

COMMUNITY REFUGEE  
SPONSORSHIP PROGRAMME

Information Session #1  
Questions & Answers



*The following questions were asked during the Community Refugee Sponsorship Programme (CORS) Information Session on 9 December 2021.*

*If you were unable to attend the information session, you can watch the recording [here](#).*

**Questions and answers from this Information Session:**

**Requirements as a legal entity for sponsoring organisation:**

**Does the legal entity have to be a single entity, or can it be a group operating under a Memorandum of Understanding?**

A group of individuals can partner with a registered entity (company, charity, incorporated society, or charitable trust) and submit an application together. They may decide to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) together to outline the terms of the partnership.

**Is it possible to join an existing sponsor group?**

There are no existing Approved Sponsor groups as the programme has only recently opened. Individuals interested in joining together with a registered entity from their area should contact HOST Aotearoa to find out more information.

**Can the approved community organisation of four or five persons sponsor two single refugees at the same time, considering that there is no relationship between the two single refugees, and they have two separate file no. with UNHCR?**

An Approved Community Organisation can nominate two single refugees that they wish to sponsor. The organisation would need to submit two settlement plans and provide financial evidence to show that they can deliver settlement services for two individuals.

**Is there a guide for what people should do if they form their own groups to become an organisation?**

Individuals who are interested in sponsoring refugees are encouraged to partner with an organisation that is already a registered entity (i.e. a company, charity, incorporated society, or trust).

You should not form a new organisation for the purposes of sponsoring because it is unlikely that you will be able to provide sufficient evidence of the organisation's financial resources and history of working with refugees or vulnerable people.

**Can the sponsor be an individual? As an individual can I sponsor a refugee family I have a personal relationship with?**

Individuals and families are not able to sponsor a refugee by themselves. Approved Sponsors need to be a registered entity (i.e. a company, charity, incorporated society, or trust). We strongly encourage individuals who are interested in sponsoring a refugee to partner with a registered entity and submit an application together. This is a model that has worked well in the past.

You can approach registered entities in your area and see if they are interested in working with you to sponsor the refugee family that you have a prior relationship with.

**As a small business owner, can be sponsor for a person or family?**

A small business would qualify as a registered entity for the purposes of the sponsor application but depending on the size of your business you might consider partnering with other individuals and groups in your community and submit an application together.

Many ex-refugees came to NZ through refugee quota and have experienced this with themselves, but they have not been sponsor before. Can such people join the community sponsorship?

We definitely encourage former refugee-led organisations to submit applications to become Approved Sponsors!

**Preparing for sponsorship:**

**Can you describe how the Settlement Plan will be developed and by who and how?**

The organisation will need to develop the Settlement Plan and submit it as part of their application to become an Approved Sponsor. There is a guidance note on the Immigration NZ website to help you through the process and HOST Aotearoa NZ can advise you as well. Once you have been approved as a sponsor you can start to communicate with the refugee that you will be sponsoring to understand their settlement needs and expectations in more detail so that you can adjust your plan.

**How much detail do we need to provide in the settlement plan? Is it enough to mention that we will use our network of 500 people (for example) to find a place to live? Or do we have to be specific about finding an exact house for them?**

The Settlement Plan and Guidance note are available on the Immigration NZ website and they outline some of the considerations that you'll need to answer as part of the application process. If you have members of your network who are landlords of affordable housing you can provide detail about that. If you've spoken to property management companies about suitable houses in your settlement location, provide details about that. You will need to show that you have considered important factors such as size, location, privacy, cost, and healthy homes standards.

**Is there a limit on the numbers each year sponsored by sponsoring organisation?**

If you are wanting to sponsor multiple refugee families then you should mention this as part of your application and submit settlement plans for each family.

**What is the difference between sponsoring a single individual and a family?**

As an Approved Sponsor, you can decide if you want to sponsor an individual or a family. Your organisation can explain in the Settlement Plan how you would support an individual versus how you would support a family (i.e. access to childcare, schools and other relevant services), and your budget should highlight any associated costs that are additional for a family to an individual.

**Who runs the child protection course?**

The Fundamentals of Child Protection is an online e-Learning module run by Safeguarding Children: <https://safeguardingchildren.org.nz/courses/fundamentals-of-child-protection/>

### **Can we please have the text of the Deed of Agreement for Services?**

Once potential sponsoring organisations have made the decision that they would like to apply to become an Approved Sponsor Organisation, we can make a draft Deed of Agreement for Services available to the organisation. As this is a legal agreement between the Approved Sponsor and Immigration New Zealand, we are not able to make it publicly available on the website.

### **How much does this sponsorship model cost and approximately how long does it take? How much money does the organisation need to spend (roughly)?**

In some part of the information provided they mention that the approved community organisation will financially support the refugees 2 years, in other documents they say about 4 weeks while they wait to access the benefits from the government. Please clarify.

A budget template will soon be available on the HOST Aotearoa's website so you can calculate estimated costs. Approved sponsors will need to be able to financially support sponsored refugees until the Ministry of Social Development is able to process their benefit claims. There is no strict timeframe for this, but approved sponsors should prepare to provide financial support for at least four to six weeks.

Approved Sponsors will be responsible for providing settlement support in various forms for two years (i.e. supporting the sponsored refugees to access government services, enrol in schools and healthcare, access employment and training opportunities and connect with their new community).

When refugees arrive, the approved sponsor will need to provide sufficient cash per person (adults and children) for initial expenses including groceries, toiletries, clothes, while their claim for benefits is being processed. Initial payments should be at the same level as social welfare payment entitlements.

### **Who pays for the travel?**

Immigration NZ will pay for the refugees' international travel as well as the costs associated with the health and English language assessments and visa processing.

### **Travel and arrival of sponsored refugees:**

#### **Will they be arriving as quota refugee and spend time at MRRC [Māngere Refugee Resettlement Centre] before going in their respective regions? Or they will go straight to sponsors?**

#### **How long will the refugee spend in Mangere, what assistance will they receive whilst they are there - IRD number, Benefits etc?**

Refugees who are sponsored by community organisations are not quota refugees and will not spend any time at Te Āhuru Mōwai o Aotearoa, the Māngere Refugee Resettlement Centre.

Sponsored refugees will be issued with a visa under the Community Organisation Refugee Sponsorship visa category, which is complementary and additional to the quota refugee system. Once they arrive in New Zealand they will settle directly into the community with support from the Approved Sponsor.

The Approved Sponsor will be responsible for supporting the refugees financially during the first four to six weeks in New Zealand and will assist them to register with the Ministry of Social Development for benefit payments.

HOST Aotearoa New Zealand will work with the Approved Sponsors on their Settlement Plans and help them create an orientation package for the refugees.

### **Do they need to go through MIQ or self-isolate?**

We will closely monitor the re-opening of New Zealand borders throughout 2022 and advise Approved Sponsors of any plans that may need to be in place for the sponsored refugees to self-isolate on arrival.

In addition, as part of their settlement support, Approved Sponsors will need to help the sponsored refugees access the COVID-19 vaccine if they have had not already received it and download the My Vaccine Pass.

**What benefits will the refugees be entitled to, including housing supplements? Will they qualify for benefit on arrival? Will the government be supporting them with income?**

Sponsored Refugees are entitled to the same benefits as other New Zealand residents. The most common benefit for refugees will be the Jobseeker Benefit including the accommodation supplement.

The most recent benefit rates from Work and Income can be found here: [Benefit and other rates at 1 December 2021 \(workandincome.govt.nz\)](https://www.workandincome.govt.nz/benefit-and-other-rates-at-1-december-2021)

Sponsored Refugees may also qualify for the Re-establishment grant ([Re-establishment grant \(Special Needs Grant\) - Work and Income](#)) to help with purchasing whiteware. This should be discussed with Work and Income NZ once the sponsored refugee has arrived in the settlement location.

**Eligibility criteria for sponsored refugees:**

*There were several questions on the eligibility of sponsored refugees. Check out the [Refugees FAQs](#) page on our website for further details.*

**Is there any specific number which will be sponsored each year?**

Under the extended pilot up to 150 refugees will be resettled in New Zealand through community sponsorship until July 2024.

**How do we nominate a refugee? Do we need to somehow get in touch with a refugee abroad from a particular country? How do nominations typically work?**

There are two options available for Approved Sponsors – you can nominate a refugee that you would like to sponsor or be matched with a refugee that has been identified by UNHCR as being a suitable candidate for the refugee sponsorship programme. If you are not already in contact with a refugee who you wish to sponsor, then the best pathway is to be matched with a refugee.

**If a person is nominated not from camp how can we prove his or her refugee status for mandate requirement?**

A person will need to be registered with UNHCR in order to meet the criteria for the sponsorship programme and living outside their country of origin. They could be living in a refugee camp or in urban areas in the host country.

**Can you explain what work experience the principal applicant should have? What if he doesn't have any qualifications?**

The principal applicant needs three years' work experience or a tertiary qualification. If they do not have evidence of their prior work experience, then they can sign a statutory declaration as part of their immigration interview outlining the work experience that they have. There are no rules on the type of work or the level.

**Can your group sponsor a family that not all are under 45? Parents and 3 girls?**

Yes, only the principal refugee applicant needs to be between 18 – 45, have three years' work experience or a tertiary qualification, and a basic understanding of the English language.

**Can a refugee who comes to NZ through community organisation sponsorship bring their family to NZ later like wife and children?**

**I think the refugee can bring his spouse and kids to NZ later on. Can he bring his old parents who are alone, at the same time? Or can he sponsor them later?**

**Can your group choose the refugee? Can be a family of 3, the first applicant is 25 but the two grandparents all older than 45 be eligible?**

An Approved Sponsor who is nominating a refugee family will need to identify who the principal applicant is and prove that they meet the criteria for principal applicant (i.e. is between 18 – 45 years old, has 3 years work experience or tertiary education, and basic English).

In addition to the principal applicant, you can sponsor their partner and any dependent children. You will not be able to sponsor extended family members.

Once they are settled in New Zealand, those former refugees can then register under the Refugee Family Support Category to sponsor other family members, including elderly parents or grandparents. More information on the Family Support Category can be found here:

<https://www.immigration.govt.nz/new-zealand-visas/apply-for-a-visa/tools-and-information/general-information/sponsorship-refugee-family-support-category>

**If the principal applicant doesn't have any qualifications, he can't sponsor anyone? What type of work experience should he/she have?**

The criteria for having three years of work experience or tertiary qualification is for the principal refugee applicant.

The **Sponsor criteria** is:

- Be a legal entity — such as incorporated society, registered company, charitable trust, or religious organisation.
- Have the financial resources to provide settlement services to sponsored refugees for up to two years.
- Have experience working successfully with refugees or other vulnerable people.
- Have capability and capacity to secure suitable accommodation and support sponsored refugees to enter the labour market and secure meaningful and sustainable employment.
- Be willing and able to enter into a Deed of Agreement for Services with Immigration New Zealand for the provision of settlement services to the agreed standard.

**Please could you clarify eligibility for adults or children with disabilities in terms of health screening - this seems unclear as it is stated there is no discrimination, but it also states that this may exclude people. Thank you.**

**Does having a medical case affect the chance of the refugee for being granted a visa?**

**If the refugee is sick, does it affect his chance negatively?**

One of the aims of the Community Sponsorship Programme is to be additional and complementary to the Refugee Quota Programme. As such, there are different criteria for refugees under the Community Sponsorship Programme, than the Refugee Quota Programme - including three years' work experience, a basic understanding of English, and an acceptable level of health.

The **Refugee Quota Programme** which has 1500 places each year is focused on resettlement for refugees who are most in need. This includes spaces for medical cases.

**Former refugee communities in NZ have been saying "Nothing about us without us" for decades. Where does Strengthening Refugee Voices fit in these processes? Why don't we have any refugee led organisations in the panel in this session?**

Former refugees and refugee-led organisations have been closely involved in the co-design process that has taken place over the last year. Their voices have shaped – and will continue to influence – the implementation of the programme. There will be a former refugee representative on the assessment panel for approving sponsors, and there will also be opportunities for former refugees to take part in the monitoring and evaluation of the extended pilot.

We decided not to invite previously sponsored refugees to speak at the first information session because the focus of the session was on the requirements for sponsor organisations and the process for applying to become an approved sponsor. There will be information sessions throughout the course of 2022 on different topics and we will invite former sponsored refugees to provide their insights.