

GLOBAL REFUGEE SPONSORSHIP INITIATIVE AT A GLANCE

US launches new program for American citizens to sponsor Afghan refugees



Washington Governor Jay Inslee speaks at the Afghan Welcome Center in the Seattle-Tacoma Airport.

© Ted S. Warren/Associated Press

In a historic announcement, the US State Department has partnered with the new non-profit [Community Sponsorship Hub](#) to launch the [Sponsor Circle Program for Afghans](#), enabling groups of five or more private American citizens to sponsor Afghan refugees in their communities. The Community Sponsorship Hub will vet, validate, and match groups to an Afghan refugee or refugee family. Sponsor circles will help provide initial resettlement assistance to Afghan refugees, such as securing housing and providing basic essentials, like groceries and clothing. The Community Sponsorship Hub has awarded **\$2.3 million USD to 17 local and national resettlement agencies** to support and encourage Americans to sponsor Afghan refugees. GRSI partners, including the Open Society Foundations and The Shapiro Foundation, actively support the Community Sponsorship Hub.

Check out the [Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative on Twitter!](#)

Follow [@theGRSI](#) on Twitter for more updates on [#communitysponsorship](#)

New community organization refugee sponsorship visa category now open in New Zealand

On November 5th, 2021, Immigration New Zealand (INZ) confirmed that the new Community Organisation Refugee Sponsorship visa category is now open. Through the program, New Zealanders interested in welcoming refugees into their communities can apply to be sponsors. New Zealand's community sponsorship was first piloted with 24 refugees in 2018 and will expand to 150 refugees over the next three years. Groups can either nominate someone to sponsor or be matched with a refugee.

[Saralinda MacMillan](#) participated in the 2018 pilot, sponsoring a refugee with her community. Saralinda shared that it gave her a deeper connection to her community. She added her motivation for becoming a sponsor: "We have our own sets of difficulties and challenges, and not everything's perfect, but overall we're pretty privileged when you look at the opportunities most people can have access to."

Are you a policymaker or civil society leader designing a refugee sponsorship program?

[Download the GRSI's policy design workbook.](#)

UK Community Sponsorship Groups to welcome Afghan refugees through the Afghan Citizens' Resettlement Scheme

On September 13th, 2021, UK Minister for Afghan Resettlement Victoria Atkins announced that the Afghan Citizens' Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) would allow Community Sponsorship groups to sponsor Afghan refugees. Kate Brown, Co-Director of the charity [Reset](#), declared, "We are thrilled that Community Sponsors will be able to welcome Afghan refugees through the new Afghan Citizen's Resettlement Scheme. We know that people all over the UK want to give Afghan refugees a warm welcome, and Community Sponsorship is a brilliant way to do this." The scheme has not opened yet.

Syrian family to be reunited in Harriston, Ontario, Canada



A sign welcomes visitors to Harriston.

© Ken Lund/Wikimedia Commons

After years of being separated, two Syrian brothers, Ahmad and Obid Almohamed, are reuniting in Canada thanks to help from the Minto Refugee Settlement Committee. The committee sponsored Ahmad and his family five years ago, and are now sponsoring Ahmad's brother, Obid, and his family. Several of Obid's children will be attending local public schools in Harriston, while Obid will work alongside with his brother as a tiler for a ceramics company. The Minto Refugee Settlement Committee chairman, Carrie Fayez, said: "... we'll try to help the newcomers any way we can." Omid and his family will arrive in Canada on November 23rd.

Community sponsorship group prepares to host refugee family in Germany



Kirsten Jeck (from left), Maria Bastian, Horst Thiel, Volker Schreiber, Stefanie Schreiber, Sina Goliasch and Edith Wichmann prepare an apartment for their refugee family.

© Raulf/Hellweger Anzeiger

A group in the *Neustart im Team* (New Start in Team) or "NesT" program in Unna, Germany, is preparing to welcome a refugee mother and her five children from South Sudan. The group signed up for NesT almost one year ago and is nearly ready to receive the family in November. While the group was able to find accommodation and furniture for the family, they are still looking for interpreters. The community sponsorship group varies greatly in age: the oldest member is 80, and the youngest is 17! One of the members commented, "It's fun to work towards this common goal." The diversity of ages, professions, and life experience makes this group unique and strong. A few of the group members will first welcome the family on November 10th.

What is the GRSI?

The Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative is a partnership of six organizations – the Government of Canada, UNHCR, the Open Society Foundations, The Giustra Foundation, The Shapiro Foundation, and the University of Ottawa. It aims to help other countries set up their own community-based refugee sponsorship programs, strengthening local communities and improving the narrative on refugees in the process.

[SUBSCRIBE](#) [GRSI ONLINE](#) [CONTACT US](#)