

## What is a SAH Allocation and why does it affect my church's interest in refugee sponsorship?

Each year, the Canadian government announces its immigration targets for the upcoming year and then a “**Global Cap**” (limitation) is set on sponsorship applications that can be submitted within the Private Sponsorship of Refugees (PSR) program. These numbers are typically released in the preceding year around September to November; however, given that there was an election in October, and then the new government was focusing on bringing 25,000 Syrians to Canada by the end of February 2016, the Global Cap was not released until March 8, 2016.

Out of this Global Cap, the Canadian government adds further “**sub-caps**” for international visa offices that have a large back-log of applications to be processed. The remaining “**non-capped**” application submission numbers are then “**allocated**” to each of the Sponsorship Agreement Holders (SAHs) based upon their previous year's submission numbers. SAH representatives were just recently given their specific sub-capped and non-capped allocations on May 4, 2016.

When a SAH is given their specific “allocation” for the year, they then need to determine from their inventory of CGs (sponsoring groups) which applications will be submitted for that upcoming year.

## What is different in the processing of sponsorship applications and expected arrival times as compared to last year?

### 2015

Syrian and Iraqi applications were considered a “**ministerial priority**” and therefore, did not have a limitation imposed on how many applications could be submitted for them. This means SAHs did not require an “allocation” in order to submit applications for them.

The Canadian Government put extra resources in place to expedite processing of ministerial priority applications so that (on average) it took only three and six months for Syrian and Iraqi refugee families to arrive.

Syrian and Iraqi applicants, who had their interview between October 4, 2015 and March 1, 2016 did not have to pay for a travel loan or medical screening.

### 2016

Syrian and Iraqi applications **are no longer** considered a ministerial priority and therefore will now fall back within the normal processing standards that existed prior to the 2015 exceptions. This means SAHs will once again require an “allocation” in order to submit applications for Syrians and Iraqis.

Syrian applications submitted between January 1-March 31, 2016 will not count against our C&MA SAH specific allocations.

Non-Syrian applications submitted between January 1-May 4, 2016 have been deducted from our 2016 SAH specific allocations.



The Canadian Government has retained extra resources in Lebanon, Jordan, and Turkey to help expedite processing of Syrian and Iraqi applications; however, refugee families may still experience a longer waiting time before being approved to come to Canada. For example, applications being processed in Jordan have a current processing time of nine months. This is still considered quite a quick processing time by normal standards since some international visa offices have much longer times (e.g. Libya is 48 months).

Medical screening and travel loans are once again the responsibility of the refugees, as is the normal requirement for all refugees. The **waiving of medicals and travel fee loans was only in place for the ministerial priority applicants** who had their interviews completed by March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016.

## What is the C&MA SAH planning to do to receive more spots?

We will continue to submit applications that are currently in process until our allocations are exhausted.

We do have an opportunity to request additional spots from the “allocations pool,” which is reserved for sponsoring groups who have used up all of their allocations and require more. The SAHs can request only 10 spots every three weeks from this allocation pool once they have submitted applications, which use up their designated SAH allocations.

## What does this mean for groups already in process who have applications waiting to be submitted?

Groups who have sent in their applications to the C&MA SAH (or their partner denomination) to be reviewed and submitted to the Central Processing Office Winnipeg (CPO-W) will be placed on a waiting list. This list has been prioritized based upon two dates:

- The date the IMM6000 documents were received by the C&MA SAH for review; and
- The date of initial inquiry

## How will C&MA prioritize submission of applications?

The C&MA SAH will submit applications based on when the application is completed and approved for submission, and when there is an adequate allocation number available to match the number of people being sponsored.

Applications that do not require amendments will be moved up in the priority waiting list once they are approved for submission.

### Example #1:

Two churches began their initial sponsorship inquiry in November 2015. Church A was able to raise funds quickly and form a sponsorship committee of at least five people by February 2016 and submitted the paperwork on March 3, 2016. Church B focused on fundraising but did not have a committee formed until April 2016 and consequently could not submit the IMM6000 documents until April 15, 2016. Church A would have priority for submitting their application.



### Example #2:

Church A began their initial inquiry in January 2015, while Church B began an initial inquiry in January 2016. If both church groups were to submit their application paperwork at the same time, Church A would have priority over Church B for submission.

### Example #3:

Church A and Church B both initially inquired about sponsorship and submitted applications on the same day. Church A did not review their IMM6000 application for error prior to sending it to the C&MA SAH and amendments had to be made, or the CG may not have submitted all of the paperwork at one time, so additional paperwork needed to be received. Church B ensured they had reviewed their application for completeness and accuracy before submitting everything to the C&MA SAH and were approved to submit. Church B would have priority over Church A for submission.

## What does this mean for groups who have been raising funds and/or preparing a settlement plan, but have not selected a family yet and/or begun to complete the IRCC paperwork?

The C&MA will continue to submit applications until we have no more allocations available. Groups can continue in preparing for sponsorship by selecting a family and competing paperwork, however we cannot guarantee that their application will be submitted in 2016. They may need to remain on the waiting list until 2017 when new allocations will be received.

Alternatively, these groups may choose to:

- Submit under the Group of Five or Community Sponsorship program instead of submitting through the C&MA SAH.
- Try to find another SAH who has allocations that they can submit under instead of submitting through the C&MA SAH.

If a group wishes to learn more about Group of Five and Community Sponsorships, they can go to [RSTP.ca](http://RSTP.ca) and contact one of their staff for more information.

The C&MA SAH will also be available to assist groups who decide to go this route with paperwork and resources.

## What does this mean for new church groups, who are just now asking about submitting a sponsorship through the C&MA SAH?

They may ask to be put on the waiting list; however, if we do not receive enough allocations in 2017, they may not be able to sponsor through us until 2018.

Alternatively, these groups may choose to:

- Submit under the Group of Five or Community Sponsorship program instead of submitting through the C&MA SAH.
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If a group wishes to learn more about group of five and community sponsorships, they can go to [RSTP.ca](http://RSTP.ca) and contact one of their staff for more information.

The C&MA SAH will also be available to assist groups who decide to go this route with paperwork and resources.

## What about BVOR sponsorship applications?

BVOR application submissions do not require SAH allocations to sponsor visa-office-referred-profiles.

IRCC's goal for 2016 is to refer up to a total of 5,000 refugees for sponsorship through this program.

From March to July, IRCC will post 100-250 persons (depending on availability of travel-ready cases and operational considerations) on a bi-weekly basis, with an expected total of 1,600 persons by the end of July. Most of the refugees posted during this period are expected to be admitted in 2016. In October and November, IRCC will post 100-250 persons, also on a bi-weekly basis, for a total of 900-1000 persons. Most of the refugees posted during this period are expected to be admitted in 2017. The profiles will include refugees from various populations, but the majority is expected to be Syrian.

As a result of the high interest in sponsoring refugees since last September, many Canadians are interested in the BVOR program and as such, this has resulted in this program becoming a highly competitive way to be matched with refugees. When a SAH requests a refugee profile, no matter how many they are requesting, a SAH will only receive one profile at any one time. Receiving a profile is based on a first-come first-served response system of priority (i.e. they must be quick to reply when the list is released and yet many SAHs are not successful in receiving a BVOR profile.)

It is a rare occurrence now for a SAH to receive a BVOR profile, so churches will not be sent a BVOR profile listing because by the time they see it, all profiles will have been chosen by other groups already. This means that churches also will no longer be able to pick and choose a specific profile to sponsor (as was the past process).

As the C&MA SAH, we ask interested groups to provide the general family size and composition that they wish to sponsor, and when a profile is secured that matches their request, the church will only have 24 hours notice to confirm their agreement to sponsor that family before it is made available to another church group in the waiting list.

Requests for BVOR profiles through the C&MA SAH will also be wait-listed and prioritized based on the date the group notifies us of the family size they wish us to request on their behalf.

## So what is the number of PSR allocations that the C&MA received for 2016?

NOTE: these numbers represent the number of people, not the number of applications:

Nairobi	6
Cairo	5
Pretoria	6
Islamabad	XX
Tel Aviv	5
Rome	6
Dar es Salaam	6
Other (non sub-capped missions) *Syrians & Iraqi's in this number	22
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>56</b>

## What is the “hoped for” number of additional spots being requested from the pooled allocations?

The potential number of additional spots for 2016 which we might be eligible to receive is **130**

NOTE: this number will only become a reality upon IRCC's approval to receive these available spots from the pooled allocations, based upon requesting 10 every three weeks until December 2016.

## Within the C&MA's current roster of CGs who have identified or been matched with a refugee family, how many allocation are currently needed for 2016?

As of May 5, 2016 there are **122** additional spots needed.

## In closing, one group's long-term vision, commitment, and words of encouragement to continue to support refugees:

In early 2015, the churches in Cobourg, Ontario, began to dream about what they might do next together and inquired about sponsoring refugees. They had previously worked shoulder-to-shoulder to build a house through Habitat for Humanity and found the experience transformational and unifying as a community, so they wanted to reignite a passion for working together to serve a greater purpose.

When September 9, 2015 came around and Canadians were just beginning to ask questions about how to help Syrian refugees, the Cobourg team's vision for sponsorship had grown exponentially. They had already begun the process of forming several teams—a total of seven would be formed from the



collaborative efforts of seven churches and one local community organization! The community of Cobourg has a big vision, a big commitment, and the grand support of an entire community behind them. How do you imagine this news will impact them? Given a recent correspondence that went out to their teams, I imagine they will continue to pursue their sponsorship goals *no matter what* challenges and disappointments may lie ahead:

“Our first two families came in with the wave of 25,000 that were expedited and, so, they arrived quite quickly. Things have changed significantly since then. Most notable is the timeline, which has returned to its former state before the expedited refugees. What that means for us is that we are likely not going to see families 4–7 for quite some time, possibly a year or more. That’s the reality right now.

It would be easy to become discouraged about this; however, we encourage all of our supporters not to give in to this. We are in it for the long haul because we remember why we are doing this—it’s the right thing to do! And we continue to serve with all of our hearts because we know that it is making a difference, even if it isn’t as quickly as we would like it to be. We also continue to be in contact with Kim Rudd’s office, so if there is any way to speed up the process for our families, we will be aware.”

—Gloria Peters, Better Together Refugee Sponsorship Cobourg