



## Important Changes to Refugee Sponsorship

Greetings from the Office for Refugees, Archdiocese of Toronto (ORAT). This is an important notice for all those involved in the sponsorship of refugees.

From time to time the Ministry of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (“IRCC”) renews the agreement with organizations like the Archdiocese of Toronto who wish to sponsor and resettle refugees from overseas. A new sponsorship agreement between IRCC and the Archdiocese of Toronto has been signed by His Eminence Thomas Cardinal Collins, having an effective date of January 1, 2018.

As you perform this important work, we would like to bring to your attention a number of important changes that IRCC has made to the sponsorship agreement regarding the level of support expected to be provided to newcomers/refugees. These provisions, which are outlined in the new agreement, have a significant impact on your work, in terms of both the financial and non-financial support that you provide to newcomers. Sponsors are asked to operate according to these revised guidelines.

The following is an overview of these key changes:

### Key Changes to Financial Requirements

*a. Level of Financial Support Required:* The sponsor must provide sufficient income support to at least the minimum financial requirements as outlined in the Resettlement Assistance Program (“RAP”). This level of support is to continue for the duration of the sponsorship period, which is one year or until the refugee becomes self-sufficient. Varying amounts of funds to meet the basic costs of living are needed in different areas of Canada. The total sponsorship costs may be reduced through the donation of “in-kind” goods, which may include lodging, furniture and clothing. Where practicable, the refugee should have the responsibility to manage his or her own financial affairs.

*b. Canada Child Benefit & Earned Income:* The standards for use of personal funds and earned income will follow the same standards as per the RAP program (e.g., calculation of income support and personal assets, additional income incentive threshold, Canada Child Benefit, etc.). However, the cosponsor may choose to maintain a higher level of income support.

**Canada Child Benefits (“CCB”):** Sponsors are not permitted to reduce their level of financial support

### Change in Terminology from Resettlement Groups (RGs) to Constituent Groups (CGs)

In order to be consistent with the terminology used by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (“IRCC”), and in order to eliminate any confusion that may have arisen from the use of the “CG” acronym in IRCC documents and forms, ORAT will now be referring to Resettlement Groups (“RG”s) as Constituent Groups (“CG”s). This is the official term used by IRCC in all its documents and forms. This change will not have any effect on the structure, responsibilities or duties of the refugee committee. The only change is that ORAT will now be referring to RGs and CGs in all of its document.

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## Important Changes to Refugee Sponsorship (Cont'd)

to the newcomer because the newcomer is receiving CCB. Neither RAP or provincial social assistance programs claw back, or reduce retroactively, monthly payments once a family starts to receive the CCB. There is no specific guidance on how newcomers are to use their CCB. However, a sponsor cannot require a newcomer to direct monies received from CCB towards the costs of settlement; having the effect of reducing the sponsor's level of financial support to the newcomer.

**Earned Income:** Regarding employment income, the guidelines for RAP apply as follows:

Newcomers are permitted to earn up to 50% of their monthly RAP payment without incurring any deduction. In other words, a sponsor cannot require a newcomer to direct employment income equaling up to 50% of the monthly RAP rate towards the costs of settlement; having the effect of reducing the sponsor's level of financial support to the newcomer. If the earned income exceeds 50% of their monthly RAP payment, that income will be deducted dollar for dollar from the sponsor's monthly financial support.

### c. Management of Expenses:

When the refugees have financial resources, they will retain the right to manage their own finances. Sponsors will not require the refugee(s) to submit their funds for management by others.

## Key Changes to Non-Financial Support

### 1. Employment, Language

Family Size	Monthly RAP	50% of Monthly RAP
1	\$750	\$375

Scenario	Earned Income	Reduction in Sponsor Support	Monthly Support from Sponsor
Earning up to 50% of RAP	\$375	\$0	\$750
Earnings exceeds 50% of RAP	\$500	\$125	\$625

Figure 1: How to calculate how much of the newcomer's earned income can be applied to settlement expenses

### Training & Employment

**Counselling:** Sponsored refugees who are able, have a duty to aspire toward self-sufficiency. Sponsors have a duty to encourage those aspirations. Work toward self-sufficiency should include enrolment in language training or obtaining employment counselling before encouraging them to find employment. The sponsor cannot force the newcomer to secure employment.

**2. Residency Requirements:** Two (2) representatives are required in the community of settlement if the settlement area is outside of the Archdiocese of Toronto.

### **Increased Monitoring by IRCC**

IRCC has increased its monitoring of refugee cases to ensure that all stakeholders are fulfilling their obligations and responsibilities. As part of IRCC's monitoring efforts, IRCC has been arranging to meet directly with newcomers. Neither the SAH, CG nor cosponsor are notified by IRCC when they have extended an invitation to the newcomer to meet with them. We are encouraging all sponsors to continue their tireless work of helping to resettle refugee families,

and ensure that they are abiding by IRCC's updated rules.

The following are some important questions, which you may use to guide your work and ensure that you are abiding within IRCC's updated guidelines:

- 1) Has the newcomer received the required monthly financial support as per RAP from the sponsor?
- 2) Was monthly financial support from the sponsor reduced because of monies received by the newcomer from CCB?
- 3) Was monthly financial support from the sponsor reduced because of monies received by the newcomer from employment income, when earned income was less than 50% of the monthly RAP rate?
- 4) Did the newcomer receive all the settlement support required (refer to the Settlement Plan)?
- 5) Was the newcomer encouraged to take advantage of settlement services?
- 6) If English language training was required, was the newcomer enrolled in a language training course?

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## Important Changes to Refugee Sponsorship (Cont'd)

7) Was the newcomer encouraged to take advantage of employment counselling?

8) When the newcomer has their own financial resources, was the newcomer required to submit their funds to be managed by others?

9) Did you as the sponsor(s) acting on behalf of refugees accept funds from the refugee(s) either before or after their arrival in Canada for the submission of a sponsorship, or as prepayment or repayment for lodging, care and settlement assistance, or as a deposit to guarantee that the newcomer will remain with the sponsor for one year post arrival?

We ask that you please take the time to become familiar with these key changes and to understand your role as a sponsor. We have included the Ontario RAP information. ORAT is in the process of updating its training materials to reflect these changes and provide the necessary support for all sponsors involved in helping refugees. We will be holding special information sessions for sponsors to help

walk them through these changes.

If you are a member of a Refugee Committee, I would ask that you kindly forward this update to all members.

Should you have any questions about these key changes, please do not hesitate to contact the Outreach department at

[oratoutreach@archtoronto.org](mailto:oratoutreach@archtoronto.org)

Please be assured of my prayers for you and my deep appreciation for the important work that you are doing.

Sincerely in Christ,

*Deacon Rudy*

**Deacon Rudy M. Ovejak**

*Director, Office for Refugees, Archdiocese of Toronto (ORAT)*

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## Upcoming Sessions

Please note that you are required to register to book your seat for any session you wish to attend. You may register for the following sessions by clicking on the attached link:

<https://orat.eventbrite.ca/>

### **How a Parish can Resettle Refugees**

*With over 65 million forcibly displaced people worldwide, the refugee crises doesn't seem to be getting any better. Give hope to refugees to start a new safe life in Canada and learn how the church can be part of their durable solution.*

Date: Friday, 23 February 2018

Location: ORAT office, 1220 Yonge Street | Suite 203 (2nd floor)

Time: from 6:00 PM to 7:30 PM

Please note that all of the sessions that ORAT holds can be found directly on: <https://orat.eventbrite.ca/>



**Ontario Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP) Rates**

Monthly income support is intended to cover basic needs such as food, incidentals, shelter, transportation and a communication allowance. Other special allowances may be added based on need.

Family size	Household composition	Basic needs allowance	Shelter allowance	Communication allowance
1	Single Adult	\$337	\$384	\$30/file
2	Couple	\$486	\$632	\$30/file
	Single parent plus one child	\$354	\$632	\$30/file
3	Single parent plus two children	\$354	\$686	\$30/file
	Couple plus one child	\$486	\$686	\$30/file
4	Single parent plus three children	\$354	\$744	\$30/file
	Couple plus two children	\$486	\$744	\$30/file
5	Single parent plus four children	\$354	\$802	\$30/file
	Couple plus three children	\$486	\$802	\$30/file
6 or more	Single parent plus five children	\$354	\$831	\$30/file
	Couple plus four children	\$486	\$831	\$30/file

**Housing Supplement:** up to a maximum of \$200, may be issued when actual housing expenses exceed the basic shelter allowance.

Special allowances:		
Allowance	Frequency	Rate
Maternity Food	Monthly	\$75
Maternity Clothing	One-time	\$200
Newborn Allowance	One-Time	\$750
Dietary Allowance	Monthly	\$ 75
Funeral/Burial Allowance		Costs are reviewed case by case based on provincial rates.

In Ontario, any client aged 65 or older will receive senior rates for basic needs and shelter. For rates, consult the tables below. Note: for special allowances and transportation rates consult the tables above.

Basic needs allowance		
Senior recipient with no spouse (with or without children)	Recipient and spouse where one person is a senior (with or without children)	Recipient and spouse where both are seniors (with or without children)
\$596	\$882	\$1189

Family size	Shelter allowance	Communication allowance
1	\$479	\$30
2	\$753	\$30
3	\$816	\$30
4	\$886	\$30
5	\$956	\$30
6+	\$990	\$30

**Housing Supplement:** up to a maximum of \$200, may be issued when actual housing expenses exceed the basic shelter allowance.

**Transportation allowance:** is provided to each adult as per the rate of public transit in their community. For rates, consult the links above.

**Note:** in communities where there is no public transit, a flat transportation rate of \$75 is issued.



## Get to know the staff



My name is ChrisAnn Alvarez and I began working with the Outreach Team of ORAT this past October 2017. When I had initially taken my BA in Psychology from Carleton University, I had full intention of pursuing a career in the research field and began working at several labs as an assistant. I quickly realized that I had a true hunger to work with people and in making a difference in whatever way I could. My path had since taken drastic turns, from working with the homeless and those fighting addictions, to a desk job with the federal government, to the Local Immigration Partnership

working with NGOs, to being a missionary in Malta engaging with youth. I believe it is here at ORAT where the best of all those worlds come together. It is with great joy that I have joined the Outreach Team in helping with the resettlement of refugees, and each day I get the privilege of witnessing firsthand good people coming together to illicit a change and make a difference in a very real way. It is an honour to be able to work with an organization that follows Christian principles, and that sees “the neighbour” who they are called to love, as someone in need, even if that someone might be an ocean away

## Access ORAT’s sessions on our website

ORAT is introducing a new channel for Constituent Group (“CG”) members and cosponsors to access its Information Sessions. You can now download ORAT’s sessions as PDF on a monthly basis through our website <https://www.archtoronto.org/refugee/>. The new channel is very user-friendly, CGs and cosponsors will be able to see available sessions on a calendar layout. By clicking on each session, you will be instantly directed to Eventbrite to register for that exact session.

	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN	
2018 <b>MARCH</b>	2018-02-26	2018-02-27	2018-02-28	2018-03-01	2018-03-02	2018-03-03	2018-03-04	
					Pre- Arrival 1220 ORAT Office/# 10:30 To 12:30 PM			
	2018-03-05	2018-03-06	2018-03-07	2018-03-08	2018-03-09	2018-03-10	2018-03-11	
			IRCC Processing Time 1220 ORAT Office/# 10:30 To 12:30 PM		Job Readiness 1220 ORAT Office/# 1:30 To 3:30 PM			
	2018-03-12	2018-03-13	2018-03-14	2018-03-15	2018-03-16	2018-03-17	2018-03-18	
		General Integration 1220 ORAT Office/# 6:30 To 8:30 PM	RG Seminars 1220 ORAT Office/# 10:30 To 12:30 PM					
	2018-03-19	2018-03-20	2018-03-21	2018-03-22	2018-03-23	2018-03-24	2018-03-25	
				How a Parish can Resettle Refugees 1220 ORAT Office/# 10:30 To 12:30 PM				
2018-03-26	2018-03-27	2018-03-28	2018-03-29	2018-03-30	2018-03-31	2018-04-01		
2	3	NOTES:						

## Volunteering opportunities at ORAT

Refugee resettlement work is not possible without our many dedicated volunteers who assist with administration, reception, event coordination, interpretation, translation, information sessions and case management. Volunteers at ORAT develop useful skills while contributing to our world in meaningful ways.

There will be more volunteer opportunities opening at ORAT soon. If you are interested in becoming part of our volunteer team, please contact Hazem at: [orateducator@archtoronto.org](mailto:orateducator@archtoronto.org)



### Join us on Facebook

Become a member of the ORAT Facebook Page to get the latest news and updates on resettlement issues. Please visit our [Facebook page](#)

### ORAT Website

Please visit ORAT's website to find details about our mandate, goals, and policies, as well as to obtain immigration forms and info session materials.

<https://www.archtoronto.org/refugee/>

## Recent Update regarding IRCC Processing Time

The processing time begins when IRCC receives a completed application at the Resettlement Operations Centre in Ottawa (ROC-O). This is the time when ROC-O issues the Application Number ("G number") for the file and sends it to the appropriate visa office overseas. The processing time ends when the:

- Sponsorship portion is refused or withdrawn; or
- When IRCC makes a final decision on the refugee portion.

The processing time is impacted by:

- How many applications are pending review (either sponsorship or refugee portion);
- How many refugees Canada can welcome in a given year;
- The security situation in the area;
- Inability to reach or communicate with the refugee;
- How long it takes to complete the medical exam and security screening;
- Family profile (family sizes/ages may impact processing time of security/medical checks);
- Dependants being added during processing;
- Exit permits the refugee may need; and
- Other barriers that cannot be controlled or anticipated.

### Your input is welcome

If you would like to contribute an article to ORAT's newsletter, have any feedback on past articles, or have suggestions for future articles, please email us at: [orateducator@archtoronto.org](mailto:orateducator@archtoronto.org)



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