

Advance Copy
2021-22 Cohort

Community Supporter Group Guidebook

Community Refugee
Integration and Settlement
Pilot (CRISP)



Community Refugee
Sponsorship Australia

“... this is an opportunity to help, to meet [refugees], and to get that rewarding interaction ... The more kindness you show people, the more they will carry that forward ...”

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1. What is the Community Refugee Integration and Settlement Pilot (CRISP)?

a. Background

The Australian government has appointed Community Refugee Sponsorship Australia (CRSA) to co-design and administer a new Australian community sponsorship program for refugees, known as 'CRISP' (Community Refugee Integration and Settlement Pilot).

This program will enable groups of everyday Australians (including those in regional communities) to welcome refugees into their local area from 'day one' of their Australian journey and provide them with practical resettlement and integration support, in line with other community sponsorship programs operating successfully around the world.

The program will support 1,500 refugees who will arrive in Australia between 2022 and 2025..

The vision for the CRISP is inspired by the successful community refugee sponsorship program operating in Canada since the late 1970s, which has enabled more than 325,000 refugees to build a new life in Canada, in addition to those resettled under the government-funded resettlement program. Similar schemes are now being implemented in many countries around the world, including the United Kingdom, Ireland and New Zealand.

b. Benefits of a Community-Led Approach

Experiences of community sponsorship in Canada and other parts of the world have shown that community sponsorship of refugees can:

- Boost the social and economic participation of refugees in their new host country, through increased social capital and access to social and professional networks
- Support social cohesion in local communities by bringing otherwise disconnected groups of people into close, meaningful and ongoing contact with one another
- Help people learn the language of the host community by providing opportunities for newcomers to practice a new language in natural, conversational settings with established members of the local community
- Support refugees to settle in more diverse geographic communities (and not just in large metropolitan areas) by providing a model for settlement support that doesn't rely on professional migrant service organisations having staff 'on the ground' in each location
- Provide a rewarding experience to the volunteers involved from the host communities by enabling them to apply their skills in new ways, make new local connections and become more active citizens

In addition, this model provides another policy tool that governments can potentially use to expand the scale of refugee resettlement, supplementing purely government-funded resettlement efforts.

c. Key Features

The CRISP will work with refugees who are identified overseas by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) as being in most urgent need of resettlement, and who are then referred to the Australian government for resettlement.

Programs like this are sometimes referred to as ‘**sponsor a stranger**’ programs, in comparison to other program types where supporter/sponsor groups identify the refugee they wish to sponsor/support.

The CRISP will support **up to 1500 refugees over four program years**, with visa allocations to scale up as the program progresses, as below:

Financial Year	2021 - 2022	2022 - 2023	2023 - 2024	2024 - 2025
Allocation of Visas	100	325	475	600

Community Supporter Groups (CSGs) will provide 12 months of practical settlement and integration support to refugee participants, from their date of arrival to Australia. CSGs will be comprised of five or more adult volunteers, who can be based in a community anywhere in Australia, provided they can demonstrate capacity to provide appropriate support to a refugee household settling within or near to that community.

CRSA will mobilise, train, approve, support and monitor CSGs and match them with refugee households referred into the program.

The first cohort of refugees (100 individuals across approximately 20 households) will be matched with CSGs by 30 June 2022.

d. Summary of Roles & Responsibilities

Community Supporter Groups will assist refugee households with their immediate needs upon arrival in Australia and over their first 12 months in the country (see ‘Community Supporter Group Responsibilities’ below).

Refugee Participants will:

- Consider and articulate to the CSG their needs, challenges and aspirations
- Communicate their cultural needs and sensitivities
- Take an active role in soliciting appropriate support from the CSG

Community Refugee Sponsorship Australia (CRSA) will:

- Mobilise, screen, approve and train CSGs
- Match refugee participants with CSGs;
- Support CSGs through training, convening a national community of practice and providing ad hoc advice and support
- Monitoring how CSGs are faring and helping them to troubleshoot issues that may arise

The Australian **Department of Home Affairs** will:

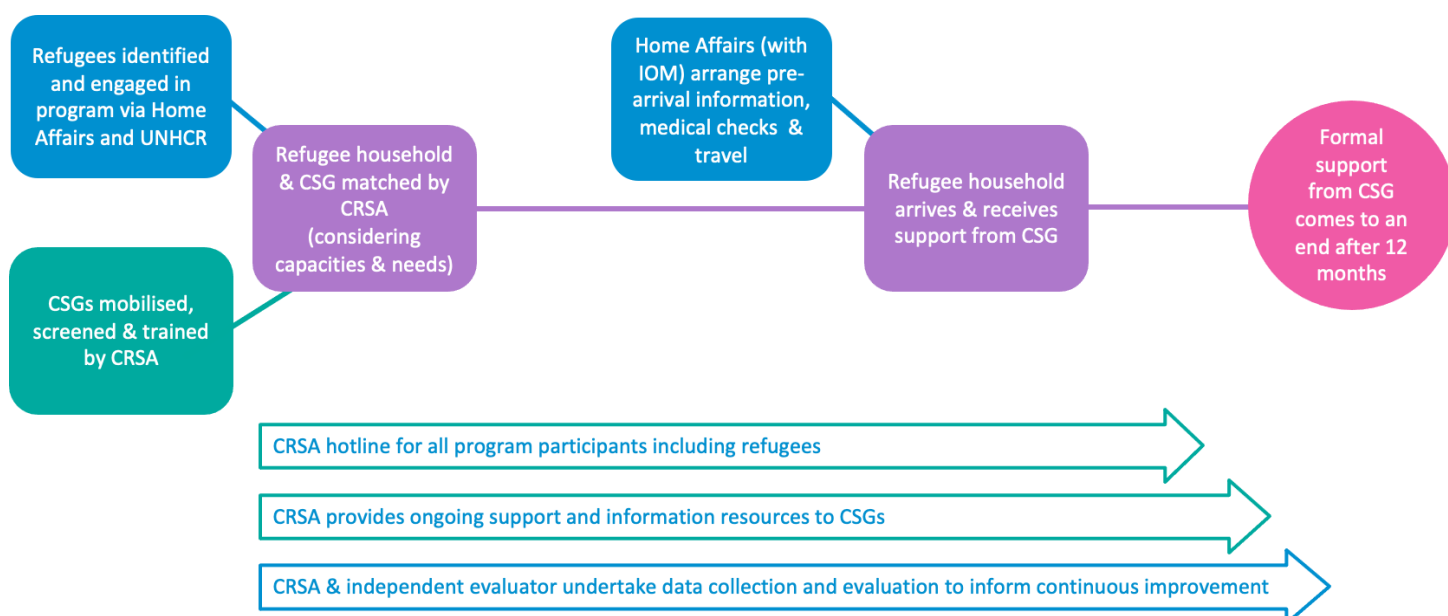
- Identify refugee participants, via the UNHCR
- Issue visas and arrange travel, via the International Organisation for Migration (IOM);
- Provide access to key services (eg. Centrelink, Medicare, Adult Migrant English Program, Translating and Interpreting Services);

- Support CRSA in discharge of its responsibilities, including through evaluation activities
- Provide access to the Humanitarian Settlement Program if refugees need to exit the CRISP

Established Organisations (such as clubs, faith organisations, schools, businesses, local governments) may assist in:

- Promoting the CRISP, and mobilising and supporting CSGs
- Helping CSGs in their fundraising efforts, including by issuing tax deductible gift receipts where possible and appropriate.

e. Process Overview



2. Eligibility for Involvement in the CRISP



a. Eligibility Criteria for Refugee Participants

Refugee participants will be:

1. Identified by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) as being in need of protection, and referred to the Australian government for resettlement
2. Selected by the Department of Home Affairs as appropriate CRISP participants
3. Have no known family links in Australia

b. Eligibility Criteria for Community Supporter Groups

Members of a Community Supporter Group must:

1. Be able to form a local group of at least five adults who are Australian citizens or permanent residents (see 'Community Supporter Group Composition' below)
2. Be willing and able to profile clear background checks (National Criminal History Check (AFP Check) and Working With Children Check or equivalent (WWCC))
3. Have no serious criminal record or active adverse immigration proceedings on record (eg. visa cancellation, citizenship revocation, etc)
4. Be willing to abide by a national Code of Conduct containing minimum behavioural standards
5. Be willing and able to raise funds to meet the anticipated financial commitment for a refugee household
6. Be able to commit the necessary time to:

- a. Undertake program training (approximately 8 hours)
 - b. Developing a settlement plan for an allocated refugee household
 - c. Provide consistent settlement and integration support to a refugee household (estimated on average 10 hours per week per group, with more intense support required in the first few weeks), for a period of 12 months from the date of the refugee participants' arrival in Australia)
 - d. Provide feedback on the program to CRSA and an independents evaluator at various intervals throughout the experience
 - e. Engage in occasional peer-to-peer learning opportunities with other CSGs (desirable but not compulsory).
7. Submit an application, including proof of background checks via the application process set out below.



3. Community Supporter Group Responsibilities

a. General Commitments

CSGs will need to provide:

- Oversee pre-arrival preparations while refugee participants remain offshore
- Meet refugee participants at the airport on arrival (including transit assistance)
- Provide transport to initial accommodation and organise transit accommodation if required
- Provide or source temporary accommodation and then assist refugee participants in securing long-term housing
- Provide income support, until Centrelink income support is in place established (usually within 1-4 weeks)
- Assist refugee participants to register for key services (bank, Medicare, Centrelink, Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP), National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), Australian Taxation Office etc)
- Help the household become orientated in their local community including providing guidance/assistance on public transport, obtaining a driving licence, understanding local culture and systems and connecting with others in the local community
- Assist refugee participants to enrol in school and English classes
- Assist refugee household to connect with a local GP/health care centre, dentist and/ or other required healthcare services
- Provide or source basic household goods required by the household (eg furniture, appliances etc)
- Support refugee participants achieve their settlement and employment objectives during their first 12 months in Australia (eg help identifying suitable job and training opportunities, preparing a resume, attending interviews, making friends, engaging in sports and hobbies etc)
- Help refugees make friends, build networks and develop social capital, by leveraging the group's social and professional networks .

b. Financial Commitments

The financial commitment for CSGs will depend on a range of factors, including:

- the size and composition of the refugee household they're matched with
- whether transit accommodation is required between arrival in Australia and final destination (mostly relevant for CSGs in regional areas)
- whether the group can provide initial 'free' temporary accommodation
- whether the CSG is able to source quality donations of new or secondhand household goods and appliances
- how long it takes for the newcomers' Centrelink income support to be established

As a guide, we estimate the quantum of the financial commitment to be follows:

Refugee Household Composition	Range
Single Adult	\$3,000 - \$14,000
Couple	\$4,000 - \$15,000
Family of 3 (2 adults and 1 child)	\$5,000 - \$17,000
Family of 3 (single parent and 2 children)	\$6,000 - \$19,000
Family of 4 (2 adults and 2 children)	\$7,000 - \$21,000
Family of 5 (2 adults and 3 children)	\$8,000 - \$23,000
Family of 6 (2 adults, 3 children and 1 grandparent)	\$11,000 - \$31,000
Family of 7 (2 adults, 3 children and 2 grandparents)	\$12,000 - \$32,000

When you prepare your group's application to be part of the program, you will be asked to provide a rough budget for your support of a refugee household, taking into account any free or donated resources that your group expects to have access to (eg free temporary housing or quality donated household goods). We suggest that you base this budget on the largest household that your group could feasibly support. CRSA will provide you with information to help you prepare this budget as part of the application process.

4. Applying to Join the CRISP

The CRISP application process contains four key steps.

a. Step 1: Form a Community Supporter Group

CSGs should comprise a minimum of five adults (18 years or over), who are Australian citizens or permanent residents. The following principles should be considered in forming a group.

- **Skillsets and Expertise of Group Members**
Relevant professional or language skills, volunteer experience and local networks would be a great asset to your group, but don't worry if you can't think of anything specific that you can offer – you will tap into your knowledge and strengths and develop new capabilities along the way. A foundational concept of community sponsorship, which has been proven in similar programs around the world, is that ordinary people can provide meaningful support to refugees in their local communities.
- **Proximity of Group Members**
We recommend that group members reside within a reasonable proximity from each other (a 30-minute drive or thereabouts) and come from at least three different households in order to maximise the diversity of support for refugee participants and minimise the risk that the CSG will be unable to continue if a family/household is affected by an unforeseen event. If you are an individual in need of a group, we may be able to help you connect with others in your local area.
- **Other Group Attributes**
We are looking for groups that have a positive, 'can-do' spirit and who submit a well-thought-out application detailing their group, and community profile and capacity. Though we will do our best to involve all groups who meet the program criteria, we cannot guarantee there will be an immediate opportunity for every group, given the need to match CSGs with a finite number of refugee participants.

Once you have formed a local group of at least five adults:

- **Appoint a Group Coordinator**
Select one member of your group to be the Group Coordinator and to take responsibility for submitting the CSG Application Form and acting as the primary point of contact for communication with CRSA.
- **Complete the CSG Application Process**
Meet and discuss your group's expectations and ways of working, your group and community's resources and your interest in the CRISP, including the refugee profile(s) your group could support. This will help you arrive at a common understanding as a group and complete the CSG Application Form.

b. Step 2: Apply for Background Checks

This program involves CSGs engaging in unsupervised and self-directed activities with refugee households. Accordingly, we need to satisfy all stakeholders that each group member is of good character with no relevant criminal history.

You will need to apply for and obtain background checks (National Criminal History Check (AFP Check) and Working with Children Check or equivalent (WWCC)) for each of your group members.

You will not be able to submit your application for the program without these documents. See below for application details.

Please apply for background checks as soon as possible to leave sufficient time for processing. Please have the background checks sent to you and save each background check for each group member as a single, clearly labelled .pdf file to upload with your application.

i. How to apply for a National Criminal History Check (AFP Check)

You can apply for a National Criminal History Check [here](#) (this is cheaper and faster than applying directly to the Australian Federal Police). Apply for an individual police check (Volunteer Check), which costs \$29.00. Processing times are 1-2 days for 70% of applications, and 3-12+ days for 30% of applications.

It is important that you list the reason for the check as '**Community Supporter Group Member**' and the level of contact as '**Unsupervised Contact**'. If unsupervised contact is not specified on the check, we will ask you to obtain a new one. If you and your group are connected with a local community organisation, speak to them as they may be able to support your application for this check.

Police checks must be no older than 6 weeks from date of application.

ii. How to apply for a Working with Children Check or equivalent (WWCC)

The process for applying for a WWCC varies by state/territory. You should apply for a volunteer check, which is generally free.

If you are in NT, QLD, or WA, you will need a non-profit organisation to help you submit your WWCC application. If your group is not part of, or associated with a local community organisation, please email Nicole Watkins at Nicole.watkins@refugeesponsorship.org.au and we will try to help you find an organisation that can assist you with this.

If you already have a valid WWCC for the state/territory from which you will be participating in the CRISP you do not need to obtain a new one, provided it has at least 6 months of validity remaining. For application details by state/territory, see below:

- **Australian Capital Territory:**
[https://www.accesscanberra.act.gov.au/app/answers/detail/a_id/1804/~/working-with-vulnerable-people-\(wwvp\)-registration#!tabs-1](https://www.accesscanberra.act.gov.au/app/answers/detail/a_id/1804/~/working-with-vulnerable-people-(wwvp)-registration#!tabs-1)

(Note: If you have a WWCC expiring on or after 16 March 2020, its validity has been extended due to COVID-19)

- **New South Wales:**
<https://www.service.nsw.gov.au/transaction/apply-working-children-check>
(Note: New NSW WWCCs can take up to ten weeks to be processed)
- **Northern Territory:**
<https://nt.gov.au/emergency/community-safety/apply-for-a-working-with-children-clearance>
- **South Australia:**
<https://screening.sa.gov.au/applications/application-information-for-individuals>
- **Queensland:**
<https://www.qld.gov.au/law/laws-regulated-industries-and-accountability/queensland-laws-and-regulations/regulated-industries-and-licensing/blue-card/applications/apply>
(If you don't have a community organisation associated with your group, CRSA can help with your application. Please provide your account number to CRSA when applying so we can link you to our organisational portal. This way you won't be charged. [More info here.](#))
- **Tasmania:**
<https://www.cbos.tas.gov.au/topics/licensing-and-registration/registrations/work-with-vulnerable-people/applications/apply>
- **Victoria:**
<https://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au/>
- **Western Australia:**
<https://workingwithchildren.wa.gov.au/applicants-card-holders/applying-for-a-wwc-check/how-to-apply>

c. Step 3: Secure Funding

While the financial commitment involved in supporting a refugee household will vary depending on a range of factors (see 'CSG Financial Commitments' above), CSGs will need to submit an indicative budget and demonstrate that they have raised a minimum amount before they will be matched with a refugee household.

These funds should be held in a bank account in the name of the Community Supporter Group.

Undertaking fundraising activities in your local area is a great way to engage your local community into your refugee sponsorship endeavour.

2021-22 Program Year: Further details of this requirement will be available soon and CRSA will take a flexible approach to applying this requirement for the first program year.

d. Step 4: Complete and Submit the Community Supporter Group Application Form

The CGS Application Form is available on the CRISP page of our website¹.

The purpose of the application form is to help CRSA understand the make-up, location and capacity of your group. This will allow us to ensure your group meets the criteria for the program and help us facilitate a successful match and positive experience for both your group and your refugee household. It is not intended to be a 'pass/fail' process. Once we receive your completed applications, we will work with you to address any concerns or gaps.

Your group's coordinator should submit the CSG Application Form (one form per group) online via our website.

The CSG Application Form will include detailed questions about:

- Each of your group members (eg. name, contact details, occupation)
- Your group and community's resources
- Your group and community's profile, resources and capacity

It is advised that you spend some time as a group discussing these elements to ensure you cover all the required areas for the application and are on the same page about your shared endeavour.

¹ www.refugeesponsorship.org.au

5. How CRSA will assist Community Supporter Groups

CRSA will provide ongoing support for CSGs throughout the process, from application to be involved in the program through to the end of the group's 12 month period of support.

The support provided by CRSA will include:

- An initial session of mandatory training before being matched with a refugee household
- A second session of mandatory training post-matching and before the newcomers arrive
- 'Top Up' training throughout the 12 month period of support
- Access to an online Knowledge Hub to answer common questions relating to settlement
- A telephone hotline for ad hoc settlement support, coaching and troubleshooting
- Regular check ins between CRSA and CSGs
- A national Community of Practice, facilitated by CRSA, where CSGs around the country come together regularly, in an online forum, to ask questions and share learnings
- An online Peer Network, where CSGs can seek support from their counterparts around Australia
- A telephone hotline for feedback or complaints

6. What Happens Next?

1. Review of CSG Application

Once we receive your group's completed application, we will review it and let you know if any additional information is required. You will also have an opportunity to ask us questions.

2. Training Workshop 1

Your group will be invited to the first of two mandatory training sessions (3-4 hours).

3. Matching with Refugee Household

The first round of refugee participants will be matched with approved CSGs.

4. Establish Contact with Refugees Offshore

CSGs who are matched with refugee participants can establish contact with them while they are offshore, to introduce the group and the program's objectives.

5. Development of a Settlement Plan

CSGs meet and develop a settlement plan that relates to the specific refugee participants' needs. Individual skills of CSG members should be taken into account, and specific settlement tasks allocated among the CSG members.

6. Training Workshop 2

Your group will be invited to the second of 2 mandatory training sessions (3-4 hours).

7. Approval of Settlement Plan

We will review your Settlement Plan, work with you to revise it if required, and issue an approval.

8. Enter into a Settlement Deed

You will enter into a Settlement Deed with the refugee participants and with CRSA.

9. Prepare for Arrival

You will organise on-arrival accommodation and basic essentials including food and groceries, good quality seasonal clothing and a Smartphone with sim card and data.

10. Welcome Refugee Household



Thank you for your interest in the
Community Refugee Integration and Settlement Pilot (CRISP).

We look forward to receiving your application to join the
movement and become a Community Supporter Group!

Appendix 1: Sample Application Form for Community Supporter Groups (CSGs)

Do not complete this form. Applications must be submitted through our website:
www.refugeesponsorship.org.au.

This document is to provide an overview of the information you will need to complete the CSG Application Form.

Part One	
About your Group Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Full Name ● Address ● Phone Number ● Email Address ● Year of Birth ● Gender ● Occupation (previous if retired) ● Current Employment Status ● Citizenship / Residency Status ● Criminal History ● Historical Immigration Proceedings, if any ● Evidence of Police Check ● Evidence of Working With Children Check, or equivalent ● Name of Group ● Number of Group Members ● Name of Group Deputy Coordinator

Part Two	
About your Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Name of Group ● Names of Group Members ● How Group Members Know Each Other ● Details of Past Refugee Settlement / Support Work, if any ● Details of Associated Organisations or Legal Entities, if any ● Estimated Hours of Support Your Group Could Provide Per Week ● Weekly Availability of Group Members ● Personal / Professional / Business / Volunteer Skills Within the Group ● Personal / Professional / Business / Community Networks Available ● Proposed Budget ● Evidence of Fundraising ● Details of Public Liability Insurance ● Language Skills of Group Members, if any ● Group Members' Experience Working With Children, if any

<p>About your Community</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Local Government Areas Covered by Group ● General Description of Your Community (Demographics, Infrastructure, etc)
<p>About the Support You Can Provide</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How Will You Help the Refugee Household Secure Long-Term Housing? ● How Will You Help the Refugee Household with Transport? ● How Will You Help the Refugee Household Access Educational Opportunities? ● How Will You Help the Refugee Household Access Employment Opportunities? ● What Settlement/Migrant Services (if any) are Available in Your Region? ● How Will You and Your Matched Household Access Interpreting Services? ● How Will You Help the Refugee Household Access General and Specialist Physical and Mental Health Services? ● Given Your Group and Your Community's Resources, could you support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A Single Refugee - A Couple - A Refugee family - A Refugee in Need of Specialist Physical/Mental Health Support - A Refugee With Other Specific Needs - A Number of Refugee Households (how many?) ● Anything Else About the Profile of Refugee/s Your Group Could Support, eg: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Single Parent Household - Particular Faith Background - LGBTIQ+ - Group Expertise in NDIS - Specific Interest in Supporting Household With Young Children, etc.

Part Three	
<p>About your Group Members</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Full Name ● Address ● Phone Number ● Email Address ● Year of Birth ● Gender ● Occupation (previous if retired) ● Current Employment Status ● Citizenship / Residency Status ● Criminal History ● Historical Immigration Proceedings, if any ● Evidence of Police Check ● Evidence of Working With Children Check, or equivalent ● Name of Group Coordinator ● Name of Group Deputy Coordinator

<p>About your Group's Involvement in the CRISP</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Is your Group Able to Commit Time for Training (approximately 8 hours)?● Is Your Group Willing to Participate in the Following Activities Associated with the CRISP?<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Peer-to-Peer Learning- Fundraising- Information Sharing- Top-Up Training● Is Your Group Willing to Develop a Settlement Plan, After Being Matched With a Refugee Household?● Is Your Group Willing to Develop a Group Agreement to Guide How You Will Work Together?● Might Your Group Be Willing to Participate in Media and Promotional Activities Relating to the CRISP?● Do You Have Any Questions or Concerns About the CRISP?● Is There Anything Else of Relevance You'd Like to Mention?● How Did You Hear About the CRISP?
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