SYRIAN REFUGEE SPONSORSHIP

Answers to Frequently Asked Questions about ICNA Relief Canada (IRC)’s response to help sponsor, welcome and settle Syrian Refugees in Canada in partnership with the Governments of Canada and Ontario, other Community Organizations, and members of the community.

Q1) What is the infrastructure and process on how to work sponsoring the Refugees
A1) Please watch our promotional video (link), read the pdf file (link) & power point presentation (link) to understand the process.

Q2) Will IRC provide necessary training to the sponsors for resettlement?
A2) Yes, ICNA Relief Canada with support of other agencies will provide you with the necessary training. The Canadian Government also has a training program. Please visit http://www.rstp.ca/ to learn more about their Refugee Sponsorship Training Program.

Q3) How can/will other organizations coordinate and cooperate with ICNA Relief Canada?
A3) We believe in cooperation, collaboration, & communication with other organizations. Interested organizations/Masajid/Community groups can send us an email at info@icnareliefcanada.ca. We will discuss in details about all possibilities and come up with a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to establish a potential partnership.
Q4) How will ICNA Relief Canada manage its Relief mission for Syrians and Syrians Refugees in coming months?
A4) ICNA Relief Canada is addressing the current Syrian Crisis in 2 main ways:
   I. By helping Internally and Externally Displaced Persons (Syrians IDPs and Refugees) in the region (Middle East). In fact, this remains our first priority. ICNA Relief Canada has already spent over $1 Million since 2012 for this project and will continue our work there for as long as there is a need.
   II. We are helping fellow Canadians to sponsor 100 Syrian families to come to Canada under Privately Sponsored Refugees (PSR) program.

Q5) How will groups of people (Sponsors of Syrian Refugees) be formed and how will ICNA Canada (ICNA Relief Canada’s Parent Organization) and its members encourage others to come together to form the groups for sponsoring the Syrians refugees?
A5) Read the promotional and educational materials available via the ICNA Relief Canada website. Understand the importance and process of sponsoring Syrians under PSR program. Then just follow the process or contact us at info@icnareliefcanada.ca for further assistance.

Q6) Are there any legal commitments for the Sponsors of Syrians Refugee Families?
Yes, there is one year commitment for financial & settlement support. The sponsored family should not apply for Government Social Assistance (like Ontario Works) within the first year. In for some genuine reason you / your group cannot continue to provide financial & settlement support to the family you’ve helped to sponsor, contact us immediately at info@icnareliefcanada.ca and IRC will try to make alternative arrangements ASAP, God Willing.

Q7) Which other local organization will ICNA Relief Canada be working with to Sponsor the Syrian Refugees?
A7) ICNA Relief Canada is sponsoring Refugees under the Canadian Government’s PSR (Privately Sponsored Refugees) Program. For this program, our SAH (Settlement Agreement Holder) is the Islamic Foundation of Toronto (http://www.islamicfoundation.ca/). ICNA Relief Canada is acting as a Constituent Group (CG) and each sponsor group from the community will become our co-sponsor. LifelineSyria (http://lifelinesyria.ca/) is our partner in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) providing Settlement Training to our co-sponsors. Note that currently, ICNA Relief Canada is not offering the ‘Group of 5 Program’. The Government Assisted Refugee (GAR) Program is different than our Privately Sponsored Refugees (PSR) Program.
Q8) Does ICNA Relief Canada have any Visual Aids to help better explain the Refugee Sponsorship Program?
A8) Yes, please watch our promotional video here.

Q9) Who is a Refugee?
A9) In the words of a refugee, “To be a refugee means you are an exile. It is a very different experience from being a migrant. Many migrants have come here to get a better standard of living. We have come here because our lives are in danger!” The UN Convention on Refugees offers this definition: “Someone who has suffered or fears persecution in their home country because of their race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion and who flees to another country seeking protection is a refugee.”

Q10) What is the Private Sponsorship of Refugees (PSR) Program?
A10) The Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program is a program of Citizenship and Immigration Canada that is a public-private partnership. Sponsored refugees whose cases are successful come to Canada as Permanent Residents, having been duly processed by Citizenship and Immigration Canada and sponsored by sponsorship groups, most often faith-based communities. From the Canadian Council for Refugees: “Private sponsors provide financial support and settlement assistance for the refugees they sponsor, usually for one year after arrival.”

Q11) What can I do to help? Can I even make a difference?
A11) Yes, you can help and you can make a huge difference. There are a few ways you can support ICNA Relief Canada (IRC)’s ongoing response to the Syrian refugee crisis.

I. You can financially support IRC’s ongoing humanitarian relief efforts. In regions like Syria, IRC is focused on providing emergency food, shelter, and non-food items. Click here to donate for these initiatives.

II. Your family, community group, Masjid, or workplace can partner with IRC to sponsor a refugee family to come to Canada. Learn more about sponsorship or contact us.

III. You can volunteer to come alongside newly arrived refugees to build community and networks of support. Register Online.

Q12) Can I simply make a donation to IRC’s refugee resettlement work?
A12) Yes, IRC is accepting donations designated to our Refugee Program in Canada.

Q13) What kind of guidance and support can we expect throughout the process of sponsoring refugees?
A13) IRC is committed to supporting our sponsor communities as they journey through the refugee resettlement process. You’ll be able to count on us for support as you plan for the arrival of refugee families, as well as assistance on how to best welcome Syrian refugees. IRC will stay connected as you welcome refugees into your community, and our head office staff are available to take your call at 905 997 8777 or email at info@icnareliefcanada.ca
Q14) As a sponsor, what are our responsibilities once the family arrives in Canada?
A14) When a refugee is sponsored privately, the sponsor is responsible for:

- Reception at airport
- Finding housing
- Clothing
- Food
- Transportation
- Community orientation
- Education
- Language courses
- Finding schooling
- Finding childcare
- Any other additional living expenses
- Emotional support and other logistical and settlement assistance

Q15) How do the finances work?
A15) In the planning phases, you’ll work with IRC to develop a detailed budget specific to your community. Generally speaking, the costs of the resettling refugees depends on how many members of the family are being resettled. Also, many sponsor groups donate gently used household items to significantly reduce the costs outlined below.

![Refugee Resettlement Cost Chart](chart.png)
Q16) What kind of health care do refugees receive?
A16) When Privately Sponsored Refugees arrive in Canada they are permanent residents, and are eligible for provincial health care coverage. The Interim Federal Health (IFH) program currently affords minimal benefits to ensure coverage in emergencies (Basic Coverage: Basic services are covered only until the beneficiary qualifies for provincial or territorial health insurance. Public Health or Public Safety (PHPS) Prescription Drug Coverage: which includes prescription medications and related products, only if required to prevent or treat a disease posing a risk to public health or to treat a condition of public safety concern). The new Canadian Government has committed to reversing previous cuts made to the IFH program, restoring coverage for prescriptions, mobility devices and trauma-related therapy. Coverage last for 1 calendar year from the date of arrival.

Q17) Who pays for their travel costs?
A17) When sponsored refugees come to Canada through either the Government Assisted stream or the Private Sponsorship stream, the government works with its own offices abroad, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UN Refugee Agency) and the International Organization for Migration to organize the necessary medical testing and travel arrangements. The government pays for these up-front, and the newcomers are not expected to repay after they arrive in Canada.

Q18) Are refugees able to work? Do sponsors need to find them employments?
A18) It is the responsibility of the sponsor to make sure that newcomers have access to all necessary resources to find employment. As soon as is reasonably expected, a newcomer will be encouraged to look for work to become self-sufficient. As a permanent resident, resettled refugees are fully entitled to work. They will need to have adequate language skills for this to happen. In the event that the newcomers are not self-sufficient by the end of the year of sponsorship, they would be eligible for social security benefits (welfare) as long as they meet the eligibility requirements.

Q19) Is it safe to bring refugees here?
A19) All Sponsored Refugees are screened and must clear security checks before they can be granted Permanent Resident status in Canada. If they do not clear the Government’s Security checks, they are not accepted for resettlement in Canada. The checks are carried out by Citizenship and Immigration Canada, CSIS, RCMP, and other security and intelligence agencies around the globe. All people immigrating to Canada are subject to this kind of screening. To the best of our knowledge, no refugee coming to Canada (over 200,000 privately sponsored) has ever been the subject of an investigation related to national security or terrorism since the inception of the Private Sponsorship Program.
Q20) Is resettlement in Canada really the only option?
A20) For the refugees involved in this initiative, resettlement is the best option remaining. IRC works in partnership with different organizations to select refugees who are unable to return home and are unable to remain where they are. While IRC also provides humanitarian relief to areas of conflict and provides psychosocial care for traumatized individuals, refugee resettlement is the only recourse for those involved in this project.