

ISANS 2019 Process for Selection of Privately Sponsored Refugees

Context

ISANS is one of 110 Sponsorship Agreement Holders (SAHs) in Canada.

The ISANS Private Refugee Sponsorship program has grown from 11 refugee sponsorship applications submitted in 2011, to over 146 applications submitted in 2016. ISANS has supported hundreds of Nova Scotians to join together to sponsor refugees, providing timely support for private sponsors to ensure the success of the sponsorships, and to ensure the experience is a positive one for communities and refugees alike.

In 2016, over 40,000 resettled refugees from many refugee populations, including Syrians, arrived in Canada. Many of them wish to sponsor their relatives. Public interest in private refugee sponsorship has been at its highest level in more than 30 years.

Selection Process

Sponsorship Agreement Holders (SAHs) across the country must determine a process to select the refugees they wish to sponsor. Some SAHs select based solely on ethnicity (i.e. sponsor Iraqis), or elements of persecution (i.e. sponsor members of the 2SLGBTQI+ community).

ISANS' Unique Position as a SAH

ISANS, as a SAH and Settlement Agency that is publically funded and secular, has an open selection process, emphasizing a family focus that is endorsed by a Constituent Group (CG). However, as ISANS has a very public profile throughout the province, daily referrals to ISANS to 'sponsor a relative' or for a group 'wishing to sponsor relatives of refugees' creates a great deal of interest. The demand to sponsor refugees exceeds ISANS' annual allocation.

ISANS' Private Refugee Sponsorship Selection Process

In 2019, ISANS allocation for privately sponsored refugee sponsorship is 98 spots. Each allocation spot is for one individual. Each application filed with the federal government requires spots for all members of a family (including spouses or children still living in their country of origin.) ISANS Private Refugee Sponsorship program staff estimate the demand for spots to our SAH is at least 10 times the actual allocation we received. Some of these spots will go to dependents of previously submitted privately sponsored refugee applications.

While IRCC does not actively engage in SAHs selection process, new IRCC procedures have led to changes to ISANS' selection process for 2019. For this year, IRCC has implemented stricter expectations on sponsors' financial support of refugees as well as a tighter monitoring process during the refugees' first year in Canada.

Given these factors, ISANS has designed this revised selection process for 2019:

May 15 – June 30

- Interest Form is posted on the ISANS website (fillable online), which includes:
 - Information about sponsoring with ISANS (with new monitoring and financial support expectations of the federal government)
 - Form to complete for those interested in sponsorship with ISANS
 - Requirement to show a T4 or Notice of Assessment for 2017 or 2018 (from cosponsor - relative) later in the selection process
- June 30th deadline to submit forms

July

- PRS Application Selection Committee reviews the forms, selects eligible candidates based on following criteria:
 - Viability of sponsorship – financial capacity of cosponsor (as shown by T4 or Notice of Assessment); support of a Constituent Group (community association*); minimum of 5 volunteers to assist with settlement of refugees
 - Admissibility - does the person being sponsored meet the refugee definition (i.e. outside country of origin, in a country of asylum that can be accessed by Canadian Embassy for interviews)
 - Size of family unit with a maximum of four persons
 - Residency of co-sponsor (must be a resident of Nova Scotia and have lived in the province for more than 2 years)
 - Only one sponsorship opportunity will be considered per family for each selection call
 - People who have not sponsored before are prioritized over sponsors with active PRS application files or who recently completed a sponsorship

July - August

PRS program staff invite selected candidates (from the pool of candidates selected by the application selection committee) to a mandatory information session, which includes explanation of new monitoring processes, financial expectations, new secondary migration considerations, etc. and the selection process ISANS is using. Selection of applicants is made after this session.

The selection process will follow the following process:

- ISANS CEO in the presence of Legal Counsel will select candidates by random draw (lottery) to establish the approved list for ISANS submissions to IRCC as a SAH.
- This list is used to fill to sponsor spots (may take 1, 2 or more years). Until all spots are filled, no new applications will be accepted.
- Applicants, who have questions or concerns about the selection process, can submit a letter to the Director of Programs (Settlement, Community Integration and Support Services) by October 31, 2019.