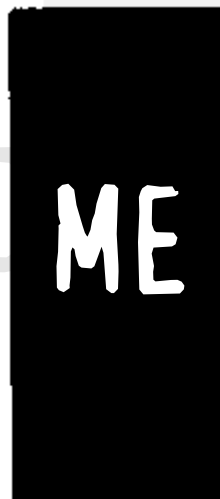


AND YOU ALSO
WELCOMED ME



A Congregational Handbook for Refugee Sponsorship



Copyright © 2004
The United Church of Canada

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be photocopied, reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means electronic, mechanical, or otherwise, without written permission of The United Church of Canada.

Exception: Potential refugee sponsors are encouraged to photocopy and distribute specific pages for their congregational board meeting or first committee meeting.

Care has been taken to trace ownership of copyright material contained in this text. The publisher will gratefully accept any information that will enable it to rectify any incorrect reference or credit in subsequent printings.

The United Church of Canada
3250 Bloor St. West, Suite 300
Toronto, ON
Canada, M8X 2Y4
416-231-5931
www.united-church.ca

Printed in Canada
5 4 3 2 1 08 07 06 05 04

AND YOU ALSO WELCOMED ME

*And You Also Welcomed Me** is a guide for United Church members who are thinking about sponsoring a refugee(s). The handbook raises sponsorship considerations and outlines the steps involved in preparing for sponsorship and settlement.

During the last quarter century, several United Church congregations have sponsored refugees in need of protection. However, over the years, sponsorship has become increasingly complex. This handbook came into being because of our congregations' faith-filled commitment to sponsor and in the anticipation that it will facilitate and inform their ongoing refugee ministries.

The United Church of Canada holds its Sponsorship Agreement nationally and works with sponsoring congregations across the country. *And You Also Welcomed Me* is a supplement to staff assistance available to congregations through our United Church Refugee Program.

*Adapted with permission from The Refugee Sponsorship Training Program (RSTP), a program of the Sponsorship Agreement Holder representatives to the NGO-Government Committee on the Private Sponsorship of Refugees. RSTP is funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada.

CONTENTS

Introduction: The United Church of Canada, Refugee Sponsorship, and You	1
Sponsorship...Rooted in Faith	1
What Does Sponsoring a Refugee Mean?	1
What Makes a Good Sponsor?	1
What Makes a Good Sponsorship?	1
The United Church's Commitment to Private Sponsorship	2
The United Church—Your Sponsorship Agreement Holder	2
Chapter 1: Refugee Resettlement and Sponsorship in Canada	3
1.1 Who Is a Refugee?	3
1.2 The World's Response to Refugees	3
1.3 Canada's Response to Refugees	4
1.4 What Is Sponsorship?	4
1.4.1 Who Can Be Sponsored?	4
1.5 Types of Refugee Sponsorship	5
1.6 Deciding on Sponsorship	7
1.6.1 Preparing Emotionally and Psychologically	8
1.6.2 Practising Principles and Screening Volunteers	8
1.6.3 Determining Physical Requirements	8
1.6.4 Determining Financial Requirements	9
1.6.5 Preparing for Time Commitments	9
1.6.6 Determining the Availability of Community Resources	9
1.7 Getting Started on Sponsorship	10
A Story of Refugee Sponsorship	12
Chapter 2: The Sponsorship Application Process	13
2.1 The Application and Screening Process	13
2.1.1 Reasons for Sponsoring	13
2.2 The Group Formation Process	15
2.2.1 Relating to Your Sponsorship Agreement Holder	15
2.2.2 Deciding Who to Sponsor	15
2.2.3 Group Composition	16
2.3 Preparing and Submitting Your Sponsorship Application	17
2.3.1 Completing the "Undertaking/Application to Sponsor"	17
2.3.2 Developing a Settlement Plan	19
2.3.3 Your Letter of Approval from the United Church	21

2.4 The Application and Screening Process	22
2.4.1 Submitting Your Group’s Sponsorship Application	22
2.4.2 The Preparation of the Refugee’s File Overseas	22
2.4.3 The Screening Process	23
2.4.4 Expenses and Loans	25
2.4.5 Visa, Notification of Arrival, and Travel	25
2.4.6 Citizenship and Immigration Canada’s Continuing Role	25
2.4.7 In Conclusion: Reaping the Benefits of Sponsorship	25
Some Things That Can Create Delays—and How to Avoid Them	26

Chapter 3: Settlement Preparation in Detail 27

3.1 Getting Ready for the Refugee’s Arrival	27
3.1.1 Getting Started on the Checklist	28
3.1.2 Raise Funds	35
3.1.3 Gather Forms	36
3.1.4 Find Housing	36
3.2 Other Helpful Preparations	36
3.2.1 Flesh out the Details of Your Settlement Plan	36
3.2.2 Develop Your Group’s Support Skills	37
3.2.3 Develop Cultural Awareness	37
3.2.4 Learn about Rights and Responsibilities	38
3.2.5 Prepare the Community	38
3.3 Receiving the Newcomers	39
3.3.1 Receiving Joint Assistance Sponsored (JAS) Refugees	40
3.4 Orientation	41
3.4.1 Budgeting	42
3.4.2 Language Assessment	43
3.4.3 Employment Counselling	43
3.4.4 Immigration Loans Repayment	44
3.5 Confidentiality and Privacy	45
3.6 Secondary Migration	46

Chapter 4: Enabling Settlement: The First Year and Beyond 47

4.1 Enabling Settlement: The First Year	47
4.1.1 Reviewing the Budget	47
4.1.2 Cultural Adjustment	48
4.1.3 Understand Family Issues	49
4.1.4 Non-Accompanying Family Members	50
4.1.5 Post-Traumatic Stress, Torture, and Healing	51
4.1.6 Support Newcomers to Get the Education They Need	52
4.1.7 Assist Newcomers to Find Employment	52
4.2 After the First Year	52
4.2.1 Help Newcomers Work toward Self-Sufficiency	52

4.2.2 Help Newcomers Link into a Social Network	52
4.2.3 Consider an Advocacy Role	53

Chapter 5: Evaluating Your Achievements	54
5.1 What Is Evaluation? Why Evaluate?	54
5.2 How to Evaluate	54
5.3 What to Do with the Results	55
5.4 Celebrate!	55

Appendix: Additional Information and Resources	56
6.1 Interim Federal Health Program (IFH)	56
6.2 Cross-Cultural Awareness	58
6.2.1 Cross-Cultural Resources and Activities	59
6.3 Group Listening and Communication Skills	61
6.4 Group Dynamics	61
6.5 Rights of Newcomers	62
6.6 CIC Coding for Resettlement Categories	63
6.7 Acronyms	64

First Step...

Photocopy the "Introduction" (pages 1 and 2) and "1.7 Getting Started on Sponsorship" (pages 10 and 11) for distribution at your congregational board meeting and/or your first committee meeting.

INTRODUCTION

THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA, REFUGEE SPONSORSHIP, AND YOU

Sponsorship...Rooted in Faith

The 1988 General Council established guidelines for the church's refugee work. These guidelines are rooted in our faith tradition:

- Hospitality to strangers is a fundamental concept of Hebrew scriptures.
- Loving our neighbour is the crux of the Christian gospel.

As Christians, we are called to welcome the stranger. We believe we owe a spiritual and moral obligation to each other. This obligation also means that we take reasonable measures to care for and protect the interests of the other. We know that the world's 'vulnerable, uprooted people,' refugees, are a priority for the whole church. As the church, we are asked to respond—to address root causes, to provide solutions, to ensure asylum, to become personally involved—to sponsor.

Refugees are the Christ figures we are called to welcome; this is a sacred trust we hold.

What Does Sponsoring a Refugee Mean?

Sponsoring a refugee means that you

- provide the newcomer family with financial resources to live in Canada for a year
- help the family integrate into Canadian life—your goal at the end of your year of sponsorship is to have them self-supporting and independent members of the community
- learn more than you ever thought possible

What Makes a Good Sponsor?

Sponsors must be flexible. Each family is different and has different needs.

Congregations who organize a committee seem to work best. The committee assigns certain group members to take care of housing, clothing, furnishings, food, language training, job training, employment, health, personal support, and funding. The committee also ensures the appropriateness of the contact people and plans the initial settlement process.

What Makes a Good Sponsorship?

In a sponsorship, we treat refugees as we would wish to be treated ourselves. We must ensure that the sponsorship of refugees is carried out in an ethical and responsible fashion. Loving our neighbour means we need to do the right thing in the right way. We need to take care to

- respond to refugees in need, irrespective of circumstances or creed
- learn about the history, culture, and values of the people being sponsored
- respect their religious beliefs
- inform newcomers of their rights and responsibilities in Canada
- respect their rights, privacy, and person

- recognize refugees are survivors—capable of making their own decisions
- be aware that refugees are, first and foremost, people. They are not all the same. Starting anew in a strange country with strange customs, each person will adjust in his or her own individual way to life in Canada

The United Church’s Commitment to Private Sponsorship

The United Church is committed to Private Refugee Sponsorship; Private Sponsorship increases the number of refugees that can come to Canada. However, the church’s involvement does not change the government’s criteria for choosing who may come. The Government of Canada makes the decision about who will be accepted or rejected. In particular, the ability of the Visa Post (Immigration Section within Canadian High Commissions/Embassies abroad) to handle the paper flow and process applications can limit our ability to sponsor and affect “processing time.” Prospective sponsors are asked to consider carefully and focus on refugees in real need of protection—so that each application has merit (meets the eligibility criteria) and does not needlessly overload the system.

The priority of the United Church is the most vulnerable or needy refugees whose only hope lies in resettlement, people who face personal persecution in their homes or in their country of asylum.

The United Church—Your Sponsorship Agreement Holder

The United Church of Canada is a Sponsorship Agreement Holder with Immigration Canada. The United Church assumes full responsibility for the sponsorships undertaken by congregations and will support these congregations throughout the process. As a church, all of us are legally, ethically, and spiritually accountable for our treatment of refugees.

REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT AND SPONSORSHIP IN CANADA

1.1 Who Is a Refugee?

No one is a refugee by choice. All kinds of people are refugees. Refugees are forced to flee out of fear for their lives and liberty. The United Nations defines a refugee as a person 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 nationality, and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country.”¹ This definition was established in the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees.

But a refugee, first and foremost, is a person with rights and dignity. “A refugee has the right to safe asylum.... International protection comprises more than physical safety. Refugees should receive at least the same rights and basic help as any other foreigner who is a legal resident, including certain fundamental entitlements of every individual.”²

1.2 The World’s Response to Refugees

The international community assists refugees to find lasting or “durable” solutions to refugee situations. The three durable solutions are:

- repatriation
- local integration into the asylum country
- third country resettlement

The solution for most of the world’s refugees is repatriation. This is possible when conditions have improved to allow return in safety and with dignity. The local settlement and integration of refugees into their country of first asylum is also a solution to the problems of refugees—particularly if voluntary repatriation is not likely. Finally, third country resettlement is a solution for a limited number of refugees internationally.

¹ United Nations, “1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees,” as quoted in UNHCR, *Protecting Refugees: Questions and Answers*, (Geneva: Public Information Section, 1996) 2.

² *Protecting Refugees* 4.

CHAPTER 1

1.1 Who Is a Refugee?

1.2 The World’s Response to Refugees

1.3 Canada’s Response to Refugees

1.4 What Is Sponsorship?

1.5 Types of Refugee Sponsorship

1.6 Deciding on Sponsorship

1.7 Getting Started on Sponsorship

I.3 Canada's Response to Refugees

The 1976 Immigration Act was a milestone in Canada's response to refugees, establishing "refugees" as a class distinct from "immigrants." The "Boat People" crisis of the late 70s and early 80s mobilized Canadians to respond. For the first time, ordinary people across the country became involved in assisting refugees to settle in Canada through private sponsorship, changing forever the way Canadians view their role. The 2002 Immigration and Refugee Protection Act clarified the humanitarian goals of the program—established to offer protection and a durable solution to refugees in need of resettlement. Through the **Private Sponsorship Program**, over 180,000 refugees who would not have otherwise been able to come to Canada were resettled between 1979 and 2002.

Canada is one of the few countries in the world that annually offers resettlement places to thousands of government-sponsored refugees. But groups across Canada have become important partners, offering additional sponsorships above the government numbers. Private sponsorship does not rely on public resources, but rather taps the energy and funds of faith communities, ethnic groups, families, and other benevolent associations. Private sponsors offer personalized local support that the government is not able to provide. Ultimately, Private Sponsorship has shown itself to be fulfilling for both refugees and the sponsors, as refugees gain an opportunity to establish themselves in a new land, and sponsors gain a way to play a meaningful role in helping refugees become future Canadians.

I.4 What Is Sponsorship?

Sponsorship is a commitment to working alongside refugees in order to ensure that they have the necessary support to integrate into life in Canada. Sponsoring groups commit to providing basic financial support (e.g. for lodging and food) and care for the sponsored refugee for up to 12 months, or until the sponsored refugees become self-sufficient, whichever comes first. In exceptional circumstances, the length of the sponsorship may be up to 36 months. Sponsorship is a three-way partnership between sponsoring groups, the Government of Canada, and the refugees.

I.4.1 Who Can Be Sponsored?

Convention Refugees Abroad and members of the Country of Asylum Class and Source Country Class are **eligible** to be sponsored. These classes and designations are defined as:

A **Convention Refugee** is any person who, by reason of a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, and membership in a particular social group or political opinion:

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

A **Convention Refugee Abroad** is any person:

- a) who is a Convention Refugee
- b) who is outside Canada
- c) who is seeking admission to Canada for the purpose of resettling in Canada, and
- d) in respect of whom there is no possibility, within a reasonable period of time, of a durable solution

A member of the **Country of Asylum Class** is a person:

- a) who is outside of his/her country of citizenship or habitual residence
- b) 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
- c) for whom there is no possibility of finding an adequate solution to his/her situation within a reasonable period of time, and
- d) who will be privately sponsored or who has adequate financial resources to support himself/herself and any of his/her dependants

A member of the **Source Country Class** is a person:

- a) who resides in his/her country of citizenship or habitual residence
- b) who has been and continues to be seriously and personally affected by civil war or armed conflict
- c) who has suffered serious deprivation of his/her right of freedom of expression, right of dissent, or right to engage in trade union activity and who has been detained or imprisoned as a consequence
- d) who fears persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion
- e) for whom there is no possibility of finding an adequate solution to his/her situation within a reasonable period of time
- f) who resides in a country that has been designated as a source country (the list of source countries is subject to change; currently, it includes Sierra Leone, the Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Colombia)³, and
- g) who will be assisted by the government, privately sponsored, or has adequate financial resources to support himself/herself and any of his/her dependants

I.5 Types of Refugee Sponsorship

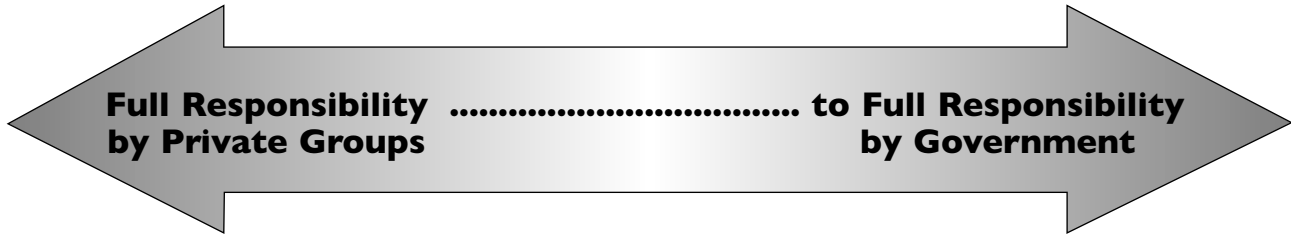
Refugees selected overseas for resettlement to Canada may either be sponsored by the government, or by a private sponsoring group. Special needs refugees may be jointly sponsored. These types of sponsorship can be imagined as a continuum, ranging from full responsibility by private groups on one end, to full responsibility by government on the other:

In **Private Sponsorship**, sponsoring groups are responsible for all material and financial support, and they provide emotional support and orientation during the sponsorship period (usually the refugee's first 12 months in Canada), or until the refugee becomes self-supporting.

Sponsoring groups may choose to identify the refugees they wish to sponsor (a **sponsor-referred case**), or may request a match with a **Visa office-referred case**.

1. In a sponsor-referred sponsorship, a group or congregation sponsors a specific refugee or refugee family in need of resettlement, someone known through overseas contacts or through friends or relatives in Canada. The process begins with the submission of the sponsorship Undertaking.
2. By offering a **Visa office-referred sponsorship** the group or congregation provides a sponsorship for an individual or family already identified as in need of protection. The congregation can ask for assistance from General Council to be matched with a refugee or refugee family. Because the overseas processing is almost complete, the refugees usually arrive in Canada very quickly. (See 2.2.2 for more information.)

³ The Source Country Schedule is subject to revision. Consult your Sponsorship Agreement Holder or the CIC website at www.cic.gc.ca for an update.



PRIVATE SPONSORSHIP	JOINT ASSISTANCE SPONSORSHIP (JAS)	GOVERNMENT ASSISTED
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fully funded by the sponsoring group <p><i>May be either:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sponsor-referred (named) sponsorship <p><i>or</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • visa office-referred (unnamed) sponsorship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • refugees identified as having special needs • government funded sponsorships • with private sponsoring group logistical and moral support • up to a 24 month commitment <p>Cases referred by visa officers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fully-funded by the government • initial reception and orientation support provided by Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP) Service Provider Organizations

Under the **Joint Assistance Sponsorship Program (JAS)**, the United Church and its congregations work together with the government. Specifically, for up to the first 24 months, the government provides basic financial assistance, while sponsoring groups provide community and emotional support and orientation and sometimes needed financial subsidy, and ensure access to appropriate resettlement services.

Joint Assistance Sponsorship Program (JAS) refugees receive financial assistance through the Resettlement Assistance Program and initial orientation assistance from a settlement agency contracted to provide reception and orientation to government-assisted refugees, including JAS cases. Despite the financial assistance provided, the congregation should be prepared to subsidize the sponsorship; the housing allowance, in particular, is not always adequate.

Note: The earning exemption for a family is equal to that allowed by the social assistance provisions of the province of residence—or up to 25 percent of their total monthly income support entitlement, whichever is greater—after which the income support would be reduced on a dollar for dollar basis. Adjustments are effective the months in which the income is earned. Exemption: Where income is earned by a minor who is attending school on a full-time basis, the income is not to be included in the total of the family earnings.

- This category has been set up specifically to allow the sponsorship of refugees who are expected to need a longer and/or more difficult resettlement period because of their special circumstances or experiences.
- This category could include special needs related to: emotional problems resulting from the refugee experience, physical or mental disabilities, unusual family configurations such as families with large numbers of children, elderly parents, single-parent families with several young children, or families consisting only of siblings, one or more of whom has assumed parental responsibilities; and separated minors.
- JAS refugees, because of their special needs, require experienced sponsors who have significant time, energy, and skill to commit to the resettlement process.
- In some instances, a JAS case could also meet the definition of “vulnerable case,” which would mean the person is exempted from the requirement to demonstrate a potential to resettle.

Groups interested in participating in the Joint Assistance Sponsorship Program are encouraged to request the *RSTP Sponsoring Group Handbook: Joint Assistance Sponsorship Groups* through the United Church office.

Note: Family Class Sponsorships are dealt with quite differently from the refugee sponsorships mentioned so far. Persons who are the close relatives (spouse, dependent children, parents, grandparents, orphaned minor brothers and sisters) of someone already in Canada, should usually be sponsored by that family member. Family Class Sponsorships are processed faster, do not require that the persons meet the refugee eligibility definitions, do not require that the persons be able to establish themselves, and have appeal rights. However, Family Class Sponsorships cannot be used for extended families, and sometimes the family members already within Canada cannot meet the financial criteria for a Family Class Sponsorship. In these cases, a Family Class Sponsorship is not possible. As long as the person overseas qualifies as a refugee, a private sponsorship may be submitted.

1.6 Deciding on Sponsorship

Sponsorship is not easy, but can be very rewarding. There is usually ample time to prepare for the refugees’ arrival because the overseas immigration processing can take a couple of years. Basically, sponsors are responsible, financially and morally, for the refugees’ first year in Canada.

Visa-referred (privately sponsored) and Joint Assistance Sponsorships (JAS), funded by the government, arrive more quickly because they have already been interviewed and found admissible to Canada. However, only experienced sponsors should consider Joint Assistance Sponsorship. The government funded JAS program is for more vulnerable refugees. These refugees will most likely require serious investments of sponsors’ time and energy as well as some financial subsidy.

Sponsorship is all about human relationship. You can’t prepare for everything, but this section discusses some things you must think about. The sponsorship relationship is one of “equals.” At first, you have more knowledge of the community and you share this information with the newcomers as you would with any new neighbours. Equip the refugees to make their own informed decisions and take care not to abuse your position of trust. Gradually, as the newcomers learn to manage without you, genuine friendship may develop.

I.6.1 Preparing Emotionally and Psychologically

Refugee families are in Canada because they were forced to leave their homes, often abruptly and usually unwillingly. They are suffering from shock when they arrive and they will undergo many stages of grieving as they adjust to life in their new land. Helping them will not be easy.

You and members of your congregation must be ready to

- accept that refugees may not be grateful to be in Canada. They want to be home
- accept that refugees may not be grateful for your help and support. They may be angry at their enforced dependence
- be flexible. Despite all your preparations, the unexpected will happen
- listen. Let the refugee families tell you what they want and need
- get professional help if needed—you may not be able to deal with the family's emotional and psychological problems

Your congregation may want to have those closely involved with the refugee family take training in these areas or talk to other congregations about difficulties they've encountered.

I.6.2 Practising Principles and Screening Volunteers

Approach sponsorship with common sense. You are trying to provide a safe environment for the refugees in Canada and need to take reasonable precautions to prevent power abuse and/or sexual, physical, and emotional misconduct from occurring within the sponsorship. Most volunteers are genuine and sincere about the care and support they offer, but the help they offer can be misplaced. For example, a hug may not be welcomed by all people who need comfort. Moreover, you will be dealing with people new to Canada who might find informality between men and women intimidating or confusing.

Recruit, screen, and train your volunteers carefully. Identify the nature of contact and activities required for the particular sponsorship. Try to anticipate problematic situations and so minimize or eliminate problems. Think very carefully about who should be assigned to handle what, or be alone with whom, and under what circumstances. You might begin by setting simple, but sensible group behavioural standards (e.g. no unsupervised contact with children).

Be especially sensitive to gender and child-care concerns. Ensure that primary contact people are appropriately prepared, screened (apply the same precautions you would with Sunday school teachers), and supported. Remember that abuse can happen within a church program and that not all people are suited for all jobs; sometimes our efforts to be inclusive and non-discriminatory can put other people at risk. It is strongly recommended that the congregation refugee committee or sponsoring group develop a job description of its tasks. This will help in the recruitment of volunteers with the appropriate skill set.

'Loving our neighbours' requires holding our ministries and selves accountable. We have moral, ethical, spiritual, and legal responsibilities and obligations to safeguard vulnerable people. Duty of Care is a legal principle that recognizes the obligations of individuals and organizations to take reasonable measures to care for and protect their participants.

I.6.3 Determining Physical Requirements

Families will require food, shelter, and clothing. You are responsible to ensure they have these for a year. Although it is possible that family members may get jobs within a few months, you cannot be assured of that.

When considering accommodation for a newcomer(s), consider location carefully. Allow for accessibility to the sponsorship group and to necessary social services. You might want to scout out a few apartments in the area ahead of time and encourage the newcomer to choose among them. However, committing to a lease prior to the newcomer's arrival is not recommended. Remember, as you consider accommodation needs and realities, to consider how the newcomer will be able to maintain the standard of living when on her/his own. Living in a decent apartment is indeed a better way to start life in Canada and can be a motivator if you are also able to help secure employment. But what you want to avoid, if possible, is the newcomer's forced relocation to cheaper accommodation at the close of the sponsorship term.

You must think about how you will collect furniture, clothing, food, and money. Many people will offer donations of clothing and furniture. However, your refugee family needs to take control of their own lives by choosing their own possessions. Consider how you can balance the refugee family's need for dignity and the congregation's ability to provide donations of items or money.

1.6.4 Determining Financial Requirements

The congregation is required to provide full financial support for the refugee(s) for a year.

Refugees are not expected to pay back their sponsors. If your refugee family develops excessive debts or is sued or arrested, you are not responsible.

The level of income required depends on the area of the country you are in. Generally, you can use social assistance payments as a guide to the minimum level of income you should provide. Remember, after a year, the family is on its own financially. Therefore, there is no point in providing them with a standard of living they won't be able to sustain.

All donations to the sponsored family are charitable deductions if you have received formal approval of your Board and set up a refugee support line in the budget.

1.6.5 Preparing for Time Commitments

You have to provide immediate support for the family when they arrive. You need to have someone available, often at short notice, who can spend most of the first two or three days with the new family, meeting them at the airport, getting them settled temporarily, introducing them to their neighbourhoods.

In the first month, you make frequent contact with the newcomers, taking them on shopping trips, helping them find accommodation, getting them moved. After the first month or so, you may find that being in contact once a week for an hour or so is enough. Be consistent in your contact. In addition, organize some social events, particularly around holiday times, and be prepared for emergencies.

1.6.6 Determining the Availability of Community Resources

Research the resources available in your community for helping newcomers. There may be settlement agencies, private programs, municipal or provincial immigrant programs, or other resources available that assist refugees. There may be orientation sessions available for some of the basics, e.g. how to use a telephone.

You may also be able to arrange co-sponsorships with other churches or other organizations. Small country churches, for example, may be able to pair with a city congregation and have access to some of the city services as well.

1.7 Getting Started on Sponsorship

1. Read this handbook. Keep it available over the course of the sponsorship.
2. Form a Refugee Sponsorship Group within or among the congregation(s).
3. Call the Refugee Program to discuss how to proceed with the United Church as your Sponsorship Agreement Holder. (Program Assistant: Andra Owen at 416 231 7680 ext: 4056 or Program staff: Heather Macdonald at 416 231 7680 ext: 4066)

They can arrange for you to be matched with a Visa-referred case or help you discern whether a 'refugee' you may be considering is "eligible" for resettlement to Canada.

4. Read through Canada Immigration's *Refugee Sponsorship Kit: Sponsorship Agreement Holders and Constituent Groups* and the *Guide to Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program*.

These can be downloaded from the United Church (www.united-church.ca) or Canada Immigration (www.cic.gc.ca) or call the CIC call centre (1-888-242-2100).

5. Decide on whom you will sponsor.

"Unnamed" sponsorship means you are willing to sponsor anyone who meets certain general characteristics. For example, you may specify the size of family you can support. Unnamed sponsorships, referred by visa offices overseas, will proceed more quickly than named sponsorships. The Refugee Program Assistant can help you consider overseas or Visa-referred refugee profiles.

"Named" sponsorships name the specific person or family you wish to sponsor. This process takes years as applicants must be screened, scheduled, interviewed, and then approved as refugees. You must have all the information about the person or family and be able to explain why you believe they need protection.

NB: The Church cannot submit a sponsorship for someone who is not a refugee in need of resettlement (protection).

6. Prepare a sponsorship proposal. Consider how the congregation can
 - meet the needs of the refugee(s) for food, clothing, and shelter for one year
 - meet the psychological needs of the refugee(s)
 - provide time to spend time with the family
 - meet the financial needs of the refugee(s), help them budget
 - work with community resources to help the family adjust
 - ensure counselling is available
 - ensure medical and dental care is available

Later, this proposal can be developed into a settlement plan.

7. Get formal approval for refugee sponsorship proposal from your Board or Council. If more than one congregation is involved, it may be appropriate to secure motions from each congregational Board or Council.

Without a Board Motion, the sponsorship cannot proceed. With a Board Motion and a refugee support line in the budget, you can operate a refugee benevolent fund and acknowledge contributions with charitable tax receipts.

The Board Motion does not name the specific refugee, but acknowledges the responsibilities the

congregation is about to undertake.

Sample Motion: [Name of congregation] undertakes the moral and financial obligations of refugee sponsorship for a family of [indicate size] for a period of [one] year.

8. Submit the dated Board Motion, the sponsorship proposal or preliminary settlement plan, a copy of your Undertaking/ Application to Sponsor (include any additional background on the refugee you propose to sponsor) to the United Church Refugee Program. E-mail material to Andra at aowen@united-church.ca or fax Refugee Program c/o 416 231 7680. Material can also be mailed to the Refugee Program, The United Church of Canada, 3250 Bloor St. West, Suite 300, Toronto, ON M8X 2Y4.

9. Talk through your proposal with the Refugee Program Assistant. When the eligibility of the refugee and soundness of the settlement plan is assured, the United Church (your Sponsorship Agreement Holder) will give you a Letter of Approval.

10. Submit the Letter of Approval, the completed Undertaking/Application, and the Sponsor Assessment Form to your local Canada Immigration Centre. The CIC acknowledges and forwards the congregation's sponsorship application. Prepare for a lengthy wait; the overseas process can take two years.

11. The refugee applicant is ultimately approved or refused by a Senior Immigration Officer at the post or embassy abroad; there is no appeal. Let the Refugee Program Assistant know of the refugee's approval or rejection as soon as possible.

If the refugee application is approved, the refugee must pass security clearance.

12. CIC arranges for travel and may provide travel loans for refugees who have been cleared for travel.

At this stage, be prepared to act quickly; you may get only a few days' or hours' notice of the refugees' arrival.

13. Keep in touch with the Refugee Program Assistant throughout the application and settlement process. Staff are there to support you.

The waiting period can be frustrating for both sponsor and refugee; and the first year in Canada can be an emotional roller coaster for the refugee. We need each other's support.

At the end of the sponsorship (the refugee's first year in Canada), plan a celebration. Have a party. And, please share an evaluation of how your year went so that others might benefit from your experience.

A Story of Refugee Sponsorship

[The] Somali families arrived in Toronto in June of 1994 after four years of flight and fear and waiting—two mothers who are cousins and 16 children! One husband had died of illness as he fled with his pregnant wife and children; the other had been taken from his comfortable home in Mogadishu by a large band of armed men, and four more children were lost during the chaotic journey out of Somalia, through Ethiopia to Yemen.

Rather than dwell on the essential and demanding work of a refugee support group and the many people who have worked so hard for [the] families since their arrival—finding housing in the face of racial prejudice and reluctance to rent to large families, the often frustrating encounters with government bureaucracy, which seems oblivious to the most obvious facts of life, the extra rounds of medical appointments that a large family needs after four years of extreme hardship—I want to talk about getting to know Khadija and her children. Without a doubt, it has been one of the most rewarding, eye-opening, and moving experiences I have ever had.... Women with children particularly can relate to the hardships Khadija and other single women face in Canada. The sheer exhaustion of looking after even a small family of children in our own native land pales beside what these two Somali women face with their large, unsettled families. Traumatized by four years of flight, worried sick about relatives back home, wondering how on earth they will be able to support their children in these lean times in Canada, and how their teenaged daughters will ever succeed in high school when they missed four crucial years of education and are just starting to learn English, it's a wonder these courageous women can still laugh and smile. "Women are strong here in Canada. That's good," Khadija says, but wonders about her own parental role, as "Girls here make up their own minds." So we talked about our daughters, Khadija and I, and I shared how decisions are made with my own 14-year-old, and the direction we try to give her, with varying degrees of success, as an example of how a Canadian family muddles through the minefield of adolescence.

Now in their second year in Canada, the children all speak much better English, the younger ones talking too fast for their mother to follow.... Things are definitely looking up, but we still worry about finding better housing for both families, finding the mothers jobs, and providing enough help so that they have time to work on their English.... The good news is that Khadija's husband is alive and was released from jail last year! He has managed to locate the four lost children, and now they are in Addis Ababa. So now St. Clement's Refugee Sub-Committee has started all over again, pushing immigration to let them join their families here.... Hamdi, an 11-year-old girl, has not seen her mother since she was six. What a reunion it will be! If they get their visas...⁴

⁴ Elizabeth MacCullum, "How Many Is Too Many?" *Refugee Sponsorship "A Glorious Challenge!"* WGRR—Working Group on Refugee Resettlement Celebrates Ten Years of Service, 1985–1995, ed. Kimberly J.E. Sutherland (Newmarket: Kennedy Productions, 1995) 14–17.

THE SPONSORSHIP APPLICATION PROCESS

2.1 The Application and Screening Process

This chapter gives an outline of the overall group formation and application process in chronological order. Please read it carefully as it contains a host of details on the procedural issues your sponsoring group will face, including:

- ❖ Forming your sponsoring group
- ❖ Preparing and submitting your congregation's sponsorship application
- ❖ The preparation of the refugee's file overseas
- ❖ The screening process
- ❖ Expenses and loans
- ❖ Visas, notification of arrival, travel and landing, and Citizenship and Immigration Canada's continuing role

Also refer to the flow chart on the next page to see how all these activities fit into the application process.

2.1.1 Reasons for Sponsoring

Congregations make a faith commitment of their time, energy, and often money to the direct assistance of an individual or a family in need of resettlement. Volunteering to assist refugees is a response of the heart and the spirit to the injustice in the world. Congregations may decide to sponsor for many reasons:

- They are aware of international refugee protection and resettlement needs.
- They know of someone in need of sponsorship.
- Sponsorship is an expression of their faith.
- The congregation receives a request from The United Church of Canada.

To initiate this process, obtain the Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) *Refugee Sponsorship Kit: Sponsorship Agreement Holders and Constituent Groups (IMM5413)*, and the *Guide to the Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program* from:

- ❖ the United Church at: www.united-church.ca
- ❖ CIC call centre: 1-888-242-2100 or your local CIC office
- ❖ the CIC Web site: www.cic.gc.ca

2.1 The Application and Screening Process

2.2 The Group Formation Process

2.3 Preparing and Submitting Your Sponsorship Application

2.4 The Application and Screening Process

The Sponsorship Application Process

Forming Your Sponsoring Group

- ▼ FORM A GROUP
 - ▼ Decide to sponsor; begin to raise funds
-

Submitting Your Group's Sponsorship Application

- ▼ COMPLETE Undertaking
 - ▼ RESEARCH and WRITE your Settlement Plan
 - ▼ SUBMIT Settlement Plan and Undertaking to United Church Refugee Program
 - ▼ RECEIVE Letter of Approval from United Church Refugee Program
 - ▼ CHOOSE IMM6000 distribution option (send IMM6000 to refugee if Option 3 is chosen)
 - ▼ SUBMIT to Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC): Letter of Approval, Undertaking Sponsor Assessment Form(s), and supporting documents [under Option 3 include completed and signed IMM6000 forms received back from refugee(s)]
 - ▼ RECEIVE signed Undertaking from CIC, with file number and CIC contact info (Option 2- send IMM6000 to applicant with copy of signed Undertaking)
-

The Preparation of the Refugee's File Overseas

- ▼ CIC FORWARDS Undertaking to Visa office overseas
 - ▼ Visa Office SENDS IMM6000 to refugee (Option 1)
 - ▼ Option 1 and 2: Refugee COMPLETES and RETURNS IMM6000 form (Note: Access Information) to Visa office
 - ▼ Visa office OPENS FILE, assigns refugee applicant a VISA POST NUMBER, and notifies Sponsorship Agreement Holder (SAH) that application is complete
-

The Screening Process

- ▼ Refugee is WAIT-LISTED for interview
 - ▼ Screening or INTERVIEW; if accepted SAH notified
 - ▼ MEDICAL EXAM if cleared
 - ▼ SECURITY and CRIMINALITY CHECK if cleared
-

Expenses and Loans

- ▼ Refugee SIGNS Immigrant Loans forms
-

Visa, Notice of Arrival, Travel, and Landing

- ▼ GRANTED VISA
 - ▼ International Organization for Migration arranges travel
 - ▼ NOTICE OF ARRIVAL sent to sponsoring group
 - ▼ Refugee BOARDS plane to Canada
 - ▼ Refugee is given "permanent residence" on arrival
-

Arrival

- ▼ Sponsors greet NEWCOMER
-

2.2 The Group Formation Process

The process begins with forming a group. While each sponsoring group has the same basic obligations towards the refugee(s) they sponsor, the composition of sponsoring groups varies widely. Sponsoring groups may be a congregation, pastoral charge, a group of congregations, or even a presbytery. The United Church sometimes works with other groups, including other churches, that may sponsor under our Agreement provided all parties agree to the terms and conditions.

2.2.1 Relating to Your Sponsorship Agreement Holder

The United Church Refugee Program is responsible for assessing the feasibility of the sponsorship, both in terms of the refugees' "eligibility" and the group's ability to carry out the sponsorship. The United Church guarantees the Government of Canada that the terms of the sponsorship will be met and commits to the training and support of congregational sponsorship groups. Refugee Program staff are there to assist you during the application and resettlement process. As these processes can run over years, it is important to keep the Refugee Desk informed and working for you.

What do sponsoring groups do?

In brief, they:

- ❖ work with United Church Refugee Program staff throughout the application process and sponsorship year
- ❖ work with CIC during the application process
- ❖ prepare to receive the refugee(s)
- ❖ provide support for the newcomer(s) during their first year in Canada

2.2.2 Deciding Who to Sponsor

1. Sponsor-REFERRED Case

Your group may have formed as a result of direct knowledge of a particular refugee or refugee family that has been brought to your attention. Before making the commitment to sponsor, it is important to consider the refugee's personal story and particular circumstances, as not all refugees are eligible for resettlement to Canada. (See Section 2.4.3.) The United Church Refugee Program staff can help guide you to assess the refugee's claim and may ask you for further information before approving the sponsor-referred case. Sponsorships should not be submitted for someone unlikely to meet the eligibility criteria.

2. Visa-REFERRED Case

Your group can also choose to sponsor a refugee already identified by a Canadian Visa office as eligible for resettlement and in need of a sponsorship. The United Church can help you to be matched to a Visa office-referred case that has already been interviewed. Because these refugees have already completed most of the overseas processing, it is likely that they will arrive within a few months of the submission of your sponsorship. Correspond with the chosen refugee(s) if you can.

If your group wishes to sponsor a refugee or refugee family from a particular country, or with particular needs, you can request a match by completing a "Request for a Refugee Profile." Obtain the application kit *Request for a Refugee Profile (IMM5496)* from the CIC website or call centre and complete the form contained within (IMM5438), prior to submitting an Undertaking/Application to Sponsor. You can expect to receive a profile on a refugee case that may be suited to your community.

Your group's decision to sponsor a refugee should be well informed

Read this handbook and the Citizenship and Immigration Canada application kit guide to understand the program and what your group needs to do to provide the necessary finances, emotional support, and time.

2.2.3 Group Composition

Remember that your sponsorship group will need to work together intensively for up to three years (taking into account both the application process and the sponsorship period). Recruit group members to suit the sponsorship, e.g. if you intend to sponsor a single woman or group of women, the main caregivers should be women. Be prepared to screen for suitability those who plan to be closely involved with the refugees; you do not want to place the refugees in a potentially vulnerable situation. Many people will eventually play a role in the settlement of the refugee(s), but one of the first steps is deciding who will be part of your sponsorship group, and then who will take on official responsibility by completing a Sponsors Assessment form and signing the Undertaking/Application to Sponsor.

Each sponsorship Undertaking must have one main contact person identified. When choosing the contact person for your sponsorship, consider who can be easily contacted during office hours.

Co-sponsor—Individual

If you are sponsoring a refugee brought to your attention by a relative or friend of the refugee in your community, then it is important to decide how that individual will be involved in the sponsorship. Has this relative or friend made a commitment to provide sponsorship support? If this is the case, consider making the individual a member of your sponsoring group or asking them to formally partner with your group by signing the Undertaking as a co-sponsor. Whether or not they are formally recognized as partners, the relatives or family members who are contributing financial support or settlement assistance should be included in the settlement planning process.

Co-sponsors must provide details of all previous sponsorship commitments, including Family Class Sponsorship obligations. Reviewing these obligations with a prospective co-sponsor can help your group assess the level of support the individual can realistically be expected to provide. There is no obligation to formally recognize individuals contributing to the sponsorship as co-sponsors. Individual co-sponsors who sign the Undertaking officially commit themselves to share responsibility for the sponsorship. However, remember that all parties are held jointly and severally liable for the sponsorship. Therefore, the sponsorship group or congregation must be ready to assume responsibility if the co-sponsor is unable to provide the support promised. The United Church is ultimately liable and must authorize the involvement of a co-sponsor.

Co-Sponsor—Organization

You can also include another group as a co-sponsoring organization. This may be another congregation or any other organization that joins the sponsorship as a formal partner. Many sponsoring groups effectively combine the efforts of several different organizations—formally recognizing a co-sponsoring organization is an official indication of shared responsibility. Any organization that wishes to co-sponsor with a United Church congregation must submit a 'motion' that binds the organization. Again, the ultimate liability rests with the General Council of The United Church of Canada under whose agreement the sponsorship is submitted.

Sponsor Assessment Form

When forming your group, you should also be aware that some people are not eligible to participate in a sponsorship. This includes those who have been convicted of serious criminal acts and those who are in default of court-ordered payments. The “sponsorship group representative” who signs the sponsorship Undertaking must also sign a Sponsor Assessment Form, which details the circumstances which exclude an individual from participating.

Finally, it is important to be aware that privately sponsored refugees can be quite vulnerable, and that your group will have considerable power over the lives of the refugees after their arrival. Your group should be aware of the potential for the abuse of this power. Your group representative signs a declaration that states: “To the best of my ability, I will not knowingly or deliberately allow any individual to participate in the group’s settlement activities who may be considered a threat to the safety and security of the refugee(s).”

Important Principles and Agreed Practices from the Sponsorship Agreement

- ❖ The United Church will not profit financially through the sponsorship of refugees.
- ❖ The refugees who are sponsored under the Private Sponsorship Program will not be required to take membership in, volunteer for, or participate in activities, meetings, or religious services associated with the sponsoring group in order to receive care, lodging, and settlement assistance.
- ❖ In view of the emotional and financial link of de facto dependants to their extended family, it is Canada Immigration’s policy to keep family units intact.
- ❖ Privately Sponsored Refugees have no legal obligation and cannot be made to enter into a legal obligation to prepay or repay their sponsors for lodging, care, and settlement assistance.
- ❖ Privately Sponsored Refugees (PSR) with financial resources must contribute to their basic financial support. Where PSR have financial resources, they will retain the right to manage their own finances. The United Church will not require the PSR to submit their funds to them to manage.

2.3 Preparing and Submitting Your Sponsorship Application

The **Refugee Sponsorship: Sponsorship Agreement Holders and Constituent Groups** (IMM5413) application kit includes various forms that must be completed as part of the sponsorship application your group submits to your local Citizenship and Immigration Canada office.

2.3.1 Completing the “Undertaking/Application to Sponsor”

You must complete the *Undertaking/Application to Sponsor (IMM5439)* very carefully as this form provides Immigration Canada with the details on your group and on the refugee(s) you have chosen to sponsor.

If you are submitting an application for a sponsor-referred case, however, your group must be very careful to ensure that you have available all the required details on the refugee or refugee family. If you are sponsoring a Visa office-referred case, your local Citizenship and Immigration Canada office or United Church Refugee Program will provide you with the details about the refugee(s) that you require in order to complete the application.

One of the most important details is ensuring that your group has complete information on all the family members and other dependants and includes them on the sponsorship Undertaking. The individual with the strongest refugee claim should be listed as the principal applicant, and the sponsorship must include the refugee's spouse and all dependent children.

It is important to list all family members even if their whereabouts are unknown, or if they are presumed dead. The "one year window of opportunity" provides a mechanism to reunite spouses and dependent children who are missing or unable to be processed together with the principal applicant, as long as they are listed on the refugee application form or IMM0008. Your group's settlement planning should take into account the settlement needs of these "non-accompanying family members" as your group will be expected to sponsor them as well if they are located and submit an IMM0008 within one year of the arrival of the principal applicant. Your group's sponsorship should also include dependants who do not meet the immigration definition of "family member," but who are financially and/or emotionally dependent on the family. These "de facto" dependants may include orphaned children who have not been formally adopted, or elderly family members who are part of the same household. Your group will need to complete a separate Undertaking for each "de facto" family member.

In order to prevent delays, it is particularly important to be sure that the mailing address for a sponsor-referred refugee is accurate and reliable.

At the time of preparing your Undertaking, your group must also choose how the **Application for Permanent Residence in Canada: Convention Refugees Abroad and Humanitarian-Protected Persons Abroad** (IMM6000) application guide that the refugee(s) must complete will be sent. There are three options for the distribution of the IMM6000:

Option 1: Visa office sends IMM6000 to refugee applicant

This has been the standard process for many years, but sponsors should be aware that this process often takes many months. The local CIC sends the approved Undertaking to the Visa office, and the Visa office mails the IMM6000 to the refugee applicant. The applicant completes all the forms and returns the completed application to the Visa office.

Option 2: Sponsoring group sends IMM6000 to refugee applicant

Under Option 2, the sponsoring group sends the refugee applicant a copy of the approved sponsorship Undertaking and the IMM6000. The refugee completes all the required forms and sends them to the Visa post with all required documents and photos **and** the copy of the approved sponsorship Undertaking.

Option 3: Local CIC submits completed IMM0008 and approved Undertaking to Visa office

Under Option 3, the sponsoring group sends the IMM6000 (guide) to the refugee applicant. The refugee completes the forms and sends them back to the sponsoring group together with all the required attachments and photos. The sponsoring group submits the refugee's application to the local CIC, together with their sponsorship Undertaking. The local CIC then forwards the entire application and approved Undertaking to the Visa office.

It is still too early to assess which option is most efficient or saves processing time—the point of introducing the three options. It is, however, crucially important to cross-reference the sponsorship application (signed Undertaking) and the refugee application (IMM0008).

Note: The IMM6000 application guide (which includes the IMM0008 application, Schedules 1 and 2, the Authorization to Release Information, and instructions for completing the forms) may be obtained from: www.cic.gc.ca/english/applications/conref.html or by contacting a CIC call centre.

2.3.2 Developing a Settlement Plan

Develop your Settlement Plan using the form included in the application kit. You must submit a Settlement Plan to the United Church for approval before the sponsorship can go forward. The plan provides the United Church with the necessary information to make a decision about the group's ability to carry out the sponsorship.

A Settlement Plan details what you will do to orient and support the newcomer(s) during the sponsorship. It will provide your group with a framework for working through the myriad of details of who will do what, when, and how, and with what resources—and where those resources will come from.

It is understood that this initial Settlement Plan will need to be continuously revised during the settlement period, and Chapter 3 of this handbook gives more detailed guidance on settlement preparations.

During the private sponsorship period (usually 12 months), the sponsoring group is responsible for:

- ❖ financial support for food, clothing, transportation, and other material needs, and assisting the family to budget
- ❖ housing and furnishings
- ❖ providing orientation to life in Canada, including providing information on rights and responsibilities of residents
- ❖ assistance in accessing services including medical care
- ❖ assistance in getting access to resources: interpreters, community support groups, settlement services, etc.
- ❖ assistance getting children into school and dealing with the school system
- ❖ assistance in finding help to learn English (e.g. registering in an ESL class)
- ❖ assistance in finding employment
- ❖ emotional support and friendship
- ❖ assistance in becoming independent

However, sponsoring groups are not responsible for:

- ❖ repaying loans

You will need to set up a budget, such as the one on the following page, for the person(s) you are sponsoring, taking into consideration any special needs. The sponsorship cost table included in the application kit gives you an indication of the social assistance rates which your group can use as a guide for support levels. Remember, however, that your local cost of living may be higher.

SAMPLE MONTHLY BUDGET AND ISSUES TO CONSIDER⁵

Item:	Cost:	Questions to Consider
Rent	\$ / mo	Is rent at a level the newcomer will be able to afford after sponsorship ends? Budget for reasonable rent costs during the year, unless the newcomers are very close family members who can reasonably be expected to live permanently and happily with relatives already in Canada.
Utilities	\$ / mo	Include electricity, heat, and water.
Food	\$ / mo	Take into account the newcomers' need to have some national foods in his/her diet. Help newcomers to comparison shop and buy in bulk.
Transport	\$ / mo	Look into bus or metro passes.
Clothes	\$ / mo	Show newcomers how to make use of second-hand and bargain stores.
Phone/Post	\$ / mo	Decide whether to fund long-distance calls and e-mail access, and if so, to what extent. Remember that the newcomer will need to communicate with family and friends back home.
Supplies	\$ / mo	Take into account laundry and cleaning supplies, as well as toiletries.
Furniture	\$ / mo	Use donations and second-hand stores.
Health	\$ / mo	Plan for costs not covered by IFH or provincial health plans and any special costs. Dental care could be required; try to include a dentist in your group.
Discretion	\$ / mo	Pocket money; recreation.
Education	\$ / mo	School trips, books, daycare to allow parents to study English and to look for jobs.
Reserve	\$ / mo	Allow a minimum extra of 5% for unanticipated expenses.

⁵ Betty Miller, "Refugee Sponsorship for Dummies," unpublished handbook, Anglican Dioceses of British Columbia, 1998, 13.

Sample Preparation Checklist: Have You Planned for the Following?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ lodging upon arrival✓ locating/securing housing✓ home furnishings✓ meeting the refugees on arrival✓ locating an interpreter✓ selecting a family doctor✓ plan for a medical/dental emergency✓ health registration✓ initial provision of food✓ provision of clothing | <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ application for family allowance✓ and child tax benefits (if applicable)✓ application for SIN✓ school enrollment of children✓ child care arrangements✓ language training✓ assistance in finding employment✓ transport to appointments/interviews✓ familiarization with public transit,✓ banking systems, etc. |
|---|--|

Refugee sponsorship involves a considerable commitment of time, and responsibilities should be shared among group members. Even if the refugee you are sponsoring has a family member that is providing the bulk of the support, there are many ways other group members can assist during the sponsorship period.

When partnering with family members in Canada, whether informally or formally as co-sponsors, remember that your sponsoring group remains responsible, and it is important to have a contingency plan in case they cannot meet their commitments. The United Church of Canada, as Sponsorship Agreement Holder, is ultimately responsible if your group cannot fulfill its sponsorship obligations.

2.3.3 Your Letter of Approval from the United Church

When you have completed your initial Settlement Plan, send the plan and sponsorship Undertaking to the Refugee Program, which administers The United Church of Canada's Sponsorship Agreement. If you intend to submit a sponsor-referred sponsorship, you should also send as many details as possible about the refugee and his or her situation. As well as assessing your Settlement Plan, the United Church will assess the strength of the case, and may counsel you on whether to proceed with the sponsorship. This "pre-approval" step can save everyone frustration and disappointment.

Along with the Settlement Plan and the 'eligibility' of the refugee applicant, the United Church requires a formal Board Motion from its constituent groups or congregations that acknowledges the congregation's commitment to refugee sponsorship. The dated, generic Motion (the refugees' names are not included) not only ensures that the congregation is aware of their responsibility toward the sponsored refugee(s), but equips the congregation to establish a refugee support fund. A motion that recognizes refugee sponsorship as a ministry of the congregation enables the congregation to operate a refugee support fund like a benevolent fund and recognize financial contributions to this fund with charitable tax receipts.

The United Church will provide your group with a **Letter of Approval** when it has approved your sponsorship and Settlement Plan and received the Board Motion. This letter indicates that the United Church has reviewed your settlement plan and the involvement of any co-sponsors, and has given your group permission to sponsor as a constituent group under our Sponsorship Agreement Holder's contract with the federal government. The original copy of the letter must be submitted with the sponsorship Undertaking.

2.4 The Application and Screening Process

2.4.1 Submitting Your Group's Sponsorship Application

The complete private refugee sponsorship application, ready for submission, includes:

- a completed and signed Undertaking/Application to Sponsor (IMM5439)
- the original Letter of Approval from the United Church naming the constituent group and each co-sponsor
- Sponsor Assessment (IMM5492) for each person who has signed the Undertaking
- completed Document Checklist (IMM5441)

Groups wishing to choose Option 3 of the IMM0008 distribution options should also include:

- completed IMM0008, Schedule 1, Schedule 2, and all required attachments (see 2.4.2 for details)

You may also include extra documents with your Undertaking to assist the Visa officer to make an informed decision. This could be information related to the protection needs of the refugee applicant, details from your Settlement Plan, or relevant information on your community. The United Church Refugee Program office can advise you about the type of information or documents to include.

Your completed application may be hand-delivered or mailed to your local Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) office. Your local CIC will review your application and when everything is in order will send your group's contact person a signed copy of the IMM5439 with a file number, to indicate that your application is now "in process." Note that this first file number is from the local CIC in Canada and is not related to the Visa Post Number (beginning with the letter B), which will be assigned overseas. The responsibility for communicating with your local CIC lies with you, the constituent group, unless you are experiencing significant problems. If that is the case, remember that United Church Refugee Program staff have experience and information likely to be of value to you and can intercede: keep in close touch with them!

Note: The overseas process for a sponsor-referred refugee starts when you submit your sponsorship application. A Visa office-referred refugee will already have been interviewed overseas and may be ready to travel very soon after the match with your sponsoring group has been made.

2.4.2 The Preparation of the Refugee's File Overseas

From the sponsoring group's point of view, the submission of the application to CIC is the beginning of a long period of "waiting." Overseas, however, sponsor-referred cases follow a number of steps:

- CIC forwards the Undertaking to the relevant Visa office overseas.
- The Visa office opens a file and assigns a Visa Post Number to it (this number begins with B).
- In Visa office-referred cases, the refugee has already completed his or her own application and has been interviewed. In a sponsor-referred sponsorship, the next step is ensuring that the refugee's own **Application for Permanent Residence in Canada-Refugees Outside Canada (IMM6000 including the IMM0008 forms)** is:
 - a) already completed by the refugee(s) and submitted with the Undertaking (Option 3), or
 - b) sent to the refugee(s) at this point

The submission of the IMM0008 and its Schedule 1 and 2 begins the overseas processing. The forms must be completed fully and accurately, and returned to the Visa office quickly.

Sponsored refugees should be advised to:

- check off the “access to information” box authorizing release of information to the sponsor on Schedule 2
- list **all** family members, even those not coming to Canada, or those missing, or presumed dead
- list a safe mailing address (advise both the Visa office and their sponsor of any address changes)
- ensure that all required copies of documents are attached

Upon satisfactory completion and return of the IMM0008 forms and all required photos and documents, the sponsor-referred refugee (family) is wait-listed to be called to an interview with a Visa officer (the Visa office-referred applicant has already been interviewed).

Helping Sponsored Refugees Understand the Process

To help advise the refugees you have sponsored, send them a copy of Information for Privately-Sponsored Refugees. This document gives refugees an overview of the immigration process and what they need to do, and information on both their responsibilities and their sponsor’s responsibilities after arrival in Canada. It has been translated into a number of the languages spoken by refugee groups currently resettling to Canada. Contact the United Church Refugee Program office for copies.

Find out more about the Selection Criteria and the Overseas Process

Ask the United Church Refugee Program office for a copy of the video, **Who Can Be Sponsored?: Private Sponsorship of Refugees to Canada**. The video includes interviews with recently arrived refugees, a Visa officer, and seasoned sponsors. This 20 minute video has an accompanying study guide.

2.4.3 The Screening Process

Visa officers use Canada’s specific **eligibility** and **admissibility** criteria to screen applicants. You may wish to refer back to the definitions provided in Section 1.4.2.

To be **eligible**, a person must be either a Convention Refugee Abroad or a member of a Country of Asylum or Source Country Class. To evaluate **eligibility**, the officer will be considering the following questions.

- Does the applicant meet the definition of a Convention Refugee Abroad, or a member of the Country of Asylum or Source Country Class?
- Is repatriation possible?
- Has the applicant already integrated in the asylum country?
- Is resettlement to Canada the preferred durable solution?

A person must also demonstrate the ability to successfully settle and become independent in Canada. To be **admissible**, the family must also pass the medical, security, and criminality checks.

To assess the applicant’s likely **ability to successfully establish** in Canada, the officer will be trying to weigh contributing factors and use questions such as:

- What are the education, work experience, and skills of the applicant?
- What is the applicant’s age? How adaptable, motivated, and resourceful is the applicant?

- How many dependants accompany the applicant, and what are their ages and skills?
- Does the applicant have any funds with which to support him/herself?
- What support (sponsors, family members) does the family have in the community of resettlement?

However, Visa officers are directed to balance the refugee's protection needs very carefully against an assessment of their ability to become independent, and to ensure that families are kept together. The greater the need for protection, the less an emphasis is placed on the ability of refugees to establish. Refugees identified as vulnerable or in urgent need of protection are exempt from demonstrating the ability to establish.

After interviewing, the refugee will be accepted or refused. The refugee and the United Church should both receive notification from the Visa post of the outcome of the selection interview, and in approved cases, an estimated processing time to Visa issuance. However, communications can be a serious challenge. It is important for you to stay in direct contact with the refugee(s) you have sponsored and to forward any important information you receive to the United Church Refugee Program. This includes any information about changes in their circumstances or family composition, as well as updates about the processing of their application.

If Accepted at Interview

The refugee and all dependants must complete a **medical exam** to determine whether an applicant has a medical condition that presents a danger to Canadian public health or safety. The applicant will receive instructions regarding the medical exam—where to go, when, and the cost. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) or Red Cross will pre-pay the medical exam, which will be repaid by the refugee if his/her refugee application is successful. If s/he cannot afford to pay for the exam, its cost is added to his/her loan (see below). The sponsor is not responsible for these costs; if approached to pay, contact the United Church Refugee Program.

- Under the 2002 Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, refugees with serious chronic medical conditions are no longer inadmissible. The United Church and/or your group should be informed of any significant medical issues that will impact the settlement of the refugee family.
- Applicants with a condition considered a danger to public health or safety are inadmissible to Canada. (If the condition is treatable, such as tuberculosis, the applicant may be scheduled for a follow-up medical after treatment.)
- If any one member of the family is found to be inadmissible, the entire family is inadmissible.
- Contact the United Church Refugee Program if the refugee(s) are found to be medically inadmissible.

If Cleared...

The refugee and all his/her dependants, including dependants 18 and over who are not coming to Canada with the principal applicant, will be subject to a security check and criminality check to verify information in the application and to ensure that the applicant is admissible under this criteria.

- There may be long delays involved in the security check process, especially if there are concerns about membership in an organization that is suspected of being involved in terrorist acts or war crimes.
- Contact the United Church Refugee Program if the refugee(s) are found to be inadmissible on security grounds.

If Cleared on Medical, Security, and Criminality Checks

The refugee(s) will be informed that they are accepted for resettlement to Canada, and the processing for departure will begin.

2.4.4 Expenses and Loans

Most refugees do not have vast personal resources, but there are a number of expenses refugees must pay themselves, including the cost of medical exams and travel. Government loans are available to pay these costs. The Visa officer will take into account savings they do have when considering eligibility for loans, and will also assess their ability to repay a loan after arrival in Canada. The following loans are available to eligible applicants from the Government of Canada:

- The Transportation Loan, which enables applicants to pay for transportation to their place of final destination in Canada.
- The Admissibility Loan, which enables applicants to cover the costs of their medical exam and other processing costs such as IOM service fees.

In cases where the officer is concerned about the sponsored person's ability to repay, the sponsoring group may be asked to pay a portion or all of these costs. If your sponsoring group is asked to, or wishes to incur a cost on behalf of the refugee, it is critical to confer with the United Church Refugee Program first. It is important to ensure continued access to the Immigrant Loan program, rather than raising expectations that sponsoring groups will always be able to take on these costs.

In the case of certain special needs refugees, the Canadian government may make a contribution to cover the costs of transportation and medical examinations. In these cases the Visa officer has determined that the special needs refugee would benefit from a Joint Assistance Sponsorship, and could not be reasonably expected to repay an immigrant loan. (Single parents with four or more dependants may be eligible for a special contribution.) These contributions come from a limited special fund and not every "special needs" refugee will qualify. (See section 3.4.4 for further information on Immigrant Loans.)

2.4.5 Visa, Notification of Arrival, and Travel

After the final clearances, there are a number of final processing steps:

- The refugee will be granted a permanent residence Visa.
- Refugees without travel documents may be issued a Single Journey Document (IMM5485).
- In most cases, the IOM (International Organization for Migration) will arrange transportation.
- The Visa office sends a Notice of Arrival to the Matching Centre who will notify the local CIC.
- The local CIC will notify the group's contact person of the refugee's date and time of arrival.
- The refugee will travel to Canada.
- Upon arrival, the refugee is "landed" and becomes a permanent resident of Canada.

2.4.6 Citizenship and Immigration Canada's Continuing Role

Your local CIC has a continued role after arrival. The office can provide contact information for organizations that offer services and support, referrals, assistance with registration for the Interim Federal Health Program, and on-going monitoring.

2.4.7 In Conclusion: Reaping the Benefits of Sponsorship

In the process of reaching out, sponsoring groups and the congregation gain a great deal. They may benefit from the satisfaction of fulfilling a political or activist mandate of their group (for example, if the group has a goal of advocating for human rights in a troubled country or region). If they are sponsoring someone from a different culture or group, the participants will be enriched through cross-cultural learning. All groups will benefit from the experience of building relationships with newcomers, learning new, relational and organizational skills, and having a means of putting into action their faith commitment. All are reaching out to offer protection and an opportunity to rebuild a life in safety and freedom.

Some Things That Can Create Delays—and How to Avoid Them!

When you are in touch with the refugee, emphasize the importance of the IMM0008 forms that they have received either from your sponsoring group, or from the Visa office. It may be tempting for the applicant to leave out or gloss over information s/he feels may make him/her less eligible for entry into Canada, such as health problems, or number of dependants. However, it is vitally important that refugees disclose the full truth, since discrepancies in information, or any perceived untruths will most certainly work against them. (Under the “one year window of opportunity,” missing spouses and dependent children located later may be resettled to Canada under the same sponsorship, provided they have been included on the application. Contact the United Church Refugee Program for further information.)

Advise the applicant to authorize the “release of information to the sponsor” by checking off the “yes” box on Part D of Schedule 2, and also completing the form entitled, Authority to Release Information to Designated Individuals (IMM5476). These forms are both included with the IMM0008 in the *Application for Permanent Residence in Canada Kit* (IMM6000). This option may not be pointed out to him/her, and the lack of information flow can cause delays.

Be in touch as often as possible. If you are aware of a change of address for the refugee, you must forward it to the Visa office. This will help prevent delays caused by Visa office letters going astray.

Why Was the Refugee Turned Down?

Up to 50 percent of private sponsorship applications that are sponsor-referred are refused. This can be devastating to everyone involved.

To help avoid refusals on eligibility, review the details of the refugee’s situation carefully before signing a sponsor-referred sponsorship. Many refugees are refused because the circumstances have changed in their country of origin or their country of asylum, and they are considered to have another solution. The United Church Refugee Program can help you assess their reasons for refugee flight and the circumstances in their country of origin and asylum.

If you think that the refugee’s situation will not qualify for any of Canada’s refugee programs, submitting a sponsorship for them will only result in disappointment for them and for your group.

Your group should be aware that even though a refugee may be found to be eligible, he or she may still be refused. There can be a variety of reasons such as:

- The refugee has a medical condition that makes him/her inadmissible.
- The refugee did not pass the security or criminality check.
- The refugee may be deemed unlikely to become financially independent in Canada, even with an extended sponsorship.

Refusals are a hard reality to accept, and there is no formal appeal mechanism. Before taking on a sponsorship, you may want to talk about this with the United Church Refugee Program office.

SETTLEMENT PREPARATION IN DETAIL

3.1 Getting Ready for the Refugee's Arrival

The overseas processing can take a long time, and waiting can sometimes be frustrating. However, there is no lack of things to be done during this time! This chapter provides you with information about how to prepare. This includes required preparations that you must complete in order to support the newcomer and suggested preparations that may be very helpful to you. You'll need to learn a great deal, from the point of view of the newcomer's needs, regarding:

Housing

- stocking the house

Shopping

- for food
- for clothing
- for household items

Finances and Money Management

Interpreters

- cultural sensitivity
- using interpreters appropriately

Settlement Services

Transport

Clothing

- seasonal information
- cultural information

Language Training

- rights and obligations
- available resources

Employment Resources

Child Care

Health Care

Education

- options and opportunities

3.1 Getting Ready for the Refugee's Arrival

3.2 Other Helpful Preparations

3.3 Receiving the Newcomers

3.4 Orientation

3.5 Confidentiality and Privacy

3.6 Secondary Migration

3.1.1 Getting Started on the Checklist

The first step in preparing is to learn about all the local resources available. Before you can help the newcomer(s), you need to educate yourself about your community resources. This may require some sleuthing, for there is no section in the Yellow Pages that compiles such a list. What are the kinds of resources you will want to research? You want to find out about anything that will help you accomplish the tasks in the following checklist. Here are some suggestions:

Preparation Checklist and Resources

PREPARATIONS Things you need to make sure you do...	RESOURCES Getting started and important issues to consider
<p>FINDING HOUSING and STOCKING THE HOUSE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Scout appropriate housing before the newcomer(s) arrive. ✓ Is rent within the guidelines and at a level that's affordable after sponsorship ends? (Take into account the cost of utilities.) ✓ Is the location convenient for transit, stores, schools, etc.? ✓ Is the landlord sensitive to cultural issues? ✓ Will the refugee(s) feel safe there? ✓ Prepare temporary housing before the newcomer(s) arrive. 	<p>You'll need to find out about affordable housing options in your community, venues for searching for rental units, and the specifics of the rental laws and local bylaws that apply in your community. Most importantly, you'll need to get out into the community and look at housing so that you get a very good idea of what's available and what's affordable. When the newcomer(s) arrive, it may be with very little notice, so it is good to have scouted out the possibilities in advance. Note: Do not rent an apartment until the refugee(s) have arrived in your community.</p> <p>Having an interim housing option is ideal, as this gives the newcomer(s) the chance to participate in the permanent housing decision. When stocking the apartment with food, take into account the kind of food the newcomer(s) is used to. Stocking "food from home" can go a long way to easing the stress around all the new things a newcomer(s) must face. When preparing for the newcomer(s)' reception, include some toys for the children.</p>
<p>SHOPPING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Help the newcomer(s) learn to shop for food in Canada. ✓ Take into account the newcomer's(s)' need to have national foods in his/her diet. ✓ Introduce him/her to Canadian food and cooking. 	<p>Since the newcomer(s) will have very limited funds to work with, learning how to shop economically will be a priority. Shopping may be quite different in their country of origin—for example, they may be used to bargaining on prices; or alternatively, they may be used to fixed prices for staple foods and may not realize they need to comparison shop. Find out what economical shopping venues are available in your community: from bulk food to discount stores, to second-hand shops.</p>

<p>PREPARATIONS</p> <p>Things you need to make sure you do...</p>	<p>RESOURCES</p> <p>Getting started and important issues to consider</p>
<p>FINANCES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Assist the newcomer(s) to open a bank account. Help him/her learn about handling money in Canada, how to use bank services, rights and obligations, income tax, etc. ✓ Find out about support provided by community groups. Some multicultural groups will provide financial counselling to the newcomer(s) in his/her own language. ✓ Provide guidance in budgeting, including an explanation of the costs of long-distance phone bills, utilities, and other variable costs. 	<p>Some multicultural groups offer financial planning and management counselling to members of their community, in their own language. Although you will certainly provide orientation in this area, it can be helpful to the newcomer(s) to have someone from his/her own culture—who understands the differing cultural perceptions around handling money—to provide the “bridge” into the Canadian way of approaching money matters. As well, you may want to talk to bank managers to find out whether any banks in your community have special cross-cultural sensitivity or expertise.</p>
<p>INTERPRETERS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ You may need an interpreter often, especially at first. ✓ Find out about interpreters in your community. In choosing an interpreter, take into account age, gender, and political sensitivities. ✓ Interpreters may deal with very personal matters, so it is essential to be able to trust them with such. ✓ As soon as possible, the newcomer(s) should be encouraged to interact without the use of an interpreter. This will build his/her confidence and help him/her build other connections in order to become independent. 	<p>A newcomer(s), unless his/her English is very good, will require the use of interpreters at some point. At the beginning, this may be extensive and indispensable. You’ll want to have interpreters identified before arrival. Settlement agencies or multicultural councils may be able to make recommendations. There are a number of important considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Given that you will very likely be discussing personal matters, is the interpreter’s gender and age appropriate? • If the interpreter is from the same country as the newcomer—is s/he from a group that has historical antipathy with the newcomer’s group? • This situation can be both explosive and painful for everyone. • Does the interpreter have an understanding of refugee situations and issues? If not, s/he may benefit from some information and awareness-raising. • Is the interpreter easily available? Especially at the beginning, the interpreter may be needed on short notice and at virtually any hour of the day or night.

PREPARATIONS Things you need to make sure you do...	RESOURCES Getting started and important issues to consider
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the interpreter known and recommended within the multicultural community? Unless you can understand the language that will be spoken, you will depend upon the interpreter to accurately convey information, and must place a great deal of confidence in him/her. • Does the interpreter understand the need for strict confidentiality?
<p>SETTLEMENT SERVICES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Find out what settlement agencies, refugee/ethno-cultural groups, and community social support groups exist in your community and the services they offer. ✓ Help the newcomer(s) to connect with those groups that will be able to offer appropriate assistance or ongoing support. 	<p>Many agencies provide counselling, support, referrals, and a variety of ongoing services and can provide invaluable advice and contacts. So, visit your local agency to understand exactly what services and resources will be available to the newcomer(s). Plan to build on this.</p> <p>Note: although you may feel you are capable of providing the counselling yourselves, keep in mind that the newcomer(s) may make friends and important contacts through groups at agencies.</p>
<p>TRANSPORTATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Find out about bus or metro passes. ✓ Show the newcomer(s) how to use the transport system; show him/her around your town. 	<p>When checking out transportation options, keep in mind the limited resources of the newcomer(s) and make sure you find the most economical options. As well, consider the convenience of bus routes, keeping in mind that the newcomer(s) will be juggling many things: housing and employment search, child care, and English-as-a-second-language (ESL) classes.</p>
<p>CLOTHING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Assist the newcomer(s) to buy required clothing and show him/her how to make use of second-hand and bargain stores. ✓ Advise him/her on dress appropriate for our Canadian climate. 	<p>Be sensitive to issues of cultural appropriateness, especially concerning use of second-hand clothing. Adequate winter clothing is essential.</p>

<p>PREPARATIONS</p> <p>Things you need to make sure you do...</p>	<p>RESOURCES</p> <p>Getting started and important issues to consider</p>
<p>LANGUAGE TRAINING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Research available ESL (English-as-a-second-language) courses in your community. Settlement agencies can explain testing/referral process in your area. ✓ Assist the newcomer(s) to find and register for the most appropriate course (e.g. some ESL courses focus on language in the workplace related to a specific job; others are more general). 	<p>You will need to research what ESL and language training courses are available in your community. The newcomer(s) may be eligible for government funded language instruction courses specifically organized for newcomers. Language classes are offered through various types of organizations (educational institutions, non-profit organizations, government organizations) and in various formats (community-based, workplace-focused). The basic eligibility criteria are that the applicants are adult immigrants and have not acquired Canadian citizenship. To find out more, visit the CIC website at www.cic.gc.ca, or contact your local CIC. Other courses may also be available, through the local adult education program, college, or high school. A newcomer(s) may even want to consider distance education courses in English, or private volunteer tutoring. When researching courses, find out about their focus, the “target” student group, and how, where, and when assessment and placement is conducted.</p> <p>Your sponsorship budget should allow the newcomer(s) to take language classes when he/she first arrives rather than requiring him/her to begin working immediately. A newcomer who learns an official language settles better in the long term.</p>
<p>EMPLOYMENT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Find out about employment counselling services in your community. Ethno-cultural groups or settlement agencies may provide counselling or even some training (e.g. using a computer) that is tailored to the needs of newcomers. ✓ Find out about the services of the Employment Resource Centres, such as access to the Internet, fax, computers, printers, and workshops for job search, 	<p>Looking for employment is one of the most important tasks facing the newcomer(s) during the first year of settlement. Maybe you have experienced how scary it is to walk into an office where everyone speaks a different language, and the “rules” of seeking employment are foreign. To assist the newcomer(s), advance research can be very helpful. If you know anything about the newcomer’s skill set and background, you can start researching employers for those skills in your area. Visit your local Canada Employment Centre to find out what resources are offered, and whether job counselling is available.</p>

PREPARATIONS Things you need to make sure you do...	RESOURCES Getting started and important issues to consider
<p>counselling services, etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Find out about the employment preparation workshops, such as those for resumé writing, interview skills, networking strategies, etc. ✓ Assist the newcomer(s) to learn the “how to” of searching for jobs in Canada—searching ads, using the Canada Employment Centre, getting together a resumé, “knocking on doors,” etc. ✓ Provide lots of practical help and emotional support. ✓ If applicable, research re-qualification procedures for the newcomer(s) who may have professional skills and education (see Education section on facing page). 	<p>Begin to check out the many websites for job hunting, such as +Jobs Canada, (http://www.canada.plusjobs.com), HRDC Job Bank, (jb-ge.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca), Canada Jobs (www.canadajobs.com), the Job Bus Canada (www.JobBus.com), and Southam’s Careerclick, which covers job listings from major newspapers across Canada (www.careerclick.com).</p> <p>In addition to listing jobs such sites also provide information and resources on writing resumés and successful job hunting. As well, you should be able to find printed resources in your local library that give valuable job-hunting advice, such as the classic <i>What Color is Your Parachute?</i> by Richard Nelson Bolles. Do all this keeping in mind that the newcomer(s) will need to learn how to find and use all this information him or herself—in other words, with an eye to mentoring the newcomer(s) into the effective use of the employment and job-hunting resources that are out there.</p>
<p>CHILD CARE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Find out about child care options in your community. ✓ Keep in mind access to public transport, proximity to ESL classes, cost, and cultural sensitivity. ✓ Remember that for mothers to attend ESL classes, child care may be one of their first needs. 	<p>When researching child care resources in your community, keep in mind the likely income level of the newcomer(s) after support ends. In addition to the normal care and safety concerns, consider cost, access to transport, and sensitivity to cultural issues. Consider, too, that parents may be uncomfortable leaving their children with strangers, and will only participate in programs where child care is on-site.</p>
<p>HEALTH</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Obtain forms to register for provincial health insurance. ✓ Ask local CIC about the process for registering for Interim Federal Health Program (IFH). ✓ Assist in finding a family doctor, explaining the Canadian medical system, etc. ✓ Investigate which vaccinations are required for school registration. 	<p>To receive provincial health coverage, the newcomer(s) must meet the provincial rules for eligibility. Privately sponsored refugees are also eligible for Interim Federal Health (IFH) coverage. Until they become eligible for provincial health coverage, they will be covered for full IFH; from then on they will still have partial coverage for visual, dental, and pharmaceutical costs during the sponsorship period.</p>

<p>PREPARATIONS</p> <p>Things you need to make sure you do...</p>	<p>RESOURCES</p> <p>Getting started and important issues to consider</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ If sponsoring a refugee family with special medical needs, research the sources of special equipment, care, and support. 	<p>It is worthwhile registering even for partial IFH, but this program is intended for emergency care and covers specific, basic health care needs within very strict guidelines. You'll need to be aware of these guidelines and be prepared to help the newcomer(s) understand them, as well as budget for costs not covered. (See the Appendix for a more detailed description of the IFH program.)</p>
<p>EDUCATION/JOB TRAINING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Find out about schools in the area and assist the newcomer(s) to register their children at school(s). ✓ Provide information about the Canadian school system and Canadian views on education. ✓ Support the newcomer(s) as she/he learns about school trips, homework expectations, etc. ✓ Find out about job training and credential assessment and upgrading possibilities. 	<p>In addition to ESL courses, there are now a wide variety of workplace training, adult education, and targeted skills development courses available both in-class and through distance learning. Organizations such as the Centre for Education and Training (CET) have services that are developed specifically to help the newcomer(s) assess and build his/her skills and language competency for the Canadian job market (for more information on CET, check: www.tcet.com).</p> <p>Many local colleges also offer courses which are intended to develop specific skills for the Canadian market. The Association of Canadian Community Colleges' Work Keys program provides detailed and specific job profiling, skill assessment, and instructional support that is geared towards the Canadian job market (for more information, check ACCC's website at www.accc.ca or contact ACCC at 200 1223 rue Michael Street Nord/North, Ottawa, ON, K1J 7T2, (613) 746-2222). This sort of assessment may be a very good way for the newcomer(s) to effectively address his/her employment skills.</p>
<p>RELIGION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ If appropriate, and the refugee family has informed you of their religious observance, locate places of worship in your community. 	<p>Religion is a very sensitive area. You must be very careful not to impose your religious beliefs on a newcomer. A newcomer has the right to religious freedom and cannot be required to join</p>

PREPARATIONS Things you need to make sure you do...	RESOURCES Getting started and important issues to consider
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Discuss with your group how to ensure that meetings with the newcomer(s) are planned in locations where (s)he feels comfortable if (s)he are not of your faith. 	<p>your group’s church, mosque, temple or other worship group. Invitations to religious activities and worship must be approached cautiously and sensitively—even if the newcomer(s) is of the same faith as your group.</p> <p>A newcomer(s) of a different faith than your own may not feel comfortable coming to a meeting or social event at your place of worship. If issuing an invitation to an event, explain the context carefully. One newcomer may welcome an invitation to your group’s religious service, whereas another might prefer to meet and express his/her appreciation to their sponsors outside of a place of worship.</p>
<p>CULTURE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Find out about the newcomer’s culture. (See the CIC website for cultural profiles available.) ✓ Raise your own awareness about culture. ✓ Learn about how your cultural assumptions (e.g. regarding gender roles) may affect and even cause stress to the newcomer(s). ✓ Plan how you’ll support the newcomer’s cultural adjustment. 	<p>Your work on raising your cultural awareness has already helped you find out about many resources. But you will also want to find out specifically about ethno-cultural groups that provide employment counselling, crisis counselling, and so on. If your town has a multicultural society or council, this is a good place to start.</p> <p>If appropriate, you may want to find out about community groups, centres etc., that the newcomer(s) may be interested in affiliating with on his/her arrival. Keep in mind however the pluralism of a community and the refugee experience and that the newcomer(s) may not necessarily feel an affinity with a certain group. See section 4.1.2, below, for specific suggestions on supporting a newcomer(s) in his/her cultural adjustment.</p>
<p>CRISIS AND TRAUMA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Contact the United Church Refugee Program for information on appropriate trauma treatment or counselling in your area. 	<p>Refugees have been through traumatic situations. Once they’ve taken care of their immediate settlement needs, crisis and trauma counselling may become a necessity for some. Find out in advance the appropriate resources that are available in your community. Visit the website of the Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture (CCVT) to find out</p>

PREPARATIONS Things you need to make sure you do...	RESOURCES Getting started and important issues to consider
	about torture and its treatment. (See Section 4.1.5 for details.)
RECREATION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Find out about recreation facilities. ✓ Help the newcomer(s) learn how to use them if necessary. ✓ Be sensitive to cultural issues (e.g. dress and mixed-gender activities). 	Check out facilities in your area, particularly those that can be used at a low cost or for free.

3.1.2 Raise Funds

When you decide to sponsor, you take on a significant financial obligation. If you need to raise funds it may be useful to set up a committee to deal strictly with fundraising, and certainly you will want to ensure that finances are carefully and appropriately monitored. When planning fundraising activities, think about:

- How much time will it take? Do we have enough volunteers?
- How much money will it raise?
- Are there legal or insurance implications? (e.g. Do you need to block off a street for your activity?)
- How will money be gathered and tracked?
- Will tax receipts be given?
- How will gifts-in-kind be tracked?

Following is a list of some activities that non-profit groups have used successfully to raise funds.

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dedicate a percentage of your collections to refugee sponsorship. • special offering • Solicit donations from your community or group members and/or businesses. • art auction • gala events • shows • dances • door-to-door selling • golf tournament • With local businesses, organize a tour of factories, research facilities, or other | <p>interesting facilities to which the public would not normally have access.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solicit services for free or reduced cost from businesses. • gift-wrapping • fashion show • bake sale/craft sale • spring flowers/Xmas wreaths • Host/sell tickets to a curling or other sports event. • corn roast • Host/sell tickets to a community “theme tea” (Hallowe’en, Valentine’s). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fitness event • special dinners (e.g. mystery theatre or ethnic dinners, chili fest, barbeques) • silent auction • Host/sell tickets to a wine/gourmet food tasting event. • “tea bag and letter” campaign in your community (have a cup of tea and please read the letter, requesting a donation) • garage sales |
|--|--|--|

3.1.3 Gather Forms

As soon as the newcomer(s) arrives, there will be a number of forms to fill out in order to ensure s/he has access to everything s/he is entitled to. The period of waiting and preparation is an ideal time to gather these items together so that the work can be completed quickly. This includes:

APPLICATION FOR SOCIAL INSURANCE NUMBER (SIN)

You can download the SIN application form from the Government of Canada's Human Resources Development Canada website at: www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca. Otherwise, refer to the Government of Canada pages in your telephone book, under the heading "Social Insurance Number;" or write to Social Insurance Registration, P.O. Box 7000, Bathurst, NB E2A 4T1.

APPLICATION TO PROVINCIAL MEDICAL PLAN

Information forms can be found on provincial websites. Use this formula: www.xx.ca. Where the xx appears, substitute the two-letter abbreviation for the province (e.g. ab for Alberta, bc for British Columbia, etc.). Otherwise, find contact information for your provincial health department in the provincial government pages of your phone book.

APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL CHILD TAX BENEFIT

The application for the Federal Child Tax Benefit can be downloaded from the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency website at: www.ccr-a-drc.gc.ca. Or contact Canada Child Tax Benefit at 1-800-387-1193. As well, check with your provincial government to find out whether any provincial benefits apply.

3.1.4 Find Housing

Finally, as you approach the time of the newcomers' arrival, finding appropriate housing becomes a priority. By this point, you should already have done extensive research so that you can rent housing on short notice. It's a tricky waiting game: you can't rent until you really know the refugees are on their way, yet you want to ensure the newcomers have a new home to come to. To do this, you need to have temporary accommodations lined up for the first few days, as well as a "roster" of appropriate housing options.

However, don't rent anything until the newcomers arrive. There are a several reasons for this:

- You won't know exactly when the newcomers are to arrive; even if you're given arrival dates, these could change without notice.
- The family composition of the newcomers may not be exactly as you were told.
- And, importantly, the newcomers should be given the opportunity to decide for themselves where they want to live. Proximity to services is a prerequisite and to the sponsoring group an added bonus.
- However, you do need to secure housing as soon after arrival as possible. In some provinces, applying for provincial health coverage and even registering children for school can be dependent upon having a permanent address.

3.2 Other Helpful Preparations

3.2.1 Flesh Out the Details of Your Settlement Plan

Your basic Settlement Plan has already been developed, but it's not detailed. During this waiting time, you should identify all the things that need to be completed, along with the exact activities, and who will do

what and when. Such a plan might look like this:

What Do We Need to Achieve?	Activities	Who?	By When?	Resources Required?	Who Needs to Know?
Sample Detailed Settlement Plan Monthly budget developed	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Research local cost of living. 2. Find out about community resources for budget planning support for the newcomers. 3. Design budget, etc. 	Betty Chandra Mike	Aug 31 Sept 15 Sept 15	For each item list all resources required: \$, materials, etc.	Finance Committee
Apartment rented	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Search local vacancies in realistic/ appropriate range. 2. Talk to prospective landlords. 	Pat Milly Tunji	Oct 15	Will need money for first & last month's rent.	Finance & Housing Committee
Furnishings & household items in place	Etc.	Etc.			

3.2.2 Develop Your Group’s Support Skills

Your group will work together for an extended period of time—possibly up to three years or more—from the time you start thinking about sponsorship to the time when the newcomers launch out on their own. You may want to give some attention to building your group’s support skills in order to increase your effectiveness. This could include everything from listening and communication skills, to building your understanding about participation, developing consensus, and effective decision-making as a group. See the Appendix for ideas and resources for building skills.

3.2.3 Develop Cultural Awareness

Many sponsoring groups will be assisting newcomers who come from a culture and background very different from their own. Such groups may want to plan some activities to develop their cultural awareness and skills. There are many activities that can help: reading, watching movies, role-playing, and outings. See the Appendix for ideas and resources.

It may be important to raise your own group’s awareness regarding gender issues. If you’re sponsoring a woman under the Women at Risk program, it’s important to ensure that a female member of your group is the primary contact with the newcomer. This can help overcome gender barriers and may be critical when sensitive issues arise. At the same time, North American women’s roles may differ radically from the practices of the newcomer’s culture, and may challenge her and her family dynamics. It may be equally difficult for newcomer men to discuss their concerns with a mixed-gender group of sponsors. Everyday things that may seem ‘simple’ and even innocuous to us can be challenging and unnerving—the way in which eye contact is made, expectations around how business and social activities are conducted between the

genders. The more aware you can become of these cultural differences, the better you'll be able to approach them with sensitivity and compassion.

Some groups receive newcomers from their own cultural background. In these situations, the challenge is a little different: to help the newcomers understand the new culture from the perspective of someone who has already gone through the adjustment. This requires becoming more conscious of one's own reactions in the new culture. Again, a wide variety of cross-cultural activities, such as those suggested in the Appendix, can help develop important self-awareness.

3.2.4 Learn about Rights and Responsibilities

As a sponsor, you have rights and responsibilities that you need to be aware of. As you discovered in Chapters 1 and 2, by agreeing to sponsor a refugee, you take on certain financial, social, and emotional support obligations during the sponsorship period. You are responsible for ensuring that the newcomer understands Canadian laws and their rights and responsibilities in Canada. As well, you need to respect the newcomer's rights to privacy and confidentiality, and to making their own religious and cultural choices. You may become involved in very private and sensitive issues. You have a responsibility to maintain the newcomer's confidentiality.

As well, you'll be assisting the newcomer in so many ways that you can begin to feel a sense of ownership over the decisions made. Remember, however, that even if you don't agree with them, the newcomer has the right to make his or her own decisions about issues that affect his/her life. Your role is to advise and to support.

Note: All Canadian residents have the right of mobility. Sponsored refugees may decide to move away to another area of the city, province, or country. While they have the right to do so, they do not have the right to be supported by the sponsor outside the expected resettlement community.

Newcomers Are Responsible for:

- paying the cost of transportation to their final destination in Canada
- repaying any Immigration Loans and any other debts they assume
- participating with the sponsors in planning their immediate and long-term future
- keeping the sponsorship group informed of their plans and cooperating with sponsors
- showing initiative in adjusting to life in Canada
- contributing to their own support upon finding employment
- being law-abiding
- becoming independent.⁷

Ultimately, it is the newcomer who must decide, in each case, how he or she will respond to each responsibility.

3.2.5 Prepare the Community

In an article, "A Story of Refugee Sponsorship," Delores Feltmate describes how her church helped to prepare the community for the arrival of the refugees: "With the committees hard at work, and with the arrival of our families approaching, we wanted to know more about Bosnia. We decided to hold an information session and to invite the community to participate. We asked Heather Graham, our contact person of the immigration office, to come and talk with us. She agreed and said she would bring recent immigrants along. We had no idea the community would be so interested. When Heather and [the] family walked in, about 50 people from the community were gathered." Seeing the success of this evening and the interest of the community prompted this group to look at additional community preparation. Feltmate

continues, “[We] decided to bring the community on board even further by sharing what we knew about Bosnia on a local radio talk show. Our minister and a local college teacher agreed to do this. The response was positive.”⁸

This kind of preparation can be both rewarding and invaluable. While there is always the possibility that newcomers may face discrimination, stigmatization, and—most often—misunderstanding, making the community aware of the refugees’ arrival can be of tremendous help. Most people are interested in other people(s) and their customs, and you can take advantage of this natural curiosity to raise awareness. (Free cultural profiles are available through CIC. Check their website at www.cic.gc.ca.)

3.3 Receiving the Newcomers

Feltmate describes vividly the mixed emotions surrounding the arrival of the refugees. “The week before the first family arrived,” she says, “was like a mixture of Exam Week and Christmas. When the plane landed on November 17 and [the family] walked off in Fredericton, they were met by a group of people who had already invested a great deal of feeling in them. Dave, the chair of our group, along with Jane, a high school student, Mary, with the kindest face you ever saw, Heather from immigration, with Liljana as translator, were there, waiting to say ‘Welcome.’ Heather remarked that she had never seen a family come off the plane and look so scared.”⁸

This description highlights how important the first meeting is, and how lasting its impression. It also points to some of the things you need to be aware of when you first receive the newcomers.

Checklist: Immediately Before and Upon Arrival

<input type="checkbox"/>	Who will welcome the newcomers with flowers and teddy bears? (Must be available on short notice at any time of the day.) Arrange for backup in case greeters are not available.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Provide appropriate written information in newcomers’ own language (something very brief).
<input type="checkbox"/>	If it is a Joint-Assistance Sponsorship, coordinate closely with the settlement agency contracted by CIC to provide the initial orientation services. Newcomers may stay initially in a reception centre.	<input type="checkbox"/>	If appropriate, take photos at the airport.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is an interpreter needed at the airport? Is an interpreter available on “stand by”?	<input type="checkbox"/>	Provide opportunities to go to the bathroom at the airport before piling into cars.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Provide newcomers with names and phone numbers of group members.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Take newcomers to where they are staying. Leave some emergency funds with them (\$20, \$10, and \$5 bills and coins).

⁷ United Church of Canada, *Building on a Rock*, Refugee Sponsorship Handbook, 18–19.

⁸ Delores Feltmate, “A Story of Refugee Sponsorship,” *Exchange*, Fall, 1997: 1–5.

As well, keep in mind that the newcomers will be experiencing a bewildering number of things all at once:

- When newcomers arrive they may be exhausted and even scared—they may not even feel particularly happy to be in Canada. Keep in mind that they have not left their country by choice. Their feelings may be quite different than yours and may be very mixed.
- Meeting new people can be exhausting. Choose carefully the ‘best’ people to greet the newcomer(s) at the airport, and keep in mind that having too many greeters can be overwhelming. Although you may feel like celebrating immediately after arrival, the newcomer(s)’ first need will likely be to rest.
- Make sure you always communicate to the newcomer(s) what you are doing and why.
- Allow the newcomer(s) as much privacy as possible.

3.3.1 Receiving Joint Assistance Sponsored (JAS) Refugees

A Joint-Assistance Sponsorship for special needs refugees is a partnership between the government and your sponsoring group and congregation, but there are other organizations that have a role in the sponsorship. The government provides income support through the Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP). RAP is delivered by settlement agencies contracted by CIC to assist government-assisted refugees, including joint-assisted, with their initial settlement needs. Contact your local RAP service provider and your local CIC to coordinate a plan for the reception and orientation of the refugees you have sponsored under the Joint Assistance Program. See the **RSTP Joint Assistance Sponsoring Group Handbook** for further information.

- The RAP provider may arrange temporary accommodation upon arrival and, in some cases, can assist sponsors to locate permanent housing.
- If the RAP provider is in another town or city, discuss plans for the orientation sessions, financial counselling, and other RAP services. An experienced sponsor may be able to meet the refugees’ orientation needs.
- In some circumstances, JAS cases can be sent to sponsorship communities outside a RAP catchment area; however, most often, destination of JAS cases is restricted to larger communities with RAP centres.
- Learn about the services offered under the RAP program, and discuss the division of responsibilities between your group and the RAP provider staff. Consider any special needs that have been identified.
- Consider having a group member sit in on the orientation sessions delivered by the RAP provider. Request copies of materials distributed to the refugees so that your group can help to reinforce the information.
- As RAP is available nationally, JAS refugees who choose to relocate, either upon arrival or within the settlement period, are still entitled to receive the monthly allowance.
- Secondary migration is a real concern with JAS cases. United Church policy is that refugees who relocate—despite counsel not to—are no longer the responsibility of the sponsoring group. Please notify the United Church Refugee Program office immediately should you anticipate such a problem. This is a situation for their intervention; secondary migration and breakdowns are to be mediated with the CIC and United Church.

3.4 Orientation

The first 24 hours and the first few days are a critical time in a newcomer’s life. This is the time when first impressions are formed, and vivid memories of these days will remain with them for the rest of their lives. Therefore, while you want to ensure that you are addressing the necessary practical issues during this time, focus on the newcomer’s emotional needs. A checklist can be helpful. The following is a sample.

Orientation Checklist

FIRST 24 HOURS	
Assist newcomers, if necessary to...	
<input type="checkbox"/>	know how to use things in their house or apartment (e.g. different types of faucets, telephones, and basic household equipment can be confusing to figure out, and objects such as fire alarms may be unknown)
<input type="checkbox"/>	know how to contact someone at all times (this may entail learning how to use a pay phone). Leave several numbers. If their English is poor, you can develop a “warning” system, where the newcomers can call someone with a code word, and whoever receives the call will know they need help ⁹
<input type="checkbox"/>	call their family at home. Explain whether, or to what extent, your group is willing to cover long-distance calls
FIRST FEW DAYS	
Assist newcomers to...	
<input type="checkbox"/>	complete and submit the SIN, medical coverage (IFH application – see section 6.1), and Child Tax Credit forms you collected earlier
<input type="checkbox"/>	understand both their and your rights and obligations regarding sponsorship
<input type="checkbox"/>	have a tour of the immediate neighbourhood and help them learn how to get around
<input type="checkbox"/>	shop for food and clothing
<input type="checkbox"/>	receive any needed medical attention (you may want to suggest setting up an appointment for a physical examination soon after arrival). School-age children may need to have their vaccinations updated before they are permitted to register for school
<input type="checkbox"/>	open a bank account and begin the budgeting process. (Cdn I.D. SIN or Health Card may be required.) Explain the sources of funds and the expectations around managing money

These are the immediate practical concerns. Important emotional concerns include:

⁹ *And You Welcomed Me*, 15

- Be careful to introduce the newcomer to all the members of the sponsoring group and to explain how your group has divided the responsibilities. Meeting group members early in the sponsorship is important, even if a family member in Canada will take on most of the support requirements. Host a Welcome Party (shower) with gifts appropriate for the newcomer's(s') circumstances (e.g. tools/ business supplies for those looking for work, make-up for women, laundry/sewing materials for all family configurations, and school supplies and toys for children and teens).
- Be sensitive to the emotional ups and downs newcomers will experience. Give them privacy and enough time to rest.
- Be sensitive to the "overload" newcomers will experience as they are introduced to many new things all at once. Be patient and be prepared to explain things as many times as necessary. Don't assume the newcomer will feel comfortable asking for information or help; be aware of signs of confusion.
- Be sensitive to culture shock and the frustrations of adjustment.
- Be aware of newcomers' needs to make their own decisions from the very beginning. Never make a decision "for" the newcomer; make the decision "with" the newcomer, with the aim of, whenever possible, being a mentor regarding alternatives and resources.

3.4.1 Budgeting

You have already developed detailed budget sheets, compiled during the planning and fundraising stages. Soon after the newcomers' arrival, sit down with them to discuss their budget. They should have all budgetary information explained to them fully and should be given autonomy over their own income and budget once it has been explained. Prepare a schedule of payments, detailing what is paid biweekly or monthly. If this is a JAS case, alert the family to the claw-back of family benefits.

Orientation Checklist

FIRST FEW WEEKS and FIRST MONTH Assist newcomers, if necessary to...			
<input type="checkbox"/>	look for permanent housing	<input type="checkbox"/>	receive employment counselling and begin job search
<input type="checkbox"/>	enroll children in school	<input type="checkbox"/>	understand rights and obligations regarding loans and loan repayment (see section 3.4.4)
<input type="checkbox"/>	complete a language assessment and enroll in English-as-a-second language classes	<input type="checkbox"/>	be aware of family law, parenting obligations, and finding child care
<input type="checkbox"/>	become oriented to life in the community including shopping, public transport, settlement services, recreation, and culture	<input type="checkbox"/>	be aware of culture shock, family stresses, and effects of crises (see section 4.1 for specific suggestions)

3.4.2 Language Assessment

Unless the newcomer's English is very good, language training will be one of the first concerns both for finding a job and for developing relationships, friendships, and meaning in his/her new life in Canada. During your preparation time, you researched available language training resources. Now is the time to take the newcomer to the language assessment centre if there is one nearby. If not, explain the options to the newcomer. As you present options, keep in mind the newcomer's skills and training (some language classes are geared towards providing vocabulary for work in a specific field). You may want to arrange a visit to an English-as-a-second language (ESL) class early on, so the newcomer has some idea about what to expect. As always, when providing information and resources, remember that:

- the newcomer has the right to make his/her own decisions
- you are in the role of “enabler,” not “provider”
- you don't want to foster dependency. Don't only provide information, but also show how you found the information
- in conjunction with language study options, you may need to discuss child care and transportation options

One of your ongoing contributions will be speaking English with the newcomer in an open, non-judgmental, and non-threatening way, and, when appropriate, giving feedback on language usage that other people might not provide.

3.4.3 Employment Counselling

Once the newcomer has begun his/her language studies, together you can begin discussing employment and developing a job-search plan. You may have discovered in your research on settlement agencies, that they can provide employment counselling, information on employment law, and even some skills development (e.g. learning how to use a computer) in the newcomer's own language. In any case, by now, through your research, you are more than likely aware of a range of resources available. You may already have some information about the newcomer's skills and experience, but it will be helpful to find out more. If the newcomer chooses to share his or her future career dreams with you, this can be very helpful in narrowing which employment avenues will be most fruitful to explore. Share the resources and options with the newcomer (perhaps a little at a time, as too much information at once can be overwhelming). However, as above, remember that:

- the newcomer has the right to make his/her own decisions
- you are in the role of “enabler,” not “provider”
- you don't want to foster dependency. Don't only provide information, but also show how you found the information

But can you really help someone with the “nitty-gritty” of getting out there and knocking on doors? The newcomer will have to do the knocking, but there is indeed much you can do. On the next page are some ideas for activities that may be helpful.

- ✓ ASSIST the newcomer with having their skills and credentials assessed. (See section 3.1.1 for references on resources.)
- ✓ DISCUSS WHAT A HIRING PROCESS “LOOKS LIKE” in Canada from beginning to end. From your group, have several members—with different job backgrounds—contribute, as this will vary from work sector to work sector. Together you will build up a “picture” for the newcomer to help alleviate some of the fears of the unknown—and you’ll probably learn something new, too!
- ✓ DISCUSS ISSUES such as: How long is it appropriate to wait before calling back to check on the status of your application? What do you have to respond to in a job interview (e.g. when the prospective employer asks personal questions)? When not responding to a job ad (making cold calls), who is the right person to speak to? What is the expected protocol?
- ✓ If the newcomer wants to start up a business, what LOANS, ASSISTANCE, AND GUIDANCE might be available? What are the legal issues to be aware of? (See Industry Canada’s website: <http://strategis.ic.gc.ca>.)

- ✓ CIC offers an ASSISTANCE LOAN to cover costs of required tools, licensing fees, clothing, etc.
- ✓ ROLE PLAY a job interview.
- ✓ SET UP A PANEL OR DISCUSSION GROUP on workplace culture. This is the kind of topic that almost anyone in your group or community may be interested in, and should not be aimed only at the newcomer. You may even want to bring in some people with special expertise. You will learn a lot and also discover how much variation there is within Canadian culture. Discuss the Canadian view of: working in teams, performance evaluation, attitudes regarding office relationships (friendships/working relationships), ideas about formality/informality in the workplace, appropriate communication styles in meetings (do you joke in meetings? stand up when you speak?), views about leadership (hierarchical, participative), sexual harassment policies, hiring and pay equity policies, non-discrimination and inclusiveness policies, how planning is done, view of time and time management concepts, customs regarding space and touch, gesture and eye contact in the workplace, workplace rituals, etc.

3.4.4 Immigration Loans Repayment

As you found in section 2.4, privately sponsored refugees are eligible for Immigrant Loans from the Canadian government. A newcomer’s overall loan usually includes:

- **The Transportation Loan**
Enables applicants to pay for transport to their place of final destination in Canada, and
- **The Admissibility Loan**
Enables applicants to cover the costs of their medical examination

Newcomers may also apply for a Citizenship and Immigration Canada **Assistance Loan**, which enables the applicant to cover any extraordinary costs after arrival in Canada, which may not be covered by the sponsoring group. For example, labour market access costs, such as the purchase of tools or work clothes, cost of licensing examinations where employment is offered, and so on.

The repayment of these Immigrant Loans is the responsibility of the newcomer. The size of the loan determines the interest-free period, as shown in the following table.

Amount of Loan	Interest-Free Period
Up to \$1,200	12 months
over \$1,200 but less than \$2,400	24 months
over \$2,400	36 months

The sponsoring group can help the newcomer work out a manageable plan for the repayment of the loan. Newcomers are expected to begin repaying their loans as soon as possible. In fact, the first written demand for repayment will be mailed shortly after the newcomer arrives.

The newcomer may request a **deferral** in the commencement of the repayment of the loans. You can assist the newcomer to request this deferral in writing. The deferral period may be up to 24 months, although it may be granted in six-month periods. Please note that this deferral is not automatic, but must be requested. If your sponsoring group has not included loan repayments in your sponsorship budget, requesting this deferral for the sponsorship period is particularly important.

When setting up a repayment schedule, the newcomers should be aware that it is possible to negotiate the size and timing of the payments. A repayment schedule is suggested in the bill sent to the newcomer, but it is possible to negotiate monthly payments that are feasible from a limited budget. Start by helping the newcomer to write a letter with an explanation to the Immigration Loan Officer, or calling the number on the letter sent to the newcomer. The following table shows CIC's suggested loan repayment periods:

Amount of Loan	Repayment Period
up to \$1,200	within 12 months
over \$1,200 but not exceeding \$2,400	within 24 months
over \$2,400 but not exceeding \$3,600	within 36 months
over \$3,600 but not exceeding \$4,800	within 48 months
over \$4,800	within 72 months

Newcomers should be aware that their ability to sponsor relatives under the Family Class will be affected if their loan is in arrears. A loan is considered in arrears if the newcomer is paying less than the minimum amount suggested, even if this lower amount has been approved by immigration.

Please remind the newcomer:

- Don't ignore requests for payments.
- Inform the Immigration Loan Officer of all address changes within 10 days of relocation until the loan is repaid in full by writing to:
The Chief Revenue Accounting, Jean Edmonds Tower North,
300 Slater St., 4th Floor, Ottawa, ON K1A 1L1
- Call Collection Services at 1-800-667-7301 if there are any problems.

3.5 Confidentiality and Privacy

During the settlement process, keep in mind that there are many reasons to maintain the privacy of the refugee newcomer family. Some are related to common sense, others to the law in Canada.

A basic guideline will be to envision how you would like to have your privacy and the confidentiality of your situation and that of your family ensured. Add to that the needs of a refugee family who have been traumatized and whose members are now in a society and a context that they do not know or

understand. The trust that you are able to develop with the refugee newcomer will depend to a great extent on how well they perceive you guard their privacy and safety.

Some Basic Dos

- Telephone first, or make an appointment before going over to the refugee's home. This is common practice in Canada. It also allows the refugee newcomer to know that their home is theirs.
- Wait for an invitation to enter their home.
- Take information from those wishing to contact the family and then relay that information to the refugee and help them make the connection if they wish to do so.
- Discussion within the sponsorship group around practical aspects of settlement is important, but matters that are very personal should be discussed on a 'need to know' basis among those who are directly involved in providing support. It is very important to avoid gossip.
- Provide protection from media attention by acting as mediator and determining the interest of the refugee in responding to media interest.
- In accessing support from settlement agencies and other community organizations, act as a liaison to connect the refugee newcomer directly with the support service.

Some Don'ts

- Do not publish, promote, or distribute to anyone or any organization the names, address, and telephone number of any member of the refugee family without their specific permission.
- Do not discuss their private and personal affairs with any individual or any member of an organization without their permission. This includes discussion with other members of the sponsorship group and with settlement organizations.
- Do not talk "around" the refugee newcomer with others when the refugee newcomer is present unless the refugee is directly involved in the dialogue.
- Do not expect agencies and organizations to keep you completely informed on their work with the refugee newcomers. They are bound by privacy legislation.

3.6 Secondary Migration

Sometimes, refugees decide not to travel on to the expected community of resettlement (e.g. they might remain in the city where the international airport is located) or want to move away from the expected community of resettlement (community where the sponsors reside) shortly after arrival or within the first year. This may happen because the newcomers feel culturally isolated or have no connection with or commitment to the sponsoring group. This can be difficult and disappointing for all parties concerned.

Sponsors must assume responsibility when we have in any way contributed to the secondary migration or a potential breakdown. However, if we have fulfilled our obligations to the newcomers and counselled those newcomers re our ability to offer moral and financial support **only within** the expected community of resettlement, then we will not be held responsible should they choose to relocate. Only in most exceptional cases—where the reasons for secondary migration are clearly and unequivocally the fault of the sponsor—will the United Church continue financial support. Examples would be in situations of abuse, exploitation, or neglect.

Secondary migration leads to a breakdown in the sponsorship. When you cannot resolve such a dispute within the sponsoring group, it is vital to involve the United Church Refugee Program office. As your Sponsorship Agreement Holder, we are prepared to intervene on your behalf and become actively involved in the mediation process with CIC.

ENABLING SETTLEMENT: THE FIRST YEAR AND BEYOND

4.1 Enabling Settlement: The First Year

During the first year, newcomers learn a tremendous amount and move from a large degree of dependence to a large degree of independence. Through it all, your role is that of an enabler, helping newcomers to equip themselves, make their own decisions, and find out as much as possible about their new environment. Above all, you are helping to provide warm friendship and support.

One important task will be to clarify expectations on all sides. While the government expects certain “results” (finding employment, learning English, learning life skills to function in Canada), newcomers and sponsoring groups have aspirations that both include and go beyond this. They will want to learn about each other’s backgrounds and develop a sense of community. Sponsoring groups may hope to increase their skills through this learning experience; newcomers may hope to motivate their sponsors to become more activist.

Newcomers may hope to be supported while they study or re-qualify for certain trades or professions, and sponsors may hope that the newcomer finds work as quickly as possible. If these hopes and aspirations can be expressed and agreed on, the potential for misunderstanding and disappointment will be reduced.

During the busy first months when there are so many details to take care of, “the bigger picture” may be forgotten from time to time. Below are some of the important things you will want to consider during times of assessment.

4.1.1 Reviewing the Budget

No matter how well we plan, a budget is something that always requires adjustment. You may agree with the newcomer to sit down on a quarterly basis to review the budget to assess whether expectations on both sides are appropriate. In particular, you may want to make an assessment once it is clear what kind of employment the newcomer will seek, or once he/she has found a job. As well, you will need to take into account immigrant loan repayments. If the newcomer is clearly lacking in budgeting skills, he or she may want to take advantage of counselling services through local volunteer groups, settlement agencies, or from someone in your group. When discussing financial issues, newcomers will need to know

4.1 Enabling Settlement: The First Year

4.2 After the First Year

about taxes. Provide information about Canada’s tax system, the law, and how tax deductions are handled by employers. In budget planning, explain that salary earned will not be equal to take-home pay.

4.1.2 Cultural Adjustment

Most people are familiar with the term “culture shock.” As the term suggests, it refers to the period of disorientation experienced when encountering a new culture, and **is a normal part of cultural adjustment**. While culture shock is extremely painful, it should not be viewed negatively, for the end result is profound learning. **Cultural adjustment** is typified by the stages shown below. As you read about them, keep in mind that the pace at which people are able to progress through the stages will be individual; as well, family members may progress at quite different rates. This process may last three to five years. You can provide specific supports at each stage.

STAGE	CHARACTERIZED BY:	SUPPORT TO PROVIDE DURING THIS STAGE
<p>Honeymoon Stage</p>	<p>An initial reaction of enthusiasm, fascination, admiration, and cordial, friendly, superficial relationships with hosts. (Note: Refugees have not come to Canada by choice, and may be less enthusiastic.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide orientation and information. • Focus on the practical aspects of becoming competent in the new situation (e.g. getting around, looking for a job, language training).
<p>Challenge and Crisis</p>	<p>Differences in language, concepts, values, and symbols lead to feelings of inadequacy, frustration, anxiety, and anger. During this time, studies show that most people find the most difficult situations to be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • making friends your own age • dealing with someone who is angry • approaching others • appearing in front of an audience • getting to know people in-depth and intimately • understanding jokes, humour, sarcasm • dealing with people staring at you • being with people that you don’t know very well • complaining in public/dealing with unsatisfactory service 	<p>Give empathy, friendship, and support; accept that anger and frustration are normal and legitimate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share information about culture shock. • Help newcomer to see his/her competencies. • Provide opportunities for the newcomer to talk about his/her culture. • Provide opportunities to learn together about cross-cultural communications. • Talk about the most difficult situations. Share how these things are dealt with in both cultures. • Share jokes from your different cultures; talk about why they translate (or not). • Set up a fun time for role plays or role reversals (see Appendix). • If the newcomer is suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder or other psychological problems, help them to find appropriate help.

STAGE	CHARACTERIZED BY:	SUPPORT TO PROVIDE DURING THIS STAGE
Recovery	<p>The crisis is resolved as the person learns the language and culture of the host country. Life factors known to reduce stress and aid recovery include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • time • having a sense of purpose • being socially or politically involved • having opportunities (esp. re: career) • maturity • having strong social support • having structure in one's life • equal or greater status than before 	<p>You will notice that in a number of these areas, neither you nor the newcomer has any control. In fact, in some areas such as “status” the newcomer is very likely to be worse off than before. However, there are things you can do to enhance a sense of purpose, belonging, and structure. During this time:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the newcomer to find employment and to map out an employment strategy that will lead to a fulfilling job. • Help the newcomer to see the positive contribution he/she is making to your community. • As the newcomer's English abilities increase, set aside more times for storytelling—this is both an opportunity for the newcomer to teach you about his/her situation, and a way for him/her to structure/make sense of events.
Adjustment	<p>The newcomer begins to work in and enjoy the new culture, though there may be some instances of anxiety and strain.</p>	<p>Continue to provide friendship and support; and continue to expect to learn as you walk alongside the newcomer.¹⁰</p>

4.1.3 Understand Family Issues

Whenever there is a big change in a family's life, there is stress on the family system. There are some circumstances that are especially difficult for newcomers. For example, if a family has young children and the mother stays at home rather than go to English classes, she may soon find herself feeling alone, stranded, friendless, and depressed, as she watches her other family members develop competency and relationships in Canada. She may begin to find it very difficult to leave the house at all. Winter weather may complicate transportation options, increasing a sense of isolation. Or, her culture may prevent her from making friends outside the home, especially if gatherings and relationships tend to be mixed male/female. There may be other issues related to gender roles in a new context, such as women being employed in

¹⁰ For more information on culture shock and cultural adjustment, see Sheila Ramsay, “Creating a Context: Methodology in Intercultural Teaching and Training,” *Experimental Activities for Intercultural Learning*, vol. 1, ed. H. Ned Seele, (Yarmouth, Maine: Intercultural Press, 1996). See also Furnham and Bochner, *Culture Shock: Psychological Reactions to Unfamiliar Environments* (Methuen, 1985).

menial jobs, while men look for “good” jobs (which, at times, can lead to men not being employed at all); or the opposite: jobs available to women that are not traditionally acceptable in the newcomers’ home cultures. Dealing with these new situations can be very confusing and distressing.

Teenagers tend to adjust less well than other family members (at least initially), and face difficulties with fitting in, learning new patterns of relating to adults, authorities, and parents, and struggling with different sets of values. Young children tend to adapt rapidly, but this in itself may cause disruption. They may begin to be relied upon to interpret for their parents, even taking on jobs such as shopping, filling out application forms, and so on—which is more responsibility than they can handle. This kind of reversal of child/parent roles is at best inappropriate and can be damaging. Keep your eyes open for signs of family stress.¹¹

Whenever there is family stress, the possibility exists that there may be abuse in the family. It is important that newcomers are helped to understand Canadian definitions of child and spousal abuse, and the legal implications. What may be considered “discipline” in one context, might be considered “abuse” in Canada. It may seem unfair to newcomers to be judged by the standards of another culture; but it is only fair to newcomers that they know that they will be held legally responsible for their actions. As well, it is important that you and the newcomers are aware of where to go for help. Find out whether there is a trauma counselling centre, a community centre, a social services agency, or a women’s shelter in your community to which you can turn for help in a crisis.

What Can You Do?

- Recognize that you cannot “fix” their situation; the newcomers will be in a state of flux for a long time, and will face cultural and social challenges for the rest of their lives. Accept that the struggle is normal with the aim of being supportive throughout the year.
- Talk about how family life differs in Canada from the newcomer’s country.
- Help the family to see their areas of competency. Help them to see how much they are achieving in all their adjustments to their new situation.
- Be especially supportive of women experiencing isolation. Try to help them develop relationships outside the home and, especially, to learn English. If necessary, provide extra English tutoring in the home.
- If a family situation is severe, find out about professional counselling. Some counselling facilities now provide specialized cross-cultural counselling.

4.1.4 Non-Accompanying Family Members

If the sponsored family includes a spouse or children who are missing or were not able to travel, the family’s first focus is likely to be on contacting these family members. Provided they were named on the refugee’s application, they will be covered by the “one year window” and become part of your sponsorship obligation. The family separation may delay the newcomers’ willingness to focus on their own settlement and may lead to counselling and support needs. The Red Cross offers a tracing and reunion service that might be of assistance.

¹¹ For more information on stresses that affect different family members, see J. Krupinski, “Psychological Maladaptation in Ethnic Concentrations in Victoria, Australia,” *Cultures in Collision*, ed., I. Pilowsky (Adelaide: Australian National Association of Mental Health, 1975). See also Adrian Furnham and Stephen Bochner, *Culture Shock: Psychological Reactions to Unfamiliar Environments* (Methuen, 1985).

4.1.5 Post-Traumatic Stress, Torture, and Healing

Because of the terrible situations that create refugees, newcomers are likely to have experienced traumatic situations of deprivation and violence. They may even have survived torture. Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a condition that affects people who “have been exposed to violent events such as rape, domestic violence, child abuse, war, accidents, natural disasters, and political torture.” It can result in ongoing symptoms, such as depression, flashbacks, nightmares, experiences of overwhelming emotions of grief and fear, numbness, avoidance of intimacy, irritability, trouble concentrating and remembering, dizziness, nausea, and panic attacks, to name just a few.¹²

Torture is one kind of event that can lead to PTSD. The dictionary defines torture as “the act of inflicting severe pain.”¹³ We generally use the term to refer to government-sanctioned violence against individuals. Torture affects every part of the person and inflicts deep psychological, emotional, and spiritual wounds, in addition to physical injuries. The Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture (CCVT) notes that, “While torture may be used to obtain information or signed confessions, this is not its primary purpose. Torture is directed towards instilling and reinforcing a sense of powerlessness and terror in victims and the societies in which they live. It is a process which generates a situation designed to destroy the physical and psychological capabilities of survivors to function as viable individuals.” As a supporter of someone who has survived torture, this is important for you to know. Gaining a sense of control over one’s own life is critical to a survivor. Therefore, your support should never “take over” the newcomer’s life; it must always result in empowerment.

While all sufferers of PTSD may experience the symptoms noted above, victims of torture face additional repercussions. They may be unwilling to disclose information about their experiences, and may feel suspicious, frightened, or anxious to forget about what has happened. These feelings may discourage them from seeking the help they need. In addition, what to most people are everyday situations may throw them into a state of terror. They may be adversely affected by officials in uniform, signing forms, visiting doctors’ offices, being admitted to hospitals, or even encountering staff of government agencies. (For further information, see the Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture website at: www.icomm.ca/ccvt.)

Many treatment methods are used to aid recovery from PTSD and torture; whatever treatment is recommended, they all have in common an emphasis on restoring a sense of control and safety.

Important Things to Be Aware of and Act on

- Post-traumatic stress disorder must be dealt with by trained professionals.
- Love and support are critical for healing to take place. Your group has the opportunity to play a very important role.
- Each person’s healing proceeds at its own pace. You have no way of knowing how long it may take for an individual to heal, nor can you judge whether the individual has made “enough” progress. Your role is to support and encourage, not to judge.
- Maintain appropriate boundaries. Empathy is appropriate, but taking on the emotions as if they were your own, is not. Only the individual can heal him/herself—you cannot heal for him/her. There is a delicate balance here, which you will need to examine often. If you are providing support for someone in therapy, it may be appropriate at some point to speak with the therapist to find out how to be most supportive, and how to maintain appropriate boundaries.

¹² American Psychological Association (APA) website, at www.psych.org.

¹³ Random House Dictionary

- Healing is hard work. Don't be surprised if the individual seems exhausted, distant, or overwhelmed.
- If you are providing support, it is appropriate to find ways to celebrate together the individual's progress, and acknowledge his/her strengths and successes.

4.1.6 Support Newcomers to Get the Education They Need

Once some progress has been made in learning English, the newcomer may want to begin planning for other aspects of his/her education and skills development. Your previous research on skills assessment and training courses will show what some of the many options are (Section 3.1.1).

4.1.7 Assist Newcomers to Find Employment

Finding employment can be one of the most stressful events in a newcomer's life. We all know how difficult job hunting—and the inevitable rejections—can be. In addition, however, many refugees are highly skilled and trained and may even have gained a high status in their own country. In Canada, they are suddenly at the bottom of the ladder, and their qualifications may not even be usable. They may be facing years of re-training, additional education, or having to choose a completely different career. They may need to settle for a menial and low-paying job at first. Because of their struggles to learn a new culture and language, they are aware that they may sometimes come across (and be treated) as childlike, even though they are confident and competent in their own environment. All these things are very, very hard on self-esteem. Newcomers will need all the support, sensitivity, and encouragement one can provide during their job search. You can help by drawing on all your group's appropriate contacts to find job openings.

4.2 After the First Year

From the beginning, you and the newcomers need to prepare for the long-term. Ask the question: "What will things look like when this sponsorship period is over?" Below are some issues you may want to consider.

4.2.1 Help Newcomers Work toward Self-Sufficiency

A famous Chinese poem reads:

Go to the people. Live with the people. Learn from them, Love them.
 Start with what they know. Build on what they have.
 But with the best leaders, when the work is done,
 The people all say, "We have done it ourselves."

Lao Tsu (China) 700 B.C.

This poem describes beautifully the process of helping, with an eye towards independence. The core of self-sufficiency is that people are able to make their own plans and decisions in order to attain their own dreams. When a group sponsors a refugee, this can be a delicate balance to maintain. Out of a desire to help, groups may "do for" rather than "do with" a newcomer, reducing his or her learning opportunities—and eventually, his or her chances to survive independently in Canada. Independence does not imply that the refugee will sever ties with your group (though this possibility must also be allowed for). You may remain life-long friends, but your help should always be given with the long-range goal of self-sufficiency.

4.2.2 Help Newcomers Link into a Social Network

One important way for newcomers to increase their chances for self-sufficiency is to link into a secure and supportive social network. This network may include your group, but it may not. Network-building takes time, and a year is a short time in which to develop relationships with a wide variety of people. Yet, if

approached intentionally, it can be achieved. In preparing for the newcomer's arrival, you have already greatly expanded your network of contacts through talking to people about employment options, language courses, settlement services, cultural awareness, and so on. Later, when the newcomer arrives, as you pass on this knowledge by "learning through doing," you also pass on much of this network. At the same time, the newcomer has been busy developing his/her own set of relationships and contacts. Remember also that sponsored refugees cannot be required to join your organization, or participate in future sponsorships.

4.2.3 Consider an Advocacy Role

An advocate can be defined as "a person who pleads for or on behalf of another." Most advocacy groups see themselves in this role as "a voice" for a cause. They view this activity as going hand-in-hand with educating the public and, increasingly, they see themselves as partners with the groups on whose behalf they advocate.

Advocacy is a voice for change. This can be done in many, many ways, such as showing films, talking with school children, raising funds for a cause, bringing speakers to community events, and so on.

Refugee issues are certainly worthy of advocacy. As you work through the sponsorship process, you will become more and more aware of this. This may prompt you to join a formal refugee advocacy group, or you may concentrate on education and awareness-raising within your community. Both are legitimate responses and, indeed, go hand in hand.

The Canadian Council for Refugees (CCR) is one organization you will want to be aware of. CCR's mission statement claims that it, "is a non-profit umbrella organization committed to the rights and protection of refugees in Canada and around the world, and to the settlement of refugees and immigrants in Canada."¹⁴ CCR provides networking and information exchange amongst groups working with refugees, and conducts research and policy analysis. (For more information on CCR see: www.web.net/~ccr/ or contact the office at 6839 Drolet #302 Montréal, Québec, H2S 2T1 Phone: 514-277-7223; e-mail: ccr@web.net.)

KAIROS is a Canadian ecumenical social justice organization, formed in July 2001. The refugee and migration program will follow up from the work of the former Inter-Church Committee for Refugees (ICCR). The focus is public education on refugee and migration issues and national and international monitoring and advocacy. (For more information, contact the Educator/ Policy Advocate, Refugees and Migration Program, KAIROS, 129 St. Clair Ave. W. Toronto, ON M4V 1N5, tel: 416-463-5312, or consult the KAIROS website at: www.kairoscanada.org.)

Amnesty International is another well-known group, working to prevent the violation of people's human rights worldwide. (See: www.amnesty.ca/ or contact the office at AI Canada (English Speaking), 214 Montreal Rd., 4th Floor, Ottawa, ON K1L 1A4, tel: 613-744-7667 or 1-800-AMNESTY.)

¹⁴ Canadian Council of Refugees (CCR) website at www.web.net/~ccr/.

CHAPTER 5

EVALUATING YOUR ACHIEVEMENTS

5.1 What is Evaluation? Why Evaluate?

5.1 What is Evaluation? Why Evaluate?

Evaluation—that means being tested, right? Not really. Evaluation is determining the worth or significance of something through careful appraisal and study. That doesn't imply pointing out everything that went wrong. Instead, evaluations are most successful if we can find out what worked best and build on that for the future.

Thus, evaluation can be defined most simply as: "Looking back with a critical eye, in order to move forward with your best foot!"

If your group thinks it may sponsor other refugees at some point, evaluation will be important to you.

5.2 How to Evaluate

5.2 How to Evaluate

The most basic evaluation method is simply to ask questions. Most evaluations ask questions from two angles: what were the results? how were these results achieved (process)? Examples of the questions you might ask in these two areas are:

Results

- What did we set out to achieve?
- Did we achieve it?
- Did we achieve other things also?
- How did these results affect everyone involved?

Process

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

Another important part of evaluating is to make sure you give everyone who participated a chance to give their opinion. Situations look different to different people, so only by including the views of as many as possible can you get a full picture.

5.4 Celebrate!

5.3 What to Do with the Results

You have a “picture,” now what? This is the time you’ll want to ask “the big picture” questions:

- What does this all mean?
- What are the life lessons we learned?

You may want to write up your results, and, if appropriate, some stories to illustrate them, so they can be shared amongst your group, with other sponsoring groups, and with the United Church Refugee Program. This kind of record can be very useful if, at some time in the future, you decide to sponsor again. You will not only have reminders about some of the significant things you learned, but also reading about your experience will take you back to those earlier memories. Whenever you evaluate your experience, it will help you to see how rich it has been, and will equip you better for the future.

5.4 Celebrate!

To conclude your evaluation and bring closure to the entire year, plan a celebration to honour your achievements. A dance, a special meal together, a street party, a multicultural potluck, or a games night can be fun and might easily include, if desired, other partners and community members who came alongside the newcomer and your group. Mark the anniversary of the newcomers’ arrival. It’s time to celebrate the past year! It’s time to look forward to the future possibilities!

APPENDIX

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

6.1 Interim Federal Health Program (IFH)

6.2 Cross-Cultural Awareness

6.3 Group Listening and Communication Skills

6.4 Group Dynamics

6.5 Rights of Newcomers

6.6 CIC Coding for Resettlement Categories

6.7 Acronyms

6.1 Interim Federal Health Program (IFH)

Register newcomers for IFH at your local CIC. Privately sponsored refugees are eligible under this program, but must apply. The guidelines are specific and must be followed exactly.

The IFH program is not meant to replace provincial health plans, nor does it provide the same extent of coverage. Privately sponsored refugees are eligible for full benefits under the IFH program until coverage under their provincial health plan begins. Depending on the province of destination, the waiting period for provincial health care coverage can be as much as 90 days after the refugee has arrived in the province. Once provincial coverage has started, refugees are eligible for partial benefits under the IFH program up to 12 months from the time of arrival in the county.

Services that Are Covered

- *Essential services only* for the treatment and prevention of serious medical and dental conditions (see “Dental Care Regulations” below)
- Contraception, prenatal, and obstetrical care
- *Essential medications only* and they must be Compendium of Pharmaceutical Specialties (CPS) prescription drugs (lowest cost alternatives, listed on provincial drug formularies, or life-supporting drugs such as insulin or nitroglycerine)

Provincial health care plan fees and the fee codes (where applicable) must be supplied. Invoices must be submitted within six months of service.

Services Covered Only with Prior Approval

Requests for prior approval must be submitted by mail or fax to:
Manager, Interim Federal Health Program
Citizenship and Immigration Canada
365 Laurier Avenue West, 14th floor
Ottawa, ON K1A 1L1
Fax: 1-800-362-7456

- Allergy testing/desensitization
- Cosmetic plastic surgery under special circumstances (e.g. severe disfigurement)
- Diagnostic services (surgical, laboratory, or X-ray) when no significant medical short-term complications are foreseen

- Elective surgery (e.g. hernia repair, cholecystectomy, rhinoplasty, tympanoplasty)
- Essential sports medicine and physiotherapy
- Eyewear (if serious condition is present); prior approval and visual acuities needed for all patients
- General assessments, counselling, psychotherapy
- High-cost medications (e.g. Imitrex, Accutane, Interferon, and Acyclovir)
- High-cost procedures (e.g. transplants, lithotripsy)
- Ongoing psychiatric therapy (after initial consultation)
- Prosthetic or mechanical devices, including hearing devices and artificial eyes

Invoices and photocopies of original identity/IFH eligibility documents to be mailed by health-care providers only to:

FAS Benefit Administrators Ltd.

9707-110th Street, 9th Floor, Edmonton, AB T5K 3T4

Information for health professionals only: 1-800-770-2998.

Services Not Covered by the Interim Federal Health Program

No routine medical examinations (e.g. yearly physicals, eye examinations, pre-employment examinations) are covered by IFH.

- Service or medication provided solely at the patient's request
- Chiropractic services and acupuncture
- Infertility work-up and treatment
- Naturopathy or any other "alternative" medicine
- Non-emergency ambulance service/transportation
- Non-emergency dental services (see below)
- Over-the-counter medications (even if prescribed by a doctor)

Dental Care Regulations

- Only **emergency** dental services are covered by IFH. (Emergency services are defined as urgent procedures needed to alleviate pain, active infection, hemorrhage, or the results of oral trauma.)
- *Maximum* coverage during the patient's eligibility period is \$400 (the eligibility period must be supported by an IFH eligibility document bearing a photograph of the patient). A maximum of two teeth may be treated per visit.

This Funding Is Intended to Cover Only

- Emergency examinations (no more frequent than once every three months)
- Radiographs (no more than two intra-oral films per visit)
- Permanent fillings (composite, amalgam, and stainless steel crowns only)
- Pulpal treatments (only opening and drainage on permanent teeth; only pulpotomies on primary teeth)
- Periodontal services (limited only to emergency treatment of acute oral / gingival infections e.g. drainage of periodontal abscesses)
- Extractions (uncomplicated tooth removal is allowed; complex extractions require pre-treatment radiograph submission and pre-authorization)
- Drug prescriptions (only those needed to treat the emergency condition)
- Flipper partial dentures (wire-reinforced if necessary) to replace anterior teeth and any strategic posterior teeth that happen to be missing at the same time in the same arch (please note that cast partial dentures will not be routinely covered)

6.2 Cross-Cultural Awareness

The United Church Refugee Program can provide two additional training modules (developed by the Refugee Sponsorship Training Program) to help sponsoring groups: **Cross-Cultural Awareness** and **Conflict Management and Resolution**.

What is culture? An important aspect of preparation is developing cultural awareness. Culture has been called “the story of reality” that individuals and groups value and accept as a guide for organizing their lives.¹⁵ This is a helpful way to think about culture, for although there are physical manifestations of it (such as the way people dress), we know that this, in itself, is not “culture.” Culture is subjective: each group has a different “story of reality.”

Through this commonly held story, people create meaning in their lives, upon which are built values, and in turn, behaviours. Culture runs as deep as anything can in human life. It is very difficult to understand even our own culture; indeed, we are not even aware of it most of the time. Therefore, developing awareness of someone else’s culture may seem daunting. As you build your awareness about the newcomers’ culture, you will begin to gain some understanding of the challenges they will face upon arrival in Canada.

Everyone is capable of learning about and functioning in other cultures. The key is building awareness, learning some core concepts, and practising this knowledge in real-life situations. One important concept is “ethnocentricity.” We are ethnocentric when we judge peoples’ actions by our cultural criteria, rather than by their own. This is a very natural and normal thing to do; however, to communicate and work with someone from another culture, it’s not helpful. Just being aware of one’s own tendency to be ethnocentric can be a great help. You can learn to question why something happened, rather than react to a situation and be angry or upset.

Another important concept is that of cross-cultural competence. If you have ever had the chance to work with people from another culture, you will be aware of how impossible it would be for you to become truly “one of them.” And, indeed, it would not be appropriate or healthy for you to abandon your own culture. The important thing is that you are able to function competently with people of that culture when you’re with them. Think about this from the newcomers’ point of view: they want to become Canadian, but certainly not to abandon their own heritage. Instead, they strive to be sensitive and open, to learn, and to function well. This is the idea of cross-cultural competence. Both you and the newcomers will be learning and making adjustments and developing cross-cultural competence. Although the biggest adjustment and greatest amount of work will be on the part of the newcomers, it’s helpful and important to remember that cultural adjustment is never a one-way street.

There are many ways to develop cultural awareness. Most of us are fortunate to live in culturally rich and diverse places that offer a wide variety of opportunities for learning. Keep in mind that, although reading

¹⁵ Ramsay in *Experiential Activities for Intercultural Learning*.

about other cultures is good, any activity that involves you in relationships with people from other cultures will be vastly richer. Thus, for example, hosting a Hispanic dinner to which members of the Latin American community are invited will be a much more fruitful experience than going to a Mexican restaurant. Keep the culture of the newcomer you have sponsored in mind as you review these ideas for building your cultural awareness:

- Read a refugee's story
- Contact a local ethno-cultural group for information and education
- Attend local music and cultural events, films
- Conduct research
- Read about culture shock
- Host a multicultural dinner or potluck
- Read ethno-cultural magazines
- Host a display of cultural art or provide a venue for artisans to show off their work
- Host dances, drama, and musical events
- Contact your local multicultural centre
- Do volunteer work in an ethno-cultural community
- Get involved in advocacy issues with ethno-cultural groups
- Invite ESL teachers or students, or members of multicultural societies to talk to your group
- Meet with other sponsoring groups or newcomers to hear their stories
- Ask your Sponsorship Agreement Holder contact for information on other resources
- View films and videos about the refugee experience
- Find information on the World Wide Web (but note the sources, and note that not all information on the Web is reliable!)
- Take a cross-cultural introductory course at your local college or community adult education organization
- Take a cooking course
- Set up a chat room with people of like interest

These are only a few suggestions; you will no doubt come up with more. In all these activities, remember that the more open-minded you can be asking respectful questions, the more you will learn. The more relationships you develop, the more this learning will become part of your life.

6.2.1 Cross-Cultural Resources and Activities

Beyond the RSTP training modules, there are a variety of simulations, games, resources, and activities that teach cross-cultural awareness. A few (along with contact information) are described below.

Barnga

Barnga, though a simple card game, simulates the experience of encountering people from other cultures and discovering that they are operating under different "rules." Though faced with ambiguity and barriers to communication, one must understand and reconcile the differences in order to function effectively in a cross-cultural group. For nine or more players; for 45 to 90 minutes. Participant instructions are provided in English, French, and Spanish. Contact: International and Community Development Resources Inc., Suite 203, 10138-81 Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta T6E 1X1, Canada. Tel: 780-437-8013. Fax: 780-439-6879. www.icdr.com.

BaFá BaFá

“BaFá BaFá begins with an introduction describing what happens in the simulation. The group is then divided into two cultures: Alpha and Beta. In separate rooms, each group learns the rules specific to its own culture. Alpha is an in-group/out-group oriented, touching culture, and Beta is a foreign-language-speaking, task-oriented culture. Once participants learn and have practised the rules of their own culture, observers and visitors are exchanged. After each exchange, participants return and try to describe their experiences in observing and interacting with the other culture. When everyone has had the opportunity to visit the other culture, the simulation is ended. Participants from the two cultures are brought back together to discuss and analyze the experience.”¹⁶ The resources required to run the simulation are available from: Simulation Training Systems, P.O. Box 910, Del Mar, CA, USA 92014, 619-755-0272 or 1-800-942-2900.

The Tag Game

“This is a short, highly participatory activity. It can be used as an icebreaker or introductory exercise to encourage a group to focus on similarities and differences so they can be openly discussed. Participants wear tags of different shapes and colours and walk around silently observing each other. Then they are instructed to silently form groups. After at least four rounds of forming new groups, they trade their original tags for new, very unique tags. Again they observe, but do not talk, while they decide how to form groups during four more rounds. After the game, participants usually list obvious similarities and differences among people and eventually begin to identify deeper-seated, more intangible abstract similarities and differences. They also discuss the strong attachment people have to likeness rather than diversity. In-group/out-group issues can arise from this game and must be discussed. The game and debriefing can take less than one half hour.”¹⁷ The resources required to run the simulation are available from Simulation Training Systems, P.O. Box 910, Del Mar, CA 92014, 619-755-0272 or 1-800-942-2900.

The Squiggle Game

On a flip chart page, draw a large squiggle. Ask people to take a couple of minutes to decide what it represents. “After a few minutes they begin to see—or think they can see—some emergent shape in the squiggle: a cow, a skyline, a ship in a storm. Once people have had a chance to say what they see, have them form groups of three or four, with the assignment of coming to consensus on what the squiggle really means. This process generates a lot of heated debate. People are quick to imagine that their interpretation of a random set of marks on paper is the right one; that they have seen reality and their colleagues are somehow lacking in the percipience with which they have been richly and unusually endowed.”

Discussion: No one answer is correct. Why do we defend our own point of view so heatedly? Once you saw the “cow” or the “ship,” describe the emotional attachment you felt to this interpretation. Discuss the functional purpose of interpreting “raw data” and defending one’s own interpretation. When is this useful? When is it not useful? How can we be aware that our “interpretation” is getting in the way of communication or relationships? What are some of the ways we can try to see someone else’s interpretation? What will we gain by doing so?¹⁸

¹⁶ R. Gary Shirts, “Beyond Ethnocentrism: Promoting Cross-Cultural Understanding with BaFá BaFá,” *Intercultural Sourcebook: Cross-Cultural Training Methods*, vol. 1, Sandra M. Fowler with Monica G. Mumford (Yarmouth, Maine: Intercultural Press, Inc., 1995) 95.

¹⁷ Dorothy A. Sisk, “Simulation Games as Training Tools,” *Intercultural Sourcebook*, 83–84.

¹⁸ Adapted from Charles Elliott, *Locating the Energy for Change: An Introduction to Appreciative Inquiry*, (Winnipeg: International Institute for Sustainable Development, 1999) 10–11.

6.3 Group Listening and Communication Skills

Communication involves both listening and speaking. Listening is especially important and is the vehicle for developing trust. One definition of listening is: Listening is paying attention with empathy and acceptance. In particular, two “small” steps can radically improve communications.

ON THE LISTENING SIDE	ON THE SPEAKING SIDE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check to see whether you have understood the other person. • In receiving the message, you may have heard something different than was intended by the speaker. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make “I” statements rather than “you” statements. • You cannot really know about others’ motivations, feelings, or assumptions—only your own.

GUIDELINES FOR GIVING AND RECEIVING FEEDBACK

1. Focus feedback on BEHAVIOUR rather than on the person.
2. Focus feedback on OBSERVATION rather than on inference.
3. Focus feedback on DESCRIPTION rather than on judgment.
4. Talk about MORE/LESS rather than either/or, good/bad.
5. Talk about SPECIFIC SITUATIONS rather than abstract situations.
6. Focus on SHARING IDEAS AND INFORMATION rather than giving advice.
7. Focus on EXPLORING ALTERNATIVES rather than providing answers/solutions.
8. Focus on WHAT IS SAID rather than on why it is said.¹⁹

6.4 Group Dynamics

Developing Consensus

The most important part of developing consensus is having enough discussion—effective discussion—before making a decision. In general, any method that keeps the discussion on topic is helpful in building consensus. If your group is stuck over a contentious issue, it may be worth bringing in an outside person to facilitate your discussion—someone with facilitation and/or conflict resolution training.

Participation

After all the work your group will do to prepare for the arrival of the refugee, you may (whether consciously or not) begin to feel that you “own” the process. Of course, your support is very important, but the process “belongs” to the newcomer. Your role is that of an enabler—and a good enabler helps people to imagine, create, and live out their own dreams. Another way of looking at this is in terms of the level of participation. One framework divides participation into five different levels, beginning at the bottom with “virtually no participation” and working all the way up to the top with “full participation.”

¹⁹ Adapted from “Aids for Giving and Receiving Feedback” (Author Unknown), *Training Know-How for Cross-Cultural and Diversity Trainers*, Robert Kohls with Herbert L. Brussow (Duncanville, Texas: Adult Learning Systems, Inc., 1995) 167–169.

Ideally, you want all your group work to take place at the top level of participation:

LEVEL 5: Full participation: the person decides and lives out his/her own vision for the future

LEVEL 4: The person participates in planning and implementing activities

LEVEL 3: Minimal level of participation: the person involved is consulted

LEVEL 2: The person acts on activities prescribed by others

LEVEL 1: Virtually no participation²⁰

Having full participation is important for a number of reasons. You know from your own experience that it is only when you are able to make your own decisions that you feel empowered by what you do. Having others make decisions for you is depressing and de-energizing. Also, the chances of being able to carry on an activity (e.g. job hunting) after support has been withdrawn is very low, unless participation by the newcomer him/herself is very high—Level 5, or Level 4, at the very least.

Appropriate Boundaries

Ensuring that there is an appropriate level of participation by the sponsoring group and by the newcomer goes a long way to ensuring that appropriate boundaries are observed. Boundary issues are complicated by the cross-cultural nature of the interaction; but it still holds true that newcomers need to be in charge of their own lives. Through a desire to help, sponsoring groups can easily take on more than they should. Or, they may want to look into a newcomer's personal life more than they should, or ask inappropriately personal questions.

It Is Helpful To Ask:

- Am I “doing for” or “doing with”?
- Will this activity help the newcomer to become more independent?
- Who “wants” this to be done?
- What am I getting out of it?
- How does this make me feel? Do I have any clues about how the newcomer feels?

Honest answers to questions like these will help to clarify whether there are appropriate boundaries.

6.5 Rights of Newcomers

Charter Rights

Refugees accepted for private sponsorship enter Canada as Landed Residents. Charter Rights apply immediately. Newcomers have most of the social, economic, and cultural rights of citizens. They are eligible to apply for citizenship after three years of residency in Canada.

Right of Mobility

Right of mobility is the right to live anywhere, but not the right to be supported anywhere. If the newcomers decide to move away from the sponsorship community, the sponsor may continue to support them, but is not obligated to do so.

²⁰ Adapted from “Stages in Participating,” drawing by Nancy Bergau for the Sulawesi Rural Development Project.

Right to Health Protection

The Interim Federal Health Program covers sponsored newcomers during the residency period required for coverage under provincial health plans. Once provincial health coverage has started, refugees are eligible for partial benefits under the IFH Program for up to 12 months from the time of arrival in Canada.

Right to a Certain Standard of Living

Sponsored refugees do not have the right to social assistance during their first year in Canada. This is the responsibility of the sponsor. If a sponsored newcomer draws upon social assistance during the period of sponsorship, the sponsor must repay the full amount of benefits to the appropriate social assistance authority.

Right to Education

Sponsored newcomers are entitled to Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC). If government sponsored English-as-a-second language training is not available in the community, the sponsor must ensure that the sponsored person has access to basic language training.

Children of sponsored refugees have a right to public education.

Right to Child Tax Benefits

Sponsored refugees who are parents of school-age children are eligible for Child Tax Benefits.

6.6 Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC)

Coding for Resettlement Categories

CONVENTION REFUGEE ABROAD CLASS

CR1	Convention refugee abroad, government-assisted required for up to 12 months
CR3*	Convention refugee abroad, sponsored by a group of five or corporation for up to 12 months
CR4	Convention refugee abroad, self-supporting, government assistance not required
CR5	Convention refugee abroad, special needs case selected under Joint Assistance Sponsorship
CRC	Convention refugee abroad, with a community sponsorship
CRS	Convention refugee abroad, sponsored by a Sponsorship Agreement Holder (SAH), such as the United Church
CRG	Convention refugee abroad, sponsored by a group of five
CRX*	Convention refugee abroad, sponsored by a group or corporation for 12 to 24 months

SOURCE COUNTRY CLASS (Resettlement-Source)

RS1	Source country, government-assistance required for up to 12 months
RS3*	Source country, sponsored by a group of five or corporation for up to 12 months
RS4	Source country, self-supporting, government assistance not required
RS5	Source country, special needs case selected under Joint Assistance Sponsorship
RSC	Source country, with a community sponsorship
RSS	Source country, sponsored by an SAH, such as the United Church
RSG	Source country, sponsored by a group of five
RSX*	Source country, sponsored by a group or corporation for 12 to 24 months

COUNTRY OF ASYLUM CLASS (Resettlement-Asylum)

RA3*	Country of asylum, privately-sponsored for up to 12 months
RA4	Country of asylum, self-supporting, government assistance not needed
RA5	Country of asylum, special needs case selected under Joint Assistance Sponsorship
RAC	Country of asylum, with a community sponsorship
RAS	Country of asylum, sponsored by an SAH
RAG	Country of asylum, sponsored by a group of five
RAX*	Country of asylum sponsored by a group of five or corporation for 12 to 24 months

Note: Codes marked with an asterisk (*) will be inactive under the Immigrant and Refugee Protection Act.

6.7 Acronyms

AWR	Women at Risk
CCR	Canadian Council for Refugees
CCLB	Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks
CCVT	Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture
CET	Centre for Education and Training
CG	Constituent Group
CIC	Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Canada Immigration Centre
CLAIT	Centre for Language Assessment, Instruction, and Training (a branch of CET)
CPC	Case Processing Centre (CPC-Vegreville, CPC-Mississauga, etc.)
CR	Convention Refugee
CSIS	Canadian Security Intelligence Service
CSQ	Certificat de sélection du Québec
DMP	Designated Medical Practitioner
ESL/FSL	English-as-a-second language/French-as-a-second language
G-5	Group of Five
GAR	Government-Assisted Refugee
HDC	Humanitarian Designated Class
IFH	Interim Federal Health (program)
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IRB	Immigration and Refugee Board
IRPA	Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (implemented June 28, 2002)
ISA	Immigrant Serving Agencies (also known as SPOs)
ISAP	Immigrant Settlement and Adaptation Program
JAS	Joint Assistance Sponsorship
LINC	Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada
NAT	Notification of Arrival Transmission
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PSR	Privately Sponsored Refugee
PTSD	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
RAP	Resettlement Assistance Program
ROLF	Right of Landing Fee
RSTP	Refugee Sponsorship Training Program
SAH	Sponsorship Agreement Holder
SPO	Service Provider Organization (also known as ISAs)

UN United Nations
UNHCR United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

FORMS

IMM0008 Application for Permanent Residence—generic
IMMI324 Joint Assistance Undertaking
IMM5355 Immigrant Loans (Assistance Loan)
IMM5413 Sponsorship Kit for Sponsorship Agreement Holders (SAHs) and Constituent Groups (CGs)
IMM5439 Undertaking/Application to Sponsor for SAHs and CGs
IMM5440 Settlement Plan—SAHs and CGs
IMM5441 Document Checklist—SAHs and CGs
IMM5492 Sponsor Assessment Form
IMM5493 Sponsorship Kit for Joint Assistance Sponsorship
IMM5496 Request for a Refugee Profile
IMM6000 Application Kit for Permanent Residence in Canada, includes IMM0008, Schedule 1, Schedule 2, and IMM5476 Authority to Release Information to Designated Individuals



The United Church of Canada