

WELCOMECORPS

Journey Guide

A week-by-week guide for refugee newcomers and community sponsors participating in the Welcome Corps program



Acknowledgements

This guide was created by Church World Service's Refugee Welcome Collective (RWC). RWC is a technical assistance provider funded by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) to build capacity for community engagement in the refugee resettlement program. The week-by-week model and content in the guide was adapted or taken directly from Church World Service's Sponsorship Manuals.

Image assets were provided by Church World Service, Welcome.US, Integrated Refugee and Immigrant Services (IRIS), and the Cultural Orientation Resource Exchange (CORE).

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WELCOMECORPS

The Welcome Corps is a program of the U.S. Department of State, administered by a consortium led by the Community Sponsorship Hub with funding provided by the U.S. government.

A Message of Welcome

Dear Refugee Newcomers and Welcome Corps Sponsors,

We would like to warmly welcome you to the United States and to the Welcome Corps program. We understand that adjusting to a new environment can be challenging, but we are here to help you along the way.

Through the Welcome Corps, Americans work in groups of at least five to welcome refugee newcomers by securing and preparing initial housing, greeting refugee newcomers at the airport, enrolling children in school, and helping adults find employment. Most importantly, sponsor groups offer a sense of welcome, belonging, and inclusion for families that have left far more than their worldly goods behind — they've left behind friends, family, and the social networks that help us thrive. These shared acts of welcome bring communities together while making it easier for refugee newcomers to adjust to life in the United States.

As part of the Welcome Corps, we have created this guide to provide a week-by-week process of key activities that refugee newcomers and private sponsors will complete together. The guide will help you navigate the key activities to complete during the first 90 days of the program and provides tips to help you along the way.

The Welcome Corps program is being implemented through the collective efforts of organizations with expertise in refugee resettlement, protection, and welcome under a cooperative agreement with the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration at the U.S. Department of State.

Two of these organizations (CWS and IRC) have technical assistance (TA) projects to support refugee resettlement. You will find key resources developed by these TA providers referenced in this guide. While resources published by these providers may not always reference the Welcome Corps specifically, we encourage you to access and reference these providers as they will help make your participation in the Welcome Corps smoother and easier. The projects include:

- [CORE](#) for cultural orientation for newcomers
- [Refugee Housing Solutions](#) for accessing housing for newcomers
- [Refugee Welcome Collective](#) for expanding community engagement in refugee resettlement

Thank you for being a part of the Welcome Corps program. We are excited to have you here and look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

The Welcome Corps Team

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Acronyms

CSH	Community Sponsorship Hub
CWS	Church World Service
EAD	Employment Authorization Document
EBT	Electronic Benefits Transfer
ELL	English Language Learner
IRAP	International Refugee Assistance Project
IRC	International Rescue Committee
IRIS	Integrated Refugee and Immigrant Services
MG	Matching Grant
ORR	Office of Refugee Resettlement
PRM	Population Refugee Migration
PSG	Private Sponsor Group
PSO	Private Sponsor Organizations
RA	Resettlement Agency
SNAP	Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
SRC	State Refugee Coordinators
SRHC	State Refugee Health Coordinators
SSI	Supplemental Security Income
TANF	Temporary Assistance for Needy Families

Overview of Refugee Resettlement

The U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) is the agency with the mandate to provide resettlement services to newly arriving refugees. They contract with 10 national resettlement agencies (RAs) on an annual basis and outline specific services that must be provided during a 30- to 90-day period as part of the Reception and Placement (R&P) program. The national RAs each have a network of professional local affiliate organizations or offices through which they resettle refugee newcomers. There are more than 274 local resettlement affiliate organizations across the U.S. The 10 national agencies that oversee the local network include:

- Bethany Christian Services (BCS)
- Church World Service (CWS)
- Episcopal Migration Ministries (EMM)
- Ethiopian Community Development Council (ECDC)
- Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS)
- International Rescue Committee (IRC)
- Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services (LIRS)
- U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB)
- U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI)
- World Relief (WR)



In January 2023, PRM entered into a cooperative agreement with the [Community Sponsorship Hub](#) (CSH) to implement the Welcome Corps to resettle refugees to the United States through private sponsorship. The program is implemented through a consortium of organizations led by CSH. Organizations that make up the consortium include:

- [Church World Service](#)
- [Integrated Refugee and Immigrant Services \(IRIS\)](#)
- [International Refugee Assistance Project \(IRAP\)](#)
- [International Rescue Committee](#)
- [Welcome.US](#)



Resettlement Services

In both the R&P and Welcome Corps programs, newcomer refugees are provided key services and activities over a 90-day period. Depending on the program, these services are either carried out by a local resettlement office or a Welcome Corps private sponsor group.

Services include but are not limited to:

- Pre-arrival planning (housing/furniture set-up, clothing, and supplies)
- Reception (airport pick-up and transportation to furnished home)
- Basic needs support such as:
 - Safe, sanitary, and affordable housing; essential furnishings
 - Appropriate food, food allowances, and other necessities
 - Necessary clothing
- Assistance applying for social security cards
- Assistance in obtaining health screenings and assistance accessing other necessary health and mental health services
- Assistance in obtaining appropriate benefits, other social services, and English language instruction
- Assistance with enrollment in employment services; registering children in school
- Transportation to job interviews and job training

Additional Resettlement Support

During the initial resettlement period (first 90 days), refugees are enrolled in cash assistance programs for which they are eligible through local social service offices. The Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR), under the Department of Health and Human Services, offers Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA) which provides a monthly cash stipend for a period of up to eight months, or until they find a job. ORR also offers the Matching Grant (MG) program which provides rent, utilities, and spending money for family members (adults and children) and support to find employment up to six months post-arrival.¹ Refugee Medical Assistance (RMA) is health care coverage for refugees who do not meet the qualifications of other health care programs.

¹ Ethiopian Community Development Council (2022). *Co-sponsorship Manual for Refugee Resettlement*. ecdcus.org

Refugee families may also access mainstream public assistance programs managed by states such as:

- **Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)** — available for families with children under 18 who are income eligible; families receive \$300-800 per month depending on family size.
- **Supplemental Security Income (SSI)** — provides monthly cash to meet basic need for food, clothing, and shelter for eligible persons with disabilities, elderly, and those with little or no income.
- **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)** — available for individuals and families who are income eligible; families are provided an Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card to be used like a debit card to purchase food at eligible retail food stores.
- **Medicaid** — provides health insurance for income-eligible families.²

Private Sponsor Groups

Private Sponsor Groups (PSGs) in the Welcome Corps do not directly work with national or local resettlement agencies as part of the R&P program; instead, they are supported either by a Welcome Corps Private Sponsorship Organization (PSO) or CWS' Refugee Welcome Collective. Some PSOs may also be resettlement agencies.

PSOs and RWC provide direct support to PSGs to help navigate the services they will support the refugee newcomer to navigate and access. While not all PSGs are directly connected with national or local RAs through the Welcome Corps program, it is important to connect with them to learn what programs they offer that the refugee newcomer may qualify to participate in. Some of these programs offer key longer-term programming for which individuals resettled through the Welcome Corps are eligible and that can provide critical services, support, and community for newcomers' longer-term integration. Your PSO or RWC will provide guidance on how to connect with local RAs in your area after you are certified as a PSG.

² Ibid.

Key Mindsets

Refugee newcomers and private sponsors who take part in the Welcome Corps are encouraged to keep in mind the following mindsets to foster a positive, collaborative, and successful experience with the program. Key mindsets are introduced in the [Community Sponsorship Essentials](#) training.

The ABCDs of Community Sponsorship³

A **daptive:** The most successful sponsorship programs are those in which the refugee newcomers and sponsors always start from a place of “not knowing” and humility in every dialogue. They are able to look at situations from multiple perspectives and avoid judgements about what is right and wrong. There will be a lot to learn about each other and ways of doing things. There will be a lot of unpredictable situations and a lot of constraints that may require flexibility. It will be critical for you to develop an adaptive mindset of inquiry and curiosity, continuously setting and re-evaluating expectations.

B **enevolent:** We encourage you to learn about and use compassion throughout the program. Sponsorship is challenging, and one of the most effective ways to do it is with compassion. You will navigate a tremendous amount of ambiguity and work with people who may approach issues and topics from a different cultural lens. You will likely make errors, so it will be critical to learn about and embrace compassionate approaches.

C **ollaborative:** Sponsorship is a team effort, one that requires close collaboration between your sponsorship group members, your community, resettlement agency or sponsorship organization, and newcomers. More than anything, sponsorship itself should feel like a collaborative effort between the sponsors and newcomers from the very beginning.

D **edicated:** Sponsorship is not an easy task. It’s incredibly rewarding and transformative, but it does require a significant time commitment over the first 90 days to follow through with a number of documentation and logistical tasks.

³ Community Sponsorship Hub, Church World Service, & Welcome.US. (2023) *Community Sponsorship Essentials*. Coassemble. sponsoressentials.org.

Table A: vocabulary check

Word	Definition
Adaptive	Adaptive means being able to adjust to new or changing circumstances and situations. It refers to the ability to change or modify one’s behavior, actions, or decisions in response to different conditions, challenges, or environments. In other words, it means being flexible and responsive to changes, and being able to learn and grow from new experiences
Benevolent	Benevolent means being kind, caring, and compassionate towards others. It refers to the desire to do good and to act in a way that benefits others. It involves showing goodwill and a sincere concern for the well-being of others, and taking action to help them in a positive way. In other words, benevolent means having a generous and selfless attitude towards others, and acting with kindness and compassion
Collaborative	Collaborative means working together with others towards a common goal or objective. It involves cooperation and partnership, and requires people to share ideas, resources, and responsibilities in order to achieve something together. Collaborative efforts are characterized by a sense of teamwork, mutual respect, and open communication, where each person’s strengths and contributions are valued and utilized. In other words, collaborative means working together in a coordinated and cooperative manner to achieve a shared goal.
Dedicated	Dedicated means being fully committed and devoted to a particular task, goal, or purpose. It involves putting in the necessary time, effort, and resources to achieve something, even in the face of obstacles or challenges. A dedicated person is someone who is focused and determined, and is willing to make sacrifices and overcome difficulties in order to achieve their objectives. In other words, dedicated means being wholeheartedly committed to something, and being willing to do what it takes to succeed.

COMMUNITY SPONSORSHIP ESSENTIALS

An interactive, user-friendly online training for community sponsorship programs.

This training equips sponsors with:

- > A background on the **history of refugee resettlement in the United States**
- > Key mindsets needed when **approaching community sponsorship**
- > **Roles and responsibilities** of community sponsor groups
- > **Key terminology and policies**
- > Key examples of **best practices** when engaging in community sponsorship

WHY? This training was co-developed by the [Community Sponsorship Hub](#), [Refugee Welcome Collective](#), and [Welcome.US](#) in direct response to surveys distributed to all national resettlement agencies and forwarded to their local affiliates, as well as [Community Sponsorship Catalyst Fund](#) grantees and the [Sponsor Circle Program](#) coalition. Responses to those national surveys indicated a clear need from the resettlement community for a baseline training for prospective community sponsors that could be utilized by all organizations, including to:

- > Assist community sponsorship program staff in providing a comprehensive, foundational training for new community sponsors
- > **Streamline the workload for management of community sponsorship programs**
- > **Create greater awareness of and increase engagement with community sponsorship**
- > Facilitate cross-fertilization of best practices in training for community sponsors

HOW WAS IT DEVELOPED? Design of this training draws on years of shared knowledge and lessons learned about community sponsorship training and sponsor assistance from both the national and local levels. An initial prototype was sent out for review in Spring 2022, feedback was collected, and user testing was conducted to ensure the training was appropriate for all resettlement partners managing and supporting community sponsorship programs. Built-in mechanisms will continue to gather user feedback to keep the training up-to-date and tailored to the needs of new community sponsors.

WHERE?



This training should be completed with guidance from a community sponsorship program. It is hosted on the e-learning platform, **Coassemble**. It can be accessed through a mobile app as well as by internet browser. The training can also be accessed from the following partner websites: [Community Sponsorship Hub](#), [Refugee Welcome Collective](#), [Welcome.US](#).



DESIGNED FOR R&P PROGRAMS & THE WELCOME CORPS

WHAT'S NEXT?

- > Onboarding sessions will be held for interested program staff.
- > Other tools and resources will be made available to provide further guidance for staff.



Welcome Corps Journey Guide Checklist

The Welcome Corps Journey Guide checklist is a week-by-week guide of the important activities sponsors and newcomer refugees will need to do together during the first 90 days after the refugee newcomers' arrival in the United States. The table below outlines activities to complete each week and key support resources for your journey.

The Welcome Corps Journey Guide checklist activities can also be found in the [Welcome Corps Checklist](#). This checklist tool can be used with the Journey Guide to develop plans and track activities.

Table B: Welcome Corps activity timeline and resources

Pre-Arrival		
Activity	Overview	Good to Know
<input type="checkbox"/> Fundraising	Secure \$2,425 per individual refugee newcomer, which may include cash or other direct funding as well as in-kind supports (e.g. donated housing).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sponsors can use this fundraising guide to help their fundraising efforts.
<input type="checkbox"/> Housing & set-up	Groups are responsible for securing initial and/or permanent housing on behalf of the refugee newcomer. Groups also need to (1) connect utilities and internet, including enrollment into plans discounted for low-income residents, where applicable, (2) furnish the housing with recommended items, and (3) stock the pantry with initial food items.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review this tip sheet on securing housing. Connect with Refugee Housing Solutions. Refer to this checklist of recommended household items.

Pre-Arrival

Activity	Overview	Good to Know
 <p>Interpretation & translation resources</p>	<p>Find interpretation and translation resources for future communication regarding critical issues, such as those surrounding health and core services. Identify interpretation for airport pick-up.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federally funded healthcare and medical institutions are required to provide interpretation. • Research professional telephonic interpretation options. • Identify volunteers for informal interpretation. Good places to find informal interpreters are local universities, mosques, and other community organizations.



The Welcome Corps Checklist can also be accessed on the [RWC App](#). The RWC App is a free tool for sponsor groups to track key activities that they are responsible for supporting refugee newcomers to complete.

The App allows groups to track timeframes, take notes about the activities completed, and see activities completed by other group members.

Check with your PSO or RWC to learn more.



RefugeeWelcome.org/welcome-collective-app



Introducing the **RWC**app



Track and Manage Your Community Sponsorship Work with Ease!

The RWC App is your all-in-one solution for community sponsorship program activities. Streamline your efforts, enhance collaboration, and make a lasting impact on refugee families. Best of all, it's completely FREE!

RWC App Features for Sponsors

Stay on Track: Access a comprehensive checklist of vital activities required for successful integration.

Never Miss a Deadline: Real-time deadlines ensure timely completion of tasks, ensuring refugee newcomers have the resources they need.

Take Notes and Track Mileage: Easily jot down notes on completed activities, track mileage, and even record translation services provided.

Log In-Kind Donations: Keep a record of in-kind donations and effortlessly monitor your contributions.

Collaborate with Ease: Stay connected with your sponsor group by viewing and tracking activities completed by fellow members.

RWC App Features for Organizations

Progress at a Glance: Stay up-to-date with real-time information on the progress of sponsor groups you manage.

Simplify Reporting: Access notes from sponsors on completed activities, streamlining your program reporting.

In-Depth Analytics: Dive into valuable data on sponsor hours, donated mileage, translation hours, and both in-kind and financial donations made.

Generate Insightful Reports: Effortlessly generate reports for reporting and learning purposes, fostering continuous improvement.

The App was developed by CWS' Refugee Welcome Collective under an agreement paid for by the U.S. Department of State. The app is designed for and currently available to organizations delivering the Reception and Placement and Welcome Corps programs.

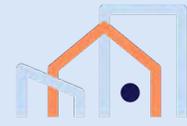
To learn more and request a demo, visit: refugeewelcome.org/welcome-collective-app



Who We Are

EVERYONE DESERVES A SAFE PLACE TO CALL HOME.

At Refugee Housing Solutions, we provide **tools, resources, training, and one-on-one support** for refugee resettlement practitioners, landlords, and property owners to address barriers refugees and newcomers often face when accessing affordable housing.



Refugee Housing SOLUTIONS

Increasing access to **safe, sanitary and affordable** housing for refugee families and newcomers in the United States.



What We Do

Refugee Housing Solutions provides technical housing support and works collaboratively with resettlement practitioners by engaging key stakeholders to **innovate and expand affordable housing solutions**. We offer on-demand **technical assistance** and **live trainings** to provide ongoing support to resettlement practitioners seeking quality housing for newcomers across the U.S.

Resources include but are not limited to:



Who is a Refugee, Afghan Evacuee & Asylum Seeker?



Housing Toolkit & Navigating Resources



Partnering with Landlords & Property Managers



Understanding the U.S. Housing Crisis



Housing Advocacy & Policy



Media Inquiries



Refugee Resettlement in the U.S.

Get Involved

Addressing the housing crisis will take multiple solutions, policy changes, and a collaborative effort to increase access to affordable housing.

We believe this is possible and are hopeful for change.

Increasing access to affordable housing and creating innovative housing solutions not only benefits newcomers, but also the entire United States.



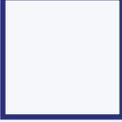
Scan the QR code to join our mailing list and stay up-to-date on upcoming trainings, housing policy news, and more.



Day of Arrival

Activity	Overview	Good to Know
 Airport pick-up	Welcome the refugee newcomer(s) at the airport and transport them to secured housing. Bring appropriate seasonal clothing, a child's car seat, and a translator as appropriate.	
 Arrival meal	Provide a ready-to-eat, culturally appropriate meal.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore this food supply list prepared by the Refugee Welcome Collective.
 Arrival, home, and personal safety orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This orientation is a chance for the refugee newcomer to become familiar with their new home, including an introduction to basic fire safety, door and window locks, how to access emergency services (including when and how to dial 9-1-1), and receive a demonstration and information on appropriate use of appliances and bathroom facilities. Provide initial emergency contact information and ensure refugee newcomer(s) are able to make contact (e.g., working phone and/or introductions to neighbors). 	

Week One

Activity	Overview	Good to Know
 Arrival meeting	<p>The arrival meeting is an opportunity to identify any immediate needs, talk about refugee newcomer goals, and create an initial calendar of activities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This arrival meeting guide and sponsorship plan are tools you can use for an effective arrival meeting.
 Grocery shopping	<p>Sponsors and newcomers should locate the most convenient and affordable grocery store to the newcomer's home. As needed, sponsors can assist with locating desired food items and ingredients and assist in tracking costs and locating specific items.</p>	
 Shopping for needed clothing and necessities	<p>Newcomers and sponsors can go on a shopping trip for clothing or personal items. Make sure to purchase any needed seasonal items such as coats and shoes for cold weather</p>	
 Interpretation	<p>REMINDER: Newcomers should have interpretation/translation available for critical issues such as those surrounding health and core private sponsorship services. It's important to ensure that newcomer minors are not relied upon to interpret or translate.</p>	
 Arrival medical care	<p>While infrequent, should refugee newcomers require medical care upon arrival, coordinate with state or local health care providers. Ensure that refugee newcomers with health care requirements receive appropriate and timely medical care, including any prescription refills.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If a refugee newcomer has an urgent medical need, it is not necessary to wait for the Domestic Medical Screening (DMS) to access medical care.

Week One

Activity	Overview	Good to Know
 <p>Enrollment in benefits</p>	<p>Benefits commonly applied for include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF; must have children under 18 in home to be eligible) • Medicaid • Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly food stamps) • Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA, for those ineligible for TANF) • Refugee Medical Assistance (RMA, for those ineligible for Medicaid) • Supplemental Security Income (SSI, for some individuals age 65 and older or people with disabilities) 	<p>Generally, benefits should be applied for as needed within the first few weeks of arrival. Benefits eligibility will be unique to each case depending on income, assets, and other factors.</p> <p>Health benefits should be applied for as soon as possible to support any emergent or urgent health needs that may arise in the first few weeks.</p>
 <p>Arrival medical care</p>	<p>While infrequent, should refugee newcomers require medical care upon arrival, coordinate with state or local health care providers. Ensure that refugee newcomers with health care requirements receive appropriate and timely medical care, including any prescription refills.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If a refugee newcomer has an urgent medical need, it is not necessary to wait for the Domestic Medical Screening (DMS) to access medical care.



Videos: Benefits and Documentation Series

This series of videos for refugee newcomers and sponsors explains important benefits and documentation and describes how to access them. It is available on [Refugee Welcome Collective Online Learning](#) and [Youtube](#).



Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR Programs)

Some localities may have Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) funded programs for which refugee newcomers are eligible within their first months in the U.S. ORR programs include Matching Grant, Preferred Communities, and Refugee Support Services.

Matching Grant (MG)	<p>The MG program provides funding for services such as employment services, job training, English language classes, and case management, with the aim of helping refugees become self-sufficient within a certain period.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To qualify for MG, refugee newcomers apply for the MG program within 31 days of arrival, meet certain eligibility criteria, and agree not to access cash assistance programs such as TANF or RCA.• If refugee newcomers would like to find out more about MG eligibility and availability, it is important to do this as soon as possible.• Even if refugee newcomers qualify for MG, there may be limited availability of slots in this program and the program may not be an option.
Preferred Communities (PC)	<p>PC offers intensive case management and critical interventions to ORR eligible populations with exceptionally challenging needs, including serious medical conditions, women at risk, or elderly populations.</p>
Refugee Support Services (RSS)	<p>RSS is available for up to five years from date of eligibility and may include assistance with employment, English language training, case management, and other supports to foster greater access to services including transportation, translation and interpretation services, and childcare.</p>

IMPORTANT To inquire about accessing these services, newcomers and sponsors should connect with their Private Sponsor Organization (PSO), and then their State Refugee Coordinator (SRC) / State Refugee Health Coordinator (SRHC).

Additional Information on Benefits for Refugee Newcomers

IMPORTANT

Benefits are not permanent and there are lifetime caps on benefits that vary by state (e.g., most states have a five-year lifetime limit on receiving TANF).

If you enroll in RCA or TANF, you cannot enroll in the Matching Grant (MG) program. Refugees welcomed through the Welcome Corps may want to check with the local resettlement office for MG availability and eligibility before enrolling in RCA or TANF.

- In most states, benefits can be applied for through the local government agency or online. In some other states, benefits like RCA and RMA are available through the local resettlement agency. Go to benefits.gov to learn more about different benefits and find out how to apply in your location.
- Don't forget to apply for other benefits like Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), Social Security Insurance (SSI), and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) if you qualify.
- Tell the benefits office your preferred language for future communication.
- Check your mail for letters from the benefits office. You may need to attend an interview after applying, so it's important to make sure you don't miss the appointment. Bring all the required documents listed in the letter.
- If you need an interpreter for the interview, request one ahead of time.
- Finding and using available benefits can be tough, but there are resources.

Other resources for navigating benefits include RWC's [State Resources Map](#), [United Way's 2-1-1 service](#), which can be a great place to start to learn about community resources in your area, and [USA Hello's Find Hello](#). Your State Refugee Coordinator's office may have public information available on resources in your area. You can find a list of all State Refugee Coordinators (SRC) and State Refugee Health Coordinators (SRHC) [here](#). State specific guides for Welcome Corps groups will be made available as developed.

Please note: Your Welcome Corps PSO can be a source of additional individual support.

Table C: Documentation Table

Documents to complete and timelines	Overview	Good to Know
 <p>AR-11 change of address form</p> <p><i>Timeline: within 10 days of arrival and within 10 days of additional moves</i></p>	<p>The AR-11 form is a change of address form that is specifically for noncitizens in the United States. It provides USCIS with an updated address for important notices and documents regarding immigration status.</p> <p>An AR-11 must be filed within 10 days of arriving in the U.S., and then again within 10 days of additional moves.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The AR-11 can be filed online at uscis.gov/ar-11 or mailed. There is no cost to file. • Each newcomer, including children, must have an AR-11 submitted. • You will be prompted to include a previous U.S. address. If the refugee newcomers have newly arrived, the PSG coordinator’s address (as provided in the Welcome Corps application) should be used as the previous address. • VIDEO: The Benefits and Documentation series explains benefits and documentation and how to access them. Videos available at RWC Online Learning and YouTube.
<p>Remember: Until you have your green card, you will need to submit an AR-11 form every time you move. Make sure you know how and where to complete the AR-11 form.</p>		
 <p>Social Security Cards and Employment Authorization Documents</p> <p><i>Timeline: expected within three weeks</i></p>	<p>Social Security Cards and Employment Authorization Documents are applied for overseas and arrive after the refugee newcomer lands in the U.S.</p> <p>Employment Authorization Documents (EADs) are similarly applied for overseas through an I-765 form.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EADs are expected to arrive within three weeks of the refugee newcomer’s arrival. • If the EAD does not arrive in that time frame, you may submit an inquiry with USCIS. • If the Social Security card does not arrive within seven to ten business days of the delivery of the EAD, it is recommended that you reach out to your local social security office, which you can find here. • VIDEO: The Benefits and Documentation series explains benefits and documentation and how to access them. Videos available at RWC Online Learning and YouTube.
<p>Important: It’s common for EADs to take longer than expected. It’s important to plan and know that EADs may come late.</p>		

Documents to complete and timelines	Overview	Good to Know
 <p>Selective Service Registration <i>Timeline: within 30 days of arrival</i></p>	<p>Any eligible refugee newcomers (men 18-25) need to register with Selective Service Registration within 30 days of arrival in the U.S.</p> <p>The Selective Service System is an independent agency within the Executive Branch of the U.S. Federal Government. According to law, men (including immigrants) must register with Selective Service within 30 days of their 18th birthday. Selective Service accepts late registrations up until a man reaches his 26th birthday.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Selective Service registration can be done online at sss.gov/register. • If the refugee newcomer is in temporary housing, it is okay to use the temporary address. This address will be used to send the Registration Acknowledgement Letter and Selective Service number (SSN). • A refugee newcomer will need their Social Security number to register online. If you do not have a SSN within 30 days of arrival, you can visit your local post office to pick up a Selective Service registration form or download it from the link above. • VIDEO: The Benefits and Documentation series explains benefits and documentation, including how to register for Selective Service. Videos available at RWC Online Learning and YouTube.
<p>Important: Failure to register is a felony and non-registrants may be denied certain benefits going forward.</p>		



Who We Are

Refugee Welcome Collective (RWC) is a community sponsorship technical assistance provider funded by the U.S. Department of State Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) to improve outcomes for refugees resettled through the U.S. Refugee Admissions program by building capacity and expanding community sponsorship.



What We Do

We provide resources and connection opportunities for community sponsors, community sponsorship staff at the national and local levels, refugees paired with community sponsors, and other partners.



In-depth training programs



Adaptable resources



One-to-one technical assistance

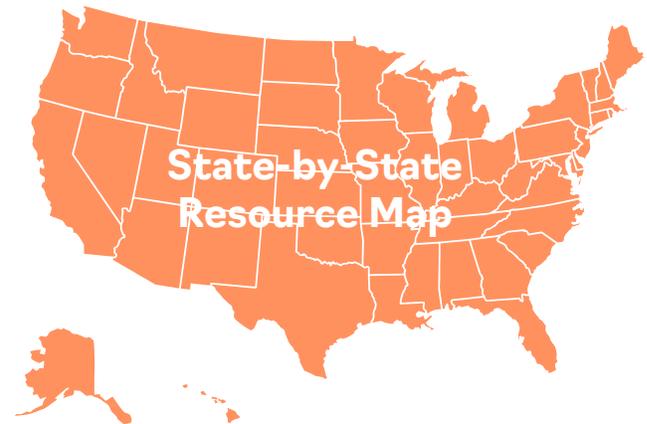


Knowledge sharing

Request Technical Assistance

Need support developing, implementing, or managing a CS program?

Email us at ta@refugeewelcome.org or book an appointment directly online [here](#).



How We Do It

RWC works in partnership with representatives across the country to meet the most pressing needs. We have a Collective Membership made up of community sponsorship representatives from across national and local resettlement agencies, community sponsors, and refugees paired with sponsors. Collective Members provide feedback on key materials and resources, and help set the priorities of the Collective based on their knowledge and expertise.

Engage

Join us for knowledge sharing and learning opportunities.

Lunch and Learns

Weekly webinars for sponsors and volunteers

Sounding Boards

Monthly social learning spaces for CS staff

Communities of Practice

Ongoing opportunities to connect with others

Week Two

Activity	Good to Know	Cultural Considerations
<p>Budgeting</p> <p>Creating a budget is an important way to learn about the income and expenses that refugee newcomers will have in the United States.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refugee newcomers and sponsors can use this tool to create a budget each month. It is likely that the budget will change from month to month. At first, benefits and support from the sponsor will be high. However, as the refugee newcomer gets a job and the money from their job increases, benefits and support from the sponsor will decrease. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Late fees and online payments may be new to some newcomers. Employable members of the family may all have to work to meet financial needs. There are resources where newcomers can receive assistance in managing financial resources (e.g. financial literacy classes). Comparing pricing for services can help save money.

Important Paying bills on time is important to build credit history and credit history in the U.S. is important for getting loans and renting homes.

Week Two

Activity	Good to Know	Cultural Considerations
<p>School enrollment</p> <p>School enrollment for children should happen as soon as possible after arrival.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some countries follow different calendars or do not emphasize formal birth documentation. When enrolling children in school, you may identify irregular birthdates, such as several birthdates listed as January first or siblings' birthdays too close together. It is advisable to move forward with this information and avoid any enrollment delays. • Newcomer families who are temporarily housed can still enroll their children in school under the McKinney-Vento Act. For enrollment purposes, these children are considered homeless due to a lack of a permanent address. • Some school districts offer newcomer centers or community school programs to help students adjust to a new learning environment. School choice is also often available, allowing refugee newcomer families to explore different learning environments that may be best suited for their student's interests and strengths. • Human services agencies at the state and county levels can provide information on child development programs and affordable childcare options for refugee newcomer families. Head Start and Early Head Start programs, which offer free learning and development services for children from birth to age five in low-income families, are also available. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public schools are free. • School is required by law for children. • All genders attend public school together. • Parents have rights and responsibilities to children in school system. • There are different ways for parents to be involved in their children's education (i.e. ensuring attendance, attending parent teacher conferences). • Public school is free, but there are some costs such as school supplies and appropriate clothing.

Important Enrollment may be contingent upon some health services such as immunizations and physicals. Be mindful of these requirements and any delays they might cause.

Week Two

Activity	Good to Know	Cultural Considerations
<p>English Language Learner (ELL) programs</p> <p>Newcomer adults should enroll in local ELL programs if needed and as desired. This key activity should be provided to all adults as early as possible.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify ELL programs within your community, including classes and one-on-one tutoring. These may also be referred to as English as a Second Language (ESL) programs. Many times, you may be able to identify ELL programs within local libraries, the local literacy council, or other community organizations. Be sure to ask if there are any requirements for a newly arrived individual to participate and if childcare is offered, if necessary. Federal and state governments fund ESL classes. Visit your state's adult education program online (commonly in Departments of Education) to get a list of providers in your area. USA Hello's Find Hello site is also a good resource. Once ELL programs are identified, newcomer refugees can decide which they would prefer considering which are closest to their home, at the best time, or with other newcomers from their cultural communities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learning English is important for successful adjustment in the U.S.; it helps with employment and self-sufficiency. Having limited English should not prevent newcomers from pursuing employment, enrolling in school, applying for assistance, or participating in community life.

Week Two

Activity	Good to Know	Cultural Considerations
<p>Domestic Medical Screening</p> <p>Refugee newcomers receive a health screening prior to arrival to the United States; however, a Domestic Medical Screening (DMS) that includes specific guidance for providers recommended by the CDC for refugees and other newcomer populations after arrival is required.</p> <p>The DMS provides clinicians with an opportunity to identify health concerns that may hinder resettlement and to promote wellbeing.</p> <p>Typically, medical screenings are conducted through a designated health clinic or designated provider.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedule a Domestic Medical Screening appointment with a designated/contracted Medical Screening clinic or an alternative health clinic. • There may be a waitlist for DMS services. This is very common and can delay things like school enrollment. • DMS not conducted within the appropriate timeline may be very expensive for refugees in the future. • The providers or clinics that provides DMS may be a significant distance from your community. Sponsor groups and refugee newcomers should plan for the travel and time needed to complete the DMS. • When making the appointment, tell the clinic if interpretation services are needed and in what language. • After confirmation that interpretation service is available, discuss how the sponsor can help provide transportation and discuss where they should wait during their appointment. • Note: DMS must take place within 90 days of arrival and is crucial for future documentation in the U.S. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The U.S. does not have universal health care and refugee medical assistance (RMA) differs state by state. RMA can be available for up to 12 months. • Preventative health care plays a large role in maintaining good health. • There are norms associated with healthcare services in the U.S. It's important to be on time, and medical information that is shared with a health provider is kept confidential.

Important The sponsor should not invite themselves into the exam room. Depending on the outcome of the initial appointment, there may be follow-up appointments or referrals to specialists that are suggested. Members of the sponsor group healthcare team should work with the refugee newcomer and the various medical teams to make sure communication is happening directly with the refugee and that the refugee is supported in navigating the U.S. healthcare system.

Week Two

Activity	Good to Know	Cultural Considerations
<p>Employment</p> <p>In the first weeks after arrival, sponsors and newcomers should work together to pursue employment.</p> <p>This can be done by enrolling in available employment services and beginning the process of applying for jobs and exploring community connections.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Job Readiness Curriculum empowers newcomers to find and succeed in jobs and offers tools to help them understand their documents and their rights as workers, career path options, and personal finances. • Employment opportunities are often listed through workforce services, your local library, and job boards such as Welcome Employment. • Sponsors should use existing community connections to identify employers in your area. Community connections are invaluable to the job search. • Contact the local job center to find out what is required to make an appointment to enroll in the services. • If the refugee newcomer enrolled in MG, the PSG and refugee newcomer should actively communicate and collaborate with the local RA and participate, when possible, in case management, skills training, reporting, and job referrals. • Ensure the employment services office provides interpretation or find appropriate interpretation. • After a job is received, remind the employer, if necessary, that the refugee newcomer's I-94 document can be used as employment verification for form I-9 for 90 days until the EAD is issued. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A crucial way of finding better-paying jobs is learning how to speak English. • Early employment and job retention is essential to self-sufficiency in the U.S. and must be the primary focus for all employable adults. • Initial jobs might not be in their chosen profession.

Week Two

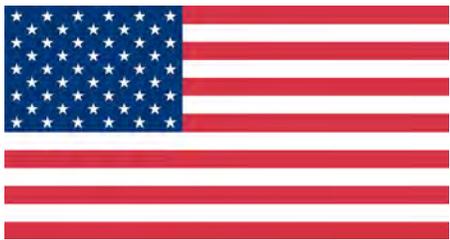
Activity	Good to Know	Cultural Considerations
<p>Lease Review</p> <p>The lease review is an opportunity to introduce the rights, responsibilities, restrictions, and regulations connected to renting in the U.S.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refugee Housing Solutions (RHS) is a technical assistance program that provides training and information related to housing in the U.S. for refugee newcomers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ending a lease requires giving prior notice. • There are behaviors that can lead to eviction (being forced to leave a rental). • Norms and rules often apply to apartment or housing complex common areas (e.g. noise, cleanliness). • Rent and utilities may be paid online, or may need to be left in an office or mailed. Understanding how rent is paid can prevent late payment charges and/or other charges.
<p>Cultural Orientation</p> <p>Cultural Orientation, or CO, is a pre-departure and post-arrival education program designed for refugees resettling in the U.S.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Cultural Orientation Resource Exchange (CORE) is a technical assistance program that connects and supports all those working with refugees globally to deliver effective Cultural Orientation which helps newcomers achieve self-sufficiency in the United States. 	

Cultural Orientation

What is Cultural Orientation?

Cultural Orientation, or CO, is a pre-departure and post-arrival education program designed for refugees resettling in the U.S. that helps them acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to adapt to their new lives and achieve self-sufficiency.

The **Cultural Orientation Resource Exchange (CORE)** is a technical assistance program that connects and supports all those working with refugees globally to deliver effective Cultural Orientation which helps newcomers achieve self-sufficiency in the United States.



Resources

The **Domestic Cultural Orientation Objectives and Indicators**: The Cultural Orientation Objectives and Indicators (O&Is) clearly outline what refugees are expected to do or say by the end of Cultural Orientation. Download the list of topics to be covered in Cultural Orientation here. Note: Sponsors should substitute the word “sponsor” wherever the term Resettlement Agency or case manager is mentioned.

Resources for Community Partners and Sponsors: This page provides resources for community sponsors, including materials to use with newcomers. Specific resources on this page include:

The **Cultural Orientation Toolkit for Community Partners and Sponsors**: This toolkit teaches sponsors how to incorporate key Cultural Orientation messages while providing direct resettlement services to newcomers during their first 90 days.

Cultural Exchange Activities: This resource walks sponsors through self-reflection exercises and outlines five activities to support sponsors in ensuring newcomers feel welcome, included, and celebrated.

Activity Bank: Explore a variety of activities, complete lesson plans, and access additional resources for different Cultural Orientation topics.

Settle In Website: This resource is a newcomer facing website with fact sheets, videos, and podcasts on a variety of Cultural Orientation topics translated into multiple languages and designed with newcomer literacy needs in mind. There is also a help center that provides more tailored content to specific populations.

Settle In App: A newcomer facing mobile app with interactive chapters and gamification in multiple languages. Once downloaded, the app is available for offline use. This app can be downloaded from the App Store and Google Play.

Training

Self-paced courses: Sponsors can learn more about providing effective Cultural Orientation by taking self-paced courses on CORE's Learning platform. **Register here** to gain access to these training opportunities. After registering, scroll down to Sponsorship Orientation. This pathway will guide you through multiple courses designed to teach you more about the resettlement process and best practices in teaching adult learners.

Webinars — Visit CORE's **YouTube page** to explore pre-recorded webinars:

Introducing the Cultural Orientation Toolkit for Community Partners and Sponsors

Building Trauma-Informed Cultural Orientation

How to Use Settle In in Cultural Orientation Delivery

Cultural Backgrounders: Learn more about refugee populations resettling in the United States, including general information along with specific population backgrounders.

Week Three

Activity	Good to Know	Cultural Considerations
<p>Transportation orientation</p> <p>Transportation orientation is an opportunity to explore and learn the transportation options that exist in your community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Online and paper maps, schedules, and payment methods should be reviewed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There are safety procedures related to driving or riding in a vehicle, including wearing a seat belt.• There are safety procedures when walking, biking, and/or taking public transit, such as using a crosswalk and wearing a helmet.

Week Four

Activity	Good to Know	Cultural Considerations
 <p>Connect with health care and mental health care providers identified in the Welcome Plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This activity is also an opportunity to discuss and have newcomers learn about the variety of health care services available in the U.S. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are different kinds of places to receive care, including clinics and urgent care centers. Health care in the U.S. is very expensive, and the government will only pay limited health care costs for refugees up to their first 12 months in the U.S. After that, it is the individual's responsibility to obtain insurance or pay for services. Long-term health insurance is generally tied to employment. Even with health insurance, people still have to contribute to the cost of health care (e.g. co-pays, reaching deductible limits). Health professionals in the U.S. consider mental health to be a significant component of human health.
 <p>30-day report</p>	<p>PSG groups will be required to complete 30- and 90-day reports as well as 6- and 12-month surveys following the arrival of refugee newcomers. Refugee newcomers will also be asked to complete surveys within the first month of arrival and at the six- and 12-month marks after arrival. The purpose of the reports and surveys are to ensure your PSG can complete core private sponsorship services, to identify areas where you may need additional support and guidance, and to provide the program with feedback and data on program results. They will also provide opportunities to share information about the impact of sponsorship on the PSG and on the refugee newcomers.</p>	

Weeks Five – Eight

Activity	Overview	Good to Know
<input data-bbox="21 365 142 492" type="checkbox"/> Midpoint meeting	Halfway through the sponsorship, around week six, is a good time for a midpoint meeting. The midpoint meeting is an opportunity to update the sponsorship plan, review progress, and discuss next steps.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This midpoint meeting guide and the sponsorship plan are tools you can use for an effective meeting.
<input data-bbox="21 565 142 691" type="checkbox"/> Review and make updates to budget as needed.		
<input data-bbox="21 714 142 841" type="checkbox"/> Set up a checking account.		
<input data-bbox="21 863 142 990" type="checkbox"/> Follow up on health care appointments (DMS).		
<input data-bbox="21 1013 142 1140" type="checkbox"/> Obtain state IDs or driver's licenses and follow up on documentation (AR-11, Selective Service registration)		
<input data-bbox="21 1162 142 1289" type="checkbox"/> Continue employment applications.		
<input data-bbox="21 1312 142 1438" type="checkbox"/> Continue community and cultural orientation.		

Weeks Nine – Twelve

Activity	Overview	Good to Know
 <p>Connect to legal services</p>	<p>Connect to legal services to prepare for adjustment of status to lawful permanent resident after one year; family reunification to petition for family members to join refugees in the United States; replacement of lost documents, and/or citizenship services after five years.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good questions to ask a legal service provider include cost, interpretation options, and experience or frequency assisting other refugees with adjustment of status or family reunification. • Information on family reunification
<p>Important Refugee newcomers may be eligible for family reunification and should be able to identify locally where to get assistance in the process.</p>		
 <p>Discuss paying off no-interest travel loan</p>	<p>Refugee newcomers will have signed a no-interest travel loan prior to arrival, paying for the cost of their plane ticket to the U.S. slowly over time. Once the bill is received, read the bill, and utilize payment options.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most agencies offer the opportunity to lower payments or defer payments for newcomers who will have difficulty paying the full monthly amount.
	<p>Ensure the Domestic Medical Screening has occurred within 90 days of arrival and is logged in myUSCIS.</p>	
	<p>Continue with employment applications if not employed.</p>	
	<p>If employed, assist with any necessary documentation transitions for employer after receiving the EAD.</p>	

Weeks Nine – Twelve

Activity	Overview	Good to Know
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Continue cultural orientation, focusing on any topics needed for self-sufficiency.</p>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Prepare for the refugee newcomer to take responsibility for paying all of their living expenses.</p>	
<input type="checkbox"/> <p>If not already enrolled, connect to RSS</p>	<p>Connect to your state’s ORR-funded Refugee Support Services (RSS), available for up to five years from date of eligibility. Services may include assistance with employment, English language training, childcare, transportation, translation and interpretation services, and case management.</p>	
<input type="checkbox"/> <p>Transition meeting</p>	<p>Towards the end of the sponsorship period, usually around week ten, is a good time for a transition meeting. This gives you an opportunity to identify activities that can be done in the next two weeks. The transition meeting is an opportunity to review progress, discuss next steps, and develop the transition plan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This transition meeting guide and the transition plan are tools you can use for your transition meeting.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Complete 90-day report</p>	

Referenced Resources

Benefits.gov

[benefits.gov](https://www.benefits.gov)

Cultural Orientation Resource Exchange (CORE)

coresourceexchange.org

Cultural Orientation Toolkit for Community Partners and Sponsors

coresourceexchange.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/co-toolkit-for-community-partners-and-sponsors_june-2022-2.pdf

FindHello

find.usahello.org

Fundraising Tips & Tools

welcomecorps.org/resources/fundraising-guide

Grocery Lists

refugeewelcome.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/grocery-list.pdf

Job Readiness Curriculum

switchboardta.org/resource/job-readiness-curriculum-2

Welcome Employment jobs board

manpowergroup.avature.net/welcomeus

Local Job Centers

careeronestop.org/localhelp/americanjobcenters/find-american-job-centers.aspx

Refugee Housing Solutions

refugeehousing.org

Refugee Welcome Collective

refugeewelcome.org

Refugee Welcome Collective Online Learning

rwc-benefitsandservices.thinkific.com

RWC App

refugeewelcome.org/welcome-collective-app

Sample Home Supply Checklist

communitysponsorship.org/sample-home-supply-checklist

SettleIn App

coresourceexchange.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/english-settle-in-palm-card.pdf

Social Security Offices

secure.ssa.gov/ICON/main.jsp

State-by-State Resources for Newcomers and Sponsors

refugeewelcome.org/state-resources

State Contacts

acf.hhs.gov/orr/grant-funding/key-state-contacts

United Way's 2-1-1

211.org/about-us/your-local-211

USAHello

usahello.org

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services Non-delivery of Document

egov.uscis.gov/e-request/displayNDDForm.do?sroPageType=ndd&entryPoint=init

Welcome Corps Checklist

welcomecorps.org/resources/welcome-corps-checklist

WELCOMECORPS

The Welcome Corps is a program of the U.S. Department of State, administered by a consortium led by the Community Sponsorship Hub with funding provided by the U.S. government.