

Syrian Refugee Crisis – How Can I Help?

Many North Shore residents want to know how they can help Syrian refugees. Here is a list of suggestions that have been compiled with assistance from the Immigrant Services Society of BC and the North Shore Multicultural Society.

1. Make a donation or raise funds for relief agencies overseas

The conflict in Syria has resulted in the largest refugee crisis since World War II. From a population of 22 million people in 2010, 5 million Syrians have since fled the country, 5-8 million are preparing to flee and another 6-7 million have been internally displaced. Relief agencies in Syria and in neighbouring countries like Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan where the majority of refugees have fled, are in high need of funds to support their efforts.

The Government of Canada has created the [Syria Emergency Relief Fund](#) and will match donations made to registered Canadian charities until December 31, 2015.

United Nations Refugee Agency (www.unhcr.org)

The UNHCR coordinates UN refugee responses, including support for host countries providing assistance for Syrian refugees.

International Organization for Migration (www.iom.int/)

The IOM is an intergovernmental organization which provides services and support to governments and migrants.

Amnesty International (www.amnesty.ca)

Amnesty International is a non-governmental organization with a focus on human rights.

Canadian Red Cross (www.redcross.ca)

Part of the international humanitarian organization Red Cross/Red Crescent, the Canadian Red Cross is helping to support the efforts of the Syrian Arab Red Crescent in Syria.

Doctors Without Borders (www.doctorswithoutborders.org/)

Doctors Without Borders, or Médecins Sans Frontières, operates medical facilities inside Syria and supports more than 100 clinics, health posts and field hospitals in the country.

Migrant Offshore Aid (www.moas.eu/)

MOA consists of humanitarians, security professionals, medical staff and maritime officers working to prevent further refugee crisis at sea.

Oxfam (www.oxfam.ca/)

Oxfam is an international confederation of 17 organizations working around the world to find solutions to poverty and support human rights.

UNICEF Canada (www.unicef.ca)

The United Nations Children's Fund is a child-focused humanitarian organization operating in 192 countries, including Syria.



www.nsiip.ca

World Food Programme (www.wfp.org/)

The World Food Programme is the food assistance branch of the United Nations.

World Vision Canada (www.worldvision.ca)

The non-profit charitable organization provides food, water and shelter to more than 500,000 Syrian refugees in the Middle East.

2. Support local refugee work through donations and/or volunteering:

The Immigrant Services Society of BC (ISSBC) has primary responsibility to provide initial settlement and orientation to government-assisted refugees who arrive in the Lower Mainland, including finding these refugees temporary and permanent accommodation. ISSBC is currently soliciting offers of accommodation, employment and volunteer support for these refugees.

Immigrant Services Society of BC (ISSofBC) (www.issbc.org)

Additional organizations in Metro Vancouver that support refugees include:

Inland Refugee Society (IRS) (www.inlandrefugeesociety.ca)

Kinbrace Refugee Support and Housing (www.kinbrace.ca/)

MOSAIC (www.mosaicbc.com/)

Mt Pleasant Family Centre (www.mpfamilycentre.ca)

Pacific Immigrant Resources Society (PIRS) (www.pirs.bc.ca)

Rainbow Refugee Canada - (www.rainbowrefugee.ca/)

Settlement Orientation Services (SOS) (www.sos.ca)

Vancouver Association for Survivors of Torture (VAST) (www.vast-vancouver.ca)

While the North Shore has historically has not been a primary destination for government-assisted refugees In Metro Vancouver, more than 2,100 new immigrants arrive on the North Shore each year, including a small number of refugees from Iran. The North Shore Multicultural Society runs a “Community Connections” program which welcomes volunteers. Opportunities include mock employment interviews, mentoring, English language practice and participation in informational and social activities with newcomers. Should Syrians arrive on the North Shore, there may be opportunities to connect with and support them through this program.

North Shore Multicultural Society (www.nsms.ca)



www.nsiip.ca

3. Sponsor a refugee or a refugee family to come to Canada under the federal government's Private Sponsorship Program

Many faith groups on the North Shore have status as "Sponsorship Agreement Holders" with the Government of Canada and can provide advice and assistance to residents wishing to sponsor refugees or support fundraising efforts for local families wishing to sponsor their relatives from overseas. Contact your nearest church, synagogue, temple or mosque to find out about opportunities. Sponsorship Agreement Holders include:

Anglican Synod of The Diocese of New Westminster (vancouver.anglican.ca/pages/refugee-unit)

Canadian Lutheran World Relief (email: clwr@clwrbc.ca)

Canadian Unitarian Council (cuc.ca/refugee-sponsorship)

Mennonite Central Committee (mccbc.ca)

Presbyterian Church of Canada (presbyterian.ca/pwsd/refugee-sponsorship/)

Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Vancouver (refugeecrisis@rcav.org)

United Church of Canada (united-church.ca/humanrights/refugees/sponsor)

World Renew (formerly CRWRC) (worldrenew.net/refugeesponsorship)

World University Services of Canada (wusc.ca)

North Shore Multicultural Society has a 25 year history of providing settlement and adjustment programs. They are more than pleased to meet with sponsorship groups and share information and resources to assist groups in settlement of their refugee families. Services include – English language training, basic settlement – MSP – Social Insurance numbers, health care information, etc. as well as immigrant and refugee specific employment services. An example of other NSIIP members assisting sponsoring families is Family Services of the North Shore providing support to sponsors who are working with people who have experienced trauma.

4. Support local clothing, furniture or toy drives

Note: Organizations like the Muslim Foodbank and Community Services Society (www.muslimfoodbank.com) and the Syrian Canadian Association of BC (www.syriancanadiancouncil.ca) were seeking donations of this nature until recently but have now stopped due to the overwhelming generosity of local residents. Instead, the Muslim Foodbank is now requesting monetary donations to help it expand its warehouse capacity. Alternatively, contact the following two organizations to see if they are continuing to accept material donations:

Eversafe Outreach Society (Surrey-Langley-Delta)
<http://www.eversaferranch.ca>

Homestart Foundation Vancouver
<http://homestart.ca>