

PSR Post-arrival Assurance Activities

The purpose of this document is to identify and describe the post-arrival assurance activities undertaken by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) within the Private Sponsorship of Refugees (PSR) Program.

Assurance activities:

What is program assurance?

- ✓ Program assurance refers to ensuring a program is performing according to its objectives and requirements. Within the PSR Program, post-arrival, this means ensuring that refugees are receiving the support that they should be from their private sponsors, based on program requirements and regulations.

Why is IRCC conducting post-arrival assurance activities?

- ✓ IRCC shares the same goal as sponsors – for refugees to settle well into their community and work towards self-sufficiency.
- ✓ In taking on this critical responsibility, sponsors commit to being responsible for the refugees they sponsor for the duration of the agreed sponsorship period.
- ✓ For its part, IRCC is accountable to the Canadian public for evaluating the results of programs, policies and initiatives across all immigration programs. What this means for sponsors is that IRCC must ensure that the support they provide to refugees meets identified minimum standards.
- ✓ The need to improve IRCC's monitoring and awareness of post-arrival supports in the PSR Program was identified in the 2007 and 2015 PSR Program Evaluations.
- ✓ IRCC remains committed to ensuring positive settlement outcomes for privately sponsored refugees and Blended Visa Office Referred (BVOR) cases, and will continue to work with sponsors and their representatives on this mutual goal, while maintaining the integrity of the program.
- ✓ A variety of assurance activities are conducted in order to get a complete picture of the program at large, and to gain insight into how well the program is working. These will give confidence to the Department that the standards of the program are being met.
- ✓ These activities are extremely important in evaluating the success of the PSR and BVOR programs, which assist to feed into larger program reviews and improvements.

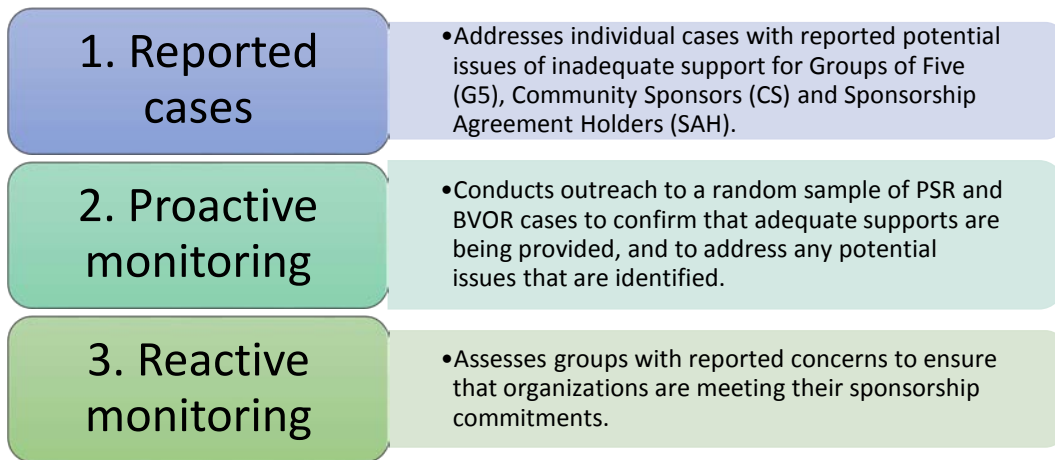
Who undertakes these activities?

- ✓ The Resettlement Services Assurance Team (RSAT), part of the International Network – Resettlement Operations Division

How do I contact this team?

- ✓ Email Address: IRCC.PSRCASEReview-RevuedecasPSR.IRCC@cic.gc.ca

What forms of assurance activities are undertaken by the RSAT team?



1. Reported cases

The RSAT receives information from a variety of internal partners as well as from the larger community, such as from social assistance workers, settlement agencies or sponsors and refugees themselves. We encourage the sponsorship community to reach out to the RSAT if they are aware of any potential concerns. All cases that are referred to our team are reviewed.

If there is a potential concern about a case, then the *Case Review Process* will be initiated for the specific case that was reported. See the below graph that depicts the stages of this process.

After a concern is reported, IRCC provides the sponsor with the opportunity to work together by sharing documentation to demonstrate that the sponsorship requirements have been met. After communicating with the sponsor, IRCC will also attempt to speak to the refugee to evaluate their situation and to determine how much financial and non-financial support has been provided. The concern itself is a flag that there may be a problem, but is not a determination that adequate support has not been provided. The sponsor is given the opportunity to demonstrate the support that has been provided and if there is a shortcoming, they are then given the opportunity to provide any outstanding support and comply with program requirements in order to avoid a sponsorship breakdown and potential default.

Some examples of issues that have triggered case specific follow-ups are:

- lack of, or no, financial support being provided
- lack of, or no, settlement support being provided, for example health concerns not addressed, or lack of access to settlement services
- interpersonal conflict between the sponsors and refugees

Case Review Process steps and letters:

***Note that the case will only move to the next step if the issue is not resolved at the lower stage.

1. Request for Information Letter

- IRCC will request information, including documentation, from the sponsor about the level of support provided, so that a review of the sponsorship can be performed. At this stage, IRCC collaborates with the sponsor by answering questions about program requirements and providing suggestions of acceptable documentation.

2. Results of Case Review Letter

- IRCC will issue a letter with the results of the case, including the detailed Resettlement Assistance Program rate amounts as well as a summary of the support provided. When support deficiencies are noted, rather than breaking down a sponsorship, IRCC collaborates with the sponsor by identifying any outstanding items for correction and by providing a period of time to allow for resolution of these items.

3. Sponsorship Breakdown or Sponsorship Breakdown/Procedural Fairness Letter

- In this stage, IRCC declares a breakdown of the sponsorship, and in cases where fault is to be determined, an opportunity is provided to the sponsor to demonstrate that they should not be at fault. Note that once a breakdown has been declared, the sponsorship cannot be restored and only support provided prior to the breakdown will be considered when determining fault.

4. Default Letter

- At this stage, if the sponsorship breakdown was declared and the sponsor is determined to be at fault, a Default Letter is sent to advise the sponsor of this final decision.
- As per the Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations, when a sponsor is found in default, they can no longer submit new applications, and to get out of default, they must satisfy IRCC that they should no longer be in default. In addition, if the sponsor is in debt to the government concerned, they must pay back this amount. The default lasts until the sponsor pays back any debt, satisfies IRCC they are in compliance with the obligations, and until the end of the sponsorship period for the case that the sponsor defaulted on.

What is the sponsor's role in Reported cases?

- The sponsor will be notified via the *Case Review Process*, starting with the Request for Information letter, if there is a possible issue with a case.
- The sponsor should acknowledge receipt of the letter and then follow-up on the case by communicating with the Constituent Group or co-sponsor, if applicable, and by working directly with the refugee to ensure that adequate support is provided.
- The sponsor must communicate with IRCC in a timely manner to avoid any Agreement related issues (for SAHs only) and/or sponsorship default.
- If at any time the sponsor is having difficulty with the *Case Review Process*, they should communicate this to the RSAT.

2. Proactive monitoring/outreach to refugees

****Implemented in January 2019. Communication was shared with the sponsorship community prior to implementation.**

To provide a more complete picture of how well the program is working, IRCC conducts outreach to refugees at random, to assess the level of support received.

- A random selection of cases who have arrived and are 4 to 6 months into their sponsorship will be selected from all sponsorship streams – SAH, G5, CS and Blended Visa Office-Referred (BVOR).
- Two methods will be used as part of the proactive outreach:
 - online questionnaires
 - telephone interviews
- Interpretation will be available for telephone interviews, and the online surveys will be available in various languages.
- There will be a Web notice on the IRCC website so that refugees can confirm the legitimacy of the survey or telephone call received.
- Following the outreach, sponsors may be contacted, but only if potential issues are identified. The *Case Review Process* will be initiated to work together to resolve any possible concerns.

What is the sponsor's role in proactive monitoring?

- In most cases, sponsors will not be required to take any action.
- The sponsor will be notified, via the *Case Review Process*, only if there was a possible issue during the proactive monitoring of a case.
- The sponsor should acknowledge receipt of the letter and then follow-up on the case by communicating with the Constituent Group or co-sponsor, if applicable, and by working directly with the refugee to ensure that adequate support is provided.
- The sponsor must communicate with IRCC in a timely manner to avoid any Agreement-related issues (for SAHs only) and/or sponsorship default.
- If at any time the sponsor is having difficulty with the *Case Review Process*, they should communicate this to the RSAT.

3. Reactive monitoring

If a recurring number of case-specific follow-ups are required, or if more serious allegations are reported, a monitor, or thorough review, of a particular sponsor or group will be conducted to look into the potential issues. A sample of the sponsor's caseload will be assessed and interviewed in order to analyze and review the concerns.

This activity includes interviews with refugees, with the use of interpreters, as well as sending questionnaires to the sponsor for their comments on each case. Following the interviews, and receipt of the questionnaires from the sponsors, IRCC will then analyze the information on file for each case, and determine if there are potential issues identified. If potential concerns are noted, the *Case Review Process* will be initiated to work with sponsors to resolve the possible concern.

Some examples of issues that have triggered reactive monitoring are:

- lack of, or no, communication with IRCC
- allegations of refugees paying for their sponsorship
- trends of negative results and increased numbers of reported case follow-ups

What is the sponsor's role in reactive monitoring?

- The sponsor, including any constituent groups and/or co-sponsors, will receive a questionnaire to fill out for each case that was monitored. SAHs will always be copied on all correspondence.
- If concerns are found, the case review process will begin and sponsors will receive a Request for Information letter from IRCC. IRCC will work with the sponsor to try to address the possible issues.
- The sponsor should acknowledge receipt of the letter and then follow-up on the case by communicating with the Constituent Group or co-sponsor, if applicable, and by working directly with the refugee to ensure that adequate support is provided.
- The sponsor must communicate with IRCC in a timely manner to avoid any Agreement-related issues (for SAHs only) and/or sponsorship default.
- If at any time the sponsor is having difficulty with the *Case Review Process*, they should communicate this to the RSAT.