

Sponsorship Agreement Holders

What is the Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program?

The Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program (PSR) is a partnership program administered by Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) and the people of Canada to extend Canada's capacity to resettle refugees from abroad. Sponsorship Agreement Holders and their Constituent Groups, Community Sponsors and Groups of Five can sponsor refugees.



UNHCR Photo by Luke Powell



What is a Sponsorship Agreement Holder?

A Sponsorship Agreement Holder (SAH) is an organization that has signed a Sponsorship Agreement with the Government of Canada, as represented by the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, which allows it to participate in the resettlement of refugees through the Private Sponsorship of Refugees program.

How Does a Group Qualify?

To become a SAH, an organization MUST:

1. Be incorporated / registered
2. Have the necessary financial capacity
3. Understand and uphold the objectives of the private sponsorship of refugees program
4. Have a good volunteer base
5. Pass a security review

How to Apply

In order to become a SAH, a corporation must submit an application with supporting documents to CIC. The applicant is required to provide a detailed explanation as to why they wish to become a SAH as well as outline why they would qualify as a SAH. The Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration will assess the application and make a determination.

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What is a Constituent Group?

A Constituent Group (CG) is a group authorized in writing by the SAH to act on its behalf in sponsoring refugees. A SAH can authorize any number of CGs to sponsor under its agreement and provide support to the sponsored refugees. Each SAH sets its own criteria for recognizing CGs. CGs have the following characteristics:

- they are in the community where the refugee(s) is/are destined;
- they are authorized, in writing, by the SAH to act on its behalf as sponsors of refugees;
- they are managed under the SAH.

The SAH bears the legal responsibility for all sponsorships submitted under their agreement. CGs are the animators for the sponsorships themselves. Some SAHs have CGs and some do not.

What are the responsibilities of a SAH?

When an organization signs a sponsorship agreement, it undertakes legal responsibilities that are detailed in the sponsorship agreement. These include:

- providing basic financial support (e.g. for housing and food) and care for the sponsored refugee for the sponsorship period or until the sponsored refugee no longer requires assistance, whichever comes first
- pre-screening to determine whether a sponsorship application may meet sponsorship eligibility and admissibility criteria
- being responsible for the selection and authorization of CGs
- ensuring it has sufficient resources and expertise to carry out its responsibilities
- remaining jointly or solitarily liable when the SAH and CG has signed a sponsorship undertaken
- providing organizational assistance, advice, information and support to its constituent group(s)
- being responsible for monitoring of its constituent group(s)
- advising CIC of any changes in the signing authority of the organization
- submitting an annual report to CIC

Who Can Be Sponsored Under the PSR Program?

Refugees who would qualify under the Convention Refugees Abroad or Country of Asylum Class may be sponsored. Refugees already in Canada are *not* eligible to be sponsored.



How Do I Find a Refugee to Sponsor?

A group may submit an undertaking to sponsor a particular refugee(s) from abroad (sponsor-referred refugee). It is also possible for a SAH to sponsor a refugee that has been identified by a visa officer abroad either through the Visa Office-Referred (VOR) or the Joint Assistance Sponsorship (JAS) Programs. The VOR program provides profiles of refugees for who once an undertaking to sponsor has been submitted will most likely travel quickly to Canada as they have already been determined eligible and in most cases admissible to Canada.

The Joint Assistance Sponsorship (JAS) Program enables the admission and resettlement in Canada of special needs refugees. These people are unlikely to re-establish successfully within 12 months without additional emotional support and settlement assistance. However, with additional attention and assistance, they can reasonably be expected to re-establish over an extended period of time. Under the JAS program, CIC will provide financial assistance to meet the refugee's basic needs; the sponsor's role is to provide emotional support and settlement assistance usually for a period of 24 months. JAS and VOR profiles are available for viewing by SAHs on a secure website. Contact the RSTP to obtain website address and password.

More Information...

The RSTP website provides ample information on becoming a SAH and sponsoring as a SAH. The Sponsoring Group Handbook for provides further information and is available online at www.rstp.ca.

All refugee sponsorship application forms can be found on the Citizenship and Immigration Canada website at: www.cic.gc.ca.

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