



Settlement Handbook

Christian and Missionary Alliance

Churches in Canada

Settlement Handbook for Sponsoring Groups

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Pre - Arrival

Travel Arrangements

Travel arrangements are typically made by the [International Organization for Migration \(IOM\)](#), and will be communicated to the CMA SAH via an emailed **Notice of Arrival Transmission (NAT)**. The Refugee Sponsorship Program staff will notify the CG and co-sponsors when it has been received.

Once the NAT has been received, it will be about 10 days to a month before the newcomers will arrive. Sponsors are required to review their settlement plan and revise the budget plan as needed to account for increases to the minimum RAP rates and/or cost of living as they prepare for the arrival of the family.

If the newcomer will have a lay-over or overnight stay enroute to their final destination, IOM will provide assistance in getting to and from their connecting flight and will arrange for their overnight accommodations.

Upon arrival in Canada, the newly arrived refugee(s) will usually be asked to provide a mailing address in Canada to which the Permanent Resident (PR) card will be sent. Please be sure that the family understands that when they first land at the port of entry (airport in Canada), they will receive **Confirmation of Permanent Residence** documents. They will need to check that their names are spelled correctly.

They will also receive Interim Federal Health Program (IFH) and they may also have the ability to request their Social Insurance Numbers (SIN) at the port of entry into Canada, which will save your settlement team a trip to the local Service Canada office.

Chapter 1 – 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 newcomer(s) 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 newcomer(s), 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 newcomer(s) 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. 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 newcomer(s)' language at arrival may ease some discomfort that might exist for the newcomer(s). (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 they are not 100% accurate.)
- The newcomer(s) may not be aware of your role as a sponsoring group when they arrive. It depends on how much information they have received before departure. Therefore, as a sponsoring group you should include in your introductions at the airport that you will support them through their settlement in Canada and 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 newcomer(s) (page 8) 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 a very uncomfortable experience for both parents and children. Remember what they have, 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.
- Permanent Resident cards should arrive in a few weeks at their new address (check status here: http://www.IRCC.gc.ca/english/my_application/status.asp?s=7)
 - If the newcomer(s) were not able to provide the address at arrival the sponsoring group can contact the C&MA'S SAH Representative to update the information online ([Link to IRCC's Address Notification page](#))
 - Newcomer(s) who are not able to provide an address at the airport will be given an IMM 5456 (Address Notification—Permanent Resident Card). The sponsoring group can assist them in completing this form and fax it back to the PR Card Processing Centre at 1-902-564-7317, however you may note that contacting the C&MA'S SAH Rep. to do it 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 necessary minimum during the day of arrival. Things that you need to go through during the first day:

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 folder.

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 number, such as the contact information for the members of the sponsoring group etc. You can also suggest that they keep the binder for all their important paper work 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 or French.** If you need assistance with translation, contact a settlement agency which you can find at: <http://www.settlement.org/findhelp/>

- During the first day check the Confirmation of Permanent Residence Forms to ensure that all names, gender and dates of birth are correct. Contact C&MA'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 C&MA'S SAH representative can contact Port of Entry to get it back if it is reported immediately
- One of the most important things to do during the day of arrival is to give the newcomer(s) 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. (For sponsoring groups that are located in Ontario, you can also explain what Telehealth Ontario is, and when and how they can make use of it. Telehealth provide service in English and French and has translation support for other languages as well as a direct TTY number for people with hearing and speech difficulties. You can find more information about Telehealth here: <http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/public/programs/telehealth/> .) Other provinces may have a similar Telehealth program in place – check with your local settlement agency to learn more.
- Provide a list of important phone numbers that the newcomers need, such as emergency numbers and a list of phone numbers to committee members who are available 24 hours during the first days after arrival in case of emergency.
- It is suggested that the group provides a picture of each committee 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.

- 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 have to 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 specific check lists of tasks that are **required immediate upon arrival** go to Appendix (A).
 - ✓ For specific check lists of tasks that are **required during the first two weeks** go to Appendix (B).

Visits and Privacy

During the settlement process it is important to remember your role as a sponsoring group in relation to the newcomer(s). **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 the sponsoring group and the 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 C&MA'S SAH Representative at the national office.

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 newcomer(s) 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 newcomer(s), let the newcomers know who is going to contact them and why.
- Avoid sharing unnecessary private information about the newcomer(s) within the sponsoring group such as information that you would not like to be shared about yourself. Only discuss matters about the newcomer(s) with people who are directly involved with the settlement support.
- Do not publish or forward the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of any member of the newcomer(s) to anyone or any organization outside of the sponsoring group without the newcomer(s)' specific permission.
- Do not discuss the newcomer(s)' private issues with anyone without their permission. This includes discussions with other members of the sponsoring group as well as settlement organizations.
- **Make sure to include the newcomer(s) in conversations when they are present, especially conversation that is about them.** This is important to do even though their English or French is not very 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 newcomer(s), the workers are bound by privacy legislation.

Managing expectations of Sponsoring Group

As a sponsoring group you may have certain expectations about how the sponsorship should be done and what you imagine the results of the sponsorship will be like for the newcomer(s). 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 the sponsoring group members to be conscious of their own expectations of the newcomer(s), especially when it comes to attending events. When inviting the newcomer(s) to events, you must ask them if they would like to attend the event and not assume so. **It is up to the newcomer(s) 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 newcomer(s). 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 newcomer(s) 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 newcomer(s) 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 newcomer(s) out or ask them to speak in front of a group of people**. This can be a very uncomfortable experience and may make them feel less as if they belong and more as an outsider.
- In all, be conscious of your own expectations. Always ask the newcomer(s) before taking them out to a social event and be aware of the power you hold as a sponsoring group and how it can be seen from the newcomer(s)' perspective. They might feel as if they have to attend events since you are helping them with their new life in Canada. Even if you might not be able to remove it, try to minimize that power difference by asking questions, explaining things clearly and simple and **make sure they understand their right to say no**.

Responsibilities of Newcomers and Sponsors

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

- Finances
 - Monthly allowance including, if applicable, Child Tax Benefit etc.
 - Living expenses – who pays rent, food etc., and what 'living expenses' include.
 - Who pays for what (newcomers vs. sponsoring group).
 - Bills – understanding of who pays the bills, how much, 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 or French, when 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 etc.
- Emergency

- What to do in case of emergency
- How 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 (ie. OHIP if in Ontario)
 - IFH-Interim Federal Health coverage
 - Dental
- Canadian Laws, Rights and Freedoms
 - Right to Free Speech, Freedom of Religion, women’s rights, driving in Canada, vehicle and property insurance, compulsory education of children, domestic violence, rights as permanent residents

It is beneficial to have the above points discussed and written down and provide a copy for the family; if possible **it is good to provide an extra copy of the document in the newcomer(s)’ native language**. It is suggested that a basic contract be drafted which lays out the most important requirements and that the family to confirm that they understand what was discussed. If they agree to sign the document, make sure that they understand exactly what is written down and that they agree with the information. This document is not legally binding but is a good tool as it can be used in case of doubts or uncertainties of what was discussed. **It is necessary to do a follow up on everything discussed after a few months**, as a reminder of their responsibilities.

Program Assurance is conducted randomly by IRCC to ensure settlement supports provided by sponsors are in compliance with the sponsorship undertaking, financial guidelines and SAH agreement. It is therefore mandatory that sponsors upload all proofs of settlement supports (both financial and non-financial) provided to the newcomer family to the CMA SAH’s cloud-based shared folder. A listing of appropriate proofs can be obtained by contacting the CMA SAH’s Sponsorship Program staff team at refugeesponsorship@cmacan.org.

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 in order to 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**. Google Docs/Drive 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: <http://www.gcflearnfree.org/googledriveanddocs/2/print>
 - 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.
 - We also recommend that the sponsoring group members involved with the newcomers do write-ups on their visits, conversations and other necessary information about the newcomer(s) and share with the other members on a web-based portal. This will help to keep everyone up to date on what is going on.
- 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 as soon as I have an answer for you" or "I will check with the other sponsor group members and talk to you once we have an answer". It is important that the newcomer(s) don't get

mixed messages or lose trust when people are not able to follow through on promises.

- When explaining things for the newcomer(s) **it is important to make sure that what you have explained has been understood. Even though people may be nodding, responding 'yes' to your questions or giving a general response this does not mean that they have actually comprehended the message clearly.** Here are some tips for creating better communication:
 - Write down key points in both English (or French as applicable) and the newcomer(s)' 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, both orally and by reviewing the welcome binder.
 - Invite them to ask questions.

Newcomer Information Packages

Canadian provinces and cities may offer Newcomers Information Packages to provide information on a wide range of community resources needed for settlement and integration of newcomers.

A listing of current newcomer guides prepared by different provinces and cities for newcomers can be found here: <http://www.toptipsclub.com/blog/immigration-citizenship/guide-for-newcomers-to-canadian-provinces-and-cities/>

Immediate Medical Needs

Newcomers may have medical needs that have to 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 while visiting, so see if you can find a clinic with staff that speaks their language or arrange for an interpreter to accompany them. 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. It is therefore important that the sponsoring group assists them as soon as possible after arrival with applying for both IFH and Provincial Health cards.

If they need to seek medical care before they have received IFH or Provincial Health cards coverage the sponsoring group should call C&MA'S SAH representative who can assist you with scheduling an appointment at a Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) office to apply for IFH.

Newcomer(s) sponsored through the BVOR and JAS programs will need to be scheduled for appointments with their nearest local IRCC's office. The CG representative should confirm with the local IRCC office assigned to them how and when this appointment will take place.

Interim Federal Health Program (IFH)

It is important to **apply for IFH as soon as possible** in order to receive medical coverage for refugees in the period prior to qualifying for provincial health care coverage.

If the newcomer(s) are sponsored through the **Joint Assistance Sponsorship (JAS) program**, the application for IFH should be done at the assigned [local IRCC office](#) during their interview with a IRCC official. The sponsoring group needs to ensure that this is done when settling the refugees into their new home.

If the newcomer(s) 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.**

For all other refugees applying for IFH, an appointment has to be made with a Citizenship and Immigration office. Please refer to [IRCC's website](#) for information and assistance to make an appointment with IRCC.

Applying for the IFH Program:

Refugees must fill out an IFH application form and bring it to their local Citizenship and Immigration office once they arrive in Canada. The application requires a photograph which must fit the requirements exactly or the form will not be accepted. If your form is accepted you will begin to receive IFH coverage immediately.

- A guide to the IFH application can be found here: [Guide 5568 - Application for Interim Federal Health Program Coverage \(IFHP\)](#)
- See IFH application form on appendix D.
This form is used both for initial IFH applications as well as IFH-Extension applications.

Alternatively, you can mail in the form but your coverage will not activate until your application has been accepted by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, this can take around six weeks to process. C&MA'S SAH Representative therefore recommends that the sponsoring group accompanies the newcomer(s) to apply at their local IRCC office within the first week of arrival.

Resettled refugees who receive governmental resettlement assistance under the Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP) ("RAP" is the funding that is provided for Blended Visa office referred- BVOR sponsored refugees) are eligible for expanded Health-Care Coverage..

- They will remain eligible for IFHP expanded Health-Care coverage as long as they receive income support from a governmental resettlement assistance program, or are under a private sponsorship.
- This applies to Government-assisted refugees; Visa-Office Referred (BVOR) refugees and Joint Assistance Sponsorship Program (JAS) refugees.

Resettled Privately Sponsored Refugees (PSR – **sponsor-referred**) do not receive RAP funding and are **not** eligible for **expanded** Health-Care Coverage.

- They will however remain eligible for covered medications and vaccines needed to prevent or treat a disease posing a risk to public health or to treat a condition of public safety concern, as long as they are under private sponsorship.

Beneficiaries 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](#).

To learn about the services that the IFH program covers, visit: <https://provider.medavie.bluecross.ca> for a [downloadable version](#).

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

The newcomers must inform the healthcare provider prior to receiving the service that they have coverage under the IFH program and therefore they will need to send your bill to Medavie Blue Cross. They must provide the doctor with the Interim Federal Health Program Certificate they received from Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. 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 but can be extended for cases receiving government support for longer, i.e. JAS cases. **This should be done four weeks prior to the expiration date on their eligibility document to avoid gaps in coverage.**

- 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 IFH 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 IFH, please contact the C&MA'S SAH representative for the most up-to-date information.*

Provincial Health Coverage

Newcomers should apply for a health insurance card 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.

It is very important that you check the box "Convention Refugee /Protected Person", NOT "Permanent Resident under section "C" on the application form where applicable!

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.

A listing of links for Provincial Health Services by province:

British Columbia —

www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/health-drug-coverage

Alberta — www.health.alberta.ca/

Saskatchewan — www.ehealthsask.ca/HealthRegistries/Pages/default.aspx

Manitoba — www.gov.mb.ca/health/index.html

Ontario — www.health.gov.on.ca/en/public/programs/ohip/default.aspx

Quebec —

www.ramq.gouv.qc.ca/en/citizens/health-insurance/health-insurance-card/pages/description.aspx

New Brunswick — www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/departments/health/MedicarePrescriptionDrugPlan.html

Nova Scotia — www.novascotia.ca/dhw/msi/

Newfoundland and Labrador — www.health.gov.nl.ca/health/mcp/index.html

Prince Edward Island — www.healthpei.ca/healthcard

Yukon — www.hss.gov.yk.ca/yhcip.php

Northwest Territories — www.hss.gov.nt.ca/health/nwt-health-care-plan/health-care-card

Nunavut — www.gov.nu.ca/health/information/health-care-card

Canadian Provincial and 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 newcomer(s) won't 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

British Columbia produces the **B.C. identification card (BCID)**. The minimum age to apply for this card is 12 years, although individuals under the age of 19 require parental consent. Production of these cards is administered by the [Insurance Corporation of British Columbia](#), the same office as BC Drivers licenses. Currently there is a fee for this card, unless a valid drivers license is exchanged.

Alberta

Alberta provides its residents with the Identification Card. This card is produced by Service Alberta. The minimum age for this card to be issued is 12, but anyone under the age of 18 requires parental consent. Alberta has not produced an enhanced card for non-drivers.

Saskatchewan

Saskatchewan produces a photo ID for non-drivers, issued through the same agency which produces drivers licenses. There is a \$10 fee for the production of this card

Manitoba

Manitoba produces both a **Manitoba Identification Card** and **Manitoba Enhanced Identification Card** for non-drivers. These cards are issued by Manitoba Public Insurance and there is a fee

Ontario

This card can be applied for at Service Ontario and the applicant must bring:

- An original identity document to prove their legal name, date of birth and signature. Acceptable identity documents can be found here: <https://www.ontario.ca/government/acceptable-identity-documents-ontario-photo-card>

- A marriage certificate if the person applying are doing so under their married name

The photo card costs \$35 and delivery time is 4-6 weeks. The Ontario Photo Card cannot be used as travel documentation. The Photo Card needs to be renewed every five years at a ServiceOntario centre.

Quebec

As of 2012 Quebec does not have a photo card for non-drivers.

New Brunswick

New Brunswick produces a Photo ID card for non drivers for a \$44 fee, or \$15 for a replacement.

Nova Scotia

Nova Scotia produces the Nova Scotia Identification Card. Nova Scotia has chosen not to produce an enhanced ID card because Nova Scotia does not have significant land borders with the US

Newfoundland and Labrador

Newfoundland and Labrador produces the **Photo Identification Card**. Newfoundland has not produced an enhanced ID card.

Prince Edward Island

Prince Edward Island produced the **Voluntary ID** for residents of PEI who do not drive. These cards are produced by Access P.E.I.

Yukon

Yukon Territory introduced the **Yukon General Identification Card** In October 2010, while also upgrading the security features of Yukon driving licenses. Prior to these cards non-drivers used a Territorial Liquor Card

Northwest Territories

In 2012 NWT began issuing the Northwest Territories General Identification Card

Nunavut

In 2008 Nunavut began issuing General Identification Cards

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 in person at a Service Canada Centre.

Find a Service Canada Centre here:

[www.servicecanada.gc.ca/cgi-bin\(s\)c-srch.cgi?app=hme&ln=eng](http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca/cgi-bin(s)c-srch.cgi?app=hme&ln=eng)

The applicant needs to provide a **primary document** at the time of application. 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 Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada.
- **Confirmation of Permanent Residence AND visa counterfoil** affixed to a foreign passport or a travel document
- **Confirmation of Permanent Residence AND foreign passport** for visa exempt countries
- **Verification of landing.** This document is provided when an original of the Record of Landing or the Confirmation of Permanent Residence is not available (i.e. lost, misplaced, etc.).
- **Status Verification**, also known as "Verification of Status", is considered an acceptable document to support the client's status in Canada when applying for a replacement SIN card or updating the SIN record.

Supporting Documents:

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

- In addition to your primary document, you will need to provide one of the following supporting documents when you apply, if required:
- 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 and 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 (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.

Make sure that you explain to the newcomer(s) 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:

www.priv.gc.ca/resource/fs-fi/02_05_d_02_e.asp

Housing

If looking for permanent housing before the arrival of the newcomer(s), the landlord will probably ask one of the sponsoring group's members to sign as a guarantor. C&MA'S SAH Representative **recommends that the members do not sign personally** and instead provide a letter from the church, explaining how the sponsoring group will support the newcomer(s) during the year of the sponsorship. When arranging for permanent housing, either before or after arrival, **choose housing that the newcomer(s) will be able to afford themselves once the sponsorship is over.** This provides more comfort and security for the newcomer(s) 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 newcomer(s). 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 newcomer(s) you can provide them with a letter from your sponsoring group stating your financial support throughout the year in numbers. If the newcomer(s) are receiving RAP funding from the government, 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 newcomer(s) families that 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 of several people sharing one bedroom, especially if that can lower the rent for them.

In some places there is a by-law regulating occupancy standards. For example, the [Toronto Municipal Code: § 629-25 Occupancy Standards](#), describes how many people can share rooms:

- A. A room designed and intended for use as a non-habitable area shall not be used as a habitable area.
- B. No basement or cellar space shall be used as a dwelling unit or as a habitable room unless this use is otherwise permitted by law and complies with the other occupancy provisions in this chapter.
- C. The maximum number of persons living in a habitable room shall not exceed one person for each nine square meters of habitable room floor area.
- D. For the purposes of this section, the minimum height of a habitable room shall be 1.95 meters over at least 1/2 the floor area, and, for the purposes of Subsections E and F, any floor area under a ceiling that is less than 1.4 meters in height shall not be counted in computing the required minimum floor area of a room used for sleeping.
- E. The minimum floor area of a room used by only one person for sleeping shall be six square meters with the room having a minimum dimension on one side of two meters.
- F. The minimum floor area of a room used by two or more persons for sleeping shall be four square meters for each person using the room.

All sponsoring groups across Canada should check with your local municipality to learn if there is a by-law addressing this issue. It is also advisable to inform the newcomer(s) about any by-laws to avoid any issues regarding occupancy. Here is a great website which provides tenant rights information listed by province: www.tenantrights.ca/facts.

To learn more about municipal residential laws you may also choose to:

- contact a community legal aid clinic for free or low-cost advice: [www.settlement.org\(s\)ys/faqs_detail.asp?k=LEGAL_CLC&faq_id=4000078](http://www.settlement.org(s)ys/faqs_detail.asp?k=LEGAL_CLC&faq_id=4000078)
- contact a community agency through: www.settlement.org/findhelp/

Neighborhood orientation

During the first days after the arrival, the sponsoring group needs to give the newcomer(s) 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

It is good to show the newcomer(s) 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. See if you can find a cheaper grocery store in their area, e.g. No Frills, however ask the newcomers about their preferences when it comes to food, such as halal or certain ethnic food items. Stocking food that are familiar to the family can go a long way towards easing the stress around all the new things they face in the settlement process. There might be food items that can only be found in certain stores. Little by little you can also introduce them to Canadian food items either from the grocery store or by preparing a meal for or with them.

Remember that the newcomer(s) might be very unfamiliar with cooking for different reasons and 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 with bargaining on prices at the stores. Explain to the newcomer(s) the customs around non-bargaining in Canada.

Here is a great article on ethnic consumer's grocery shopping habits:
www.canadiangrocer.com/uncategorized/inside-the-mind-of-the-ethnic-consumer-29244

Parks, trails, and beach areas

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

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 many times easiest to take the newcomer(s) around and assist them in learning how to buy tickets, how much they cost, how they work, the system with the buses, street cars and the subway and other things related to the transit system. Keep in mind the limited resources the newcomer(s) have to make sure you find the most economical options.

Library

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

Clothing

If the newcomer(s) 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 that they can buy clothes appropriate for the weather that also suits their cultural needs and budget.

Advise the newcomer(s) 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 newcomer(s) to buy them.

Some sponsoring groups get donations in form of second-hand clothing for the arriving families. **It is important for sponsoring group to be aware that some cultures have different views on second-hand goods.** In some cultures it is completely acceptable, but in others it can be seen as an insult to give other people used goods. No matter which culture the 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.

Laundry

Offer to demonstrate how to operate the washing and drying machines, how the payment system works, and what products should be used. If there are no laundry services inside the unit or the building, it may be necessary to take them to the closest Laundromat and explain how the process works.

Place of Worship

Ask the sponsored family if they are interested in attending a specific religious place of worship. Offer to help them locate one nearby. Do not assume the newcomer(s) are of a specific religion or are looking for a place of worship.

Financial matters

It is good to have a discussion about the financial matters during the first week of arrival. Even if you can provide the newcomer(s) with financial literacy and budgeting there are multicultural groups that offer these services in their own language. It can be very helpful to have someone from their own culture, who understands the cultural ways of handling money, who can provide advice on the Canadian way of taking care of finances in addition to the discussion with the sponsoring group. However, the sponsoring group should not leave all of this responsibility with anyone outside of the group.

Budget

When developing a budget together with the newcomer(s) is important to create a clear understanding about their financial situation.

- It needs to be clear from whom and how they will be receiving money as well as how much their expenses are expected to be. In addition to the sponsors responsibility to provide [Resettlement Assistance Program \(RAP\) minimum rates](#) within the province of settlement, make sure to include, where applicable, any [BVOR RAP funding](#), [start-up costs](#) and Canada Child Benefit (CCB) payments.
- Receipt of the Canada Child Benefit (CCB) by the newcomer does not justify a reduction in the monthly budget that the sponsoring group is responsible for providing the newcomer with during the sponsorship year. As of 2010, neither the Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP) funding nor provincial social assistance programs “clawback” (reduce) monthly support payments once a family starts to receive CCB. Therefore, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) has confirmed that: *“sponsors should not reduce income support to account for the Canada Child Benefit.”*
- Creating a chart of the budget with income and expenses might be a useful visual aid.
- Explain how to pay bills and the importance on paying them on time. It is a good idea to help with this at least in the beginning of the sponsorship until it becomes a routine.
- Explain public transportation and different options for payment such as monthly pass, tokens, children’s tickets, and weekend family pass etc.
- Explain costs related to phones and internet (if applicable) such as long-distance calls, texting, calling abroad, using phone cards, calling online, etc.
- Before the newcomer(s) arrive the sponsoring group should make decisions on what type of electronics they can provide the newcomers with. Note, it might be difficult for the newcomer(s) to buy their own phones or anything extra during the

sponsorship year due to their limited income. Maybe the sponsoring group knows someone who can donate a used phone or a computer. A phone or a computer with internet connection are tools for connecting the newcomers with their family abroad and can provide great comfort for them.

- It is a good idea to do research on affordable phone plans, internet plans, and cost of phone cards before the newcomer(s) 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 newcomer(s).

Taxes

- Explain necessary information about Canada's taxation system. Explain HST, otherwise it might be confusing when the price they pay in the store is different than originally stated on the store sign. Depending on the situation you can chose to explain shortly about filing taxes and that the salary earned is not equal to take-home pay but you can also chose to leave this until they are more settled in Canada as it might be too much information for them at once.
- Note: during the year of settlement support, newcomers who are sponsored by church groups are not required to claim their settlement support as income and the church is not required to complete a T5007 Income reporting not required-confirmed by CRA

Banking

After the newcomer(s) arrive you will need to go with them to a bank to set up a bank account and get a bank card.

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

Frugal Shopping Tips

Assist the newcomer(s) to understand how they can make the most out 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.

You may wish to introduce them to <http://www.frugalshopper.ca> a website where they can find store sale flyers, coupons, and information about baby and maternity free samples.

Warnings About Fraud

As a part of orienting newcomers to Canada in the first few days after their arrival, do let them know about common scams, particularly regarding their immigration status and documentation. Information regarding what to avoid can be found here:

<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/information/protection/fraud/newcomers.asp>

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

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

Child Tax Benefit

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:

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

The sponsoring group can assist the newcomer(s) to apply for the CCB by sending a completed Form RC66, *Canada Child Benefits Application*. You can find the application here: www.cra-arc.gc.ca/cctb/

Reminder note: **amounts received by the family for CCB should not reduce the amount of monthly financial support** the sponsors are responsible to provide.

A proof of birth for the child needs to be attached to the application if CRA have 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 Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada.

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:

www.cra-arc.gc.ca/E/pbg/tf/rc66sch/README.html

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

Provincial and territorial Benefits related to the CCB:

You do **not** need to apply separately for provincial and territorial programs. The CRA uses your Canada Child Benefits Application, whichever way you applied, to determine if you are eligible for benefits. If you are, we will automatically calculate your payments based on information from your and your spouse or common-law partner's income tax and benefit return.

The CRA administers the following [provincial and territorial programs](#) related to the CCB:

- Alberta family employment tax credit (AFETC)
- BC family bonus (BCFB)
- BC early childhood tax benefit (BCECTB)
- New Brunswick child tax benefit (NBCTB)
- Newfoundland and Labrador child benefit (NLCB)
- Northwest Territories child benefit (NWTCB)
- Nova Scotia child benefit (NSCB)
- Nunavut child benefit (NUCB)
- Ontario child benefit (OCB)
- Yukon child benefit (YCB)

Québec child assistance payments provide financial assistance to all eligible families who have one or more dependent children under 18 years of age. See the [Régie des rentes du Québec](#) for more information on the program and how to apply.

You can also contact the Canada Child Benefit program by phone: 1-800-387-1193.

School Registration for Children and Youth

Before registering the children for school you should provide information about, and discuss the Canadian school system. In particular, point out that primary education in Canada is compulsory between the ages of 6 to 16, which may not have been a requirement in their country of origin. Talk about the schools nearby and homework expectations, school trips, school lunch, vaccinations etc.

Canadian Schooling system overview

<http://www.canadavisa.com/canada-immigration-discussion-board/school-admissions-read-all-about-it-here-t72241.0.html;msg780524#msg780524>

Some provinces may have special language training for children who do not speak English or French as their first language.

Kindergarten

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 (or French as applicable) speaking adults and children.

Full-day and/or half day kindergarten programs are typically offered in Canadian provinces and territories. You can read about which programs are offered provincially here:

www.oise.utoronto.ca/atkinson/UserFiles/File/Policy%20Commentaries/PolicyUpdate-FDKinCanada.pdf

Elementary School & Secondary School

To register students, contact the school and/or the school board in your region to obtain the required documents for registering. It is helpful to get the registration form ahead of time and fill part of it in.

Financial assistance for afterschool care and programs may be available for families who qualify. To learn more about programs offered within each province contact your local school board.

Departments of Education / School Boards

Click on the images to view available information



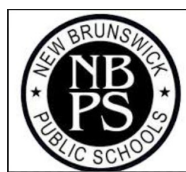
Government
of Canada



British Columbia
School Trustees
Association



Leading Education's Advocates



Vaccinations for School aged children

In Canada only Ontario, Manitoba and New Brunswick have legislation that mandates children be vaccinated in order to attend school. Parents may need to provide their school-age child's immunization record or a valid exemption form* in the provinces which have made it mandatory to be vaccinated.

Visit the Government of Canada website for more information:

healthycanadians.gc.ca/healthy-living-vie-saine/immunization-immunisation/schedule-calendrier/infants-children-vaccination-enfants-nourrissons-eng.php

*medical, religious or philosophical reasons.

Canada Learning Bond

The Canada Learning Bond is an important but little-known benefit. When newcomer parents apply for their Social Insurance Numbers (SIN), they should also apply for their children. As soon as the children have their SIN, they can receive the Canadian

Learning Bond. For more information about the Canada Learning Bond:
www.esdc.gc.ca/en/education_savings/clb.page

Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP)

If the newcomers arrive to Canada through the Blended Visa Office Referred (BVOR) program or the Joint Assistance Sponsorship (JAS) program they will receive full or partial financial support from the Canadian government through Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC). The Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP) rates are province-specific and are the same calculated rates used by private sponsors when determining minimum amounts allowable for non-BVOR SPR sponsorships. It is best to work with the RAP officer to determine the amount of funding that is going to be most beneficial for the newcomer family.

Blended Visa Office Referred (BVOR)

Through the BVOR program the newcomers receive partial financial support from the government. Before the newcomers can start receiving their payments they need to attend a RAP meeting with a RAP officer. Information on the appointment for RAP will be sent to the sponsor group either directly by a CIC employee or the SAH representative. Members of the sponsoring group responsible for the financial guidance must attend the meeting together with the newcomers. For the appointment all newcomer(s) over the age of 18 must attend and bring:

- Original Confirmation of Permanent Residence document.
- All travel documents (passports, single journey documents, etc.)
- Social Insurance Number document (SIN)
- Proof of Provincial Healthcare
- Permanent Address
- Completed Direct Deposit form (which will be provided in the appointment email)
- Interim Federal Health documents (IF)

A Social Insurance Number (SIN) and the Interim Federal Health (IFH) documents are sometimes issued upon arrival in Canada. If the newcomer(s) have not received these documents, please let the CIC employee know before the interview.

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 BVOR 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. It is suggested that the group copies and saves a blank version of this form as it is not a publicly available document.

For groups sponsoring newcomer(s) under either the BVOR or JAS program, you should familiarize yourselves with the RAP Agreement as it is a legally binding contract that you should help the newcomer(s) understand.

Joint Assistance Sponsorship (JAS)

Through the JAS program the newcomer(s) receive full financial support from the government for up to 2 years. Before the newcomer(s) can start receiving their payments they need to attend a RAP meeting with a RAP officer. A member of the sponsoring group responsible for finances must attend the meeting together with the newcomer(s).

Interpreter/Translator

If the newcomer(s)' English (or French as applicable) is limited, an interpreter might be necessary and very useful when communicating about important issues with the newcomer(s), 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 newcomer(s) 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 newcomer(s) have arrived to Canada.

When searching for an interpreter, take into account 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 newcomer(s), is the interpreter from a group that has historical hostility with the newcomer(s)' group?
- Does the interpreter have understanding of refugee situations and issues?
- Is the interpreter easily available on a 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.

Chapter 2 – First Month

Medical Attention:

One of the first things to discuss with newcomer(s) is the Canadian medical system. Explain OHIP and IFH coverage and what they each encompass. You will also need to discuss obtaining a family doctor, how to access walk-in clinics for medical care, as well as accessing the nearest hospital for emergency medical care. The newcomer(s) might have had very limited access to medical care and need to be informed about different ways of accessing it, what they have to pay for, and what is free.

When sponsoring newcomer(s) with special medical needs, it is important to ask them about their specific needs. It is also wise to research ahead of time to learn about sources of special equipment, care and support. The government of Canada has produced this brochure where you can begin to learn more about what is available: www.faslink.org/Disability_Guide_ENG.pdf.

The Canadian Abilities Foundation envisions an inclusive, universally accessible society, where all people belong and are valued. You can access some great information about helps and services from their online presence here:

<http://abilities.ca/category/learning/>

Family doctor

It is a good idea to register the newcomer(s) with a family doctor as soon as possible after arrival. Make sure that you assist the newcomer(s) in finding a doctor that suits their needs. The doctor's office would preferably be located in their area and if possibly be speaking the newcomer(s)' native language if there is an issue with the English language. You should also ask the newcomer if they prefer a female or a male doctor. Settlement.org has information on how to find a family doctor at:

[http://www.settlement.org\(s\)ys/faqs_detail.asp?k=MED_DOC&faq_id=4001217](http://www.settlement.org(s)ys/faqs_detail.asp?k=MED_DOC&faq_id=4001217)

Dentist

The expanded IFH program covers only emergency and essential dental. 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. These services must have prior approval.

A recent collaboration of dentists in the Ottawa area has launched a Canada-wide initiative called Canadian Dentists For Refugees. This initiative has formed in response to the growing refugee crisis and aims to make sure Canadian refugees receive the dental care they need. Here is their website with a listing of dentists across Canada who are offering free dental services to refugees: canadiandentistsforrefugees.net/patients. Note, there may be some differences in the free services being offered since each dentist self-determines which dental services they are providing free of charge. Sponsoring groups should clarify up front with the dentist which services will be free of charge.

Mental health

People who come to Canada as a refugee may have experienced war, violence or other types of trauma. These previous experiences may make it more difficult to establish a life in Canada as well as to trust authority figures such as government officials. They can also lead to Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). PTSD can develop at any time following a traumatic event. Please be aware that only medical professionals can diagnose PTSD. If you are concerned that the newcomer is suffering from mental trauma, you can inform the person about different counselling services and support programs.

Private counselling may be expensive but there are other options such as Community Health Centers that also provide support such as counselling. Keep in mind that it is important to find a service in the language that the newcomer speaks well.

Remember that as a sponsoring group member, you cannot and should not act as a counsellor, but you can help the person access available services.

To find mental health services in your province or territory, begin by contacting the Canadian Mental Health Association in your area:

<https://www.cmha.ca/get-involved/find-your-cmha>

The Centre for Addition and Mental Health (CAMH) also provides information in multiple languages:

http://www.camh.ca/en/hospital/health_information/pages/information_in_other_languages.aspx

English/French Language Education

It is really important that the newcomers start English (or French as applicable) classes as soon as possible. A strong knowledge in the English (or French as applicable) language will improve their chances of getting a job, applying for school and interact with the community.

[Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada \(LINC\) programs](#) provide free English classes for permanent residents and convention refugees who are 18 years or older.

Before starting a class, the newcomer(s) must first get an assessment to find out their current language skills. Settlement organizations can assist you with locating a formal language assessment centre.

LINC offers both full- and part-time classes and some centers offer free childcare. There are also options for day time or evening classes and they provide instruction in different levels of English. At the assessment the newcomer(s) needs to provide the staff with requirements they have such as childcare, wheel chair accessibility etc.

At the time of the assessment the newcomer must bring an original immigration document. Acceptable immigration documents for permanent residents are:

- Record of Landing (IMM 1000),
- Confirmation of Permanent Residence (IMM 5292 or IMM 5509)
- Permanent Resident Card.

To learn more about language instruction for newcomers visit:

www.cic.gc.ca/english/newcomers/live/language.asp

Free online English language training can also be accessed here:

<http://www.learn-english-online.org>

Child care

Before the family arrives in Canada, you can begin researching information about quality, affordable childcare in Canada here: findingqualitychildcare.ca. This website provides information for parents in Canada looking for quality child care that's affordable and meets the needs of their families. Keep in mind that newcomer parents may be uncomfortable leaving the children to strangers so this a good discussion to have ahead of time, before the need for childcare.

As a sponsoring group assisting newcomer(s) you should learn [why it's hard to find good child care](#) and read general information about [child care in Canada](#), so you can help the family to understand their options, what the best evidence says about [quality](#),

and how to [improve their chances](#) of accessing [high-quality child care](#). When assisting a family to choose childcare services, cost and access to public transit are also key factors. The child care cost needs to be affordable enough so that the children can stay in the same place after the sponsorship ends.

Childcare Fee subsidy by Province / Territory

In Canada, parents are responsible for paying child care fees, however, child care fee subsidies may be available for families in financial need.

Subsidy Information listed by province or territory

- [Newfoundland and Labrador](#)
- [Prince Edward Island](#)
- [Nova Scotia](#)
- [New Brunswick](#)
- [Quebec](#)
- [Ontario](#)
- [Manitoba](#)
- [Saskatchewan](#)
- [Alberta](#)
- [British Columbia](#)
- [Northwest Territories](#)
- [Nunavut](#)
- [Yukon](#)

Settlement Services

Settlement agencies provide immigrant services for newcomers to Canada. These services will help newcomers settle and adjust to their new life in Canada. Settlement services are often free and they are always confidential. Connecting the newcomers with a settlement agency early on can be very beneficial.

While you may feel quite capable of providing the newcomers with the same supports as a settlement agency, keep in mind that as a sponsoring group, you are empowering the family to move towards independence. The newcomers will likely make friends and important contacts through the different programs at the agency which contributes to self-confidence in widening their circle of support, and provides a sense of self-sufficiency.

Settlement services include:

- Interpretation and translation of documents, or help to arrange these services
- Help filling out forms and applications
- English as a Second Language (ESL) classes
- Help finding a job or training

- Information about other community services, schools and health care.

Many settlement agencies have staff or volunteers who speak languages other than English. If newcomers go to a settlement agency and they do not have the service or language they need, they will help the newcomers to find another agency that does

When searching for a settlement services agency for the newcomers you must consider factors such as;

- Location
- Languages
- Availability (if there is an empty spot)
- Services provided (LINC, Child Minding)
- Translation

To locate a settlement agency/immigrant services in your area, go to the Government of Canada website page here: cic.gc.ca/english/newcomers/map/services.asp.

Chapter 3 – During the year

Finances

Transportation and Admissibility Loans

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

1. The Transportation Loan: This loan allows applicants to pay for transport to their place of final destinations 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 newcomer(s) are responsible for repaying the loans, the sponsoring group may choose to include the full or partial cost of the travel loan in their budget plan. Most refugees that are sponsored to come to Canada have a very limited budget both during the sponsorship period as well as directly after. However, helping the newcomer(s) with paying of their loans is not a requirement for sponsoring groups.

Repayment should start 30 days after the newcomer(s) have arrived in Canada. They 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. There is an interest-free grace period of one to three

years depending on the size of the loan. It is beneficial to pay off as much as possible during the interest free period.

You can call Collections Services toll-free at 1-800-667-7301 for more information about the loan.

Under special circumstances, a collection officer may grant a deferral of loan payments, a variation of payments or an extension to the repayment period; the deferral of loan payments may be up to two years.

A deferral of loan payments is not automatically provided. A loan recipient who approaches an immigration office in Canada because he or she is unable to make full, regular loan payments must be immediately referred to Collection Services, Finance, NHQ, toll-free at 1-800-667-7301.

Reviewing the Budget

The budget will need to be looked over several times during the year as both income and expense amounts might change and require adjustment. Also, reviewing the budget provides an opportunity to assess how the newcomer(s) are doing financially and identify any issues or discuss the possibility of putting aside some income into a saving account. During the review it is a good idea to look at the loan repayment schedule to see if they are able to meet their payments.

Rights and Responsibilities

During the year it is a good idea to explain the newcomers' rights and responsibilities in Canada. Rights and responsibilities may be quite different in some countries, and there are also responsibilities specific to sponsorship to be discussed. 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 (or French as applicable) 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 in regards to renting an apartment (see Chapter 2: Housing)
- 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. Newcomer(s) can apply for travel documents here:

Adult Travel document application:

<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/passport/forms/pdf/pptc190.pdf> Child

Child Travel Document Application (under 16):

<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/passport/forms/pdf/pptc192.pdf>

Education

If the newcomer(s) English (or French as applicable) language ability is strong and they are interested in studying at a post-secondary institution there are different resources that can be used in sourcing information. Again, community centers and settlement agencies can help with this as well.

- 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.
- Some settlement agencies have services that are specifically developed to help newcomers assess and build their skills and language competency for the Canadian job market.
- If the person is interested in higher education in Canada and has a high-school diploma or other past academic credentials from their home country, their credentials 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. You can learn more about foreign credential recognition in Canada here:
www.esdc.gc.ca/en/foreign_credential_recognition/index.page
- If accepted at an educational institution, the person can apply for financial assistance through OSAP as well as bursaries and grants. (More about this in *Income Support*)
- Here also are some online sites that offer free education/lectures/training but do not lead to a degree. 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 newcomer(s) during the sponsorship period is to improve their English (or French as applicable) through classes and conversations. **Note that before the newcomer(s) start looking for a job they need to have a strong knowledge in the English (or French as applicable) language.** The sponsorship year is a great opportunity for the newcomers to take advantage of English (or French as applicable) classes as well as social events to practice. If the newcomer(s) start looking for a job during the sponsorship period before their English (or French as applicable) 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 (or French as applicable) well. **They are much more likely to succeed in Canada if the take the opportunity they have of acquiring a higher level of English (or French as applicable).**

If their English (or French as applicable) is at a high level at arrival or they achieve this during the sponsorship year, then looking for employment becomes next important task for the newcomer. This can be a challenging and daunting experience; therefore, the newcomer(s) 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 (or French as applicable), 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 (or French as applicable) and adjustment to their new life in Canada.

- The newcomer(s) 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 the experience in order to be able 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 is 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 also have workshops in computer literacy. Many also have

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

Workplace Culture

There are topics regarding workplace culture that the sponsoring group can talk about with the newcomers to give them an insight in Canadian expectations regarding customs and behaviors. Topics can include but are not limited to:

- Office behavior
- Appropriate communication style in different settings
- View of time and punctuality
- Body language
- Non-discrimination and inclusiveness policies

Applying for a Job

There are different ways to apply for a job in Canada and this should be discussed with the newcomer 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 resumes and cover letters. This is a good option especially when applying for jobs such as store clerks or restaurant staff.
- Having a well prepared resume is necessary when applying for jobs. Many employment services and settlement agencies can help with resume writing and interview preparation.

Canadian experience

- Canadian employers often ask for Canadian work experience; especially in jobs that requires higher education. Canadian experience through volunteering is very common for new immigrants. This is covered in the section on *Volunteering*. The newcomer(s) may not be able to start volunteering during the sponsoring year but it is still important to inform them on this so that 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 very good idea, especially financially, to get 1 evaluation report that can be useful 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.

- The Government of Canada website also has information about preparing for work: www.cic.gc.ca/english/newcomers/work/

Volunteering

Volunteering is common in Canada, but working for free might seem like a strange concept for newcomers. **Since volunteering is often a way to obtain Canadian experience so often asked for by employers, it is important to discuss this with newcomers.** There are many benefits of volunteering related to the work life for newcomers such as Canadian work experience, practical knowledge about the Canadian workplace, develop new skills, network opportunities, and Canadian references etc.

- One important benefit of volunteering is the opportunity to practice their language skills. If the newcomers are not well integrated with English or French 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 things such as: matching newcomer's schedule, the opportunity for practicing Language skills and interacting with other people, and that the tasks they will do suits their needs. Make sure that the newcomer(s) 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 newcomer(s) towards employment (if that is the goal).
- Visit Volunteer Canada to learn more: volunteer.ca/volunteer-centres

Culture

On Canada Day many towns provide public events and celebrations with parades, fireworks and musical entertainment. Asking newcomers to join you in this Canadian cultural celebration can make them feel more welcome and valued as members of Canada.

There are also many museums, art galleries, heritage buildings, historic sites and other local attractions to help newcomers learn about Canadian culture. Many have a lower admission fee for children, students and seniors, or they may have one day a week when admission fees are free or at a lower cost for adults as well.

- [List of museums in British Columbia](#)
- [List of museums in Alberta](#)
- [List of museums in Saskatchewan](#)
- [List of museums in Manitoba](#)
- [List of museums in Ontario](#)
- [List of museums in Quebec](#)
- [List of museums in New Brunswick](#)
- [List of museums in Nova Scotia](#)
- [List of museums in Newfoundland and Labrador](#)
- [List of museums in Prince Edward Island](#)
- [List of museums in Yukon](#)
- [List of museums in the Northwest Territories](#)
- [List of museums in Nunavut](#)

In Canada we also celebrate our multiculturalism and diversity through arts and culture festivals which take place during the summer and offer 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 the newcomers in finding free events and local attractions that they can attend by themselves or together with the sponsoring group. This is a great way for newcomers to enjoy some free or low-cost entertainment as well as to experience multiculturalism.

The Institute for Canadian Citizenship (ICC) provides a gift to each Canadian citizen during their first year of citizenship called [the Cultural Access Pass](#) which provides complimentary admission to more than 1000 of Canada's cultural treasures from coast-to-coast-to-coast. The Cultural Access Pass creates opportunities for Canada's newest citizens to discover our rich cultural history, world-renowned artworks, historical figures and stunning parks. Here is an online mapped listing of attractions across Canada:

<http://attractions.icc-icc.ca/find-attractions/map>.

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

The YMCA also offers daytime and overnight ESL summer camps for children 7 and older. Learn more here: <http://www.ourkids.net/esl-camps.php>

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.

Contact your local municipality or community centre or the YMCA to learn more about programs operating in your area.

Community and Recreation

Community

Participating in community activities is important to newcomers. It can help newcomers to meet new people and adjust to their new life in Canada. Newcomers can join a local community group; which is a good way to make them feel more included in their community. Newcomers have the chance to meet people with shared backgrounds, traditions and languages. It is an excellent way of practicing their English or French language skills and making new connections. To find an activity that suits the newcomers' wants and needs, the sponsoring group should have a conversation with the newcomers about their interests.

Sponsoring groups must be aware of the potential that a newcomer may not want to be connected to their cultural community and should therefore ask about and respect the newcomers' feelings about meeting members from their own community.

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.

For more information, you can visit the Canadian Ethno-cultural Council (CEC) website which lists ethno-cultural organizations across Canada:

<http://www.ethnocultural.ca/members>

Recreation

Many recreation centers have ice rinks, tennis courts or swimming pools. Many of these are low-cost or free to use. Newcomers usually have to pay to attend organized programs, such as swimming lessons or fitness classes. 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.

Birthdays and Celebrations

The newcomer(s) might have experienced traumatic events in their life and together with the change of moving to a foreign country and maybe leaving family members behind; they might not feel that there are reasons to celebrate. To recognize their 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. If you want to do a larger celebration you need to talk to the newcomers first and get their approval.

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

Religion

Religion may a very sensitive issue. The sponsoring group must be careful not to impose their religious beliefs on the newcomers. Invitation to religious activities and

worship should be approached carefully even if the newcomers are of the same faith as the sponsoring group. It is also wise to be culturally sensitive even to the point of meetings with the refugees apart from specific places of worship.

If the family has informed the sponsoring group of their religious observance and is interested in connecting with a church, mosque etc., the sponsoring group can assist in locating places of worship in the area. A place of worship can be an important source of support for a newcomer 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:

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

Legal Aid

If you during the year of settlement the newcomers may discover they are in need of some legal assistance. There are different options that you can use to help them seek free legal services. The government of Canada website www.justice.gc.ca/eng/fund-fina/gov-gouv/aid-aide.html provides an overview of the Legal Aid Program.

There is also a great website www.legalline.ca/guides which contains libraries of legal information, guides specific to each province, as well as a pre-recorded 24hr telephone information line or even live help from a lawyer or other expert.

Every province and territory in Canada also provides legal aid services which we have linked for you here:

British Columbia — www.legalaid.bc.ca

Alberta — www.legalaid.ab.ca/contact/Pages/default.aspx

Saskatchewan — www.legalaid.sk.ca/legal_help/nature_of_problem/other.php

Manitoba — www.legalaid.mb.ca

Ontario — www.legalaid.on.ca/en

Quebec —

www4.gouv.qc.ca/EN/Portail/Citoyens/Evenements/separation-divorce/Pages/aide-juridique.aspx

New Brunswick — legalaid.nb.ca/en/index.php

Nova Scotia — www.nslegalaid.ca

Newfoundland and Labrador — www.legalaid.nl.ca

Prince Edward Island — www.gov.pe.ca/jps/la-info/dg.inc.php3

Yukon — www.legalaid.yk.ca

Northwest Territories — www.justice.gov.nt.ca/en/legal-aid

Nunavut — www.nulas.ca/en

Sponsorship Breakdown

As permanent residents, the newcomer(s) have the right to relocate to any part of Canada they wish to reside. It is very important that the sponsoring group notifies C&MA'S SAH representative directly if the newcomers are considering moving or if there is any other circumstance that could lead to sponsorship breakdown.

This following information is provided through Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) <http://www.IRCC.gc.ca/english/resources/publications/ref-sponsor/section-2-19.asp>

- If the newcomer(s) is able to support himself or herself in the new community for the remainder of the sponsorship period, the sponsoring group has no further obligations.
- If the sponsoring group is willing to maintain the sponsorship from a distance, the group should notify the CPO-W of the refugee's relocation and continue the sponsorship.
- If the sponsoring group wishes to transfer the sponsorship to another group in the new community or if the group is not willing or able to continue providing material assistance to the refugee in the new location, the CPO-W must be contacted immediately.

Where the sponsor has decided that it will not or cannot continue to support the newcomer(s) in the new community, the sponsorship is in danger of *breakdown*.

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

It is important to remember that, unless the local Citizenship and Immigration Centre issues a formal notice of sponsorship breakdown (which effectively cancels the sponsorship undertaking) sponsored newcomer(s) 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, sponsoring groups may, under certain circumstances, be liable for reimbursing the government concerned for income support issued to newcomer(s) under the group's sponsorship.

Chapter 4- Preparing for Independence

Throughout the year, the sponsoring group together with the newcomer(s) needs 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 in order to ease the newcomer(s) into independence to make the transition as smooth as possible.

RSTP has developed a useful document called [Month 13 Planning – Resource Kit](#).

Finance

Filing Taxes

All sponsored refugees must submit a tax return form, however during the time they receive sponsorship support, they do not have to declare the sponsorship funding that comes from charitable organizations as income. The charitable organization providing that funding is also exempt from having to report these series of payments on a T5007.

Newcomer(s) may have never filed taxes before, but it is important to teach them how and why they need to file their taxes instead doing it for them. This is an important step in preparing them for independence.

You may wish to encourage them to visit a free tax clinic which will provide services for eligible persons with low-income (students, seniors, new immigrants etc.). Some tax clinics also have services in different languages other than English or French such as Urdu, Punjabi, Tamil, Arabic, etc.

Volunteer Tax Preparation clinics (links obtained from the [CRA website](#)):

[British Columbia](#)

[Alberta](#)

[Saskatchewan](#)

[Manitoba](#)

[Ontario](#)

[Quebec](#)

[New Brunswick](#)

[Nova Scotia](#)

[Prince Edward Island](#)

[Newfoundland and Labrador](#)

[Yukon](#)

[Northwest Territories](#)

[Nunavut](#)

If there isn't a free tax clinic in your area, you may want to work through the online information provided by the Canada Revenue Agency for newcomers to Canada here: <http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/newcomers>.

Income Support

As you get closer to the end of the sponsorship it is important that the newcomer(s) are prepared financially. When the financial support from the sponsorship ends there needs to be a plan in place for how the family will support themselves. If they are in need of government support, the applications have to be done early enough so that there is no

gap between the sponsorship and their new income. If the newcomer(s) are able to work, they will probably need help in seeking employment which can be done through an employment agency or a community organization.

- Remember that the newcomer(s) are not expected to become fully self-supporting during their first year in Canada and some people require longer support. It may take longer to learn English or French or upgrade their skills, and others may just require more time to adjust to their new lives. In this case, the sponsoring group should assist the newcomer(s) to apply for provincial social assistance at the end of the sponsorship period.
- The following links provide information (by province) which includes among other things: the Department responsible, the name of the program, and income assistance rates:

[Newfoundland and Labrador](#)
[Prince Edward Island](#)
[Nova Scotia](#)
[New Brunswick](#)
[Québec](#)
[Ontario](#)

[Manitoba](#)
[Saskatchewan](#)
[Alberta](#)
[British Columbia](#)
[Yukon](#)
[Northwest Territories](#)
[Nunavut](#)

- If the newcomer(s) have applied to study at university, college or another educational institution then they might need assistance in applying for student loans as well as for bursaries and grants. The sponsoring group can accompany the person to the financial aid office at the educational institution to apply for loans and to get assistance in identifying which bursaries and grants are available. Student loans and grants through the Government of Canada can be found here: http://www.esdc.gc.ca/eng/jobs/student/loans_grants/index.shtml
- Many settlement agencies can assist in applying for income assistance. You can search for the nearest one online by province here: <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/newcomers/map/services.asp>
- The Government of Canada's website also provides information about different types of income assistance here: <http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/subjects/benefits/>

Food Banks

Food banks are a good resource to inform the newcomer(s) about in case they need to access it in the future. Food banks provide people with food and many times also acts as a resource centre to other forms of social assistance. The following website can help

you locate a food bank near you: <https://www.foodbankscanada.ca/utility-pages/find-a-food-bank.aspx>

Service Canada Toolkit Outreach Initiative

Service Canada can assist you in helping newcomers apply for Government of Canada benefits and programs for which they may be eligible.

Contact your SAH representative for a copy of the toolkit containing numerous information sheets related to the possible benefits and programs.

In addition, Service Canada will be offering information sessions via webinars, teleconferences, and/or in-person presentations.

Subsidized Housing

If there is a possibility that the newcomer(s) are going to have low income when the sponsorship is over they may need to apply for **subsidized housing**. The rent a person pays may be determined by the person's income (rent-geared-to-income) or it may be a rental fee supplement may be provided, in which case the subsidy is not determined by income. Unfortunately the waiting lists for subsidized housing can be very long, up to 10 years.

- **Settlement agencies** can assist with applying for subsidized housing. It is advisable to accompany the newcomer(s) to make sure that there is no miscommunication in the information given.

Pests and Bedbugs: It is important to inform the newcomer(s) 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.
- Do not pick up furniture from the street as these may be infested with bedbugs or cockroaches. This is a very important point.

Travel

If the newcomer(s) want to travel outside of 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 advisable not to travel back to their country of citizenship as permanent residents. There is a possibility for issues entering Canada upon return because 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 the newcomer does not have a passport from their country of citizenship they will 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 does not make travel plans until they receive the documents. In some cases the newcomer(s) 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 newcomer(s) are planning to visit about their entry requirements.

You can find more information on how to apply here as well as contact information for further inquiries:

- General Inquiries: 1-800-567-6868
- TTY: 1-866-255-7655

To find the forms and a guide to apply:

<http://www.ppt.gc.ca/info/form.aspx?lang=eng®ion=NonCA>

For more information about travel documents:

http://www.settlement.org/sys/faqs_detail.asp?k=ref_after&faq_id=4001608

One Year Window (OYW)

The One Year Window (OYW) program assists with 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 original family member's application or have been added to it before the 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. The sponsoring group will be notified regarding the non-accompanying member's application in order to make sure that the group is still able to provide settlement support.
- If the newcomer(s) are interested in resettling their family members listed on their original application, the sponsoring group should contact C&MA'S SAH representative for more information about how to proceed.

Chapter 5- What Happens After?

Keeping in touch

After the sponsorship is over you might have become friends with the newcomer(s). You can keep in touch with them but you have to make clear that they understand the difference between your role as a sponsor and as 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. You can also include other community members or partners who supported the newcomers and your group.

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. Make sure to have everyone in the sponsoring group participate in the evaluation together to get a diverse view. It is preferable that the evaluation is done within one month after the sponsorship is over in order to provide the most accurate view of the sponsorship.

You can start the evaluation based on two questions:

- What were the results?
- How were these results achieved (process)?

Results:

- What were our goals?
- Did we achieve them?
- Did we achieve other things as well?
- How did the results affect everyone involved?

Process:

- What methods did we use to achieve our goals?
- Of these methods, which was/were the most effective?
- What would we do different the next time to achieve different results?
- What would we do different the next time to achieve the same results more effectively?

It is a necessary to document the evaluation to have a source to go back to next time you do a sponsorship or for new members in the sponsorship group. Feel free to use the following questions as a template for your groups evaluation.

General 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?

Specific questions:

- How was the communication between the CG members performed?
 - What were the results from this method?
 - What could you do different next time to achieve better results?
- How well did the CG members feel involved in the sponsorship throughout the year/s?
 - What could you do different next time to make CG 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 different next time to achieve better results?
- How well did the newcomer/s improve their knowledge in the English or French language?
 - What were the barriers to improving their English or French (if any)?
 - What could you do different 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 or French, social support etc.)?
 - What were the barriers to becoming independent (if any)?
 - What could you do different 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 different 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?

Resources

- **C&MA'S Refugee Sponsorship Program Staff team** – (416) 674-7878 ext. 356
refugeesponsorship@cmacan.org
- **Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada:**
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/index.asp>
- **Settlement.org** – while this website provides resources and information to newcomers in Ontario, it has information that is also valuable and applicable to refugees across Canada. The website has general information about immigration & citizenship, housing, health, employment, education, community & recreation, legal service and daily life. They also have some general documents about the above categories translated into different languages. <http://www.settlement.org/>

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Service Canada

Appendix

A - Check List for Required Tasks Immediate Upon Arrival

Required Tasks – Immediate on Arrival (A written version of information must be given for all *starred tasks)			
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 home or cell phone		<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>			

B - Check List for Required Tasks During the First two Weeks

Required Tasks – With First Two Weeks (A written version of information must be given for all *starred tasks)			
Task	Assigned To	Completed	Comments
Find permanent housing		<input type="checkbox"/>	
Provide newcomers Canadian address and phone number to C&MA's SAH Representative		<input type="checkbox"/>	
Register for SIN		<input type="checkbox"/>	
Register for IFHP		<input type="checkbox"/>	
Apply for CCTB (if applicable)		<input type="checkbox"/>	
Register for OHIP		<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 or French classes		<input type="checkbox"/>	
Register children in school		<input type="checkbox"/>	
Expanded explanation of who group is and that they are there to help new arrivals*		<input type="checkbox"/>	
Explanation of group's roles and responsibilities to newcomers*		<input type="checkbox"/>	
Explanation of newcomers 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"/>	
Contact local CIC to schedule RAP meeting (if applicable)		<input type="checkbox"/>	
<i>Additional Tasks Completed:</i>			

C - Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms

(source: <http://www.pch.gc.ca/eng/1356631760121>)

Foreword

This booklet is published by the Human Rights Program of the Department of Canadian Heritage. Its aim is to increase understanding of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and to heighten awareness of its importance in our daily lives.

Note: The discussion is for explanatory purposes only, and should not be taken as legal interpretation of the provisions of the Charter.

Human Rights Program Department of Canadian Heritage
25 Eddy Street (15-11-B), Hull, QC K1A 0M5
Telephone: (819) 994-3458 | Fax: (819) 994-5252
E-mail: droits-rights@pch.gc.ca

© Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada 2003
Catalogue No. S2-215/2003
ISBN: 0-662-67507-x

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