



Priority



This is a HIGH priority task and should be regularly examined by the group.

Timing



This task should be started before the refugee arrives and periodically rechecked.

Group Participation



The entire refugee sponsoring group should be involved.

Managing Expectations:

Expectations are perfectly normal; we all have them after all. Problems can arise when expectations about refugee sponsorship are not acknowledged, unrealistic and/or those who hold them fail to adjust them accordingly.

Newcomers may have expectations about life in Canada, the 'American Dream', employment, sending money home, bringing family to Canada, and learning English to name just a few.

Sponsors may have expectations about how the sponsorship should be carried out, what the end results will be, their relationship/friendship with newcomers, and how newcomers will feel towards them. These are just a few examples.

It is the refugee sponsor group's responsibility to create a respectful environment that allows for the discussion and acknowledgment of expectations, respectively manage both group and newcomer expectations and to proactively work through any differences.

Important Considerations:

- How a sponsorship proceeds depends greatly on the individuals involved. No two sponsorships are the same, and things do not always go as planned.
- Be mindful not to make assumptions. This is not easy!
- Many refugees never wanted to leave their country, but were forced to, and they may not feel outwardly grateful, or happy to be here.
- Some refugees do not understand how private sponsorship works.
- A newcomer's problems are not instantly solved upon arriving in Canada. While certain needs may be met, a new set of challenges arises.
- Explain freedom of religion. You can invite the newcomers to talk about their religion, but it should never be forced and it is up to them if they wish to share.
- Be mindful of invitations to religious spaces and events, and how this could make newcomers uncomfortable.



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Conversations with Newcomers:

Clear, honest and frequent communication is the key to creating an environment of realistic expectations. It is necessary to discuss expectations and responsibilities with the newcomers soon after arrival so that everyone involved has the same understanding of who is responsible for what.

Prioritize information according to the newcomers needs. Things to be explained and discussed include, but are not limited to:

- Role of the sponsor group (availability, limits).
- Sponsor group members, how/why group formed.
- Finances, budgeting (see Finance info sheet).
- Housing: Plan for temporary/permanent housing, furnishing etc.
- Schooling: LINC/ESL, future education plans, additional support.

***The Anglican Diocese and AURA require that all newcomers attend ESL classes**

- Employment: Explain the sponsorship as a job – the newcomers’ job is to learn English, and they are being supported to do that job. **No employment is to come at the expense of English language learning and must be discussed with AURA.**
- Canadian laws and customs, life in the new city/town, connections to resources.
- What to do in case of emergency.
- Phone, Internet: ***AURA requires sponsors to provide phone/internet.**
- Medical & Dental needs, IFHP/OHIP.
- Rights and responsibilities of Permanent Residents.
- When the sponsorship will end, financial self-reliance, and continued friendship.
- Any questions/concerns newcomers may have about anything.
- Privacy, confidentiality, and open communication.
- Explain the role of Police in Canada, and the way Police are perceived. Various resources are available through Police Departments for Newcomers.

We suggest having the above points discussed, written down and a copy provided for the newcomer(s), with a special focus on the financial arrangements. A basic contract can be drafted which lays out the most important requirements and that the newcomers confirm that they understand. This document is not legally binding but is a useful tool as it can be used in the case of challenges later.

Power Imbalance:

A power imbalance exists between the refugee sponsoring group and the newcomer(s). This imbalance can create a sense of obligation that can lead to negative consequences, resentment, and conflict throughout the sponsorship.

Strive to minimize the power difference by:

- Asking questions.
- Carefully listening to answers.
- Explaining things clearly, often in more than one way, and checking for understanding (not just “Yes”).
- Making sure newcomers understand they have the right to make their own decisions.

1. Ensure all communications are open and honest between the refugee sponsoring group and the newcomers.

2. At social gatherings do not single out the newcomers or ask them to speak in front of a group of people. This can be a very uncomfortable experience and make them feel like an outsider.

3. Once refugees arrive in Canada through this program they are permanent residents. It is more appropriate to refer to them as “newcomers” than “refugees”.

4. For important meetings like a formal conversation about expectations or finances, it may be necessary to have a professional interpreter present.