



COVERSHEET

Minister	Hon Casey Costello	Portfolio	Associate Immigration
Title of Cabinet paper	Establishing a permanent Community Organisation Refugee Sponsorship (CORS) pathway	Date to be published	4 August 2026

List of documents that have been proactively released

Date	Title	Author
April 2026	Establishing a permanent Community Organisation Refugee Sponsorship (CORS) visa category	Office of the Associate Minister of Immigration
22 April 2026	Establishing a permanent Community Organisation Refugee Sponsorship visa category SOU-26-MIN-0037 Minute	Cabinet Office
June 2026	Establishing a Permanent Community Organisation Refugee Sponsorship (CORS) pathway	Office of the Associate Minister of Immigration
June 2026	Appendix One: Key policy settings carried over from the Pilot	Office of the Associate Minister
17 June 2026	Establishing a Permanent Community Organisation Refugee Sponsorship (CORS) Pathway ECO-26-MIN-0102 Minute	Cabinet Office
25 November 2025- 9 June 2026	Briefings regarding establishing a permanent Community Organisation Refugee Sponsorship (CORS) pathway	MBIE

Information redacted

YES / NO (please select)

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Some information has been redacted for reasons of national security, international relations, privacy of natural persons, confidential advice to Government, free and frank opinions, and confidentiality and negotiations.

IN CONFIDENCE

Office of the Associate Minister of Immigration

Cabinet Social Outcomes Committee

Establishing a permanent Community Organisation Refugee Sponsorship (CORS) pathway

Proposal

- 1 This paper seeks agreement to establish a permanent Community Organisation Refugee Sponsorship (CORS) pathway, funded through a corresponding reduction of 200 places from the Refugee Quota Programme (currently 1,500 places annually), with no overall reduction in New Zealand's humanitarian intake.

Relation to government priorities

- 2 This proposal relates to the government priority of delivering effective and fiscally sustainable public services.

Executive Summary

- 3 I propose establishing a permanent 200-place Community Organisation Refugee Sponsorship (CORS) pathway to ensure an enduring complementary protection pathway in New Zealand's refugee resettlement system. A permanent CORS category will support New Zealand's resettlement efforts by broadening access to resettlement, supporting local communities to welcome refugees, and delivering meaningful outcomes, with CORS refugees and their immediate families generally becoming independent and self-sufficient more quickly.
- 4 CORS was established in 2018 as New Zealand's pilot complementary protection category for refugees until 30 June 2025. It operated in addition to the Quota, which is New Zealand's primary resettlement mechanism for refugees deemed by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to have priority protection needs. Over the life of the pilot, 225 refugees and their immediate families, supported by 28 approved community organisations, were approved. Evaluation findings show strong settlement outcomes, sustained engagement from approved community organisations, and good value for money.¹
- 5 The global context has changed sharply. [REDACTED] Confidentiality [REDACTED] while asylum claims are rising globally and in New Zealand. As pressure on traditional resettlement systems grows, diversifying refugee resettlement pathways is becoming more important in the international protection system.
- 6 Australia, Canada, and the United Kingdom have already established permanent complementary pathway programmes. UNHCR continues to encourage states to expand these pathways alongside core resettlement programmes, as part of international solidarity and responsibility-sharing in a period of acute need.

¹ Community Organisation Refugee Sponsorship Programme, *Outcomes Evaluation Report*, June 2025: <https://www.immigration.govt.nz/assets/inz/documents/refugees/CORS-Outcomes-Evaluation.pdf>.

- 7 Given current fiscal constraints, I propose that this new permanent category be funded through a corresponding 200 place reduction in the Refugee Quota Programme (currently 1,500 places per year), with no overall reduction in New Zealand's overall humanitarian intake. A transition year would be needed in 2026/27, with 50 CORS places and a Quota of 1,450.
- 8 The principal risk of funding the new permanent category in this way is that reducing the Quota would mean 200 fewer places for refugees referred by UNHCR as having the highest priority protection needs. All principal applicants under the CORS category are recognised as meeting the definition of a refugee under 1951 Refugee Convention. While all CORS refugees require a durable protection solution, programme settings – including eligibility criteria – mean they are generally not among those with the highest protection needs and would therefore fall outside those typically referred through the Refugee Quota Programme.
- 9 Funding the permanent category by offsetting against the refugee quota is likely to be viewed unfavourably by [REDACTED] Free and frank opinions [REDACTED], settlement service providers, former-refugee communities and the Refugee Advisory Panel. On balance, I consider this risk manageable and outweighed by the benefits of securing a permanent complementary pathway now.
- 10 The main risk of not establishing a permanent CORS programme now is that the programme infrastructure and momentum built during the pilot will be lost.
- 11 [REDACTED] International relations [REDACTED]

Background

CORS was New Zealand's pilot complementary protection category

- 12 New Zealand resettles 1,500 refugees per year through the Quota programme. The Quota is New Zealand's primary refugee resettlement pathway for the most vulnerable refugees who are deemed by the UNHCR to have priority protection needs. It contributes to New Zealand's fulfilment of our international and humanitarian commitments and supports the UNHCR and the international community in providing protection for refugees.
- 13 In 2018, Cabinet increased the Quota from 1,000 to 1,500 to support the UNHCR and the international community to find durable protection solutions for refugees [CAB 2525 18-19]. In 2025, Cabinet reconfirmed the Quota settings for 2025/26 – 2027/28 [CBC-25-MIN-0018].
- 14 Alongside the Quota, CORS was established in 2018 as a pilot complementary protection category.² Its purpose was to provide an additional protection pathway outside of the quota, strengthen community involvement in settlement, and support refugees to become independent and self-sufficient more quickly.
- 15 The initial pilot resettled 24 refugees through four approved community organisations. In Budget 2020, the pilot was extended for a further three years to gather more information on the effectiveness of the programme [CAB-20-MIN-0155.21] and was extended again in 2024 to allow decisions in the pipeline to be processed [ECO-24-MIN-0120]. Across both phases, 225

² On 13 June 2016 Cabinet approved in principle the piloting of a CORS category [CAB-16-MIN-0271]. This was subject to a report back on the proposed details of the pilot, which was confirmed by the Economic Growth and Infrastructure Committee on 10 August 2017 [EGI-17-MIN-0224] and by Cabinet on 14 August 2017 [CAB-17-MIN-0427].

refugees and their immediate family were approved with support from 28 approved community organisations.

- 16 Under the extended pilot, principal applicants were required to be recognised refugees, have basic English, at least three years' work experience (or a qualification requiring at least two years' tertiary study), and to be aged 18 to 45. Approved community organisations were required to provide at least two years of settlement support.³
- 17 CORS shares settlement roles and costs between government and approved community organisations:
 - 17.1 Government meets immigration processing and travel costs, funds programme oversight, and provides access to core public services.
 - 17.2 Approved community organisations secure housing, meet initial settlement costs, and support access to services and employment.
- 18 A process evaluation was completed in October 2024 and an outcomes evaluation in June 2025.⁴ The independent evaluation found that the pilot met the policy objectives agreed by Cabinet and met or exceeded expectations across all evaluation criteria, delivering a complementary pathway with strong settlement outcomes. It also found system readiness and ongoing interest from approved community organisations to continue supporting refugees through a permanent programme.

I propose establishing a permanent CORS category

- 19 I consider there to be strong grounds for establishing a permanent CORS programme. CORS delivers measurable and positive outcomes with CORS refugees and their immediate families generally transitioning into work and study more quickly, reflects international best practice,

Free and frank opinions

CORS complements the Quota through strong settlement outcomes

- 20 My officials have drawn on Statistics New Zealand's integrated data infrastructure (IDI) to consider employment, welfare and education outcomes for both Quota and CORS refugees.⁵ While the data is not directly comparable due to different eligibility criteria, arrival times, and sample sizes, it does show clear differences in settlement trajectories, with CORS refugees and their immediate families generally transitioning more quickly into work and study. For example:
 - **CORS refugees and their immediate family enter employment sooner**, with 41 per cent of working-age CORS arrivals employed within 12 months, compared to 19 per cent for Quota refugees.

³ Under the pilot approved community organisations included faith-based organisations, not-for-profit organisations, former refugee-led organisations, and businesses. Officials have since had conversations with universities who are interested in taking part in the programme. A programme of 200 places would enable officials to conduct targeted outreach to organisations and regions, to continue to diversify the sponsor community.

⁴ Community Organisation Refugee Sponsorship Programme, *Outcomes Evaluation Report*, June 2025.

⁵ Data for CORS refugees updated as at March 2026.

- **Reliance on welfare support reduces more quickly for CORS refugees and their immediate families**, with 77 per cent of working-age arrivals off the Jobseeker benefit after 12 months, compared with 33 per cent of Quota refugees.
- **Housing support is also required for a shorter duration**, with 67 per cent of CORS refugees not receiving the accommodation supplement after 12 months, compared with 28 per cent of Quota refugees.⁶

21 The CORS pilot also provided a meaningful opportunity for approved community organisations to actively engage in refugee resettlement, drawing on local networks, resources, and expertise to meet the needs of refugees. The outcomes evaluation found that sponsor organisations generally developed effective relationships with local services, built capability over time, and adapted their support to promote refugee independence. Participation in the programme was widely described as a positive and rewarding experience by approved community organisations, who valued the opportunity to build relationships with refugees, develop greater cultural understanding, and contribute to broader humanitarian objectives.

Like-minded countries have established permanent complementary pathway programmes

- 22 Complementary pathways are playing an increasing role in the global protection system, as traditional refugee resettlement systems face constraints due to high global displacement levels, reductions in funding, and reduced quotas.
- 23 Like-minded countries including Australia, Canada, and the United Kingdom have already established effective permanent complementary pathway programmes. The UNHCR continues to encourage states to expand these pathways as additional to core resettlement pathways, as part of international solidarity and responsibility-sharing in a time of acute need.

The global refugee resettlement context is changing

- 24 Global refugee resettlement places have fallen sharply, Confidentiality
 At the same time, asylum claims are rising, both globally and in New Zealand. Countries are increasingly needing to balance their international humanitarian commitments with domestic pressures. In this context, global resettlement policy is shifting from a state-led, quota-based model toward a more diversified system, characterised by constrained resettlement places, greater reliance on complementary pathways (including community sponsorship), and increased involvement of non-state actors.

A permanent CORS pathway will be funded by reducing existing Quota places, with settings put in place as per the extended pilot

- 25 Given New Zealand's current fiscal constraints, in order to achieve a permanent 200-place CORS programme, I propose funding it through a corresponding reduction in the Quota by 200 places from 2027/28. New Zealand's overall humanitarian intake would remain 1,500 places per year: 1,300 Quota places and 200 CORS places. A transition year in 2026/27 would deliver up to 50 CORS places alongside a Quota of 1,450.

⁶ The Ministry of Housing and Urban Development notes that lower uptake of the accommodation supplement may not indicate lower need, as, in general, not all eligible people access the support available. However, the CORS Pilot evaluation observed that all sponsored refugees were in safe and appropriate homes, with many moving into private, self-funded accommodation and only a small number exploring options for social housing. See: Community Organisation Refugee Sponsorship Programme, *Outcomes Evaluation Report*, June 2025.

- 26 Based on the outcomes evaluation and cost estimates, I consider that a 200-place programme per year delivers an outcomes-focused pathway without compromising quality.⁷ Two hundred places would enable Immigration New Zealand (INZ) to recruit new approved community organisations each year, which is crucial for programme sustainability. I propose that the permanent CORS programme be managed within a ± 10 per cent operational tolerance, consistent with the Quota.
- 27 Targeted stakeholder consultation on the proposal to establish a permanent CORS pathway showed broad support for scaling up the programme, reflecting the strong results of the pilot, sponsor interest in supporting more people, and ongoing humanitarian need. Stakeholders also noted that any increase would need to be phased and supported by sufficient resourcing for the umbrella organisation.
- 28 In 2025, Cabinet confirmed Quota settings for the period 2025/26 to 2027/28 [CBC-25-MIN-0018]. I do not propose changes to the rolling three-year cycle. Cabinet will next consider Quota settings in 2028 which provides an opportunity to review the impact of this proposal.
- 29 I propose proportionate reductions across the Quota's regional allocations to balance the impact of the reductions,⁸ and because consultation with International has not been possible under the timeframes available. I do not propose amending the subcategory allocations, which have specified numerical targets, specifically the women at risk, medical needs, and emergency or urgent resettlement categories. These targets will remain the same, with reductions made to the regional allocations instead.
- 30 I propose that the permanent CORS category retain the core settings tested through the extended pilot as set out in paragraph 16, with limited amendments for ongoing implementation (detail of proposed requirements are provided in Appendix One). This would preserve the current allocation of responsibilities between the Crown and approved community organisations, the eligibility settings for principal applicants, and the approval requirements for approved community organisations.
- 31 MBIE would continue to assess all applicants against identity, character and health requirements, and Security and defence. These settings maintain the distinction between the Crown's role in immigration processing and core public services, and the approved community organisations' role in providing practical settlement support.
- 32 UNHCR guidance on complementary pathways promotes a multi-partner approach (including NGOs) to help identify, prepare, and connect refugees to opportunities. I therefore propose one substantive change: the use of an alternative international referral partner to undertake refugee status determinations, instead of relying on the UNHCR. This change aligns with global practice and ensures that the UNHCR can continue to focus on priority Quota referrals. All principal applicants will continue to need to meet the definition of a refugees under the Refugee Convention, as with the CORS pilot. Negotiations.

⁷ The initial pilot capped the annual caseload at 25 refugees per year [EGI-17-MIN-0224]. Cabinet agreed for this to be increased to 150 over three years in 2020 [CAB-20-MIN-0155.21] and to a further 51 places in 2024 [ECO-24-MIN-0120].

⁸ The current regional allocations for the Quota are: Asia-Pacific – 50%; Africa – 10%; Middle East – 20%; and the Americas – 20%.

- 33 To support implementation of the permanent CORS pathway, a target of 50 CORS approvals will be set for 2026/27, with the ability to backfill any unutilised CORS places with Quota places, ensuring that New Zealand's overall intake of 1,500 refugees is maintained. To manage the risk that CORS targets may not be met in future years, for example if participation from sponsor organisations varies, I propose enabling unutilised CORS places to be backfilled by Quota places on an ongoing basis.

There are some impacts and risks to establishing CORS by reducing the Quota

- 34 The primary impact of this proposal is that, while a permanent CORS category would be established, the programme would no longer be additional to the Quota. The UNHCR recommends that complementary pathways sit alongside, not substitute, traditional resettlement pathways.⁹
- 35 Reducing the Quota would mean 200 fewer places each year for refugees referred by UNHCR as having the highest priority protection needs. Given this, **International** and domestic stakeholders with an interest in refugee policy settings are likely to be concerned that reducing the Quota will result in fewer places for the most vulnerable refugees.

- 36 **International relations**

- 37 This decision also carries domestic reputational and stakeholder risks. While some stakeholders may support making the CORS programme permanent, some are expected to oppose any reduction in the Refugee Quota Programme. **Free and frank opinions**

These risks will be mitigated through proactive communications with key stakeholders, and through a transition year with a smaller number of CORS places, ensuring time to develop a pipeline of approved community organisations.

- 38 In addition, reducing the Quota will result in some underutilisation of the Māngere Refugee Resettlement Centre and Quota infrastructure. This is discussed further in the financial implications section.

The alternative option is not to establish CORS as a permanent category at this time

- 39 This option would mitigate the risks outlined above. However, it would forfeit momentum and infrastructure from the pilot and leave New Zealand out of step with comparable countries that have already established permanent complementary pathways. It may also disappoint stakeholders consulted on the establishment of a permanent pathway. On balance, I consider these trade-offs acceptable and propose establishing CORS as a permanent pathway.

⁹ UNHCR, Conclusion No. 117 (LXXV) on durable solutions and complementary pathways (2024).

- 40 My officials also considered establishing a 50-place CORS programme as a long-term option. However, because many Quota costs are fixed – and CORS also has fixed programme costs – the savings from a small reduction in Quota are insufficient to fund CORS at this scale.

Implementation

- 41 The Associate Minister of Immigration will approve any further changes to policy and process that are required to operationalise the decisions in this paper, and the Minister of Immigration would certify immigration instructions required to implement this proposal from 1 July 2026.
- 42 A transition year from 1 July 2026 would support establishment of the permanent programme, with a target of up to 50 CORS places and the ability to backfill with Quota places if necessary to maintain 1,500 places overall. To manage the risk that CORS places may not be met in future years, for example due to fluctuations in sponsor participation, I also propose enabling unutilised CORS places to be backfilled by Quota places on an ongoing basis.
- 43 During this transition period in 2026/27, my officials would build a pipeline of approved sponsors to ensure the feasibility of a 200-place programme. The 200-place programme would commence from 1 July 2027.
- 44 Immigration New Zealand (INZ) would work with the umbrella organisation responsible for programme delivery to support and monitor approved sponsors. Monitoring and reporting would occur at set intervals, and the umbrella organisation would notify INZ of any issues or concerns.

Cost-of-living Implications

- 45 There are no cost-of-living implications associated with these proposals.

Financial Implications

- 46 The proposal in this paper to establish CORS by reducing the Quota is designed to be fiscally neutral. Maintaining a cost-neutral 200-place CORS programme requires reducing the Quota by 200 places and making other cost reductions across both categories, because many Quota costs are fixed and CORS has programme-specific costs. This means that while CORS has lower delivery costs at scale, a one-for-one reduction in the Quota is needed to support a 200-place CORS programme.
- 47 Flights, medicals and visa processing costs are broadly interchangeable between the two programmes. Savings from reduced Quota delivery come from reduced need for case management, selection missions, interpreting, catering and furniture and these savings are reallocated to meet CORS programme costs including referral arrangements, approved community organisations support and English language assessments.
- 48 As permanent residents, CORS refugees and their families would continue to be eligible for mainstream government services, including health, education, welfare and housing support. Overall demand for some government services is expected to be lower for CORS refugees than for Quota refugees, reflecting faster entry into employment and lower reliance on income and housing support.
- 49 Operating the Māngere Refugee Resettlement Centre, which provides a reception programme for Quota refugees, at lower capacity will have a modest impact on operational efficiency, reflecting that some costs are fixed and will be spread across fewer arrivals. There will be no

immediate change to Quota delivery for 2026/2027, with existing arrangements continuing while the permanent CORS pathway is implemented. Any longer-term adjustments will be considered through standard planning and contract processes.

Legislative Implications

50 Legislation is not required to implement the proposals in this paper.

Impact Analysis

Regulatory Impact Statement

51 The impact analysis requirements do not apply to this paper.

Climate Implications of Policy Assessment

52 A Climate Implications of Policy Assessment (CIPA) is not required.

Population Implications

53 The number of refugees resettled under this proposal will be neutral, as New Zealand will continue to resettle 1,500 people each year under both the Quota and CORS. This will be made up of Quota places which are counted on arrival and CORS places which are counted on approval of residence (because arrival timing is driven by sponsors). Arrivals will be 1,450 in 2026/2027, with 1450 under the Quota and the 50 approved CORS refugees arriving in the next financial year. There will be a minimum of 1,350 arrivals in 2027/2028, with 1,300 under the Quota and the 50 CORS arrivals approved in the prior year. Arrivals are expected to reach 1,500 per year from 2028/2029.

54 The proposal will benefit approved community organisations in New Zealand, including faith-based organisations, ethnic community groups, and former refugee-led organisations that have invested in supporting successful settlement outcomes. These organisations have consistently expressed strong support for the programme, including prior to the pilot, and place value on being able to nominate refugees for resettlement where there are existing connections.

55 It will also support wider communities where refugees are resettled through CORS to build understanding of refugees, strengthening social inclusion, connection, and cultural identity, as observed under the Pilot.¹¹

Human Rights

56 The proposals in this paper are consistent with the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990 and the Human Rights Act 1993.

Consultation

57 This paper was prepared by MBIE. The Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, the Ministries of Education, Ethnic Communities, Foreign Affairs and Trade, Health, Housing and Urban Development, Justice, Social Development, the New Zealand Police, the New Zealand

¹¹ Community Organisation Refugee Sponsorship Programme, *Outcomes Evaluation Report*, June 2025.

Security Intelligence Service and the Treasury were consulted. Departmental consultation was undertaken in parallel to ministerial consultation.

- 58 Officials consulted with a targeted group of stakeholders on the proposal to establish CORS as a permanent pathway: [redacted] Confidentiality [redacted]
[redacted] Security and [redacted], and six sponsor organisations from the extended pilot. These six organisations [redacted] Confidentiality [redacted] Stakeholders were not consulted on the option of reducing the Quota in order to make CORS permanent.

Communications

- 59 Subject to Cabinet agreement, communications material will be developed to ensure those affected are aware and updated immigration instructions will be published. Given the risks of negative stakeholder reaction, careful communication to the sector will be necessary to ensure that approved community organisations are not deterred from participating in the programme.

- 60 [redacted] International relations [redacted]

Proactive Release

- 61 This paper will be proactively released in line with the Cabinet Office circular Proactive Release of Cabinet Material: Updated Requirements [CO (18) 4].

Recommendations

The Associate Minister of Immigration recommends that the Committee:

- 1 **note** that the Community Organisation Refugee Sponsorship pilot was a protection pathway that was additional and complementary to the Refugee Quota Programme (Quota), and that the pilot finished as planned on 30 June 2025;
- 2 **note** that, in June 2017, Cabinet approved in principle the piloting of a Community Organisation Refugee Sponsorship (CORS) category [CAB-16-MIN-0271], subject to a report back on the proposed details of the pilot which were confirmed by Cabinet in August 2017 [EGI-17-MIN-0224];
- 3 **note** that, in 2020, Cabinet agreed to extend the CORS category for a further three years to gather more information on the effectiveness of the programme [CAB-20-MIN-0155.21] and again in 2024 to allow decisions in the pipeline to be processed [ECO-24-MIN-0120];
- 4 **note** that, under the CORS category, settlement costs and roles are shared between Government and community organisations; **agree** to establish the CORS category as a permanent visa category to support New Zealand's resettlement efforts by broadening access to resettlement, supporting local communities to welcome refugees, and delivering meaningful settlement outcomes, with an annual cap of 200 places plus or minus ten per cent from 2027/28;
- 5 **agree** to retain the policy settings of the extended pilot in the permanent CORS pathway (with some minor amendments, recommendations 13, 14 and 15 below refer);
- 6 **agree** to reduce the Quota by 200 places to 1,300 to fund a 200-place CORS programme;

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- 7 **agree** to an initial transition year target of 50 CORS places and 1,450 Quota places in 2026/27;
- 8 **authorise** the Minister of Immigration, if CORS visa approvals are not on track to meet agreed annual quotas, to use CORS places for Quota refugees;
- 9 **note** that these arrangements will maintain New Zealand's overall refugee intake of 1,500 humanitarian places per year and are fiscally neutral;
- 10 **agree** to the Quota being reduced proportionately across the regional allocations to balance the impacts of the reduction, with no reduction to subcategory allocations;
- 11 **agree** that Cabinet decisions on regional allocations and sub-categories in the next three-year Quota will next be required in 2028 for 2028/2029 to 2030/2031;
- 12 **note** that, while establishing a permanent CORS category provides a broadened protection pathway for recognised refugees and their families, reducing the Quota impacts the individuals with the highest priority protection needs, and carries risk of negative stakeholder reaction that may overshadow some of the positive feedback of establishing a permanent CORS pathway;
- 13 **agree** that the key policy settings being carried over from the extended pilot (with some minor amendments) relate to cost and responsibility sharing between the Government and approved community organisations, the eligibility requirements of refugees (including age, English language and work experience) and the eligibility requirements (including financial resources and experience) and responsibilities of approved community organisations (as set out in Appendix One);
- 14 **agree** that a new international referral partner will be engaged to undertake refugee identification and case verification, and conduct refugee status determination, which will enable New Zealand to provide an additional pathway to refugee recognition (without excluding refugees with UNHCR determinations);
- 15 **authorise** the Associate Minister of Immigration to make further policy decisions as necessary in line with the intent of these decisions;
- 16 **note** the Minister of Immigration would certify amendments to Immigration Instructions as required to give effect to the decisions taken in this paper, including any policy adjustments made under recommendation 15.

Authorised for lodgement

Hon Casey Costello

Associate Minister of Immigration

APPENDIX ONE: KEY POLICY SETTINGS CARRIED OVER FROM THE PILOT

The core policy settings for establishing a permanent CORS category are largely retained from the extended pilot programme, with some minor amendments to enhance the framework. These settings are outlined as follows:

Cost and responsibility sharing between government and approved community organisations

Funding source	Costs covered
Crown	- immigration processing and health assessments - international flights - funding for umbrella organisation supporting refugees and approved community organisations - Permanent Residents have access to the same government funded services as New Zealand citizens, such as health, education, and welfare. ¹
Approved community organisations	- domestic travel - sourcing housing - initial bond and rent and essential furniture and household goods - living expenses until benefits commence - interpretation services - initial orientation for refugees

Eligibility criteria

Who	Requirements
Principal applicants	- Be a mandated refugee or a recognised refugee who has had status determination conducted by a partner organisation - Express interest and be invited to apply - Have a basic understanding of English - Possess a minimum of three years' work experience or hold a qualification requiring at least two years of tertiary study - Be aged between 18 and 45 years old - Successfully pass character, health, and Security and defence - Not be eligible for residence sponsorship under any other Residence family category
Approved community organisations	- Must be legal entities capable of entering into a Deed of Agreement for services - Be approved by INZ - Demonstrate adequate financial resources to provide settlement services to refugees supported through CORS for up to two years - Have experience working with refugees or other vulnerable groups - Possess the capability and capacity to secure suitable accommodation and support the transition into employment

Referral, assessment and resettlement location

Referral	A major change from the pilot is appointing a new international partner for refugee identification and verification and status determinations, which will enable New Zealand to provide an additional pathway to refugee recognition (without excluding refugees with UNHCR determinations). This shift aligns with global practices and allows UNHCR to prioritise high-needs quota referrals. For the permanent programme, a third-party organisation will conduct refugee status determinations for both the matched and nominated pathways. Initial discussions International and potential partners suggest this approach is feasible and cost-effective.
Immigration processing and assessment	INZ will assess all CORS applicants, including interviews to confirm identity, assess credibility of refugee claims, and check character and security requirements. Security and defence All CORS refugees must also pass standard health screening to meet New Zealand's health standards and ensure successful settlement.
Resettlement locations	CORS refugees are permitted to resettle outside traditional resettlement centres, offering greater flexibility in their integration into New Zealand communities.

¹Noting some service costs will be met by the individual as they are for other New Zealanders, such as tertiary fees (including through student loans), or primary care fees.