

## Initial Meeting Checklist

An initial meeting with potential and existing Constituent Groups (CGs) and co-sponsors is required by many SAHs. If handled well, this can help CGs and co-sponsors set reasonable expectations regarding the sponsorship and ensure that potential sponsors understand what their responsibilities and obligations are. Here are some of the ways SAHs can handle their first contact with a new group:

- An in-person **assessment interview** to examine the financial and settlement capacity of the co-sponsors;
- The SAH representative **meets with one or more key members of the group** to give an overview of what to expect during the sponsorship; or,
- The SAH holds **information and training workshops** for all potential CGs and co-sponsors, as well as existing CGs and co-sponsors.

Below are some of the items that SAHs have found useful to review with prospective CGs or co-sponsors when they first enquire about sponsoring:

- The requirements of the PSR and/or the BVOR programs and the application process.
- Helpful resources/training, such as those available from the SAH and RSTP.
- The cost of sponsorship and sponsors' financial and settlement responsibilities.
- An introduction to the [RAP rates](#), RAP polices (as outlined in the [FAQs on Post-Arrival Financial Support for the PSR Program](#)) and how they affect sponsorship costs.
- The requirements of sponsors and their volunteers regarding criminality checks and screenings etc.
- The role and names of local settlement agencies (English and French language).
- The importance of connecting with a local settlement agency and settlement workers.
- The SAH's expectations about participation in training.
- A review of the internal contract or Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that the SAH uses and the group will be expected to sign (if any).
- Expectations and timelines regarding monitoring, checking in and reporting.
- SAH's expectations regarding communication.
- SAH and CG/co-sponsor responsibilities prior to the arrival of the refugee(s).
- SAH and CG/co-sponsor duties and responsibilities post-arrival.
- The importance of the Settlement Plan.
- What help the SAH can provide pre- and post-arrival.

## Training

Most SAHs recommend that their CGs/co-sponsors take training, regardless of whether they are new to refugee sponsorship or experienced sponsors. Some SAHs require their CGs/co-sponsors to be familiar with the items listed below before the SAH will assist them with their application. A wide variety of resources are available for CGs and their volunteers, and also new groups, on what sponsorship is and what the responsibilities and obligations are when sponsoring refugees from overseas.

Training may consist of in-person or webinar sessions that the SAH itself conducts or that RSTP provides. Many recordings of past webinars are available on the RSTP website at the following link: <http://www.rstp.ca/en/resources/video/past-webinars/>

Some SAHs produce their own fact sheets, FAQs and information resources, as does the SAH Association. RSTP also has [fact sheets](#) (translated into a variety of languages), [videos](#), [recorded webinars](#) and a [Sponsorship Handbook](#) available online under the 'Resources' tab at: [www.rstp.ca](http://www.rstp.ca)

After training, SAHs can assess whether the CG and/or the co-sponsors are familiar with the following:

- The rights of refugees.
- Sponsorship costs, RAP rates, RAP polices and the financial requirements.
- The CG's settlement responsibilities on arrival.
- The CG's responsibilities and obligations duties throughout the sponsorship period.
- The sponsorship process and certain markers in the application process, e.g. when the NAT might be received etc.

## Support and Resources

Many SAHs encourage new CGs and co-sponsors to reach out and find support through existing CGs and co-sponsors.

Your SAH may want to consider holding a meeting for new and experienced CGs and co-sponsors so they can share their experiences about the process, best practices and manage the expectations of sponsors new to refugee sponsorship. You may also want to consider hosting meetings or trainings with local SAHs to contribute to this networking, sharing of experiences and best practices. Or perhaps you can link a new group with an experienced group for mentoring.

Some SAHs support their groups with regular updates on sponsorship. This will ensure that the sponsoring groups are well-prepared for sponsorship, which in turn makes monitoring less onerous for all.

Social media channels like Twitter and Facebook are also easy to set up and a great way to get information out to CGs and co-sponsors. Many SAHs announce new arrivals, fundraising efforts and new sponsorship groups to their community this way. If your SAH is using social media, please ensure that you protect the refugee(s)' privacy and do not identify refugee(s) by name, share their story or pictures of them without their consent as doing so may have implications for the friends and family members of the refugee(s) that are not in Canada (i.e. they may still be in the country of origin and targeted for persecution).

RSTP sends out a biweekly [RSTP Bulletin](#) that contains the latest policy and program updates and posts the details of upcoming [webinars](#) and [training sessions](#) on its [website](#), through its social media channels and list-servs.