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SECTION 1:

Sponsorship Agreement Holders

Sponsorship Agreement Holders (SAHs)

A Sponsorship Agreement Holder (SAH) is an organization that has an **agreement** with the Government of Canada, permitting them to resettle refugees through the Private Sponsorship of Refugees (PSR) Program. This agreement is a legal agreement between a corporation and the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism. When it is signed, the organization accepts the legal responsibility for all sponsorships it signs directly, as well as those it authorizes its **Constituent Groups** (CGs) to sign. Agreements can specify an expiration date and limit the number of individuals who can be sponsored.

Currently, there are 83 SAHs across Canada. While they vary in composition, type and organizational structure, the responsibilities of each SAH are generally the same. SAHs are responsible for managing sponsorships under their agreement and have the prerogative to identify refugees who they would like to sponsor. More information about the identification of specific refugees or refugee families in need of resettlement is provided in Chapter 3.

SAHs can also authorize CGs to sponsor under their agreement. The SAH is responsible for assessing the feasibility of a sponsorship, both in terms of the refugees' eligibility and a group's ability to carry out the sponsorship. Each SAH has its own procedures for assessing and approving potential sponsorships. SAHs are also responsible for the training, advising, assisting, monitoring and information-sharing of their CGs. A SAH may have many CGs across Canada, only a few in a specific region or area, or none at all.



Lydia Yasotha Elankairajah, Nina Chiba, Larry Pearce and Antoinette Godbout receiving certificates in recognition of their dedication to the resettlement of refugees in Canada, in celebration of the PSR programs 30th anniversary. Calgary, Alberta. 2009

Constituent Groups (CGs)

A Constituent Group (CG) is a group that sponsors refugees on behalf of a SAH. If your group is sponsoring with a Sponsorship Agreement Holder (SAH), the first step is to contact your SAH representative to find out more about the process in their organization. Each SAH has its own process of recognizing sponsoring groups or Constituent Groups.

While each SAH sets its own criteria for recognizing CGs, CGs must be:

- ▶ authorized, in writing, by the SAH to act on its behalf as sponsors of refugees;

- ▶ located in the community where the refugee is expected to settle; and
- ▶ be managed under the SAH.

The SAH bears the legal responsibility for all sponsorships submitted under its agreement. Given the legal responsibilities of the SAH for the activities of its sponsoring groups, and taking into account some of the liability considerations, SAHs must clearly define who is eligible to be a Constituent Group. CGs may or may not already be members of the SAH. As the animators of the sponsorship itself, the main role of a CG is to provide support for the newcomers during their first year in Canada. This includes preparing to receive the refugees.

If your group is interested in sponsoring, you can begin by contacting a SAH who will provide you with the required forms or instructions, and advise you on the criteria and the process. Your SAH will be a useful source of information and advice throughout the application process and the sponsorship period.

Parties to a Sponsorship

A SAH may choose to authorize a Constituent Group and/or a co-sponsor individual or organization or choose to work alone on a private sponsorship case. Where settlement responsibilities are shared through a sponsorship partnership between SAH, CG and/or co-sponsor, in case of a sponsorship breakdown or default by the CG and/or the co-sponsor, the SAH is ultimately responsible to ensure that the conditions of the sponsorship undertaking are met. Failure to do so may result in a default being declared against the SAH and the cancellation of their agreement. For this reason, all partners to a sponsorship should keep in touch throughout the application process and the sponsorship period to ensure that concerns that arise can be addressed and to avoid breakdown or default.