

# COMMUNITY SUPPORT PROGRAM

## Information Sheet for Potential Supporters

### What is the Community Support Program (CSP)?

The CSP provides Australian citizens, permanent residents, and eligible New Zealanders in Australia with the opportunity to actively support and engage in the international resettlement of refugees. Individuals, groups, organizations and/or businesses are encouraged to work together to take responsibility for sponsoring a refugee or refugee family to travel to Australia.

The CSP does not rely on public funds. It depends on motivated Australians to take the lead in helping some of the world's most vulnerable persons start a new life in a secure and welcoming environment. Supporters raise funds, use their personal income, and collect softly-used donated goods to ensure refugees are meaningfully assisted during their journey to Australia and throughout their first year in the country.

The CSP is designed to ensure that newly arrived refugees not only feel welcome in their new home but become self-sufficient within the first twelve months after their arrival. Supporters are indispensable to achieving this goal by assisting in helping new arrivals find employment and permanent housing opportunities. Supporters will also take the lead in linking refugees with sports groups, education pathways, health services, and other community engagement activities.

Supporters work alongside Approved Proposing Organizations (APOs), such as SSI, to finalize the submission of visa applications, and arrange settlement services for new arrivals.

## Who Can Participate as a Supporter?

SSI encourages individuals, groups, organizations and businesses to form broad "Communities of Support" to ensure that the needs of newly arrived refugees in Australia are adequately met. Communities of Support can vary in size but should include individuals who are willing to take on a multitude of different tasks. This includes receiving newcomers at the airport, collecting donations, making an offer of employment, or signing on as an Assurer of Support.

All refugee participants in the CSP require both a principal supporter as well as an assurer of support to endorse their application through the CSP. One or more persons must act as the principal supporter for the purposes of the visa application while a maximum of three adults may sign the Assurance of Support to take legal responsibility for any government debts incurred by newly arrived refugees during their first twelve months in Australia. The principal supporter does not have to be the same individual operating as the assurer of support and assurers of support can be businesses.

**Eligibility requirements for principal supporters and/or assurance of support signatories include but are not limited to:**

- Demonstrating a strong understanding and commitment to participating in the CSP
- Being a person of good standing
- Being 18 years of age or over
- Being an Australian citizen, Australian permanent resident, or holder of a New Zealand passport with a protected special category visa

## Who Can Participate as a Refugee or Humanitarian Applicant?

To enter Australia under the CSP, a principal applicant needs to meet the following criteria:

- be outside their home country and outside of Australia
- be subject to substantial discrimination in their home country
- satisfy all Class XB (subclass 202) criteria of the Global Special Humanitarian visa
- be aged between 18 and 50
- have adequate English and be able to demonstrate this at a visa interview
- have a job offer or skills to enable them to get a job quickly
- demonstrate a willingness to live and work in regional or rural Australia

It is not required that supporters be acquainted with the individual or family they wish to bring to Australia. SSI can work with UNHCR and other groups to identify eligible refugees who are interested in participating in the CSP and match them to appropriate supporters.

## What Responsibilities do Supporters Have?

Supporters are required to assist refugee participants in the CSP both before and after they arrive in Australia.

### **Pre-arrival responsibilities include but are not limited to:**

- Covering the cost of all visa and APO service fees
- Paying for any pre-departure health checks or exit permits, as required
- Booking and covering the cost of all airfares to Australia
- Identifying possible employment pathways
- Organizing and financing suitable accommodation for upwards of 12 months

### **Post-arrival responsibilities include but are not limited to:**

- Meeting, greeting and welcoming newly arrived refugees at the airport
- Providing newcomers with basic necessities such as furniture, linens, weather-appropriate clothing, toys, basic foodstuffs, bathroom necessities, and cleaning products
- Introducing newly arrived refugees to their Community of Support and area of residence
- Providing transportation to medical appointments, meetings with the Department of Social Services, and helping facilitate applications for driver's licenses, etc.
- Assisting in the procurement of viable and appropriate employment
- Assisting in registering all children in school, purchasing uniforms, books, pencils, etc., as required
- Covering the cost of all Humanitarian Settlement Program (HSP) fees

### **Supporters must never:**

- Profit financially by supporting refugees
- Accept funds from refugees to cover the costs of any visa, administrative, relocation, or other fees associated with any pre or post arrival responsibilities
- Accept funds as prepayment or repayment for any lodging, care, or assistance provided
- Force refugees to work
- Force refugees to work for no pay or unfair wages
- Confiscate personal documents, such as passports, for any reason

## What costs are involved?

It is not possible to predict the exact financial costs required for each case. The costs of resettlement will differ depending on the size of the family, the location of the settled refugees, as well as the unique needs and complexities of each case. Communities of Support can bear in mind that they can offset many of the hard financial costs involved in supporting resettlement by raising funds, donating softly-used items, offering free accommodation upon arrival, and assisting their supported family to find employment and become financially independent.

Anticipated costs for Pre-Arrival fees for a family of 5 **(2 Adults and 3 Child)**:

SSI's APO fee for service costs	
Detailed case review	\$1,500
Visa Lodgement and Application Assistance	\$3,000
Post-Visa Processing Assistance (for successful applicants)	\$2,500
Pre and Post Arrival Settlement Arrangements (for successful applicants)	\$2,500
	Total APO fees: \$9,550+GST
Government Visa Application Charge 1	Total Visa 1 charges: \$ 3,005
Government Visa Application Charge 2	Total visa 2 charges for a family of FIVE: \$16,444 +\$2,680 for each additional dependent
	Total Visa 2 Charges for a family of FOUR: \$27,164
Medical fees	Case dependent
Exit permit fees	Case dependent
Airfares to Australia	Case dependent
HSP integration services for up to 12 months after arrival	Case dependent – Upwards of \$9,000 if full services are required

Costs that will differ depending on each case include but are not limited to:

Accommodation for up to 12 months after arrival	Infant/young child necessities (a car seat to transport an infant from the airport for example, and/or enriched milk, diapers, etc)
Monthly living expenses for up to 12 months after arrival	Clothing (weather appropriate)
Furniture (basics required to form the foundations of a home)	School uniforms, writing books, pencils, etc.
Linens (including all sheets, blankets, pillows)	Basic foodstuffs, cleaning material, hygiene necessities
Books, entertainment (toys, games, sports equipment), English language learning materials, etc.	Public transportation costs for up to 12 months – or alternative transportation arrangements

## Processing Times

There is no guarantee that an application will be successful. Further, there is no standard time for processing an application, or for each step of the process. Most successful applications take several months to process. It is not possible to predict how long a particular application will take. Processing time depends on factors that vary from applicant to applicant, as well as on the processing offices' workloads and the operating conditions in the countries in which Applicants live.

## The role of SSI as an APO

APOs are individuals, community groups, or businesses that have been authorized to propose applicants who are in humanitarian situations overseas. APOs key focus will be to link employers with prospective humanitarian applicants. APOs are also responsible for lodging visa applications and ensuring the provision and management of settlement services to these people following arrival in Australia.

As an APO, SSI will work with local and international community and business networks to identify and screen CSP applicants that a) satisfy all Global Special Humanitarian (subclass 202) requirements, b) have an Assurer in Australia that is willing and financially capable to assure them under the Assurance of Support provisions, and c) has either an offer of employment and/or personal attributes that will enable them to become financially self-sufficient within 12 months of arrival. As an APO, SSI will also assist by lodging a Class XB subclass 202 visa application on behalf of Applicants and their Supporters.