



Anglican United
Refugee Alliance

AURA Handbook for Refugee Sponsorship

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2025

Welcome to Your Refugee Sponsorship Handbook!

For more than 30 years, the **Anglican United Refugee Alliance (AURA)** has been supporting refugee sponsorship in partnership with the Anglican Diocese of Toronto and the United Church of Canada. We are a **Sponsorship Agreement Holder (SAH)** working through the **Private Sponsorship of Refugees (PSR)** program.

AURA's job is to:

- Guide sponsor groups through the refugee sponsorship process.
- Help prepare sponsorship applications and submit them to **Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC)**.
- Support sponsor groups with training, resources and advice.
- Ensure sponsored newcomers receive adequate support.

We commend your interest and dedication to welcoming refugees. Sponsorship requires a serious commitment of resources, time, and energy. While it is important to be prepared and understand your responsibilities, you must also realize that not every problem will have a solution. You are embarking on a journey that may surprise and challenge you.

This handbook is a resource for planning and carrying out your sponsorship as effectively as possible. You will find information about your responsibilities, overarching considerations, tips, checklists, and resources AURA has available specifically for you - a refugee sponsor. This handbook is updated regularly based on feedback from sponsors.

For non-AURA Sponsor Groups:

AURA's mission is to provide expertise and support to any and all refugee sponsors. We are very happy to share our resources. However, if AURA did not submit your refugee sponsorship application to IRCC then our responsibilities and requirements as described in this handbook do not formally apply to you.



Types of refugee cases AURA supports:

Named (Sponsor-referred)

Sponsored refugees are known already by the sponsor group and usually have family in Canada. The average processing time is 1.5-3 years from case submission to arrival.

Sponsors are responsible for full 12 months of financial and settlement support.

Blended Visa Office Referred (BVOR)

Sponsored refugees are referred to Canada by the United Nations, and matched with sponsors after being accepted by IRCC. The average processing time is 4-6 months from case submission to arrival. IRCC provides 6 months of modest income support during the 12 month sponsorship and sponsors provide the rest.

Do not hesitate to contact us:

Email: questions@auraforrefugees.org

Phone: 416-588-1612 x0

A digital version of this handbook and additional resources are available in our Sponsor Toolbox at: www.auraforrefugees.org

FEEDBACK:

Is there something you think we should add or update?
See a mistake or typo? Please let us know!



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Each group must also complete **AURA's Settlement Plan**, a document available from our website or AURA staff.

COMMON ACRONYMS

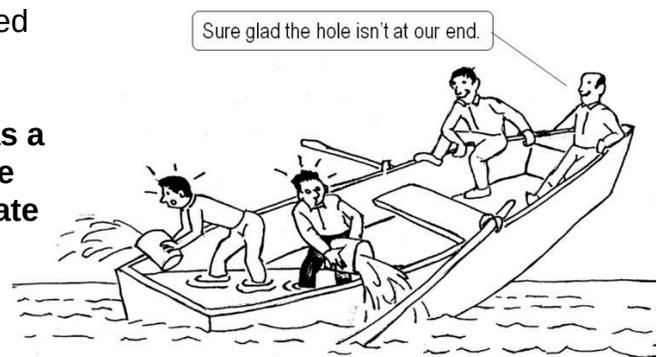
BVOR: Blended Visa Office Referred	ESL: English as a Second Language (also called ELL, English Language Learner)	LINC: Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada	PSR: Private Sponsorship of Refugees or Privately Sponsored Refugee
CCB: Canada Child Benefit	GAR: Government Assisted Refugee	NAT: Notice of Arrival	RAP: Resettlement Assistance Program
COPR: Confirmation of Permanent Residence	IFHP: Interim Federal Health Program	OHIP: Ontario Health Insurance Plan	RSTP: Refugee Sponsorship Training Program
CRA: Canada Revenue Agency	IOM: International Organization for Migration	OW: Ontario Works (also called Social Assistance)	SAH: Sponsorship Agreement Holder
CG: Constituent Group (also called Sponsor Group)	IRCC: Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada	PR: Permanent Resident	SIN: Social Insurance Number
		PICS: Polycultural Immigrant and Community Services	UNHCR: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

"This sponsorship was an amazing experience that required far greater effort than we expected, and had a far greater reward than we could have ever imaged."

~ AURA Sponsor

Responsibilities

Thank you for choosing to be directly involved in refugee sponsorship. People decide to become sponsors for many reasons. Regardless of what has brought you here, **as a sponsor you have an obligation to ensure the refugees you sponsor receive adequate support during their first year in Canada according to the PSR program rules.**



Your sponsorship will last 12 months from the refugee's date of arrival.

Sponsor Responsibilities

You and your group must work together to:

- Welcome the sponsored newcomer(s) upon arrival at the airport.
- Locate and utilize interpreters, as needed (see tips on page 23).
- Provide sufficient financial and in-kind support to cover the cost of rent, food, utilities, and reasonable day-to-day expenses for one year.
- Plan and follow a budget in line with the PSR program rules.
- Ensure sufficient clothing, furniture, and household goods.
- Help newcomers open a bank account and manage their own finances.
- Provide ongoing orientation about day-to-day life (shopping, transportation, etc.)
- Assist with accessing health care and coverage (OHIP, IFHP, doctor, dentist, glasses, mental health supports etc.)
- Help to enroll children in school and adults in ESL classes.
- Support access to services (settlement agencies, employment programs, tax benefits, registrations, recreation etc.)
- Ensure they receive the documents they need (COPR, PR Card, SIN, OHIP, Driver's Licences etc.)
- Help identify and prepare for employment.
- Provide emotional and settlement support in line with their needs.

AURA
@auraforrefugees

Group Leader Responsibilities:
Group Leaders are responsible for ongoing communication with AURA. They must be available and responsive to AURA's requests and enquiries, and must submit the following before AURA submits the application to IRCC:

- a list of all group members and their contact information
- copy of a recent police clearance for all members
- settlement plan
- budget

Every sponsor group working with AURA must:

- Identify a leader or main contact for communication with AURA.
- Commit to the sponsorship, even if timelines, priorities, personalities, or challenges differ from your expectations.
- Provide support for the entire sponsorship year.
- Approach the sponsorship year as an opportunity for newcomers to study English, understanding this means employment may not be an immediate priority.
- Ensure sufficient funds are available to reasonably support the sponsored newcomers, including some additional costs (e.g. dental care, emergencies, last month's rent deposit etc.). This usually means raising more than IRCC's minimum financial requirements.
- Respect the newcomers' right to privacy and self-determination.
- Seek help from AURA in a timely manner when questions or difficulties arise.
- Respond in a timely manner to AURA's requests and check-ins.

*"The newcomers were sometimes very pushy to get their way (we expected more gratitude). Demanding behaviour made us feel unappreciated."
~ AURA Sponsor*

Managing Expectations

We all have expectations, whether we are aware of them or not. It is easy to develop unrealistic expectations which can lead to serious problems in sponsorships.

Expectations are one of the biggest factors that shape the experience of sponsorship for both refugees and sponsors. Discussing and managing expectations can prevent disappointment, resentment and conflict.

Sponsor Expectations:

Take a moment to think about why you are participating in refugee sponsorship. This experience may be different than what you have imagined or experienced before. Will you remain committed even if things don't go as you hope?

Sponsors often report that sponsorships were more work than they expected.

Example Sponsor Expectations:	A More Informed Approach:
The newcomers will be so happy to be in Canada.	Many refugees never wanted to leave their country, so "happy" is not the first emotion they feel about being in Canada. Starting a new life here means a whole new set of challenges, many of which may be unexpected.
We have gone to great lengths to be prepared. Everything will go according to our plan.	Expect surprises. So much depends on the individuals involved, their personalities, and unique needs. Part of being ready is being prepared to be flexible and adjust plans for support when roadblocks arise.
All refugees have PTSD and need counselling.	There is no singular 'refugee experience'. Every person is an individual and must be seen as such. In some cultures, openly discussing mental health challenges is considered taboo.
The newcomers will tell us if they don't feel comfortable doing something we request.	They may feel confident asserting themselves or they may feel pressure to say what they think you want to hear. It is your job to make it clear that they can say no to offers or requests that come from you and your group.
This will be a beautiful, lifelong friendship.	Sometimes lifelong relationships are formed, but every sponsor-newcomer relationship is unique. Sometimes personalities clash and people do not stay in touch after the sponsorship ends.
We will hear all the details of why they left their country.	They should only share as much or as little about their past as they feel comfortable. Sponsors are not entitled to information and should not pressure newcomers to share.
The family will no longer require support after one year.	It usually takes a lot longer than 1 year to settle, feel at home and be "self-sufficient". Sponsorship is not about supporting a family until they don't need any more support. It is about providing extra help for their first year.

Maintain Solidarity: Strive for consistency among sponsor group members when it comes to what you can or cannot provide. You're a team - support one another.

Welcome Agreement: Some groups draft an agreement, outlining roles and expectations, and ask the newcomers to sign it. This can be helpful to set the tone of your sponsorship. Contact AURA if you'd like to see some examples other groups have shared.

Respectful Environment: Strive to create a respectful environment of open communication that allows expectations to be identified and discussed. This may allow for an opportunity to re-align expectations before they cause problems - with both sponsors and newcomers.

Cultural Awareness: If applicable, strive to inform yourself about the customs and culture of the newcomer to understand/be aware of how this might affect your communications and relationship.

Newcomer Expectations:

Each refugee newcomer brings with them a set of expectations. They may come from family members or friends who were sponsored, the media, the 'rosy image' of Canada projected to the world, or their own priorities, hopes, and dreams. Often times, connecting pre-arrival to discuss expectations can be helpful.

Example Newcomer Expectations:	A More Informed Approach:
As soon as I get to Canada, I can start working in my field.	Canadian processes to recognize foreign credentials are complicated and stringent. This can be a real challenge to a newcomer's sense of self.
I will send money to my relatives back home.	Life here is expensive, leaving little opportunity to send money home. Sponsorship funds should not be used for family members abroad.
I will bring my relatives to Canada.	The ability to sponsor other family members is very limited and out of reach for most. Sadly, most people who want to access the PSR program cannot.
I will learn English quickly.	English is really hard to learn. It can be easy for newcomers to surround themselves with people who speak their language. Full-time, good quality and free classes are not always available right away.
The sponsors are Christian so they may want me to go to Church.	Freedom of religion is an important part of all AURA sponsorships. You can invite newcomers to talk about their religion, but it should never be forced. It is up to them if they wish to learn about or participate in your religion.
I will get all brand new clothes and furniture from my sponsors.	Sponsors must provide the reasonable necessities of life. Often times there is little room in a budget for many new items. Newcomers may have to wait longer than they expected before they will have all the things they may want. The PSR program rules allow for a significant amount of in-kind support.
My neighbours are refugees too and they got something I didn't get. I'm being cheated.	There are many types of sponsorships (GAR, BVOR, PSR) that receive different benefits. Understand these differences so you can explain them.

- Don't expect newcomers to know much about the PSR Program. It's your responsibility to **explain the sponsorship**, goals, roles and expectations.
- **Address** unrealistic expectations by explaining the sponsorship, the reasoning behind decisions, and your **shared responsibility in helping them settle**.
- Ask them about **their priorities** for the sponsorship period to see if they align with yours, and explore ways to work together towards the same goals.

"The simple biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place."
~ George Bernard Shaw

Reflections from a Sponsor Group:

<i>"An old story comes to mind.</i>	<i>The learning here for us:</i>
<i>Someone asking for directions is told,</i>	<i>understand clearly from the</i>
<i>'I can tell you how to get there but if</i>	<i>beginning where the newcomer is in</i>
<i>I were you, I wouldn't be starting</i>	<i>terms of skills, knowledge,</i>
<i>from here.' It's a good reminder that</i>	<i>education, language and so on. Set</i>
<i>it's critical to start where the</i>	<i>short and long-term goals and</i>
<i>newcomer is and go from there. I feel</i>	<i>evaluate them frequently. Have clear</i>
<i>we would have had lower levels of</i>	<i>lines of communication amongst</i>
<i>frustration and discouragement had</i>	<i>those interacting frequently with the</i>
<i>we walked more slowly and with</i>	<i>newcomer and also between the</i>
<i>more realistic goals.</i>	<i>group and the newcomer."</i>

Secondary Migration

Secondary migration refers to a sponsored refugee choosing to move outside of the sponsor's community. In most cases, this will result in a sponsorship breakdown (an official end to the sponsorship). However, IRCC has a process sponsors must follow in these situations, which includes:

- trying to identify sponsors in the new community and documenting these efforts
- continuing to provide financial support until a formal breakdown is declared

If you have concerns about Secondary Migration, please contact AURA right away.

"It is important to remember newcomers are people, not projects."

~Sponsors of a BVOR family from Myanmar

Power Imbalance & Self-Determination

A **power imbalance** refers to a relationship where one party has more actual or perceived power than the other. **A power imbalance often exists between sponsors and sponsored refugee newcomers.** This is because sponsors have more knowledge of life here, speak better English (often), and have control over material support. Humility and gratitude on the part of the sponsored refugees can also be contributing factors.

Self-determination refers to someone's ability to control their own life. Sponsored refugees have the right to **make their own choices**. It is **not** your role to make decisions for them, but rather to help them access the information that will allow them to make **informed decisions** for themselves, and understand the impact their decisions will have.



A sponsor-newcomer relationship is not a parent-child relationship.

Avoiding a parental approach can be tough when you're responsible for someone financially and genuinely care about their well-being.

Consider these situations and reflect on the concepts described above:

- You ask a newcomer to speak at your church about their experience coming to Canada.
- You post pictures or videos of the newcomers (or the children) without asking permission.
- You drop off boxes of donated items without asking if they want them.
- You show them where to buy inexpensive food, then notice they've been shopping at expensive stores.
- You arrange free spots at a wonderful after-school program for the children in the family, but the parents decline.

You and the sponsored newcomers may not share all the same values.

You may not agree with all their decisions.

This cannot prevent you from fulfilling your responsibilities as a sponsor.

Strive to minimize the power difference and support self-determination by:

- Being mindful of the power you hold in the relationship.
- Asking questions and carefully listening to answers. Checking for understanding.
- Using interpreters when needed, and avoiding yes/no questions.
- Taking the time to explain things clearly, repeating important points as needed.
- Explaining your role as a sponsor.
- Explaining they have the right to make their own decisions, to say "no", and that they do not need to agree with your suggestions.
- When possible/appropriate, providing options from which newcomers may choose.
- Explaining they have the right to express their opinions, desires, and concerns (and the sponsorship will probably be better if they do!). They may not always be able to get what they want, but they should not be forced to do or accept something they do **not** want.

Reflections from a Sponsor Group:

<i>Establishing boundaries can be very difficult; however, it is one of the most important things a sponsor can do to ensure a healthy and successful sponsorship. Many times, when newcomers first arrive there are more needs than any single sponsor can support. It is important for sponsors to understand that they are not responsible to solve ALL of the newcomers' problems.</i>	<i>Sponsors should remember that the ultimate goal is self-sufficiency and independence, and that cannot be achieved if the sponsor does not give the newcomer adequate space to learn and grow. It is best to establish these boundaries at the beginning of the sponsorship, but sponsors should not hesitate to clarify boundaries at any time.</i>
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Privacy & Confidentiality

Imagine you moved to a new country, and a group of people were responsible for your rent, your food, your children's clothing, etc. How would you react if you disagreed with something that group proposed, or if they asked you for a favour you really did not want to do?

For sponsored refugees, privacy is a right. Be conscious and careful about respecting it.

- Sponsors, donors, or volunteers may feel entitled to the newcomers' private information when in fact they should not.
- Ensure there is agreement among sponsors about respecting privacy from the outset.
- Do not make assumptions about the newcomers' comfort level with their personal information being shared. Always seek informed consent.

Publishing Information: Be careful not to publish private information. Always ask before using names or pictures and make sure they know they can say 'no' without causing a problem. For some refugee newcomers, sharing photos or personal information can put them or their family members in danger.

Good Intentions: We have to be mindful about respecting privacy because having good intentions doesn't guarantee against offending or endangering someone.

DO:	DON'T:
Do call before visiting.	Don't assume that you can visit anytime.
Do avoid sharing unnecessary private information, even among sponsors.	Don't expect settlement and other service providers or organizations to share information with you.
Do ensure newcomers understand they have the right to say 'no'.	Don't publish photos, videos, names or identifying information without their informed consent.
Do treat the newcomer's privacy as you would want to others to treat yours.	Don't exclude newcomers from conversations when they are present, especially conversations about them.
Do reflect on power differentials as a group and identify ways to minimize them.	Don't provide newcomers' contact information to a person or organization without their permission. If someone wishes to contact them, offer to give that person's contact info to the newcomers (not vice versa).
Do ask before acting on an assumption e.g. May I hold your baby? May I come in? Are you interested in this program?	Don't single out newcomers or ask them to speak in front of people without discussing it first and obtaining consent.

"Newcomers" or "Refugees" ?

- Privately Sponsored Refugees become Permanent Residents of Canada upon arrival
- They will self-identity as they wish, but you should use language that leaves that choice to them
- **Use the term "newcomers" instead of "refugees"**

IMPORTANT: During the sponsorship you may get copies of documents with the newcomer's personal information, including electronic ones. Don't share information unnecessarily and remember to return/destroy personal documents when the sponsorship is over.

AURA TIPS

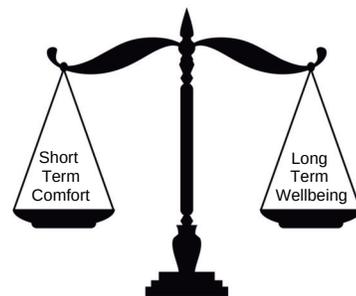


- Always use your best judgement and discretion to respect the newcomers' privacy. If you're not sure - ask them what they're comfortable with.
- Avoid referring to newcomers as 'our refugees.' Use the family or individual or family's names.
- Try not to lose sight of these important concepts as your sponsorship progresses.
- Remember you likely know much more about them than they know about you.
- Some newcomers may want to have their pictures published, or their stories told. The key is that they make their own informed decision.
- The trust that will develop between your group and the newcomers will likely depend on how well they perceive your ability to protect their privacy.

Financial Support



"Now let's talk about money. Do we have any? How much would we like? Does anyone know where we can get some?"



Balance is key.

There is no "one size fits all" model. Requirements vary based on sponsorship type, family composition, available in-kind donations, cost of living, family support, etc.

Sponsors are responsible for supporting newcomers financially for their first year in Canada. Your group must provide and/or raise enough money to ensure their basic needs are met.

Sponsored newcomers must receive funds for start-up expenses and monthly expenses, according to IRCC's rules for the PSR program. Many sponsors also raise enough money to cover additional expenses.

Considerations in Budget Planning:

- **A Fine Balance:** Be aware of creating an unsustainable relationship of dependency by providing too much financial support.
- **Avoid Difficult Transitions:** If sponsors provide high levels of financial support or pay for things on behalf of newcomers without them understanding the cost, it could be extra-challenging for them to transition away from dependence on sponsors.
- **Avoid Surprises:** They deserve to know from the beginning how much money they will receive, how, when and from whom. Strive for consistency month to month.

In-Kind Support

- Furniture, household items, kitchenware and clothing can be collected, donated or purchased for the newcomers, reducing the overall cost of the sponsorship or allowing money to be directed to other supports. However, IRCC rules state that in-kind support can never replace financial support entirely.
- Housing is the only support that can be provided fully in-kind by sponsors. Other supports (start-up, food, transportation, communication etc.) have minimum dollar amounts assigned to them.
- Regardless of how many donations your group can arrange, the newcomers **MUST** be provided with some start-up funds.
- Some items cannot be provided second hand, such as: mattresses, open food items, footwear, and personal clothing (like underwear).

- **Self-Determination in Practice:** Sponsors must provide reasonable funds and explain how they are meant to cover the newcomers' needs. As long as their basic needs are met, how they prioritize and decide to spend their money is up to them (not you!).
- **English** is key to long-term success, and the sponsorship year is an opportunity for newcomers to prioritize studying English - not seek employment right away if it comes at the expense of language learning.
- **Agency:** The financial structures established in a sponsorship must enable newcomers to be in control of their own funds. They must have agency and power within the sponsorship.

- **Sharing Information:** Newcomers are not obligated to share their personal financial information with sponsors. They may not want to share bank statements, receipts, pay stubs etc. with you. The extent to which they will be able to benefit from your support may be limited if they do not, but it is their choice.

For more information, see AURA's Sponsor Toolbox > Financial Support

We had enough money to pay for driver's licenses, a pronunciation class and visits to the dentist. We felt these were important in getting the family established."

~Sponsors of an Iraqi family

Finances: Budget Planning

Newcomers should receive funds directly from the sponsoring church or AURA for start-up costs shortly after arrival, then each month for the first year. Your group must plan a **Sponsorship Budget** and/or **Disbursement Schedule** and submit it to AURA. You may use one of AURA's template documents or create your own.

- Pre-submission, a Sponsorship Budget will help you decide how much money you need to raise.
- Pre-arrival, a Disbursement Schedule will help you plan how/when funds will be given to the newcomer(s).

IRCC's Rules for Financial Support:

- IRCC provides financial support to Government sponsored refugees through the **Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP)**. You must provide financial support equal to or greater than RAP Rates. Seniors and children over 18 require additional financial support (see below and page 11).
- RAP Rates are calculated based on family composition for start-up and monthly support. They are very low and do not reflect the real cost of living. Extra support from sponsors is almost always required if newcomers have no other income or assets.
- IRCC has set dollar amounts for various categories, and maximum deductions for in-kind support. This means that regardless of how many donated items and supports sponsors arrange, there will always be a certain amount of money that newcomers must receive from sponsors for both start-up and monthly support.

RSTP's Minimum Financial Support Calculator

This Refugee Sponsorship Training Program tool helps you calculate:

- RAP rates for your sponsorship
- In-kind deductions

<https://www.rstp.ca/calc/?lang=en>



Start-up: one-time expenses for newcomers to get established, such as:

- household items
- kitchenware
- furniture
- linens and towels
- food staples
- clothing
- deposit for utilities
- internet installation
- school supplies
- cleaning supplies
- cell phones
- winter clothing

Monthly: Sponsors must provide enough money and in-kind support to ensure basic needs are covered for the entire first year, such as:

- Housing / rent
- Food
- Personal care items
- Transportation
- Communication

Consider raising extra funds for:

Dental care, camps, bikes, child care, activities, university applications, interpreters, recreation programs, evaluation of credentials, courses or programs, renter's insurance, supports for employment, or repayment of the immigration travel loan (see page 14) etc...

YOUR PLANNED FINANCIAL SUPPORT MUST MEET OR EXCEED RAP RATES.

IRCC Minimum Financial Support Obligations - RAP Rates						RAP Start-up + Monthly x 12	Amount Required before application is submitted to IRCC	Estimated Realistic Cost
#	Family Composition	Monthly RAP Rate	Monthly RAP Rate x 12	Minimum Start-up	Minimum Start-up after Maximum In-kind Deductions*			
1	Single Adult	\$1,167.41	\$14,008.92	\$3,197.89	\$1,161.57	\$17,206.81	\$17,500.00	\$25,000.00
1	Single Senior	\$1,634.56	\$19,614.72	\$3,197.89	\$1,161.57	\$22,812.61	\$23,000.00	\$25,000.00
2	Couple	\$1,726.41	\$20,716.92	\$4,752.62	\$1,632.96	\$25,469.54	\$25,500.00	\$35,000.00
2	Couple (1 Senior)	\$2,312.56	\$27,750.72	\$4,752.62	\$1,161.57	\$32,503.34	\$33,000.00	\$35,000.00
2	Couple (2 Seniors)	\$2,764.71	\$33,176.52	\$4,752.62	\$1,632.96	\$37,929.14	\$38,000.00	\$40,000.00
2	Adult + Child	\$1,433.00	\$17,196.00	\$4,850.00	\$1,709.50	\$22,046.00	\$22,500.00	\$40,000.00
3	Adult + 2 Children	\$1,491.41	\$17,896.92	\$6,185.00	\$2,174.00	\$24,081.92	\$24,500.00	\$40,000.00
3	Couple + Child	\$1,781.41	\$21,376.92	\$5,973.72	\$2,067.10	\$27,350.64	\$27,500.00	\$45,000.00
4	Adult + 3 Children	\$1,550.41	\$18,604.92	\$7,812.59	\$2,749.43	\$26,417.51	\$27,000.00	\$45,000.00
4	Couple + 2 Children	\$1,840.41	\$22,084.92	\$7,555.52	\$2,609.46	\$29,640.44	\$30,000.00	\$50,000.00
5	Adult + 4 Children	\$1,609.41	\$19,312.92	\$9,180.06	\$3,227.49	\$28,492.98	\$30,000.00	\$50,000.00
5	Couple + 3 Children	\$1,899.41	\$22,792.92	\$9,215.73	\$3,175.34	\$32,008.65	\$32,500.00	\$60,000.00
6	Adult + 5 Children	\$1,638.41	\$19,660.92	\$10,547.53	\$3,705.55	\$30,208.45	\$30,500.00	\$60,000.00
6	Couple + 4 Children	\$1,928.41	\$23,140.92	\$10,583.20	\$3,653.40	\$33,724.12	\$34,000.00	\$70,000.00
+1	+ child under 18, add:	\$200.00	\$2,700.00	\$1,053.21	\$368.62	\$3,753.21	add \$4,000.00	add \$4,000.00
	For each child over 18, add:	\$1,167.41	\$14,008.92	\$3,197.89	\$1,161.57	\$17,206.81	add \$17,500.00	add \$17,500.00

*If you plan to provide in-kind (donated) items to reduce start-up expenses, this is the minimum amount of start-up funds you must provide.

Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP) Rates & Blended Visa Office Referred Cases

AURA facilitates 2 types of sponsorship applications: Named Cases and Blended Visa Office Referred (BVOR) Cases. Named cases are for refugees identified or known by sponsors, and BVORs are referred to the Government of Canada by the UNHCR.



AURA TIPS

- RAP rates do not increase much for children under 18, because of Canada Child Benefit (CCB) payments. But, the CCB application may take several months and then include a retroactive payment.
- Some groups provide a loan for the first few month to families while they wait for the CCB. **If you do this, document your arrangement with a signed agreement.**
- IRCC's rules around minimum financial support can get very complex, particularly when sponsoring multiple family units, or providing significant in-kind support. Please contact AURA if you'd like help in budget planning.

BVORs receive 6 months of Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP) funds from IRCC at the rates below. Sponsors provide the rest.

RAP Appointment:

A local RAP officer will email sponsors shortly after the arrival of a BVOR to arrange a meeting in person or by telephone.

- All adults in the sponsored family and a sponsor must attend.
- Sponsors must arrange for an interpreter, if required.
- In order to start receiving RAP, newcomers must be in permanent housing. Therefore, the RAP start date may be delayed.

Budgeting Considerations:

- Take RAP payments into consideration to ensure consistency over the 12 month sponsorship.
- RAP rates are usually insufficient, especially for families with children not yet receiving Canada Child Benefits (CCB). Sponsors can (often must) provide additional financial support during the RAP period.
- Take extra care in explaining the source of funds during these months and how your support is adjusted.
- Clients must report any income from employment to RAP, and RAP will be reduced based on their earnings. Contact AURA for more details. Funds from sponsors do not count as income.
- RAP will begin once permanent housing is secured. The start date must be confirmed with the RAP officer.



Minimum Financial Support Calculator

The Refugee Sponsorship Training Program created an online tool to calculate:

- RAP rates
- In-kind deductions

See:

<https://www.rstp.ca/calculator?lang=en>

MONTHLY RAP RATES						
#	Family Composition	Basic Needs	Shelter	Transportation	Communication	Total Monthly
1	Single Adult	\$343.00	\$590.00	\$156.00	\$78.41	\$1,167.41
1	Single Senior	\$706.00	\$722.00	\$128.15	\$78.41	\$1,634.56
2	Couple	\$494.00	\$842.00	\$312.00	\$78.41	\$1,726.41
2	Couple (1 Senior)	\$969.00	\$981.00	\$284.15	\$78.41	\$2,312.56
2	Couple (2 Seniors)	\$1,409.00	\$1,021.00	\$256.30	\$78.41	\$2,764.71
2	Adult + Child	\$360.00	\$842.00	\$156.00	\$78.41	\$1,436.41
3	Adult + 2 Children	\$360.00	\$897.00	\$156.00	\$78.41	\$1,491.41
3	Couple + Child	\$494.00	\$897.00	\$312.00	\$78.41	\$1,781.41
4	Adult + 3 Children	\$360.00	\$956.00	\$156.00	\$78.41	\$1,550.41
4	Couple + 2 Children	\$494.00	\$956.00	\$312.00	\$78.41	\$1,840.41
5	Adult + 4 Children	\$360.00	\$1,015.00	\$156.00	\$78.41	\$1,609.41
5	Couple + 3 Children	\$494.00	\$1,015.00	\$312.00	\$78.41	\$1,899.41
6	Adult + 5 Children	\$360.00	\$1,044.00	\$156.00	\$78.41	\$1,638.41
6	Couple + 4 Children	\$494.00	\$1,044.00	\$312.00	\$78.41	\$1,928.41
+1	For each child under 18, add:					\$200.00
	For each child over 18, add:	\$343.00	\$590.00	\$156.00	\$78.41	\$1,167.41

Finances: Post-Arrival



Employment

The sponsorship is a one time opportunity for newcomers to benefit from your support and focus on studying English full time (if needed). This will enable more lucrative and meaningful work in the long-term. Start focusing on employment in the second half of the sponsorship.

If newcomers do work, your group can reduce financial support according to the PSR program's established rules if they choose to share information regarding their earning with you. Contact AURA to learn more.

Explain the Plan: Shortly after arrival, arrange a semi-formal meeting and explain how the finances will work month by month. These conversations may not feel natural or comfortable but are absolutely essential. Be explicit and explain everything.

- Provide a simple document to share the numbers.
- Develop an approach that reflects the newcomers' needs.
- Some people will need and want more support than others.
- The guidance and overall structures you establish will vary depending on the financial literacy and experience of the family/individual you are sponsoring and how involved they would like you to be.

Strive for a situation in which the same total sum is received by newcomers monthly and they pay their own bills and expenses directly from their bank account.

Canada Child Benefit: Families with children must apply to receive monthly CCB payments, the first of which will be retroactive to arrival and potentially very large. CCB payments **cannot** replace sponsor support. Apply for CCB as soon as possible (see page 13).

Housing: The concept of utilities, electricity, heat, and water being billed separately may be new for some.

Phones and Internet: Newcomers must have internet access and a cell phone. Provide a computer if the budget allows for it.

Banking: Open a bank account with the newcomers in the first few days. Consider the location, fees, benefits and multilingual staff.

Explain: How to pay bills and the importance of paying them on time. Explain pre-paid vs. monthly.

Explain: ATM fees, NSF, cheques, credit vs debit, charges, etc.

Taxes: See the next page.

AURA TIPS



- Funds raised for sponsorship are meant to be used for resettlement in Canada, not supporting families abroad.
- Extra help will likely be required in the beginning. Make a conscious effort to ensure newcomers learn to handle their finances independently as the sponsorship progresses.
- Consider connecting newcomers with financial literacy services in addition to your support.
- Check out programs for low-income families such as: Ontario Electricity Support Program, Toronto Welcome Policy (for recreation), Child Care Fee Subsidy.
- Complete financial freedom with no accountability could prevent you from fulfilling your responsibilities if problems arise. On the other hand, you cannot force newcomers to keep every receipt. Sponsors can be as involved in daily finances as the newcomers allow them to be.
- Sponsors are not responsible for debts incurred by newcomers. Do not co-sign a credit card.
- Warn against scams! Warn newcomers about phone scams and credit companies that try to recruit new customers.
- To discuss how to use funds left over after a sponsorship, contact AURA.

Sourcing Donations

Some sponsors have received free computers, gift cards, cell phones, bikes, welcome baskets, clothing...even apartments! Try approaching local companies to ask about donations (this is a great job for a volunteer who wants to help from a distance).



"We wished we had known about telephone scams. We got so many calls from what we thought was the Canada Revenue Agency and we thought there was a problem. Our sponsors told us that the calls were scams, but it was confusing."
~Family sponsored through AURA

Taxes and Benefits

The Canada Child Benefit (CCB):

The CCB is a monthly tax-free payment for families with children under 18. Sponsored refugee newcomers are eligible.

Budgeting Considerations:

- It can take Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) 3+ months to process a CCB application. So, apply ASAP!
- The first payment will be retroactive to arrival and could be very large.
- If families receive a large CCB, sponsors can reduce financial support to the RAP rate level, but not below the RAP rate level.
- Explain the amounts they will receive to avoid confusion or surprises.

Maximum Benefit Amount per Child:

- age 6 and under: \$619.75/month
- 6-17: \$522.91/month

How to Apply:

- You need SIN numbers in order to apply.
- Complete CRA Form **RC66** "Canada Child Benefits Application" and Form **RC66SCH**, "Status in Canada and Income Information" and mail them to the Sudbury Tax Centre.
- Settlement agencies can help.

No Children?

- Single newcomers and couples without children should complete **Form RC151** as soon as possible after arriving, to start receiving the **GST/HST Credit** and the **Canada Carbon Rebate (CCR)**.
- Download the form from CRA's website, complete it, and mail to the Sudbury Tax Centre.
- When a family applies for CCB they are automatically assessed for these credits.



AURA TIPS

- CRA recalculates benefit amounts every July, based on tax returns.
- Explain what taxes pay for in Canada.
- To apply for Citizenship, newcomers must have filed taxes for at least 3 of their previous 5 years of residency.
- Remind newcomers to inform you when they receive government mail, as not responding can cause delays.
- It may be helpful to authorize a sponsor to speak with CRA on the newcomer's behalf by phone.
- When applying for CCB or filing taxes, never leave the previous year's income section blank. If it's zero, write "zero". Leaving this blank causes processing delays.

Income Tax:

As permanent residents of Canada, sponsored refugees must file a tax return for each year they were present in Canada (even if was only a few days, weeks or months). This way, CRA can determine if they are eligible for: GST/HST credit, CCB, other Ontario Programs.



For tax purposes, money received from a sponsor group is considered a gift - not taxable income.

- Income from the Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP, for BVORs) must be reported, although it is not taxable.
- IRCC should send BVORs a T5007 - Statement of Benefits in February.
- Any income from employment must be declared as such.

Free Income Tax Clinics:

The CRA's website lists volunteer-run Tax Preparation Clinics, where you can accompany newcomers to file a return, and where they can go in future years.



Helpful CRA Online Tools:

- great informative videos for newcomers about taxes and benefits
- child and family benefits calculator to help with budget planning

Immigration Loans & Travel to Canada

IRCC works with the **International Organization for Migration (IOM)** to arrange travel to Canada for sponsored refugees.

- During the application process, the Principal Applicant (PA) signs a loan agreement with IRCC to cover the cost of their travel.
- Once Permanent Resident visas are issued, IRCC asks the IOM to book flights, facilitate exit permits and provide an orientation to Canada where possible.
- IOM provides support directly and through partner agencies at departure, during any stopovers and at the airport in Canada.
- There is a \$300 IOM fee per family member included in the loan.

Loan Repayment:

- The loan is interest free and the maximum for each PA is \$15,000.
- The PA will need to make monthly payments on the loan, starting 1 year after their arrival in Canada.
- These are the repayment periods:
 - loans up to \$1,200: 36 months to repay
 - loans of \$1,200 - \$2,400: 48 months to repay
 - loans of \$2,400 - \$3,600: 60 months to repay
 - loans of \$3,600 - \$4,800: 72 months to repay
 - loans of over \$4,800: 96 months to repay

Full details about the loan program are on IRCC's website.
Search: Payment and collection of immigration loans.

Notification:

- About 6 months after arrival, IRCC Loans and Accounts Receivable creates the loan account and prepares the first monthly statement, sending it by mail or email to the PA. It shows zero dollars owing because it is sent before the repayment period begins (this can be confusing).
- If sponsors wish to re-pay the loan or know the amount, AURA can contact IRCC for loan details.

AURA previously required sponsors to re-pay the loan. Our policy changed in 2023 as a result of significant increases in travel costs.

We strongly encourage you to consider repaying the loan in cases where newcomers will likely face financial hardship post-sponsorship. Sponsors can repay some or all of the loan by cheque, credit card or direct deposit anytime between month 6 and 12.

IRCC Loans and Accounts Receivable:

Mailing Address:
IRCC Collection Services
Accounts Receivable
70 Rue Cremazie
Gatineau, 1C, K1A 1L1

Phone: 1-800-667-7301,
Mon-Fri, 8am-4pm
(Very helpful staff!)

Email: collection@cic.gc.ca

Travel Documents:

Many refugees don't have and can't get valid passports from their country or origin. In these cases, IRCC issues **Single Journey Travel Documents** for their trip to Canada.



Loan Amounts - AURA Examples

1. Family of 4, travelling from UAE: \$7,300
2. Family of 6, travelling from Malaysia: \$8,500.00
3. Couple, travelling from Lebanon: \$2,900
4. Family of 3 (1 child), travelling from Iraq: \$5,200
5. Family of 7, travelling from India: \$14,000
6. Family of 6, travelling from Malaysia: \$8,500.00
7. Chartered flights from Pakistan in 2023: \$3,000 - \$3,500/person

For refugees leaving Israel, travel costs are covered by the Israeli government. On rare occasions, refugees or sponsors may purchase tickets directly, so there is no loan. This only happens when sponsored refugees are in countries where IOM does not operate (such as Iran). The loan amount includes flights, IOM fees, and sometimes additional costs such as meals or hotels in transit.

AURA TIPS



- Newcomers may receive a form referencing the loan amount from IOM or upon arrival.
- Syrian refugees who arrived in Canada in 2015/16 were not issued loans because IRCC paid for their travel as a temporary measure.
- If there are multiple Principle Applicants (e.g. linked cases), they will each have a separate loan.
- Whether sponsors re-pay none, some, or all of the loan, be sure to explain how the loan works to the newcomers and ensure they know how to repay it.

Housing



"Be strategic in ensuring the family's home is close to settlement services and amenities. Always keep the goal of independence in mind."

~Sponsors of a Syrian BVOR family

Sponsors are responsible for providing/securing reasonable housing for the sponsored newcomers. It can be very difficult to balance affordability, location, and comfort with the realities of the housing market. The sponsorship contract calls for the provision of safe and adequate housing, basic furniture and household essentials.

- Securing housing is often one of the biggest practical challenges.
- Some sponsors provide or arrange housing in-kind (rent-free) for part or all of the sponsorship period.

Timing:

AURA strongly recommends you **DO NOT** rent accommodation before the sponsored refugees arrive. Because:

- The travel itinerary could change.
- The newcomers should be involved to the greatest extent possible in the decision of where they will live.
- Being involved in the search for housing means they will gain perspective on the options and prices.

However, in sponsorship we are always balancing reality and the 'ideal', and this may not be possible. Some sponsors secure housing when travel dates are set.

Temporary Housing:

AURA strongly recommends sponsors arrange temporary housing.

- Flexibility, duration and location are important
- Consider a community member's home, unused apartment, or a short term rental
- Upon arrival, newcomers must have immediate internet access to communicate with family/friends, and an orientation to the space
- Search for permanent housing with the newcomers as soon as possible post-arrival

Permanent Housing:

Permanent housing refers to the housing in which the newcomers will stay for at least the duration of the sponsorship period.

Strive to secure housing where the newcomers will be able to remain once the sponsorship period ends.

- Housing should be at a reasonable distance from sponsors to ensure support.
- AURA strongly recommends tenant/renter's insurance, typically provided in a package covering liability and property.
- Research options before arrival.
- Explain utilities, electric heat and bills.
- There are no hard rules around children sharing rooms or apartment size based on family size, but landlords may not accept larger families in smaller units. Refer to the Residential Tenancies Act for Ontario and Toronto Municipal Code: Occupancy Standards.



- Your best resource for finding housing will be your networks and personal connections.
- Ask your congregation (if applicable) or local community organizations to put a call out on your behalf.
- Ask people who live in buildings to ask their landlords about vacancies.
- Visit Housing Help Centres.
- Contact local Settlement Agencies.

"We found out the family was arriving with only 9 days notice! We scrambled but managed to have a nice temporary space ready at a group member's house."

~Sponsors of a Congolese BVOR family

Proof of Address:

You may need to provide proof of address before permanent housing is secured.

- One option is to complete a Lease Agreement for the temporary address. You can download a standard template from the government of Ontario's website.
- Note that it's unlikely to be accepted (for OHIP or school registration) unless it shows a 1 year agreement.

Signing a Lease at Permanent Housing:

Ideally, the lease will be in the newcomers' names and they will pay their rent directly.

- This may not be possible due to the timing of arrival or the landlord's requirements.
- Explain the unique situation of sponsored newcomer renters and their guaranteed income for one year.
- If you do co-sign/guarantee a lease, get informed about how long you will remain listed and how to remove your name in the future.

Sponsors should avoid signing, co-signing or guaranteeing a lease. However, given the realities of the housing market, this may not be possible. Be prepared to identify a guarantor well in advance if you can.

Upon request, AURA will provide a "Rental Support Letter" explaining the sponsorship and funds in place.

For Anglican Parishes:

The Anglican Diocese will not allow the parish or its representatives to act as guarantors or co-signers on a lease. However, parishes may write a "rental support letter" or "rental guarantee letter". Please contact AURA if you would like a template/example.

Ontario 

Residential Tenancy Agreement (Standard Form of Lease)

Note

This tenancy agreement (or lease) is required for tenancies entered into on March 1, 2021 or later. It does not apply to care homes, sites in mobile home parks and land lease communities, most social housing, certain other special tenancies or co-operative housing (see Part A of General Information).

Residential tenancies in Ontario are governed by the *Residential Tenancies Act, 2006*. This agreement cannot take away a right or responsibility under the *Residential Tenancies Act, 2006*.

Under the Ontario *Human Rights Code*, everyone has the right to equal treatment in housing without discrimination or harassment.

All sections of this agreement are mandatory and cannot be changed.

1. Parties to the Agreement

Residential Tenancy Agreement between:

Landlord(s)

1. Landlord's Legal Name

[Add a Landlord \(+\)](#)

Note:
See Part B in General Information and Tenant(s)

1. Last Name	First Name
2. Last Name	First Name
3. Last Name	First Name
4. Last Name	First Name

[Add a Tenant \(+\)](#)

2. Rental Unit

The landlord will rent to the tenant the rental unit at:

Unit (e.g., unit 1 or basement unit)	Street Number	Street Name
City/Town	Province Ontario	Postal Code

Number of vehicle parking spaces and description (e.g., indoor/outdoor, location)

AURA TIPS



- When looking for housing, tell everyone you know (and tell them to tell everyone they know!). You never know where an opportunity might arise.
- Subsidized housing wait lists are very long - up to a decade!. If you anticipate newcomers will benefit from subsidized housing in the long term, help them register as soon as possible.
- There are some financial support programs available in Ontario for eligible families, such as the Ontario Electricity Support Program (OESP).
- AURA will update the newcomer's address with IRCC. Be sure to keep AURA informed of address changes.
- Plan ahead to ensure your group can access funds quickly if you need to pay first and last months rent to secure an apartment in a competitive housing market.



For more information, see [AURA's Sponsor Toolbox > Lease Support](#)

Arrival

"Newcomers are overloaded with information on arrival. Plus they are exhausted from the travel and are filled with many strong emotions."

~Sponsors of an Eritrean BVOR family



Sponsored refugees are usually informed of their travel dates before sponsors receive official notification from IRCC. AURA should receive a Notice of Arrival (NAT) email from IRCC 1 month to 10 days before the scheduled arrival date. This timeframe varies.

Notice of Arrival (NAT):

The NAT email contains the sponsored refugees' details, the itinerary (flight numbers and times), and sponsor contact information. AURA will immediately forward the NAT to the sponsor group.

- **If you are in contact with the sponsored refugees:** AURA will ask you to ensure they have a reliable address to provide to immigration officials upon arrival and a phone number for sponsors who will meet them at the airport.
- **If you are not in contact with them:** AURA can provide this information to the airport arrival staff directly.

If your group has not had a Settlement Training Session with AURA when a NAT is received, AURA will schedule one. You must also update your Settlement Plan and Budget and submit final versions to AURA before the arrival date.

Preparing for Arrival:

- You may be happy and excited, but they may be nervous and exhausted after a long trip.
- Only a few members of the group should greet the newcomers at the airport.
- Bring an interpreter if necessary.
- Be prepared:
 - Have you tracked the flight to confirm it is on time?
 - Do you need car/booster seats?
 - Do you have enough room for everyone and their luggage?
 - Do the newcomers have your phone number?
 - Are you prepared to wait many hours?

Address Notification: AURA will ensure that the newcomer's address is accurately on file with IRCC.

Polycultural Immigrant and Community Services (PICS):

- PICS has a team of multi-lingual staff who provide Reception Services at Pearson Airport in Toronto.
- Each arriving family/individual will have a PICS representative assigned to meet them when they get off the plane, accompany them through customs and immigration and out to meet sponsors.
- This may take 1 - 4 hours, or more.
- PICS staff may call the sponsor listed on the NAT. If that contact information is incorrect, AURA can provide updates to PICS before an arrival and you should ensure the newcomer has sponsor phone numbers on hand.
- A sponsor will be asked to sign confirming the newcomers have been met at the airport (any member can sign).
- Keep an eye out for PICS representatives. They wear orange jackets and lanyards.



Taking Pictures:

- Arrival to Canada is a beautiful moment to capture, but be sure to ask before taking pictures. This applies throughout the sponsorship.
- If you have pictures and the people in them are comfortable with them being shared, please send a few to us at AURA!

"Have drinks and snacks for everyone while you wait at the airport. We waited four and half hours."

~Sponsors of a Syrian BVOR family

At the Airport:

- Bring a welcome sign.
- They will exit into the international arrival hall, or through a side door in that area.
- If you are meeting for the first time, introduce yourself. Explain that you are part of a volunteer group that will support them in Canada and that you will explain more over the next few days.

Arriving Home:

- Avoid separating parents and children.
- Ensure newcomers have immediate access to internet (and a device to access it with).
- Do a basic orientation to the home and area.
- Remember they may be tired and want to rest.
- Arrange a time to return.
- Some sponsors provide cash for incidentals right away. This can be part of your "start-up" support.



See AURA's Sponsor Toolbox for Pre-Arrival and Arrival Checklists (page 30)

Documents Received Upon Arrival:

Newcomers should receive the following important documents at the airport:

- **Confirmation of Permanent Residence:** 1 paper document per person, principal proof of immigration status. Note: The PR Card will be mailed to the address provided upon arrival (or by AURA online) in the coming weeks/months - depending on current PR Card processing times.
- **Interim Federal Health Program (IFHP) Certificate of Eligibility:** 1 paper document per person.

They should also have their **Passport** or **Single Journey Document** used to travel to Canada.

Social Insurance Number (SIN):

- The SIN is a 9-digit number you need to work, and to access government programs and benefits.
- Explain the purpose and importance of the SIN, when they will need to share it, and when they should **not** share it, such as over the phone.
- If the SIN is not received upon arrival, you will have to apply through Service Canada either online or in-person, with all the required documents.
- One paper document per person → (production of SIN cards ended in 2014).

Date : 29 SEP / SEP, 2017	PROTECTED B / PROTÉGÉ B
Social Insurance Number (SIN) / Numéro d'assurance sociale (NAS): 568-897-362	
Names on the SIN record / Noms au dossier de NAS	
First Name / Prénom: Middle Name(s) / Second(s) prénom(s): Family Name(s) / Nom(s) de famille:	FRANCESCO MOHAMED
Address / Adresse:	123 ST. CLAIR AVE WEST TORONTO ON M4K
Protect your SIN; it is confidential Keep any document containing your SIN in a safe place.	Protégez votre NAS, il est confidentiel Conservez tout document où l'on retrouve votre NAS dans un endroit sûr.
Use of your SIN You are required to provide your SIN to your employer within three days after the day you receive it. Also, some programs and/or services authenticate a person's identity using data on the SIN record; ensure you are using the names as shown above.	Utilisation de votre NAS Vous devez fournir votre NAS à votre employeur dans les trois jours suivant sa réception. Aussi, certains programmes et/ou services utilisent les données au dossier de NAS afin d'authentifier l'identité d'une personne. Assurez-vous d'utiliser les noms qui figurent ci-dessus.
If your SIN begins with the number 9 You must present a valid proof of authorization to work in Canada to your employer. Your SIN record must be updated to reflect the most recent expiry date.	Si votre NAS débute par le chiffre 9 Vous devez présenter à votre employeur une autorisation valide vous permettant de travailler au Canada. Votre dossier de NAS doit être mis à jour afin de refléter la plus récente date d'expiration.
For more information, visit our Web site: Canada.ca/social-insurance-number	Pour plus de renseignements, consultez notre site Web : Canada.ca/numero-assurance-sociale

AURA TIPS



- The information newcomers receive pre-departure varies greatly.
- The process for a Permanent Resident Card is initiated at the airport, but the card itself will arrive in the mail weeks or months later.
- Sponsors are expected to be in the arrival hall looking/waiting for the newcomers to exit.
- Immigration documentation is received before exiting the secure area of the airport. If there are problems or missing documents, contact AURA. You likely cannot fix the problem at the airport.
- Some sponsors have waited only 1 hour, others have waited 6! We suggest arriving 1 hour after landing.

"We didn't remember that PR cards come in the mail automatically and we thought we had to apply for one."

~Sponsors of an Ethiopian family

"Check PR cards carefully when you receive them to ensure the info is correct."

~Sponsors of a Syrian man (whose PR card said he was Colombian!)

Permanent Resident Card & Status



Privately sponsored refugees are approved for Permanent Residence before they travel to Canada. At the airport, they sign their **Confirmation of Permanent Residence** document, officially becoming Canadian Permanent Residents (PRs). The **PR Card** is an important piece of identification.

PR Card Processing:

IRCC will automatically mail each newcomer their first PR Card for free.

- PR Cards are not received upon arrival, but the process is initiated automatically
- They do not have to apply for their first card.
- IRCC may send a letter or email requesting new photos if the photos provided at interview do not meet the specifications. Help the newcomers get and send photos according to the instructions in the letter. Mail them with tracking.
- The first card is free and will be valid for 5 years.
- It is fairly common for some family members to get PR cards before others.

Check current PR Card processing times online or with AURA. If they haven't received theirs by the current processing time, contact AURA.



AURA TIPS

- Sometimes the photo request email gets stuck in JUNK folders. Help them check.
- Remind newcomers they must apply for a new PR card every 5 years or until they become Canadian citizens.
- Accompany newcomers to the library to make colour copies of the front and back of PR cards.
- The Ontario Photo ID card or Driver's License can be used for everyday identification, allowing the PR card to stay safely stored at home.
- AURA strongly advises against travelling outside of Canada before becoming a Canadian citizen.
- See page 26 for info on citizenship.

Permanent Resident (PR) Status

As Canadian Permanent Residents, sponsored refugees:

- can live, work, and study anywhere in Canada
- can access the same social benefits and health care coverage as Canadian citizens
- do not require a permit to study or work
- are protected under Canadian law and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms
- have responsibilities, including filing taxes and respecting all federal, provincial and municipal laws
- can apply for a Refugee Travel Document in order to travel outside of Canada
- can apply for Canadian citizenship when they're eligible

IMPORTANT: IRCC *could* initiate a process to revoke someone's Permanent Residence Status if:

- they came to Canada as a refugee and choose to travel back to their country of origin
- they do not meet the residency requirement (physically present in Canada 730 days in each 5 year period)
- they commit a serious crime is (e.g. impaired driving)

Sponsors should explain the rights and responsibilities of Permanent Residents (or you can learn about them together).

Interim Federal Health Program (IFHP)

The Interim Federal Health Program (IFHP) provides limited coverage of health-care benefits for resettled refugees. It is funded by IRCC and administered by **Medavie Blue Cross**. PSRs are issued a Certificate of Eligibility upon arrival. This document must be presented to access coverage. Example 



IFHP provides coverage in addition to OHIP for 1 year.

Service Providers must be registered with Medavie Blue Cross to accept IFHP. Search "IFHP Provider List" to find pharmacies, doctors, specialists, etc. near you that accept IFHP.

Coverage is divided into 3 categories (see below). Basic Coverage is replaced by OHIP and **only lasts 3 months from arrival**. Supplemental and Prescription Drug Coverage last for one year.

BASIC (3 months)	SUPPLEMENTAL	PRESCRIPTION DRUGS
Medical Services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doctor visits • Standard immunizations • Prenatal and obstetrical care • Lab tests and x-rays Hospital services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency room and hospital stays • Medical and surgical care • Diagnostic imaging 	Limited Vision Care: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One pair of eyewear (glasses and/or lenses) • One vision test Urgent Dental Care: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency dental exams • Extractions • Dental x-rays • Dentures Mental Health Services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psychological counselling, including services from allied health-care practitioners • Assistive devices, medical supplies and equipment. 	Prescribed medication and other pharmacy products. Note: Generic drugs ONLY Source: IRCC

*It's essential for sponsors to have an early understanding of government processes (ex. IFHP, OHIP, Ontario ID cards, etc.). There are so many important things to do in the first weeks."
 ~AURA Sponsors*

IMPORTANT: If you plan to use IFHP, call the service provider in advance to ensure they accept it. If they don't, newcomers will be denied care or charged.

The IFHP only covers certain dollar amounts for each service. Some providers accept IFHP but charge extra if they bill more than what IFHP covers. **Ask if there will be extra costs before receiving a service.** You may wish to look for a provider who does not charge extra.

See IRCC's website for a list of registered service providers, policies, and a summary of benefits.



See AURA's Sponsor Toolbox > Resources > Health

AURA TIPS

- If IFHP certificates are not received upon arrival, IRCC can issue them shortly after. Please contact AURA.
- The certificate may be dated before the arrival date because the same program covers the immigration medical exam.
- It takes 2 days for new beneficiaries to appear 'in the system' post arrival.
- Ensure newcomers understand coverage ends in 12 months.
- IFHP will never reimburse beneficiaries who paid for a service.



"It's important to remember that even though you are automatically eligible for OHIP, you still have to apply to actually get it."

~Sponsors of an Eritrean family

Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP)



Resettled refugees have the right to the same OHIP coverage as all other permanent residents and citizens.

Resettled refugees arrive to Canada as Permanent Residents and are immediately eligible for the Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP). They must apply in person at a ServiceOntario Centre with a completed registration form and all necessary original documents. A temporary OHIP document will be provided for use until their Health Card is received by mail a few weeks later.

Sponsored refugees are exempt from the 3 month waiting period for new Ontario residents.

Documents you need to Apply:

Applicants need to show a document proving their:

- **Identity**

Use passport or single journey document with signature.

- **Immigration Status**

Use Confirmation of Permanent Residence Document, received at the airport upon arrival.

- **Residency/Address**

Use Lease/Rental Agreement (if you have one) or a bank statement received in the mail.

+ a completed "Registration for Ontario Health Coverage"

Download it from the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long Term Care website or fill it out at Service Ontario.

Supporting Documents:

Although they cannot be accepted as primary documentation, bank letters, debit cards, library cards, a letter from sponsors or AURA and letters received by mail can help support the documents presented.

IMPORTANT Before Applying:

Sometimes resettled refugees have trouble proving their address and identity due to lack of documentation. About 50% of the time the first attempt at getting OHIP is unsuccessful.

Don't go to ServiceOntario until you're confident you have the required documents. Newcomers have IFHP coverage in the meantime.

Don't forget to explain OHIP!

OHIP pays for most emergency and basic medical services. It does **NOT** pay for:

- Ambulance Services
- Services that are not medically necessary, like cosmetic surgery
- Prescription medication or drugs
- Dental care at a dentists office
- Some alternative medicine (such as naturopathy, acupuncture, chiropractors, or massage therapy)

Refer to the **OHIP Document List** for all acceptable documents.

Common Issues when Applying for OHIP

1. Proving Residency

Sometimes ServiceOntario workers will not accept a letter as proof of address, and newcomers don't have a lease in their name.

What to do: Wait for a bank statement received in the mail - acceptable proof of address. Reapply.

2. Three-Month Waiting Period

Newcomers are sometimes mistakenly turned away because there is a 3-month waiting period for new Ontario residents.

What to do: Refugees ("protected people") are exempt from this waiting period. Remind the ServiceOntario Worker about the exemption, ask to speak with a Supervisor, kindly ask the worker to call their staff hotline. Reference the legislation: Health Insurance Act, (R.S.O. 1990, c. H.6) Sec. 6.3.

3. Proving Identity without a Passport

It can be hard to prove identity without a passport or a signed single journey document.

What to do: Wait for the Permanent Resident (PR) Card to be received in the mail. Reapply. You may need to request expedited processing if the current PR Card processing time is long. Contact AURA for help.

If you experience problems related to documentation or clients being mistakenly denied, ask to speak with a supervisor. Sponsors may need to advocate!

Finding a Doctor:

- You must ensure the newcomers get connected to health care services.
- Use Ontario's "**Health Care Connect**" online system to find a doctor or nurse practitioner.
- In Toronto: Women's College Hospital's **Crossroads Clinic** provides primary care for refugees, connecting them with a family doctor after 2 years. Sponsor referrals are accepted.
- If there are family members here, see if their doctor is accepting new patients.
- **Community Health Centres** provide wrap-around health services, including mental health supports and language interpretation. They have long waiting lists to register. If you know where the sponsored newcomer(s) will live, you may be able to call in advance of their arrival to get them on the list.

The Ontario Photo Card

- Additional form of government-issued ID
- For people 16 and over who do not have a driver's license.
- Apply when you go to Service Ontario for OHIP (Fee: \$35).
- If you want to get a drivers licence later, you must surrender this card.



Immunizations:

- If children cannot obtain records of immunization, they will be immunized again.
- There is extensive multilingual information available about immunization.
- See Health section of AURA's Resources in our Sponsor Toolbox for links.

AURA TIPS



- Make an appointment at Service Ontario, if possible.
- A member of the sponsor group **MUST** accompany the newcomers to register for OHIP.
- ServiceOntario has one phone number for all OHIP inquiries 1-888-376-5197.
- Remind newcomers that if they move they will need to update their address with ServiceOntario.
- Government run ServiceOntario Centres have more discretion in terms of which documents they can accept. In Toronto there are only two: at 777 Bay St. and 47 Sheppard Ave. E.

"My number one tip to sponsor groups would be: If you do not think it will happen to you, it will."

~Ian McBride, Director of AURA from 2000-2018

Tips From AURA

Winter Clothing

Many newcomers have a hard time with winter. It's incredibly important to ensure they have good quality boots and jackets to make getting outside easier.

Interpreters

If the newcomers you are sponsoring do not speak English, you will need to use interpreters to communicate.

- Professional interpretation is well worth the expense for certain important meetings (e.g. finances, expectations).
- Use your networks to compile a list of people willing to interpret voluntarily in-person or by phone.
- Remind volunteer interpreters of their role: to interpret exactly what is being said without adding/omitting information or inserting their opinion.
- Be mindful of ethnicity, gender, and age to maximize the newcomer's comfort level.
- Avoid relying on children as interpreters for parents, and using family members exclusively.
- Contact AURA for help finding interpreters.

Settlement Agencies

Settlement Agencies are a great resource - use them! They cannot replace your support, but they can certainly complement it.

Don't expect staff to share all information with you, their priority and client is the newcomer.

Newcomers should be connected to settlement agencies for ongoing support post-sponsorship.



Find programs and services in your community. www.211ontario.ca

Newcomers Talk to Each Other

As sponsors, you may be challenged by outside influences providing advice or information that contradicts your approach.

E.g. neighbours, family and friends here who have experience with other immigration programs and benefits, offer jobs that interfere with English classes, and tell of 'what their sponsors gave them.' Be aware of this and try providing information to avoid misunderstandings.



Have you considered getting bicycles (and lights and helmets)?

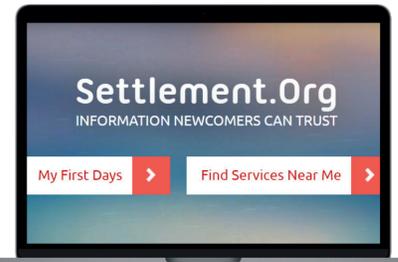
The Public Library

Register for activities, free museum passes, conversation circles, books in other languages, practice citizenship tests etc.

Warn against telephone and email scams!

IRCC Websites

If you are seeking information about IRCC related processes (e.g. PR Card renewal, processing times, citizenship, updating addresses etc.), make sure you are on the **Government of Canada's** website. Be wary of fraudulent websites.



Driver's Licenses

Consider assisting in the application for a G1 license sooner rather than later. They may want to get a license in the future (e.g. for job opportunities), and it could be helpful to have started the process earlier, given our lengthy graduated licensing system.

Fostering Good Organizational Habits

Keep copies/records of all applications you send (taxes, programs, benefits, etc.) Encourage newcomers to develop this habit. Remember that in Canada documents may play a more important role than in other countries.

Records & Documentation

Monitoring

In 2018 IRCC began randomly monitoring sponsorships.

This means the government may get in touch with you, AURA and/or the sponsored newcomers to inquire about support provided to ensure the program requirements are being met.

Sponsor Records:

Sponsors should keep records related to the support provided to refugees during the sponsorship period, such as:

- Detailed Settlement Plan and Budget
- Bank statements, copies of cheques, or transfers
- Receipts for items purchased on behalf of the newcomers
- Photos/lists of in-kind support (donated items)
- Proof of the newcomer's employment earnings or assets (**required** if you reduce your financial support as a result of income earned)
- Copies of communication related to your support (emails, texts)
- Proof of enrolment in ESL classes and accessing settlement services
- Notes from sponsor group meetings (if applicable)

For Anglican parishes: Ensure important documents (e.g. copy of the application, records of funds dispersed, etc.) remain on file.

Proper record keeping is important given the charitable status of organizations involved in sponsorships.

Charitable Tax Receipts

Generally, donations towards a refugee sponsorship program are eligible for charitable tax receipts, as long as the donor is at "arm's length" of the beneficiary. This means that family members are not entitled to tax receipts.

Once a charitable organization (such as AURA or a church) issues a tax receipt, funds cannot be returned.

Newcomers and Important Documents:

Newcomers will receive so many important documents in their first year. Make sure they know these documents are important and can be difficult to replace. Examples include:

- Confirmation of Permanent Residence (CoPR)
- Social Insurance Number (SIN)
- Interim Federal Health Program (IFHP) Cert. of Eligibility
- Permanent Resident (PR) Card
- Temporary Health Coverage Document
- OHIP Health Card
- Ontario Photo ID Card or Driver's License
- Immunization, School and Medical Records and more...

Storage: Provide sheet protectors and plastic binders to help them stay organized, and discuss secure storage options. Make sure they know which documents are important.

Make copies: Accompany newcomers to the library to make copies of fronts and backs of identification cards and documents and encourage them to keep electronic copies as well.

Sponsor Tip: If newcomers don't read English, keep documents in a transparent sheet protector and write the name of the document on the sheet protector.

IMPORTANT: Destroy copies of personal documents and information you may have (paper and electronic) after the sponsorship is over.

Address Updates

- Newcomers are responsible for ensuring their address is up to date with IRCC until they receive their PR card in the mail.
- AURA will provide the newcomer's initial address to IRCC for them, before or upon their arrival. We can update it for them when they move - as long as we are informed of the change.
- Address Updates must also be provided to: ServiceOntario, IRCC Loans and Accounts Receivable (for the travel loan notification), schools, and banks, (among others).

"We saved a few thousand dollars as a "contingency" for the family we sponsored, but when we wanted the Church to give it to the family, 3 years after the sponsorship ended, they refused because the agreement was over. We were shocked!"
~Sponsors of Syrian Named Case

Post-Sponsorship Transition

At the end of the one year sponsorship period, your contractual obligation to provide settlement and financial support to the newcomer(s) ends. It is essential that sponsors and newcomers actively work together towards month 13 from the beginning.

The end of the sponsorship can be a shock for newcomers if the sponsorship shielded them from the challenges of living independently.



Exit Strategy:

- Your group must plan a strategy to prepare for a smooth transition away from dependence on sponsors.
- Start the conversation early - newcomers should understand exactly when your group's responsibilities will end. **Mark the date on a calendar.**
- Work throughout the year to support meaningful connections beyond sponsors, such as cultural or religious groups, settlement agencies, sports and recreation programs, volunteer positions, classes, extracurricular activities, conversation circles, employment etc. and to other supports.
- Promote independence from the beginning. Take active steps throughout the sponsorship to give newcomers the tools to do things for themselves (even when it might be easier to do things *for* them). This includes:
 - Paying rent, bills, utilities etc.
 - Using public transit
 - Making appointments
 - Accessing services
 - Registering for programs
 - Interacting with schools/teachers
 - Accessing interpreters (if needed)
 - Troubleshooting problems
- Revisit conversations about the end of sponsorship regularly to avoid any surprises or misunderstandings. Periodically ask newcomers how they feel about the end of the sponsorship. Identify concerns and potential solutions/resources.

Settlement Agencies:

All newcomers should be connected to a Settlement Agency when their sponsorship ends, so they know where to get support. See AURA Sponsor Toolbox > Resources

Employment and Education:

Sponsorship is an opportunity spend time learning English, but the focus must shift towards employment if the newcomers plan on working after year one.

- Help identify and search for employment several months before the end of the sponsorship.
- Orient newcomers to job culture in Canada, training programs, mock interviews, creating a CV etc.
- Check out organizations like ACCESS Employment and Skills for Change.

Some newcomers may wish to prioritize employment sooner, and this is their choice.

Social Assistance:

Newcomers may need to go on social assistance through **Ontario Works (OW)**.

- They are not eligible for OW until their sponsorship year is over.
- Contact OW during the last month of sponsorship to arrange for intake.
- An **OW rate chart** is available online, to help get an idea of what to expect (single people receive only \$730/month).
- Like RAP, OW reduces support based on income earned.

The **Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP)** is an extended social assistance program for seniors and people with disabilities. The application takes time, so it's best to first apply for OW.

Sponsorship is about providing extra support for the first year, not supporting one newcomer/family indefinitely.



AURA TIPS

- Interim Federal Health Program (IFHP) coverage ends at the same time as the sponsorship.
- The best time to start planning for post sponsorship is in the first months.
- Consult the Ontario Works rate chart online to get an idea of what the family unit might receive. Share the amount with them so they can know what to expect if they go on OW.
- Be sure to make the necessary changes to any accounts or bills that may have been in a sponsor's name.
- Be sure to destroy any paper/electronic copies of personal documents sponsors may have been using.

Measuring Success in Sponsorship

Success in sponsorship should be measured by how well a sponsor group worked to support newcomers in fulfilling their essential needs and starting their lives in Canada.

- There is no measuring stick we can use to say "you should be *-here-* by the end of year one". Each newcomer and sponsorship is unique.
- It is not reasonable to expect that by the end of only one year, they will no longer need support. The key is to set them up during the sponsorship period so they can get the support they need from sources other than sponsors.
- Have realistic goals that reflect the individuals you are sponsoring and their skills, experiences and abilities.
- Remember: Getting the most out of sponsorship requires an invested effort on the part of the sponsors and newcomers.

Ongoing Financial Support:

Sponsors should not provide financial support after year 1.

- You can end up subsidizing a situation of dependence that could continue indefinitely (social assistance, low paid work) and ending this relationship later could be complicated.
- Your social relationship can be jeopardized if the end of financial support is not clear.
- Charitable organizations (eg. a church or AURA) who hold sponsorship funds cannot continue financial support outside the context of an active sponsorship agreement.

Canadian Citizenship

In order for a Permanent Resident of Canada to apply to become a Citizen, they must:

- have been physically present in Canada for at least 1,095 days (3 yrs)
- have filed their taxes for 3 years
- pay application fees (\$630/adult, \$100/child)
- show proof of English/French language (level 4 from LINC classes, high school diploma or third-party test)
- pass a test on Canadian culture and history
- complete and submit application forms and supporting documents

Sponsored refugees will not qualify for Canadian citizenship during the sponsorship period. But sponsors should help them understand the application requirements and process so they can apply as soon as they become eligible.



For more information, see AURA's Sponsor Toolbox > Citizenship

Benefits of Becoming Canadian

Source: <http://www.citizenshipcounts.ca/>

- YOU WILL BE ABLE TO WORK IN ALL JOBS
- YOUR CHILDREN WILL BE CANADIAN
- YOU CAN GET INVOLVED IN POLITICS
- YOU DON'T NEED TO RENEW YOUR PR CARD
- YOU CAN VOTE
- YOU CAN GET SOCIAL BENEFITS
- YOU CANNOT BE DEPORTED
- THERE ARE NO RESIDENCY REQUIREMENTS TO STAY A CITIZEN
- YOU CAN TRAVEL EASILY
- YOU CAN GET CONSULAR SUPPORT



Sponsorship Timeline

This is a reminder for sponsors about the timing of important tasks during the refugee sponsorship year. It does not include education and housing.

Apply for OHIP in-person at ServiceOntario, as soon as you can provide all the required documents.

Connect with **doctors** and **dentists** as needed.

Update/verify newcomer's **address** with IRCC online.

Apply for **SIN** if not received at airport.

- Pre-Arrival**
- Complete Settlement Plan and Budget submitted to AURA
 - Contact Info & Police Checks on file at AURA for all group members
 - Sponsors have attended an AURA Settlement Training Session
 - Financial procedures for fund disbursements have been arranged

AURA Week 2 Check In (online).

Open **Bank Account**.

Apply for **SIN**.

Get **Library Cards**.

Give sponsored refugees an address to provide on arrival and the phone number of a sponsor who will be at the airport.

Notice of Arrival

Arrival

First Days

First Weeks

Month 1

Notice of Arrival (NAT)
Newcomers will likely learn of their arrival date about 1 month in advance. The official NAT from IRCC comes by email with the itinerary about 2 weeks before.

Consider creating a "Sponsorship Contract" with/for the newcomers and discuss it with them.

Apply for **Healthy Smiles Ontario** (dental coverage for kids) and Recreation Subsidies (Welcome Policy in Toronto).

Documents Normally Received at the Airport:

- Interim Federal Health (IFHP) Certificate.
- Confirmation of Permanent Residence (COPR).

PR Card Process is initiated (card arrives later in the mail to the address provided upon arrival or online to IRCC).

Meet to Discuss:

- Financial Support
- Sponsor's Roles
- Newcomers' Roles
- Month 13
- Expectations

Do not hesitate to contact AURA if you have any questions.

Timing Varies: Assist with filing **tax returns**.

Keep Records!
Remember to keep records of the support your group provides (settlement and financial). IRCC could request proof of your support at any time.

The **Permanent Residence (PR) Card** should arrive in the mail (processing times fluctuate). If not received, contact AURA.

IFHP Health coverage ends.

For Families: Apply for Canada Child Benefit (CCB) as soon as possible.
For singles/couples: Apply for **GST/HST credit** and **OTB**.

If applying for **Social Assistance**, get informed about the rules and rates well in advance. Contact **Ontario Works** at least 3 weeks before the end of Sponsorship. Request "Confirmation of End of Sponsorship" Letter from AURA.

Complete AURA's End of Sponsorship Survey Online (All Sponsors).

Repay **Travel Loan**, if applicable. AURA will send instructions upon request.



Provide binders and sheet protectors for documents.

Re-visit conversations and planning for the end of the sponsorship.

If address has changed: Update with AURA, ServiceOntario, schools, banks, etc.

Remember **IFHP** ends at Month 12. Get glasses, eye exams etc. before this coverage is lost.

Check all documents and ID cards to ensure information is correct. Make copies (front and back) for newcomers to keep.

Post-Sponsorship

- Financial records should be kept by the sponsoring organization for 7 years.
- Familiarize newcomers with the process and requirements for becoming Canadian Citizens.
- Ensure newcomers are connected with a settlement agency, so they know where to go for help in the future.

Phone: 416-588-1612 x0 Email: questions@auraforrefugees.org

Sponsorship Task List

Here is a list of sponsorship tasks presented in another format.

HOUSING & BASIC NEEDS	ARRIVAL
<input type="checkbox"/> Temporary housing	<input type="checkbox"/> Go to the airport
<input type="checkbox"/> Permanent housing	<input type="checkbox"/> Facilitate arrival to temporary housing
<input type="checkbox"/> Sufficient furniture	
<input type="checkbox"/> Household necessities	ORIENTATIONS
<input type="checkbox"/> Toiletries	<input type="checkbox"/> A formal meeting to discuss budget
<input type="checkbox"/> Arrange internet, hydro	<input type="checkbox"/> Sponsor group and roles
<input type="checkbox"/> Ensure sufficient clothing	<input type="checkbox"/> Neighbourhood/ Public transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> Good quality winter clothing	<input type="checkbox"/> Expectations for the sponsorship
DOCUMENTS & REGISTRATIONS	MEDICAL
<input type="checkbox"/> Apply for OHIP at Service Ontario	<input type="checkbox"/> Access family doctor
<input type="checkbox"/> Apply for IFH (if not received)	<input type="checkbox"/> Access dentist
<input type="checkbox"/> Apply for SIN (if not received)	<input type="checkbox"/> Eye exams/ glasses
<input type="checkbox"/> Open bank account	<input type="checkbox"/> Explain OHIP and IFH
<input type="checkbox"/> ESL assessment	<input type="checkbox"/> Address any special needs
<input type="checkbox"/> Enroll in ESL classes	
<input type="checkbox"/> Ensure PR card is received	FOR FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN
<input type="checkbox"/> Library cards	<input type="checkbox"/> Enroll children in school
<input type="checkbox"/> Driver's Licences (if applicable)	<input type="checkbox"/> Provide school supplies
<input type="checkbox"/> Recreation programs	<input type="checkbox"/> Apply for Canada Child Benefit (CCB)
<input type="checkbox"/> Ont. Photo Card / Driver's License	<input type="checkbox"/> Identify recreation programs for kids
<input type="checkbox"/> Update Address with IRCC online	<input type="checkbox"/> Healthy Smiles Ontario (dental)
<input type="checkbox"/> File income tax	
<input type="checkbox"/> Cell phone and plan	OTHER
	<input type="checkbox"/> Welcome Letter/ Agreement
SETTLEMENT SUPPORT	<input type="checkbox"/> RAP appointment (BVOR only)
<input type="checkbox"/> Locate interpreters (if needed)	<input type="checkbox"/> Repay Immigration Travel Loan
<input type="checkbox"/> Connect with a settlement agency	<input type="checkbox"/> For Singles/Couples: apply for GST/HST tax credit and Ont. Trillium Benefit
<input type="checkbox"/> Identify further education options	
<input type="checkbox"/> Assist in finding employment	<input type="checkbox"/> And more....

Sponsorship Checklists

View and download each checklist from AURA's Sponsor Toolbox > Checklists

Pre-Arrival

- AURA Training Session

Ensure AURA has:

- Settlement Plan and Budget
- List of committee members
- Contact info and police checks

Funds:

- Plan additional fundraising, as required
- Ensure financial procedures are set up (cheques, reimbursements, process for getting timely cheques/disbursements, etc.)

Start Researching and Preparing for:

- Flexible temporary housing
- Permanent housing
- Settlement services
- Doctor and dentist
- Mental health supports to offer
- ESL classes/registration
- Schools and training
- Shopping and local transportation
- Social activities, recreation, and sports
- Interpreters (volunteer, professional)
- Welcome binder / letter / agreement

Arrival

Before Arrival:

- Settlement Plan and Budget sent to AURA
- Temporary housing ready
- Double-check itinerary

Ensure AURA and the sponsored refugees have:

- Address to provide at the airport
- Cell phone numbers of airport contacts

Arrival Day:

- Check flight status online
- Welcome sign
- Interpreter (if required)
- Warm clothing (if required)
- Snacks for a possible long wait

Important Documents received:

- Confirmation of Permanent Residence
- IFHP Certificate of Eligibility
- Social Insurance Number

Arriving to the temporary home, ensure:

- Food staples/meals
- Internet access to contact family/friends
- Basic household orientation
- An emergency number
- Some cash for immediate needs (if needed)
- Arrange a time to return

First Few Weeks

Housing:

- Secure permanent housing
- Explain laundry, appliances etc.

Finances:

- Open bank account
- Financial/budget meeting
- For BVORs: RAP appointment
- Apply for tax benefits: CCB, OTB, GST/HST

Orientations:

- Neighbourhood and around
- Public transit
- Grocery shopping
- Introduce sponsor group and members
- Sponsor roles and responsibilities
- Duration (end of sponsorship)
- Discuss priorities and expectations of sponsors and newcomers

Health and IDs:

- Apply for OHIP at Service Ontario
- Apply for Ontario Photo Card or License
- Arrange Family Doctor
- Arrange Dentist, Healthy Smiles (children)

Registrations:

- Ensure AURA has the correct address
- Apply for SIN (if not received at airport)
- Register for ESL assessment
- Register for ESL classes
- Register children in school
- Get cell phones
- Get a library cards
- Make copies of important documents
- Provide binders, etc. for documents

