

Refugee Sponsorship Guide

ANGLICAN DIOCESE OF NIAGARA



Photo by the UNHCR

INTRODUCTION

In response to the ongoing global refugee crisis, the Anglican Diocese of Niagara works in partnership with local sponsorship groups to resettle refugees to Canada. Through an agreement with Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), we are able to sponsor refugees from around the world. The diocese assists sponsors throughout the process of preparing and submitting a sponsorship application, welcoming refugees to Canada, and providing financial support during the first year of settlement. While sponsorship groups are primarily responsible for day-to-day settlement support, the diocese is responsible for guaranteeing that all support is delivered safely and efficiently.

SPONSORSHIP INVOLVES:

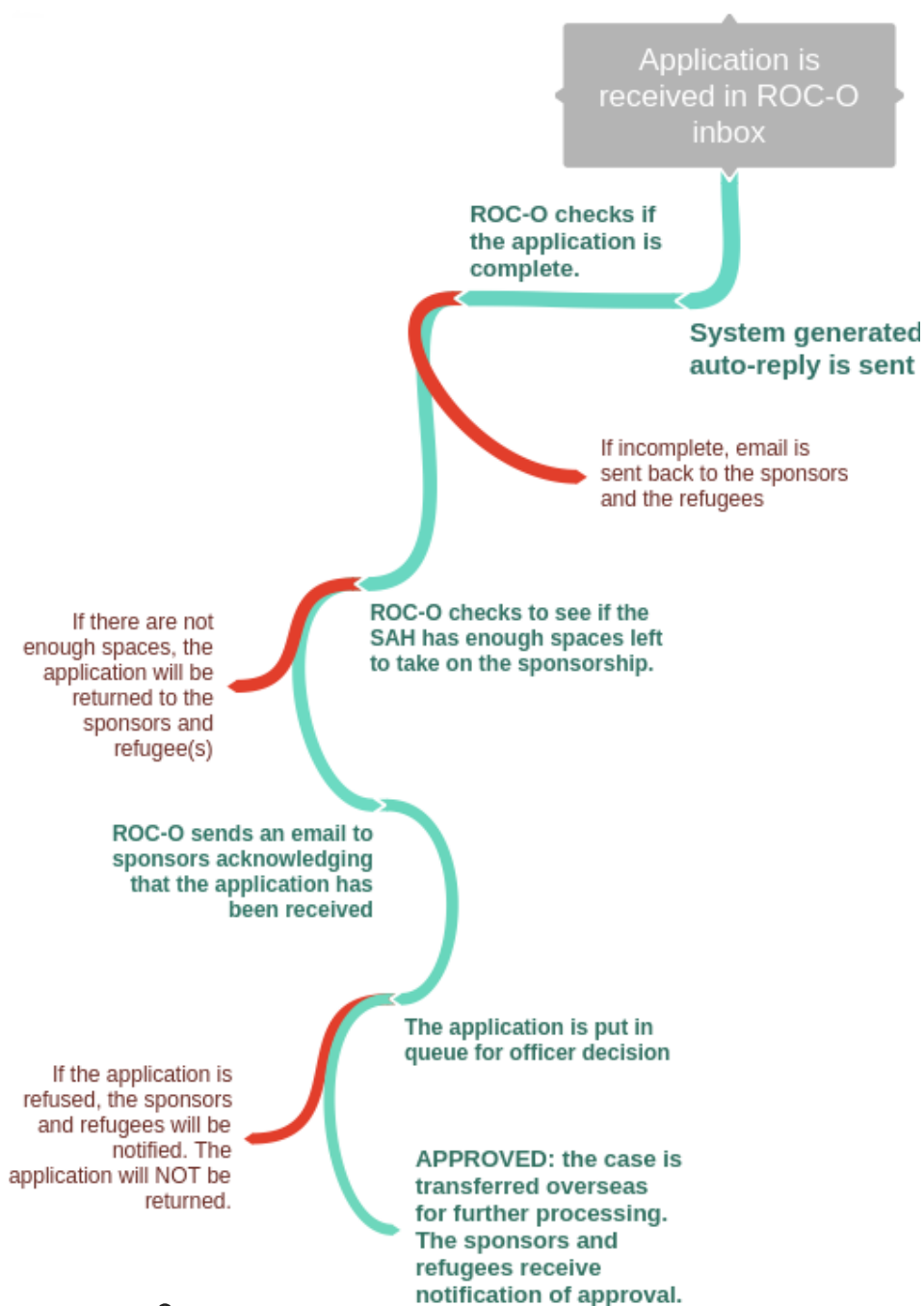
- Preparing and submitting a sponsorship application
- Planning for Arrival
- Welcoming refugees
- Settlement Support
- Financial Support

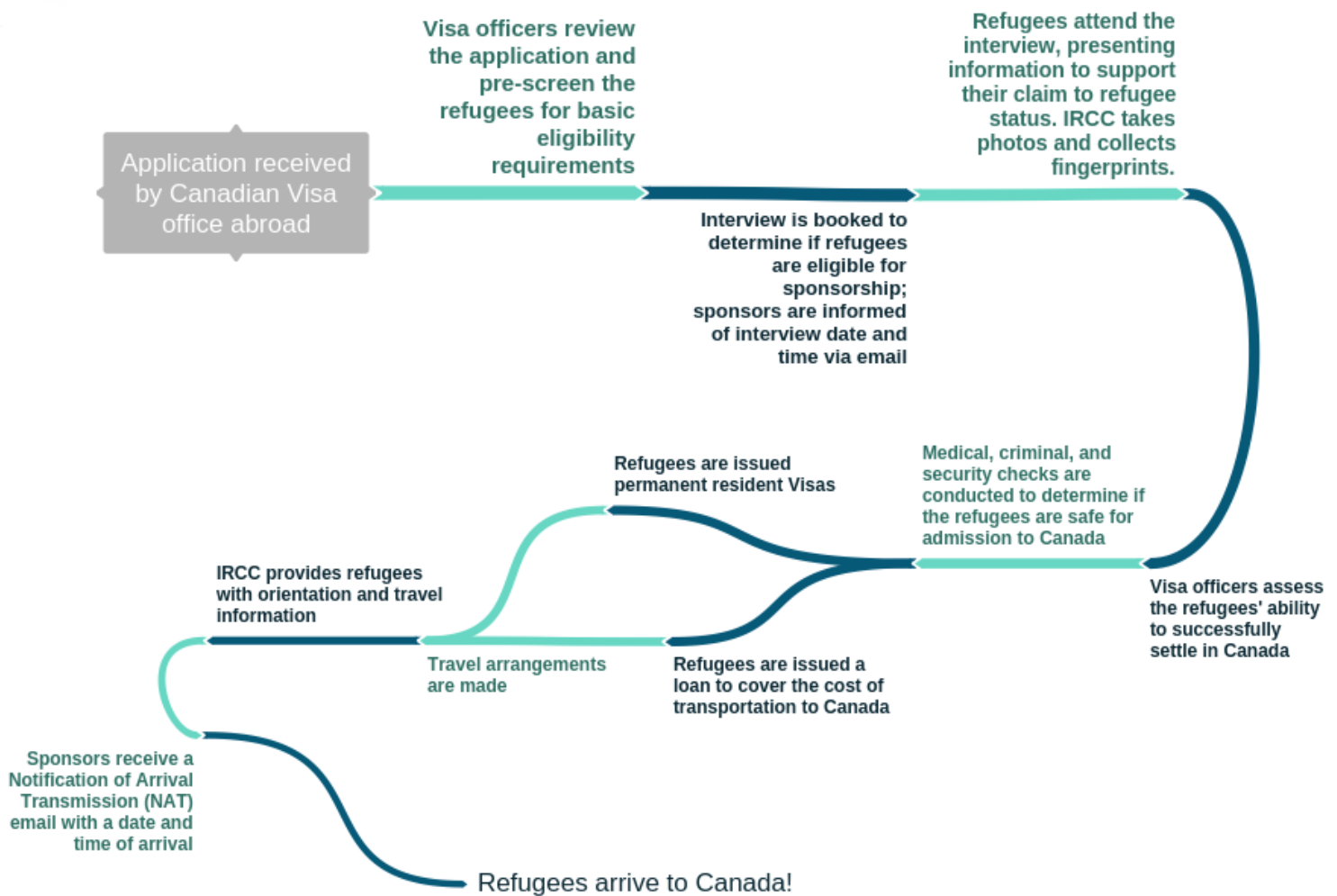
PREPARING AND SUBMITTING A SPONSORSHIP APPLICATION

The first step to refugee sponsorship is preparing an application. The diocese and the sponsor(s) work together to collect all required information and documentation. Some application forms must be completed by the refugees themselves, while others are completed by the sponsorship group. During this process, sponsors are in contact with the refugees to collect completed application forms, which are then be shared with the diocese. Ultimately, the diocese is responsible for reviewing the entire application and submitting it to the Resettlement Operations Centre - Ottawa (ROC-O) via email. Once submitted, wait times vary. First, the application is processed by ROC-O, then by a Canadian Visa office overseas. See the flowcharts below for details.

SETTLEMENT PLANNING

When preparing an application for submission, sponsors must include a document called a Settlement Plan. Settlement planning involves delegating tasks to individual group members, and creating a budget. Specific roles should be laid out for each group member as to how they will be helping the refugees. Before the refugees arrive, sponsors must research housing availability in the community and begin collecting any in-kind donations for home essentials such as furniture and clothing. It is important that sponsors respect the opinions and desires of refugees as much as possible at this stage. Refugees should have a say in where they live and how they furnish their homes in order to uphold their dignity and promote self-determination.





WELCOMING REFUGEES TO CANADA

Once refugees have arrived, they become permanent residents of Canada. As such, they are no longer "refugees" but "newcomers". The first task of sponsors is to meet the newcomers at the airport and greet them upon arrival. It is important that sponsors be sensitive to the fact that the newcomers may be very tired and overwhelmed from their travel.

Within the first 24 hours of arrival, sponsors should provide newcomers with:

- Food staples and/or pre-made meals
- Home phone or cell phone
- Orientation to their immediate neighbourhood/building
- A list of emergency and sponsorship team member phone numbers
- A small amount of petty cash for unexpected purchases

Within the first couple weeks, sponsors should:

- Arrange for medical appointments
- Apply for OHIP, IFHP, SIN, and CCB
- Connect with local settlement agency
- Register for ESL classes
- Enroll children in school
- Set up bank account and mail services
- Explain monthly finances
- Make copies of documents received at airport



FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Sponsors are responsible for providing refugees with the financial support needed to cover all living expenses during their first year in Canada. The funds raised by sponsors will go towards two types of financial support:

1. Start up costs: a one-time payment covering the cost of household items, furniture, linens, clothing, food staples, and school registration fees (if applicable)
2. Monthly income support: monthly payments covering expenses such as housing, food, public transit passes, and a communication allowance for telephone and internet

PARISH SPONSORSHIPS

For sponsorships undertaken by a parish group, any lease or contract that is signed on behalf of the refugees will be in the name of "The Synod of the Diocese of Niagara" to ensure that the diocese's insurance policy can respond in the event of a loss/claim naming the Diocese and/or the Parish Priest.

Some amount of start-up costs may be substituted with in-kind donations. All these expenses are to be covered directly by the sponsorship group. For monthly income support, the sponsorship group transfers funds to the diocese, and the diocese issues monthly cheques to the newcomers. This amount is calculated using the following formula:

Local RAP Rate + Housing Top-Up + Discretionary Support = Monthly Income Support

Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP) rates are equivalent to income received through provincial social assistance. Housing top-ups are provided when rent is not affordable in the community of settlement. Discretionary support may be provided to families with children while they wait to begin receiving income through Canada Child Benefit.

SETTLEMENT SUPPORT

During their first year in Canada, newcomers' main source of support will be the co-sponsor and/or constituent group. Settlement support involves orienting the newcomers to their new community of settlement, teaching them how to shop for basic necessities, introducing them to public transit, accessing healthcare, enrolling children in school, exploring employment options, and more. For additional assistance, sponsors can help the newcomers to access resources and programming from local settlement agencies, such as ESL and LINC courses or employment counselling.

We ask that sponsorship groups fill out settlement reports throughout the twelve-month sponsorship period, and promptly report any issues to the sponsorship coordinator.



Photo by Amnesty International



For more information...

To learn more about the responsibilities associated with sponsorship, visit www.rstp.ca.

SAFE REFUGEE SPONSORSHIP

In order to be involved in refugee sponsorship, all participating group members must submit a Police Record Check to the diocese, including a vulnerable sector check. Participants must also sign off on our diocesan Safe Church Policy. If any participant does not comply with these requirements, they must always be accompanied by a participant who has submitted a Police Record Check when they interact with the newcomers. It is expected that participants will comply with diocesan guidelines for safe sponsorship including, but not limited to: working in pairs when meeting with the newcomers, always planning visits ahead of time rather than dropping in unannounced, and respecting the privacy, confidentiality, and cultural norms of the newcomers. To establish clear boundaries, it is useful to designate specific roles and responsibilities to each member of a sponsoring group.



CONTACT US AT: refugees@niagaraanglican.ca



ANGLICAN
DIOCESE OF
NIAGARA