

CAMPUS SPONSORSHIP

BUILDING WELCOMING COMMUNITIES

What is Community Sponsorship?

Community based refugee sponsorship is a program that enables community members to directly engage in refugee resettlement. Individuals can form groups to become sponsors who commit to providing financial, emotional, and settlement support to help refugee newcomers integrate into life in a new country. Community sponsors are typically matched with refugees that have been approved by the UN Refugee Agency and government.



Why should I become a Community Sponsor?

There are significant benefits to becoming a sponsor, some of which include:

- Enabling more refugees to find a safe, secure home so they can rebuild their lives.
- Learning from others with different perspectives.
- Contributing to a quicker integration for refugees by supporting their efforts to find housing, jobs, adapt to new culture, etc.
- Expanding others' and your own cultural understanding and intercultural communication abilities, and;
- Developing greater insight and appreciation for the opportunities and challenges of refugee resettlement and integration.

What is Campus Sponsorship?

Campus sponsorship is a form of community sponsorship that directly engages faculty, staff, and students in the formation of groups to help refugee newcomers resettle and integrate into life in a new country. Campus sponsorship can range from a small high school campus to a leading university and from a group of five people to an institutionally supported, inter-campus program. Campuses can be both sites of community and administrations or workplaces to facilitate and support sponsorship.

Why should I become a Campus Sponsor?

There are significant and unique benefits to becoming a campus sponsor, some of which include:

- Sponsoring refugees is a deeply rewarding experience full of opportunities to learn and grow.
- Community building with faculty, staff and students with whom you may rarely interact.
- Building leadership skills such as project management, group facilitation, budgeting, fundraising, social marketing, etc.
- Growing your multigenerational networks both on and off campus; including alumni, families, and supporters.

What is unique about Campus Sponsorship?

Campus sponsorship differs from workplace and other forms of community sponsorship because there are opportunities to form sponsorship groups with faculty, staff, and students that are embedded or connected to all types of campuses. Campuses are unique social, learning, and workplace environments that have a large range of pre-existing communities, networks and resources that can be leveraged to support refugee newcomers.

Who can I sponsor?

Workplace sponsors have the potential to sponsor individual refugees and families from around the world, who are identified by the UN Refugee Agency and government as in need of a life-saving intervention.

How involved is Campus Administration?

Campus administration does not necessarily have to be involved in campus sponsorship. Students and faculty can and do form groups through their connections to campus and draw on their own networks and resources. However, we have seen multiple examples of how administrations can support campus sponsorship, with benefits for faculty, staff, students, and resettled refugees and families.

Less involvement



More involvement

- Students or staff forming sponsor groups through their mutual connection to a campus.
- Formalised student or staff groups affiliated to the student union or university, accessing campus services, such as a campus food bank or health centre, on behalf of sponsored refugees.
- Students and staff forming sponsorship groups with support of schools or faculties and/or provision of programmatic, research, or financial support.
- Staff and faculty-led sponsorship initiatives or groups accessing campus administrative services such as management of finances and provision of wide range of campus facilities.
- Campus administration uses branding, networks, and resources to form multi-campus sponsorship initiatives raising funding and expanding sponsorship programs.

Samples of Campus Sponsorship

Student Group

A group of students or colleagues who have met through campus form a sponsorship group to resettle a refugee or refugee family.

They encourage people on campus to join or form their own groups and raise funds and material support through their campus communities and individual connections.

Example

Four third-year law students at Queen's University, supervised by their professor, formed the **Queen's Law Refugee Support Program** and sponsored a 25 year old Syrian man.

Faculty-led Initiative

Students and/or colleagues collaborating with campus administration to establish an initiative to sponsor multiple refugees or families.

The campus supports sponsorship through provision of administrative support and fundraising, and expanding the initiative through their networks.

Example

Ryerson University Lifeline Syria Challenge: Four universities raised more than \$4.9 million, formed 90 teams, sponsoring 120 families, 434 Syrian refugees, with over 1000 volunteers.

Youth to Youth

Students in coalition with faculty create, join, or support a group on campus that welcome student refugees on campus through enrollment in courses and degrees.

Campus administration selects and enrolls students who are refugees offering bursaries and tuition, and supporting with social and financial support.

Example

Student volunteer groups around the world form **World University Service of Canada (WUSC) Local Committees** to provide academic and social support to enrolled refugees at their university.

Transform and enrich your campus through refugee sponsorship.

What may be my responsibilities as a sponsor?

Prior to arrival

- Preparing application for permanent residence and compiling the supporting documentation along with certified translations.
- Sharing information and updates with refugee applicants throughout the application process.
- Communicating with refugees to learn about their particular resettlement needs.



After arrival

- Sponsors are responsible for providing recently arrived refugees with care, lodging, settlement assistance, and support for the duration of the sponsorship period.
- Normally, this lasts twelve months starting from the refugee's arrival in Canada or until the refugee becomes self-sufficient; whichever comes first.

What are some potential challenges and risks of campus sponsorship?

- There are important things to consider such as confidentiality and working with vulnerable people.
- Take care of your work-life balance! Becoming a sponsor implies adding activities to your current personal and professional responsibilities.
- Campus administrations and staff must consider the ethics of research opportunities that arise from campus sponsorships.

I am interested! What next?

- Find answers to your questions in the **Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative's** guidebook on community sponsorship.
- Find out if there are any **pre-existing sponsorship groups** on your campus.
- **Contact us!**

What is GRSI?

The Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative is a partnership of five – the Government of Canada, UNHCR, the Open Society Foundations, the Giustra Foundation and the University of Ottawa. It aims to help other countries set up their own community-based refugee sponsorship programs, strengthening local communities and improving the narrative on refugees in the process.

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Campus Resources

Many campuses resemble small cities, already equipped with many of the services that are required by resettled refugees and families. Campuses contain and connect many communities with their own networks that can provide great opportunities for the social support of resettled refugees. The degree to which sponsor groups access services and support from campus administrations can vary and is dependent on the needs and wants of each newcomer and sponsorship group.

Campus Services

Campus services that could be accessed include, for example: Housing, health and counselling services, sports and recreation facilities, faith-based groups and services, restaurants and dining halls, social events and organisations, financial and banking services, libraries, childcare facilities, career and employment counselling, language services, orientation services and tours, etc.

Administrative Support

Administrative support could include: Tuition-waivers, residence, meal plan waivers, bursaries, enrollment, scholarships, immigration and legal support, research and programmatic funds, dedicated support staff, salary sacrifices, tax credits for donations, administration and management of funds for sponsor groups, fundraising through alumni and corporate networks, etc.