




SPONSORSHIP AGREEMENT HOLDER

TRAINING GUIDE

FOR CONSTITUTENT GROUPS AND
COSPONSORS

The Refugee Sponsorship Training Program is funded by:
 Citizenship and Immigration Canada

The Refugee Sponsorship Training Program (RSTP) provides resources and services to meet the ongoing information and training needs of private sponsors of refugees in Canada. RSTP is committed to providing SAHs with the necessary training support to support them in fulfilling their commitments to training of their Constituent Groups under the Sponsorship Agreement. Comprehensive orientation and training programs not only ensure that the requirements of the sponsorship are met but also allow sponsoring groups to remain engaged in the sponsorship process when long wait times make it difficult to keep sponsoring groups interested.

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Objective of this Guide

This guide is intended to be an overview of the areas of training that can be offered by SAHs to their Constituent Groups and the resources currently available to assist them. Please contact RSTP if you have any detailed questions regarding specific training topics or require assistance tailoring a session to meet your group's needs. Keep in mind that all groups differ in their knowledge and basic understanding of sponsorship matters and that trainings must be suited to meet the needs of an individual sponsoring group.

Trainings do not always have to be formal sessions but can include many different media types. This will depend on the make-up of your group and the topic of the session. Please find below a list of RSTP resources that are available to you. Many of these resources can be accessed on the RSTP website at www.rstp.ca. For copies of any RSTP resources please contact info@rstp.ca. Please find below a list of resources that may be useful when preparing training sessions for your sponsoring groups:

RSTP Resources

- Sponsorship Agreement Holder's Manual
- Sponsoring Group Handbooks
 - Community Sponsors
 - Groups of Five
 - Joint Assistance Sponsorships
 - Sponsorship Agreement Holders and their Constituent Groups
- Videos
 - Who Can be Sponsored: Private Sponsorship of Refugees to Canada
 - Starting Over: Refugee Voices
- Training Modules
 - Introduction to Sponsorship, Settlement Planning
 - Conflict Management and Conflict Resolution
 - Cross Cultural Training: Awareness Development for Sponsors
- Sponsored Refugee Database Program
- Information for Privately Sponsored Refugees

CIC Resources

- Overseas Selection and Processing of Convention Refugees Abroad Class and Members of the Humanitarian-protected Persons Abroad Classes (OP5)
- In Canada Processing of Convention Refugees Abroad and members of the Humanitarian Protected Persons Abroad classes (IP3)
- Overview on Information-Sharing (IN 1)
- Guide to the Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program

Other Resources

- Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA)
- Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations (IRPR)
- Sponsoring Refugees: An online handbook for Presbyterian Congregations
- Guide to Canadian Overseas Refugee Determination Process (MIIC)
- Strangers No More: An Introduction to Refugee Sponsorship (Video)

Identifying training needs throughout the sponsorship application process

1. Forming a sponsoring group

When attempting to engage individuals in the PSR program it is important to provide them an overview of the world refugee regime. This will put their work into a global context, allowing them to have a sense of belonging and of being valued. Once the group has been 'convinced' to engage in the sponsorship program it is important for them to have a general understanding of the PSR program and expectations – both that they as a sponsoring group may have in relation to their role and the refugees they are seeking to assist and also on the expectations that as a SAH you may have toward them as your CGs.

Topics to cover could include:

- **Overview of the world refugee regime**
 - Enables a general understanding of the term refugee and can help to dispel any myths and misconceptions regarding refugees in Canada.
 - Assists the group in putting their efforts into a global context providing them with a sense of belonging and value.
 - Can provide information on populations of concern that they were unaware of at the outset.
- **Overview of Canada's immigration and resettlement programs**
 - Provides a general understanding of Canada's immigration system and provides context to the group's contribution under the sponsorship program.
- **Objectives and obligations of refugee sponsorship**
 - Allows the sponsoring group to fully understand their legal and moral responsibilities
 - Ensures that there are no surprises later in the process.
 - This session should include a detailed overview of the financial requirements associated to the sponsorship.



*The RSTP training module including PowerPoint presentations on **Introduction to Private Sponsorship of Refugees and Settlement Planning** may provide some information on putting together the previous three sessions. Additionally, please refer to the RSTPs Best Practices Series for an information session put together by the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Toronto which provides an overview of Canada's immigration and resettlement programs as well as a broad overview of the PSR program.*

- **Crosscultural awareness training**
 - Ensures that group member's preconceived notions regarding refugees or working with newcomers or individuals from diverse culture backgrounds is addressed.



*The RSTP training module including PowerPoint presentation and case studies on **Crosscultural Awareness** may be useful in planning this session.*

- **Rights and responsibility of the CG members, the SAH and of the newcomers**
 - Managing expectations plays a prominent role in conflict prevention; ensuring that all parties to the sponsorship are clear on what their responsibilities are will go a long way in preventing future conflicts.

- **Ethics, confidentiality, privacy**

- Ensures that groups are aware of the ethical dilemmas that can arise while acting as a member of a sponsoring committee – a session which includes case studies on personal relationships (between newcomer and group members); financial transactions; and gift giving/receiving, etc... – could be very useful.

It is necessary to ensure that groups understand confidentiality and privacy policies before beginning to work on a sponsorship case. It may be useful for your SAH to develop written forms to provide to group members in order to ensure that they fully understand the importance of this issue.

- **Finances and fundraising**

- Ensures that groups understand what the financial obligations are in relation to their sponsorships as well as the SAHs internal policy regarding finances.
- Providing sessions on fundraising can assist groups who may be daunted by financial obligations to feel that the fundraising goals are achievable.

The book "Ask and You Shall Receive: A Fundraising Training Program for Religious Organizations and Projects" by Kim Klein might be a useful tool to consult when assisting your groups with their fundraising efforts.



2. Choosing a refugee and submitting the group's sponsorship application

Once the group is well-versed in their obligations as a sponsoring group and decide that they would like to participate in the PSR program they will need to be supported through the process of choosing a refugee up to the submission of the sponsorship application.

Training topics here will vary greatly depending on the internal policies of your SAH but could include:

- **JAS/VOR/Sponsor-referred sponsorship**

- Assists groups in finding the most suitable way for them to sponsor depending on their resources and time. This session also allows the SAH to promote JAS/VOR sponsorships.

- **Eligibility training**

- Ensures that sponsoring groups understand the obligations SAHs have in regards to conducting eligibility assessments on every case they agree to sponsor. This becomes even more important when the sponsoring groups play an active role in the eligibility assessment process.

RSTP has conducted numerous training sessions on this topic and can assist you in preparing one for your sponsoring groups. Please contact RSTP for information on training techniques that can be used. Additionally, RSTPs Best Practices Series includes many tools used by other SAHs for case assessment that could be useful to your sponsoring groups including a case assessment process developed by MCC Saskatoon.

- **Updates on changes to immigration policies and procedures as well as country information (ongoing eligibility training updates)**

- Ensures groups are up-to date on the changing policies and country specific information that is paramount to conducting a successful case assessment.

The RSTP and CIC website provide up-to date information on these changes. Consult them regularly to ensure that sponsorship groups are aware of any changes.

- **Settlement planning training**

- Provides the group with basic information regarding the areas of settlement that the group must provide to the newcomer.
- Assists the group in identifying their own capacity and resources as well as professional services in their area that can assist them in implementing the settlement plan.
- Informs the group of standards of care and practice standards that are set by the SAH.



The RSTP training module including PowerPoint presentations on Introduction to Private Sponsorship of Refugees and Settlement Planning can provide an overview on training on this topic; it also includes useful case studies for the group to assist them in identifying settlement issues.

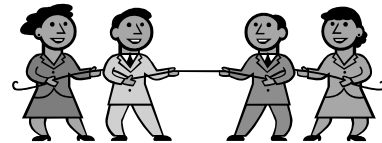
3. The preparation of the refugees file overseas including the screening process, expenses and loans

This is an important and sometimes lengthy time period where the SAH can consider doing speciality trainings and/or orientation sessions to ensure that the group remains engaged and interested even if they must wait a few years for the refugee(s) to arrive in Canada. Additionally, because most often the first two steps happen very quickly it is also possible to schedule some of the earlier noted trainings during this time period.

Additional sessions could include:

- **Conflict management and resolution**

- Enables groups to handle various situations that they may encounter which can lead to conflict within the group, with the newcomer, or with a cosponsor.



The RSTP training module including PowerPoint presentations on Conflict Management and Resolution can be used to provide trainings to your group on this topic.

- **Assessing federal and provincial programs and services to assist the refugees**

- Provides information to the sponsoring group on programs and services that are available. Guest speaker sessions (including settlement counsellors; local CIC reps; education workers; and other professionals) can be an interesting and useful method when providing sessions on this topic.

- **Role of CIC and Settlement Service Provider Organizations (SPOs) including Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP SPOs) for Joint Assistance Sponsorships**

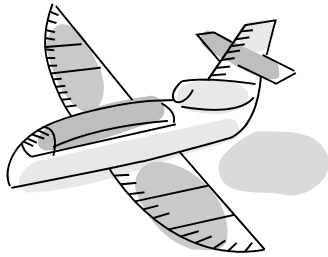
- Allows the group to understand their responsibilities and what the RAP SPO will be providing to their refugee regarding a JAS case. Closer to the arrival of the refugees it may be beneficial to hold a meeting with the sponsoring group and a RAP SPO representative to discuss the responsibilities of the sponsoring group and what role you expect the RAP SPO to play.

- **Dealing with refugees with high needs**

- Creates awareness within the group that all refugees have high needs and prepares them by providing information on warning signs that can be looked for as well as an overview of the services available to the newcomers once they arrive in Canada.
- Provides information to sponsoring groups when a specific need has been identified prior to their arrival allowing the sponsoring group to adequately prepare and think about settlement with their need in mind.

- **Crosscultural sessions**

- Provides the greater sponsoring community that may only be indirectly partaking in the sponsorship - whether through fundraising or moral support – with the opportunity to be engaged and enabled to understand the culture of the newcomer family. Putting sponsoring groups in contact with ethnic organizations that may be able to assist them in providing an information session and cultural awareness night to the sponsoring community may be useful.



4. Notice of arrival, travel, landing and settlement period

This is the final opportunity for the sponsoring group to ensure that they understand their role as sponsors and are prepared for the arrival of the refugee(s). It is important at this stage to go over the final preparations for the arrival of the newcomer to Canada. Most training needs should be met at this point – however it may be useful for sponsoring groups to conduct a self-assessment to ensure that they are adequately prepared to receive the newcomers.

Topics could include:

- **Revisiting settlement planning**

- Assist the group in updating their original plan and ensure that the plan is ready to be implemented. The need for this session will largely depend on the make-up of the group and the length of time since the sponsorship process began.

- **Self-assessment**

- Allows the group to self-assess whether they are adequately prepared to welcome the refugee and determine what steps need to be taken prior to the refugee's arrival. This tool could also be used to inform further training needs within the group.

- **Special topics**

- If special situations arise or the sponsoring group or SAH identifies a further training need – conflict resolutions; dealing with special/high need families; crosscultural awareness, etc... – it may be necessary to provide sessions during the settlement period as needed.

5. Post-sponsorship

Once the sponsorship period has ended it is important to provide a final session on evaluation and next steps. It is often difficult for sponsoring groups to know how to move forward and how to re-assess the role they play in the newcomers' life; therefore it is important that once the sponsorship period is complete for you as the SAH to guide the group into their new role and/or a new sponsorship.

Topics could include:

- **Debriefing**

- Allows the group to provide their thoughts, experiences and comments in an informal gathering. Allows the groups to work through all of the emotions they may have experienced throughout the sponsorship period. For faith based sponsoring groups a debriefing session can also be a spiritual exercise.

