



# Guidance for Community Organisations

## Community Organisation Refugee Sponsorship Category

### Kia ora!

Sponsoring and welcoming a refugee family\* into your community is a serious undertaking, but it is also a hugely rewarding process. At first, it may seem challenging, but the right preparation and support will help you to succeed.

*\* You may still nominate or be matched with an individual refugee. However, we need to understand your plan to support the broader range of needs that a family would present, so your plan should address a full range of potential settlement needs. For this reason, this guide references refugee families throughout.*

The purpose of this guide is to help your community group or organisation complete the settlement plan form (INZ 1274) correctly. The settlement plan must be included with your Community Organisation application (INZ 1238).

Your settlement plan should outline the details of how your group or organisation will deliver settlement support and services to the refugee family who will be settled in your community. This guide will help you develop a robust plan which will, in turn, help you throughout the settlement process. The guide includes pointers and questions to act as prompts to help you and your community sponsorship organisation focus on the details required.

The plan covers the basics of what will need to be done to welcome and support a refugee family. It will require you to detail how you propose to meet the outcomes and requirements outlined below. And remember, you are not alone; the umbrella organisation, Host Aotearoa New Zealand, will be on hand to assist you in compiling the plan and will review the completed plan before submission.

### Key factors you will need to identify in your settlement plan:

Who in your group will do the tasks you have identified?

How will all fulfil your assigned roles?

Where will the family live, the children go to school, etc.?

When you are completing the plan please ensure you have addressed the full range of tasks needed to welcome, support and integrate a refugee family in your community.

This includes:

- A home of their own, of an acceptable standard, furnished and with adequate facilities.
- School enrolment for the children.
- Appropriate interpreting services, as required.
- Arrival day plans, and a comprehensive welcome and support plan for the first week.
- Accessing Benefit Payments and services and providing financial support to the family until the Benefit payments are in place (we suggest four weeks).
- Opening a bank account.
- Signing on with a GP, dentist and other medical services.
- English language training, both formal (ESOL training and qualifications) and informal (conversation sessions).

In this plan you will need to show that you can deliver support across all aspects of the settlement process from welcome, to ongoing support and integration. You will need to show that members of the group have the relevant experience or expertise, or that you have linked with others in your area who can provide it. Necessary or useful skills and competencies include:

- Finance – budgeting, accounting, etc.
- Child protection knowledge and designation – either as a Mandated Person or Designated Liaison Person.
- Ability to access interpreters.
- Understanding of the education system and how to access ESOL provision.
- Knowledge and experience on how to best connect with tangata whenua in your community.
- Knowledge and connections to local government.
- Knowledge of or connections to organisations or groups specialising in supporting refugees or asylum seekers, social inclusion or local development.
- Ability to find employment or training opportunities for the refugee families.
- Knowledge of or connections to places of worship, cultural centres, refugee support groups.

## Section A Accommodation: Sourcing suitable housing for the refugee family

One of the primary and more difficult challenges your group may face is finding suitable housing for the refugee family for the two year duration of the sponsorship period. Finding suitable housing can take time, so it is recommended that your search starts as soon as possible, ideally as soon as your application as an Community Organisation has been successful. Housing support does not mean that the Approved Community Organisation is required to fund the accommodation costs. Rather, it is a commitment to ensure that housing has been identified and is available upon arrival in the destination community. As permanent residents, sponsored refugees will be eligible to apply for accommodation supplement. In the plan you will be required to show, in detail, that you have addressed this essential criterion.

### Outcome 1: Housing

The sponsored family or individual will need a home in Aotearoa New Zealand. The property must be of an adequate standard and meet all requirements under the Residential Tenancies Act 1986, including building, health, and safety requirements. More information can be found here: [www.tenancy.govt.nz/maintenance-and-inspections/laws-and-bylaws](http://www.tenancy.govt.nz/maintenance-and-inspections/laws-and-bylaws)

You also need to be aware of the healthy homes standards:

[www.tenancy.govt.nz/healthy-homes/about-the-healthy-homes-standards](http://www.tenancy.govt.nz/healthy-homes/about-the-healthy-homes-standards)

#### A1 Suitable private accommodation is available for use by the refugee family.

You must demonstrate that a property is available to rent to the family.

Describe the property: Is it a flat or a house? What is the nature of the tenancy – is it a periodic or fixed term tenancy? Is it available for the length of time that will be required? Is it rented privately? Is it a donated property (eg. church organisation) and if so, what are the terms of the lease or tenancy agreement?

Where is it located?

Is the size of the property suitable for the family? Confirm the number of occupants who are permitted to live at the property. Remember that landlords may state a maximum number of occupants in a tenancy agreement.

Is it suitably furnished with all essential appliances?

If a property is confirmed, ensure you complete an initial property inspection with the landlord when taking possession of the property. You can **use this template**, and take photos to confirm the condition of the property and any existing damage at the start of the tenancy.

If you do not have a housing solution available at the time of submission of the settlement plan, it is essential that you set out clearly how you intend to secure it.

[www.tenancy.govt.nz/starting-a-tenancy](http://www.tenancy.govt.nz/starting-a-tenancy)

#### A2 The housing must be available to the resettled family at a cost that is affordable and sustainable, considering the benefit, including Accommodation Supplement, the family will receive.

State when the property will become available. Consider the timeframe needed for the family to sign the tenancy agreement before they enter into New Zealand.

Does the tenancy require bond money? The landlord can ask for a bond that is up to the equivalent of four weeks' rent. Any bond paid must be lodged with Tenancy Services – usually the landlord will do this but the tenant will receive the notification from bond services. The rent must be affordable and sustainable, considering the benefit rate and the accommodation supplement rates in your local area that the refugee family may be entitled to. See some helpful links below:

[www.workandincome.govt.nz/products/a-z-benefits/accommodation-supplement.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/products/a-z-benefits/accommodation-supplement.html)

[www.tenancy.govt.nz/rent-bond-and-bills/market-rent](http://www.tenancy.govt.nz/rent-bond-and-bills/market-rent)

#### A3 The property provides adequate privacy.

The property must be self-contained and not rooms in a house share or boarding house.

**A4 Consider compliance with the healthy homes standards.**

The healthy homes standards requires all rental properties to meet minimum standards relating to heating, insulation, ventilation, moisture ingress and drainage, and draught stopping.

Healthy homes standards compliance timeframes start from 1 July 2021. More information here:

[www.tenancy.govt.nz/healthy-homes/about-the-healthy-homes-standards](http://www.tenancy.govt.nz/healthy-homes/about-the-healthy-homes-standards)

**A5 Assistance is provided to register with utility companies and appropriate arrangements are made for payment.**

Set out arrangements for registering with utility companies. What are payments likely to amount to and how will they be made? Has your group planned to help pay for utilities until receipt of benefits by the family? Outline how you will communicate how heating systems, laundry facilities and billing works. Will the family have a contact point if appliances break down? Consider potential language barriers.

**A6 Information is provided to the family on the accommodation and health and safety, and who will act as an emergency contact point.**

How will the family be informed of contacts in the event of emergencies or problems that may arise in the property? Who is the accommodation lead person and point of contact for the group? How will you provide information on all accommodation issues, including health and safety issues?

**A7 The property is adequately connected to public services, transport, and the local community.**

Families will require access to key regional and community services. This includes doctors, dentists, schools, further education, English language tuition, shops and local amenities. Community supports such as local groups and sports clubs are essential to support good integration and community connections. The property should be located within easy reach of the wider community to enable a meaningful community integration process. What steps have you taken to mitigate for any potential community tensions?

**A8 The house has safe electricity and/or gas supplies with adequate ventilation and lighting.**

State recent repairs and replacements, e.g. if the boiler etc. has been replaced or serviced.

**Section B Resettled individuals feel welcome in Aotearoa New Zealand**

**Outcome 2: Resettled family members feel supported by and integrated into their new community**

**B1 The arriving family are met and welcomed at the airport and escorted to their accommodation. They are briefed on how to use the amenities.**

Consider which members of the group are going to travel to meet the family at the airport. Keep the group small. Include an interpreter and consider gender balance. Consider the nature of the welcome, a small banner, or a letter of welcome in the main language of the family. Plan the journey from the airport to the home. Consider the fact that the family may have a lot of luggage. Will you need a child seat?

**B2 Connections have been made between the sponsorship organisation and iwi in your local area to discuss opportunities to connect former refugees with Te ao Māori and share cross cultural understanding.**

Consider how connections can be made between local iwi and hapu to support former refugees to understand Te ao Māori, the history of the whenua and the relationship as tangata ti tiriti. Consider how the community can welcome new families formally and informally in a mutually agreed way.

**B3 A welcome pack is provided, the contents of which should take account of the likely culture and nationality of the resettled family.**

Consider what initial information the family will need to know about their new community and life in Aotearoa New Zealand. Set out what information will be included in the Information pack. Consider translating this information into the family's language. Do you know someone who can translate? Include key contacts of core group members. Provide some food and toiletries. Consider providing food that can be easily heated up upon arrival. Do any of the family members have specific dietary requirements e.g. Halal? If the family are arriving in winter, consider providing some warm clothing. How will you ensure the family's privacy and dignity is maintained, for example managing information about their arrival, and ensuring they are not overwhelmed on and after arrival? What items will you provide for the family? How will you make sure the family is familiar with how the appliances work in the house? Ensure that they have the requisite utensils and that all of the appliances work. What other arrangements will you put in place to make the family feel welcome?

**B4 On arrival, sufficient cash is provided per person (adults and children) for initial expenses including groceries, toiletries, clothes, while their claim for benefits with Ministry of Social Development is being processed. Initial payments should be at the same level as social welfare payment entitlements.**

Consider how you will make the money available to the family until their benefit payment comes through. How will you arrange for the family to purchase groceries and essential items that they may need? We suggest planning for a four week delay.

**B5 Information is provided on budgeting assistance if required.**

Consider how the family will become familiar with the currency and what things cost in Aotearoa New Zealand. Will someone be able to assist the family with budgeting their money? How will you start to encourage the family to take autonomy over their own finances? How will you make the family aware of the Budgeting Service if required?

**B6 Assistance is provided to set up a bank account for relevant family members.**

Have you researched the paperwork and criteria needed to open a bank account for the family? The family should be given a choice in how they receive and spend their money.

**B7 Information and support is provided to access local shops and transport.**

How will the family become acquainted with their local area? Will you provide maps/transport/information on fares? The family will need help navigating the area to access local public transport to attend appointments and to access local amenities. Who will be in charge of providing assistance on this? How will the family be made aware of the different local shops?

**Section C** Establishing a life Aotearoa New Zealand – Resettled individuals have freedom to explore and grow as a person.

**Outcome 3: Establishing a life in Aotearoa New Zealand**

The resettled family is confident and has freedom to explore Aotearoa New Zealand, including accessing community activities, medical care, language skills, education and employment.

**C1 The family are assisted to register for an IRD number within one week of arrival in Aotearoa New Zealand.**

When the family arrives in New Zealand they will have permanent residence status. The family will be required to register with the IRD. Note that the family cannot access benefit payments without an IRD number. Have you arranged for an interpreter to be present? Are you familiar with the IRD application and documentation requirements? Consider contacting your local Work and Income Office (WINZ) Office and Citizens Advice Bureau in advance for advice on documentation, especially personal documents e.g. passports. Familiarise yourself with the welfare supports the family may be entitled to and outline the projected amount and type of welfare payments you foresee for the family.

**C2** The family are assisted to register their child/children with local schools as soon as possible – commencing prior to arrival and concluding registration no later than 2 weeks after arrival. Identify what additional supports may be available to assist the child/children, especially during the first 6- 12 months in school.

Outline what steps you have/will take to register a child or children in a local school. Have you contacted and identified spaces in a local school/s? Outline any research you have done around it. Are you familiar with the requirements to register a child in a school, e.g. required documentation. Also consider the additional educational and social supports that the local school/s can provide.

Ministry of Education have Senior Advisors for Refugee and Migrant students to assist you in registration and understanding the support available. Contact your local advisor, see details below:

**[www.education.govt.nz/our-work/contact-us/regional-ministry-contacts/ministry-of-education-refugee-education-coordinators/](http://www.education.govt.nz/our-work/contact-us/regional-ministry-contacts/ministry-of-education-refugee-education-coordinators/)**

Are the family eligible for computers in homes programme? For more information, visit their website: **[computersinhomes.nz](http://computersinhomes.nz)**

Consider specific language requirements; is language assistance likely to be required? Is it likely to be available? Consider also the social needs of the children in the school. Has the school any support/new pupil/'buddy system' in place? Consider availability of learning supports in local schools. Can the school provide additional psycho-social support in a school context, should the child/children require it? Consider the ethos and approaches of the schools in your local area, e.g. religious ethos, and their suitability accordingly. Consider the school's uniform policy, the books and accessories needed, and transport routes to the school. Is there a school bus route near the family's house? Budget for initial uniform, essential stationary and accessory costs. Consider what items the school may be able to provide.

**C3** English language tuition is arranged for adults as soon as possible and within one month of arrival. Formal English language tuition is provided by a suitably qualified ESOL teacher. Formal English language tuition is supplemented on a regular basis by less formal conversational English practice.

**Whilst it is recognized that progress will differ between individuals, there is an expectation of reaching an adequate level of English (in speaking and listening, reading, and writing) over the course of the year.**

Do you have access to a qualified ESOL tutor? Consider contacting a tutor before the family's arrival who would be available to provide regular lessons. Consider the cost of language tuition, and budget for that as part of your fundraising plan. Consider how to organise regular English language tuition. Think about arranging regular meet ups, and how you would plan this with the family. Consider which members of the group are available to meet for informal language/conversational practice, and dynamics including gender balance. Consider the need to consult the family once they are settled to see what kind of times and dynamics would work for language tuition, e.g. depending on their own personal obligations or schedules. Consider what childcare arrangements may need to be put in place while the parents take ESOL lessons. Have you researched available funding from your local authority for childcare provision to enable parents/carers to access ESOL lessons?

**C4** The Community Organisation has completed a safeguarding risk assessment in consultation with their umbrella organisation, Host Aotearoa New Zealand. The Community Organisation has developed a clear child protection policy and procedures which are in place to manage the risks identified. The child protection policy is in line with the Children's Act 2014.

**Each group member has completed the e-learning module, and will provide proof of completion. Each group member is familiar with the group's reporting procedures and policies, in accordance with their child protection policy. The group has appointed a point of contact in relation to the child protection policy and process.**

Consider that as a group you will likely be working with children. It is vitally important that child protection protocols and legislation are strictly adhered to by the community sponsorship organisation, in the implementation of community sponsorship. Consider how, as a group, you will keep children safe from harm while they are being supported by the sponsor organisation. Have you carried out a risk assessment to identify whether a child or young person could be harmed while being supported by the Community Organisation? Have you developed, in consultation with your umbrella organisation, Host Aotearoa New Zealand, a child protection policy and process that outlines the policies and procedures which are in place to manage the risks that have been identified? It is necessary to appoint a relevant person to be the first point of contact in respect of the organisation's child protection policy.

**[safeguardingchildren.org.nz/courses/fundamentals-of-child-protection](http://safeguardingchildren.org.nz/courses/fundamentals-of-child-protection)**

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Has each group member provided, or is able to provide evidence that they completed the Fundamentals of Child Protection training (linked above)? The umbrella organisation, Host Aotearoa New Zealand will have an appointed Child Protection Lead within their organisation. As a group, are you aware of who that is, and what their role is?

The child protection policy, Procedures and proof of completion of the online learning must be submitted along with your settlement plan.

**C5 An opportunity is provided to obtain an English language qualification at the appropriate level, where this will support access to employment and education.**

Consider where the family's nearest language school would be. If it is a considerable distance from the family's home, how can you assist with transport arrangements? Is a member of your group familiar with employment and/or language education who can take the lead/do you know any members of the community who could offer tuition? Have you budgeted for the cost of any English language tuition, qualification and certification likely to be required?

**C6 The family members are assisted to attend the local Work and Income office within the first week of arrival.**

Is there a member of the group who is familiar with the workings of the Ministry of Social Development/the welfare system who can take the lead? Someone in your group would have to apply to be registered as the family's "agent". See more details in the link below:

**[www.workandincome.govt.nz/on-a-benefit/your-rights-and-responsibilities/having-someone-act-on-your-behalf.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/on-a-benefit/your-rights-and-responsibilities/having-someone-act-on-your-behalf.html)**

This process can only be done once the family had arrived in New Zealand. The "agent" will be able to contact work and income on the family's behalf and book an appointment. Keep in mind they will need to bring their personal documents including their NZ bank account details. Have you arranged for an interpreter to be present?

**C7 The family are assisted to register with a local general practitioner (GP) and a local dentist within one week of arrival.**

Consider notifying the GP in advance of the family's arrival. Have you identified a suitable GP and local doctor's surgery in advance? Will the family need an interpreter to register/for ongoing medical appointments? The family may not have been able to access dental services for some time. Have you researched what dental services are available for adults with a community service card? Have you researched the nearest Dental Clinic in your area? Have you budgeted for initial costs and identified a suitable dentist in your area?

**C8 Appropriate mental health services and specialist services are identified in your region, where available, such as for victims of torture, and gender-based violence.**

Have you enquired with your umbrella organisation, Host Aotearoa New Zealand, or spoken to health professionals about any local, regional or phone-based support services for victims of torture, gender-based violence, mental health, etc. that you will be able to access should they be required? Consider any associated transport requirements. Consider where in-person services are located.

**C9 Assistance is provided regarding access to employment, including development of a curriculum vitae, and education, recognition of qualifications etc.**

Consider the needs and aims of any resettled individuals relating to employment. Ensure someone is available to introduce family members to their local Work and Income office, as above. Have you made preparations for an interpreter to be present if required? They may be able to assist with referrals to services that support in developing curriculum vitae, vocational courses or other training schemes. Have you identified the relevant authorities, e.g. NZQA, who can assist with assessing qualifications, qualification transfers etc.? Have you identified any initial volunteering opportunities etc. in the community that may be of interest?

**C10 The family are assisted to access mobile phone services and the internet.**

Consider how, and where, the family may have access to a phone, computer and WiFi. Have you made preparations for an internet connection within their household? If the family members are not computer literate, or able to function independently online, what support or training can you put in place? Consider English language literacy. Are certain family members likely to need assistance, for example with Roman alphabet keyboards or translation of online services (depending on languages available)?

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**C11 Adult family members are made aware of how to obtain a New Zealand driving licence, if required.**

Are you aware of the applicable laws around recognition of foreign driving licences? Have you familiarised yourself with and can you communicate the requirements for obtaining a driving licence in Aotearoa New Zealand? If a family member wishes to replace or obtain a new driving licence, consider how you could support them. Is there a driving school in the area where they can access training, if desired? Will an interpreter be needed?

**C12 The family is aware of, and supported to attend, local community activities, both with and without the sponsoring group, such as children's playgroups, coffee mornings, local clubs, local events, etc.**

Have you identified local community groups who may be willing to help welcome the family? Consider gender balance, age and identifying activities for different members of the family. Are any members of the Community Organisation members of other societies or clubs in the local area? Are there any youth clubs or places of worship that offer community activities?

**C13 Places of worship are identified in the area.**

Consider the potential religious beliefs of the family. Have you identified a local mosque/church/other appropriate places of worship in advance of their arrival?

**C14 Orientation support is provided by the Community Organisation.**

Identify local amenities; put the family in touch with local services including GP, other health services, schools, Work and Income office and access to welfare, English language tuition arrangements; identify transport, access to driving licences, information, WiFi and internet services, etc.; identify local groups, clubs, social spaces including relevant places of worship that could assist with social integration and orientation. Have you identified member(s) of the group who can provide a point of contact and proactively assist, especially in the initial months of the family's arrival, with orientation in the local area, and further afield? Consider anything that might not have been mentioned in previous sections.

**C15 Appropriate interpreting services are provided, as required.**

Access to interpretation services, of one form or another, is likely to be required over the course of the sponsorship period, particularly during the initial period. How will you sustain daily interpreting services for the first week? Explain how associated costs will be met. Consider any back-up arrangement including access to a telephone or text support for interpretation. Have you considered in which situations informal solutions would be inappropriate and where professional interpretation services would be necessary?

## Additional Resources

- Information on MSD benefits payments: [www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/deskfile/main-benefits-rates/index.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/deskfile/main-benefits-rates/index.html)
- Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB): [www.cab.org.nz](http://www.cab.org.nz)
- Other health information available at HealthPoint: [www.healthpoint.co.nz](http://www.healthpoint.co.nz)
- After hours and emergencies: National Telehealth services [whakarongorau.nz](http://whakarongorau.nz) and the 1737 for mental health support and counselling.

