

Month 13 Planning – FAQs

What should the sponsoring group consider when the sponsorship period is coming to an end?

Sponsors should consider the following as they approach the end of the sponsorship period:

- Evaluating the sponsorship period, including your experience as sponsors, i.e. successes, challenges and lessons learned;
- The settlement needs of the newcomer(s) before the sponsorship period comes to an end, i.e. any assistance required during the transition and post-sponsorship period; and,
- The sponsors' relationship with newcomer(s) in the post-sponsorship period.

When do we begin preparing the newcomer(s) for the post-sponsorship period?

Sponsors are advised to **begin preparing newcomer(s) for the end of the sponsorship period**, and the transition to the post-sponsorship period, **as early as Month 9**. In Month 9, sponsors are advised to communicate to the newcomer(s) that the sponsorship period will be ending in 3 months, and that the sponsoring group is not obligated to provide financial and settlement support beyond Month 12.

At the beginning of Month 9, sponsors are advised to conduct a **needs assessment** to determine what needs to be done before the sponsorship period concludes at the end of Month 12 to prepare the newcomer(s) for the transition to the post-sponsorship period. The assessment should be conducted in conjunction with the newcomer(s) to ensure that there are no unmet needs or service gaps at the end of Month 12.

What essential information should be communicated to the newcomer(s) before the sponsorship period ends?

Sponsors are advised to communicate to the newcomer(s) as soon as possible after arrival that the sponsorship period is 12 months (2 years for JAS cases), and that the sponsoring group is not obligated to provide financial and settlement support beyond Month 12. Sponsors are strongly advised to communicate this clearly to newcomer(s) and ensure that the newcomer(s) are aware of the exact date when the sponsorship ends.

Starting in Month 9, sponsors should **begin preparing newcomer(s) for the end of the sponsorship period**. Before the end of Month 12, sponsors are advised to use the **Month 13 Planning Checklist** to ensure that the newcomer(s) have the information they require, as well as necessary skills, knowledge and services for the post-sponsorship period. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Access to affordable housing;
- How to pay rent and other household bills;
- How to budget and transfer money electronically; and,
- How to contact emergency services.

Information that sponsoring groups should provide to newcomer(s) about transitioning to the post-sponsorship period includes, but is not limited to:

- Social assistance (including eligibility and how to apply);

- Eligibility for subsidized housing (including when and how to apply);
- Services offered by local settlement agencies;
- Taxes (including how and when to apply, assistance available when completing tax returns and entitlement for tax benefits);
- Educational programs and subsidies offered by local schools and colleges for further education (including further ESL); and,
- Changes in healthcare coverage (i.e. end of IFHP coverage, and alternative options for loss of coverage).

Is there a checklist that sponsoring groups can use to ensure that all essential information is communicated and all tasks are completed before the sponsorship period ends?

Sponsors are strongly advised to use the **Month 13 Planning Checklist** to assist them with ensuring that all essential information is communicated to the newcomer(s), as well as ensuring the newcomer(s) have the necessary skills, knowledge and services, for the post-sponsorship period.

When and how should self-sufficiency be assessed?

Self-sufficiency should be continually assessed throughout the sponsorship period by sponsors. Some benchmarks of self-sufficiency include, but are not restricted to: employment/self-employment with sufficient income to cover living costs; and, the ability to conduct day-to-day tasks (e.g. paying rent, bills, budgeting, knowledge of local area and transportation etc.).

What services are available, and what steps should be taken, when it appears that the newcomer(s) are not self-sufficient?

It is important for sponsors not to feel disheartened or discouraged if the newcomer(s) they have sponsored are not self-sufficient by the end of Month 12. Sponsors must recognize that **integration is a long-term process** which can take many years and is influenced by a number of factors. Sponsors are the start of the integration process, and it is unrealistic to expect the newcomer(s) to be fully integrated into Canadian society by the end of Month 12.

If newcomer(s) are not self-sufficient by the end of Month 12, the newcomer(s) are entitled to the following services and assistance that will help them achieve self-sufficiency:

- Social assistance and welfare support;
- Subsidized housing;
- Further ESL classes;
- Employment training support; and,
- Community activities and social support groups.

Sponsors are advised to see what services are available to newcomer(s) within their province and municipality, as some services may be restricted or additional services may be available based on location.

When, and how, should newcomer(s) that are not self-sufficient apply for social assistance?

Sponsors are advised to **research what social assistance or income assistance programs are available within their province**, what the average processing times are, and the specifics of how to apply. **Sponsors should ensure that the newcomer(s) receive their first social assistance payment at the end of Month 12** so that they are able to cover their rent for Month 13, as well as pay for groceries and bills.

Newcomer(s) in **Ontario** are able to apply for **Ontario Works** at the start of Month 12, to ensure that they receive coverage at the end of Month 12. Newcomer(s) can apply for Ontario Works online, in-person, or by phone. Newcomer(s) in **Ontario** are advised to contact their local Ontario Works office to see what the best and quickest way to apply is for their municipality.

Website: <http://www.mcscs.gov.on.ca/en/mcscs/programs/social/ow/>

In **Nova Scotia** the Department of Community Services is responsible for delivering the **Employment Support and Income Assistance Program**. Newcomer(s) in **Nova Scotia** can apply for the program via telephone. **Website:** http://novascotia.ca/coms/employment/income_assistance/HowtoApply.html

Newcomer(s) in **Prince Edward Island** are able to apply for the **Social Assistance Program** via telephone. **Website:** <https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/information/family-and-human-services/social-assistance-program>

In **New Brunswick**, newcomer(s) are able to apply for the **Social Development Program**. Newcomer(s) are advised to contact their local Social Development Regional Office for more information on how to apply. **Website:** http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/services/services_renderer.10295.Social_Assistance_Program.html#serviceDescription

In **Newfoundland**, newcomer(s) are able to apply for income support from the Department of Advanced Education and Skills. **Website:** <http://www.aes.gov.nl.ca/income-support/application.html>

In **British Columbia**, the application for the **BC Employment and Assistance Program** can be submitted online, and is followed by an in-person or phone interview with a case worker. Sponsors in **British Columbia** are advised to contact their local Work BC Centre for more information. **Website:** <http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/income-assistance/apply-for-assistance>

Newcomer(s) in **Manitoba** can apply for the **Employment and Income Assistance Program**. Before newcomer(s) are able to submit an application for the program, they may need to attend a pre-intake orientation. Newcomer(s) in **Manitoba** are advised to contact their local office for more information on how to apply for the **Employment and Income Assistance Program**. **Website:** <http://www.gov.mb.ca/fs/misc/loc/winnipeg.html>

For newcomer(s) in **Saskatchewan**, the **Saskatchewan Assistance Program (SAP)** offers varying kinds of financial help. Newcomer(s) in **Saskatchewan** are advised to contact their local Social Welfare office for more information and how to apply. **Website:** <https://www.saskatchewan.ca/residents/family-and-social-support/find-a-social-services-office>.

In **Alberta**, the **Income Support Program** is administered by the Ministry of Human Services. Newcomer(s) can apply for social assistance online, and is followed by an in-person meeting with a case worker. Sponsors in **Alberta** are advised to contact their local Alberta Works Centre for more information. **Website:** <http://www.humanservices.alberta.ca/financial-support/689.html>

Are newcomer(s) entitled to subsidized/low-income housing once the sponsorship period has ended?

Sponsors are advised to research whether their provincial government offers any subsidized or low-income housing and assist the newcomer(s) with applying for the program, or provide them with the information on how to apply. Sponsors must consider processing and waiting times, as waitlists may be longer in some areas compared to others.

What relationship should sponsoring groups have with the newcomer(s) in the post-sponsorship period?

Sponsors are welcome to continue providing financial and/or settlement support after Month 12 for PSR and BVOR newcomer(s) at their discretion. However, **sponsors are not obligated to do so**. If sponsors do decide to provide financial support after Month 12, sponsors must research how this support may affect any social assistance or income assistance the newcomer(s) may be receiving from the provincial government, as it may result in them not being eligible for social assistance, or having their payments reduced.

Sponsors may also wish to keep in contact with the newcomer(s) they sponsored to see if they could be of any assistance in the post-sponsorship period. However, **sponsors should respect the newcomer(s)' right to self-determination** in the post-sponsorship period, as they did during the sponsorship period.

