the refugees while they are still overseas. These loans will not be issued if the refugee has the funds to cover their own costs. The two loans are:

1. **The Transportation Loan:** This loan allows applicants to pay their flight to their place of final destination in Canada.
2. **The Admissibility Loan:** This loan allows applicants to pay for the medical exam they are required to have prior to their departure to Canada.

Although the newcomers are *responsible* for repaying the loans, the sponsoring group can help newcomers repay some or all their loan. Most newcomers have a very limited budget both during the sponsorship period as well as directly after. However, helping newcomers repay their loans is not a *requirement* for sponsors.



Repayment begins after 12 months in Canada. Prior to month 13, newcomers will receive a payment schedule from the Government of Canada. Monthly payments are calculated based on the amount borrowed and the length of repayment period depends on the amount borrowed. No interest is charged on these loans.

Where the loan amount is not more than:

- a) \$1,200 – repayments will continue over a period of 36 months;
- b) \$2,400 - repayments will continue over a period of 48 months;
- c) \$3,600 - repayments will continue over a period of 60 months;
- d) \$4,800 - repayments will continue over a period of 72 months;
- e) If loan amount is over \$4,800, repayments will continue over a period of 96 months.

More information including deferral options can be found [here](#).

#### Review the Budget

The budget created in the excel Settlement Booklet will need to be reviewed several times during the year, and specifically if there are any changes that affect support (i.e.: pregnancy, employment, medical diagnosis, etc.). Income and/or expenses may change requiring adjustments to the budget. Reviewing the budget with newcomers



also gives a chance to assess how they are doing financially and if they have issues meeting the budget or if they might be able to save some of their income.

Although the budget may need to be adjusted, DO NOT make any changes to monthly support without consulting the AGC SAH Representative. Any changes to monthly support will need to be addressed well ahead of time to avoid confusion, unrealistic expectations and miscommunication.

## Rights and Responsibilities

During the year it is a good idea to go through the newcomers' rights and responsibilities in Canada together with them. Rights and responsibilities are often different in other countries and there are also responsibilities specific to sponsorship.


Things to go through include but are not limited to:

- Financial obligations such as paying bills and rent.
- The responsibility and importance of learning English during the sponsorship year.
- The responsibility for job searching when they are ready to do so.
- The right to settlement and social services.
- Responsibility of repaying travel loans.
- Responsibility to file taxes.
- Responsibilities and rights with regards to renting an apartment. Go over their lease agreement, and look online for provincial tenancy laws.
- Legal rights and freedoms such as the freedom of religion and freedom of opinion and expression. The newcomers might have experienced persecution due to their religion or beliefs and it is therefore important to clarify for them that the Canadian Charter of Freedom and Rights guarantees the fundamental rights and freedoms set out in it. For more information about the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, see Appendix C.
- The right to travel within and outside Canada including obligations of travel documents.



## Education

Once some progress has been made in learning English, or if the newcomer's English language ability is strong, they may want to begin planning for other aspects of their education and skills development. From research done pre-arrival on skills assessment and training courses, you will know some of the many options available. Community centers and settlement agencies can also be a help.

- There are many different types of education, some that might not be familiar to the newcomers. It is therefore good to go through the different options and the difference between them such as university and college programs, continuing education, apprenticeship programs and private career colleges.
  - Organizations such as Achēv (formerly the Centre for Education and Training) have services that are developed specifically to help newcomers assess and build their skills and language competency for the Canadian job market. For more information go to: <https://achev.ca/>
  - If the newcomer is interested in higher education in Canada and has a high-school diploma or other past academic credentials from their home country, their credentials will need to be evaluated in Canada. At some academic institutions this is done by staff at the admissions office while others ask the students to get an external evaluation. Questions about evaluation need to be directed to the specific academic institution.
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- If accepted at an educational institution, the person can apply for financial assistance through regular provincial student loan programs as well as bursaries and grants. More about this in *Income Support* p. 54.
  - Here are some online sites that offer free education/lectures/training but do not lead to a degree. I have heard they are quite good for learning, and some do offer certificates upon completion which may be useful for obtaining employment:
    - <https://www.coursera.org>
    - <https://www.edx.org>
    - <http://www.open.edu/itunes>

## Employment & Job training

One of the most important responsibilities for the newcomers during the sponsorship period is to improve their English through classes and conversations. Note that before the newcomers start looking for a job, they need strong English language skills. The sponsorship year is a great opportunity for the newcomers to take advantage of English classes as well as social events to practice. If the newcomers start looking for a job during the sponsorship period before their English has reached a high level, the sponsoring group should advise and encourage the newcomers to focus on their language learning. Provide examples on what benefits they can get in the future from

speaking, writing, and reading English well. They are much more likely to succeed in Canada if they acquire a higher proficiency in English.

If their English is at a high level at arrival or they achieve this during the sponsorship year, then looking for employment becomes the next important task for the newcomer. This can be a challenging and daunting experience, not to mention very stressful. Many refugees are highly skilled/trained and may have gained a high status in their own country. In Canada, they may find themselves suddenly back at the bottom of the ladder facing years of re-training, additional education, or having to choose a completely different career because their qualifications are not recognized.



At first, they may need to settle for a menial, low-paying job. Because of their struggles to learn a new culture and language, they are aware that they may sometimes come across (and be treated!) as a child, even though they are confident and competent in their own environment. These things are very hard on self-esteem. Newcomers will need all the support, sensitivity, and encouragement you can provide during their job search.

In light of this unique situation, newcomers may benefit from assistance and support both from the sponsoring group *and* an employment or settlement agency. Be prepared to provide both practical and emotional support.

Depending on the newcomer's level of English, employment counselling can be started at different times throughout the sponsorship year. When to start discussing different employment options depends on the individual and on their level of English and adjustment to life in Canada.

- The newcomers need to understand the significance of Canadian work experience when searching for a job. Understanding that their first job in Canada may be the first step towards a better job is important. It is typical in Canada to work in one job to gain experience in order to acquire a better job. It is therefore important to begin working when able to do so, to gain Canadian work experience, even if it is not in their trade, skill, or profession.
- Many settlement and employment agencies provide employment counseling and skills development in different languages that are tailored to the needs of newcomers. They often have both one-on-one counselling and workshops with focus on interview skills, career planning, and job search techniques, etc. Some agencies have workshops in computer literacy. Many also have self-

service resources such as access to computers and internet, photocopiers, and fax machines.

- Many local school boards' continuing education departments and community colleges offer bridging training courses for newcomers with international professional training and other courses that are intended to develop specific skills.
- Sponsors should talk about workplace culture with newcomers to give them insight into Canadian expectations regarding customs and behaviors. Topics can include but are not limited to:
  - Office behavior,
  - Appropriate communication style in different settings,
  - Concept of time and punctuality,
  - Body language,
  - Non-discrimination and inclusiveness policies.
- There are different ways to apply for a job in Canada and this should be discussed with newcomers to help them prepare for job search.
  - Online job search is a tool commonly used nowadays. A downside with online job applications is the amount of people applying. The chance of getting an interview this way might be small.
  - Another way of searching for a job is in person. This requires being prepared with resumés and cover letters. This is a good option especially when applying for jobs such as store clerks or restaurant staff.
  - Having a well prepared resumé is necessary when applying for jobs. Many employment services and settlement agencies can help with resumé writing and interview preparation.
- Canadian experience is often asked for; especially in jobs that require higher education. Canadian experience through volunteering is an excellent method for new immigrants. This is covered in *Volunteering* on pg. 49. The newcomers may not be able to start volunteering during the sponsoring year but it is still important to inform them about this so they are aware of this option.
- If the person already has academic credentials, they should be evaluated in the Canadian context to find out if additional education is needed. Most of the time it is. It would be a good idea, especially financially, to get one evaluation report that can be used for all 5 purposes: immigration, employment, higher education or continuing education, licensing with professional licensing associations, and entry to apprenticeship training programs. A single multi-purpose report is better

than 2 or 3 reports that are for different purposes. An employment consultant at a community organization or settlement agency can help in directing where to send the credentials for assessment.

## Volunteering

Volunteering is common in Canada but working for free might seem like a strange concept for newcomers. Since volunteering is a common way to get the Canadian experience so often required by employers, it is important to discuss this with newcomers. There are many benefits of volunteering related to work life for newcomers. Volunteers will get Canadian work experience, practical knowledge about the Canadian workplace, they will develop new skills, encounter networking opportunities, get Canadian references, etc.

- One large benefit in volunteering for newcomers is the opportunity to practice their English language skills. If the newcomers are not well integrated with English speaking people, this is a good opportunity for them to do so.
- There are places that reimburse volunteers for their expenses, such as bus fare, in exchange for their work. This way the newcomers do not have to pay anything extra out of their own pocket for volunteering.
- Many organizations have flexible volunteer schedules that can fit into the newcomer's life.
- If the newcomers decide to volunteer, you can assist them in finding an organization that suits their needs. When looking for an organization, be aware of the newcomer's schedule, the opportunity for practicing English and interacting with other people and ensure the tasks they will do suit them. Make sure that the newcomers end up in a volunteer position that will benefit them when searching for a job. There are many volunteer positions out there and it is important to find one that can be used to help the newcomers towards employment (if that is the goal).



## Legal Aid

If you discover the newcomers need legal aid during the settlement year, there are different options to help them seek free legal aid services:

1. Community legal clinics.
2. Provincial legal aid.
3. JusticeNet (<https://www.justicenet.ca/>)

If you need to find legal aid for the newcomers, please contact the AGC's SAH Representative for assistance.

## Culture

In Canada, many cultural and arts festivals take place during the summer offering free outdoor performances. These festivals may focus on theatre, music, dance, literature, film, an art form, or a specific ethno-cultural community. As a sponsoring group you can assist newcomers in finding free events and local attractions that they can attend by themselves or together with sponsors. This is a great way for newcomers to enjoy some free or low-cost entertainment as well as to experience multiculturalism.



There are many cultural attractions you can visit, such as museums, art galleries, heritage buildings, historic sites, and other local attractions. Many of these places have a lower admission fee for children, students, and seniors. Sometimes they have one day a week when the admission fee is free or at a lower cost for adults as well.

- Look online for cultural events in your area. Sometimes libraries and museums offer special passes or discounts that newcomers may be able to take advantage of.
- There are also special events and important celebrations throughout the year, such as Canada Day, when towns have public celebrations, parades, fireworks and musical entertainment. If possible, ask the newcomers to join you in the celebration. These moments will make memories for both sponsors and newcomers!

### Summer programs for children

Children can participate in summer programs focusing on sports, art, science and more. These programs can be a good way to make new friends and have fun. Many communities have activities for children during summer vacation. It is important to register early, or they might not get a spot.

Summer programs usually last for 1 - 2 weeks. They can sign up for multiple sessions. Depending on a newcomer's household income, they may be able to get a reduction (subsidy) on the price. Ask program organizers if cost reduction is possible.

### Day Programs

- Most day programs go from 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. It may be possible to get extra care before or after the regular programming, but it might come with an additional fee.
- In most cases the child must bring a lunch, snack and drink.

Again, look online for programs in your area.

### Community and Recreation

Participating in community activities is important to newcomers. It can help newcomers meet new people and adjust to life in Canada. Newcomers are welcome to join a local community group. This could be a way to help them feel more included in their community. Participants will have the opportunity to meet people with shared backgrounds, traditions and languages. It is an excellent way of practicing their English and making new connections. To find an activity that suits the newcomers, sponsors will need to have a conversation about their interests.



Having said that, sponsors must respect the newcomers' feelings about connecting to their community. This is another situation where sponsors make the opportunity available, then follow the newcomer's lead about participating.

To find an association or group, you can:

- Talk to people in the community.
- Contact a settlement agency.
- Community groups often have interesting activities to join, such as choirs, bands, dance groups and book clubs.
- Volunteer in the local or cultural community. Volunteering can be a good way to gain Canadian experience and references.
- Look in local or ethno-cultural media.
- Contact an ethno-cultural organization or a place of worship.
- Many community agencies can help you get more information about ethno-cultural organizations and other community groups.

### Recreation

Many recreation centers have ice rinks, tennis courts, gyms or swimming pools. Many of these are low-cost or free to use. Some centers have sports or programs specifically for people with disabilities. See if the municipal government has a guide with a description of available programs and how much they cost. Depending on newcomer's household income, they may be able to get a subsidy on the price.

To find a recreation center in the area, you can:

- Research online.
- Contact your municipal government.
- Visit a community agency.



## Religion

Religion can be an area where the power imbalance is most noticeable. Invitation to religious activities and worship should be approached carefully even if the newcomers are of the same faith as the sponsoring group. Newcomers may feel obliged to say “yes,” even if they would rather not. Sponsors will need to communicate clearly and give newcomers the option to say “no” without fear of repercussions.

If the family has informed sponsors of their religious observance and is interested in connecting with a church, mosque etc., sponsors can assist in locating places of worship in the area. A place of worship can be an important source of support for newcomers as well as a place for prayers and community.

In Canada, places of worship often provide social services. For example, they might organize food or clothing for people in need, or help newcomers settle in their communities. For example, newcomers can find out where to find food that meets their religious dietary needs, or stay connected to their language, culture and traditions. They may also advocate defending the rights of refugees and immigrants.

Here are some ways that you can help newcomers look for a place of worship in their area:

- Look in local or ethno-cultural media.
- Contact an ethno-cultural organization.
- Talk to people in your community.
- Contact a settlement agency.

And remember, you are always welcome to contact the settlement provider in your area. They may be able to help you find what you are looking for.

## Sponsorship Breakdown

As permanent residents, newcomers have the right to relocate to any part of Canada. It is very important that the sponsoring group notifies the AGC’s SAH Representative directly if the newcomers are considering moving or if there is any other circumstance that could lead to sponsors being unable to fulfill your settlement responsibilities.



This following information is provided through Immigration, Refugees & Citizenship Canada: <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/publications-manuals/guide-private-sponsorship-refugees-program/section-2.html> (Scroll to 2.25)

- When a situation arises that may result in sponsorship breakdown, IRCC, the sponsoring group (including both SAH and CG) and the refugees will attempt to resolve the issues to try and avoid a sponsorship breakdown.
- If a solution is not possible, then IRCC will ascertain responsibility.
- If the newcomers are determined to relocate to a community that is farther away than current sponsors can maintain, then sponsors will need to do their best to find a new settlement team of at least 2 individuals to transfer the sponsorship to in the new community. If it is possible for newcomers to remain in the same community with sponsors until the end of month 12, settlement support is simpler for everyone.

If sponsors will not or cannot support the newcomers in the new community, the sponsorship is may be declared a *breakdown*.

In this case, IRCC, the sponsors, (both SAH and CG) and the newcomers will meet to try to resolve the sponsorship breakdown and, if necessary, to ascertain responsibility. The three-way meeting will also address the ongoing needs of the newcomers for the remainder of the sponsorship period and the capacity of sponsors to support them under the changed circumstances. Where there is no agreement on who is ultimately responsible for the breakdown, IRCC makes the final determination. If the sponsor is found responsible, the group must continue to support the newcomers in the new community. If it is not responsible, it is released from all further obligations.

It is important to remember that, unless IRCC issues a formal notice of sponsorship breakdown (which effectively cancels the sponsorship undertaking) sponsored newcomers are **not** entitled to obtain income support through provincial or municipal social assistance programs or the Resettlement Assistance Program during the sponsorship period (normally 12 months). Furthermore, sponsors may, under certain circumstances, be liable for reimbursing the government concerned for income support issued to newcomers under the group's sponsorship.

## Birthdays and Celebrations

The newcomers might have experienced traumatic events in their life beyond the change of moving to a foreign country and leaving family members behind; they might not feel that there are many reasons to celebrate. To recognize birthdays with a cake, or maybe even a small party if appropriate is a gesture that can cheer up and bring new, pleasant memories into their lives.



You will want to have a conversation with newcomers to know which birthday they would like to celebrate – their actual date of birth, or their birthdate as it appears on ID. Understandably, most prefer their actual date of birth if it is known. You will also want to have a conversation with the newcomers about the type or size of celebration so they are prepared and know what to expect.

Include the newcomers in other celebrations such as Canada Day, Thanksgiving, etc. This is a good way to show the newcomers Canadian traditions and customs and it can also make them feel more welcome and included.



## CHAPTER 6 – PREPARING FOR INDEPENDENCE

Throughout the year, the sponsoring group together with the newcomers need to prepare for what is going to happen when the sponsorship period is over. There are many things that need to be prepared and considered to ease the newcomers into independence and to make the transition as smooth as possible.

### Finances

#### Filing Taxes

The newcomers might never have filed taxes before and even if they have, the system that they are used to is probably quite different to the Canadian system. It is important to file taxes together with the newcomers instead of doing it for them. This way they learn how to do it which is necessary as they will need this knowledge in the future. This is an important step in preparing them for independence. Think about how you as a sponsoring group can assist them in doing their taxes in a way that they will be able to do it themselves next year.



- E-file or similar programs may be simpler than filing a paper version. Even e-filing may still be quite confusing for people who are not used to the Canadian tax system or used to computers. Unless there is a person capable of filing and teaching, a better option may be to go to a free tax clinic.
- A free tax clinic will provide services for eligible people such as people with low-income, students, seniors, new immigrants etc. Some tax clinics also have services in different languages other than English such as Urdu, Punjabi, Tamil, Arabic, etc.

Look online for free tax clinics in your area.

#### Income Support

As you get closer to the end of the settlement year, it is important that the newcomers are prepared financially. When the financial support from the sponsorship ends there needs to be a plan in place for how the family

Remember that newcomers are NOT necessarily expected to become fully self-supporting during their first year in Canada. Most resettled refugees require longer social support. Recognize the contribution your group has made to their adjustment – whether they become independent within their first year or not.

will support themselves. If they are in need of government support, the applications have to be done early enough that there is no gap between the sponsorship and their new income.

- If the newcomers are able to work, they will probably need help seeking employment. This search can be done through an employment agency, a community organization, or a settlement provider organization.
- Remember that newcomers may not become fully self-supporting during their first year in Canada. Some people require longer than one year. If this is the case for you, it is NOT a failure on the part of sponsors or newcomers. It may take longer to learn English or upgrade skills, or family members may simply require more time to adjust to their new lives. In this case, sponsors should assist the newcomers to apply for social assistance at the end of the sponsorship period. Look online for the most recent requirements and forms for your province.
- Many settlement agencies can assist in applying for income assistance. You can search for the nearest one here as well as find one that provides services in other languages: <https://www.cic.gc.ca/english/newcomers/services/index.asp>
- This is a website by the Government of Canada where you can find more information about different types of income assistance: <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/benefits/income-assistance.html>
- If they have applied to study at university, college or another educational institution, they might need assistance in applying for student loans, bursaries or grants. Most provinces offer specific bursaries and grants for low-income students. Sponsors can accompany the newcomer to the financial aid office of the educational institution to apply for loans and to get assistance applying for any bursaries or grants that are available. Along with provincial websites, this federal site may also be useful:

Student loans and grants through the Government of Canada:

[http://www.esdc.gc.ca/eng/jobs/student/loans\\_grants/index.shtml](http://www.esdc.gc.ca/eng/jobs/student/loans_grants/index.shtml)

### Food Banks

Food banks are a good resource for newcomers to be aware of should they need to use them in the future. Food banks not only provide people with food, but many times

also act as a resource centre to other forms of food insecurity assistance. Food banks are often located in community centres or churches.

During the 12-months of settlement support, sponsors are expected to provide enough **that newcomers do not need to access food banks**. Once newcomers are self-supporting, they are free to access any community programs they may need.

## Housing

If there is a possibility that the newcomers are going to have low income when the sponsorship year is over, they may need to apply for **subsidized housing**. Usually, the rent paid is determined by the person's income and is called rent-gear-to-income housing. Rent is approximately 30% of their monthly income and the rest is subsidized by the government or a private organization.



There are also rent supplements, in which the subsidy is not determined by income. Unfortunately, the waiting lists for subsidized housing can be very long, and applicants sometimes cannot be added to a wait list until the sponsorship year is completed.

- **Settlement agencies** can assist with applying for subsidized housing. It is advisable to accompany the newcomers to make sure that there is no miscommunication.
- Sponsors will need to make inquiries in their own community to know **how to get on a wait list** for subsidized housing in your area. These inquiries should be made in month 9 to allow time to collect information, have the necessary conversations and make informed decisions.

## Pests and Bedbugs

If pests or bedbugs are a problem in your community, it is important to inform the newcomers about this issue and what they need to do if they get bedbugs or pests in their own apartment.

- It is important to keep the apartment clean and uncluttered. Prevent overcrowding or an apartment that is too warm, as they are conditions that pests and bedbugs like.
- Report any infestations to the building manager as soon as discovered. It is important to deal with it right away.
- If treatment is being done, make sure to follow the instructions, otherwise the treatment will not work.
- Be aware that furniture picked up from the street may be infested with bedbugs or cockroaches.

## Travel

If newcomers want to travel outside Canada, as permanent residents they need to have a passport from their country of citizenship AND a Permanent Resident card issued by the Government of Canada. It is **strongly advised** not to travel back to their country of origin. If someone comes to Canada as a refugee and then returns to their country of origin, it can be interpreted that they are no longer in need of protection.



If newcomers do not have a passport from their country of citizenship they need to apply for a refugee travel document in Canada. This document is available for convention refugees, protected persons, stateless persons, and permanent residents for less than three years who are unable to obtain a national passport for a valid reason. Obtaining the travel document can take several months, and it is recommended that the person not make travel plans until they receive the documents. In some cases the newcomers may be given a certificate of identity. Once the application form and supporting documents are submitted, Passport Canada will decide which document the person is eligible for.

### Refugee Travel Document

Refugee travel documents are issued to people in Canada with protected-person status, including Convention refugees and persons in need of protection. It is recognized in all countries as a valid travel document. However, note that a refugee travel document is endorsed for travel to “all countries **except the bearer's country of citizenship.**”

The validity period is determined by the issuing office.

### Certificate of Identity

Certificates of identity are issued to permanent residents of Canada who are not yet Canadian citizens, and who, although not considered to have refugee status in Canada, are otherwise stateless or unable, for a valid reason, to obtain a national passport or travel document from any source. **A certificate of identity is not valid for travel to the bearer's country of citizenship.**

The validity period is determined by the issuing office.

Not all countries recognize certificates of identity; therefore, it is necessary to check with the consulate or embassy of the country that the newcomers are planning to visit about their entry requirements.

To find the forms and a guide to apply:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/canadian-passports.html>

For more information about travel documents:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/canadian-passports/travel-documents-non-canadians.html>

### One Year Window (OYW)

The One Year Window program assists in family reunification by allowing resettled refugees, within one year of their arrival in Canada, to identify family members who are abroad and were not able to travel with them. Family members processed under OYW are processed as dependants on an expedited basis. They do not need to have their own refugee story examined but they will go through the inadmissibility screening. All family members applying under the One Year Window must have been listed on the family member's original application or have been added to it before their departure to Canada.

- It is the sponsoring group that is responsible for the support of all family members on the application for the duration of the sponsorship, even those who arrive later under the One Year Window program. The sponsoring group will be notified regarding the non-accompanying member's application to ensure the group is still able to provide settlement support.
- If newcomers are interested in resettling their family members listed on their original application, the sponsoring group should contact the AGC's SAH Representative for more information about how to proceed.

## CHAPTER 7 – AFTER THE SETTLEMENT YEAR

### Sponsorship Evaluation

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, evaluation will be a great tool to improve your work.

As such, your SAH requires a final “**Month 13 Sponsors’ Evaluation**” report to be completed. Make sure to have everyone in the sponsoring group participate in the evaluation together to get a diverse view. This evaluation should be completed within one month of the sponsorship completion to provide the most accurate view of the sponsorship. Your AGC SAH Representative will send a copy of this evaluation to the Team Lead at the beginning of the 12<sup>th</sup> month of settlement support so your team can be thinking of responses to the questions.

The following are not specific questions on the evaluation but are worthwhile for sponsors to consider in preparation for completing the evaluation.

#### Questions:

- What did you do well during the sponsorship period?
- What can you improve for the next sponsorship?
- What learning experiences have you experienced that you would like to share with other sponsoring groups?
- How was the communication between the Core Team members performed?
  - What were the results from this method?
  - What could you do differently next time to achieve better results?
- How well involved did the sponsorship team members feel in the sponsorship throughout the year?
  - What could you do differently next time to make sponsorship team members more involved in the sponsorship?
- What actions were taken to integrate the newcomer/s in Canada?
  - What were the results?
  - What could you do differently next time to achieve better results?
- How well did the newcomer/s improve their knowledge in the English language?
  - What were the barriers to improving their English (if any)?
  - What could you do differently next time to achieve better results?
- How prepared were the newcomer/s for independence at the end of the sponsorship period (financially, level of English, social support, etc.)?
  - What were the barriers to becoming independent (if any)?
  - What could you do differently next time to achieve better results?



- How were the newcomer/s medical issues taken care of?
  - What were the barriers to accessing medical care (if any)?
  - What could you do differently next time to achieve better results?
- Did the newcomers have affordable, appropriate and permanent housing at the end of the sponsorship?
  - What were the barriers to accessing affordable, appropriate and permanent housing (if any)?

## Keeping in touch

By the time the sponsorship is over you may have become good friends with the newcomers. You are welcome and encouraged to keep in touch with them, but you will have to make clear the difference between your role as a sponsor and that of a friend after the sponsorship. Be clear about where your responsibilities end, especially the financial ones.


## Celebrate!

Mark the anniversary of the newcomers' arrival and your achievements as a sponsoring group by planning a celebration.

A special meal together, a street party, a multicultural potluck or a games night can be fun and can easily include other partners and community members who supported the newcomers and your group.

IT IS TIME TO  
CELEBRATE THE  
PAST YEAR!

IT IS TIME TO  
LOOK FORWARD  
TO FUTURE!  
POSSIBILITIES.



## APPENDIX A - RESOURCES

- **AGC's SAH Representative** – Susan Davis [susan@agcrsi.org](mailto:susan@agcrsi.org)
- **IRCC's Guide to the Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program:**  
<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/publications-manuals/guide-private-sponsorship-refugees-program.html>
- **IRCC's Minimum Financial Support Calculator** – keep in mind that this is the *minimum* support calculation. As your SAH, we have built in a contingency amount and a slightly higher monthly support to not only be better positioned financially at the time of arrival, but to minimize any last-minute scrambling to cover unexpected changes (i.e. a new baby). <http://www.rstp.ca/calc/?lang=en>
- **IRCC's Find refugee services in Canada** - Settlement organizations across Canada, information about health care, repaying travel loans, and more will be found here:  
<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/refugees/help-within-canada.html>
- **IRCC's Interim Federal Health Program (IFHP)** – The limited, temporary coverage of health-care benefits to newcomers who are not yet eligible for an employee health plan. PDFs available of Basic Coverage, Supplemental Coverage, Prescription Drug Coverage, and Dental Benefit Grids.  
<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/refugees/help-within-canada/health-care/interim-federal-health-program/coverage-summary.html>
- **IRCC's Immigrating and Settling in Canada YouTube Channel** – includes videos that address settlement-related topics, such as education, mental health, employment, renting a home, language training and becoming a Canadian citizen.  
<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?app=desktop&list=PLA40417703AAB47D8>
- **Settlement.org** – this website provides multilingual information for newcomers. They provide information about immigrating, housing, work, health, education, legal matters, and daily life in 41 different languages. Some of the information is specific to Ontario, but some would be useful anywhere in Canada.  
<https://settlement.org/translated-information/>

## APPENDIX B - SOURCES

Canada Child Benefit (CCB)

<https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/child-family-benefits/canada-child-benefit-overview.html>

Government of Canada - Interim Federal Health Program Coverage

<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/refugees/help-within-canada/health-care/interim-federal-health-program/coverage-summary.html>

Government of Canada - Guide to the Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program

<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/publications-manuals/guide-private-sponsorship-refugees-program.html>

Government of Canada - Passport Canada

<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/canadian-passports.html>

Government of Canada - Social Insurance Number

[https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/sin.html?utm\\_campaign=not-applicable&utm\\_medium=vanity-url&utm\\_source=canada-ca\\_social-insurance-number](https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/sin.html?utm_campaign=not-applicable&utm_medium=vanity-url&utm_source=canada-ca_social-insurance-number)

Refugee Sponsorship Training Program (RSTP) – Handbook for Sponsoring Groups

<http://www.rstp.ca/en/resources/>

## APPENDIX C – ARRIVAL CHECKLISTS<sup>8</sup>

| Required Tasks – Immediate on Arrival<br>(All *starred tasks should be both verbal and in print form.) |             |                          |          |
|--|-------------|--------------------------|----------|
| Task   | Assigned To | Completed                | Comments |
| Meet at airport  |             | <input type="checkbox"/> |          |
| Basic explanation of who group is and that they are there to help new arrivals*                        |             | <input type="checkbox"/> |          |
| Provide cell phones to each adult  |             | <input type="checkbox"/> |          |
| Provide basic safety orientation of new home*  |             | <input type="checkbox"/> |          |
| Provide names, contact details and times of availability of group members*                             |             | <input type="checkbox"/> |          |
| Provide list of emergency numbers*   |             | <input type="checkbox"/> |          |
| Provide information on 911, nearest hospital and walk-in clinic*                                       |             | <input type="checkbox"/> |          |
| Provide food staples and/or premade meals  |             | <input type="checkbox"/> |          |
| Orientation of appliances in new home*   |             | <input type="checkbox"/> |          |
| Provide a small amount of money for unexpected purchases   |             | <input type="checkbox"/> |          |
| Phone card provided to allow contact with family and friends back home                                 |             | <input type="checkbox"/> |          |
| Arrange a time to return to home the following day*  |             | <input type="checkbox"/> |          |
| <i>Additional Tasks Completed:</i>   |             |                          |          |
|  |             |                          |          |
|  |             |                          |          |

<sup>8</sup> Please note that both of these lists are available for download as pdfs from <https://www.agcrsi.org/resources/preparing-for-arrival>

| <b>Required Tasks – Within First Two Weeks</b><br>(A written version of information must be given for all *starred tasks) |                    |                          |                 |
|---|--------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>Task</b>   | <b>Assigned To</b> | <b>Completed</b>         | <b>Comments</b> |
| Find permanent housing  |                    | <input type="checkbox"/> |                 |
| Provide newcomer's Canadian address and phone number to SAH Representative  |                    | <input type="checkbox"/> |                 |
| Register for SIN  |                    | <input type="checkbox"/> |                 |
| Register for IFHP (if not completed at PoE)   |                    | <input type="checkbox"/> |                 |
| Apply for CCB (if applicable)   |                    | <input type="checkbox"/> |                 |
| Register for Provincial Medical Coverage  |                    | <input type="checkbox"/> |                 |
| Tend to acute medical needs   |                    | <input type="checkbox"/> |                 |
| Neighborhood orientation*   |                    | <input type="checkbox"/> |                 |
| Expanded home orientation*  |                    | <input type="checkbox"/> |                 |
| Public transit orientation*   |                    | <input type="checkbox"/> |                 |
| Register for English classes  |                    | <input type="checkbox"/> |                 |
| Register children in school   |                    | <input type="checkbox"/> |                 |
| Expanded explanation of who group is and that they are there to help*   |                    | <input type="checkbox"/> |                 |
| Explanation of group's roles and responsibilities to newcomers*   |                    | <input type="checkbox"/> |                 |
| Explanation of newcomer's responsibilities and rights in Canada and to group*   |                    | <input type="checkbox"/> |                 |
| Provide Welcome Binder*   |                    | <input type="checkbox"/> |                 |
| Financial meeting*  |                    | <input type="checkbox"/> |                 |
| Open bank account   |                    | <input type="checkbox"/> |                 |
| Confirm application/apply for Permanent Resident Card   |                    | <input type="checkbox"/> |                 |
| <i>Additional Tasks Completed:</i>  |                    |                          |                 |

## APPENDIX D

### Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms

<https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/services/how-rights-protected/guide-canadian-charter-rights-freedoms.html>

## APPENDIX E – ACRONYMS, GLOSSARY & LINKS

|      |  |
|------|--|
| AGC  | <p><b>Associated Gospel Churches</b></p> <p>This is our association of approximately 150 churches spread across Canada.<br/> <a href="https://agcofcanada.com/">https://agcofcanada.com/</a></p>   |
| BVOR | <p><b>Blended Visa Office Referred</b></p> <p>A type of sponsorship that blends support from the Canadian government with Canadian citizens. BVOR cases are a 12 month commitment for sponsors.<br/> <a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/refugees/help-outside-canada/private-sponsorship-program/blended-visa-office-program.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/refugees/help-outside-canada/private-sponsorship-program/blended-visa-office-program.html</a></p> |
| CCB  | <p><b>Canada Child Benefit</b></p> <p>A tax-free monthly payment from the Canadian government to help with the cost of raising children under 18 years of age.<br/> <a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/child-family-benefits/canada-child-benefit-overview.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/child-family-benefits/canada-child-benefit-overview.html</a></p>  |
| CCTB | <p><b>Canada Child Tax Benefit</b></p> <p>Refers to the CCB mentioned above.</p>   |
| CCVT | <p><b>Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture</b></p> <p>A community-based organization in Toronto that provides treatment and tools to support refugees as they heal from trauma. <a href="http://ccvt.org/">http://ccvt.org/</a></p>  |
| CG   | <p><b>Constituent Group</b></p> <p>In our context, the CG is the local AGC church. Each CG needs a Core Team of not less than 5 individuals to provide settlement support. It is the CG and the SAH (and co-sponsor if applicable) who take joint responsibility for settlement support of refugees.</p>   |
| CRA  | <p><b>Canada Revenue Agency</b></p> <p>The revenue service of the Government of Canada. The CRA collects taxes, administers tax law and policy, and delivers benefit programs and tax credits for the federal government and most provincial and territorial governments.<br/> <a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency.html</a></p>   |
| ESL  | <p><b>English as a Second Language</b></p>   |
| GAR  | <p><b>Government Assisted Refugee</b></p> <p>A type of sponsorship in which the Canadian government provides all financial and non-financial settlement support to refugees for 12 months. SPOs were originally established to help GARs with settlement support.</p>  |
| ID   | <p><b>Identification</b></p>   |

|      |   |
|------|---|
| IFH  | <b>Interim Federal Health</b>   |
| IFHP | <p><b>Interim Federal Health Program</b></p> <p>After arriving in Canada, the IFHP provides limited and temporary coverage of healthcare benefits to resettled refugees and refugee claimants. Before arriving in Canada, IFHP covers pre-departure medical services to refugees selected for resettlement in Canada.</p> <p><a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/mandate/policies-operational-instructions-agreements/interim-federal-health-program-policy.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/mandate/policies-operational-instructions-agreements/interim-federal-health-program-policy.html</a></p>                                |
| IRCC | <p><b>Immigration, Refugees &amp; Citizenship Canada</b></p> <p>The department of our federal government tasked with all things related to immigration, refugees and citizenship.</p> <p><a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship.html</a></p>  |
| IRIS | <p><b>Immigration Reception and Information Services</b></p> <p>Based in the Halton region in Ontario, IRIS is the primary welcome body for all GARs and PSRs who arrive at Pearson International Airport.</p> <p><a href="https://www.mnsinfo.org/mns-iris/">https://www.mnsinfo.org/mns-iris/</a></p>   |
| JAS  | <p><b>Joint Assistance Sponsorship</b></p> <p>Refers to a joint undertaking by a sponsoring group and IRCC to sponsor vulnerable refugee/s with special needs who may need more support when settling in Canada than other refugees. These are typically a 3-year commitment for sponsors.</p> <p><a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/publications-manuals/operational-bulletins-manuals/refugee-protection/resettlement/government-assisted/joint-assistance.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/publications-manuals/operational-bulletins-manuals/refugee-protection/resettlement/government-assisted/joint-assistance.html</a></p> |
| LINC | <b>Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada</b>   |
| NAT  | <p><b>Notice of Arrival Transmission</b></p> <p>The notification sent to sponsors once refugee travel plans have been finalized. Usually received 7 – 10 days prior to arrival.</p>   |
| NCBS | <b>National Child Benefit Supplement</b>  |
| NOA  | <p><b>Notice of Assessment</b></p> <p>An evaluation of a tax return that CRA sends after a tax return is filed. The NOA is often needed to prove annual income for subsidies, etc.</p>  |
| OYW  | <p><b>One-Year Window</b></p> <p>A provision of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act that assists with family reunification. It permits resettled refugees in Canada to identify for resettlement, within one year of their arrival, family members abroad who were previously unable to travel with them. Family members identified under the OYW are processed as dependents of the original family member and therefore do not need to have their refugee story examined.</p> <p><a href="https://www.rstp.ca/en/infosheet/one-year-window-oyw/">https://www.rstp.ca/en/infosheet/one-year-window-oyw/</a></p>   |
| POE  | <p><b>Port of Entry</b></p> <p>The location where someone enters a country. In our context, this is generally one of our major airports – Toronto, Vancouver, Calgary, Montreal.</p>  |

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| PR   | <p><b>Permanent Resident</b></p> <p>Once a refugee successfully passes their Visa Office interview overseas, they are granted PR status in Canada with all the rights and privileges inherent therein.</p>  |
| PSR  | <p><b>Privately Sponsored Refugees</b></p> <p>Refers to the three ways that Canadian citizens or PRs can sponsor refugees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SAH/CG model (this is what we are doing)</li> <li>• Group of Five model</li> <li>• Community Sponsorship</li> </ul>   |
| PTSD | <p><b>Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder</b></p> <p>A mental health condition that is triggered by a terrifying event either experienced or witnessed.</p>  |
| RAP  | <p><b>Resettlement Assistance Program</b></p> <p>A contribution program administered by the Canadian federal government that has two main components: income support and assistance for a range of immediate essential services.</p> <p><a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/publications-manuals/operational-bulletins-manuals/service-delivery/resettlement-assistance-program.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/publications-manuals/operational-bulletins-manuals/service-delivery/resettlement-assistance-program.html</a></p>   |
| SAH  | <p><b>Sponsorship Agreement Holder</b></p> <p>An incorporated organization that holds an agreement with the Canadian federal government to help refugees resettle in Canada. A SAH can self-determine if they will sponsor refugees on their own, or by working with Constituent Groups. The AGC is a SAH that sponsors solely with CGs.</p> <p><a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/refugees/help-outside-canada/private-sponsorship-program/agreement-holders.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/refugees/help-outside-canada/private-sponsorship-program/agreement-holders.html</a></p> |
| SIN  | <p><b>Social Insurance Number</b></p> <p>The 9-digit number that every citizen, PR or temporary resident needs to work in Canada or to have access to government programs and benefits.</p>   |
| SPO  | <p><b>Settlement Provider Organization</b></p> <p>Also known as Settlement Services, SPOs are multicultural associations that help newcomers settle and adjust to a new life in Canada. SPOs provide services such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• interpretation &amp; translation of documents</li> <li>• help to fill out forms &amp; applications</li> <li>• ESL</li> <li>• job training &amp; resumé preparation</li> <li>• information about community services, schools &amp; health care.</li> </ul> <p>To find an SPO near you search online for “Settlement Provider Organizations in _____” your city/area.</p>                             |