

The EMCC is a cosponsor under the C&MA C&MA is a Sponsorship Agreement Holder (SAH)

A Sponsorship Agreement Holder is an incorporated organization that has signed a Sponsorship Agreement with the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. A SAH can authorize Constituent Groups to sponsor under its agreement and provide support to the refugee(s).

The SAH or Constituent Group may also choose to formally partner with an individual (for example, a family member of the sponsored refugee living in Canada) and/or another organization in carrying out settlement duties. The partner is herein termed the “cosponsor”.

What does that mean?

**Any EMCC church in Canada can sponsor refugees under our status
as a “Constituency Group” (CG) with the C&MA**

Who facilitates and supports the Sponsorship Agreement Holder responsibilities?

The EMCC Refugee Sponsorship Team will help facilitate the process with Constituency Groups. They have a prescreening process in place to determine if someone will qualify as a refugee under the private sponsorship program. Any EMCC Church that is interested in refugee sponsorship can contact them for assistance at refugeesponsorship@emcc.ca.

EMCC will

1. Pre-screen sponsorship applications to determine whether they meet Canada’s sponsorship eligibility and admissibility criteria;
2. Be responsible for the selection and authorization of sponsoring groups;
3. Provide organizational assistance, advice, information and support to the Constituent Groups;

What are the responsibilities of a sponsoring Constituency Group (CG)?

When an organization signs a sponsorship agreement, it becomes fully accountable for assuming the responsibilities that are detailed in the sponsorship agreement. These include:

1. Providing basic financial support (e.g., for housing and food) and care for the sponsored refugee during the sponsorship period (generally a period of one year), or until the sponsored refugee no longer requires assistance, whichever comes first;
2. Ensuring it has sufficient resources and expertise to carry out its responsibilities;
3. Remaining jointly or solely liable when the CG has signed a sponsorship undertaking;

What settlement assistance is required from a Sponsoring Constituency Group?

At the outset of the sponsorship process, a CG has an obligation to provide a settlement plan that outlines the settlement assistance it will offer to the sponsored refugee(s).

During the sponsorship period, what does a sponsoring EMCC Church group do?

1. Welcome the refugees at the airport, and provide an orientation to life in Canada;
2. Provide suitable accommodation, basic furniture and other household essentials;
3. Provide food, clothing, local transportation costs and other basic necessities of life;
4. Help the refugees:
 - Complete any required forms, including health insurance, social insurance and child tax benefits;
 - Learn English or French (e.g., help with getting into an English-as-a-second-language or French-as-a-second-language class, provide tutoring);
 - Understand the rights and responsibilities of permanent residents;
 - Find a job and make friends;
 - Learn about and access services that are available in the community;
 - Register children in school and guide them in dealings with the school system;
 - Locate a family physician and dentist; and
 - Become independent.

A Sponsoring Constituency Group (an EMCC Church) is expected to prepare a settlement plan that outlines, in as much detail as possible, how it will divide the responsibilities of settling the newcomers; who will provide money; which in-kind support is available; and what the back-up plan is in case the original settlement plan does not work out.

How long will the Sponsoring Constituency Group have to provide support?

The sponsoring group is responsible for financial and settlement assistance, counselling and support for the sponsored refugees for the duration of the sponsorship period. This is usually for one year from the date of the arrival of the refugee, but can be up to three years in exceptional circumstances.

How much does a Private Sponsorship cost?

The sponsoring group must show that they have sufficient financial resources at least equal to social assistance rates available to support the sponsored refugees for the duration of the sponsorship period. [Click here](#) to see a current estimate based on the province/territory. EMCC will provide a more detailed worksheet including deductions for any available gifts-in-kind.

What is the Blended VOR Initiative?

The Blended Visa Office Referred initiative is a program designed to resettle refugees identified by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and submitted to Canadian visa offices abroad. It is referred to as a "blended" program because it is a cost-sharing arrangement whereby Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) and Sponsorship Agreement Holders (SAH) both contribute to financially supporting the refugees. Refugees under this program have already met eligibility and admissibility criteria, making them travel-ready. However they must be matched with a sponsor before they can travel to Canada.

How does the "blended" model work?

Refugees resettled under the Blended VOR initiative will receive income support during months two to seven after their arrival through the Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP). They are also fully covered under the Interim Federal Health (IFH) program in addition to provincial health coverage.

For the duration of the sponsorship period, sponsors are required to provide:

- reception upon arrival
- initial housing setup
- basic necessities for the first and last five months of RAP income support. Startup costs are responsibility of sponsor.
- settlement assistance (including arranging for language classes, enrollment in school, finding health care providers, job search, etc)
- psychological and emotional support.

How is this different from the Private Sponsorship of Refugees (PSR) program?

Under the Blended VOR initiative, refugees are referred to Canadian visa offices abroad directly by the UNHCR. IRCC will provide income support for 6 months of the sponsorship period and sponsors are responsible for remaining costs through the sponsorship period (usually 12 months).

Can refugees be referred to the Blended VOR Initiative by sponsoring groups?

No. Refugees chosen under this program can only be referred by Canadian visa offices.

How soon will the refugees arrive?

These cases are normally ready to travel to Canada within 1 to 4 months of being matched with a sponsor.

What happens after the refugees arrive?

These refugees are considered permanent residents once they arrive in Canada. This means they are legally entitled to work, go to school, receive health care and access free services for newcomers to Canada such as language classes, employment counseling and other support services. Sponsored refugees are eligible for provincial health care immediately.

How do refugees access Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP) support?

Upon arrival, sponsors schedule an intake interview with the local IRCC office as soon as possible in order to register sponsored refugees for RAP support and IFH program coverage.

What are the expected costs of sponsorship under this program?

Sponsors are expected to provide refugees with assistance equivalent to the RAP income support.

What is expected of refugees under this program?

Sponsored refugees are expected to work with their sponsors to become independent and self-sufficient after the end of the sponsorship period. Refugees are expected to remain in their sponsorship community for the duration of the sponsorship period and will not need to access social services during the sponsorship period since they will receive sufficient support from their sponsors.

What is a Joint Assistance Sponsorship (JAS)?

The JAS program has been created to enable the resettlement of vulnerable refugees who require special assistance and whose admissibility to Canada depends on the additional support of a sponsor. Refugees sponsored under the JAS program are identified as having special needs that will likely result in a longer or more difficult period of integration in Canada due to:

- trauma from violence or torture
- medical disabilities
- effects of systemic discrimination, or
- large family unit (i.e.: higher number of family members).

Sponsorship under the JAS program means giving refugees a welcoming environment, helping them integrate, helping them access services for their needs and giving moral and emotional support. Under a JAS, the government provides financial assistance to the refugee while sponsoring groups provide community and emotional support and orientation, and ensure access to appropriate services.

Who can sponsor refugees under JAS?

Sponsorship Agreement Holders and their Constituent Groups.

Who qualifies for JAS?

Someone who is a Convention Refugee Abroad or a member of the Country of Asylum class AND is expected to require greater settlement assistance due to the serious nature of personal circumstances such as large/unusual family configuration, trauma due to violence or torture, medical disability, and/or effects of systemic discrimination. The person has to be referred to the JAS program by either Canadian visa office abroad or a RAP Service Provider Organization in Canada.

How are JAS cases identified?

The visa officer determines during the eligibility interview which refugee applicants require a JAS. Sponsoring groups cannot designate cases to the program.

How long is the processing time?

Refugees under the JAS program who are still overseas arrive on average within 12 weeks of the sponsorship approval date.

How long are JAS refugees supported?

Most refugees under the JAS program are provided support between 12 and 24 months after arrival, depending on the individual circumstances and needs. In some exceptional cases, support is continued to 36 months.

Who are the major players in JAS?

Since sponsorship under JAS is a joint endeavour, SAHs and their CGs must work closely with the local IRCC office, the Resettlement Assistance Service Provider Organization (RAP SPO), settlement and other community agencies to meet the needs of the newcomers.

What is the Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP)?

RAP provides income support and immediate essential services to Government-Assisted Refugees (GARs) and humanitarian cases for which the federal government has undertaken a financial commitment. Financial entitlements under RAP are based on prevailing social services rates.

We want to commit to a JAS case; what now?

Contact us at refugeesponsorship@emcc.ca!