



Immigration, Refugees  
and Citizenship Canada

Immigration, Réfugiés  
et Citoyenneté Canada



Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada

# Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program



This publication is intended for private sponsors (i.e., Sponsorship Agreement Holders and their Constituent Groups, Groups of Five and Community Sponsors) in Canada who are interested in sponsoring refugees from abroad.

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### **We've change our address**

Starting April 1, 2017, all Privately Sponsored Refugee (PSR) sponsorship applications should be mailed to the address listed below.

#### **Resettlement Operations Centre in Ottawa (ROC-O)**

365 Laurier Avenue West

Ottawa, Ontario

K1A 1L1

Email: [IRCC.INROCO-CORORI.IRCC@ci.gc.ca](mailto:IRCC.INROCO-CORORI.IRCC@ci.gc.ca)

## Table of Contents

1. Introduction .....	5
2. Private sponsorship of refugees program .....	6
2.1 Who may be sponsored?.....	6
2.2 Who may <i>not</i> be sponsored? .....	7
2.3 Who may submit a private sponsorship? .....	8
2.4 Who may not submit a private sponsorship? .....	9
2.5 How is a sponsoring group formed?.....	10
2.6 What are the responsibilities of the sponsoring group?.....	11
2.7 How much financial support will be required?.....	12
2.8 Are there any extra costs?.....	12
2.9 How is a match made between a sponsoring group and a refugee? .....	13
2.10 What is a non-accompanying family member and the One-Year Window (OYW) of Opportunity? .....	14
2.11 What is a de facto dependant? .....	15
2.12 Addition of a dependant to an application .....	16
2.13 How does a group begin the sponsorship process?.....	19
2.14 IMM 6000 application kit .....	19
Supporting information.....	20
2.15 How to submit a sponsorship application via email .....	21
2.16 How is the application processed? .....	25
2.17 How can I obtain information on my sponsorship? .....	26
2.18 What are the refugee's responsibilities? .....	27
2.19 When will the refugee arrive? .....	27
2.20 Other useful information .....	28
Sponsorship Withdrawals .....	30
3. Additional sponsorship opportunities .....	31

3.1 Blended Visa Office-Referred Program.....	31
3.2 Other Visa Office-Referred Program .....	32
When you decide to sponsor a case .....	33
3.3 Joint Assistance Sponsorship.....	34
3.4 Women at Risk program.....	36
3.5 Urgent Protection Program .....	36
4. Where do I send information and where should I go for information? .....	38
Additional information.....	38
Check processing times.....	38
Check on your application status .....	38
Obtain case status updates on files.....	38
Sponsorship withdrawals, addition of dependants and One-Year Window requests .....	38
Provide information on changes in organization or updated contact information for Groups of Five or Community Sponsors.....	38
Update an applicant’s contact information or case information .....	39
For matters on Sponsorship Agreement Holders (SAH) sponsorship agreements, annual reports and allocations, or to provide updated SAH contact information .....	39
For information on visa office-referred and Joint Assistance Sponsorship matches .....	39

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## 1. Introduction

Each year, millions of people around the world are forced to flee their homeland to escape persecution, war or severe human rights abuses. Often, these people are permanently displaced and are never able to return home. In keeping with its humanitarian tradition and international obligations, the Government of Canada provides assistance to thousands of such displaced persons every year through its Government-Assisted Refugee (GAR) program.

Canadian citizens and permanent residents are able to provide additional opportunities for refugees living abroad to find protection and build a new life in Canada through the Private Sponsorship of Refugees (PSR) program. This guide explains how the private sponsorship program works, who may be sponsored, the obligations involved and the application process.

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#### **Resettlement Operations Centre in Ottawa (ROC-O)**

365 Laurier Avenue West  
Ottawa, Ontario  
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Email: [IRCC.INROCO-CORORI.IRCC@cic.gc.ca](mailto:IRCC.INROCO-CORORI.IRCC@cic.gc.ca)

## 2. Private sponsorship of refugees program

### 2.1 Who may be sponsored?

The PSR program is strictly for sponsoring refugees and persons in refugee-like situations. Under the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations*, there are two classes of persons who may qualify as refugees for Canada's refugee and humanitarian resettlement program. The classes are the Convention Refugees Abroad Class and the Country of Asylum Class.

**Convention refugee:** Any person who by reason of a well-founded fear of persecution because of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group or political opinion:

- is outside the country of his or her nationality and is unable or, by reason of that fear, unwilling to avail himself or herself of the protection of that country; or
- does not have a country of nationality, is outside the country of his or her former habitual residence and is unable or, by reason of that fear, unwilling to return to that country.

**Convention Refugee Abroad:** Any person who:

- is a Convention refugee;
- is outside Canada;
- is seeking resettlement in Canada;
- does not have a prospect of another durable solution, within a reasonable period of time, that is:
  - cannot return to his or her country of nationality or habitual residence;
  - cannot integrate in the country of refuge or the country of first asylum; and
  - does not have another offer of resettlement from a country other than Canada.
- will be privately sponsored or assisted by the government or has adequate financial resources to support himself or herself and any dependants.

Member of the **Country of Asylum Class:** A person:

- who is outside his or her country of citizenship or habitual residence;
- who has been, and continues to be, seriously and personally affected by civil war or armed conflict or who has suffered massive violations of human rights;
- for whom there is no possibility of finding an adequate solution to his or her situation within a reasonable period of time; and
- who will be privately sponsored or who has adequate financial resources to support himself or herself and any dependants.

An officer at a Canadian visa office makes the final decision on whether someone meets one of these definitions and is, therefore, eligible for resettlement. The eligibility decision is normally based on an interview with the applicant, supporting documentation

submitted by the applicant and sponsoring group and additional information available to the officer (such as country condition updates).

To be accepted for resettlement in Canada, the refugee must also pass medical, security and admissibility checks. In addition, refugees will be assessed on their ability to establish successfully in Canada. In making this assessment, the visa officer will consider whether the refugee has relatives or a sponsor in Canada, the ability to speak or learn to speak English or French, the potential for employment and resourcefulness. When a family unit is applying, the settlement potential of all family members is assessed as a single determination. Refugees deemed by the visa officer to be in urgent need of protection or in vulnerable circumstances are not assessed on their ability to establish.

## 2.2 Who may *not* be sponsored?

The following persons do not qualify for private sponsorship:

- People already in Canada. Such persons seeking Canada's protection as refugees should contact a local Citizenship and Immigration Centre for information on how to make a refugee claim.
- People who were the subject of a previous sponsorship application and were refused, unless:
  - their circumstances have changed;
  - new information, which was not presented in the previous application, has come to light; or
  - Canadian laws affecting the case have changed.
- People deemed to be Convention refugees by another country and allowed to live there permanently.
- People who fled persecution or civil war some time ago but can now integrate into the country where they are residing or can return home safely.

## 2.3 Who may submit a private sponsorship?

The following groups may submit a private sponsorship:

- **Sponsorship Agreement Holders (SAHs):** Incorporated organizations that have signed a formal sponsorship agreement with and Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC). Most current SAHs are religious organizations, ethnocultural groups or humanitarian organizations. SAHs, which may be local, regional or national, assume overall responsibility for the management of sponsorships under their agreement. Organizations entering into a sponsorship agreement with CIC generally submit several refugee sponsorships a year.
- **Constituent Groups (CGs):** A SAH can authorize CGs to sponsor under its agreement and provide support to the refugees. Each SAH sets its own criteria for recognizing CGs. CGs are based in the sponsored refugee's expected community of settlement and must have their sponsorship application and settlement plan approved by their SAH before the undertaking is submitted to the Centralized Processing Office in Winnipeg (CPO-W).
- **Groups of Five (G5):** Five or more Canadian citizens or permanent residents, who are at least 18 years of age, live in the expected community of settlement and have collectively arranged for the sponsorship of a refugee living abroad. The five individuals act as guarantors that the necessary support will be provided for the full duration of the sponsorship. CPO-W assesses individual contributions of group members to the sponsorship. The financial and non-financial aspects are considered collectively, as well as the settlement plan, before the sponsorship is approved. The group's financial commitment must meet the levels established in the Sponsorship Cost Table under section E of the [Settlement Plan](#) (IMM 5373A).

As part of the application package, the sponsoring group will need to include proof that each applicant has been recognized as a refugee by the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) or by a foreign state, unless the refugee you wish to sponsor is a Syrian or Iraqi refugee. Only a photocopy of the original document is required. If the document is in a language other than English or French, then a certified translation (in either official language) must be submitted along with the photocopy of the original document.

- **Community Sponsors (CSs):** Any organization (for-profit/not-for-profit, incorporated/non-incorporated) located in the community where the refugees are expected to settle can make an organizational commitment to sponsor. Community Sponsors must undergo financial and settlement plan assessments by CPO-W each time they wish to sponsor. Like G5s, Community Sponsors must demonstrate that the organization is willing and able to commit funds toward the sponsorship in line with the levels established in the Sponsorship Cost Table under section E of the [Settlement Plan and Financial Assessment \(IMM 5515\) \(PDF, 1.45 MB\)](#).

As part of the application package, the sponsoring group will need to include proof that each applicant has been recognized as a refugee by the UNHCR or by a foreign state, unless the refugee you wish to sponsor is a Syrian or Iraqi refugee. Only a photocopy of the original document is required. If the document is in a language other than English or French, then a certified translation (in either official language) must be submitted along with the photocopy of the original document.

A SAH, a CG or a CS has the option of formalizing a partnership with an outside party to share in the delivery of settlement assistance and support. Partnerships may be formed with individuals (e.g., a family member of the sponsored refugee living in Canada) or other organizations. The partner–co-sponsor–is expected to sign the sponsorship undertaking and discharge the responsibilities that were agreed to in the settlement plan.

## 2.4 Who may not submit a private sponsorship?

The following persons and groups are ineligible to participate in the sponsorship of refugees:

- Persons and groups liable for a sponsorship undertaking that remains in default.
- Persons convicted in Canada of the offence of murder or an offence set out in Schedule I or II of the *Corrections and Conditional Release Act*, regardless of whether the offence was prosecuted by indictment, and a period of five years has not elapsed since the completion of the sentence imposed under the *Criminal Code of Canada*.
- Persons convicted of an offence outside Canada that, if committed in Canada, would constitute an offence referred to above, if a period of five years has not elapsed since the completion of the sentence imposed under a foreign law.
- Persons subject to a removal order.
- Persons subject to revocation proceedings under the *Citizenship Act*.
- Persons detained in any penitentiary, jail, reformatory or prison.
- Persons in default of court-ordered support payments.

## 2.5 How is a sponsoring group formed?

### **Sponsorship Agreement Holders (SAH)**

Interested organizations can request an application to become a SAH by writing to [PSR-PPPR@cic.gc.ca](mailto:PSR-PPPR@cic.gc.ca).

SAHs must be incorporated organizations. Generally, new SAH applicants have sponsorship experience and expect to sponsor multiple refugee cases each year. Applicant organizations must have personnel and finances available to ensure the settlement needs of the sponsored refugees are in place before their arrival.

### **Constituent Groups (CG)**

These are usually members of the organization holding the sponsorship agreement. However, each SAH sets its own criteria for recognizing CGs. Interested parties should [contact a SAH](#) directly to inquire about sponsoring under its auspices.

### **Groups of Five (G5)**

At least five individuals must be eligible to sponsor and willing to contribute to the requirements of sponsorship. Each group member must complete a personal financial profile form and the group must collectively complete a settlement plan and financial assessment.

### **Community Sponsor (CS)**

An organization decides to participate in refugee sponsorship and provides statements demonstrating the ability to meet the required financial obligations.

### **Co-sponsor**

Interested individuals should [contact a SAH](#), a CG or a CS in their area to inquire about partnering in the private sponsorship of a refugee. Each SAH, CG or CS has its own procedures for screening and approving a cosponsor as well as for establishing the division of responsibilities in the settlement plan. The decision to accept an individual or organization as a cosponsor is the choice of the SAH, CG or CS who submits the undertaking.

To apply, use the [sponsorship kit for SAH/CGs, G5s and CSs](#) as well as the [Application for Convention Refugees Abroad and Humanitarian-protected Persons Abroad \(IMM 6000\)](#) (overseas application kit), which the refugee must complete.

## 2.6 What are the responsibilities of the sponsoring group?

Sponsoring groups agree to provide the refugees with care, lodging, settlement assistance and support for the duration of the sponsorship period. Normally, this is 12 months starting from the refugee's arrival in Canada or until the refugee becomes self-sufficient, whichever comes first. In exceptional circumstances, the visa officer may determine that the refugee requires more time to become established in Canada and will ask the sponsoring group to extend the sponsorship period to a maximum of 36 months. The sponsoring group has the option of refusing the request for an extension of the sponsorship period. However, the sponsoring group risks having the case refused as a result.

Private sponsors normally support the sponsored refugees by:

- providing the cost of food, rent and household utilities and other day-to-day living expenses;
- providing clothing, furniture and other household goods;
- locating interpreters;
- selecting a family physician and dentist;
- assisting with applying for provincial health-care coverage;
- enrolling children in school and adults in language training;
- introducing newcomers to people with similar personal interests;
- providing orientation with regard to banking services, transportation, etc.; and
- helping in the search for employment.

It is not possible to sponsor only one member of a family unit. The sponsorship undertaking should name all immediate and dependent family members listed on the *Application for Permanent Residence*, whether they are accompanying the principal applicant to Canada or may follow later under the provisions of the One Year Window (OYW) program as described in section 2.10. The sponsoring group is obliged to provide support to all family members listed on the undertaking, regardless of the timing of their arrival in Canada. The sponsor is responsible for supporting the non-accompanying family members under the same terms as in the original settlement plan, unless the principal refugee applicant is now self-sufficient and able to provide adequately for his or her family members. De facto dependants should also be included in the sponsorship but should be named on a separate undertaking as described in section 2.11.

## 2.7 How much financial support will be required?

The sponsorship application kit provides details of how much financial support will likely be needed to meet the sponsorship obligations as well as advice on how to determine whether a group has sufficient funds. Although the cost of living varies from centre to centre across the country, the [Sponsorship Cost Table and the In-Kind Deduction Table \(PDF, 1.11 MB\)](#) included in the sponsorship kits can help to estimate the annual settlement cost for sponsoring a refugee or refugee family. One rule of thumb is that sponsors are expected to provide a level of support that is at least equal to that of the prevailing rates for social assistance in the expected community of settlement.

The sponsoring group may establish a trust fund for the sponsorship but may not accept or require payment of funds from a refugee for submitting a sponsorship.

The financial support of sponsors is given on the basis of need. Refugees are expected to contribute to their own settlement costs from funds they bring to Canada or earn during their sponsorship period.

Since sponsorship is meant to lead to self-sufficiency, sponsoring groups are encouraged to help refugees find employment but cannot force refugees to accept any job offered. Sponsors are, however, permitted to adjust their financial support downward if a refugee refuses to take a *reasonable* job offer. Finding employment within the sponsorship period is not always possible, so the sponsoring group is advised not to count on employment income when securing funds for the sponsorship.

## 2.8 Are there any extra costs?

Refugees are usually given a loan from the Government of Canada to pay for their medical examinations overseas and their transportation to Canada. In cases where the visa office has concerns about a refugee's ability to repay a loan, the sponsoring group may be asked to pay a portion of, or all these costs. Examples may be sponsorships for elderly persons who are unlikely to enter the labour market or sponsorships of unaccompanied minor children.

Payment for transportation and other costs from the contributions fund is reserved for certain cases within the Joint Assistance Sponsorship (JAS) component (see [Additional Sponsorship Opportunities](#)) where a visa officer is of the opinion that the refugee would be unable to repay the loan.

## 2.9 How is a match made between a sponsoring group and a refugee?

There are two ways to match a sponsoring group and a refugee.

**1) Sponsor-referred:** The sponsoring group suggests the name of a refugee or refugee family it is interested in sponsoring. The group may have obtained the referral from an overseas contact, a friend, the relative of a member of the organization or elsewhere. SAHs/CGs, G5s and CSs submit the sponsorship application on behalf of the sponsor-referred refugee to CPO-W.

A group that would like to refer a refugee applicant for sponsorship should:

- consider whether or not the person is likely to be eligible for the private sponsorship program. (See [Who may be sponsored?](#) and [Who may not be sponsored?](#)) Ineligible applicants will be refused;
- determine whether the person has relatives or friends in Canada. In most cases, refugees should be resettled in their relative's community.

To be sponsored as a refugee by a **Group of Five** or a **Community Sponsor**, the principal applicant **must already have refugee status** (unless you are trying to sponsor a Syrian or Iraqi refugee). Having refugee status means that an authorized body has determined that an individual meets its refugee definition. This authorized body can be the UNHCR or the government of the country where the asylum seeker is currently living (i.e., foreign state).

A document proving recognized refugee status that has been issued by the UNHCR or a foreign state must accompany the refugee sponsorship application submitted to the Centralized Processing Office in Winnipeg (CPO-W).

Principal Applicants without refugee status recognized by the UNHCR or a foreign state can only be sponsored by a Sponsorship Agreement Holder (SAH). A [list of the SAHs](#) in Canada is updated regularly to reflect all groups/organizations which have signed sponsorship agreements with the Government of Canada.

**2) Visa office-referred:** The Matching Centre at CIC national headquarters in Ottawa administers an inventory of visa office-referred (VOR) cases that have already been selected but for which CIC works to find a private sponsor to match with the refugee identified initially by the UNHCR. VOR cases are normally ready to travel to Canada within one to four months of being matched with a sponsor. However, delays may occur in some travel-ready cases because of problems in arranging exit permits, travel documents, etc. Once the sponsorship is signed, the local Citizenship and Immigration Centre works with the Matching Centre and the visa office to provide the sponsor with more accurate information regarding departure and arrival dates, as well as any particular settlement needs that might exist in transit and in the first few weeks after the refugees have arrived in Canada.

Please refer to [section 3. Additional Sponsorship Opportunities](#) for more information on VORs, including the Blended VOR (BVOR) program.

## 2.10 What is a non-accompanying family member and the One-Year Window (OYW) of Opportunity?

Non-accompanying family members are spouses and dependent children of the principal applicant who have been separated from the family unit and will not be travelling with the rest of the family. De facto dependants (see definition in section 2.11) cannot be identified as non-accompanying family members.

If the separated family member's application for permanent residence is submitted to CPO-W within one year of the principal applicant's arrival in Canada, it will be processed on an expedited basis as part of the same application. In order to qualify, the principal applicant must identify the non-accompanying family member on the [Generic Application Form for Canada \(IMM 0008\) \(PDF, 481.17 KB\)](#) before departing for Canada. If the application is submitted after the one-year period has expired, the family member will not benefit from the provisions of the OYW. Applications for consideration under the OYW of opportunity are processed at the visa office responsible for the area in which the family members reside, even if that differs from the visa office where the principal applicant was processed.

Sponsoring groups must include separated family members on the undertaking and also ensure that the principal applicant identifies them on the IMM 0008 application as non-accompanying family members. **Family members who are not identified on the IMM 008 application form will not be eligible for the OYW or for sponsorship under the Family Class at a later date.**

When a non-accompanying family member is located or otherwise becomes available for processing, the family member in Canada or their sponsoring group will submit a OYW application to CPO-W.

Please refer to the [OYW Instruction Guide](#) for additional information.

## 2.11 What is a de facto dependant?

A de facto dependant is a person considered by the refugee family to be an integral member of the family unit, but who does not meet CIC's definition of a family member. For example, an elderly aunt who has always lived with the principal applicant may be a de facto dependant. Such individuals should be included in the sponsorship.

To be considered as a member of the family unit, such individuals must satisfy the visa officer that they are dependent on the family unit in which membership is claimed. The dependency may be emotional or economic and will often be a combination of the two. Such people would normally, but not exclusively, live with the principal applicant as members of the same household.

Sponsors must submit a separate sponsorship undertaking for de facto dependants. They should, however, identify the name and date of birth of the principal applicant in the Multiple Undertakings section of the undertaking to ensure that de facto dependants and the rest of the family unit are processed concurrently.

De facto dependants must be refugees in their own right and meet all statutory requirements. Where the de facto dependant does not qualify as a refugee in their own right, they may be eligible for humanitarian and compassionate consideration. Persons who form part of the family unit will be examined while keeping in mind the goal of keeping family units together.

De facto dependants must also complete separate applications. In addition, Schedule 2 of the overseas refugee application kit ([Application for Convention Refugees Abroad and Humanitarian-protected Persons Abroad IMM 6000](#)) includes a section in which the principal applicant is asked to identify the de facto dependants who are co-applying.

For all VOR cases and cases where the sponsor did not list de facto dependants identified by the principal applicant, visa officers will contact CPO-W to ensure that sponsoring groups are prepared to assume responsibility for the settlement of the de facto dependants with the rest of the family unit.

De facto dependants are **not** eligible under the OYW as they do not meet the definition of family member described above.

### **Examples of persons who may qualify as de facto dependants:**

- An unmarried adult daughter in cultures where it is normal for an unmarried adult daughter to remain dependent until she marries.
- A widowed sister or sister-in-law in a culture where it is normal for the applicant to take on responsibility for her care and sustenance when she has no other means of support.
- Nieces and nephews whose parents have been killed or are missing. In the case of nieces and nephews, sponsors must take into consideration the best interests

of the child. To the extent possible, sponsors should work with appropriate authorities in that field to try to avoid any disputes with respect to custody or guardianship.

- Parents of any age living with the principal applicant and without other children with whom they could reside or without means of support other than the principal applicant.
- Elderly relatives who have lived with the principal applicant or who are solely, or for the most part, dependent on the applicant for care, shelter, etc.

### **Examples of persons who may *not* qualify as de facto dependants:**

- A married sister living with the applicant, who has a husband residing in another known location, unless it is demonstrated to the visa officer that the sister cannot rely on her husband for support.
- A married daughter and her husband living with the principal applicant, unless they can demonstrate to the visa officer that they are completely dependent on the principal applicant for financial support.
- An elderly parent who normally lives with the principal applicant but who may reside with other children from time to time.
- A person who has been taking care of the principal applicant's children and living in the household for an extended period (more than six months) but who is not without family of his or her own.

## **2.12 Addition of a dependant to an application**

Sponsoring groups should be aware of all family members, accompanying or not, at the time of the original sponsorship application and they should include them on the sponsorship undertaking. However, instances can arise where a family member must be added to the application after it has been submitted to CPO-W but before the visa has been issued (for example, due to the birth of a child or a marriage).

The sponsoring group must provide the following documents to CPO-W in order to add a dependant to an existing Sponsorship Undertaking:

### **SAHs and their CGs**

- [Undertaking/Application to Sponsor \(IMM 5373\)](#) - The sponsoring group must check the "add dependant" checkbox on page 1, complete the sponsor information in section A, B or C as applicable, record the Principal Applicant's G number or UCI, and include additional dependant information in Section E.
- [Application for Convention Refugees Abroad and Humanitarian-protected Persons Abroad \(IMM 6000\)](#) - De facto and overage dependants require their own separate application and must therefore be identified as the Principal Applicant on the IMM 6000. All other types of dependants must be recorded as such on an updated IMM 6000 application package to be completed by the Principal Applicant.

- [Settlement Plan \(IMM 5440\) \(PDF, 690.49 KB\)](#) (if the SAH has less than two years of experience).

## Groups of Five

- [Undertaking/Application to Sponsor \(IMM 5373\)](#) - The sponsoring group must check the “add dependant” checkbox on page 1, complete the sponsor information in section A, B or C as applicable, record the Principal Applicant’s G number or UCI, and include additional dependant information in Section E.
- [Application for Convention Refugees Abroad and Humanitarian-protected Persons Abroad \(IMM 6000\)](#) - De facto and overage dependants require their own separate application and must therefore be identified as the Principal Applicant on the IMM 6000. All other types of dependants must be recorded as such on an updated IMM 6000 application package to be completed by the Principal Applicant.
- [Settlement Plan and Financial Assessment \(PDF, 1.11 MB\)](#) for Each Sponsorship Undertaking.
- [Refugee Status Determination \(RSD\) for anyone who requires a separate sponsorship application package \(e.g., for overage dependent children and for de facto dependants\) \(PDF, 651.28 KB\)](#) *facto dependants*). *This requirement is not applicable for Syrian or Iraqi refugees.*
- Financial documentation required by all group members providing financial support:
  - A copy of your most recent T4;
  - A copy of your most recent Notice of Assessment issued by the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA);
  - An original letter or proof of annotated cheque stubs from your employer confirming financial details for the past 12 months;
  - If self-employed, an original letter from an accountant confirming your annual income for the past 12 months;
  - Proof of other sources of income (pension statement, investments, etc.); or
  - Employment Insurance pay stubs.
  - Money held in trust:
    - An original letter from a Canadian financial institution attesting to account details, identity of the beneficiary (i.e. the refugees), when and how funds will be dispersed, the outcome of the funds should the beneficiary not arrive in Canada and the details of the two members of the sponsoring group with signing authority (i.e. full name, date of birth and addresses).
- [Sponsorship Assessment \(IMM 5492\)](#) for each group member.
- [Financial profile \(PDF, 651.28 KB\)](#) for each group member providing financial support.

## Community Sponsors

- [Undertaking/Application to Sponsor \(IMM 5373\)](#)- The sponsoring group must check the add dependant checkbox on page 1, complete the sponsor information in section A, B or C as applicable, record the Principal Applicant's G number or UCI, and include additional dependant information in Section E.
- [Application for Convention Refugees Abroad and Humanitarian-protected Persons Abroad \(IMM 6000\)](#) - De facto and overage dependants require their own separate application and must therefore be identified as the Principal Applicant on the IMM 6000. All other types of dependants must be recorded as such on an updated IMM 6000 application package to be completed by the Principal Applicant.
- [Settlement Plan and Financial Assessment \(IMM 5515\) \(PDF, 1.45 MB\)](#) for EACH Sponsorship Undertaking.
- Refugee Status Determination (RSD) for anyone who requires a separate sponsorship application package (e.g., for overage dependent children and for de facto dependants). *This requirement is not applicable for Syrian or Iraqi refugees.*
- Financial Documentation:
  - Last year's audited financial statement from the sponsoring organization;
  - An original letter from a Canadian financial institution attesting to bank account details;
  - An original letter from the organization guaranteeing a cash donation; or
  - Proof(s) of alternate source(s) of funding.
  - [Sponsorship Assessment \(IMM 5492\)](#); and
  - For Co-sponsors in Community Sponsorship application (if applicable):
    - [Sponsorship Assessment \(IMM 5492\)](#);
    - Proof of income (if providing financial support);
    - [Financial profile \(PDF, 651.28 KB\)](#) (if providing financial support).

If the sponsoring group is not able to demonstrate their willingness or ability to provide support to the additional family member, they may be given an opportunity to locate a replacement sponsoring group. If a replacement sponsor is identified, the new sponsoring group would be required to submit a sponsorship undertaking for the entire family to CPO-W. The new undertaking replaces the first and the original group would no longer be considered the sponsor.

If the request to add a dependant to the application is refused and a replacement sponsor cannot be identified, the principal refugee's application will likely be refused by the overseas visa officer.

## 2.13 How does a group begin the sponsorship process?

Once a sponsoring group has been formed, it must obtain the [Refugee Sponsorship application package](#). The sponsor must complete the undertaking. The refugee must complete the [Application for Permanent Residence](#). Both parts, with supporting documents, must be submitted to CPO-W at:

Centralized Processing Office – Winnipeg  
269 Main Street, Suite 400 New  
Winnipeg, MB  
R3C 1B2

The sponsorship kit includes the program information and instructions on completing the following forms:

- the undertaking to sponsor;
- the settlement plan that outlines the settlement and financial arrangements in place to support the sponsored refugee;
- the financial assessment forms for G5s and CSs ; and
- the Document Checklist.

The Application for Permanent Residence kit includes:

- the Instruction Guide on how to complete the forms;
- the Application for Permanent Residence (Generic application form for Canada IMM 0008);
- the Additional Dependents/Declaration;
- the Schedule A–Background/Declaration;
- the Schedule 2–Refugees outside Canada;
- the Use of Representative form; and
- the Document Checklist.

## 2.14 IMM 6000 application kit

Refugee applicants are required to complete all relevant application forms contained in the [Application for Permanent Residence in Canada: Convention Refugees Abroad and Humanitarian-Protected Persons Abroad \(IMM 6000 kit\)](#). The IMM 6000 includes the IMM 0008, Schedule A, Schedule 2 and the Authorization to Release Information forms. Applicants are also expected to gather all supporting documentation required for their application. (Refer to the Checklist in Appendix A of the IMM 6000.)

Only after a visa office has received an approved sponsorship undertaking and a complete Application for Permanent Residence form from CPO-W is an interview with the applicant arranged.

For sponsor-referred cases, there are two methods by which the sponsorship undertaking and the Application for Permanent Residence in Canada may be submitted to CPO-W for processing:

1. The sponsoring groups send the IMM 6000 kit to the refugees they wish to sponsor. The refugee applicant completes the kit and returns it to the sponsor, along with supporting documents and photographs. The sponsor ensures that the forms have been completely filled and that no required information is missing, **before** submitting at the same time, the IMM 6000 forms, supporting documents, photographs and the sponsorship undertaking form to CPO-W.

OR

2. The sponsoring groups send the completed sponsorship undertaking form to the refugees overseas they wish to sponsor. The refugee applicants send the completed IMM 6000 kit, along with supporting documents and photographs, together with the sponsorship undertaking form to CPO-W.

The first submission method has the advantage of reducing the processing time overseas as well as providing sponsors with an opportunity to review the content and completeness of the refugee's application before it is submitted.

## Supporting information

Sponsoring groups may provide additional information to the visa office in support of the applicant's need for protection. Information provided should generally be non-personal and written by organizations or individuals who are aware of the current situation in the country the applicant is fleeing or now residing in.

Examples of information that can help the visa officer in making a determination on the applicant's need for protection include written accounts from individuals who have fled similar situations, recent media reports on the persecution of persons with similar attributes, and reports of government legislation affecting the status of refugees in countries of asylum. Supporting information must be directly relevant to the refugee's need for protection.

Sponsoring groups are further encouraged to include their settlement plan for refugees who they feel may be considered difficult to settle. This is intended to inform the visa office that the sponsoring group is prepared to cope with any special needs the refugees may have.

If sponsoring groups wish to provide a Sponsorship Rationale, a separate sheet of paper may be attached to the application to provide additional information as to why:

- the principal refugee applicant is being referred for protection;
- resettlement is the only durable solution available to him/her; and

- Canada is the most logical choice as a destination.

This section can assist sponsors in screening their applications so that they can determine, to the best of their knowledge, whether the applicant meets one of the definitions of refugee. Ultimately, the final decision on whether an applicant is both eligible and admissible rests with the visa officer.

The submission of supporting information is optional and designed to help sponsors show why the person is in need of resettlement and what arrangements have been made in Canada to help the refugee settle.

### **2.15 How to submit a sponsorship application via email**

You can now submit a sponsorship application via email to Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC). Please follow these instructions to ensure that your application is processed without delays.

When compared with receiving applications via regular mail, this new process allows CPO-W to save more than one hour in processing time per application and it allows the sponsors to receive an email auto-reply to confirm proper reception right away.

To properly submit an email sponsorship application, here are a few tips:

- Your scanner must be set at a high resolution (at least 400 DPI). If the documents sent are not legible, CPO-W will not accept your application. Note that if you decide to re-submit your application, you must resubmit it in its entirety, not just the documents that were not legible.
- Applications can be submitted in black and white.
- Do not submit ZIP files as CPO-W cannot open these types of files. If you do, CPO-W will not accept your application.
- When you submit an application via email, do not submit a duplicate application via postal mail. This causes confusion and will delay processing. For SAHs, this will also affect the accuracy of your available cap spaces.
- The IMM0008 submitted must be 2D bar-coded. A single 2D barcode can hold a significant amount of information and may be printed easily. If the IMM0008 submitted is not 2D bar-coded (or if the 2D bar coded page of the IMM0008 is missing), CPO-W will not accept your application. Using a 2D bar coded form saves CPO-W up to 45 minutes in processing time.

- When you enter the information on the online IMM0008 form, it must comply with a specific format and certain fields must be completed in order to “validate” the form. If mandatory fields are not completed and you click “validate”, those fields will be identified in red. Once the form is complete and you click “Validate”, a 2D bar code is created. Validation does not mean that the form is submitted to CPO-W directly. It only means that a 2D bar code will be generated to be printed as part of the IMM0008 form. Upon receipt of an application, CPO-W will scan the bars on the IMM0008. Once scanned, the validated information will be uploaded directly in the Global Case Management System (GCMS).
- As you often receive the IMM0008 in two parts, i.e. the form itself and then the signature page, you have two options to submit the form (note: the second option provides the best results for the barcodes):
  - Validate the IMM0008 by clicking the “validate” button on the IMM0008
  - Print the validated IMM0008
  - Discard the empty signature page and replace it with the signed page
  - Scan the validated IMM0008 with the signed signature page
  - Submit to CPO-W.

Or

- Validate the IMM0008 by clicking the “validate” button on the IMM0008, save the PDF and attach it to your email. The attachment should be titled: “IMM008 – validated”
  - Scan separately the signature page, scan it and attach it to your email. The attachment should be titled: “IMM008 – signature page”
  - Submit to CPO-W.
- All forms MUST be typed.
  - To facilitate the receipt and identification of applications emailed to CPO-W, you must submit your application in six separate email attachments within the one or more emails (depending on the size of the attachments). For the item “supporting documentation”, you can submit multiple attachments as needed. Please use the following naming conventions for your attachments:
    1. Sponsor documents. Name this file: “PA LAST NAME, First Name - Sponsor documents”

2. IMM0008 & IMM0008 DEP (if applicable). Name this file: "PA LAST NAME, First Name - IMM0008"
  3. Schedule A, Schedule 2, & Use of Representative forms. Name this file: "PA LAST NAME, First Name - Schedules"
  4. Refugee photos. 1 photo per applicant. Name this file: "PA LAST NAME, First Name Refugee - Photos"
  5. Passports. Name this file: "PA LAST NAME, First Name - Passports"
  6. Supporting documentation. Name this file: "PA LAST NAME, First Name - Supporting documentation"
- Your overall email (text and attachments) cannot be bigger than 10MB. If your email is bigger than 10MB, it will bounce back and you will NOT receive an email auto-reply from CPO-W.
  - If any individual attachment in your email is bigger than 5MB, the email will be received at CPO-W (an auto reply will be sent), but the application will be returned to you as incomplete.
  - Your subject line for your email must follow the following structure: *PA LAST NAME, first name – sponsorship application*. If your email exceeds 10 MB, you must send your application in multiple emails. To ensure that CPO-W can find all the emails for your application, please use the following subject lines:
    - For the first email: *Part 1 of 2: PA LAST NAME, first name – sponsorship application*
    - For the second email: *Part 2 of 2: PA LAST NAME, first name – sponsorship application, etc.*
    - Note that you will receive an auto-reply (see Annex B) for each email sent.
  - If your application has been received by CPO-W but is incomplete, CPOW will not open a file. If you decide to re-submit your application, you MUST resubmit it in its entirety. You cannot only submit the missing documents.
  - As part of the application process, you must submit photos for each of the applicants included in your sponsorship application. You only have to submit one photo for each applicant. The photo should respect the following specifications:

### **Photo specifications**

You must submit one (1) photo of each applicant included in your sponsorship application. The photo should respect the specifications outlined in these guides:

- [www.cic.gc.ca/english/information/applications/guides/pdf/5445EB-e.pdf](http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/information/applications/guides/pdf/5445EB-e.pdf)

# PERMANENT RESIDENTS PHOTOGRAPH SPECIFICATIONS

## Notes to the applicant

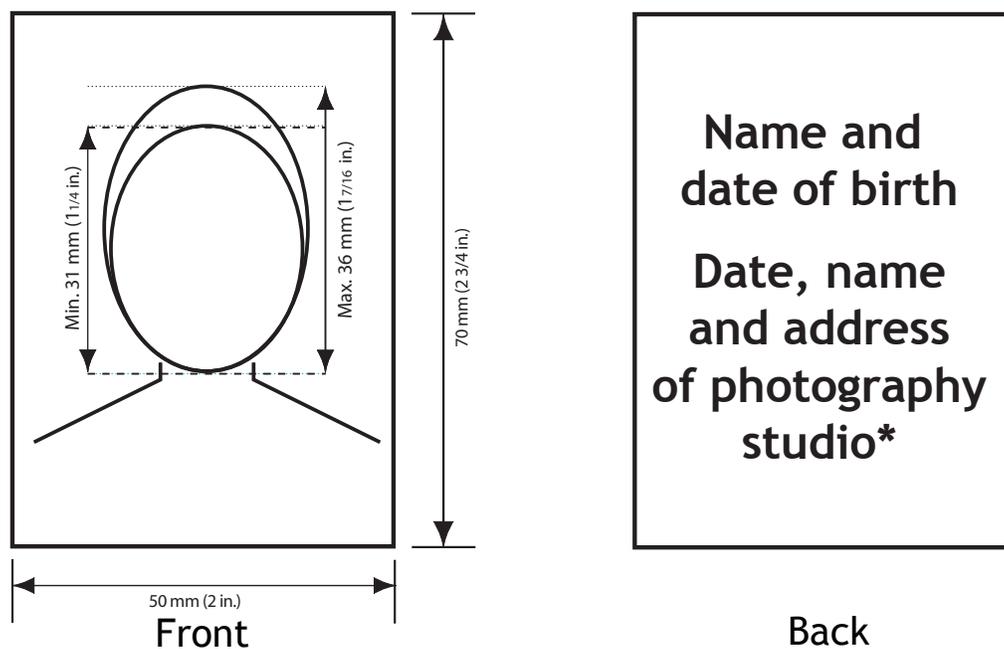
### TAKE THIS SPECIFICATION SHEET WITH YOU TO THE PHOTOGRAPHER

- ▶ Make sure you provide the correct number of photos specified in your application guide.
- ▶ You must provide identical and unaltered photographs.
- ▶ Photographs may be in colour or black and white.
- ▶ Photographs must be original and **not altered in any way** or taken from an existing photograph.
- ▶ Photographs must reflect your current appearance (taken within the past six (6) months).

## Notes to the photographer

### The photographs must be:

- ▶ taken by a commercial photographer
- ▶ 50 mm x 70 mm (2 inches wide x 2 3/4 inches long) and sized so the height of the face measures between 31 mm and 36 mm (1 1/4 inches and 1 7/16 inches) from chin to crown of head (natural top of head)
- ▶ clear, sharp and in focus
- ▶ taken with a neutral facial expression (**eyes open and clearly visible, mouth closed, no smiling**)
- ▶ taken with uniform lighting and **not show shadows, glare or flash reflections**
- ▶ taken straight on, with face and shoulders **centred** and squared to the camera (i.e. the photographs must show the full front view of the person's head and shoulders, showing full face centred in the middle of the photograph)
- ▶ taken in front of a plain white background with a clear difference between the person's face and the background. Photographs must reflect/represent natural skin tones



Not actual size. Refer to measurements above.

### \*The back of one (1) photograph must:

- ▶ bear the name and date of birth of the subject, as well as the name and complete address of the photography studio
- ▶ bear the date the photograph was taken
- ▶ the photographer may use a stamp or handwrite this information. Stick-on labels are unacceptable.

04-01-16



## 2.16 How is the application processed?

**The Centralized Processing Office in Winnipeg (CPO-W)** is CIC's point of contact for information on processing and settlement issues pertaining to private group sponsorships. Upon receipt of a sponsorship application, CPO-W will:

- review the sponsorship undertaking to ensure that it is complete and meets the eligibility requirements;
- review the Application for Permanent Residence (only for completeness);
- acknowledge receipt of the undertaking to the sponsoring group;
- inform the sponsoring group of any decisions related to the application;
- **for sponsor-referred cases:** forward the approved undertaking and the completed application for permanent residence to the visa office responsible for the area where the refugee lives;
- **for all VOR and JAS cases:** review, assess as well as process the sponsorship undertaking once received from the sponsor and forward a copy of the approved sponsorship undertaking to the Matching Centre; and
- provide the sponsoring group with processing updates.

**Canadian visa offices** process applications for permanent residence submitted by refugees living abroad. The visa offices work closely with international service providers who deal with refugees around the world and also maintain contact with CPO-W. The visa office will:

- review the application for permanent residence and pre-screen for basic eligibility requirements;
- notify the sponsor when a selection decision has been made (see 2.16);
- conduct an interview to determine if the applicant is a member of the Convention Refugees Abroad Class or Country of Asylum Class;
- assess the applicant's ability to establish in Canada;
- initiate medical, criminal and security checks and review the results to ensure the applicant is admissible to Canada;
- **for all VOR sponsorships:** send a completed VOR referral form 1 to the Matching Centre so that the profile can be added to the online refugee profile directory;
- issue a loan for transportation and medical costs;
- issue a permanent resident visa when a positive final decision is made;
- make travel arrangements for the refugee in collaboration with the International Organization for Migration (if applicable);
- provide the refugee with orientation and travel information in collaboration with international service providers; and
- advise the Matching Centre of the date and place that the refugees will arrive in Canada.

The applicable **local CIC office** in Canada will:

- provide the sponsoring group with the names of agencies offering immigrant support services;
- register the refugees for the Interim Federal Health Program (IFHP); and
- monitor the settlement of the refugees after arrival.

## 2.17 How can I obtain information on my sponsorship?

**Undertaking stage:** CPO-W will communicate with sponsors at two stages of processing:

1. An Acknowledgment of Receipt (AOR) letter will be sent to the sponsor once the application has been verified for completeness and the file is created. This letter will include the CIC file number (G number), which the sponsor can use to check the status of the application in the [Electronic Client Application System](#) (E-CAS). CPO-W will send the acknowledgment letter within 30 business days of receiving a complete application.

Incomplete applications will be returned to the party (either the sponsor or the refugee) that submitted it.

2. An approval or refusal letter will be sent to the sponsor once an officer has reviewed the Sponsorship Undertaking and rendered a decision. This letter will include a link where sponsors can find processing times for their applications overseas.

Sponsorship groups may submit application status enquiries by emailing [CPOW-BTCW@cic.gc.ca](mailto:CPOW-BTCW@cic.gc.ca) only when the:

- sponsoring undertaking is still under assessment in Canada; and
- information is not available on [E-CAS](#).

**Overseas application stage:** Visa offices are required to send updates to sponsors at two stages of processing the overseas application:

1. when there is an approximate date for the selection interview; and
2. when the selection decision has been made (if negative, the refusal reasons will be provided; if positive, the update will include the average time to departure).

Sponsorship groups may submit a Case Specific Enquiry form to the responsible visa office to inquire on the status of the Application for Permanent Residence when:

- the application has been sent to the responsible visa office abroad (as indicated in E-CAS or via confirmation letter from CPO-W);

- the information is not available on E-CAS; and
- the estimated mission processing times have been exceeded.

Visa officers will only respond to case status enquiries when estimated processing times have been exceeded and the information is not available in E-CAS.

## 2.18 What are the refugee's responsibilities?

**Application and admissibility requirements:** Refugees must complete the application forms contained in the IMM 6000 kit and gather all supporting documentation before sending the entire package back to either the sponsoring group or to CPO-W, whichever option they choose ([see 2.14](#)). During their interview, they must provide accurate and complete information about their refugee claim and their circumstances in their country of asylum. If selected at the interview stage, the refugees must visit a Panel Physician to receive medical clearance for travel to Canada.

The visa office will provide applicants with instructions for the medical examination. The refugee applicants will also undergo and need to pass criminality and security checks. The refugee applicants may be required to produce supplemental documentation to finalize these checks.

**Medical costs and costs of travel to Canada:** Refugee applicants are responsible for the medical and travel costs for themselves and all dependent family members. Two loan options are available to refugees who are unable to cover these costs at the time of application:

1. transportation loan: to cover transportation costs up to and including arrival in Canada; and
2. admissibility loan: to cover the costs of overseas medical services.

**Settlement responsibilities:** The newly arrived refugee is expected to make every effort to become self-sufficient as soon as possible after arriving in Canada. This includes taking advantage of language classes as well as other settlement services and actively seeking employment.

## 2.19 When will the refugee arrive?

**Sponsor-referred cases:** Considerable time can pass between the time an application is made and the time the refugees arrive in Canada. The selection process for these refugees can fluctuate with the volume of applications received at the visa offices. Processing times in each visa office for the past 12 months are [available online](#). Sponsors are encouraged to consult this link regularly to help them plan for the arrival of sponsored refugees.

**Blended VOR and other VOR cases:** These refugees are usually travel-ready by the time a match has been made with a private sponsorship group in Canada and usually arrive within one to four months after CPO-W has approved the sponsorship.

The sponsoring group will generally receive a *Notification of Arrival Transmission* at least 10 business days before the refugee arrives in Canada.

## 2.20 Other useful information

**Coverage of health-care costs:** Depending on the province of destination, the waiting period for provincial health insurance coverage can be as much as 90 days for new permanent residents. However, in most jurisdictions, resettled refugees may be eligible from the day of arrival. Privately sponsored refugees should apply for provincial or territorial health insurance as soon as possible.

The Interim Federal Health Program (IFHP) provides limited, temporary coverage of health-care benefits for specific groups of people in Canada until they become eligible for provincial or territorial health insurance. The IFHP is a payer of last resort, limiting benefits to those who lack public health insurance or comprehensive private insurance.

All resettled refugees, including privately sponsored refugees, are eligible for [basic, supplemental and prescription drug coverage](#) under the IFHP. The duration of coverage is as follows:

- **Basic coverage** (for example, doctor visits and hospital care) is provided until the beneficiary qualifies for provincial or territorial health insurance, which typically occurs within **3 months**.
- **Supplemental and prescription drug coverage** is provided until the beneficiary is no longer under private sponsorship. In most cases, coverage is valid for 12 months from the date that the resettled refugee arrives in Canada.

[Read details about the IFHP](#), including how to apply and the description of coverage.

**Canada child benefit:** Most resettled refugee parents with children under the age of 18 qualify for a monthly payment to help them with the cost of raising their children. For more information or to obtain the application form for this benefit, applicants should contact the nearest tax services office, visit the [Canada Revenue Agency website](#) or call 1-800-387-1193 toll-free.

**Trust accounts:** Some groups establish trust accounts for the funds collected, raised or donated for the settlement of sponsored refugees. CIC neither promotes nor objects to the use of trust accounts. However, groups should use caution in ensuring that the funds in the account and all interest accrued are **used only for the direct settlement costs of the refugees** for whom the funds were collected. Groups must be able to

account for all expenditures. To ensure this, the account can be registered in the name of the sponsoring group with a note specifying that the money is in trust for the sponsored refugee. For withdrawals, the account should require the signature of at least two group members.

**Permanent resident card:** All new permanent residents to Canada receive a [permanent resident \(PR\) card](#). These cards are valid for five years. To receive their PR cards, permanent residents must provide their new mailing address in Canada. Permanent residents can use the [Address Notification](#) tool to update their information.

To avoid a \$50 processing fee, permanent residents must provide their new address within 180 days after entering Canada.

**Secondary migration and self-destination:** Sponsors are encouraged to maintain open lines of communication with both the refugee and CPO-W throughout the sponsorship period.

It may happen that, at some point during the sponsorship period, the refugee either fails to establish in or decides to move out of the sponsor's community. This is referred to as self-destination or secondary migration. If this happens to a group sponsoring under a SAH, the group is advised to discuss the situation with the SAH.

#### **Scenarios:**

- If the refugee 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 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, CPO-W must be contacted immediately. (Note: If the former, the SAH is expected to make the initial contact with another sponsoring group.)

In a transfer of sponsorship, the new group signs a sponsorship undertaking for the remainder of the sponsorship period. The new undertaking replaces the first and the original group is no longer considered the sponsor. Where the sponsor has decided that it will not or cannot continue to support the refugee in the new community, the sponsorship is in danger of breakdown.

In this case, the local Citizenship and Immigration Centre, the sponsoring group (including the SAH if a CG is involved) and the refugee will meet to try to resolve the sponsorship breakdown and, if applicable, to ascertain responsibility. The three-way meeting will also address the ongoing needs of the refugee for the remainder of the sponsorship period and the capacity of the sponsor to support the refugee 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 refugee 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 refugees are **not** entitled to obtain income support through provincial or municipal social assistance programs or the Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP) 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 refugees under the group's sponsorship. For more information on sponsorship breakdown, consult [Chapter 3 of CIC's in-Canada processing manual \(IP 3\) \(PDF, 235.29 KB\)](#) or the [Sponsorship Agreement](#).

## Sponsorship Withdrawals

Sponsorship withdrawal is the cancellation of a sponsorship undertaking before the permanent residence visa has been issued. It is the last option when all other attempts to fulfil the conditions of the sponsorship have failed or when situations have changed.

Sponsoring groups may not withdraw an undertaking after a visa has been issued. In such cases, sponsorship dispute and breakdown protocols would be initiated following the applicant's arrival in Canada.

Sponsorship withdrawal requests must be sent to CPO-W and must include the reason(s) for requesting a withdrawal.

In cases of withdrawal, sponsors are expected to locate a new sponsoring group if feasible. Examples of where it is not feasible to locate a new sponsorship group include:

- the refugee having found another durable solution;
- new personal information being gained about the refugee that makes the sponsorship no longer viable; or
- the refugee having made no contact with the visa office to return requested information or to respond to subsequent efforts by the visa office to contact the refugee.

In cases where a sponsor is still required, the original sponsor must inform CPO-W in writing, whether or not a new sponsorship group could be located. If a new sponsorship group could not be located, the refugee's application will likely be refused.

Requests for withdrawal that are determined to be unacceptable may have negative consequences on future sponsorship activities of the organization. Depending on the circumstances and reasons for the withdrawal, sponsorship agreements can be either

suspended or cancelled. Withdrawals that are determined not to have been the fault of the SAH will not result in suspension or cancellation of the Sponsorship Agreement.

For more information on sponsorship withdrawal, consult [Chapter 3 of CIC's in-Canada processing manual \(IP 3\) \(PDF, 235.29 KB\)](#) or the [Sponsorship Agreement](#), both of which are available on the CIC website.

## 3. Additional sponsorship opportunities

### 3.1 Blended Visa Office-Referred Program

The Blended Visa Office-Referred (BVOR) Program matches refugees referred for resettlement by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) with private sponsors in Canada. CIC, in consultation with the Sponsorship Agreement Holder (SAH) community, will identify the populations that can be sponsored through the BVOR Program.

The goal is to engage in a three-way partnership among the Government of Canada, the UNHCR and private sponsors.

Under the BVOR Program, the Government of Canada will provide up to six months of income support through the Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP), while private sponsors will provide another six months of financial support, start-up costs and up to a year of social and emotional support.

Unless you are interested in sponsoring a Syrian refugee, to be eligible to sponsor a refugee under this program, you must be:

- a SAH; or
- a constituent group authorized to sponsor refugees under the agreement held by a SAH.

To choose a BVOR refugee to sponsor, the SAH can review refugee profiles [online](#).

SAHs should review the profiles carefully to ensure their sponsoring group and community will be able to meet the needs of the refugee(s). If a profile indicates existing family or friends in Canada, it is recommended that only sponsoring groups in that community sponsor the case. Other things to look for in a profile:

- Is the refugee(s) from an ethnocultural background that is already established in your community?
- Is there reasonably priced housing to accommodate the family size?
- Does your community have the necessary support services such as medical facilities, trauma counselling, language training, etc.?
- Are there employment opportunities in your community?

- Is there any other pertinent information?

A sponsor who is interested, can request a more detailed profile from the [Matching Centre](#) by emailing [matching-centre@cic.gc.ca](mailto:matching-centre@cic.gc.ca) and copying the [Refugee Sponsorship Training Program](#) - RSTP ([info@rstp.ca](mailto:info@rstp.ca)). The following information should be included in the request:

- sponsoring group name;
- contact information (including contact name and telephone number); and
- profile number(s) of interest.

If a group decides to sponsor a refugee, they must send an email to the [Matching Centre](#) ([matching-centre@cic.gc.ca](mailto:matching-centre@cic.gc.ca)) and copy the [Refugee Sponsorship Training Program](#) ([info@rstp.ca](mailto:info@rstp.ca)). The Matching Centre will give the sponsor the necessary information to fill out the [Undertaking/Application to Sponsor \(IMM 5373\)](#).

Case profiles will remain on the secure website for approximately three months. After three months, the profile may be removed from the website and referred back to the visa office for further processing as a Government Assisted Refugees (GAR). If there is sponsor interest but no sponsorship confirmation, the case posting will be extended until a decision is made by the sponsor.

Only cases from populations identified by CIC will be available for sponsorship through the BVOR Program. Sponsors interested in cases from amongst these populations should, in addition to checking the VOR website, let their interest be known to RSTP to help with matching cases as they become available.

### 3.2 Other Visa Office-Referred Program

Sponsoring groups are able to sponsor VOR refugees from populations other than those identified under the BVOR Program; however, the Government of Canada does not provide income support to assist with these sponsorships.

To request a profile from the [Matching Centre](#):

- Read the [Request for a Refugee Profile instruction guide](#) to learn how to fill out the form and learn about the matching process;
- Fill out the form [Request for a Refugee Profile \(IMM 5438\)](#); and
- Send the completed form by email to [matching-centre@cic.gc.ca](mailto:matching-centre@cic.gc.ca).

CIC is focusing its efforts on the BVOR Program. As such, it will be more difficult to find a suitable VOR case outside of that program particularly if the profile request is very specific. Requests for VOR cases that fall outside populations where Canada is resettling GARs will not be able to be matched.

**If the visa office is able to locate a potential match**, they will submit the case to the Matching Centre, which will create a VOR profile and send it to the potential sponsor.

SAHs should review the profile carefully to ensure their sponsoring group and community will be able to meet the needs of the refugee(s). Other things to look for in a profile:

- Is the refugee(s) from an ethnocultural background that is already established in your community?
- Is there reasonably priced housing to accommodate the family size?
- Does your community have the necessary support services such as medical facilities, trauma counselling, language training, etc.?
- Are there employment opportunities in your community?
- Is there any other pertinent information?

**If the sponsoring group decides not to sponsor the refugee**, the case will be referred back to the visa office for further processing.

**In the event that no VOR cases are available** to match the Request for a Refugee Profile (IMM 5438), the Matching Centre will notify the requesting SAH that there may be a waiting period until a case is available or will discuss the option of sponsoring a case through the BVOR Program, if possible.

### **When you decide to sponsor a case**

Send an email to the [Matching Centre](mailto:matching-centre@cic.gc.ca) ([matching-centre@cic.gc.ca](mailto:matching-centre@cic.gc.ca)) and copy the [Refugee Sponsorship Training Program](mailto:info@rstp.ca) ([info@rstp.ca](mailto:info@rstp.ca)).

The Matching Centre will give you the necessary information to fill out the Undertaking/Application to Sponsor (IMM 5373).

### 3.3 Joint Assistance Sponsorship

Joint Assistance Sponsorship (JAS) program enables SAH and their CG to partner with CIC in the resettlement of refugees who are identified as having special needs. These refugees often require more than the standard 12 months of government-funded income support to establish successfully in Canada. Consequently, JAS cases are matched with a private sponsor in addition to receiving income support from the RAP. Under the JAS program, government assistance and private sponsorship are offered for up to 24 months. In exceptional cases, the private sponsorship component can be extended up to 36 months.

The division of responsibilities is such that CIC provides financial assistance to cover the cost of food, shelter, clothing and essential household goods, while the sponsor provides orientation, settlement assistance and emotional support.

In order to be eligible for a JAS, the refugee:

- must be a member of the Convention Refugees Abroad Class or the Country of Asylum Class;
- must have a greater need of settlement assistance than other GARs because of exceptional resettlement needs, such as one or more of the following:
  - physical or mental disability, which could require treatment in Canada;
  - unusual family configuration such as single-parent families with several young children or families consisting only of siblings, one or more of whom has assumed parental responsibilities;
  - separated minors;
  - elderly persons; or
  - other special needs identified by the visa office.

JAS cases do not require that sponsoring groups have the same financial capacity as regular private sponsorship cases; however, these cases often require considerable dedication in terms of time and effort in helping the newcomers get established. Sponsors interested in JAS sponsorship should be aware that their community must be able to offer the services required by the applicant's special needs for it to be considered a suitable destination. Only SAHs and their CGs are eligible to participate in JAS sponsorships. G5s and CSs are not eligible to be sponsors of JAS cases.

**JAS profiles on the website:** To assist sponsors in selecting cases, visa offices refer JAS cases to the Matching Centre. Profiles of these cases are then placed on a [secure website](#) that is accessible to SAHs. These refugees have already been interviewed and determined to be eligible for Canada's resettlement program. The majority of these cases are ready to depart (travel-ready) for Canada within months of a sponsorship undertaking being made on their behalf.

To sponsor a JAS case, a sponsoring group should complete a [Request for a Joint Assistance Sponsorship Refugee Profile \(IMM 5504\)](#) (PDF, 47 KB ) and submit it to the

SAH. The SAH will check the secure website for suitable profiles and provide them to the group for consideration. The sponsor may request a more detailed profile from the Matching Centre when the group is interested in a particular case. A sponsoring group wishing to sponsor a JAS case must complete an Undertaking/Application for a [Joint Assistance Sponsorship \(IMM 1324\)](#) (PDF, 681 KB ) and submit it to CPO-W with an approval letter from the SAH. (New SAHs must also include their settlement plan.)

If no suitable JAS profile is found on the website, the sponsor or SAH should send the [Request for a Joint Assistance Sponsorship Refugee Profile \(IMM 5504\)](#) (PDF, 47 KB) to the Matching Centre. One of the functions of the Matching Centre is to manage an inventory of refugee profile requests from sponsoring groups. The Request for a Joint Assistance Sponsorship Refugee Profile will be added to the inventory until a suitable match is made. When the Matching Centre locates a possible match, it will refer the refugee's case profile to the SAH and the sponsoring group that submitted the profile request. The SAH and sponsor should review the profile and notify the Matching Centre as soon as possible as to whether or not it will undertake the sponsorship. While the profile is being reviewed, it will remain on the secure website until the sponsoring group has made its decision.

If another sponsoring group expresses interest in a profile under active consideration by another group, the profile information will be provided, but the fact that another group is also considering the case will be noted. In all cases, the sponsoring group should consult the Matching Centre before signing any JAS undertakings to ensure that the profile is still available.

This process would apply to VOR profiles on the website as well.

**Making contact with the refugee:** Once a group has been accepted to sponsor a refugee under the JAS program, it is suggested that, where possible, the sponsoring group should contact the refugee prior to his or her departure for Canada. Establishing early communication helps both refugee and sponsor to understand what they can expect from each other. The first correspondence should introduce the group and explain its role in welcoming the refugee to Canada. The profile of the refugee will indicate the level of English or French the individual understands. Correspondence may need to be translated into the refugee's language before being sent to the refugee.

### 3.4 Women at Risk program

The Women at Risk (AWR) program is for women who do not have the normal protection of a family unit and who find themselves in precarious situations where the local authorities cannot ensure their safety. This includes women who are experiencing significant difficulties, such as harassment by local authorities or members of their own communities. Some women may need immediate protection while others are in permanently unstable circumstances. The persecution or harassment they are experiencing may be solely gender-based.

While applicants must qualify as Convention Refugees Abroad or members of the Country of Asylum classes, they may not fully meet the requirement to demonstrate an ability to establish themselves in Canada in the short or medium term. AWR cases considered to be either in urgent need of protection or vulnerable are exempt from the regulatory requirement to establish successfully.

In many cases, women eligible under the AWR program will require a JAS as outlined above. There may be situations, however, where the person is eligible under the program but does not qualify for a JAS.

AWR should be counselled that it will not be possible in the future to sponsor a previously undeclared spouse under the Family Class program. Undeclared spouses will also not be eligible for resettlement under the OYW. See [section 2.10](#).

### 3.5 Urgent Protection Program

The Urgent Protection Program (UPP) was developed to enable Canada to respond to requests by referral organizations, such as the UNHCR, to provide rapid resettlement for refugees in urgent need of protection. Members of the Convention Refugees Abroad or Humanitarian Protected Persons Abroad classes who qualify for resettlement and are in need of urgent protection because of immediate threats to life, liberty or physical well-being are resettled on the expedited basis required by their particular circumstances. Where there is no other way to guarantee the security of the person concerned, resettlement is the best and often the only protection response.

The UNHCR or another recognized referral organization will refer UPP cases to Canadian visa offices abroad. Thereafter, a decision to resettle the refugee is made within 24-48 hours. CIC tries to ensure that these cases are en route to Canada within three to five days of referral to the mission or, in the event of local challenges, as soon as possible. Where CIC is unable to provide immediate protection, the referral organization is notified so that resettlement to another country may be considered.

For privately sponsored refugees who are in urgent need of protection, the applicant must present himself/herself to the UNHCR for an assessment. It is the mandate of the UNHCR or other designated referral agency to provide protection in the country of

refuge. Should the UNHCR find the applicant to be in need of urgent protection, it will advise the visa office, which will proceed as above.

Refugees who are eligible may include but are not limited to:

- those who are under threat of refoulement, expulsion, prolonged arbitrary detention or extra-judicial execution; or
- those who are facing a real, direct threat to their physical safety, which could result in their being killed or subjected to abduction, rape, sexual abuse, violence or torture.

UPP cases are designated as GARs and some may be identified as JAS cases.

If the refugee is matched with a sponsor prior to departure for Canada, the refugee will go directly to the sponsor's community. If refugees have family in Canada, efforts will be made to ensure that they are sent to their family's community.

Where urgent protection cases require a sponsor, but one has not been identified before their departure:

- the refugees will be sent to cities with reception centres and where a sponsor is likely to be found.
- They will remain in the reception centres for counselling and orientation while waiting to be matched with a private sponsoring group.
- When a sponsor is identified, UPP cases will be sent to their final destination.

## 4. Where do I send information and where should I go for information?

### PSR applications should be sent to:

Centralized Processing Office – Winnipeg (CPO-W)  
269 Main Street, Suite 400 New  
Winnipeg, MB  
R3C 1B2  
[CPOW-BTCW@cic.gc.ca](mailto:CPOW-BTCW@cic.gc.ca)

You can now also submit a sponsorship application via email. See section 2.15.

### Additional information

#### Check processing times

- [Processing times for PSR applications](#)

#### Check on your application status

- [E-CAS](#)

#### Obtain case status updates on files

- In Canada – Email the [Centralized Processing Office – Winnipeg](#)
- Outside Canada – [contact the visa office responsible for your country](#) (only after estimated processing times have passed)

#### Sponsorship withdrawals, addition of dependants and One-Year Window requests

- Email the [Centralized Processing Office – Winnipeg](#)

#### Provide information on changes in organization or updated contact information for Groups of Five or Community Sponsors

- Submit changes to organization's address by using a [case specific enquiry](#). (Groups of Five and Community sponsors only)

Be sure to select “sponsor” in the drop down menu for relationship to applicant, and select “change of address” in the drop down menu for application type.

## **Update an applicant's contact information or case information**

- [Contact the visa office responsible for your country](#) - Sponsorship group representatives should provide a signed copy of the [Use of a Representative form \(IMM 5476 \) \(PDF, 647.96 KB\)](#) if one was not already included with your application.

## **For matters on Sponsorship Agreement Holders (SAH) sponsorship agreements, annual reports and allocations, or to provide updated SAH contact information**

- [Contact the CIC National Headquarters](#)

## **For information on visa office-referred and Joint Assistance Sponsorship matches**

- General information or to indicate interest in a refugee profile, contact the [Refugee Sponsorship Training Program](#)
- For additional information on a particular profile, email the [Matching Centre](#)