



# Post arrival requirements for private sponsorships

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## Post arrival requirements for private sponsorships

This guide sets out the supports that sponsors are expected to provide to resettled refugees once they arrive in Canada. It can be used as:

- a reference document for sponsoring groups
- a reference document for Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) staff to conduct assurance work
- a tool to make sure support given to privately sponsored refugees is consistent across the country

This new 2023 guide consolidates and clarifies existing requirements found in various forms and guides, including the financial FAQs for the PSR program. It includes more detail on requirements to address gaps in areas such as timelines for providing supports.

The *Post Arrival Requirements for Private Sponsorships* guide focuses on what and when support should be delivered. The Refugee Sponsorship Training Program (RSTP) develops and delivers tools and information to help sponsors follow the requirements.

These requirements are managed by IRCC. For any comments or required updates, please contact us at [IRCC.RASOPSR-PPPROSRA.IRCC@cic.gc.ca](mailto:IRCC.RASOPSR-PPPROSRA.IRCC@cic.gc.ca).

### 1. Introduction

Sponsors play a key role in supporting privately sponsored refugees after they arrive. Sponsorship Agreement Holders (SAHs), along with their Constituent Groups (CGs) and co-sponsors, Groups of Five and Community Sponsors are all accountable to IRCC for the delivery and quality of the settlement and financial support they provide to the sponsored refugees.

In their sponsorship applications, sponsors agree to provide post-arrival financial and non-financial (i.e., settlement) supports as outlined in the sponsorship undertaking and related settlement plan. These are requirements under paragraph 153(1)(b) of the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations* (IRPR). SAHs also make commitments in the sponsorship agreement.

This guide provides more detail on the post arrival supports sponsors must provide to sponsored refugees, as outlined in:

- the sponsorship undertaking
- the settlement plan, and
- the sponsorship agreement.

All financial and settlement needs must be provided for as detailed in this guide.

Sponsors can get help via the Refugee Sponsorship Training Program (RSTP), an organization with national and regional staff that provide information, training, and support to refugee sponsors. You can find [contact information on their website](#).

RSTP provides orientation and guidance on settlement issues through:

- in-person and virtual workshops



- webinars
- e-learning courses
- an online sponsorship calculator [Minimum Financial Support Calculator \(rstp.ca\)](https://rstp.ca)
- settlement fact sheets and resources [on their website](#)

RSTP staff help sponsors:

- complete settlement forms
- plan for sponsoring
- understand post-arrival financial and settlement requirements
- by matching sponsored refugees with trained settlement workers

## 2. Settlement support requirements (non-financial)

### 2.1 Providing settlement support

#### a) Types of settlement assistance and support

Sponsoring groups are responsible for making sure the basic settlement needs of sponsored refugees are met when they arrive in Canada. They must make sure sponsored refugees receive:

- immediate and essential orientation
- financial orientation
- connection to essential federal and provincial programs
- referral to settlement agencies and community services
- other needed support

#### b) When to provide settlement support

Sponsoring groups are required to provide certain settlement supports to the refugee(s) within or before identified time periods, subject to reasonable variances due to case-specific circumstances. This ensures that newcomers have timely support to meet their evolving settlement needs over the first year in Canada.

The settlement support time periods are:

1. ongoing for the sponsorship period
2. pre-Arrival (upon receipt of a Notification of Arrival Transmission)
3. arrival and first 3 weeks
4. month 1-3
5. month 4-6
6. month 7-9
7. month 10-12

The type of activities expected for each of the Settlement support time period will be further discussed in sub-section 2.2.

#### c) How long to provide settlement support



Length of settlement support

Type of sponsoring group	Must provide settlement support for
Private Sponsorship of Refugees (PSR) Program	12 months
Blended Visa Office-Referral (BVOR) Program	12 months
Joint Assistance Sponsorship (JAS) Program	24 months (In coordination with the Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP) Service Providing Organization initially supporting the resettled refugee. For more information see section 5.)
Rainbow Refugee Assistance Partnership (RRAP)	12 months (For more information see section 6.)

- Newcomers may need different levels of settlement support at different stages of their sponsorship period. Even when sponsors connect newcomers with settlement agencies, the sponsor will continue to give additional support as needed.
- In exceptional cases, where the migration office finds that the refugee(s) need more time to become self-sufficient, they may ask that a sponsorship be extended for up to 36 months. The sponsoring group agrees to the extension period before the refugee travels to Canada.

## 2.2 Settlement support activities

This section outlines the settlement supports found in the settlement plan by providing detail on what IRCC considers essential as well as providing some best practice guidance.

If you're not sure what IRCC may consider a reasonable variance due to your specific circumstances, you can contact the Resettlement Services Assurance Team (RSAT) at IRCC via [IRCC.PSRCasReview-RevuedecasPSR.IRCC@cic.gc.ca](mailto:IRCC.PSRCasReview-RevuedecasPSR.IRCC@cic.gc.ca) for assistance.

### a) Ongoing for the sponsorship period

- **Transportation:**
  - meet the sponsored refugees when they arrive
  - provide transportation to their temporary or permanent housing
  - explain their transit options
- **Language interpretation:**
  - ensure refugees have access to interpretation services, when and where needed.
  - sponsors can contact organizations or services (e.g. health services, school boards, banks, Service Canada, etc.) to ask if they can plan for interpretation services for clients
  - in the case of provincial/territorial health services (hospitals and other health institutions), certified medical interpreters should be provided by these organizations, though sponsors may provide their own (non-medical) interpreters as a second option, if needed.



- professional interpreters, rather than family members, should be used in situations of legal issues.
- **Childcare:** Make childcare arrangements if there are children who are not of school age and/or need child care (excluding child care already provided through IRCC-funded settlement services).
- **Update the refugees' contact information with IRCC:** Make sure the refugees' contact information with IRCC (address, email and phone number) is kept up to date. This will ensure IRCC can contact them as needed when mailing a Permanent Resident Card, following up on an immigration loan, etc. If a newcomer's information is incorrect or out of date, they may not receive important documents. Please ensure that **each person's** contact information has been updated separately according to their Unique Client Identifier (UCI) number under the file number (G#), if applicable.
  - **Call the IRCC Client Support Centre at 1-888-242-2100**
  - **To change your address:**  
You can change your address [online](#) or [through our Web form](#).
  - **To change your contact information (email or phone number):**  
Use this [Web form](#) to update your email or phone number

If sponsors or refugees need help following up on information updates, they can contact IRCC via [IRCC.PSRCaseReview-RevuedecasPSR.IRCC@cic.gc.ca](mailto:IRCC.PSRCaseReview-RevuedecasPSR.IRCC@cic.gc.ca) to register the change.

- **Record keeping:**
  - make sure paper and electronic refugee applications and files are stored properly to protect refugees' confidential information from people who are not party to the sponsorship
  - helps with future applications, such as for Canadian citizenship

Sponsors are encouraged to follow these best practices:

- ✓ Review and update the Settlement Plan (IMM 5440) as required.
- ✓ Ensure a contingency plan is in place for supporting non-accompanying family members who may become accompanying family members or who may come to Canada later under the [One Year Window of Opportunity provision](#).
- ✓ Provide transportation for exceptional circumstances (e.g., drive newcomers to medical appointments as needed)

**b) Pre-arrival (once you receive NAT):** We'll inform sponsors of a refugee's arrival details (e.g. date, time, location, special needs) when IRCC issues the Notification of Arrival Transition (NAT). During this time, sponsors prepare for a successful start to the sponsorship.

**How to get ready for a refugee's arrival:**

- Review NAT details and identify any special needs
- Confirm within the sponsoring group who will be at the airport to meet the newcomer(s)
- Arrange for interpreter to be there when the newcomer(s) arrive, if needed. See section 2.2 a) for more about interpretation.



- SAHs check in with any Constituent Groups(CGs) and/or co-sponsors to make sure they are ready for the arrival of the newcomer(s)
- Confirm that sponsors meet the residency requirements. As per paragraph 153(1)(a) of the IRPR, a sponsor must live or have representatives in the community the refugee is expected to settle in. To meet the requirements:

Sponsor type	How to meet residency requirements
Sponsorship Agreement Holders (SAH):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Either the SAH and/or Constituent Group (CG) is located in the community of settlement*, or</li> <li>○ At least two co-sponsors live in the community where the refugee(s) will live, or</li> <li>○ At least two appointed representatives live in the community.</li> </ul>
Community Sponsors (CS):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Either the CS is located in the community where the refugee(s) will live, or</li> <li>○ At least two co-sponsors live in the community where the refugee(s) will live, or</li> <li>○ At least two appointed representatives reside in the community.</li> </ul>
Groups of Five (G5):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ All five sponsors live in the community where the refugee(s) will live, or</li> <li>○ Their appointed representatives (for each group member that does not live in the community where the refugee(s) will live) reside in the community.</li> </ul>

*\* Community of settlement refers to the village, town or city and surrounding areas where the refugee is expected to settle. The term “community” is used because there may be situations where the sponsor does not live directly in the same village, town or city but could be considered to live in the same general community. In determining the community of settlement, the top consideration should be whether the sponsor can provide adequate, in-person support to the refugee, taking into account the distance between the sponsor and the refugee. (Source: [Terms and definitions related to refugee protection](#))*

- Confirm that housing is available on or before the date of arrival that is
  - healthy (e.g. clear of mould, clean)
  - safe and secure
  - temporary or permanent
  - suitable for size of family
- Provide food and basic necessities – either by taking the newcomer(s) shopping to select their own items, by purchasing items on the newcomer’s behalf, or a combination of both.
- Review what settlement agencies, refugee/ethno-cultural groups and community social support groups exist in the community and what services they offer
- Review what mental health or medical support is available in the community and make sure the providers are [registered](#) with the [Interim Federal Health Program \(IFHP\)](#)

Sponsors are encouraged to follow these best practices:

- ✓ Confirm that housing is in accordance with Statistics Canada [housing suitability for private households](#), based on the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation’s [National Occupancy Standards](#).



- ✓ Stock the temporary or permanent housing with food and basic necessities **before** the newcomers arrive.

**c) Arrival and first 3 weeks:** Sponsors receive and welcome refugees and help with immediate and essential needs.

**Arrival:**

- Meet newcomer(s) at the airport and provide transportation to temporary or permanent housing
- Assess any urgent health needs that need immediate attention

**Update contact information with IRCC:**

- Make sure the principal applicant (PA) and all other family members on the file number (G#) have been updated **separately**, if this applies. You should do this through the online web portal or by calling IRCC directly. If necessary, you may email IRCC via [IRCC.PSRCaseReview-RevuedecasPSR.IRCC@cic.gc.ca](mailto:IRCC.PSRCaseReview-RevuedecasPSR.IRCC@cic.gc.ca) for more help with address and other contact information updates. This will avoid any delays in receiving the PR card(s).

**Housing and immediate/essential orientation:**

- Make sure newcomer(s):
  - have housing that is
    - healthy (e.g. clear of mold, clean)
    - safe and secure
    - temporary or permanent
    - suitable for size of family unit
  - know how to use things in their house or apartment, such as
    - faucets
    - basic household equipment
    - fire alarms, etc.
  - have enough food, linens, kitchen equipment, furniture, and groceries and help the newcomer shop for any items not already provided (related financial requirements are found in sections 3.1 a) and b) and section 3.2 e),
  - have enough clothing, including for winter (i.e. winter jackets, gloves/mitts, boots, hat, snow pants and socks) and understand how to dress for Canadian weather and seasons (see clothing related financial requirements in section 3.1 (a) and b) and section 3.2 (e),
  - have and understand how to use a cell phone or landline and internet. See section 3.1(a) for communication allowance financial requirement,
  - know how to call emergency services and evacuate the building safely,
  - understand the role of their sponsor(s), know how to contact them (i.e. SAH, CG and/or co-sponsor, G5 or CS),
  - are familiar with the immediate area, and know the name, address and telephone number of their temporary or permanent housing,
  - take a tour of immediate neighbourhood and help the newcomer(s) learn
    - how to get around using the transit options available (e.g. public transportation, taxi, Uber, etc.)
    - where to purchase groceries and essential items.





## Essential Federal / Provincial Programs and Services:

- **Healthcare Coverage:** Help the newcomer(s) apply for their provincial/territorial health plan. Make sure the name, date of birth and date of issue are correct on the Interim Federal Health Plan (IFHP) Certificate of Eligibility provided by the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) when they arrive in Canada. Explain how both systems work together:
  - The IFHP provides basic coverage until the resettled refugee qualifies for provincial or territorial health insurance (usually within 3 months).
  - The IFHP also provides supplemental and prescription drug coverage for the sponsorship period, as long as no private or public health insurance coverage is available. For more details, see: [IFHP Determine your eligibility](#)
  - Supplemental and prescription drug coverage is provided for as long as the newcomer is under private sponsorship, with initial coverage being issued for the first 12 months, and extended for up to 12 more months for JAS cases, as long as the newcomer continues to receive income support provided by the government or private sponsorship for the same period.

Note: Only health care providers that are registered with IFHP are authorized to submit claims for reimbursement. **If a newcomer pays for services/products covered by the IFHP, the individual cannot be reimbursed.** Some items must be pre-approved, and others are not covered. For more details, see [IFHP website](#).

- **Social Insurance Number:** Help the newcomer(s) apply for Social Insurance Number (SIN). Explain that they need a SIN to work in Canada and apply for government programs and benefits.
- **Canada Child Benefit:** Help the newcomer(s) apply for Canada Child Benefit (CCB), if they're eligible. Explain that the CCB is a **tax-free** monthly payment made to eligible families to help them with the cost of raising children. To receive the CCB, a refugee family must have dependants under 18 years of age and submit an application to the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA).
  - Note: As needed, resettled refugees are eligible to apply for assistance loans under IRCC's Immigration Loans Program (ILP). Assistance loans may be granted for "returnable" deposits, such as an advance on the Canada Child Benefit. For more information see: [Immigration Loans Program](#).
- **GST/HST credit application:** this is included with CCB but if newcomer does not have children, this needs to be applied for separately.
- **School aged children:** Provide information on school registration and requirements, and help the newcomer(s) register any school-aged children in school (if applicable). If there is a settlement worker in the school to provide support to newcomer children, youth and their parents, introduce them.
- **Vaccinations:** Provide information on vaccinations and help the newcomer(s) make appointments as required and applicable, particularly for any school-age children to have vaccinations updated in order to register for school (if applicable)

## Community-Based Services:

- **Primary Healthcare:** Provide referrals and information on available primary health practitioners, for example
  - family doctor
  - community health centres
  - walk-in clinics
  - hospital, including children's hospital
  - emergency room



- mental health services
- specialists
- dentist
- pharmacists
- nurse practitioners (registered nurses who have additional education and experience and can diagnose patients, provide some forms of treatment, refer patients for testing, and prescribe some medications in provincial and territorial primary care settings)
- Help the newcomer(s) make appointments and ensure interpretation services are provided, if needed.
- **Counselling and mental healthcare services:**
  - Provide referrals and information on how to access counselling or other mental health services
  - Help the newcomer(s) make appointments and make sure they have interpretation services if needed

#### **Financial orientation – income support and financial responsibilities**

- Help the newcomer(s) open bank accounts
- Provide initial overview on banking and budgeting as required

**d) Month 1-3:** By this time the newcomer’s immediate needs have been addressed or supports are in process. Settlement supports continue to address early settlement needs, focusing on:

- more orientation
- linking them to settlement and other agencies
- help finding permanent housing

#### **Immediate and essential orientation**

- Give orientation session(s) with newcomer(s) and all sponsorship parties, ideally before the end of the first month. You should cover:
  - Rights and responsibilities as sponsors as set out in the undertaking and settlement plan
  - What is covered under IFHP (including counselling and mental health support)
  - Life in the community including:
    - settlement services
    - recreation
    - culture
    - places of worship
    - shopping (e.g. where to find clothing and household goods they’re familiar with)
- **Housing**
  - Explain types of rental housing, provincial tenancy legislation, their rights and responsibilities as a tenant, including the purpose of a lease and understanding it before they sign.
  - Help them find healthy (e.g. clear of mold, clean), safe and secure permanent housing suitable for size of family unit, if not yet done and applies to them (e.g. some newcomers may choose to live with family/friends for an extended period of time).
  - Help the newcomer move into the permanent housing (movers, furniture, tenant insurance, utilities)
- **Update contact information with IRCC, if needed:** Ensure the principal applicant (PA) and all other family members on the file number (G#) have been updated **separately** (if applicable). You can do this:



- through the online web portal
- by calling IRCC directly
- if necessary, by emailing the PSR inbox to avoid any delays in receiving the PR card(s)
- **Essential federal or provincial programs and services**
  - Follow up with IRCC on status of PR card if they didn't get it yet. Incorrect information can cause newcomers to not get important documents like PR cards.
  - Remind newcomer of need to file income taxes each year.
  - Make sure the Canada Child Benefit (CCB) has started, if they're eligible, and follow-up as needed. Consider an assistance loan, if needed, as described in section 2.2 (c).
  - Help newcomer(s) find a family doctor (or primary healthcare practitioner) and dentist. Follow-up to make sure they had appointments.

### **Settlement agency and community-based services**

- Needs assessment and referral to settlement services
  - tell newcomer(s) about IRCC-funded [settlement services](#) in their community
  - give them contact information for a Service Providing Organization (SPO) that offers settlement needs and assets assessment and referral services (NAARS) to other IRCC-funded settlement services and/or community-based supports
  - develop a personalized settlement plan
  - help the newcomer(s) make an appointment if needed
  - help them get a language assessment
  - help them have their skills and credentials assessed, if applicable
- Help newcomer(s) connect to specific community programs, groups, activities or events related to their interests

### **Financial orientation – income support and financial responsibilities**

- Provide financial orientation including topics such as:
  - money
  - banking
  - credit
  - immigration loans
  - taxes
  - financial support from sponsors
  - budgeting
- Make sure newcomer(s) know when and how to pay their rent and any other household bills.
- Make sure newcomer(s) know their immigration loan and repayment options, if they have a loan.
  - An IRCC officer should have clearly explained the loan applicant's legal responsibilities and obligations with respect to the terms and conditions for repaying the loan before they signed.
  - Loan recipients may refer to the [Terms and Conditions of Loan form \(IMM 0502\)](#). They would have signed this before leaving for Canada. This form mentions that the loan is interest-free, describes the terms of the loan repayment, and provides information on how to:
    - change an address
    - defer payments
    - contact IRCC Collection Services (toll-free number: 1-800-667-7301)
  - We'll issue a statement of account to the loan recipient once we're informed of the newcomer's email or home address.



- The newcomer does not need to start repaying their loan until one year after they arrive in Canada.
- Tell them about their rights/responsibilities as an employee if they have chosen to begin working.
- e) **Month 4-6:** By this time, all the required settlement supports from months 1-3 are completed or in progress. Other settlement supports during this time period, if not already happening, could include:
  - **Update contact information with IRCC, if needed:** Make sure principal applicant (PA) and all other family members on the file number (G#) have been updated **separately**, if this applies. You should do this through the online web portal, or by calling IRCC directly. If necessary, you may email the PSR inbox to avoid any delays in receiving the PR card(s).
  - **One-Year Window of Opportunity:** Help the newcomer(s) with any OYW applications (if applicable).
  - **Language classes:** Follow-up on assessment and enrollment.
  - **Education/training:** Make sure newcomer(s) are aware of their options, such as:
    - vocational classes
    - bridging programs
    - secondary education
    - courses and diplomas
  - **Employment/job search:**
    - Inform the newcomer(s) about their rights and responsibilities as an employee.
    - Help newcomer(s) find options for jobs/self-employment, social assistance, language classes and other courses
    - Ideally, the sponsored refugees will have had a Settlement Needs and Assets Assessment and Referral Service (NAARS) and have a personalized settlement plan developed with an IRCC funded Settlement Service Provider Organization (SPO). They may choose to share this plan with you, so you know when they will be ready to start looking for work, and if they would like help from the sponsors in their job search.
- f) **Month 7-9:** During this time, you'll keep giving settlement support as needed and start getting ready for the transition at the end of the sponsorship period.
  - **Unmet settlement needs:** Identify any unmet needs or service gaps to be addressed before the end of the sponsorship period, and make referrals, if possible. This includes IFHP-covered medical care.
  - **Update contact information with IRCC, if needed:** Make sure the principal applicant (PA) and all other family members on the file number (G#) have been updated **separately**, if this applies. You should do this through the online web portal or calling IRCC directly. If necessary, you can email the PSR inbox to avoid any delays in receiving the PR card(s).
  - Explain [subsidized housing options](#) available, if they're eligible.
  - Sponsors are encouraged to follow these best practices:
    - ✓ Start planning with the sponsorship group and newcomer(s) for transition to independent living at the end of the sponsorship period.
    - ✓ Discuss with the newcomer(s) what they want the relationship with the sponsoring group to be once the sponsorship comes to an end.



- g) Month 10-12:** The last phase is the transition of the newcomers from the sponsorship period. If the newcomers are not working or not supporting themselves, you'll need to help ensure finances are in place so they can support themselves.
- Verify that there are no unmet needs or service gaps, and that:
    - Newcomer(s) have all the documents they need (SIN, PR cards, health cards)
    - If applicable, check status of any OYW application
    - Newcomers have access to Canada Child Benefit (CCB), if applicable. Remind newcomers that they must file their taxes each year (including the mother) to keep receiving CCB.
  - Update contact information with IRCC, if needed: Make sure that principal applicant (PA) and all other family members on the file number (G#) have been updated **separately**, if this applies. You should do this through the online web portal or calling IRCC directly. If necessary, you can email the PSR inbox to avoid any delays in receiving the PR card(s).
  - If needed, help newcomer(s):
    - transition to new housing
    - apply for subsidized housing
    - ensure they have all start-up items and furniture they need for independent living
  - Provide newcomer(s) with information on Canadian citizenship and how to apply. Verify they are connected to a settlement service provider.
  - Provide information on provincial social assistance, where necessary, so that the newcomer can apply and avoid any potential gaps in financial support during the transition.
    - ✓ A best practice for refugee(s) needing social assistance is to help them apply. You may also need to provide a letter to the provincial agency that provides social assistance, explaining that financial support from sponsors has ended.
  - Make sure newcomer(s) are comfortable managing their finances.

### 2.3 Changes to a refugee's situation that affect settlement support

Sponsors are encouraged to review their settlement commitments on a monthly basis so that any changes to the refugee's situation that may need changes to the settlement support are addressed. You may need to reassess settlement support for different reasons, such as:

- refugees are relocated within the community – this may require refugees be connected to a new settlement service
  - Sponsors ensure refugee contact information has been updated accordingly through the methods outlined in section 2.2 (a).
- medical needs
- marriage
- marital or household separations
- pregnancy or birth of a child
- adult dependent moved out on their own
- death
- arrival of family members via the One-Year Window of Opportunity Provision



Case-by-case assessment is often needed to make sure you maintain access to settlement services. Sponsors may contact IRCC RSAT for guidance as needed.

### 3. Financial support requirements

#### 3.1 Providing financial support

##### a) Types of financial support

Sponsors must provide one-time start-up costs and ongoing monthly costs.

Type	Description
<b>Start-up costs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>household items (basic window coverings and common household products such as kitchen utensils, pots, pans, brooms, mops, detergents and cleaners, etc.)</li> <li>furniture (beds, mattresses, dining set, couches, end tables, lamps, etc.)</li> <li>linens (including bedding)</li> <li>food staples</li> <li>clothing, both regular and seasonal</li> <li>utility connection fees</li> <li>school start-up allowance (if needed, may be issued twice for families who arrive between September 1 and May 31 and the support period spans 2 school years).</li> </ul>
<b>Monthly costs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>basic needs (food and incidentals)</li> <li>shelter allowance (housing, including utilities) and enough money to cover deposits for security, utilities, and first/last month's rent as needed</li> <li>housing supplement, if applicable</li> <li>monthly transportation allowance for all people 18 years of age or older<sup>1</sup></li> <li>communication allowance to cover the costs of a telephone and internet connection<sup>2</sup>.</li> <li>Maternity food allowance, if applicable</li> <li>Special dietary allowance, if applicable<sup>3</sup></li> </ul>

##### b) When to provide financial support

#### Timelines

<sup>1</sup> The monthly transportation allowance may be waived in areas with no public transit system as long as alternative transportation is provided at no cost to the refugee, or if the allowance is provided in kind, such as through free bus passes or access to programs for low-income residents.

<sup>2</sup> One communication allowance is provided per case and to each adult child dependant.

<sup>3</sup> Refugees can request a special dietary allowance of \$75/month (per family) if they provide a doctor (or nurse practitioner's) note indicating that they have a medical condition requiring a specialized diet.



Sponsoring groups must provide financial support to newcomers according to the timelines below.

Type	Timelines
<b>Start-up costs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Must be provided between arrival date and end of Month 2.</li> <li>• For items that may not be needed right away (winter clothing), you can provide these at a later date but you must be able to prove you are prepared to do this.</li> </ul>
<b>Monthly costs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide support monthly. Newcomers should be aware of when to expect financial support and should not have to ask for it.</li> </ul>

### c) Lump sum payments

We don't encourage lump sum payments. If sponsors chose to issue payments in lump sums, the amounts must equal the equivalent in monthly payments (i.e. lump sums do not result in any "savings" to the sponsors). If sponsoring groups want to issue support this way, they must:

- issue lump sum payments at the beginning of the period it is meant to cover, not at the end
- clearly explain to the newcomer how long the money is to cover and help with budgeting
  - Managing funds and budgeting when providing support as a lump sum can be difficult, so sponsors should document information and guidance provided to the refugees.
- use consistent payment intervals to avoid confusion and stress on the newcomer
- cover no more than 3 months at a time with each lump sum payment

IRCC may recommend re-adjusting to monthly payments, if

- at any time the refugee can't properly budget their quarterly or bi-monthly lump sum payments
- the sponsor is not providing a transparent breakdown of the payments

### d) How long to provide financial support

#### Duration of Financial Sponsorship

Program	What sponsoring groups must provide
Private Sponsorship of Refugees (PSR) Program	Income support for up to 12 months.
Blended Visa Office-Referred (BVOR) Program	6 months of income support, plus start-up costs. IRCC provides the remaining 6 months of income support through the <b>RAP</b> .
Joint Assistance Sponsorship (JAS) Program	Sponsoring groups do not provide financial support in JAS. For more information, see section 5.



Rainbow Refugee Assistance Partnership (RRAP)	9 months of income support. IRCC provides start-up costs and 3 months through the <b>RAP</b> . For more information, see section 6.
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- Note: In exceptional cases, where the migration officer finds that the refugee(s) need more time to become self-sufficient, they may ask that a sponsorship be extended for up to 36 months. The sponsoring group agrees to the extension period before the refugee travels to Canada.

**e) Reducing or eliminating financial support**

A refugee may not need financial support from their sponsor when they earn a certain amount of earned income or have a certain amount of personal assets. You can find more details in sections 3.2(f) and 3.2(g) below.

**f) Methods to provide financial support**

Sponsoring groups decide how financial support is provided, but it must be traceable.

Recommended	Cheques, e-transfers, or other traceable payment methods.
Not recommended	Cash. If you absolutely need to provide a support payment in cash, sponsors must ensure it is documented (e.g. receipt from sponsor signed by newcomer, bank statements (withdrawals/deposits), email confirmations) by both the sponsor and refugee.

Refugees have the right to manage their own finances, and should be encouraged to do so. Sponsoring groups cannot:

- control funds on behalf of the refugees
- require the refugee(s) to submit their funds for management by others

**3.2 Calculating financial support**

**a) Pre-arrival – the sponsorship cost table in Appendix A of the Application Guide**

The sponsorship cost table is primarily used to provide Groups of Five/Community Sponsors – and SAHs required to provide proof of funds at the application stage – with the information needed to show they are financially able to sponsor a case. IRCC uses this information as part of its assessment for a sponsorship application.

**b) Minimum rates**

Sponsoring groups (SAHs, Groups of Five, and Community Sponsors) must provide refugees with financial support that, at minimum, aligns with the level of RAP income support levels and policies in the city where the refugee will live.





To find how much financial assistance is needed in any city or province, sponsoring groups should [review the RAP rates in the community where the refugee will live and the start-up rates that apply nationally](#). Sponsors can use the RSTP online [Minimum Financial Support Calculator](#) to estimate the minimum sponsorship costs.

If a refugee moves to a new community of settlement, sponsors recalculate and continue to provide refugees with financial support based on RAP rates in the new community as discussed in section 4.

Case-specific factors, such as in-kind donations, shared living arrangements, or special needs may impact the amount of monthly financial support to be provided. Changes to a refugee's status that may impact financial support are further discussed in sub-section 3.3.

Sponsors are encouraged to follow these best practices:

- ✓ Have contingency plans in case they need to provide other socio-economic benefits normally provided by provincial/territorial/municipal authorities, such as (but not limited to):
  - child care
  - disability
  - health-related expenses, including travel to appointments
  - critical health related expenses not covered through the Interim Federal Health Program or provincial/territorial health insurance plans

### c) Newcomers above the age of majority

According to the **RAP rates for single persons**, adult dependent children who are above the age of majority in their community of settlement\* must be provided with start-up and monthly financial support as single adults. Dependents that reach the age of majority during the sponsorship period start receiving monthly financial support at the rates of a single adult the first of the next month after their birthday.

They cannot be considered dependents to the family when calculating financial support requirements.

Newcomers above the age of majority who live with others, for example, a 19 year old living with parents, may have financial support reduced for some shared costs as outlined in Section 3.3.

### d) In-kind support

**In-kind support** includes donated goods, commodities or services (such as gently used furniture or clothing, or housing provided at no cost to the sponsored family).

Refer to Appendix A of the Sponsorship Application Guide for [SAHs](#), [Groups of Five](#) or [Community Sponsors](#) and the [Minimum Financial Support Calculator](#) for the **maximum value of donated items** that can be applied towards the financial obligations for start-up and monthly costs of the sponsorship. In-kind donations cannot be valued for more than either their actual value or the maximum in-kind deduction amounts.

### e) Calculating start-up

You can provide start-up costs in three ways:



- Through direct payments. A portion of the start-up amount must **always** be provided through direct payments (via traceable or documented payment methods) to support the sponsored refugees’ right to self-autonomy and personal decision-making.
- Through **in-kind donations** (donated items), according to the estimated value of the items and within the maximum deduction limits.
- Through **items purchased new**, on behalf of, or with the sponsored refugee(s), documented with receipts of purchases.

Sponsors are encouraged to follow these best practices:

- ✓ Engage the sponsored person or family in the process to find an acceptable balance of direct payments and purchases.

**You can only provide certain start-up items through in-kind donations (see table below).**

Items that may be partially deducted through in-kind donations:	Items that <b>cannot</b> be provided as in-kind donations:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• clothing</li> <li>• furniture</li> <li>• household needs</li> <li>• linens</li> <li>• school supplies</li> <li>• food staples</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• mattresses, which should always be purchased new<sup>4</sup></li> <li>• opened food products</li> <li>• personal clothing items such as undergarments or footwear</li> </ul>

Only a certain percentage of the total value of in-kind donations can be subtracted from the financial support that must be provided to the sponsored refugee(s) as start-up support. **Start-up costs cannot be provided fully in-kind (through donations).** Only in-kind donations that the newcomers accept can be counted and deducted from the financial support provided.

If you buy additional items new (such as a mattress, clothing, or additional furniture), on behalf of or with the sponsored person or family, you may deduct these costs from the overall amount of financial start-up support provided. This is counted separately from in-kind donations.

Example of in-kind deductions to start-up furniture allowance:

You are sponsoring a family of 4 people (a couple and 2 dependent children). The furniture allowance for this family is \$3,000. Note this amount is hypothetical; sponsors research the current rates by consulting the [RSTP website](#).

You donate a gently-used couch, dining table, chairs, lamps, and bookshelves that you estimate to be worth about \$500. Per the RSTP’s [Minimum Financial Support Calculator](#), 70% of the RAP entitlement can be deducted for donated furniture items, which would result in a maximum deduction of \$2,100<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> While mattresses should be purchased new, IRCC may apply discretion based on the case-specific information and details provided by the sponsoring group.

<sup>5</sup> For the purposes of the upfront financial assessment conducted on Sponsorship Applications submitted by Groups of Five and Community Sponsors, the in-kind deduction table is used. According to the in-kind deduction table, a maximum of \$2,310 can be deducted for donated furniture items for a family of four.



In this case, the estimated value of the donated items is lower than the maximum in-kind deduction amount, so you can deduct the full \$500 value for the donated furniture. If the estimated value of the donated items had been higher than the maximum in-kind deduction amount, only the maximum in-kind value is deducted.

You then offer to take the family shopping for any additional furniture needs when they arrive in Canada. You know you must keep receipts for the new purchases to show the financial support you provided.

However, the family asks to make their own purchases. You then provide the family with the balance of the furniture costs, via e-transfer, personal cheque, or another trackable payment method.

**f) Calculating monthly costs**

You can provide monthly costs in two ways:

- Through direct payments. A portion of the monthly amount must **always** be provided through direct payments (via traceable or documented payment methods)
- Through **in-kind donations** (donated items), according to the estimated value of the items and within the maximum deduction limits

These monthly costs may be provided in-kind:

Shelter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shelter may be provided <b>fully</b> in-kind as long as it is safe, secure and suitable for the size of family unit, and provided to the refugee(s) without cost.</li> <li>• In-kind shelter does not have to be provided by a party to the sponsorship. Anyone other than a refugee who is within their sponsorship period can provide it. <b>Note: this exception only applies to in-kind shelter costs</b> (see section 3.3 for more information on support from parties and non-parties to the sponsorship).</li> </ul>
Basic needs (food and incidentals)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The basic needs allowance may be provided in-kind to a maximum of 50% <b>only if the refugee(s) is living with a party to the sponsorship</b>. See section 3.1 for further information.</li> </ul>
Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The monthly transportation allowance for all people 18 years and older may be waived as long as:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ In areas with no public transit system, alternative transportation is provided at no cost to the refugee, or</li> <li>○ the allowance is provided in kind, such as through free bus passes or access to programs for low-income residents</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

The **financial amounts for all other monthly costs cannot be provided in-kind**. This financial support will help refugees start their life in Canada and develop the knowledge and skills they need to make such decisions and maintain these costs on their own.

**RAP shelter rate and national housing supplement**



The RAP income support housing benefit has 2 components: the basic shelter rate and the national housing supplement.

- The basic shelter rate is guided by the current provincial/territorial social assistance rates in the province/territory they live in. It varies by destination and other variables, such as family size.
- RAP also provides a **national housing supplement** as a discretionary top up of up to \$200 per case and to each adult dependent for RAP clients when the costs to secure shelter/housing exceeds the basic shelter rates. This national supplement also substitutes for the rental supplements and subsidized housing programs offered by provinces, which are too many for RAP to administer/copy.

Sponsors provide – at a minimum – the basic shelter rate, plus the national housing supplement amount if the shelter costs exceed the basic rate.

Sponsors are encouraged to follow this best practice:

- ✓ Ask about housing supports available in their community, such as subsidized housing programs.

### **g) Refugees with personal assets**

**Personal assets** are the sum of money that the refugee(s) and their family:

- bring with them to Canada, or
- gain after they arrive in Canada, such as an inheritance, gift or other source of funds

If refugees' personal assets, minus the maximum amounts noted below, are enough to cover some or all of the sponsorship costs **for the full sponsorship period**, the sponsor can reduce or remove financial support for some or all of the sponsorship period.

Before deeming the refugee to be financially self-sufficient, the sponsoring group makes a calculation based on the guidance below. Even if the refugee is deemed to be financially self-sufficient, sponsoring groups must still provide settlement support and assistance for the full sponsorship period.

Please refer to the Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP) delivery instructions for more information on [personal assets](#). Personal assets do not include earned income (refer to section 3.2 (h) for information on earned income).

### **Refugee declaration of personal assets**

The refugee self-declares the funds and assets and cannot be forced or coerced. The amount of income and assets declared to their sponsors may impact the level of financial support to be provided.

The Refugee Sponsorship Training Program has developed a [Declaration of Funds and Assets](#) form for this purpose.

While sponsors may not withhold financial support if the assets/income are not reported, they may contact IRCC for help in situations where there are reasonable grounds to believe that a refugee may be withholding information about funds and assets.



### Factoring personal assets into financial support

If the sponsoring group wants to factor personal assets into the required levels of financial support they provide, the standards for use of personal assets follow RAP standards.

If a sponsor makes deductions to their financial support, they must be able to explain the amount and the reason. The onus is on the sponsor to show the support provided to the refugee(s) and that program requirements have been met.

The **maximum personal assets** that refugees can keep under the RAP income support guidelines without affecting the amount of income support they get can be found [here](#) and in the table below. Any other assets will be factored in when deciding the level of income support needed.

Family size	Maximum amount of personal assets (Canadian dollars)
Single person	\$5,000
Couple	\$7,500
Single plus one dependant	\$7,500
Each additional dependant	\$2,500

Sponsors are encouraged to follow these best practices:

- ✓ If a refugee declares they have more than the personal asset exemption limits outlined above, you can give them the option to apply their funds against the balance of their immigration loan before you deduct any financial support.
- ✓ If the refugee still has more than the personal asset limit, you can calculate support on a case-by-case basis factoring in only the portion of assets above the exemption limit.

### h) Refugees with earned income

If a refugee has enough earnings during the sponsorship period, sponsoring groups may reduce or not provide income support under the terms of the sponsorship undertaking subject to the employment earnings thresholds noted below.

Sponsors should keep in mind that the financial situation of the family may change during the sponsorship period. Financial support may need to be re-instated unless the refugee has enough assets to cover the full sponsorship period as per section (g) above. Sponsors may need to prove they provided the financial supports needed at all points of the sponsorship period.

If sponsoring groups decide to make deductions to monthly financial support based on earned income, it must be done according to the principles of the RAP. Refer to the RAP delivery instructions for [what is considered earned income](#).



Deductions can begin after **net** employment income becomes higher than 50% of the full RAP monthly support entitlement, at which point income is reduced dollar for dollar for each additional dollar earned above the threshold.

**Exception:** if the employment income is earned by a refugee who is attending secondary school:

- on a **full-time** basis, the income is not to be included in the total of the family earnings
- on a part-time basis, the income is not exempt and is subject to reductions outlined above

### **Refugee declaration of employment earnings**

Refugees are expected to declare income to their sponsors, as this may affect how much financial support is provided. However, this is voluntary and cannot be forced or coerced. While you can't withhold financial support for non-reporting, sponsors may contact IRCC for help if you have reasonable grounds to believe a refugee may be withholding information about employment earnings.

### **Factoring earned income into financial support**

When a refugee's level of total earned household income is more than 50% of their household's level of financial support, deductions can be made for every dollar earned **above** that. Refer to the RAP delivery instructions on the [50% additional income incentive](#) for more information.

Refugees may no longer need financial support from their sponsor:

- once the monthly support is reduced to zero dollars (i.e. after a client has earned 150% of their household's financial support level), and
- the refugee can financially support themselves and their families on an ongoing basis

If support is reduced or removed, it is strongly suggested that sponsoring groups keep documentation to show they have followed the RAP policy for earnings.

At any time during the commitment period, if the financial situation of the refugee and their family changes, the sponsor must go back to providing financial support, as needed.

The sponsoring group must still give non-financial support (i.e. settlement) for the rest of the sponsorship period, as needed.

### **i) Canada Child Benefit and other federal or provincial tax benefits**

The Canada Child Benefit (CCB) is a **tax-free** monthly payment made to eligible families to help them with the cost of raising children under 18 years of age. The CCB, which might include the [child disability benefit](#) and any related [provincial and territorial programs](#), is based on the family's net income, as well as the number and age(s) of children.

### **Excluded from financial support calculations**

Since the CCB, and other federal or provincial tax benefits or rebates, are tax-free monthly payments available to all qualifying permanent residents and Canadian citizens, **they cannot be counted as earned income or used to calculate reductions to sponsor support.**



Sponsors also cannot count them towards the financial support requirements under the PSR Program. These tax benefits have no impact on the minimum amount of financial support a sponsor is required to provide and should never be clawed back.

### **Lending or advancing funds while the refugee family awaits their Canada Child Benefit payment**

While the CCB is an important benefit for families with children, the application process usually takes several months. So even though payments are retroactive, you should plan for the CCB waiting period.

Sponsoring groups can choose to:

- top-up the monthly income support by an amount similar to the CCB, as a grant or gift
- advance or loan more money to the family
- inform resettled refugees that, as needed, they may be eligible for an assistance loan under IRCC's Immigration Loans Program (ILP)
  - Assistance loans may be granted for "returnable" deposits, such as an advance on the Canada Child Benefit. For more information see [Immigration Loans Program](#).

If a sponsor chooses to provide a loan, a clear record of the agreement and terms should be kept by all parties. **Interest should not be charged to refugees.**

Any later deductions to monthly support to repay a loan should be done according to the agreed upon terms. The terms should consider the ongoing needs of the family and not cause financial hardship.

### **j) Blended Visa Office-Referred cases: RAP rates when sponsors provide in-kind or financial support**

RAP income support is based on need. It is not meant to duplicate benefits already provided through RAP or other sources, whether in-kind or financial.

If you provide in-kind or financial support while a client is on RAP, we'll review the circumstances and nature of that support to find its impact on RAP levels of support.

Generally, if a refugee's need is greater than the support being provided by RAP, a sponsoring group may be able to provide more in-kind or financial support without RAP rates being reduced.

When the in-kind or financial supports are the same as the benefits already provided through RAP, RAP benefits may be reduced. Under the RAP agreement signed by the refugee, all income or benefits from any source must be reported to IRCC.

For example, if a sponsor provides in-kind housing at no cost or at a cost less than the RAP income support allowance for shelter during the RAP period, this would cause monthly shelter allowance to be reduced in line with RAP guidelines.

One-time or monthly financial payments from a sponsor are assessed on a case-by-case basis to find if:

- the amount and nature of the payment is more than what is needed to support the refugee and their family



- the payment duplicates what is already provided under RAP, and the amount(s) are typical for a person receiving financial support

#### **k) Blended Visa Office Referred (BVOR) cases: Supplementary benefits under RAP**

In addition to start-up and monthly support, refugees supported under an official cost-sharing arrangement with IRCC are also eligible for supplementary benefits under RAP. **Supporting documents must be submitted to the local IRCC office** when requesting these benefits. This applies to all RAP-income support applications open when we receive supporting documents. No retroactive payments will be made.

The benefits are:

- a monthly housing supplement of up to \$200 per case, and to each adult dependant, to reduce the gap between RAP shelter rates and actual housing cost
  - To be considered for this allowance, IRCC must receive supporting documents, such as a lease agreement, showing the refugees' total housing costs (including utilities) exceed the maximum shelter allowances issued under RAP.
- a special dietary allowance of \$75 per month (maximum per family) on request

To support any request for the special dietary allowance, each request must include a note from a doctor or nurse practitioner showing that the refugee has a medical condition that requires a specialized diet.

#### **l) Refugees who will not work, go to school or contribute to their integration**

A refugee's focus during their first year in Canada is to take part in activities that will help them become self-sufficient and independent. This may include working, settlement activities, language training classes, college or university courses, and job preparation programs.

Sponsoring groups should support refugee efforts in

- gaining self-sufficiency
- taking part in activities that will best support their longer-term integration

Financial support **cannot** be reduced based on the personal choices of the refugees. If refugees are not taking part in activities that would help them integrate, sponsoring groups are encouraged to try and work with them to understand why this is happening, e.g. possible physical or mental health issues.

Either the sponsoring group or the refugee may ask for help from IRCC if you can't reach a mutually acceptable solution.

#### **m) Immigration loans and debt incurred in Canada**

Sponsoring groups are not responsible for paying back the refugee's immigration loan, but they can help pay it back if they want to. If they choose to, this amount **cannot** be deducted from the start-up financial support or the monthly financial support the refugee(s) should be receiving at RAP rates.

Sponsoring groups are also not responsible for any debt that a refugee incurs in Canada, unless they have co-signed loans.





## **n) Accepting or requiring funds from sponsored people before or after they arrive in Canada**

Sponsoring groups, including co-sponsors, must **not accept** any funds from the refugee(s) either before or after they arrive in Canada. For example, no funds should be paid by refugee(s) to the sponsoring groups related to submitting sponsorship applications, housing, care or settlement help, etc.

The Sponsorship Undertaking (IMM5373) has a declaration that confirms that the refugees did not provide any funds towards the sponsorship. This applies equally to Sponsorship Agreement Holders, Groups of Five and Community Sponsors.

## **3.3 Changes to a refugee's situation that affect financial support**

Sponsors are encouraged to review their financial commitments every month to respond to any changes to the refugee's situation that may affect financial support.

You may need to reassess financial support for various reasons, such as:

- change of location
- employment or change of employment
- receipt of funds for training or school
- pregnancy or birth of a child
- dependant reaches age of majority
- arrival of dependants under one-year window
- marriage
- marital or household separations
- death
- incarceration
- hospitalization
- gifts from relatives
- travel outside of province of residence or Canada
- repatriation
- arrival of family member(s) via the One-Year Window of Opportunity provision

### **a) Sponsored refugees who choose to live together and refugees living with their sponsor or family member**

Some shared costs may be reduced in situations where:

- sponsored refugees choose to live together (for example, children who are above the age of majority live with their parents or linked cases live together), or
- families or people live with their sponsor or with a group/individual who is not a party to the sponsorship (such as a family link)

However, this only applies if:

- the overall needs of all family members are met according to RAP guidelines
- supports are reasonable and appropriate



IRCC will find supports to be reasonable and appropriate if:

- Start-up costs may be reduced in shared living situations, including certain household items (such as window coverings and household products such as kitchen utensils, pots, pans, cleaning products), shared furniture items, such as living and dining room furniture.
- The shelter amount, which is based on need, can be provided fully in-kind if shelter is provided without cost by someone other than a refugee(s) who is within their sponsorship period. Shelter allowances cannot exceed the actual cost of shelter.
- Any transportation (see footnote 6) and communications allowances that apply must be provided.

The basic allowance, which includes an amount for food and incidentals (such as personal care products), may be provided in-kind to a **maximum of 50% only if the refugee(s) is living with a party to the sponsorship** (such as a co-sponsor, or member of a Group of Five who is listed on the sponsorship undertaking). This does not apply to situations where the refugee(s) lives with an individual/group who is not a party to the sponsorship (a family link).

### **b) Sponsored refugees who decide to move out of a shared living situation and establish an independent household**

At all times, you must consider the dignity and the autonomy of the refugee(s) and any shared living arrangement must be fully consensual. Refugee(s) who would prefer to live independently of the sponsor, or age of majority children who want to live independently of their parents, must be given the right to do so.

Refugee(s) initially living with a sponsor who move out on their own:

- If the refugees choose to move out on their own within the sponsorship period, the sponsoring group:
  - must re-assess needs for start-up items, and
  - may need to provide start-up costs to help establish the refugee in the new residence, minus any in-kind deductions.
- The sponsoring group must continue to provide the:
  - full basic needs allowance (food and incidentals)
  - shelter amount, minus any in-kind deductions (if shelter is being provided without cost)
  - full transportation<sup>6</sup> and communications allowances

Sponsoring groups should contact IRCC for help in these situations.

### **c) Marital breakdowns**

In situations where the family goes through marital or household separation, the sponsoring group is not responsible for supporting 2 separate households. They may choose to support both households if they have capacity to do so.

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<sup>6</sup> The monthly transportation allowance may be waived in areas with no public transit system as long as alternative transportation is provided at no cost to the refugee, or if the allowance is provided in kind, such as through free bus passes or access to programs for low-income residents.



If they choose to only support 1 household, the sponsor should keep supporting the household with the higher number of people. If both households are of equal size, it is up to the sponsoring group to decide which household they will keep supporting.

The other household is to be processed for breakdown and referred to:

- a new sponsoring group
- provincial/territorial social assistance, or
- the RAP (typically for BVOR cases only<sup>7</sup>)

Sponsoring groups must contact IRCC for help in these situations in order for IRCC to process the partial breakdown.

#### **d) Death**

In situations where a resettled refugee dies, sponsors are encouraged to follow these best practices:

- ✓ Inform IRCC RSAT and provide a copy of the death certificate. The department reports the death to the IRCC Operational Support Centre (OSC) and uploads the death certificate into GCMS.
- ✓ Consider helping the family with funeral arrangements/expenses.
- ✓ Seek support for bereavement, debriefing, or mental health both for remaining family members and also for sponsoring group members. Reach out to a local settlement agency or health care organization for programs and support.

Sponsors are required to send a copy of the death certificate and the immigration loan warrant number (if the client has a loan) to the Chief of Revenue Accounting, NHQ. You can find the address at [Financial help – Refugees - Canada.ca](#).

In situations where a party to the sponsorship passes (e.g. co-sponsor on file or one of the G5 members), sponsors inform IRCC RSAT and provide a copy of the death certificate. The department reports the death to the IRCC Operational Support Centre (OSC) and uploads the death certificate into GCMS.

#### **e) Sponsored refugee who are temporarily hospitalized or incarcerated**

Refugees entering a hospital or correctional centre do not automatically become ineligible for financial support.

When finding whether or not the rate of financial assistance should be affected, you must consider certain factors, such as:

- the length of the expected hospital or correctional centre stay
- the number of members in the household

For instance, if the refugee is temporarily hospitalized or incarcerated, they will likely still have rental or lease obligations. They should not lose their home because of these situations. There may be other expenses or factors to consider in these situations.

Sponsoring groups should contact IRCC if they have questions about this type of situation.

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<sup>7</sup> In highly exceptional cases, SAH-sponsored PSR cases may also be referred to RAP in the event of sponsorship breakdown.



**f) Sponsored refugees who temporarily leave the community of settlement, either to other parts of Canada or overseas**

**If a refugee leaves the community of settlement or Canada temporarily:**

When finding whether or not the rate of financial assistance should be affected, you should consider the length of the expected absence and the number of members in the household that will be both travelling and remaining.

**If refugees leave the country for an extended period:**

Sponsors are not expected to provide financial or non-financial support while they are absent. It is in your best interest to report these situations and to provide proof, if you have it, to record this change with IRCC.

Sponsoring groups should contact IRCC if they have any questions about these situations.

**g) Financial support required for One Year Window of Opportunity cases**

Sponsoring groups are responsible to provide financial support for One Year Window cases for up to 12 months after they arrive in Canada. You are committed to this in the sponsorship undertaking.

However, the income situation of the family already in Canada should be considered in finding the required amount of financial support. See [guidelines for One-Year Window of Opportunity and RAP income support](#) for additional information.

## 4. Self-destination and secondary migration

**Self-destined refugees** are those who choose to change their final destination when they arrive at the Port of Entry (POE), before reaching the pre-arranged final destination. These refugees will either choose to remain at the POE city, or go to a different place in Canada.

**Secondary migration** happens when a refugee chooses to move out of the sponsor’s community before the end of the sponsorship period.

### 4.1 Residency requirements and obligations

As per paragraph 153(1)(a) of the IRPR, a sponsor must live or have representatives in the refugee’s expected community of settlement.

To meet residency requirements (as per section 2.2 (b)), depending on the type of sponsorship, a sponsor must:

Sponsor type	How to meet residency requirements
Sponsorship Agreement Holders (SAH):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Either the SAH and/or Constituent Group (CG) is located in the community of settlement, or</li> <li>○ At least two co-sponsors live in the community of settlement , or</li> <li>○ At least two appointed representatives live in the community of settlement</li> </ul>



Community Sponsors (CS):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Either the CS is located in the community of settlement, or</li> <li>○ At least two co-sponsors live in the community of settlement , or</li> <li>○ At least two appointed representatives live in the community of settlement</li> </ul>
Groups of Five (G5):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ All five sponsors live in the community of settlement, or</li> <li>○ Their appointed representatives (for each group member that does not live in the community of settlement) live in the community of settlement</li> </ul>

## 4.2 Options available to sponsoring groups

In the event of secondary migration or self-destination, the sponsoring group has 3 options to meet the residency requirements:

<b>1.</b>	Find a replacement Constituent Group and/or Co-sponsors or Group of Five member(s) to meet <a href="#">residency requirements</a> in the new community and resubmit an updated sponsorship undertaking.
<b>2.</b>	Transfer the sponsorship to a new sponsoring group. In a transfer of sponsorship, the new group signs a sponsorship undertaking for the rest of the sponsorship period. The new undertaking replaces the first one. The original sponsorship would be declared in sponsorship breakdown.
<b>3.</b>	Appoint representatives in the new community by submitting an <a href="#">Appointment of Representative(s) in Expected Community of Settlement form (IMM 5956) (PDF, 138 KB)</a> .

## 4.3 Role of sponsoring group

- Inform IRCC of self-destination (email to the Resettlement Operations Centre in Ottawa (ROC-O)) or secondary migration (email to RSAT).
- Know and work towards meeting the residency requirements. Sponsors are expected to make a reasonable effort to fulfill the residency requirements in situations of self-destination and secondary migration. Sponsors should document their process of trying to find new sponsors or representatives in the new community of settlement.
- Recalculate and continue to provide refugees with financial support based on RAP rates in the new community.
- Connect refugee with settlement support in the new community.
- Continue communication with RSAT until residency requirement are met or a sponsorship breakdown is declared by IRCC.

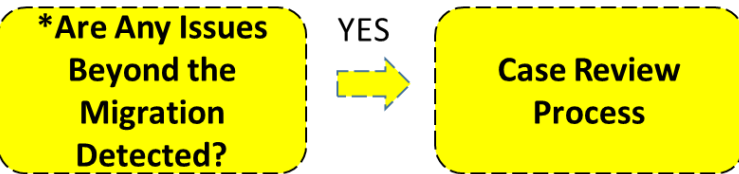
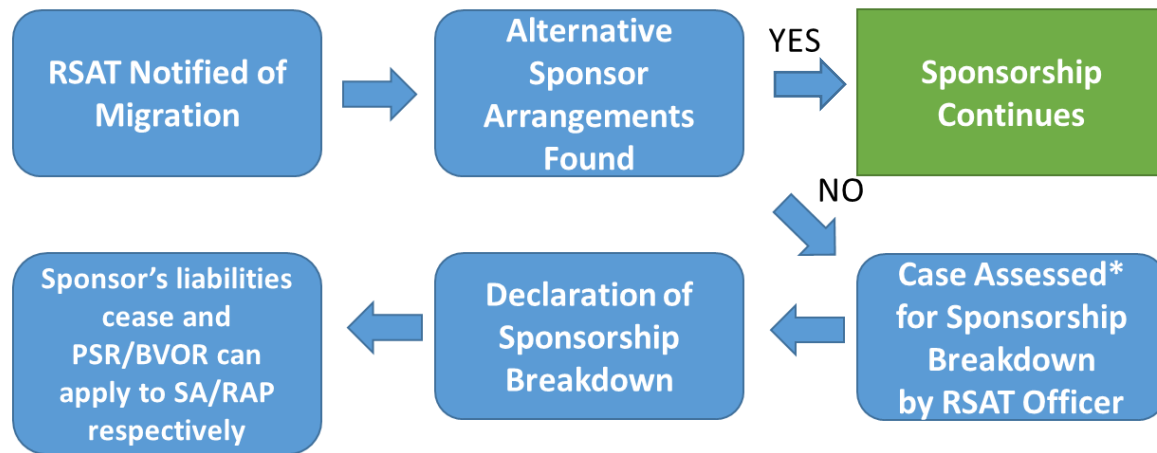
## 4.4 Sponsorship breakdown



If the sponsors can't meet residency requirements in the new community of settlement, they should tell RSAT about their attempts to meet residency requirements – i.e. reaching out to potential sponsorship groups, co-sponsors, or representatives via phone, email, or text.

This may result in a breakdown due to secondary migration. These breakdowns do not directly result in case default or agreement action. A case review process is initiated only if other issues besides the secondary migration are found. See Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Sponsorship breakdown process following secondary migration or self-destination



\*\*\*Following migration, officers are only looking at sponsor efforts to find alternate sponsorship arrangements. Unless concerns related to other program requirements are identified at this time, no case review process is initiated, and thus, no default or potential Agreement actions are taken.\*\*\*

## 5. Joint Assistance Sponsorships (JAS)

A Joint Assistance Sponsorship (JAS) is when Government-Assisted Refugees (GARs) with special needs receive support and services from a combination of IRCC, private sponsors and RAP service providers for an extended period of up to 24 months.

Special needs mean that a person has greater need of settlement assistance than other GARs because of their personal situation, such as:

- survivor of trauma or torture
- medical needs or disability (physical or mental)
- large family size or non-traditional family configuration



Working together in partnership, IRCC, the RAP service provider and the sponsor help to make sure refugee(s) have the best possible outcome. Only Sponsorship Agreement Holders (SAHs) and their Constituent Groups (CGs) are eligible to take part in JAS.

## 5.1 Roles and responsibilities

**IRCC's** role is to provide JAS clients with similar assistance as is provided to GARs under the Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP). This includes income support and access to government-funded resettlement services if needed.

The IRCC local office also helps coordinate the initial case conferencing meeting between the sponsor and RAP Service Provider. They should participate when possible, and check-in mid-way through the JAS to ensure the client's needs are being met by the sponsor and that JAS is still in the best interest of the client.

IRCC officers process Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP) contributions for eligible JAS newcomers to offset transportation and/or assistance loans (non-refundable expenses) under the Immigration Loans Program (ILP).

The **sponsor's role** is to:

- go to the initial case conferencing meeting between the sponsor and RAP Service Provider
- provide emotional support and additional settlement support as needed to help the clients get established in their new community

JAS newcomers are eligible for the same orientation and resettlement services as GARs, both under the RAP and Settlement Programs.

Sponsors should go to orientation sessions with the JAS newcomers to:

- maximize contact with the refugees during the first crucial days
- familiarize themselves with what information the refugees are receiving

The **Service Provider Organization's (SPO's) role** is to:

- go to the initial case conferencing meeting between the sponsor and RAP Service Provider
- provide immediate and essential resettlement services to the JAS clients as needed

Services they can provide may include:

- ensuring the refugee(s) has temporary housing
- ensuring arrangements are in place for newcomers to get from the point of final destination (e.g. airport) to their temporary housing
- linking clients to essential federal and provincial programs
- explaining income support by making sure they understand their financial responsibilities
- providing basic orientation specific to their immediate needs
- helping newcomers access settlement and community-based services

More information on JAS can be found at:

- IRCC's guide on the [Joint Assistance Program](#)



- [Immigration Operational Bulletin 646 – Joint Assistance Sponsorship recommendations from within Canada – December 6, 2017](#)
- The Refugee Sponsorship Training Program [Joint Assistance Sponsorship Fact Sheet](#)

## 6. Rainbow Refugee Assistance Partnership (RRAP)

IRCC has a partnership with the Rainbow Refugee Society. The goal of the partnership is to:

- encourage more Canadians to support lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and additional sexually and gender diverse (LGBTQI+) refugees
- strengthen collaboration between LGBTQI+ organizations and the refugee settlement community in Canada

This partnership applies only to PSR cases. Refugees coming into Canada under the Blended Visa Officer Referred program are not subject to this partnership.

IRCC provides 3 months of financial support and start-up support from the Resettlement Assistance Program. The sponsoring group, who partners with the Rainbow Refugee Society in Vancouver, provides 9 months of financial support, according to Resettlement Assistance Program rates, and all settlement support for the sponsorship period.

## 7. Post-arrival monitoring and assurance

### 7.1 Sponsoring group monitoring activities

Monitoring the activity of partners, ensuring the settlement plan is implemented and ensuring that settlement needs are met are key responsibilities of all sponsoring groups, especially those who work with co-sponsors and constituent groups or other organizations.

All sponsoring groups must fulfill their sponsorship responsibilities and either:

- fully implement the settlement plan itself, or
- make sure that those who are sponsoring under its guidance, such as Constituent Groups and/or Co-sponsors, properly implement the settlement plan

SAHs can refer to their responsibilities outlined in the sponsorship agreements and access the RSTP [Best Practices for Monitoring Resource Kit](#) for information on monitoring their CGs and co-sponsors. G5s and CS may want to make sure responsibilities are divided as agreed to in the settlement plan, to confirm that all settlement needs of the refugee(s) are being met.

Sponsors are encouraged to follow this best practice:

- ✓ keeping lines of communication open with newcomers, co-sponsors etc.

### 7.2 IRCC sponsorship assurance activities





IRCC and sponsors share the same goal – for refugees to settle well into their community and work toward being self-sufficient. IRCC and sponsors also share a responsibility to ensure that refugees are aware of, and have access to, the financial and non-financial supports available.

IRCC works with sponsors to ensure that refugee(s) are supported financially and non-financially, in line with the sponsorship undertaking and program requirements, throughout the sponsorship period. They work with sponsors to identify any outstanding items and help find solutions to meet the financial and settlement needs of the refugee(s), as well as how sponsors can show their support.

- IRCC may ask sponsors to provide information that shows they are providing the minimum financial and non-financial assistance under the terms of the sponsorship undertaking to all sponsored family members for the full sponsorship period. IRCC has the authority to monitor sponsors' activity so they meet the terms of their sponsorship<sup>1</sup>. **It is the sponsor's responsibility to provide this information.** The refugee is not responsible for showing they have received the support.
- Sponsors are not held accountable for things outside of their control. It is expected they do what is in their control to meet the resettlement needs of the refugee(s) and connect them to required services. When IRCC reviews the sponsorship, they will look to see if connections to services have been made and if essential applications have been at least submitted – i.e. CCB, health card.

IRCC also works with sponsors on issues that sponsors and refugees may be facing in order to:

- provide guidance
- connect to relevant services
- help in instances of disputes or relationship breakdowns

#### **IRCC's Resettlement Services Assurance Team (RSAT):**

- conducts follow-up on cases reported to IRCC with potential issues of not enough financial and/or settlement support
- reviews cases within the sponsorship period where there are specific concerns about the organization and/or person involved in sponsorship, to make sure that PSR program requirements are being met
- reviews a random sample of PSR and BVOR cases, on an ongoing basis, to confirm that the newcomers are being given proper supports
- provides guidance and support to sponsoring groups on post-arrival program requirements and issues
- declares sponsorship breakdowns and defaults on cases
- processes change of destinations, after arrival, for PSRs and BVORs

### **7.3 How sponsoring groups show they are providing enough financial support**

While sponsoring groups can provide financial support in different ways,, IRCC recommends that support be provided through cheques, e-transfers or other **traceable methods**. IRCC may ask for proof of financial support during a case review. If these methods aren't used, sponsors should regularly document support, for example, by sending an email each month stating how much money was given. While giving cash may be the most convenient method of support, it is hard to track and show that it was given, so the payment methods above are recommended.



If sponsoring groups have made **deductions to the monthly support** (e.g. in-kind items, personal assets, earned income), they must give an explanation and supporting proof that clearly outlines how, and why, the deductions were calculated.

IRCC does accept, and will consider, **attestations** from refugees or sponsors about personal assets or finances, along with all other submitted documents, when reviewing a case. These are considered as part of the overall assessment. However, as attestations cannot be verified, they may not be considered as final. If it conflicts with other details on file, verifiable proof may be needed to resolve the discrepancy.

Sponsors **cannot** ask refugees to provide receipts, bank statements, or other financial declarations as a condition of financial or in-kind support being provided.

RSTP has [examples of documents you can use to show proof of support.](#) (PDF, xx MB)

## 7.4 How sponsoring groups show they are providing enough settlement support

IRCC may ask for proof of settlement support during a case review. Examples of non-financial support documents include:

- confirmation the refugee(s) is enrolled in language classes and/or has completed language assessment
- narrative information or other supporting documents to show they have attended or completed workshops, training or orientation sessions
- copy of an application for the Canada Child Benefit, (CCB) or a receipt
- copy of an application or receipt for provincial health coverage, or other documents to prove provincial health coverage
- documents showing access to a settlement agency or community resources, such as
  - a letter saying a needs assessment has been completed
  - proof of an initial intake meeting, or
  - an appointment slip
- copies of child-care registration or school enrolment
- narrative information (on a case-by-case basis and at the officer's discretion), for example, where both the refugee and sponsor have told IRCC that a provincial health card was received

Sponsors don't need to provide copies of government documents such as passports or health cards. If there are **privacy concerns**, or if there is information that belongs to the refugee that would satisfy IRCC's request, the sponsor should note this. In these cases, an IRCC officer will approach the refugee directly.

[RSTP has more information.](#) (PDF, xx MB)

## 7.5 Difference between support provided by a party to the sponsorship and someone who is not

Parties to the sponsorship sign the sponsorship undertaking either as a signing authority for a larger group, such as a Constituent Group, Sponsorship Agreement Holder, or Community Sponsor or on their own, e.g. co-sponsors.



By signing the undertaking, they are committing to, and become liable for, providing financial and settlement support for the refugees listed. There can be other people who help to provide these supports during the sponsorship, but only those who have signed the sponsorship undertaking will be held responsible if supports are not provided.

### Planned support

If financial or non-financial support is provided by someone who is not party to the sponsorship<sup>8</sup>, the sponsors should be able to show that this support was planned when the case was originally submitted or immediately on arrival. There should be an established pattern of this support provided, so proof can be given to IRCC when a case is reviewed. Such support will not be counted if it is in the form of ad hoc gifts.

Examples of proof could be the settlement plan on file, or emails or texts showing that there was an agreement between parties to the sponsorship and non-parties for the monthly support to be provided by someone who didn't sign the undertaking.

Sponsors always have the option of adding the non-party to the undertaking to have the support be officially recognized, and that person become officially liable. Adding a party to the sponsorship lets support provided going forward to be officially recognized. It does not automatically recognize previous support given.

## 8. References

- [IRCC key contacts and activities](#) (PDF)
- Useful links:
  - IRPA, IRPR
  - Sponsorship Undertaking
  - [Settlement Plan](#)
  - Sponsorship Agreement (for SAHs) - [Revised Sponsorship Agreement](#)
  - Terms and definitions related to refugee protection, including the following
    - notification of arrival transmission
    - non-accompanying family members
    - accompanying family members
    - Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP)
    - age of majority
    - case review
    - Government-Assisted Refugees (GARs)
  - RAST case review process (graphic)
  - [RSTP Fact Sheets](#) (includes Month 13 Planning Resource Kit)
  - RSTP - [Best Practices for Monitoring for SAHs](#)
  - RSTP - [SAH Resource Bank](#)
  - [A resource library on supporting the settlement of LGBTQI+ refugees](#)