

Mentee Fact Sheet - Group Mentorship Program

Community Refugee Sponsorship Australia (CRSA) is an Australian charity that is working to introduce a community refugee sponsorship program in Australia, inspired by the successful scheme that has operated in Canada for more than 40 years. [More information about CRSA can be found on our website.](#)

While working towards the establishment of a full refugee sponsorship program in Australia, CRSA has developed a ground-breaking 'Group Mentorship Program' which provides newly arrived refugee households with 6-12 months of practical support from group of 'everyday Australian' volunteers in their community. These volunteers are screened and trained to provide 'whole of family' support to refugee households who are in need of additional settlement support, to supplement the support they receive from settlement case managers.

This program is particularly for refugees who have recently arrived in Australia and could benefit from a little more help in their local area, or who are moving to a new area and need help getting settled in a new community. The program prioritises households who don't already have strong family or community support in their area and who may need more support due to their family size or composition (eg families with large numbers of children, single-parent households, individuals with special needs).

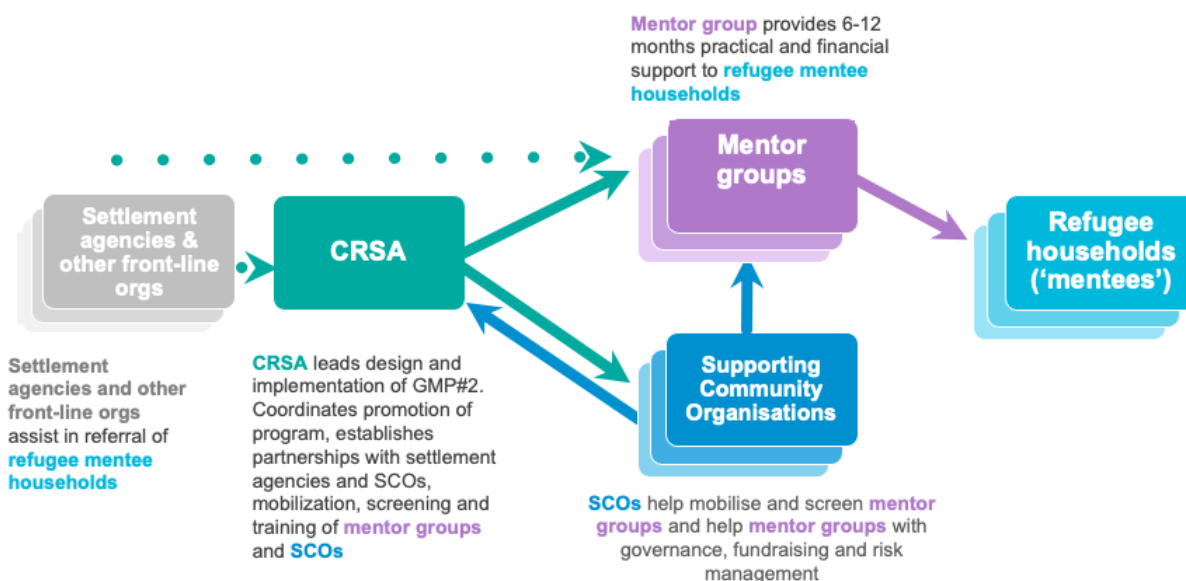
The local volunteer group (mentors) will meet with and other members of your household to get an understanding of how you are settling in Australia, what your aspirations are and what you need help with in order to achieve your personal settlement goals in the next 6 to 12 months. The mentor group will then work with all members of your household on a regular basis to find ways to support you in meeting your settlement goals. This might involve:

- giving you more information about services, opportunities and networks in the local area
- help using local transport or obtaining a driver's licence
- help with finding a suitable job or starting a business
- help with English, school and homework and adult education
- help finding a new house, if you are moving
- providing other practical assistance you may need

Mentors are not professional settlement workers. They are ordinary people who are volunteering to assist you because they want to welcome and support refugees in their community. However, mentors will get some basic training by our organisation to help them support you. They must provide us with police checks and working with children checks in order to be a part of this program. In addition, they will have access to advice from settlement organisations about how they can best help you and your family if they need it.

You can watch a video featuring some of our mentors (community volunteers) and mentees (newly-arrived refugee households) from our pilot launched last year to see a glimpse of the program in practice [here](#).

Our Model



Other things you should know

Mentor groups are not volunteers for, or representatives of CRSA, or any settlement agency. They are independent groups in charge of their own decisions and activities. They will try to support you as well as they can based on what you tell them about your aspirations and taking into account the needs, skills, resources and attributes of the group. The mentorship support will be for an initial period of 6 months, at which time the mentorship arrangement will be reviewed in order for both the refugee household and mentor group to decide whether to continue the arrangement for a further 6 months. At the end of the formal program you and your mentor group may decide to keep in contact on an informal basis as friends.

Mentor groups will not be able to provide you with any significant financial support. Mentor groups are also unable to provide you with migration law advice. They are primarily volunteering to help you with your practical settlement needs rather than your financial needs, legal needs or visa status.

Contact Shabnam Safa at shabnam.safa@refugeesponsorship.org.au or 0468 309 555 if you would like to know more about the program.