Pre-Arrival

*Prior to the arrival of the newcomer(s), the group or committee should take time to:*

* Review the detailed Settlement Plan and make any necessary changes
* Confirm and/or identify what needs to be completed by whom and when
* Confirm finances and monthly budget
* Identity appropriate housing options (temporary and/or permanent)
* Begin to source in-kind donations for furnishings and other household items
* Begin to look for employment opportunities through existing networks
* Learn about the newcomer’s society, culture, ethnicity and at least two or three words in their language
* Look into options for schooling/childcare
* Learn about rights and responsibilities (both sponsor and newcomer)
* Prepare the community (i.e. holding a community forum, distributing information)
* Prepare the household for their arrival
* Confirm flight arrival details (with SAH or otherwise)

Arrival

## AT THE AIRPORT

* Make a welcome sign with the newcomer’s name in both English and native language
* Coordinate a small group to meet newcomers at the airport (keep in mind that meeting too many people at once can be overwhelming)
* Wait at the passenger pick-up area until the newcomers arrive with an IRIS (Immigration Reception and Information Services) representative
* Before leaving the airport, or later the same day, check the Confirmation of Permanent Residence Forms to ensure that all names, genders and dates of birth are correct.
* Organize for a translator to attend the airport arrival if language might be a problem
* Introduce members of the sponsoring group; explain your role in their settlement over the coming weeks and months
* Provide warm clothing (i.e. winter jackets, hat, scarves, etc.)
* Provide home or cell phone number
* Ask for permission prior to taking any photos, and only take a few to make the process quick
* Be sure not to separate parents and children without the parents understanding or agreement
* Provide transportation to temporary accommodation

First 24 Hours

*As required, provide the newcomers with the following:*

* Basic safety orientation of new home (e.g. faucets, telephones, appliances, other basic household equipment and objects that might be unknown or confusing to figure out)
* Names, contact details and times of group member availability
* List of emergency numbers; develop a warning system to communicate a need for help/assistance if English is poor
* Information on 911 and the nearest hospital and/or walk-in clinic; explain difference between calling 911 and local police
* Food staples and/or premade meals – warm meal for the first night
* Small amount of money for unexpected purchases
* Phone card (or perhaps a pre-paid cell phone) to call their family at home; explain the extent that your group is willing to cover long distance calls
* Some sort of welcoming gift (i.e. photo album of group members, welcome card, maps of the city and neighborhood)
* Entertainment (i.e. music, magazines, books, DVDs, etc.) to keep them busy
* Arranged time to return to the home the following day

**NOTE:** Consider having dinner with the newcomer(s) on the first evening

First Weeks & Months

**ESSENTIAL DOCUMENTS & BENEFITS**

## Initiate the application process for the following

* Permanent Resident (PR) Card
* Social Insurance Number (SIN)
* Opening a Bank Account
* Alberta Health Coverage and Card
* Interim Federal Health (IFH) Plan
* Child Tax Benefit (CCTB)
* GST/HST Rebate

**BASIC ORIENTATION / COMMUNITY**

* Take a tour of the immediate neighborhood
* Find out where to shop; if necessary shop for food and appropriate clothing
* Continue to gather donations of clothing and other household goods
* Find the local public library
* Review other community services (i.e. health link, 911, police, etc.)
* Look for opportunities to join local community groups and/or volunteer

**CHILD & FAMILY SERVICES**

* Explore the various resources in your community and online to support refugee children and families
* Research options for childcare, available subsidies, as well as summer programs for children

**COMMUNICATION & EXPECTATIONS**

* Introduce newcomers to all members of the sponsoring group
* Explain how your group has divided responsibilities
* Discuss both theirs and your rights and obligations regarding sponsorship
* Discuss necessary aspects of confidentiality and privacy, as well as visitation
* Advise on when and with whom to disclose personal information to avoid identity theft

**CULTURE**

* Find out about the newcomers’ culture; learn 5 or so words in their language (i.e. greetings)
* Raise your own awareness about culture
* Learn how your cultural assumptions may affect and even cause stress to the newcomers
* Provide an orientation to the various aspects of Canadian culture and government

**EDUCATION**

* Explore different education options available for children
* Review the guide to elementary/secondary education for newcomers
* Contact school board to schedule an appointment for assessment
* Schedule a meeting at local school with the child and parents
* Investigate which vaccinations are required for school registration
* Liaise with School Social Worker to obtain school supplies and subsidies, if applicable
* Visit the local public library for academic support
* Research various education and training program available from both government and other settlement agencies

**EMPLOYMENT**

* Visit the local settlement agency for job preparation courses
* Find out about relevant bridging courses
* Find out about professional/trade licensing requirements
* Learn about rights as an employee

**FINANCES & BUDGET**

* Arrange a meeting to discuss budgeting, including costs of utilities and other variable cost
* Explain necessary information regarding Canada’s taxation system
* Explain rights and obligations regarding immigration loans and repayment
* Explain the source(s) of funds and expectations around managing money
* Assist with opening a bank account and getting a bank card

**HEALTH & WELLNESS**

* Locate nearby walk-in clinic or community health center for any immediate medical needs
* Find a local family doctor and dentist in the area, and explain Canadian medical system
* Set up appointment for a physical examination shortly after arrival
* Complete vaccinations for children (required prior to registration)
* Find out about counseling and mental health services in the community; watch for signs of mental trauma or stress

**HOUSING & FURNISHINGS**

* Scout appropriate housing before the newcomers arrive
* Consider emergency housing for unexpected events
* Prepare housing and stock with food from home country as well as appropriate furnishings
* Confirm some form of Internet access (from home or a nearby public library, community center, etc.)
* Provide an expanded orientation of the home upon arrival (telephone, email, internet, budget, etc.)

**LANGUAGE SERVICES**

* Secure access to necessary interpreters/translators as required
* Schedule an appointment at the local LINC assessment center to assess English language skills
* Sign up for appropriate LINC/ESL course(s)

**LEGAL SERVICES**

* Assist newcomers in researching different options for legal aid, if required during the year of settlement
* Review their rights and freedoms as a Canadian citizen

**RECREATION**

* Find the closest community center and/or recreation center
* Find out about available subsidies and/or subsidized programs (i.e. local zoo)
* Enroll children in swimming classes and other available programs

**RESETTLEMENT SERVICEES**

* Identify local resettlement agencies, refugee/ethno-cultural groups and community social support groups
* Help the newcomers connect with those groups or organizations upon arrival; review services provided

**SPIRITUALITY/FAITH**

* Assist in connecting newcomer(s) with spiritual or faith groups in the area, if appropriate and requested
* Plan meetings in locations where newcomers can feel comfortable if they are not of your faith

**TRANSPORTATION & TRAVEL**

* Pick up a map of the public transportation and a map for the city
* Find out about public transportation passes
* Show the newcomers how to use the transit system
* Show them around your town
* Assess interest in applying for a Canadian drivers license
* Ensure access to accurate information should the newcomer wish to travel outside of Canada

First Year and Beyond

## Continue to support the newcomers in their journey from dependence to independence

* Meet on a quarterly basis to review the budget and assess expectations on both sides
* Provide education regarding Canada’s tax system, the law and filing income tax
* Support cultural adjustment, including changes in family life and emerging issues
* Understand impact of non-accompanying family members
* Look for signs of, and support, Post Traumatic Stress, Torture and Healing (PTSD)
* Provide support for continued education and skills development
* Assist in finding continued employment
* Support the move towards self sufficiency (e.g. making owns plans and decisions)
* Provide links into a social network