

Refugee Resettlement in New Zealand

FACT SHEET One: How people can help

The government provides assistance to refugees coming to New Zealand, but there is a vital community component which is invaluable in helping refugees settle in their new home.

Immigration New Zealand is responsible for the selection of refugees coming to New Zealand, and for the six week programme at the Mangere Refugee Resettlement Centre when they arrive. Once they leave the Centre, the Red Cross is responsible (through its government-funded Refugee Programme) for providing support and for the coordination of voluntary assistance in the 12 months after arrival.

Volunteers are required to complete a training programme prior to being placed with an incoming refugee family. Red Cross provides training courses in different places in New Zealand where refugees are being resettled.

Individual action

You can train as a volunteer, donate goods or cash, assist a trained volunteer, work with the local Catholic Social Services and St Vincent de Paul Society.

Parish action

A parish could offer its local Red Cross office comprehensive support for a refugee family, including some or all of the following: trained volunteers, friendship, goods, and possibly even a job.

If your area is not a settlement location, there are still many ways you can help with resettlement.

A parish might also be able to:

- Raise awareness of the need for volunteers, and provide details of the necessary training programmes for volunteers, what it involves and the time commitment.
- Assist the local efforts already in place for refugees, as these may struggle with the additional numbers in the emergency intake. The additional 750 Syrian refugees outside the planned quota intake, although staggered, will put pressure on the systems already in place.
- Encourage Catholic (and other) employers to consider providing a job for a refugee.
- Offer ongoing friendship and encouragement and support, so that when Red Cross conclude their formal period of support (12 months after arrival) the individuals and families have support networks that they can call on, given they don't always have extended family here.

Parishes could also consider whether they could offer to Red Cross to support quota refugees, not just those in the emergency Syrian intake.

The support coordinated by the Red Cross is only for the refugee's first year in New Zealand. General community support and friendship will be very important after that time.

