



# Are You Prepared? A Readiness Guide for a Strong SAH Application

## 1. Understand Official Requirements

(This helps you understand what a SAH is legally responsible for)

- Read the current version of the [sponsorship agreement \(PDF, 610 KB\)](#), as well as the information on the IRCC website related to [SAH Sponsorship Responsibilities](#), and [Post arrival requirements for private sponsorships](#).
- Make sure your leadership understands the full scope of SAH responsibility, including oversight of Constituent Groups (CGs) and co-sponsors.

(This means the SAH is responsible even when CG/Co-sponsors do the work)

- Make sure you have created internal policies and practices that refer to those sources and explain how your sponsorship program will operate. These policies should describe how the organization will manage and monitor refugee sponsorships in an [ethical](#), [compliant](#), and [risk-aware](#) way, including how finances, resources, volunteers, CG/Co-sponsor partnerships, and settlement support will be handled.

## 2. Governance and Organizational Structure

(This shows the organization has clearly assigned roles and accountability in place)

- Create a clear organizational structure chart showing leadership and decision-making roles. (This shows who is responsible for what in your organization)

- Clearly define roles (This prevents confusion and overlap in responsibilities)  
Do this for:

- finance
- settlement support
- compliance/recordkeeping
- volunteer coordination

- Document how decisions are made and approved for sponsorship cases. (This shows how cases are reviewed and approved fairly)

- Include basic governance policies such as:
  - conflict of interest policy (to avoid personal benefit influencing decisions)
  - complaint handling process (how concerns are reported and resolved)
  - escalation process for problems (what happens when serious issues arise)

## 3. Internal Policies and Risk Management

(This shows the how the sponsorship program work is done)

- Develop internal policies that explain how the sponsorship program operates in practice. (These are written rules for how everything is done). These policies should include:
  - finances
  - resources
  - volunteers
  - CG/co-sponsor partnerships
  - settlement support



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- Include risk management procedures such as:
  - emergency response plan (what to do in urgent situations)
  - sponsorship breakdown plan (what happens if support stops)
  - protection policies for vulnerable persons (extra safety for children or at-risk individuals)
- Ensure policies are clear, written, and used consistently in real operations, not only for documentation purposes.

### 4. Financial Capacity and Controls

(This shows your organization understands the actual financial responsibility of sponsorship.)

- Provide your most recent audited financial statements (or financial review/compilation, if applicable) as required by IRCC. (This is the official financial proof of your organization's financial reporting.)
  - You may also prepare additional past financial statements (if available) to show financial stability over time. (This is optional and helps show consistency, but is not required.)
- Show proof of stable funding sources.  
(This shows where sponsorship money comes from, such as donations or reserves.)
- Demonstrate that your organization understands the real cost of supporting a refugee family in Canada, based on basic cost of living such as:
  - rent and utilities
  - food and household items
  - transportation
  - basic personal needs
- Show that your organization plans for a reasonable contingency fund for unexpected costs. (This may include emergencies such as medical needs, housing issues, or delays in settlement support.)
- Prepare a cash-flow plan for 12–24 months.  
(This shows how the organization will pay expenses during the sponsorship period.)
- Document financial controls such as:
  - who approves spending (who has permission to use funds)
  - how expenses are tracked (how money is recorded and monitored)
  - how sponsorship funds are separated  
(keeping sponsorship money separate from other/operational funds)
- Prepare a short statement explaining future financial capacity.  
(This explains how the organization can continue supporting families in the future.)

### 5. Previous Sponsorship Experience

(to show that the organization has "recent" and "significant" experience)

- Describe your organization's role in previous sponsorships as a:  
(only those where your organization name was listed on the undertaking document)
  - Constituent Group (CG)
  - Co-sponsor
  - Community Sponsor (CS)



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- List the number of families sponsored - at least 2 sponsorship cases ("significant" experience), from the past 3 years only ("recent" cases)
  - Include the arrival date(s) of the sponsored families in Canada
  - Include the family size for each case
  - Provide the case number or G-number for each sponsorship
- Describe the sponsorship activities completed by your organization, such as:
  - preparing and submitting sponsorship applications to IRCC
  - organizing financial support
  - coordinating settlement and post-arrival support
- Explain the post-arrival support provided to refugees, such as:
  - housing support
  - school registration
  - language and settlement assistance
  - transportation and medical appointment support
- If your organization worked with a SAH, provide:
  - the name of the SAH organization
  - contact information for the SAH organization
- Make sure all information is detailed, accurate, and verifiable
- Clearly show the connection between the sponsorship experience and the organization applying to become a SAH

### 6. Volunteer Management and Training

(This shows volunteers are safely selected, trained, and understand their roles)

- Describe how volunteers are recruited and selected, including any screening process used. (This shows how volunteers are chosen responsibly.)
- Provide volunteer training that includes settlement support, confidentiality, and ethics and boundaries. (This ensures volunteers understand how to support newcomers appropriately.)
- Clearly define volunteer roles and limits. (This prevents confusion and ensures accountability.)

### 7. Recordkeeping and Compliance

(This shows how the organization manages information and maintains accountability)

- Describe how sponsorship files are organized and tracked throughout the full process. (This ensures cases are properly managed.)
- Explain how financial and settlement records are stored and maintained. (This ensures documentation of support and spending.)
- Ensure secure storage of personal information to protect privacy.
- Describe the time frame (how long) records are kept according to internal policy.
- Include an internal review process to check accuracy and correct errors when needed.



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## **8. Settlement Capacity and Support Network**

(This shows your organization can support families beyond arrival.)

- Describe your housing support approach, including how housing is found and maintained.
- Identify your community support network, including individuals and organizations that assist newcomers.
- Identify referral pathways for healthcare, language training, employment support, and mental health services.
- Describe how long-term settlement support is provided to help families become independent over time.

## **9. Partnerships and Community Support**

(This shows your organization is connected to external support systems.)

- List settlement agencies or organizations you currently work with.
- Include letters of support where available.
- Identify community partners such as housing providers, employers, schools, or community organizations that support newcomer settlement.

## **10. Organizational Readiness and Capacity**

(This shows your organization can realistically manage SAH responsibilities.)

- Define how many families your organization can realistically support per year.  
(This ensures capacity is realistic and sustainable.)
- Confirm ability to manage more than one sponsorship case at the same time.
- Include a succession plan to ensure continuity if key leaders change or leave.
- Complete an internal readiness review before applying to confirm overall preparedness.