

## **Syrian Refugee Settlement and Integration Plan for Private Sponsors: Winnipeg**

This plan is intended to guide sponsors through their one-year commitment to support Syrian refugees. As a sponsor, your group is expected to:

- Help your sponsored family or individual with basic living essentials
- Provide practical support to help your Syrian family or individual become self-sufficient within one year
- Assist your Syrian family or individual access language and job training, and provide job search support
- Provide assistance in accessing health and social services as well as community programs and services
- Share friendship and emotional support and provide referrals for those needing professional support
- Provide awareness and information about Canadian culture, rights and responsibilities and orientation to living in Canada

It is recommended that the sponsorship group set-up eight committees to accomplish various tasks. The committee will have to work together to coordinate activities. It is highly recommended that if there is more than one group involved in the sponsorship, that membership in each committee have a minimum of one representative from the primary sponsor.

Each member of the sponsoring group should have photo nametags. The newcomer/s should be given a group photo of the sponsors with names so that the newcomer/s can identify them by the photo and the nametags when they are being met.

**Remember your role as a sponsor is to help the newcomers feel welcome, provide basic living essentials and conduct activities that will enable your Syrian family or individual to successfully settle and integrate in Canada. Your ultimate goal is to assist the newcomer to become self sufficient after the sponsorship agreement ends in one year.**

## Sponsorship Committees

Committee	Tasks	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Welcoming</b>	1	Determine secure drop-off for donations and contact person. Each donation should be logged and sorted into appropriate categories, e.g., winter clothes, kitchen items, etc.	
	2	Lease an apartment and/or house for one year	
	3	Purchase furniture and/or find donated households items	
	4	Arrange for utilities to be turned on once date of arrival is determined	
	5	<p>Ensure that there is enough food and cooking utensils to prepare meals for the first few days. Purchase food items and a food processor (for grinding chickpeas, parsley, etc.) to stock cupboards and fridge:</p> <p>Halal Food in Winnipeg:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Halal Meat Centre, 206 Maryland Street</li> <li>• Millad's Supermarket, 396 Notre Dame Avenue</li> <li>• Grocery Bazaar, 1052 St. Mary's Road</li> <li>• Superstores also sell Halal meat</li> </ul> <p><b>Note:</b> Islam forbids the consumption of pork, and other meats must be specially prepared in a method called <i>halal</i> cooking. Midday meal consists of 20-30 small dishes. Tea is drunk throughout the day.</p> <p><b>Staples:</b> Wheat, Hummus (puree of chickpeas and tahini paste), Baba Ganouj (eggplant puree), Meat Rissoles (stuffed grape leaves), Tabouleh (salad of cracked wheat and vegetables)</p> <p><b>Meat:</b> Lamb, chicken</p> <p><b>Vegetables:</b> Chickpeas (canned and dried), Eggplants, Onions, Green Lentils, Lemons, Olives, Tomatoes, Cucumbers</p> <p><b>Fruits:</b> Dates, figs, plums, watermelons</p> <p><b>Dairy:</b> Plain yogurt, Milk, butter</p> <p><b>Bread:</b> Pita bread</p> <p><b>Herbs:</b> Fresh parsley, garlic bulbs, salt, mint (or purchase indoor mint plant)</p> <p><b>Grains:</b> Rice, Cracked Wheat (bulgur)</p> <p><b>Oil:</b> Olive oil</p>	
	6	Purchase and/or find donated winter clothes and boots for each family member	
	7	Purchase child safety car seats for children under age 9	
	8	Purchase basic toiletries for each family member including soap, toothbrushes and toothpaste, deodorant and sanitary items (pads not tampons)	
	9	Purchase and secure bulletin board in prominent location in home with Emergency Contact Information (Police/Fire, Poison Control and 311, Power Outage) and Refugee Committee contact phone numbers and photos	
	10	Pickup and welcome family at the airport and drive to new home. Have both females and males at the airport to welcome both genders. Each sponsor group	

	<p>member should wear a name tag.</p> <p><b>At Airport:</b> Make a welcome sign with the newcomer's names in both English and their native language. This will help you identify each other. The sign can say <i>Welcome to Winnipeg</i> or <i>Welcome Home</i>. Someone should be taking photographs of the arrival to give to the family as a memory. Ask permission of the newcomer before taking any photographs.</p> <p>Bring appropriate clothes to the airport, bottled water for each family member, snacks and a gift bag consisting of a map of Winnipeg, a small toy for younger children such as a stuffed animal, a picture book of Winnipeg and/or Manitoba and an international phone card.</p>	
11	Orientation to new home including how to use a shower, bath and toilet, washing machine and dryer, dishwasher, microwave, oven, food processor, what to do with garbage and recycling, fire alarm and how to use 911 in case of emergency.	
12	Inform family about on-going support plan and ensure family understands	
13	Pickup and take on tour of Winnipeg within first week of arrival	

Committee	Tasks	☑
Transportation	<p>1 <b>Day after Arrival:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pickup and take to Manitoba Health to acquire Health Card: 300 Carlton Street (if they have not already received)</li> <li>• Pick up and take parents and children to local schools to register children age 5-18 for classes. Note by law children must attend school immediately.</li> <li>• Pickup and take to Service Canada to get Social Insurance Card for all adults and children 12 and over (if they have not received already) and to apply for benefits (Universal Child Care, etc.): 3393 Portage Avenue, Suite 140 or Portage Place Mall, Floor Ground, Unit 122 393 Portage Avenue</li> <li>• Pick up and take to get SIM card, cell phone plan and/or cellphone</li> </ul>	
	<p>2 <b>First Few Days After Arrival:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pickup and take to Manitoba Start: 271 Portage Avenue</li> <li>• Pickup and take to Welcome Place (Facilitate referral and access to community services such as health care, language training, employment assistance, income supports, education, and financial services): 521 Bannatyne Avenue</li> <li>• Pickup and take to open bank account – Will have to decide which bank and/or credit union to set up initial account</li> <li>• Pickup and take shopping. Need to know where to purchase food and how to read/recognize labels. Explain customs around “non-bargaining” for purchases.</li> </ul>	
	<p>4 Pick up and take to appointment for Winnipeg English Language Assessment and Referral Centre (WELARC) for language assessment testing: 400-275 Portage Avenue</p>	
	<p>5 Pickup and take to place of worship.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> 74% of Syrians are Sunni Muslims; 16% belong to Alawite, Druze, and other Muslim sects; 10% percent are Christians; and a small number of Jewish communities exist in Damascus, Al Qamishli, and Aleppo.</p>	
	<p>6 Take to medical appointments – Coordinate with Health Committee</p>	

Committee	Tasks	☑
Health	<p>1 <b>First Few Days After Arrival:</b> Find a family doctor once family has Manitoba Health Card. Register: <a href="https://www.gov.mb.ca/health/familydoctorfinder/register.html">https://www.gov.mb.ca/health/familydoctorfinder/register.html</a> or call 204-786-7111.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> Many Syrians will not have been vaccinated. Manitoba Health is working on a plan to deal with this issue.</p>	
	<p>2 <b>First Few Weeks After Arrival:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Find family dentist, make appoint and arrange for family to attend</li> <li>• Find Optometrist, make appoint and arrange for family to attend</li> <li>• If disability is determined within family take to Society of Manitobans with Disabilities Ethno Cultural Program (interpreters are provided): 825 Sherbrook Street</li> <li>• Potentially arrange for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder counselling at: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mount Carmel Clinic Multicultural Wellness Program 886 Main Street</li> <li>- Aurora Family Therapy Centre: The University of Winnipeg, Sparling Hall, 2nd Floor, 515 Portage Avenue</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
	<p>3 <b>First Few Months After Arrival:</b> Arrange for Canadian Cooking lessons to learn how to prepare lunches for children, if and when, children request more Canadian-style food and to learn about ordering food in restaurants</p>	

Committee	Tasks		☑
Social	1	<p><b>First Few Weeks After Arrival:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arrange Welcome Party for newly arrived family</li> <li>• Provide friendship and emotional support</li> <li>• Provide opportunities to meet with fellow Syrians and socialize with Canadians</li> <li>• Provide opportunities for children to play with other children both Syrians and Canadians</li> <li>• Introduce newly arrived family to the Winnipeg Public Library and (all public libraries) to get free library card. Winnipeg Public Library has free membership, and also offers over 3,000 free programs from family story time to English Conversation Groups to free computer and tech workshops. Books and resources are available in Arabic. There is free WiFi and free computer use.</li> </ul>	
	2	<p><b>First Few Months After Arrival:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On a weekly basis, provide recreational activities for both adults and children. Introduce to YMCA and City of Winnipeg Leisure Guide. Introduce to winter activities such as skating (Skates can be rented at the Forks), tobogganing, etc.</li> <li>• On a monthly basis, provide opportunities to visit museums, art galleries, theatre, movies, festivals and sporting events</li> <li>• Continue to provide friendship and emotional support</li> </ul>	
	3	<p><b>First Year</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue above social and recreational activities</li> <li>• During the course of the year, hold a minimum of four large events beginning with the Welcoming Party. Other events could be a picnic at a park, a Halloween event, a potluck dinner. If possible, work with other sponsoring groups to invite other Syrian families and individuals to the social events.</li> <li>• Continue to provide friendship and emotional support</li> </ul>	

Committee	Tasks	☑
<b>Orientation and Integration</b>	<p>1 <b>First Few Days After Arrival:</b>            Arrange for and/or provide information on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How to Dress for Winter</li> <li>• Understanding Windchill and Frostbite</li> <li>• How to take the bus or call a taxi - Teach the newcomer how to use public transportation. Join them on the first few trips until they can independently get bus transfers, find the bus stops and routes and know how to get out at the right place and find a bus to return home.</li> <li>• Understanding Canadian Currency</li> <li>• What to Do For Different Types of Medical Emergencies (Call 911, Go to Emergency, Go to Urgent Care, Go to Walk-In Clinic or Make a doctor's appointment)</li> </ul> <p><b>First Few Weeks After Arrival:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stages of Integration – Culture Shock</li> <li>• Understanding Banking and Credit in Canada</li> <li>• Tenant Responsibilities</li> <li>• Garbage College, Recycling and Littering</li> <li>• Canadian Legal System, Emergencies, Policing, Bribes and Basic Laws (domestic violence, child abuse)</li> <li>• Telephone Scams</li> </ul> <p><b>First Few Months After Arrival:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How to Get a Driver's License</li> <li>• How to Purchase a Car and Car Insurance</li> <li>• Hold weekly English language practice opportunities with sponsors once newcomers start to learn English</li> </ul> <p><b>Preparing for Independence after Sponsorship</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How to apply for social assistance if necessary</li> <li>• Locations of Food banks and their purpose</li> <li>• Finding subsidized housing</li> </ul>	

Committee	Tasks		☑
Education and Employment	1	<p><b>First Few Weeks After Arrival:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide orientation to Canadian Educational System (K-12 and Post-Secondary including Trades) and Differences in Approach to Teaching and Learning</li> <li>• Arrange and/or provide for assistance to help children and youth with homework. Connect with NEEDS Centre: 251-A Notre Dame Avenue</li> <li>• Assist in the arrangement of adult learning opportunities and language training if required</li> <li>• Arrange for computer literacy training if required.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Osborne Village Resource Centre: 107 Osborne Street, 204-989-6503</li> <li>- Opportunities for Employment: Offers a free 8-week computer course for social assistance recipients: 300-294 Portage Avenue, 204-925-6895</li> <li>- Winnipeg Harvest offers computer training: 204 – 982 - 3663 Ext.442</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
	2	<p><b>First Few Weeks to Months After Arrival:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arrange for or provide orientation to finding a job in Canada including the hidden job market (80% of all jobs are in hidden job market, 20% are advertised), networking, volunteering, job shadowing, mentors and informational interview</li> <li>• Assist with determining transferable skills and related occupations</li> <li>• Arrange for and/or provide preparation of cover letter and resume specific to each job advertisement</li> <li>• Arrange for and/or provide Orientation to Soft Skills and Canadian Workplace Culture including views of time and punctuality, how to dress for the workplace, body language, communication styles, management styles, small talk and office behaviour</li> <li>• Provide orientation to discrimination and racism and how to deal with it both informally and formally depending on the situation</li> <li>• Share information about Canadian culture, values, beliefs and behaviours</li> </ul>	
	3	<p><b>Prior to First Job Interview:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arrange for and/or provide mock job interviews</li> <li>• Arrange for professional business clothes, shoes and accessories and haircuts/styles prior to first job interview</li> </ul>	
	4	<p><b>Once Offered Employment:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arrange for before and after childcare and/or daycare for pre-school</li> <li>• Orientate on employee benefits such as sick plans, retirement plans, vacation benefits and employee rights</li> </ul>	



Committee		Tasks	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Financial	1	<b>First Few Weeks After Arrival:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Orientate on budgeting including paying utilities, rent, food, clothes, school supplies, haircuts, credit cards, etc.</li> <li>• Orientate on how to establish credit in Canada</li> <li>• Help develop a budget with the Syrian family or individual</li> </ul>	
	2	<b>First Few Months After Arrival:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Orientate on money management including saving for post-secondary education, retirement (RRSPs, TFSA, etc.) and life insurance</li> <li>• Orientate on Canadian Income Tax and information about filing tax return</li> </ul>	

Committee		Tasks	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Sponsor Financial Committee	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oversee finances of the sponsorship</li> <li>• Monitor donations and expenditures</li> <li>• Report on financial situation at general committee meetings</li> </ul>	•

## Orientation to Syrian Culture

**THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION IS BASED ON GENERALIZATIONS AND IS TO BE USED AS A GUIDELINE ONLY.**

**THERE WILL ALWAYS BE INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES WITHIN ANY CULTURAL GROUP.**

### Greetings

1. Greetings hold great social significance. They are often lengthy, including questions about health.
2. **Men greeting Men:** Men shake hands. Good friends and family usually kiss once on each cheek.
3. **Women greeting Women:** Same as men, but the kiss on the cheek is much more prevalent.
4. **Greetings between Men & Women:** Physical contact between unrelated men and women is very uncommon and may be offensive for some. Best to allow a woman to extend her hand first. If the hand is not extended, then a slight nod while placing your hand on your chest is the polite thing for men to do.

### Communication Style

**Note: 70-90% of all communication is non-verbal. It is important to be able to observe body language and non-verbal cues, which may or may not be quite different from your own.**

1. It is common to hear people speaking in loud voices and becoming animated during conversations. People tend to be expressive. Loud voices do not signify anger.
2. Touching the arms and/or shoulders during conversations is acceptable and common between members of the same sex.
3. Flicking the wrist with an outstretched hand means, "*What Do You Want?*"
4. Raised eyebrows combined with a slight back flick of the head usually means, "NO."

5. Touching between members of opposite sex in public is generally unacceptable. Close friends of the same gender often will walk hand in hand or arm and arm. This is the case for men and for women and is purely a sign of friendship.\*

### **Views of Time**

1. Punctuality is not highly valued and people are rarely on time. For example, being half an hour late for an appointment is acceptable except for job interviews.

### **•Taboos**

1. Touching of the leg is not usually acceptable.
2. Do NOT point the toe or heel or any part of the foot at any person, as this is considered completely rude and disrespectful.
3. Do NOT show the sole of your foot or use the foot to move anything as it is viewed, as this is insulting.

### **Gender Issues**

1. Men and women socialize separately except on occasions when the whole family is involved.
2. For religious groups a woman's place is at home. Work is frowned upon unless it's a financial necessity. Women must adhere to a strict dress code, usually head coverings and wearing long loose clothes. For secular groups, there are few restrictions on what women can do.

### **Laws**

1. Laws are not heavily enforced with the exception of the laws governing political activity and terrorism.
2. Homosexuality is against the law and carries a heavy penalty.

For more information check out the ***Syrian Refugee Guide to Canada*** available on Amazon.