



CANADIAN CONSEIL
UNITARIAN UNITARIEN
COUNCIL DU CANADA

Tips for Private Refugee Sponsorship in Canada

The Canadian Unitarian Council is s Sponsorship Agreement Holder with Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC). This enables the CUC to partner with congregations and other organizations to re-settle refugees in Canada. Is your congregation considering sponsoring refugees? Here are some frequently asked questions. Contact refugee@cuc.ca

1. **Yes, you can!** As a congregation and member of the CUC you can undertake a private sponsorship much easier than as group of individuals. This applies whether your congregation gets approached by someone who wants you to sponsor their friend/family, or you have a family in mind, or you have decided you want to sponsor someone and then decide on who you want to sponsor. If you can, sponsor someone who has family in your community and can help with applications and settlement.
2. **Pull together a good project team:** You cannot do it alone. You need about 2-3 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 about who is responsible for each area: 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 as your refugees. Partnership enriches the experience.
3. **Fundraising should start as early as possible:** You need to feel confident that you can raise funds (80% of the total) before sending in the applications to government . We believe this simple formula (which is higher than the minimum recommended by IRCC) 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 [requirements for refugee status](#) are met. A refugee is one who cannot go home, not because he has no prospects there, but because there is fear of persecution. 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 -me. If it goes faster than expected, celebrate!
6. **Applications and Contracts:** Keep your refugees' information confidential. 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 and grief no matter what, so prepare for it. Plan on activities to acquaint the refugee with their new home and have lots of hands on deck. Line up resources in advance: doctor, dentist, schools, settlement agency, language classes. A volunteer position might be helpful while the refugee looks for employment. Arrange temporary accommodations so the refugee can have a say in their permanent location. Communicate the expectations around expenses in advance. Plan to have the newcomer take charge of their expenses in Month 2 with monthly accountability.