



Conseil canadien pour les réfugiés Canadian Council for Refugees

Published on *Canadian Council for Refugees* (<http://ccrweb.ca>)

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Code of ethics

Note: the following text is a tool for use by groups involved in the private sponsorship of refugees, who want to adopt a code of ethics. It may be useful to Sponsorship Agreement Holders, Constituent Groups, Groups of Five and others. Each group will want to adapt the text to suit its own mission and reality. In particular, the choice of sub-points under the principles will depend on how the group functions.

PREAMBLE

- [Our organization] sponsors refugees because [fill in what motivates your organization: religious call to help others or seek justice? Community obligations to respond to others' needs?]
- All refugees have a right to protection and a durable solution. Through sponsorship, we contribute to some refugees securing these rights in Canada, in addition to those refugees resettled by the government.
- Consistent with the purpose of sponsorship which is to fulfill refugees' rights, we commit to respect and promote the dignity and human rights of refugees, particularly those we sponsor.
- Although we can only sponsor a small number of refugees in need of resettlement, we will respect the principle of non-discrimination in selecting whom we sponsor.
- Recognizing that there is an inherent power imbalance in the relationship between sponsors and sponsored persons, we commit to act in ways that minimize the risk of oppression in the relationship.
- We will seek to promote gender equity, mindful of the need for sensitivity in the cross-cultural setting and in the context of the unequal relationship between sponsors and those sponsored.
- We commit to respect our obligations, including our legal obligations, to protect the rights of sponsored children and other sponsored persons with particular vulnerabilities.

PRINCIPLES

We commit to respecting the following ethical principles in our sponsorship work:

1. *Right to self determination.* We will respect and support the right of those sponsored to make their own decisions about their lives.

[Select, amend or add sub-points as appropriate to your group:]

- We will inform those sponsored of their right to make their own decisions.
- We will provide those sponsored with relevant information so that they can make informed choices.
- We will support those sponsored in managing their own budgets.
- We will support those sponsored in progressively gaining confidence in making their own decisions as they familiarize themselves with Canadian society.
- We will refrain from making judgments about choices made by the persons we sponsor.
- We will respect the choices of those sponsored about how they wish to be described (including whether they wish to be identified as “refugees”).
- We will respect the right of those sponsored to make decisions regarding questions of faith and religious affiliation.

2. *Right to privacy.* We will respect the right of those sponsored to privacy.

[Select, amend or add sub-points as appropriate to your group:]

- We will inform those sponsored of their right to privacy.
- We will share personal information as needed, but no further.
- We will consult sponsored persons before publishing information about them.
- We will require sponsors to sign an undertaking to respect our organization’s policy on privacy requirements.
- We will require interpreters to sign a confidentiality agreement, and we will inform those sponsored of the interpreters’ role and duty to respect privacy.
- We will safeguard documentation containing personal information.
- We will respect the privacy of sponsored persons’ homes.
- We will take special care to protect the right to privacy of sponsored children in the school setting.

3. *Competence.* We will respect our duty to act competently.

[Select, amend or add sub-points as appropriate to your group:]

- We will acquire appropriate cultural and diversity understanding.
- We will screen, train and supervise volunteers.
- We will assess potential sponsors/constituent groups according to criteria established by our organization.
- We will provide sponsored persons with accurate information on their rights, services available to them, etc.
- We will recognize our own limits and make appropriate referrals.
- We will accept a duty of care to ensure that the basic needs of sponsored persons are met, including where appropriate mentoring on financial management.

4. *Transparency.* We will be transparent in our services, towards those seeking sponsorship, those sponsored and the public.

[Select, amend or add sub-points as appropriate to your group:]

- We will provide clear and transparent information about how we make decisions on who to sponsor.
- We will provide to sponsored persons full information about all matters that concern them.
- We will address complaints through an established complaints mechanism involving a third party.
- We will inform those sponsored of our complaints mechanism.

- We will strive to be open and to make sure information and expectations are clear.
5. *Equity*. We will strive to make our relationships as equitable as possible, by being aware of power dynamics and guarding against risks of abuse of power

[Select, amend or add sub-points as appropriate to your group:]

- We will select refugees for sponsorship based on equitable principles.
 - We will make no expectations of those we sponsor other than those essential for the functioning of the sponsorship.
 - We will inform the sponsored persons of the limits of those expectations and that they are not required to do more (bearing in mind that sometimes sponsored persons may perceive pressures to do some things even when there is no such intention).
 - We will avoid assumptions based on gender, sexual orientation, age, ability, religion, culture, ethnicity or nationality.
 - We will establish appropriate boundaries in personal relationships.
 - We will work to develop trust in relationships.
6. *Financial integrity*. We will maintain integrity in financial and business relationships and avoid actual or perceived conflicts of interest.

[Select, amend or add sub-points as appropriate to your group:]

- We will not accept gifts that are more than token.
 - We will develop and follow a protocol for sharing financial information.
 - We will declare potential conflicts of interest to each other and seek solutions to minimize the risk (e.g. involving a third party if a sponsor offers to hire a sponsored person).
 - We will require sponsors to sign an undertaking to respect our organization's policy on conflicts of interest.
 - We will strive to ensure that sponsored persons do not feel that they are receiving charity from or beholden to individuals.
7. *Concluding a sponsorship*. We will work to ensure a satisfactory conclusion to the sponsorship for all concerned.

[Select, amend or add sub-points as appropriate to your group:]

- We will prepare sponsored persons for the end of the sponsorship and attempt to address any anxieties in advance.
- We will ensure that sponsored persons are aware of their rights and entitlements, including their entitlement to government benefits and services.
- We will acknowledge the end of a sponsorship and recognize those who contributed to it.
- We will have a clear process for deciding how to re-direct funds remaining at the end of a sponsorship.

Adopted in principle by the Working Group on Overseas Protection and Sponsorship
February 2010