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## Tips for Private Refugee Sponsorship in Canada

1. **Yes you can!** As a congregation and member of the CUC you can do a private sponsorship much easier than a group of individuals. This applies whether your congregation gets approached by someone who wants you to sponsor their friend/family, or you have decided you want to sponsor someone and then figure out whom. If you can, sponsor someone who has family here and can help with applications and settlement.
2. **Pull together a good project team:** You cannot do it alone. You need about 3 people on the team for every person you sponsor. So a family of 4 requires about 12 people. Strike up a committee with clear accountability: fundraising, applications, bookkeeping, communications, and settlement. If you can, reach out and engage a partner organization that speaks the same language and/or has the same religion. Partnership enriches the experience.
3. **Fundraising should start as early as possible:** You need to feel confident that you can raise funds before sending in the applications to government (CIC). We believe this simple formula is a realistic calculation of the required 1 year of sponsorship support; \$20,000/individual refugee, \$30,000/couple and \$40,000 for a family of 4 (\$3000/additional dependent). These can be in-kind or cash donations.
4. **Spend the time to get to know the refugee:** Make sure the refugee really qualifies before you go too far. A refugee cannot go home, not because he has no prospects there, but because his life is in danger from others if he does. You need to read/validate/revalidate the application. The refugee must really WANT to come to Canada. It cannot be just the wish of the family here.
5. **This is a multi-year project:** Plan for it. Manage expectations with your team and with the refugee and their family. This process can take a very long time. If it goes faster than expected, celebrate!
6. **Applications and Contracts:** Be careful about confidentiality. Only give out last names on a need-to-know basis. Make sure you can communicate with the refugee easily. Some applications require original signatures from the refugee, so send signature pages out in advance so you don't have to wait. E-signatures are now being accepted from most countries.
7. **Settlement and culture shock:** There will be culture shock no matter what, so prepare for it. Just plan to keep the refugee busy. Have lots of hands on deck; don't leave it to the family here. Line up resources in advance: doctor, dentist, schools, settlement agency. Try to find a survival job even if it is as a volunteer. Arrange temporary accommodations so the refugee can have a say in their permanent location. Communicate the rules around expenses in advance. Plan to turn over paying expenses in Month 2 to refugee with monthly accountability. Make sure refugee keeps receipts for monthly meetings.

For further information please contact April Hope, Social Responsibility Coordinator at [april@cuc.ca](mailto:april@cuc.ca) with REFUGEE in the subject line.