



So you want to sponsor a refugee – quick guide

Thank you for your interest in refugee sponsorship. The Anglican Diocese of Ontario is a **Sponsorship Agreement Holder** (SAH) with the federal government, and works through the **Diocese of Ontario Refugee Support** (DOORS) team. This means that through us, churches and groups – which are called Constituent Groups (CGs) – are able to sponsor refugees from abroad.

Refugee sponsorship is a process that must be initiated within Canada. The first goal is **refugee protection**. The person/s being sponsored must fall under the Refugee Convention definition established by the United Nations, which says that:

“A refugee is someone who, owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his/her nationality, and is unable to, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country.”

If you want to get involved with refugee sponsorship, you need to identify what type of sponsorship you wish to be part of:

Full private sponsorship – Church or community group (CG) provides both the finances and the settlement support for the full 12 months after arrival.

If the refugee has not yet been assigned to resettlement in Canada via the visa office abroad, they need to undergo the *refugee determination process* abroad. The refugee applicant fills out *application forms* and the CG fills out an *undertaking*, which is then submitted to Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) for processing.

Family-linked – Relatives in Canada provide the settlement funds for the full sponsorship year, and the CG provides in-kind settlement support. Process is same as full sponsorship.

The timeline for these sponsorships can vary from *eight months to several years*, depending on where the family is from and how much of a backlog there is at the visa post.

Blended Visa Office-Referred (BVOR) – A cost-sharing program with the Canadian government, which provides six months of settlement funds, with the CG providing the other six months, plus settlement support for the whole year.

BVOR cases are on a list provided by the *CIC Matching Centre*. There are currently some 400 cases on the list, *most of them non-Syrian*. Requests for BVORs can be made through your coordinator (*see contact information at the end*).

If BVOR cases are “travel ready,” meaning they have had their medicals and obtained their visas, they can arrive in Canada within *a month*. Otherwise they might come within *2-4 months*.

CG responsibilities for full sponsorships:

- First form a core group of 4-6 members to make a start, bringing in others as you go for specific tasks and fundraising.
- Raise the total amount of money needed for a full year of settlement support.
 - Expenses include rent, furniture, food, clothing, transportation, prescriptions, non-emergency dental procedures, etc.
- Meet family at the airport and provide temporary housing.
- Help family to find affordable permanent housing.
- Help them access OHIP/SIN, banking and other services. (As soon as they arrive at the airport they become **Permanent Residents of Canada** – and hence are *no longer refugees* – so are eligible for OHIP and SIN).
- Register adults for ESL classes and give guidance in finding a job. Settlement agencies such as Immigrant Services of Kingston and Area (ISKA) are able to help with some of these tasks.
- Help register children in school.
- Provide orientation and help the family budget for monthly expenses.
- Provide friendship and emotional support.

CG responsibilities for BVOR sponsorships:

- Raise half the amount of money needed for a full-year of settlement support.
- Similar settlement supports as above.

Things to keep in mind:

- Start-up expenses: food pantry, seasonal clothing, first/last month’s rent, utilities.
- Travel loans, which they are expected to begin paying back 3 months after arrival. Some CGs help with these loans through additional fundraising.
- DOORS is available to help you through the paperwork, as well as provide training and linking you and the family with support services.

How much money is needed?

As a guideline, we suggest about **\$27,000** to support a family of four for 12 months for a full sponsorship. The amount would go up or down depending on family size. For a BVOR, the amount needed would be roughly *half*.

If you have questions, please contact:

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