

Syrian Refugee Families FAQs

Where can I make a donation?

Drop by the North Bay & District Multicultural Centre, 100 Main St. E., weekdays between 8:30 and 4:30 and we will be happy to receive your donation. We can give you a charitable receipt right away. If you send a cheque in the mail, the address is 100 Main St. E., North Bay ON P1B 1A8. A receipt will be mailed to you. No administration fee is being charged by the Multicultural Centre so 100 per cent of the funds will go toward the families.

Or, you can donate online at www.nbdmc.ca by simply clicking on the Donate Now button on any of our web pages. A charitable receipt in that case will be issued by our partner, Canada Helps. Please note that Canada Helps takes 1.8% of the donation in administration fees. Mayor Al McDonald is also receiving donations. Make all cheques payable to the North Bay & District Multicultural Centre.

How can I donate household items?

Give us a call at 705-495-8931 or drop by and we will tell you what specific items may be needed and where to deliver them. Items should be only “gently used.”

How can I volunteer my services?

Send an email to deborahrobertson@nbdmc.ca and she will put you on the list and hopefully get you involved soon. Right now we are looking for volunteer coordinators, donations committee members to arrange for pickup and storage of household items, housing committee members and Arabic interpreters. Later on we will have a need for one-on-one language tutors as well as support for ongoing integration needs.

How many families are coming?

We are expecting two large families to move to North Bay.

When are the families coming?

The situation is very fluid. We are told it will be between one and four months. We anticipate it will be sooner, rather than later.

Where are the families coming from?

The families coming to North Bay will have been in refugee settlements in Lebanon for some time. They have been screened by the United Nations Refugee Agency and the Canadian government.

Where will the families live?

We are searching for four or five-bedroom rental homes in the city.

Where will the children go to school?

The families will have Canadian permanent resident status when they arrive. That means they can live and work anywhere in Canada. They also have the right to choose which school board they want for their children.

What language do the families speak?

We are expecting Arabic speakers, with little or no English or French.

How will the parents learn English?

We test their proficiency at the North Bay & District Multicultural Centre and will then enrol them at the English as a Second Language class at Chippewa Secondary School. We hope that tutors will volunteer to work with them, and the children, one-on-one to accelerate the language learning process. Depending on the family, there is a possibility that some family members may know a little English or French.

Does anyone speak Arabic in North Bay?

Yes. The president of the Muslim Association of North Bay is a long-time member of the board of directors of the North Bay & District Multicultural Centre and he has volunteers that speak Arabic to serve as interpreters with the families. We expect the families will make friends at the mosque, through our volunteers and through the schools.

What if the families move from North Bay after a year?

The families will have the right to move anywhere they want in Canada. We hope that they find North Bay so welcoming that they will want to stay and raise their families here.

What if the families have medical issues?

That could well be the case. Settlement staff at the North Bay & District Multicultural Centre will help them obtain their OHIP cards soon after arrival and obtain medical treatment.

Who takes care of other issues, such as enrolling in school, SINs, banking, etc.?

Settlement staff at the North Bay & District Multicultural Centre will help them with all that, as they do with all newcomers coming to North Bay. Our offices are open weekdays only and volunteers may well be needed to help out after hours or on weekends.

How long do the funds raised have to last?

The community's financial commitment is for 12 months. After that it is hoped the families can become self-sufficient.

Is the federal government assisting financially?

We are proceeding through the Mennonite Central Committee of Ontario, based in St. Catharines. It has a sponsorship agreement with the federal government whereby the federal government will pay 40 per cent of the costs for each family during their first year in North Bay.

How much has the community raised so far?

As of November 19 the total raised is more than \$46,000.