



SECTION 3

Groups of Five

▶ GROUPS OF FIVE

▶ FORMING YOUR GROUP

Groups of Five

A Group of Five is any group of five or more Canadian citizens or permanent residents that have come together to initiate a sponsorship under the Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program.

Groups of Five may only sponsor applicants who are recognized as refugees by either the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) or a foreign state.

To qualify as a sponsor and a Group of Five **each** individual member of the group must:

- ✓ be 18 years of age or older;
- ✓ be a Canadian citizen or permanent resident;
- ✓ live in the community where the refugee will live; and
- ✓ not be in default of previous refugee or family sponsorship commitments.

The individuals who make up a Group of Five commit to providing financial, emotional and settlement support for the refugee(s) for the duration of the sponsorship period. They need to show that the group has enough money, understands its sponsorship obligations, is committed to assisting the sponsored refugee(s) and can fulfill all responsibilities listed in the sponsorship undertaking.

Group of Five members who wish to use their employment income to support refugees must list their current dependants (including any other sponsorship, both family and refugee, that they are involved in) and give proof of employment and income.

The group must agree to support the sponsored refugee and any family members that come along with him/her for the duration of the sponsorship period, which is usually 12 months (and in very exceptional circumstances up to 36 months). Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) will carry out an assessment to determine if the group and the individual group members meet the eligibility criteria.

It is expected that at least three members of the group will make a financial commitment.

The following people cannot be part of a Group of Five for refugee sponsorship:

- ▶ Those convicted of serious criminal acts, if five years have not passed since the end of the sentence;
- ▶ Those who have not fulfilled all of their previous sponsorship undertakings or other court-ordered support payments (i.e. child support); and
- ▶ Those in prison and/or who may have their citizenship revoked.

If a person in any of the above mentioned categories is a member of a Group of Five, the sponsorship undertaking will be refused by IRCC.

Forming your Group

There is no official way of forming a Group of Five or matching individuals interested in this type of sponsorship. Most Groups of Five consist of individuals who are friends, family members or individuals with a common interest in sponsoring a refugee. Some settlement service-providing agencies help groups form and sustain their Group of Five sponsorship.

When forming your group, consider who should be in it.

For example,

- ▶ How much **money** can you and the other members of your group contribute? How much still needs to be contributed?
- ▶ Is there a family member here in Canada who can also contribute to the sponsorship?
- ▶ Do you know others in your community who have been involved in **previous sponsorships** or other refugee related work who may be able to help with the processing, provide donations, or assist in the settlement of the newcomers?

Being a member of more than one Group of Five depends on your financial capacity and your time. When reviewing your application, IRCC will take into account any previous undertakings and the number of dependants you currently financially support. They will determine whether you have the necessary funds and the time to support an additional undertaking.

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Updated October 2017