

Understanding Refugee Sponsorship

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC)

IRCC facilitates the arrival of immigrants, provides protection to refugees, and offers programming to help newcomers settle in Canada. It also grants citizenship and issues travel documents (passports) to Canadians.

Refugee Sponsorship

The Canadian Immigration Act of 1976 established refugees as a class distinct from immigrants. Since then, Canada has offered settlement to thousands of government sponsored refugees. Canada is also the only country that allows for the private sponsorship of refugees through Sponsorship Agreement Holders (SAH), helping our country to sponsor additional number of refugees above the government numbers. Private sponsorship does not rely on public resources, but rather taps the energy and funds of faith communities, ethnic groups, families and other benevolent associations. Private sponsors offer personalized local support that the government is not able to provide.

Government Sponsored Refugee program (GAR)

The government sponsored refugee program provides the funds necessary to cover the costs of living in Canada for one year. IRCC also funds settlement agencies in communities to assist any newcomers to Canada as well as providing free English as a Second Language or French as a second language classes to newcomers.

Types of Private Refugee Sponsorship

Blended Visa Office -Referred (BVOR) is a blended program because it is a cost sharing arrangement whereby IRCC and private sponsors contribute financially to support the refugees. These cases are referred by United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to IRCC. The private sponsors are also responsible for providing settlement support to the refugees for the 12 months of sponsorship.

Private Sponsorship of Refugees (PSR) program allows Canadians to resettle specific individuals or families who qualify as refugees under Canada's refugee and humanitarian program. They provide all of the financial and settlement support during the 12 months of sponsorship. Often these are family members sponsoring their relatives who are refugees.

Co-Sponsor of PSR program. Individuals or small groups partner with an individual or family living in the community, wishing to undertake a PSR, but need assistance financially and/or practically in doing so.

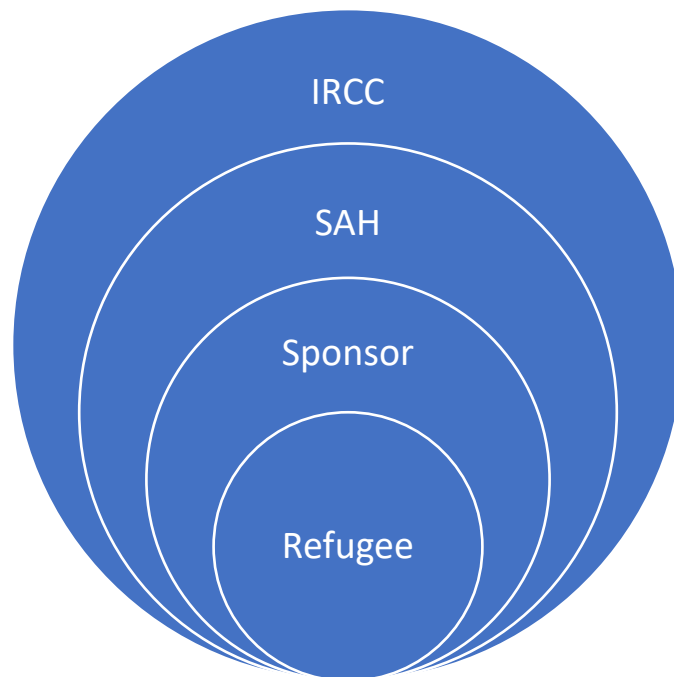
Sponsorship Agreement Holder (SAH)

IRCC signs sponsorship agreements with organizations that help privately sponsored refugees resettle in Canada. These organizations are called Sponsorship Agreement Holders (SAH) They are often religious, ethnic, community or humanitarian organizations.

SAHs support refugees they sponsor either on their own, or by working with other groups or individuals, called "constituent groups (CGs or "co-sponsors") When working with CGs or co-sponsors SAHs decide

how the relationship should work and what criteria CG and co-sponsors need to meet. SAHs also must monitor the performance of CGs and co-sponsors and their sponsorship activities.

Sponsorship Agreement Holders have a number of financial and legal responsibilities. They must be based in, or have representatives in, the community where they resettle refugees. They must oversee all sponsorships under their agreement, even if CGs or co-sponsors are participating. They must ensure the refugees they sponsor have what they need to live safely and independently in Canada. They must participate in ongoing training to stay up to date on program requirements.



IRCC has a contract with the SAH to provide quality private refugee sponsorship.

The SAH has a contract with the sponsor to provide quality private refugee sponsorship.

The sponsor has a duty to the refugee to provide quality refugee sponsorship.

If the sponsorship is successful, the person who came to Canada as a refugee, will receive the support, encouragement and opportunities to eventually become an independent member of the community and a Canadian citizen.

Diocese of Ontario Refugee Support- DOORS

The Incorporated Synod of the Diocese of Ontario is the overall structure of the Anglican church in the Kingston area (Trenton to Brockville, and north to Bancroft). Synod Council is the governing body of the Diocese of Ontario comprised of elected members of the clergy and lay persons from within the 4 areas of the Diocese of Ontario. Leeds-Grenville, Frontenac (Kingston) Quinte and Hastings.

The Incorporated Synod of the Diocese of Ontario has been a Sponsorship Agreement Holder with IRCC since 1997 when SAHs were first formed to provide private refugee sponsorship programs. We call our program DOORS-Diocese of Ontario Refugee Support.

Diocese of Ontario Refugee Support Program (DOORS)

DOORS focuses on the sponsorship of refugees as well as advocating for refugees. DOORS provides refugee sponsorship opportunity to the local community from Trenton to Brockville and north to Bancroft. Our office is situated in the office of the Diocese of Ontario in Kingston. DOORS is the only organization located in the Kingston area for the private sponsorship of refugees. We engage with interested Canadians to:

- equip them to become sponsors
- assist them with completing the application for refugee sponsorship
- manage the sponsorship application over the few years that it takes to go through the system
- ensure that the sponsors are prepared for the arrival of the refugee
- support and mentor the sponsors during the sponsorship year
- monitor the sponsorship on a regular basis to ensure that the refugee is well supported and provided for.

DOORS structure

Initially DOORS was a volunteer committee who sponsored a refugee family every couple of years. In 2016, in response to the imminent arrival of many Syrian refugees, the Diocese of Ontario and the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Kingston decided to fund a part time co-ordinator position. Mimi Merrill has been the DOORS Refugee Sponsorship Co-ordinator since 2016 and is funded at 20 hours per week. The DOORS committee has become a steering committee of 4-6 community members who are passionate about refugee sponsorship along with a representative from both the Diocese of Ontario and the Roman Catholic Archdiocese.

Role of the Diocese of Ontario

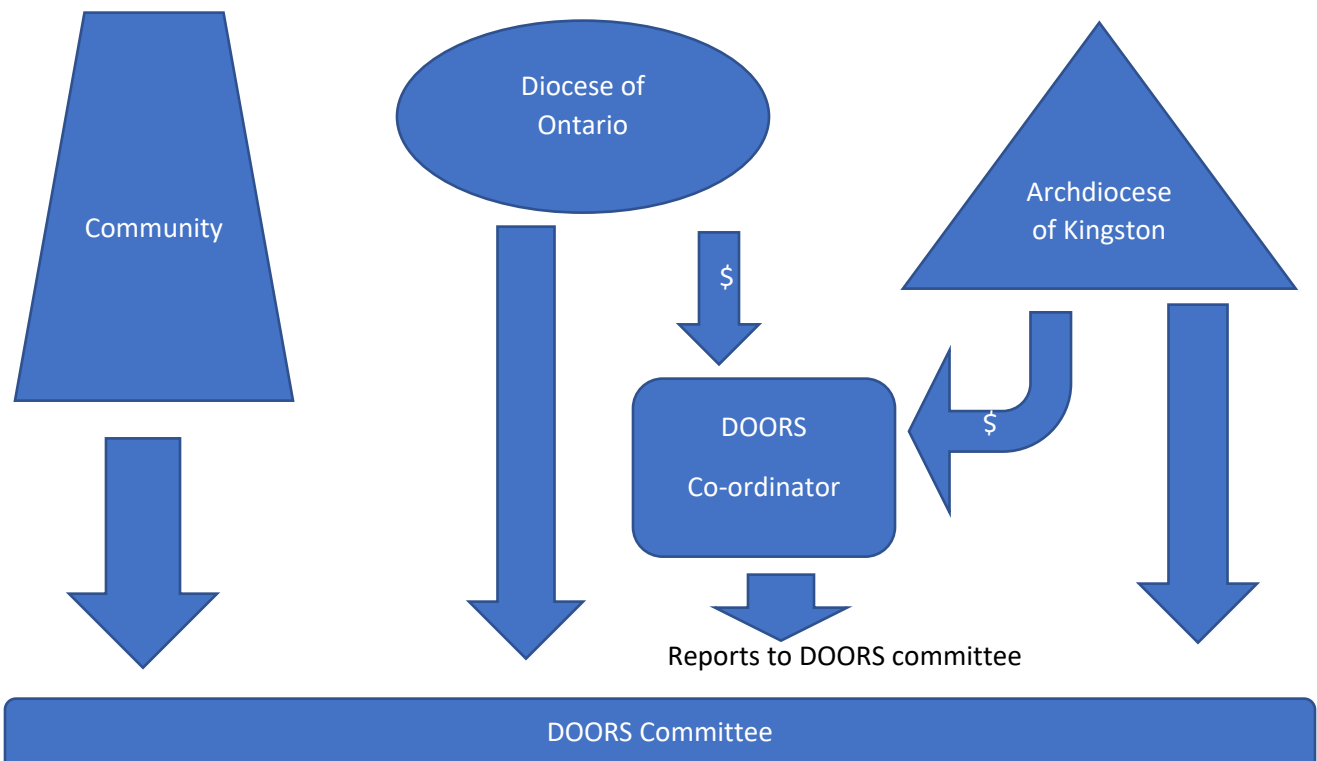
The Incorporated Diocese of Ontario has a legal contract with IRCC to be a Sponsorship Agreement Holder. The Diocese is ultimately responsible for each refugee sponsored under this agreement. Two official signatures from the Diocese office are required on each refugee application sent to IRCC. Both of these individuals are required to have completed an IRCC program outlining their responsibilities as a SAH. If we are not able to fulfill IRCC standards, then we will lose our SAH status, and no longer be able to assist people in private refugee sponsorship.

Role of the DOORS Co-ordinator

- responsible for the operation of the DOORS program
- reports to the DOORS committee on a regular basis
- writes an annual report
- communicates with and provides support and education to sponsors
- attends SAH Council meetings and the annual SAH Conference
- collaborates with community agencies
- advocates to IRCC on behalf of sponsors
- accesses the resources of the community and sponsors to maximize successful refugee sponsorships

Role of the DOORS Committee

- steering committee for the DOORS Program within the Diocese of Ontario
- provide direction, help set priorities, and resolve issues
- translates IRCC directives into practical processes enabling DOORS to maintain its SAH status
- collaborates with and provides guidance and encouragement to the DOORS Co-ordinator
- completes an annual budget and funding applications.



DOORS committee includes a representative from both the Diocese of Ontario and the Archdiocese of Kingston, along with 4-6 people from the community who are passionate about refugee sponsorship.