

**Refugees Support Coordination Meeting
6 October 2015, 2:30-4:30pm**

Summary of Meeting Inputs

PURPOSE

To clarify who is involved and what is/will be happening with regard to refugee sponsorship and support in Waterloo Region, and to plan for community coordination around refugee support.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

1. Common understanding of which service organizations and community groups are involved in refugee sponsorship and support in Waterloo Region and what they are doing/will do
2. Greater awareness of connections, commonalities, linkages and overlap in services' and groups' efforts
3. Understanding of refugee coordination needs in Waterloo Region
4. Networking, connections and collaboration

DISCUSSION POINTS

Available Services and Supports¹

Service/Support for Refugees	Organizations Providing (*planned service or support; not at meeting but available)
Settlement support (information, service referrals, advise)	Reception House (GARs only, first year in country), YMCA (in office, schools), KWMC (in office, libraries), MCRS (refugee claimants), KPL (host KWMC settlement workers), ShamRose, Najda Now
Support accessing services	Reception House (GARs only, first year in country), YMCA, KWMC, MCRS (refugee claimants), CMHA, Carizon, Muslim Social Services, Floradale Mennonite, Bring Back Hope*
Housing provision	Reception House (GARs only, first year in country), Welcome Home, Working Centre
Employment support	KWMC, YMCA, Working Centre, Muslim Social Services
Health care	Sanctuary
Mental health services/clinical assessments	CMHA, Carizon, Muslim Social Services
Language assessment and referral to training	YMCA
Education and information support	KPL, Muslim Social Services (preparedness)
English as an Additional Language support	MWKC, YMCA, KPL, City of Kitchener, Working Centre, MCRS, Conestoga College LINC , St Louis Adult Learning Centres , English at First
Cultural activities/Recreational services	YMCA, KWMC, City of Kitchener, Muslim Social Services, Najda Now
Advocacy and awareness raising	CCORIC, ShamRose, Najda Now, Interfaith Grand River, Bring Back Hope*, Immigration Partnership
Community development and outreach	Carizon, ShamRose, Najda Now, Interfaith Grand River (with police services)
Administrative/documentation processing support	YMCA, KWMC, MCRS (refugee claimants), KPL (in partnership w KWMC)

¹ This is not a comprehensive listing of all available services in all sectors in Waterloo Region. It mainly reflects the services of organizations that participated in the meeting to share information about their work with respect to refugees and refugee sponsorship. Where possible, this list indicates if an organization's services are provided to only specific categories of refugees or to sponsors working through specific sponsorship classes. Refugees come to Canada in several ways: 1. Government Assisted Refugees (GAR) are identified overseas selected by the federal government which sponsors them for their initial resettlement for one year. 2. Blended Visa Office Referred Refugees are selected by the federal government and are jointly sponsored in their initial resettlement for one year by the federal government and private sponsors. 3. Privately Sponsored Refugees are identified overseas but are sponsored by Canadian individuals, groups or organizations.

Interpretation	KWMC (for accessing all services), CMHA (for their service), Sanctuary (for their service)
Volunteer mobilization (for translation, etc)	MCRS, KW Coalition of Muslim Women, Najda Now, Bring Back Hope*
Service/Support for Sponsors	Organizations Providing
Sponsorship agreement holder	MCC, CLWR
Sponsorship information and connections	MCC, CLWR, Welcome Home, KWMC, KPL (info sessions), WLU, ShamRose, Floradale Mennonite, Interfaith Grand River, Trinity United Church, Bring Back Hope*
Sponsorship fundraising	ShamRose, Najda Now, Floradale Mennonite, Trinity United Church, Bring Back Hope*, WLU
Administrative/documentation processing support	MCC, CLWR, YMCA, KWMC, Bring Back Hope*

Emerging or proposed services for refugees in Waterloo Region

- Peer Matching Program which will match newly arrived refugees with refugees currently settled in KW (ShamRose).
- Balsillie School of International Affairs may organize a roundtable of school representatives and service providers.

Emerging gaps in refugee sponsorship and support services in Waterloo Region

- Broad inter-organizational coordination of services and programs. This happens to some extent but there is nothing comprehensive.
- Most organizations face capacity constraints with the work they do and increasing demands (on both sponsorship and refugee support service sides).
- There appears to be a particular need for support to people/groups interested in sponsoring refugees as groups of five to, ie. match up groups of five, match individual donors with sponsoring groups, match sponsoring groups with community members linked to people seeking refuge.
- Housing and health care services for refugees are already scarce compared to current demand levels. This will grow as a concern as refugee numbers increase.
- Efforts to promote and facilitate refugee sponsorship are increasing and an increase in the number of refugees in the community is expected. Additional funding will be needed for support services for refugees in the community as demand grows.
- A means of linking groups interested in privately sponsoring refugees with people/groups in the community who have connections to people around the world in need of sponsorship to leverage community relations and connections through sponsorship.
- A wider array of services should be included in conversations and collaboration going forward, ie, police, etc.
- There appears to be little in the way of peer support or mentoring for refugees, with particular focus on involvement of cultural groups.
- Some participants in this meeting felt a strong need for regular meetings to continue sharing information and for exploring solutions to meeting service gaps and the need for additional support for service providers.

POTENTIAL COMMUNITY FOLLOW UP BASED ON PARTICIPANT INPUT

1. Service inventory: Disseminate an inventory of refugee sponsorship and support services in Waterloo Region which can be easily updated.
2. Identify Gaps: Map the gaps for refugee sponsorship and support services.
3. Coordination:
 - a. Further explore the need for/commitment to regular facilitated meetings of the spectrum of community groups involved in refugee sponsorship and support, and/or bring groups working in a similar capacity or providing similar services together to facilitate better collaborations.
 - b. Build on existing frameworks for service alignment and coordination, such as through Immigration Partnership.
 - c. Explore the creation of a “connector” role to bridge people and services.
4. Information sharing: Disseminate information to Syrian and other relevant ethnic communities so that they are aware of available refugee sponsorship and support services.
5. IP to convene a meeting with newly elected MPs to share the results of this meeting and garner their support for filling the gaps and meeting the support needs of refugee and sponsor support/service organizations.
6. Funding and service capacity: Engage government and funders in discussion to ensure that refugee sponsorship and support service organizations are adequately resourced to meet increasing demand as refugee sponsorship initiatives grow, as well as housing, health care and other services for refugees.

APPENDIX A
Organizational Information Presented at the Meeting

Organization or Group	Involvement/Work with Refugees and Refugee Sponsorship	Challenges in Coordinating with Other Groups and Supports	Coordination or Other Needs
Immigrant/Refugee Settlement Organizations			
Reception House Waterloo Region: Lynne Griffiths-Fulton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with Government Assisted Refugees (GARs) for 28 years; they serve around 250 refugees per year; not funded to support other types of refugees • Refugees live at Reception House for approx. 2 weeks upon arrival to Canada and then move into other housing • Caseworkers support and work with refugees for 12-18 months after their arrival to Canada (settlement type support in accessing services, etc.) • Have many resources to share with people getting involved in sponsoring refugees 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have resources to share with people looking to sponsor • Looking to fill gaps in existing service for needs (there are many) • Interested in linking with those who want to sponsor because some of their clients have family members still abroad that could be sponsored.
YMCA-Immigrant Services: Katherine Peterson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have supported refugees in KW and Cambridge for 25 years • Provide services for newcomers, immigrants, refugees • Provide language assessment and referrals to language programs • School settlement, orientation, registration, etc. • Community settlement: supporting individuals with government forms and referral to other services • Work to make people feel welcomed, supported • Provide group activities/programs, mentorship, recreational activities (health and fitness centre) for people with permanent residency • All refugees (private/sponsored) are provided with language assessment and settlement support in school 		
Welcome Home Refugee House: Sharon Schmidt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For 10 years have provided refugees with housing and settlement support in a family style setting • Focus on singles and small families. It is particularly difficult to house singles or small families; if they don't know anyone it is very difficult to afford to live • Support sponsors who have refugees arriving with information to help them understand what they are undertaking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inundated with calls from sponsors, Welcome Home needs help 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different groups could help from different cultures

Kitchener Waterloo Multicultural Centre (KWMC): Ana Luz Martinez	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 47 years serving immigrants and refugees (all status) • Support families who do sponsorship: Provide forms and help filling out documents once a group of five is together • Provide interpretation services • Work with churches, libraries etc. to deliver settlement services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Looking at how to avoid duplication 	
Mennonite Coalition for Refugee Support (MCRS): Eunice Valenzuela	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serving and supporting refugee claimants for 28 years • Support claimants through the legal process with their claims • Support refugees to go through family reunification very complicated processes • Direct clients to settlement support with community partners (The Working Centre, KWMC, libraries, Reception House) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We need coordination, the community has the programs but we need coordination • We need information on sponsorship and what our responsibility is exactly
Service Organizations			
Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA): Christine Gilles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with Carizon and Family and Children's Services to support immigrant, refugees, youth, etc., with mental health services • Provide wrap around service; connecting clients to the services they need in addition to mental health supports • They are able to work with clients in their own languages through staff members or by accessing interpretation as needed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No additional funding provided for influx of refugees • Challenge to support clients to access other services 	
Carizon Family and Community Services: Santiago Grande	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program focused on community development and an orientation for new refugees on community well being • Provide clinical assessments and counselling to refugees experiencing trauma • Promise of Partnership Project provides direct services and works in partnership with other service providers • Collaborate with mental health and a wide array of other community service partners to support refugees with mental health concerns through the Connectivity Table 		
City of Kitchener: Dorothy McCabe and Debbie Campbell	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have various outreach programs and services that refugees can access • Provide recreational services • 14 community resource centres across Kitchener • Currently learning how to make community centres more available/responsive to the needs of refugees 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Mayor and different political leaders are interested in what service providers/organizations are and how they can contribute to bring community together to discuss bringing refugees here

	and immigrants		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Looking to work with partners to host and serve refugees • Services need to be easily accessible; people will use services if easily accessible and nearby
Mennonite Central Committee Ontario (MCC): Wendy Adema	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refugee sponsorship agreement holder. Works with churches, municipalities and economic groups to sponsor refugees (all categories except GARs) • Groups are responsible for raising funds to support the refugees they are matched up through agreement with the federal government with for a period of one year • Mainly support groups doing blended sponsorship (federal government-private group partnership). Provide some support to groups of five (no government support) and other groups, such as organizations with charitable status or smaller groups • Also do humanitarian relief work in Syria (Region of Waterloo, Kitchener, Waterloo and Cambridge donations were for this work) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited capacity to respond to needs 	
Kitchener Public Library (KPL): Kristin Johnson-Perlock	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Libraries are an outlet for information • Currently partner with the KWMC, MCC and CLWR (Canadian Lutheran World Relief) • With KWMC, have settlement workers at libraries and provide information sessions for group of five sponsors • With the City of Kitchener and YMCA, have English language circles (language practice) • Provide programs for all ages • Provide education and information sessions; hope to foster a sense of belonging in community • Library is a community space; it is for the community • Have many collections of literature in languages other than English and English age-appropriate book to support English learning 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Looking for more partnership opportunities • Share information with library to post
Working Centre: Dave Thompson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job resource centre • Assist people with finding work, housing • Provide meals, clothing, household goods • Hold a Speak English Café in partnership with MCRS • All programs are offered to all 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can the Working Centre help with housing?
Sanctuary Refugee Health Centre: Margaret Brockett	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existed for 2 years, on King and Agnes • Extending services from 2 days/week to 3 day/week • Serving 900 patients in the Region 		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7 volunteer staff (Doctors, nurse practitioners, social worker, admin.) • Interpretation is provided (for the most part) as needed (7 languages among staff) • Dr. and staff are experienced in supporting refugees • Take refugees regardless of status or health coverage (without health card or insurance) 		
Fauzia Mazhar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family and Children Services: planning what services they should have for new arriving groups • KW Coalition of Muslim Women: connecting Arabic volunteers to service organizations to provide language supports, can mobilize them • With community members: planning to sponsor one Syrian refugee family and exploring what services are available 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need public education, knowledge mobilization and general awareness about the effects on services, such as FCS
Muslim Social Services: Zainab Ramani	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aims to offer spiritually and culturally appropriate care focused on newcomers and refugees • No direct settlement services; focus on long-term support • Offer preparedness programs focused on employment and education • Deliver a Welcome to Canada series fosters belonging • Safer Families Project (long term) provides one on one counseling services for people impacted by trauma • Have some women and youth focused programs • Connect with volunteer translators (Arabic speaking) • Provide training and mentoring sessions 		
Canadian Lutheran World Relief (CLWR): Jenn Ardon *Input through email	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refugee sponsorship agreement holder. • Works with Najda Now, Bring Back Hope and other groups in the community to help them sponsor refugees. 		
Ethno-Cultural Groups			
ShamRose for Syrian Culture: Layla Jabbour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold community gatherings to bring cultural awareness • For the past few years have been supporting Syrians through private sponsorship • Supporting sponsor groups and churches • Working on a project proposal to the Working Centre to expand their work. They need support for a coordinator and plan to grow their peer matching program to match refugees with Syrians currently here 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Looking for partnerships and grants to support 1 staff member (coordinator)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resettlement focus to their work (they speak Arabic and understand culture) • Have had some discussions about holding parenting sessions. • The Working Centre has donated space. 		
Najda Now: Siba Al-Khadow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Syrian group which coordinates with groups in Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, etc. to provide support to all refugees (big families, etc.). • Send aid to camps. • Support those with family here and those abroad by linking sponsors to potential refugees • Work on settlement plan for refugees when they arrive • Teaching the culture of Canadian community to refugees • Raise awareness in Canada of issues overseas (in camps, etc.) • Offer and facilitate cultural activities (i.e. cultural dance group) 		
Faith-Based Groups			
Floradale Mennonite: Leon Kehl	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helping groups who want to be sponsor to raise funds to sponsor and connect them to services. • Have set a goal of sponsoring 26 groups. • Private: Social media campaign for family reunification (# Bring HER (to our) HOME) 		
Interfaith Grand River: Brice Balmer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interfaith is a voluntary group. Refugee work is focused on sponsorship and advocacy • Interested in coordination and helping all refugees regardless of status • Working to link groups who could help sponsor • Meet Thursdays to look at organizing sponsorship groups together • Open to all faith groups • Working to address harassment and hate crime with police to show that Waterloo Region is safe 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerned with how to distribute resources to refugees and that everyone's needs are treated equally 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To link groups who could sponsor
Trinity United Church: Janet Howitt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sponsoring refugees families • Trying to organize Syrian sponsorship coalition • Partnering with 2 other United churches • Sponsor through the blended sponsorship program (w federal government) 		

Community Groups

<p>Bring Back Hope Initiative: Iman Arab</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiative to organize and provide support to existing organizations and coordinate available resources • Partner with Reception House and CLWR (paperwork support) • Advocacy, raise awareness and mobilize community • Assist groups of five to fundraise, through the process of sponsoring refugees, help fill out forms • Connect with people in camps in need of sponsorship to potential sponsors • Fundraising efforts are only for refugees from Syria but other services can support anyone (not just those sponsors/refugees they support) • Started a website - bringbackhope.ca - to provide money, skills, space, donate 		
<p>Syrian Community Member/Student at Balsillie School of International Affairs: Maissaa Almustafa</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PhD researcher focused on protecting refugees • Planning to fundraise at the Balsillie School of International Affairs and to sponsor refugees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying partners 	
<p>Community Coalition of Refugee and Immigrant Concerns (CCORIC): Kaylee Perez</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different organizations, service providers and community members connected in 1979 and formed this voluntary group which is focused on community based advocacy • Work to raise awareness of immigrant and refugee concerns • Information sharing and community organizing • Host and facilitate community forums, World Refugee Day activities, Mental Health Leadership Training Program • Meet monthly at KDCHC 3rd Wednesday of each month 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerned with how service providers and partners can work together and fill in gaps • Concerned with how to strengthen collaboration with other groups 	
<p>Wilfrid Laurier University: Rob Donelson</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with MCC to sponsor two families • Raising funds within the university to cover cost • Asking staff and students to volunteer and to provide supports, personal supports, to donate household goods, etc. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Came to coordination meeting to learn about services and to draw on them • Need to learn more about what services are available

APPENDIX B Coordination Discussion Notes

Questions for discussion

1. Is there an ongoing need for coordination in Region?
2. What is needed in terms of coordination? Next Steps?

Syrian community member: (Maissaa- Student from Balsillie)

- Syrian families here and abroad feel left in the dark
- Students don't really have partnerships; as a student, we don't know what's going on
- Public awareness and outreach is needed
- Information sharing is needed to Syrian community to ensure they have information and awareness of programs available
- Maybe Balsillie school could support
- Organize a roundtable of schools representatives and service providers, e.g. schools like Balsillie

Rob Donelson (WLU):

- WLU would benefit from an inventory of all services in the community (listing of services)

Dorothy McCabe (City of Kitchener):

- Need a coordinator?
- Mayors said they are willing to support the public in getting access to information on all the services
- Would be willing to host a meeting for members of the public

Iman Arab (Bring Back Hope):

- It is a huge effort and no single organization can do all of it
- It is the time to act
- We need a central person to act as "the connector"; someone who knows all organizations and groups and services

Fauzia Mazhar (FCS):

- We need more than just coordination
- With influx of new arrivals, we need to discuss the impact on the community
- Do services have the capacity to support new arrivals
- Are organizations' capacities growing to meet the needs?
- Do we have enough doctors?
- How can we handle coordination?
- We need to focus more on fostering collaborations and making best use of the expertise of various groups

Ana Luz Martinez (KWMC):

- We need to focus on what is established and make the best of our expertise
- Are resources enough?
- Don't worry about duplication, worry about collaboration
- Immigration Partnership does a lot on service alignment and coordination and we should build on that
- Need to build up settlement systems' mapping

- Look at both sponsorship and support services and the capacity for both

Mary Lou Roe (CCORIC):

- Priority from today is to get mapping out (services provided)

Theron Kramer (IP Council Member):

- Bring together groups doing similar things (i.e. Trinity, IFGR)

Leon Kehl (Floradale Mennonite):

- It would be great not to see only the “traditional players” (e.g. City and library)
- Should invite Police Services, landlords, Health care providers, Education providers

Nada Hosnsi (Najda Now):

- We should increase communication and meet like this regularly, i.e. monthly, to learn about new developments, who is coming, etc.

Wendy Adema (MCC):

- We need to look at collaboration, cooperation, and we need to be clear and identify the gaps and how we fill such gaps
- Who is in best position to fill the gaps and how do we fill them in
- Experiencing capacity issues, trying to answer everyone’s questions, private sponsorship questions, can someone else in the community help with private sponsorship advice and process?
- Many organizations are pushed to capacity, would like to pass needs but don’t know who to pass them on to?

Fauzia Mazhar (FCS):

- Organizations need financial support in order to be able to provide services
- Not all monies should go to sponsorship, settlement services need more money as well
- Housing must be on this table as the problem will increase, especially for larger families
- We need to get refugees on priority lists for affordable housing

Iman Arab (Bring Back Hope):

- Will do presentations to help organizations with Syrian information, etc. (provide contact info)

Eunice Valenzuela (MCRS):

- Wants IP to lead coordination role to bring everyone to the table
- Has relevant group meetings and conversation; open to inviting other groups in community

Mary Lou Roe (CCORIC):

- Include gaps in the mapping: have a map of strengths and weaknesses (to show what’s happening)
- Follow up form to identify gaps (What services organizations are providing and the gaps)

Layla (ShamRose):

- (Gap): Need for a group to bring sponsors together to meet total cost

Janet Howitt (IP):

- We need coordination, what are the numbers, who are coming in and who's involved?
- Agreement holders are outside of the community, also (MCC and CLWR)

Fauzia Mazhar (FCS):

- Need to continue to build momentum

Wendy Adema (MCC):

- Ontario government announced money to respond to refugees, but we don't know what it will be
- Need to prepare and plan for it