



This guide is in place to provide you with best practices for responding to media.

Remember, that while media attention is helpful for promoting sponsorship and humanitarian aid, it should not ever interfere with the establishment and maintenance of a safe and welcoming environment for newcomers.

Understanding power dynamics in sponsorship

Though sponsoring groups may not feel or realize it, there are underlying power dynamics in the sponsor/newcomer relationship which complicate requests for interviews or photos. As the sponsoring group, earnest questions carry much more than one might anticipate.

Newcomers often feel as though they *must* follow the requests of their sponsoring groups – even though most newcomers are uncomfortable being filmed or having their story broadcast. It is important to remember that even when giving newcomers an option to say no, many will feel obliged to say yes anyway.

It takes time to move past these early dynamics, which is why MCC Ontario recommends that **no media interviews, photo ops, or other stories be asked of newcomers immediately upon their arrival. As well, to protect privacy and confidentiality, please do not provide the contact information (address, email, phone number, etc.) of the recent arrivals.**

Responding to Media

While most journalists and producers respect the need to welcome refugees, many still push sponsoring groups to provide interviews with newcomer families. There are several ways that we encourage sponsoring groups to respond:

1. Offer to connect the journalist/producer with MCC Ontario

MCC Ontario Communications Coordinator Sheryl Bruggeling is here to assist with media inquiries. She is aware of all MCC and Refugee Resettlement media policies, and is a helpful resource for sponsoring groups and reporters alike. She can be reached by email at SherylBruggeling@mcco.ca or by phone at 519-745-8458 x 265.

2. Share your experience as a sponsoring group

Of course, you're welcome to speak about your own experiences as a sponsor group. Many journalists are also interested in this side of the story, and as interviews with newcomers are not available for the first few months, this option will satisfy the need for a local connection to an international story.

If you have any questions regarding speaking to the media, feel free to connect with Sheryl Bruggeling at MCC.

Social Media

Especially in the days leading up to your arrival, be sensitive to posting detailed information on newcomers and their arrival. Media and other interested organizations are able to access social media posts along with friends and family, and may show up at points of arrival without obtaining permission prior. This can be challenging situations for newcomers and sponsoring groups alike, so please use discretion about posting details on social media.

A Note of Thanks

From all of us at MCC, thank you for what you are doing as sponsors – especially in light of the pressures that media attention can sometimes bring. We want to support you throughout your sponsorship process, including interacting with the media. Please do not hesitate to contact MCC, and again, thank you for your efforts. It truly makes all the difference in the world.