



LUTHERAN IMMIGRATION
AND REFUGEE SERVICE

*LIRS Refugee
Co-Sponsorship Manual
Bringing New Hope and New Life
One Family at a Time*

A publication of
Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service
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Welcome!

Dear Co-sponsor,

As you answer God's call to welcome the stranger we also welcome you to this global partnership of ministry with refugees. It is one of the most rewarding partnerships you will ever enter into. You are about to meet some of the world's most inspiring individuals. Refugees are survivors who have struggled for long and hard; we have the opportunity to open our hearts and hands to them as they resettle into new life in the United States.

Co-sponsorship is an important and meaningful way to welcome refugees. As you embrace the refugees, you will help them gain self-confidence, become acculturated to America, and become self-sufficient both faster and with fewer obstacles than a refugee navigating a new community alone. As your congregation reaches out, acting as the hands and feet of Jesus, you will find meaningful change not only in the lives of the refugees you serve, but within your fellowship and within each of your hearts, as well.

Thank you for joining LIRS and its partners in helping refugees find new opportunities and new life in the United States. We pray this manual will be a blessing to you in your first co-sponsorship experience and for many experiences to come.

Blessings,

Ralston H. Deffenbaugh, Jr.
LIRS President

The LIRS Mission

**In response to God's
love in Christ, we
welcome the stranger,
bringing new hope
and new life through
ministries of service
and justice.**

Acknowledgements

This manual was adapted with permission from materials from Church World Service and Episcopal Migration Ministries.

The creation of this manual also utilized materials with permission from Lutheran Family Services of Colorado, Denver; Lutheran Social Services of North Dakota, Fargo; Lutheran Social Services of Wisconsin and Upper Michigan, Milwaukee; St. Paul Lutheran Church of Fort Worth; The Support Team Network, Fort Worth; Exodus World Service, Chicago.

This manual was created by the LIRS co-sponsorship project team: Assistant Director for Matching Grant Susan Anderson, Senior Consultant for Organizational Capacity Building Pam Bloom, Assistant Director for Refugee Resettlement Wesley McMahon, Director for Congregational and Community Outreach Denise Peterson and Program Associate Lauren Wendt.

Special thanks to those who reviewed the manual: Angie Albee, Lutheran Services in Iowa, Des Moines; the Rev. Donna Buckles, Lutheran Social Ministry of the Southwest, Phoenix; Pat Friar, member of the LIRS Ambassadors Circle, Fort Worth; and Phil Gazley Lutheran Family Services of Colorado

Please acknowledge LIRS, too!

When reprinting, please include the following statement: "Reprinted courtesy of Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, 700 Light Street, Baltimore, Md. 21230, 410/230-2700, www.lirs.org."

1:1 What It Means to Be a Refugee

Sometimes they leave home in the dark of night, taking only what they can carry, knowing that because of their politics, religion, race or ethnicity they aren't safe. Some have suffered persecution for years, living in fear in their own homes. Many are traumatized from torture or unbearable loss, and leave knowing they may never be able to return. Often their families remain behind, and they do not know if they will ever see them again. They are refugees.

The U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees defines a refugee as someone who, owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it. In 2004 over 12 million refugees worldwide awaited a place to call home.

After fleeing their home country, refugees can spend months and even years in temporary camps or overpopulated urban areas. Basic necessities such as food, housing and medical care are scarce. Women are especially vulnerable. Without access to schools or employment, refugees full of hopes and dreams spend their days waiting for life to begin again...or wonder if it ever will. Less than one half of one percent of all refugees are resettled permanently in the United States. A few resettle in other countries, others are able to eventually return to their home countries, while still others languish in these "temporary" camps.

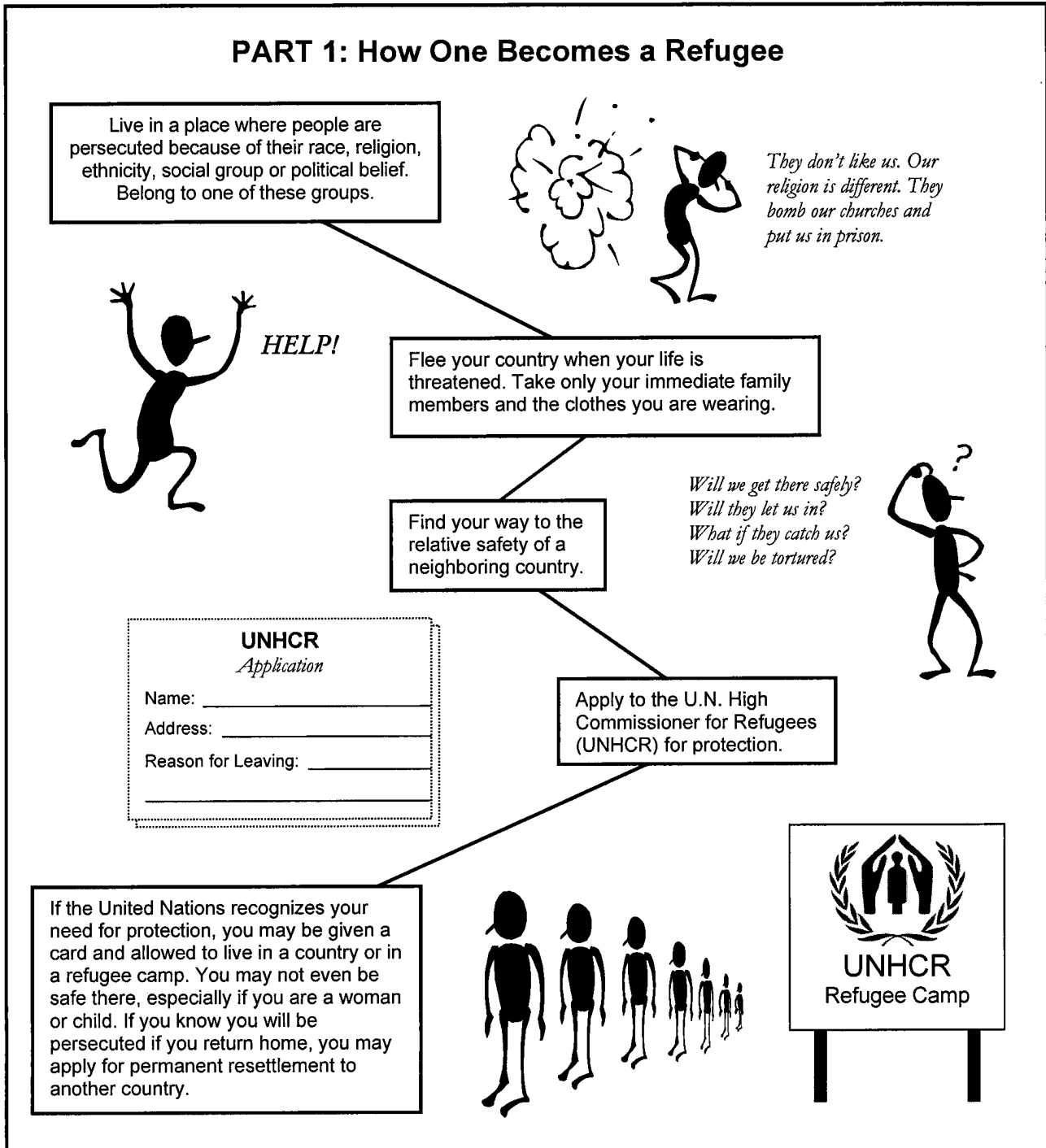
These are just a few of the immeasurable obstacles that refugees have overcome to find safety in resettlement to a third country such as the United States. Refugees are survivors. One of the greatest challenges of resettlement is encouraging refugees to rediscover their own strength and dignity. More important than the actual mechanics of resettlement—housing, employment, language training and so forth—is the process by which refugees begin the renewal of their lives.

“We’re all citizens of the earth and these are our fellow human beings... and we can help the uprooted, especially initially in resettlement, adjust to a new life.”

—Cindy Stadum, Salem Evangelical Free Church; Fargo, N.D.

1:2 The Refugee's Road: From Home to the United States

On the following three pages we have reproduced a simple handout that illustrates how people become refugees and how refugees are admitted to the United States for resettlement. Many thanks to Maurine Huang of Sacramento Refugee Ministry for developing and sharing the concept of this handout.



PART 2a: How a Refugee Is Admitted to the United States

Ask UNHCR to refer you to the nearest Processing Post which can be a Joint Voluntary Agency (JVA) or a United States Embassy.

*Where is the Embassy?
 Where is the JVA?
 Will they let me in?
 I'm scared!*



*I've been here six months.
 There is nothing to do. They don't give us enough food and it tastes awful. We don't get medical care.*

Assemble necessary documents

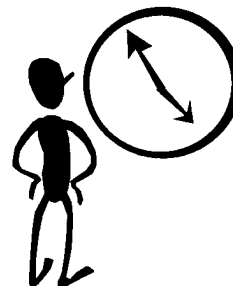
WAIT



Assemble more documents

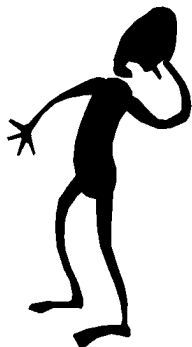
WAIT AGAIN

This is really getting to be tedious. I have been here two years. My kids haven't been in school for all that time.



Interview with the U.S. government official. Convince that person that you should have refugee status.

I'm so scared!!! What if they say NO? Where will we go? What will become of us?



If the answer is *no*, you have other options:

- Return home.
- Stay where you are.
- Try another country.

We can't go home. They will kill us! And there is no life for us in this country.



PART 2b: How a Refugee Is Admitted to the United States

If the answer is yes, your application becomes a "case" and is assigned to a national voluntary agency such as LIRS.

The agency will find a sponsor. If you have relatives you become an *anchor case* and the agency and your relative will help you. If not, you are a *free case*, and a church, a civic group or a local affiliate will be your co-sponsor.

HOORAY!!



The co-sponsor promises to do certain things to help you once you come to the United States.

Again? I have spent half of my life waiting!



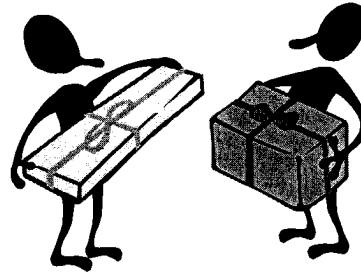
YOU WAIT

Finally, the time comes for you to travel to the United States.

Am I really here? I'm so excited!



Now let's see...who can help with housing? How about clothing, food...?



What a Co-Sponsor Does

- Meet new family at airport.
- Provide safe, sanitary, furnished housing.
- Provide food or food allowance.
- Provide any necessary clothing.
- Apply for Social Security cards within seven working days.
- Enroll children in public school within first 30 days.
- Help adults learn English.
- Help employable adults become job ready and find employment.
- Maintain contact with LIRS.

Many thanks to Maurine Huang of Sacramento Refugee Ministry for developing and sharing the concept of this chart.

1:3 The Roles of LIRS and Your Local Resettlement Office

The local refugee resettlement office in your community is an affiliate of Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS), a national agency.. LIRS has an agreement with the U.S. Department of State to resettle refugees. LIRS then partners with affiliate offices and congregations across the country to fulfill our mission.

In addition to refugee resettlement, LIRS conducts various programs and advocacy for refugees and other immigrants, specifically asylees and children in immigration detention. Please visit www.lirs.org to learn more about our many efforts to welcome the stranger.

Initial Resettlement Services

Your local resettlement affiliate will determine which of these services it will provide and which it will ask you to provide:

- Meet refugees at the airport and provide for their basic needs for the first 30 days.
- Provide standard services and cash assistance for a period of 90 days
- In conjunction with LIRS, provide matching grants for up to 180 days after arrival to help qualified refugees quickly attain self-sufficiency (not available at all sites).
- Complete required case file documentation and reporting.
- Coordinate with co-sponsors to provide needed services to refugees.
- Coordinate programs offered by state agencies or nonprofits other than LIRS to provide additional services to refugees (not available at all sites).
- Coordinate community outreach and volunteer involvement.
- Help refugees already in the United States file for other family members to join them from overseas.

Refugee resettlement is the coordination of programs that assist newly arriving refugees for up to six months after arrival. After that period your local office may or may not have other programs to assist refugees for a longer period of time. Refugee programs are designed with the end goal of helping each refugee access mainstream services and become a self-sufficient member of the community.

The role of the local office and case manager is not to provide every service a refugee needs, but rather to ensure that a standard set of services is provided in order for the refugee to reach self-sufficiency. Most often these services are completed by collaboration among case managers, other community service providers, and volunteers and co-sponsors such as you.

“You learn how to help people—the expectations of the congregation are not what’s important, it’s the needs of the refugee.”

—Ellen Erickson, Glen Cary Lutheran Church, Minneapolis

1:4 The Role of the Co-Sponsorship Team or Congregation

Imagine you are in a new country with a different culture, different language and different laws. How would you find a job? Where would you buy food? How would your children enroll in school? Now think of what it would mean to have someone reach out and help with your adjustment, and help find answers to your practical survival questions.

Co-Sponsorship: A Helping Hand

Co-sponsorship is a commitment from a community group to assist with the resettlement of a refugee family through an organized contribution of in kind goods, services and financial assistance.

Before a refugee family arrives co-sponsors can expect to be trained by the local office, on topics such as these:

- How to connect with services available to refugees
- How to support the refugee family toward self-sufficiency
- How to communicate with the affiliate office throughout the co-sponsorship period
- The boundaries of co-sponsorship and how to say “no” to unrealistic expectations
- Respecting the refugee family’s right to confidentiality

Training and communication between the affiliate office and your team will be ongoing throughout your co-sponsorship experience. You will never be alone assisting the refugee family; that is why there is a “co” in co-sponsorship! The local resettlement agency is ultimately responsible for ensuring that the needs of a family are met.

See Section 2.2 for a sample team structure and listing of team roles.

“It’s a challenge to know when to stop helping. It’s not helping them to always give them something.”

—Irene Amoros, Salem Lutheran Church; Catonsville, Md.

1:5 What to Expect As a Co-Sponsor

Each co-sponsorship team and each refugee family is different. The expectations of your team may be very different from the reality of the experience. Regardless of what happens, you are never on your own. The staff at your local office have resettled hundreds of families, and will be working with you throughout the co-sponsorship process.

Some Expectations to Guide Your Team

- Things won't always happen as planned. You must be flexible.
- The first weeks after arrival will be a busy time for the co-sponsorship team. The family will need lots of support not only getting to initial appointments, but also dealing with culture shock as they adjust to a new country.
- It may take time before the refugee family will trust you and be open and honest with you. Due to the nature of the hardships they have experienced, be prepared that they may never share the personal details of their story with you.
- Moving is one of life's major stresses, and moving halfway across the world can multiply the stress level. Different people handle stress in different ways, so expect the refugee family to feel and express a wide range of emotions during the resettlement period.
- The world has many ideas about the United States, and many rumors circulate in refugee camps. Refugees may initially be disappointed with the reality of the time and effort it will take to make the American dream a reality.
- You will probably answer the same questions many times. Learning a new culture is never easy. Language barriers combined with the stress of an entirely new environment can create confusion.
- Expect to say *No*. As co-sponsors you will probably form a relationship with the refugee family, and may find it hard to say *No* when asked for assistance. It is important to remember that the goal of resettlement is always self-sufficiency. If you aren't available to help, that's OK! It is always better if the refugee family can handle a situation on their own. Your goal is to help them eventually live as free from help as do other families in the community.
- You might be nervous and unsure. Are you worried about having never been a co-sponsor before? That's OK. The refugee has never met with an American volunteer either. But just like a first date, the jitters will pass and you will settle into a comfortable relationship.
- You will be forever changed. Co-sponsorship is a transforming experience. Not only for the refugee family, but also for your team and congregation. You are about to embark on a journey filled with new cultural experiences, growing friendships, and encounters with the Holy Spirit.

The refugee family will have many expectations about their new home as well. Often, they are told unrealistic stories while in refugee camps, only to discover their new home is nothing like they imagined it would be!

2:1 Forming Your Co-Sponsorship Team

Once several members in your congregation have indicated interest in co-sponsorship, it is time to create a formal co-sponsorship team.

Recruiting Your Co-Sponsorship Team

- Aim to organize a team of at least eight dedicated people.
- Publicize during announcement times in services, and in your congregation's bulletins and newsletters.
- Talk to people directly and invite them to participate.
- Present to the social concerns committee, Bible studies and prayer groups.
- Look for people who can commit to the full time period and also for those who want to participate in one-time volunteer opportunities.

Educating and Gaining the Support of Your Congregation

- Share information about the refugee program and co-sponsorship with the larger congregation. Ask an affiliate staff member to give a brief presentation to the congregation.
- Discuss the financial responsibilities, in-kind donations and time commitments expected of both the team and the larger congregation.
- Be prepared to provide one-time volunteer and advocacy opportunities for the congregation.
- Encourage the congregation to be a welcoming community for the refugee family.

“When you’re dealing with people, everything isn’t going to go exactly as you plan it...you’ve got to be flexible.”

—Pat Friar, St. Paul’s Lutheran Church, Fort Worth

What to Do Once Your Team Is Formed

- Consider what kind of commitment the team can make, including specifics of time, money, energy, talents and skills.
- Contact your local affiliate office. A staff member will discuss a plan of action with your team.

2:2 Parts of a Co-Sponsorship Team

This sample list of “job descriptions” for the various components of a co-sponsorship team will help your team members determine how best to use their individual gifts to cover all the responsibilities of co-sponsorship.

Remember, co-sponsorship teams come in all shapes and sizes. While experienced co-sponsors often recommend 8–15 team members, what is most important is that you realistically assess the availability of the team members’ time. The size of the refugee family is another important factor in determining the size of the commitment and how best to apportion various tasks among members.

Team Coordinator

- Oversees the co-sponsorship team to ensure that all services are provided.
- Serves as main contact with the refugee family when they need assistance.
- Learns the requirements of co-sponsorship from the case manager, and leads the team in following those guidelines.
- Serves as liaison to the case manager at all times, particularly if concerns or problems arise.
- Records and communicates all team activity to the case manager.
- Organizes the team, generally without providing direct services to the refugees.

“Get organized ahead of time. Have your committee talk about housing, clothing and jobs ahead of time, and have ideas in place.”

—Irene Amoros, Salem Lutheran Church; Catonsville, Md.

Cultural Orientation and Mentoring Team

- Helps family adjust to their environment, including explaining U.S. culture and introducing the refugees to public services such as libraries, police stations, parks and free cultural activities.

Education and Language Team

- Coordinates finding English classes for adults and enrolling children in schools.
- Prepares students for classes and purchases needed school supplies.
- Assists the family if needed during conferences with teachers.
- Seeks tutors for adults and children if needed.

Employment Team

- Finds employment for all employable family members, introducing them to employment in the United States and serving as liaison to workplace.
- Assists in creating résumés and honing interview skills when appropriate.

Fundraising and Finance Team

- Ensures that appropriate funding is available and that a preliminary team budget is in place before the family arrives.
- Explains the U.S. currency and banking system.
- Sets up bank accounts for refugees and teaches budgeting skills.
- Keeps records of all expenses for the church, and reports expenses to case manager.

Health Care Team

- Sets up appointments and accompanies refugees to medical screenings.
- Explains 911, the hospital system, the importance of check-ups, and health care benefits.
- Provides and explains first aid kits and basic home health care.

Housing Team

- May assist case manager in finding and furnishing appropriate housing
- Provides basic home orientation, including basic appliance use and tenant responsibilities.
- Checks in to ensure housing remains appropriate over time.

Publicity Coordinator

- Informs congregation of the work of the co-sponsorship team through bulletin inserts, announcements, church bulletin boards, and other means appropriate for the congregation.
- Serves as liaison to the case manager if there is media interest in co-sponsorship activities.

2:3 Media Communication and Confidentiality

You may find that the media would like to interview you and your new friends. Media interviews have ramifications for you, the refugee family, the entire ethnic community of the family, the local resettlement office and the national resettlement program overall. *Please defer all media requests to your local agency.* They have professional communications staff that can assist working with the media. Both you and the refugee family have the right to decline being photographed or being interviewed.

When you do communicate with the media, or anyone in the general public, it is important to respect the broader federal government system that makes U.S. resettlement possible. Please refrain from voicing strong personal feelings about resettlement policy. Focus conversations on your personal co-sponsorship experience rather than on government policy.

If you are involved in a media interview with the resettlement agency, consider these tips:

- Prepare for the interview. Discuss the slant of the story. If it is to be a broadcast, practice answering sample questions ahead of time.
- Share information such as what your church has done to prepare for the arrival of the refugees, what types of activities you are doing to assist the refugees, and other unique stories of how your church is involved in refugee resettlement.
- Share how helping someone new to our country makes you feel and why you are motivated to help
- Share ways in which viewers can get involved in similar volunteer work.

Confidentiality

The refugee family's confidentiality is extremely important. Remember to keep all personal information private when communicating with your friends, the congregation and the general public. Whether or not to release personal information is solely the decision of the refugee. You must assume that the refugee family does not want information to be shared outside of the co-sponsorship team, and you should ask for permission if you wish to do so. Part of your role is to help safeguard the privacy and dignity of your refugee friends and respecting their privacy the way you would anyone else's. This means not sharing *any* personal information about the refugee family without their consent, including their

- names,
- address,
- ages,
- health and medical information,
- emotional state (or your opinion of it), or
- pictures.

Check with your local agency regarding its confidentiality policies and release forms.

2:4 Learning About Other Cultures

Co-sponsorship offers a unique experience of volunteering with people who are from another culture. Through introducing U.S. culture to refugees, the co-sponsorship team is in turn enriched by learning about their culture.

Before the refugees' arrival, prepare the co-sponsorship team and the congregation by learning about the refugees' home culture.

- Have a community member from that country or region, possibly a former refugee, speak during a service or education hour about the culture. Ask your case manager for contact information.
- If no one from that country or region is available, ask a professor from a local college or an individual who has traveled to that country to come and share their experiences.
- Learn about the culture through books and magazine articles.
- Host a dinner at which foods popular in that country are prepared, followed by a learning session.
- Consult the online resources suggested in Appendix A:4.
- Involve youth groups: encourage them to learn about and share their knowledge of the culture of the refugee family.
- Religion is an integral part of many people's cultures. Consult various Lutheran Church organizations' websites for resources on your refugee family's faith, and ask your case manager to locate the nearest house of worship for their religion.
- After the family arrives, encourage cross-cultural activities together with team members or the congregation as a whole.
- Show interest in their culture and traditions. Ask questions as you share experiences; many refugees will appreciate talking about their homelands, and it will show that you care. But be sensitive as you do this. For some it may be too painful to discuss the past. Pay attention to their interest or disinterest in sharing their experiences; they may not be comfortable telling you that they do not want to do so.
- Cook meals together, incorporating dishes from both their cultural background and yours.
- Spend an evening listening to music from their culture.
- Acknowledge and respect the holidays they celebrate, and celebrate with them as appropriate.

3:1 Finding Donations

Before you start a donation drive for the new family, discuss with your local resettlement office the list of specific items needed.

Household and Personal Goods

- Some items are difficult to find, especially for a large family. Organize your donation drive as soon as you make the decision to co-sponsor.
- Once you know the size of the family, publicize your “wish list” in the church.
- Locate a place to store large items such as furniture until the family arrives.
- Ensure that all donations are clean and in good condition.
- Sometimes a congregation can be too generous. Make sure that your family does not receive an overabundance of used clothing and other items.
- Encourage purchasing inexpensive new clothing and supplies for the family if possible. Discount department store gift cards are a great idea.
- No one knows what kind of clothing your refugee family will bring with them to the United States. You must have weather-appropriate footwear and clothing on hand at the airport. You can also have additional clothing items back at their new home, and then you can take them shopping during their first week. This can make it easier to get correct sizes.
- Remember that parents will need culturally appropriate clothing for job hunting and work, and children will need clothing for school.

Food

Upon arrival the new family will need a culturally appropriate hot meal prepared for them. In addition, they need a supply of basic groceries in their home. Your local resettlement office can help you locate ethnic food items for your family. Be aware, of course, of any religious dietary restrictions. Start with basics such as chicken, rice, beans, and fresh fruits and vegetables.

- Work with the local resettlement office or other refugees of the same ethnicity to prepare a hot meal for the family upon arrival.
- Be aware that many refugees are not accustomed to canned or instant foods. They may also not be aware of food storage requirements in the United States. Part of the initial orientation will be helping refugees understand food in the United States and how it should be prepared and stored.
- Most refugees will begin receiving food stamps shortly after arrival. If so, it will be time to help the family understand shopping and budgeting. If food stamps have not arrived, contact your local resettlement office to resolve this issue.

3:2 Airport Arrival

Your local resettlement office will call you with the date that your refugee family will arrive. The travel information will be available on very short notice, usually no more than two weeks before they arrive.

Meeting the family at the airport can be a rewarding experience for volunteers, but not always for refugees. When planning the airport pick-up, please remember that some refugees may feel overwhelmed by a large crowd and will be tired after their long journey to the United States. Talk with your resettlement caseworker about your plans for airport reception, as they regularly welcome families and can tell you what to expect. It is often a good idea to have members of your group welcome the refugee family upon their arrival to their new home, as opposed to gathering a large crowd at the airport.

- A caseworker from the resettlement agency will likely accompany you to the airport.
- If the family does not speak English, the resettlement agency will locate a former refugee or other interpreter to go with you to the airport. Please contact your caseworker to ensure that interpretation has been arranged.
- Some refugees bring luggage. Prepare to have sufficient space.

The family will be carrying a white bag with blue lettering from the International Organization of Migration (IOM) that contains all of their important documents. It is vital that these materials remain secure at all times. The family will need to remain in possession of the bag and its contents, so it is very important to remind them to keep the bag in a safe place, and never to alter or deface the documents inside.

“Not everyone in the church is able to participate directly. Host a welcome reception...it gets the whole church to know the family and helps them want to do more.”

—Lynn Frank, St. Stephen Lutheran Church Urbandale Iowa

3:3 Home Orientation

Your local resettlement office may ask you to help provide initial orientation regarding basic home safety when the family arrives. If you have an interpreter who understands the following home safety issues, it may be easier for him or her to instruct the refugee directly.

Feel comfortable in showing the family the items you have prepared for them and enjoy a meal together.

You should discuss the following safety issues with the family as soon as possible after they arrive:

- How to use kitchen appliances
- How to use gas and electricity for heat and air conditioning
- Home safety, including door and window locks
- Where to find the nearest phone and how to use the 911 system
- How to use a can opener and store food
- How to use U.S. bathroom fixtures—toilet, shower and sink.
- Legal and cultural norms on keeping children safe
- Smoke detector and fire safety
- Neighborhood safety

While this information must be shared immediately, remember that this has been a long and overwhelming day for the newly arrived refugees. Taking in this staggering amount of information all at once will be impossible. Be sensitive to that and recognize you will need to repeat these instructions over the following days and weeks. Children, particularly, will need to be repeatedly reminded of safety issues, so make sure the adults in the family are instructing the children. As they train the young ones, their own understanding will be reinforced, as well.

“Even in the most difficult of moments, it’s been wonderful—each thing we learn helps us with the next family. Not that the families are anything alike. Just when you think you know what to expect, the next time will be something completely different.”

—Bryn Kirk, Ascension Lutheran Church, Waukesha, Wis.

3:4 Refugee Travel Loans

Each refugee family receives a loan from the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to pay for transportation to the United States. They are then responsible for repaying the loan.

Within three months of arrival in the United States, refugees will receive their first loan statement. The statement will tell them the minimum amount they will be required to pay on a monthly basis. Six months after arrival, repayment must begin. Sponsors should encourage refugees pay the minimum amount each month, or more if they can, in order to establish a repayment pattern and develop good financial habits in general. These are vital steps to empowering a refugee family to become self-sufficient. See section 3.5 for more information on helping refugees develop financial literacy.

The travel loan is usually the first line of credit refugees will have in the United States, so it is vital to the process of establishing a good credit rating. If they repay their loan according to their contract, they will establish good credit. If they do not repay back their loan in a timely manner, it will be reflected in a poor credit history.

The monthly payment amount will depend on the amount of the original loan. From the date they arrive, refugees have to repay the full amount within 42 months or less depending on the amount of the loan.

If refugees are unable to pay off their loans according to this schedule, they may request that their monthly payments be reduced or deferred. Such requests must be sent to LIRS in writing. Requests must include specific reasons for inability to pay, and must be supported with proper documentation such as proof of income or proof of disability. Encourage them to be in contact with LIRS if repayment difficulties arise. LIRS will work with them to overcome these difficulties so their credit rating will not be adversely affected.

The money for travel loans comes from a revolving Department of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration fund that is distributed by IOM. If a family does not repay its loan, the number of refugees that can be resettled in future is limited until loan funding can become available. By repaying their loans, resettled refugees will allow others to realize the hope of resettlement, as well.

When financially possible, some churches consider assisting the refugees in repayment of their loans as a continuation of their ministry, but the responsibility to repay a travel loan is never a requirement of co-sponsorship.

LIRS will do everything it can to help each refugee repay his or her loan on time.

However, LIRS cannot pay back a loan for a refugee.

LIRS is in partnership with the Department of State to collect loan repayments for IOM. LIRS must ensure loans are repaid so that future refugees can receive the benefit of resettlement.

3:5 Finance and Fundraising Team

Refugees will come to the United States with a wide variety of backgrounds, particularly in regard to money and finances. Some refugees may never have used paper money while others may have been bankers in their home country. Be sure to gauge what support is necessary for your refugee family to learn financial literacy and get their finances in order. They may need assistance with any or all of the following:

- Opening a bank account
- Learning the U.S. currency system
- Understanding the U.S. banking system including savings accounts, how to write checks and balance a checkbook, and how to use ATM
- Understanding how to cash or deposit paychecks and read pay stubs
- Understanding income taxes and employer withholdings
- Learning financial record-keeping
- Understanding the difference between money orders and checks
- Understanding how credit cards work, the consequences of not paying off credit card bills each month, and why establishing a stable banking account is preferable before taking on consumer debt
- How to keep necessary costs low, e.g., through using phone cards and coupons, and conserving water and heat (often a particular challenge for refugees adapting to an unfamiliar climate)
- Learning the importance of paying rent, bills and travel loans on time
- creating a budget

Ask an accountant, banker, or financial professional to share the basics of financial management with refugees.

A top priority for resettled refugees is learning to manage their own finances by paying bills on-time as well as to build good credit by paying off their travel loan. The necessity of good credit can be explained in terms of being able to purchase a home in the future; however, home ownership should not be an initial priority.

Remittance

It is common for refugees to send money back to family members who remain in their home country or in refugee camps. This is known as “remittance.” Many refugees will, understandably, see remittance as their duty and responsibility to those who were left behind. Rather than trying to dissuade those who want to send money home, honor their desire to be responsible and loving toward their families, and help them to factor in this remittance money as they plan their budgets.

Always remember that self-sufficiency is the goal, but that your role as co-sponsors is not to enforce the specifics of the path to self-sufficiency. Offer advice, counsel and discussion regarding budgetary decisions, but do not dictate to the refugees what they can or cannot do with money they receive or earn.

“Co-sponsorship will be a positive opportunity for the refugee family, but it will also be a life-changing experience for you, and it will stretch your horizons.”

—The Rev. Ken Johnson, Chicago

3:6 Housing Team

The affiliate office is responsible for finding and approving housing for all refugee clients. The co-sponsorship team can be invaluable in assisting in the housing search. Remember that the local office is ultimately responsible for any services, including housing, and should be contacted if housing can not be found.

Some Basic Rules

- The co-sponsorship team is never responsible for leasing an apartment or other housing.
- Only the refugee should sign the lease, not the team.
- Whenever possible, secure housing in advance, but without signing a lease.

When assisting the resettlement office look for housing, consider the following questions:

- Is it affordable? Will the refugee be able to continue paying the rent after the co-sponsorship period is over?
- Are there other refugees or other people of the same ethnicity in the area who might serve as an extended support system for the newly arrived family?
- Does it have the appropriate safety mechanisms?
- Is the neighborhood safe?
- Is it conveniently located near public transportation, employment opportunities, schools, your congregation, stores?

Housing Team Responsibilities

- Work with the case manager to find safe and affordable permanent housing.
- Furnish the apartment, check safety standards and prepare for the family's arrival.
- Contact a local legal aid organization for tenants' rights information.
- Explore heat subsidy programs.
- Introduce yourselves to the neighbors and, after the refugees' arrival, introduce the family to the neighborhood.
- Explain rights and responsibilities of renting, such as filing damage reports, making security deposits and giving notice before moving out.
- Explain utilities including telephone, gas, electric and water.
- Find out and explain the garbage collection schedule for the neighborhood, as well as recycling practices.
- Explain home security: window and door locks, key usage, and what to do in emergencies such as fire, power outages or bad weather.
- Explain the importance of child and baby safety.

Utilize your congregation's skills and knowledge! Does a church member own rental housing, work in realty, or know someone with available housing?

3:7 Health Care Team

All refugees receive a physical examination before being allowed to travel to the United States. Those with communicable diseases are not approved for travel until their condition improves. United States Each refugee is also required to have another physical exam within 30 days of U.S. arrival.

It's important to remember refugees may feel a little sick, (or tired) after traveling to the United States. They are going through a very stressful transition, and their bodies are adjusting to a new environment and new food, so it may take them a while to feel OK.

Volunteers for any organization should be aware of health risks while on the job. Check with your local affiliate for further information and instruction.

Health Team Responsibilities

- Locate ethnic food stores. Stock the pantry with culturally appropriate, healthy food.
- Take refugees to the grocery store, explain grocery stores in the United States (bulk foods, generic brands, expiration dates), and help them select balanced meals respecting their individual preferences. Many refugees are familiar with the metric system; have a conversation table available.
- Explain refrigeration and food safety.
- Investigate food stamp requirements and apply, if needed.
- Supply a basic home first aid kit. Orient refugees regarding its contents.
- Educate the family on what is considered a medical emergency, including when to go to the emergency room or call 911 and when to make a doctor's appointment.
- Apply for Medicaid as soon as Social Security numbers have been assigned. Most refugees receive Medicaid for eight months after arrival; therefore, ensure that medical problems are addressed as soon as possible so that expenses can be covered under the program.
- If there is a medical emergency before Medicaid is assigned, don't delay in seeking medical services. In this and all other emergencies, contact the affiliate office.
- Ask the case manager for the name of a clinic that will provide free initial health screening for refugees. Ensure that an interpreter, if needed, is present for the appointment.
- Address the possibility of an appointment at a women's clinic for women of childbearing age. This can be a sensitive issue within cultures and families; consult your case manager for appropriate action.
- Ensure that school-age children receive immunizations before enrolling in school.
- Pay particular attention to the health care needs of older refugees.

Refugees may not always let you know when they're feeling ill, so it's important to read between the lines and watch for signs of sickness—especially in children.

It is especially important when considering health issues to respect and maintain the privacy of the refugee. The refugee is not required to release medical information to co-sponsors, nor should co-sponsors share any information on a refugee's health

- When refugees get jobs, assist with company health care coverage decisions.
- Refugees possess great inner strength, but sometimes the combined difficulties of the loss of their former world and the trauma of adjusting to a complex new world can cause problems. Work with the case manager to identify counseling and other support services or groups if mental health issues should arise.
- Help the family keep records of all medical services. Ensure that receipts are kept for all services.

3:8 Education and Language Team

All refugees coming to the United States can benefit from learning as much English as possible. All education and schooling must be balanced with every adult refugee's immediate need to get a job and have enough income to support his or her family. Most employment programs, including the matching grant program, require clients to take English classes while looking for a job. The most common type of English learning is through English as a Second Language (ESL) programs. There should be various ESL programs available in your community. Your team can supplement formal classroom education by helping refugees practice what they learn and by continuing to educate in the home throughout the day. Also remember that language is an important part of culture and heritage. There should be no pressure on which language the family chooses to speak at home.

Note: You do not need to know a refugee's language to teach him or her English. In fact, some language professionals believe that bilingual ESL teaching can hinder fast learning. Members of your team should feel confident in their ability to do their part in helping someone else learn English.

Education and Language Team Responsibilities

- Consult the case manager for suggested ESL resources.
- Enlist congregation members as tutors for additional support.
- Enroll children in school in the first few weeks after arrival.
 - Ensure that immunization requirements are met before enrolling.
 - Bring the child's 1-94 form¹, any records of child's educational background, and proof of medical exams.
 - Ask about a discounted lunch program.
- Determine what school supplies are necessary and ensure they are bought or donated.
- Research and explain the school bus schedule; ensure that the student is dropped off and picked up on first day.
- If adults are interested, determine the availability of adult education programs in the area. In some school districts, refugees are able to attend high school after age 18.

¹ The I-94 is a document that notes a non-U.S. Citizen's or permanent resident's immigration status, arrival in and departure from the United States, and period of time for which the person is admitted.

3:9 Employment Team

Beyond financial self-sufficiency, employment has the following benefits:

- Interaction with other Americans.
- The opportunity to build relationships through the social network provided by co-workers.
- The responsibility attached to employment improves self-esteem.

All refugees are eligible to work in the United States upon arrival. Even non-English speakers should secure employment. Refugees are encouraged to find initial employment *while* taking ESL classes.

Why is it important for a refugee to take a job soon after arrival?

- Financial assistance is limited. Refugees will need to pay their own bills starting no more than six months after their arrival.
- Most refugee employment service programs require refugees to become employed in order to retain services.
- Enrolling on public cash assistance, or welfare, should be discouraged. The cash assistance payments are never enough to pay for rent, utilities and other basic needs.

Remember that refugees come from all backgrounds. Despite the fact that many were educated professionals in their home countries, their skills may not initially be transferable. Doctors may work as dishwashers; rural farmers may work in industry at first.

Be sensitive to this adjustment and remind refugees that they may work towards a better-paying and higher skilled positions. An “entry level” position may be the only option at first. In many cultures, job advancement is not an option, so stress that “moving up the ladder” is possible in the United States.

Many refugees are enrolled in programs such as the matching grant program that will assist them in obtaining employment. It’s important to communicate with the local affiliate to find out what programs the refugees are enrolled in and what the programs require. Many programs expect refugees to complete a certain amount of job searching each week or to find employment within a certain timeframe.

Employment Team Responsibilities

Many forms are required for employment in the United States. Below are common examples of employment eligibility documents refugees should receive in the United States:

- I-94 card
- Social Security card (be sure this is an unrestricted card)
- Employment authorization document (EAD), if necessary

Lack of English is not a barrier to employment in the United States, and studies show that people have greater success in the United States if they are working and learning English at the same time

When searching for employment, the availability of public transportation is essential. Refugees must be able to get to and from work without you.

When searching for jobs for an eligible refugee, consider the following:

- what types of employment would be suitable for the refugee?
- Could you place an announcement in the church bulletin regarding the need for jobs?
- Are there business owners or others in your congregation who might know of job leads?
- Are there employers in your area that have previously hired refugees?
- What job development services are available in the area?

Introduce norms of the U.S. working world:

- Employer/employee rights and responsibilities
- Importance of timeliness
- Importance of uniform
- Holidays, vacation and sick leave
- Overtime
- Benefits
- Union regulations
- Safety procedures
- Age of retirement

Other Pre-Employment Tips

- Teach how to complete job applications.
- Practice job interviews.
- Assist with shopping for appropriate work clothing.
- Practice bus route.
- Report employment to case manager.
- Get to know the employer.

3:10 Mentoring and Cultural Orientation Team

Imagine: You have just moved to a new country. How will you come to understand a new culture? Figure out the bus system? Learn what to do in an emergency?

Activities that may be second nature to you may be completely unfamiliar to a refugee. Remember that many refugees will arrive in the United States with only a limited orientation they received overseas and the pre-conceived notions they have learned from Hollywood.

Questions about day-to-day activities usually only come up when a refugee is faced with an unfamiliar situation. Some families will feel uncomfortable calling to ask for assistance; you must take the initiative to keep in contact.

Educate yourself and the entire co-sponsorship team on the culture of the refugees before arrival. This will help you understand where they are coming from and will give you an idea of how to best introduce them to living in the United States.

The case manager can be an invaluable resource in explaining a refugee's home culture and what the refugees may or may not be familiar with before arrival.

Ensure that one or two people, preferably the same people, visit the refugee often for the first couple of weeks to help them settle in and make them feel welcome in their new community. However, your team should be careful not to overwhelm the family.

Mentoring and Cultural Orientation Team Responsibilities

- Post a calendar in the refugee's home to record appointments.
- Explain fire, ambulance and police services. Provide emergency numbers and explain when they should be used.
- Explain that, by law, drivers must be licensed and insured.
- Explain that, by law, young children may not be left unattended.
- Explain and practice using public transportation as soon as possible.
- Explain telephone use, long-distance calling and bills. Often, co-sponsors will provide refugees with an international calling card to call friends and relatives in their home country. These cards are considerably less expensive than traditional long-distance service.
- Accompany the refugees to the post office. Explain stamps, mail delivery, etc.
- Explain washers and dryers; accompany to the laundromat if necessary.
- Explain hygiene practices, especially the disposal of baby diapers, feminine hygiene products and medical devices; use of deodorant; and garbage removal.
- Explore community opportunities for the refugee. Go on outings to community venues such as a local park, the YMCA and the public library.
- Work with the agency and ensure that males age 18-25 register for Selective Service as soon as they receive Social Security numbers.
- Explain the value of punctuality in U.S. culture.
- Be sensitive: the refugees' culture may be their strongest link to their past and family. Your role is to make them more comfortable living in a new environment while not stripping them of their individual cultural practices.

Both you and the refugees will make cultural mistakes. Be patient in explaining the intricacies of culture in the United States, and ask how to be appropriate for the refugees' culture. Having a sense of humor is important!

4:1 Sustaining Your Co-Sponsorship Team

One of the most important aspects of volunteering with a refugee family is self-care. Taking care of yourselves is an important part of being able to continue helping your refugee family in a rewarding, life-enriching way. If your relationship with the family is one of unlimited availability, you will not be able to sustain it over time. And such a relationship would not contribute to helping the family become self-sufficient.

Why is self-care important?

Volunteering with a refugee is uniquely exciting! Refugees have different languages and cultures you may have never encountered before. You will be drawn to spending time with your family and becoming a part of their lives. That's a good thing, but as you know, too much of a good thing can become a not-so-good thing.

It will be natural for the refugees to seek out your assistance beyond what you have agreed to do as a volunteer. They are new to our country, and you will be some of the first Americans they can call friends. While some degree of flexibility may be reasonable, consistent boundaries are important. Do not take on extra duties that may infringe on your own time to the extent that other important responsibilities in your life are neglected.

Over-extending assistance may create false expectations of your role in the eyes of the refugee clients. They may not fully understand your role, thinking that you work for the affiliate office or are paid to help you. It is a confusing time for the refugee family. In their culture, the idea of volunteerism may not be the same as it is the United States.

Constantly remember that your task is to empower your refugee family to take care of their own affairs. Neither you nor they will achieve this goal if you are doing too much for them. Those instances when the family would find things easier if they asked for your help are often the times most essential to their growth toward self-sufficiency.

In this section we will discuss self-care in three parts: realizing expectations, setting boundaries and avoiding volunteer burnout.

Realizing Expectations

It is important that your team discusses expectations for your co-sponsorship experience before the refugee family arrives.

Each member of your team should answer some questions regarding expectations:

- Why do I want to volunteer with refugees?
- What does it mean to be volunteering as a team, instead of on my own?
- What do I expect the refugee family's lives to be like at the end of our time as co-sponsors?
- How much time can I commit to the team?
- How will I know that we are making a difference?
- Am I prepared to say "no" to the family when I need to?
- When will I feel that I am no longer needed as a volunteer in the refugees' lives?

It is very important that you maintain realistic expectations of what you can do for the refugee family. The family will always have unmet needs. As a co-sponsor you are only being asked to do what you can while still maintaining a healthy balance with the rest of the responsibilities and activities in your life.

As the main goal of co-sponsorship is to empower the refugee family to do things on their own, you should expect a successful co-sponsorship to be relatively short. Within four to six months, if your team has done its job well, your refugee family should be able to use public transportation, shop, attend classes and work on their own.

Setting Boundaries

Co-sponsorship is not a full-time job. Setting appropriate boundaries at the beginning of your relationship with a refugee family is a critical element of self-care for each volunteer in your team. Your work as a volunteer must be compatible with your personal life, schedules and goals to ensure that you are giving your time and energy to clients in healthy ways and holding true to your team's expectations.

You will no doubt become very close to the family, and may find it difficult to watch them struggle as they face challenges and learn how to do things in the United States. Remember that you should not do everything for your refugee family, and should be steadily reducing the amount of assistance you provide. Remind yourselves regularly that this is in the refugees' best interest.

Following are some recommended boundaries for your team. Your team's list may look different. Just be sure to agree as a group on what boundaries you will set, and commit to adhering to those boundaries.

- The local affiliate agency will likely have established volunteer boundaries. Take advantage of the resettlement program's wisdom and experience in these matters. Many resettlement programs are part of a larger parent agency that is very well-versed in volunteer issues in many different types of social services. The parent agency's guidelines will also be useful to you.
- It is okay to say "no." At some point you will be asked to do something for the family that even they know is beyond your initial commitment. There is no way that you can successfully balance a healthy co-sponsorship experience if you can't turn down the family's request, even when a need may be evident. Also, you are more than likely not the only person on whom they rely. They may have relatives, other ethnic community members, or neighbors who are also providing them assistance. It is important for them to learn to rely on these community resources.
- No individual member of the team should make above-and-beyond commitments without first consulting the team. If a family member is asking you to do something that you know is in addition to your role, politely tell them that you have to speak with the team and you will get back with them. As a team volunteer you are always a representative of everyone in the group, but should not make personal decisions that would violate the team's agreed-upon boundaries.
- Do not give the family every team member's home phone number. As you develop a personal friendship with the family, keep in mind that your role as a volunteer with the resettlement agency is the foundation of your relationship. Encourage the family to contact your team leader or the agency if they need to reach you. In case of emergency the family should be calling 911, not you.
- Refer family members to medical professionals. Do not dispense medicine or medical advice.
- Do not accept money from or loan money to the refugee family.

**"It's a good feeling
to help someone; it's
a better feeling when
they don't need your
help anymore."**

*—Pat Friar, St. Paul Lutheran
Church; Fort Worth*

Volunteer Burn-Out

Burn-out is becoming so tired and unhappy with the way co-sponsorship is going that one quits the team or views the experience with overall negative feelings.

Follow these guidelines to prevent burnout:

- During regular meetings, review team expectations and boundaries. Honestly discuss times when boundaries have been challenged or violated.
- Create an open environment where feelings of frustration or conflict among team members can be addressed constructively. Frustrations within the group should not be ignored.
- Focus on team successes! Seeing a refugee family reach their potential can take years; take time to remember your goals and to celebrate you have accomplished.

4:2 Involving your Entire Congregation

Your congregation has many gifts, both known and unknown. Don't be afraid to ask individuals throughout the congregation—you will be surprised who wants to participate!

Remember, not everyone needs to be on the team to be involved. Organize one-time volunteer opportunities such as a food and clothing drive, a fund-raiser, or a welcome reception event at which the refugees can meet the congregation.

Finding Your Congregation's Gifts

- A doctor or nurse in your congregation can join the health team or guide the committee in finding local medical services.
- An accountant or financial worker can help explain the U.S. banking system, checkbook balancing and budgeting to the refugees.
- A teacher or education employee can tutor the refugee family.
- Congregants may have an extra home for rent.
- A real estate professional can identify inexpensive housing options.
- Those who enjoy cooking can arrange culturally appropriate meals for the refugee family's arrival and perhaps for a welcome reception at the church.
- Retirees can provide transportation to daytime appointments.
- Families with children can assist with enrolling refugee kids in school.
- Someone who has traveled to the region the family is from can speak to the congregation about their experiences.

Involving Your Youth Group

The refugee co-sponsorship experience can be a great educational and service opportunity for youth groups. Following are suggested activities:

- Organize the clothing, food and furniture drive before the family arrives.
- Raise funds for educational materials, toys or other child-oriented needs of the refugee family.
- Create a welcome banner for the airport.
- Decorate the children's room in the refugees' new home.
- Invite refugee youth to a non-religious youth group activity to introduce them to youth from church.
- Have a game night with refugee youth. Play soccer, which is a popular sport throughout the world and will likely be familiar to the refugees, or teach the refugee family how to play another sport or game.
- Incorporate refugee issues into a Sunday school lesson. Contact LIRS for suggestions.
- Learn about the culture and geography of the refugee family's home country; prepare educational presentation for the rest of the congregation.

"I think that members of the congregation...tend to look through their attics or garages or closets and find helpful items that they can give. It makes and gives an opportunity for the whole congregation to get involved."

---The Rev. Ken Johnson. Chicago

"It brings families together. It's a good thing to do as a couple. It's a good thing for older people who have more time on their hands."

---Pat Reichert. South Dakota

4:3 Spiritual Considerations

It is natural to share what is important to you, including your faith, with a refugee family. The purpose of co-sponsorship, however, is to offer caring support to a family in need that is not based on what they believe or a desire to convert them to a different faith. *Proselytizing, i.e., inducing someone to convert to one's own religious faith, is strictly not allowed in co-sponsorship.* LIRS and its partners have made a commitment with the federal government, our communities and the refugees whom we serve to not proselytize during any of our activities, programs or events.

Many refugees have spent years fleeing persecution because of their faith. For this reason, it is especially important that they feel safe practicing their faith in the United States.

For others, religious beliefs and traditions may be one of the few elements of their heritage that they have not lost in their flight. These practices are one of the threads that connect them to their home, and it is important to respect refugees' desire to hold onto that familiar thread as you help them to adjust to so much change in their new home.

Some co-sponsorship teams host a welcome reception for the refugee family at their church or other location. This is a good way for the refugee family to meet church members without pressuring them to attend the church. In all that you do, make sure that they understand your help is not contingent on their participation in your church or a declaration of faith.

4:4 Confidentiality

Confidentiality is an important practice in health care and social services. Agencies that have access to a client's private information are legally and ethically bound to keep that information restricted to those who "need to know." Your resettlement agency has a responsibility to honor the privacy of each refugee, and you will not have access to information about your family that is not integral to completing your duties as a volunteer.

By law, health care professionals cannot share a person's medical information unless approved by a patient in writing. The refugees you are working with may not want you to know about their medical condition, and it is their right to keep this information private. If a healthcare professional wants to share confidential information with you, stop them and remind them of the refugees' rights as patients.

Any information that *is* essential to completing your duties will be entrusted to you with the understanding that you will not share it with anyone else.

Tips for Respecting Confidentiality

- Ask the refugees what you may tell others and what they consider private.
- Do not share the refugees' names, addresses, phone numbers or personal circumstances without consent.
- Do not share information in the church bulletin or newsletter without consent.
- Even "little" stories shared with friends and congregation members could mean sharing personal information that your new refugee friends may not want shared. Remember the refugees' privacy during all conversations.

Please note: If refugees *are* comfortable sharing their stories with the public media, there are other things to consider besides confidentiality. Media interaction has ramifications for the family, the ethnic community and the local resettlement program. Please see section 2.3 of this manual for more information on media communication, and *contact your local resettlement agency if the media is inquiring about a refugee family.*

Refugees, like most people, would not appreciate having their personal medical information shared with their congregation, community, or friends. The same applies to Social Security numbers, phone numbers or addresses that may be used for identity theft.

4:5 Advocacy

Your desire to serve refugees is likely rooted in a love of justice and compassion for the oppressed, the poor, the homeless, the rejected and the disenfranchised. We encourage you to be motivated by that love of justice and compassion to go beyond direct ministry and work toward righting the injustices that cause suffering. Following are some things you can do to support displaced persons through advocacy:

Visit LIRS Online at www.lirs.org

- Read LIRS's monthly "Advocacy Update" column and subscribe to FYI, our bimonthly newsletter.
- Read and respond to Action Alerts, occasional notices about urgent advocacy needs.
- Find links to your elected officials' contact information.
- Read educational materials about refugee and asylum issues.
- Learn about the LIRS Ambassadors Circle and how you can participate.
- Read a list of 25 ways to support refugees beyond co-sponsorship.

Encourage Your Congregation to Take Action

- Reflect on scriptural passages relating to refugee and migrant issues. (*See Appendix A:5*)
- Pray for refugees and asylum seekers.
- Learn about U.S. policy and response to the global refugee problem and to refugees and asylum seekers in the United States.
- Write letters to the editor or op-ed pieces.
- Form an advocacy committee to keep the congregation informed of legislative issues.
- Visit legislators' local offices to discuss policies affecting refugees.
- Consider candidates' stands on refugee and migrant issues before casting your vote.
- Participate in local hearings and public gatherings; ensure that refugee issues are addressed at these meetings.
- Educate. Share your experience and concern with your community, and encourage them to become involved in co-sponsorship and advocacy action.

A:1 About Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service

LIRS, the U.S. Lutheran expression of service to refugees and migrants in America, has been bringing new hope and new life to newcomers since 1939. In partnership with a national network of affiliates, partners, congregations and volunteers, LIRS resettles refugees, protects unaccompanied refugee children, advocates for fair and just treatment of asylum seekers, and seeks alternatives to detention for those who are incarcerated during their immigration proceedings. With initiative and sound stewardship, LIRS seeks creative and lasting solutions to the needs of uprooted people regardless of their race, ethnicity or religious beliefs.

Contracted by the federal government to resettle refugees, LIRS is a partner of the U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement. Based in Baltimore, LIRS works through a network of 26 affiliates and 20 suboffices throughout the country to welcome the stranger to new life in America. LIRS resettled 9,297 refugees in 2004, making it the largest Protestant resettlement agency in the country.

Basic support for LIRS comes from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and the Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, as well as Lutheran congregations and individual donors. LIRS relies on extensive volunteer and financial support by parishes across the country to bring new hope and new life to refugees entering the United States.

LIRS is committed to assisting co-sponsors in the resettlement process. Although a case manager will almost always be the first person you should contact with any questions, if an occasion arises in which you need LIRS's assistance, you can reach our office in Baltimore at co-sponsorship@lirs.org or 410/230-2700.

The LIRS Mission

**In response to God's
love in Christ, we
welcome the stranger,
bringing new hope
and new life through
ministries of service
and justice.**

A:2 General Co-Sponsorship Checklist

The following is a general checklist of the basic needs of refugee clients. The federal government requires that this checklist be completed. Every resettlement office will have a different strategy for meeting these needs. Review the specific responsibilities of your team with your case manager to determine which of the following tasks will be completed by your co-sponsorship team and which will be handled directly by the affiliate office. *Remember that your affiliate office is always ultimately responsible for the delivery of services.* If there is a service your team can not complete, let the office know and they will make sure that it gets done! *(Please note that this is a sample form. Your local office will provide the any actual forms they want you to complete.)*

Anchor Relative or Co-sponsor Commitment Form

Refugee Case Number:	DOA:
Name of PA:	
See attached evaluation of: <input type="checkbox"/> Anchor Relative or Friend	<input type="checkbox"/> Co-sponsor
Is Anchor/co-sponsor different from that listed on bio? Is address different?	
Local Airport:	City of Final Destination:

Please indicate who will provide each of the following resettlement services:

Affiliate	Anchor Relative	Co-Sponsor	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Meet the family at airport and transport to housing.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Provide acceptable housing for at least 30 days.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Provide food or food allowance for at least 30days.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Provide clothing and other necessities for at least 30 days.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Help refugees apply for Social Security Cards.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Help refugees receive a health screening within 30 days.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Register children at school.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Help adults learn English.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Assist with orientation to the community.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Help adults prepare for and obtain work.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Provide transportation to job training interviews or training.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Maintain contact with the resettlement agency for 90 days and complete all required documentation.

I/we hereby commit to assist this refugee family with the services indicated above. I/we understand that this is a moral commitment only, and that the local resettlement agency is ultimately responsible for the provision of these services.

Signature of Anchor Relative: _____

Signature of Interpreter: _____

Signature of Co-sponsor representative: _____

Signature of Agency representative: _____

Date: _____

The federal government also requires that the local affiliate complete the following form to evaluate what your congregation will be able to contribute to the resettlement process. *(Again, please note that this is a sample form.)*

Co-Sponsor Evaluation	
Name of Co-sponsoring group:	
Address:	
Congregation <input type="checkbox"/>	Community Group <input type="checkbox"/>
Case manager for this case:	
Any preferred type of family they would like to assist?	
Volunteer resources:	
Who will be the main contact?	
Number of expected volunteers:	
Any unique assets that the group will provide the family (e.g. language, cultural experience, community ties):	
Will the group be able to locate and transport in-kind items?	
What financial resources will your group be able to provide?	
Orientation and Training:	
The following training resources have been made available to the co-sponsoring group:	
This group will be provided co-sponsor orientation on the following days and times:	
	Notes:
	Notes:
Any additional questions or comments:	
Evaluator: _____	
Signature: _____	Date: _____

The following list is more thorough than the government form. We recommend that you meet with your local case manager and go through both lists to determine whether the affiliate or your team will be responsible for each item. Ask lots of questions and take lots of notes at this meeting to make sure you understand exactly what is entailed in these responsibilities and can communicate that information to your team.

Before the Family Arrives

- Organize a team meeting to explain and delegate upcoming responsibilities.
- Use the worksheet in Appendix A:3 to determine your team's budget.
- Publicize your efforts within the congregation, and raise funds to meet costs.
- Assist resettlement agency in finding housing for the refugee family. Work with the agency to arrange for payment of rent and utilities. (Never pay rent or make deposits before receiving final arrival notification from the office.)
- Collect furniture, goods and nonperishable food.
- Collect basic clothing. A larger clothing drive can be held after arrival to ensure correct sizes.
- Organize a volunteer transportation system.
- If possible and appropriate, find donated bicycles for the family.
- Make medical appointments, remembering to plan for vaccinations for children enrolling in school.
- Make appointment to apply for public assistance benefits.
- Move furniture and goods into the refugees' new housing.
- Find sources for foods familiar to the family.
- One day prior to arrival, purchase food for the family.
- Schedule an orientation appointment with the case manager for the first week after arrival.
- Arrange for welcome at airport and transportation to the refugees' new home.
- Ensure that the family has a culturally appropriate hot meal ready to eat when they arrive at their new home.
- Schedule times for volunteers to make daily visits to the refugee family for the first week.

After the Family Arrives

- Complete an initial home safety orientation.
- Explain safety precautions (not leaving children home alone, turning off the stove, using electrical outlets). You will need to repeat these details.
- Provide transportation and attend the orientation appointment at the LIRS affiliate office, and attend the meeting.
- Provide transportation and assist the family in getting photo identification cards.
- Provide transportation to medical appointments and ensure completion of medical screening and immunizations.
- Provide transportation and assist with initial school enrollment meeting.
- Provide transportation and assist with public assistance enrollment.
- Ensure that clients are enrolled in ESL classes and are able to attend.
- Ensure that one team member contacts family at least once per week.
- Take family to the grocery store and explain healthy food options.
- Take family to laundromat and explain how to do laundry.
- Explain how to use U.S. currency.
- Assist in finding employment, e.g., help create résumé, practice interview skills, and assist with transportation.

As time passes, your team will become more of a reference point than a direct service provider for the refugee family. For example, when a family member has a minor illness, refer the family to the doctor that you introduced them to earlier. Remember, the goal is always self-sufficiency. Refugee families have endured some of life's greatest hardships and survived. They are more than able to become self-sufficient in America; they just need assistance learning the ropes.

- Explain income, sales and payroll taxes.
- Explain Social Security.
- Accompany on first bus trip. Provide route maps and schedules.
- Explain basic budgeting and banking skills, and create a budget.
- Explain bills and other monthly mailings.
- Introduce the family to cultural community activities.
- Help find low-cost daycare facilities.
- Continue for first few weeks to accompany to grocery store.
- Assist in explaining cultural norms: keeping appointments, being on time for commitments, following safety standards for children.



A:3 Co-Sponsorship Team Budget

Use this form to help your team determine how much money your team anticipates spending for each month of the resettlement process. Without watching your expenses, your team could end up donating more money to the family than you originally planned. This outline can help your finance team keep track of how much money is being spent each month.

Monthly Expense	Estimated Need	Family Contribution	Team Commitment
Rent and Utilities	\$	\$	\$
Food until food stamps arrive	\$	\$	\$
Household goods and furnishings	\$	\$	\$
Clothing	\$	\$	\$
Phone	\$	\$	\$
Transportation/Fuel	\$	\$	\$
Other:	\$	\$	\$
Other:	\$	\$	\$
Other:	\$	\$	\$
TOTALS	\$	\$	\$

A:4 Co-Sponsorship in Action: Challenges and Scenarios

As your team grows closer to the refugee family, it may seem difficult to say *no* when they ask for assistance. But you will not and *should* not be able to do everything the family would like you to do. **Remember that the goal is always self-sufficiency. Everything your team does should empower the refugee family to become self-sufficient.**

When You Feel Overburdened

A co-sponsorship team should never feel overburdened. If your team is unable to assist the family with a particular situation, or you are unsure if their request for assistance is appropriate, always remember you need not feel pressured to assist.

- Consider whether the family could handle this situation without your team's assistance. How could you encourage them to do it on their own?
- Explain and guide the family through a way of handling the situation on their own. Assist the family through guidance and suggestions, rather than action.
- Contact your case manager to help clarify who should be responsible to handle the situation. It may be appropriate for the affiliate office to assist.
- If your availability is the only issue, tell the refugee family you must consult your co-sponsorship team before determining appropriate assistance.
- If timing is the only issue, suggest the activity take place at a later time and date when it is appropriate for the co-sponsorship team to assist.
- Refer the family to the specific social services agency that can assist them.

Scenario 1

The head of a refugee family complains that public transportation is too difficult in your city. He requests your team to take him to the department of motor vehicles to get his driver's license.

There are many nuances of American culture and law to which refugees must become accustomed, including the laws and culture of driving in the United States. Explain to the refugee that a written test and a road test are required before receiving a license, and that some states require completion of a driver education course. Provide information on a local driving school. Explain that the cost of owning and maintaining a car is quite high, and that biking or public transportation is often necessary for a long time after resettlement. Is a car necessary for the family? Unless they need a vehicle for transportation to work, owning a car is usually a luxury. If the refugee persists in pursuing a license, suggest that he use public transportation or other means of travel to the department of motor vehicles.

Scenario 2

The refugee family has been living in your town for two months. Each week a member of the co-sponsorship team accompanies the family for grocery shopping. Although the team enjoys this activity, you feel it is time for the family to become self-sufficient, and the family continues to insist they need to be accompanied to the grocery store.

Explain to the family that you believe they are ready to complete this activity alone. Help them complete a grocery list to make them feel more comfortable going to the store. Use labels or drawings from previous weeks if necessary. Make sure to review currency before the shopping trip, so that they are comfortable using and understanding the value of the various bills.

Scenario 3

It is Friday evening. You and your family are getting ready to go to dinner. You get a call from your refugee family that has been in the United States for two months. The mother is saying that she has trouble digesting food and needs a ride to the hospital.

- First, the family should not have access to every team member's home phone number. They should only have the number for your team leader and your leader is the one who should have contacted you.
- You are not expected to drop plans with your family to meet the needs of a refugee family. They have been in the country developing connections and learning how to navigate things on their own.
- In most instances the family will have friends in their ethnic community that are able to help them. If the situation is not severe, they know how to ride the bus to get to the hospital.
- You are not emergency medical personnel. If the family has a legitimate medical emergency they need to call 911. In any other emergency they should be contacting the resettlement office.
- You may feel compelled to change your plans and be with the family. Please keep in mind that you will not always be available for the family and that they will need to learn to navigate such situations on their own. Do what you think is right while still maintaining a healthy boundary with the family.

Scenario 4

The family calls and says that they need a ride to the grocery store. While at the store, they add items to the cart that they expect you to buy for them.

- The family should not have access to every team member's home phone number, only the team leader's. The team leader should be the one calling you.
- Activities such as trips to the grocery should be planned well in advance. You can suggest taking them at the regularly scheduled time, or have them accompany you when you do your own shopping. Going to the store is not an emergency.
- If they can't wait, suggest that they ride the bus or go with a neighbor. They will always know someone other than you who can help.
- If you can take them to the grocery store, keep in mind the principle of volunteering as a group. Tell them that you have to talk with the group before you agree to provide transportation. Let your team leader know when you are planning to take them to the store. This way all members of the team will know what is being done for the family. Remember that your decisions affect not only yourself, but everyone on the team. Being immediately available could become an expectation for everyone in the group.
- While at the store be very clear that *they* are the ones who are shopping with *their own* money or food stamps. Purchasing for them only hinders their ability to be self-sufficient. Imagine if a case manager bought groceries for each one of his or her clients. It would be impossible. The family needs to get used to shopping with its own resources.

A:5 Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the difference between an immigrant and a refugee?

An immigrant is any foreign-born individual who comes to the United States with the intention of staying here. This is in contrast to a non-immigrant who only plans on visiting the United States for a while.

Refugees are a subcategory of immigrants. A refugee is a person who has a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion. A refugee is living outside his or her country and cannot return home without fear of being harmed.

Very few refugees in the world are resettled in the United States. Less than one half of one percent of all refugees in the world are resettled in any country. The vast majority live in a refugee camp or urban area in another country of first asylum. Some refugees are constantly on the move from one camp or country to the next. Those who are resettled in the United States have a special refugee status that affords them residency and access to special programs and services.

2. How are refugees allowed to come to the United States?

Refugees must meet certain criteria set by the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the U.S. government in order to be resettled here. Refugees go through an intensive screening process and a series of interviews overseas before they are eligible to be resettled. This process often takes years. Once a refugee family has been cleared to come to the United States, they are assigned to LIRS or another national voluntary agency that begins the process of arranging for them to come here.

The U.S. government admits only a certain number of refugees to the United States each year. This admission ceiling has for the last 10 years, been around 70,000. That number is apportioned by geographic region and ethnicity.

For many years the United States has fallen far short of reaching the admissions ceiling. The events of September 11, 2001 further hindered reaching the annual ceiling. Refugee resettlement is a humanitarian program of the United States with strong commitment from Congress and the president. This program unites families and provides a new start for thousands of refugees each year.

3. How is the U.S. refugee admissions ceiling established?

Congress sends a recommendation on the ceiling for any given year to the president, who in turn writes a determination letter setting the ceiling of refugee admissions for that year. A new presidential determination letter is written each year.

4. When will the refugees arrive?

Once a refugee family is cleared for travel to the United States, LIRS and the local affiliate have no control over the scheduling of exactly when they will fly here. While the affiliate will notify the co-sponsoring congregation as soon as it has confirmation of an arrival date, delays are frequent, so the affiliate may be able to give only a few days' notice to the co-sponsoring congregation. While this can be frustrating for your team, it is much more frustrating and stressful for a refugee family facing the uncertainty of their future in a new country.

Many factors influence the estimated arrival time of refugees who are waiting in their country of first asylum. One important factor is the availability of flights from the country where the family is waiting. Even after receiving a final arrival notice, there are rare occasions when the refugee family does not arrive at the airport.

5. Who pays for the refugee family's travel?

Each refugee receives an interest-free travel loan from the U.S. government. Prior to leaving the country of first asylum, the head of the refugee family signs a promissory note to repay the family's loan. Approximately three months after the family's arrival, LIRS will send them a letter notifying them that they will soon receive their first bill to begin repayment of their travel loan. It is very important that refugees repay their travel loan. Repayment allows the refugee to establish a positive credit record, which will be a great help when the time comes to purchase a house or car. Conversely, non-payment will negatively affect a refugee's credit. Furthermore, the money from repaid travel loans is used to bring other refugees to the United States. Non-repayment directly impacts the opportunity of other refugees to be resettled in the United States.

6. Will the refugees have luggage?

Depending upon the circumstance of the individual refugee, some may arrive with luggage, others with just a small bag containing a few possessions. Even if they have luggage, keep in mind that what they carry is all they own in the world. American families moving overseas for even a year or two typically pack and ship large crates of "essentials" in addition to the luggage they carry on the plane. Consider how many suitcases would you bring if you had to move to a new country for the rest of your life.

Refugees from warmer climates may be unprepared for cold weather. You should bring warm outer clothing and footwear with you to the airport during winter months.

7. What is the goal of co-sponsorship?

The goal of co-sponsorship is to help the refugee family become self-sufficient in the United States. As your co-sponsorship team makes the family feel comfortable in their new community, you will also be helping them to become self-sufficient. The goal is never to do everything for a refugee family, but rather to teach them how to live and succeed in the United States.

8. Will the refugees be healthy?

Prior to departure each refugee receives a preliminary health exam. If a refugee has a communicable medical condition they will have to wait to be treated overseas. A woman over seven months pregnant will usually have to wait until she delivers the baby. However, there have been cases where a refugee has arrived with a physical problem without prior notification.

After arrival each refugee is required to have an additional health screening within 30 days. Many refugees show a positive skin test for tuberculosis (TB). This does not mean that the refugee has active TB that can be spread. Instead, he or she may have latent TB that comes from previous exposure or from a past TB vaccination.

9. Will the refugees know any English?

Unless otherwise indicated by your case manager, do not expect your refugee family to know English. If possible, recruit volunteers who can speak the family's language. A bilingual dictionary will also be helpful. Some refugees may have learned English or come from countries where English is spoken, but their accents may be hard to understand at first.

10. Can we select refugees we want to co-sponsor?

While every effort is made to match congregations with refugees of a desired country or particular family size, we encourage congregations to be open to accepting refugees from any part of the world.

11. What else will the local congregation know prior to the refugee family's arrival?

LIRS and your local affiliate office have limited biographical information on refugees before their arrival. These biographical data forms are prepared by the interviewers at the various overseas processing posts and sent to LIRS. However, there have been instances when the information is not accurate.

12. What will the family know about the co-sponsorship team prior to arriving?

Regardless of what refugees may be told during orientation overseas, their concept of a co-sponsor may be different than yours. This is why it is very important for you to meet with the adult refugees shortly after their arrival to explain your role. At this meeting, you will have the opportunity to discover what expectations the refugees may have regarding you and their new life. It is important for both refugees and co-sponsors to clarify any misconceptions as early as possible in the co-sponsorship process.

A:6 Worship Resources

Bible Passages

All references are from the New Revised Standard Version.

- **Exodus 23:9**
“You shall not oppress a resident alien; you know the heart of an alien, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt.”
- **Leviticus 19:33, 34**
“When an alien resides with you in your land, you shall not oppress the alien. The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God.”
- **Deuteronomy 10:17–19**
“For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who is not partial and takes no bribe, who executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and who loves the stranger, providing them food and clothing. You should also love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.”
- **Deuteronomy 24:17–22**
“You shall not deprive a resident alien or an orphan of justice; you shall not take a widow's garment in pledge. Remember that you were a slave in Egypt and the Lord your God redeemed you from there; therefore I command you to do this. When you reap your harvest in your field and forget a sheaf in the field, you shall not go back to get it; it shall be left for the alien, the orphan, and the widow, so that the Lord your God may bless you in all your undertakings. When you beat your olive trees, do not strip what is left; it shall be for the alien, the orphan, and the widow. When you gather the grapes of your vineyard, do not glean what is left; it shall be for the alien, the orphan, and the widow. Remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt; therefore I am commanding you to do this”
- **Proverbs 31:8–9**
Speak out for those who cannot speak,
For the rights of all the destitute.
Speak out, judge righteously,
Defend the rights of the poor and needy.
- **Matthew 2:13–15**
Now after they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.” Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, “Out of Egypt I have called my son.”
- **Matthew 25:34–40**
“Then the king will say to those at his right hand, ‘Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.’”

Then the righteous will answer him, “Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?” And the king will answer them, “Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.””

- **Luke 4:16–30**

When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.” And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to say to them, “Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.” All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his mouth. They said, “Is not this Joseph's son?” He said to them, “Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb, ‘Doctor, cure yourself!’ And you will say, ‘Do here also in your hometown the things that we have heard you did at Capernaum.’” And he said, “Truly I tell you, no prophet is accepted in the prophet's hometown. But the truth is, there were many widows in Israel in the time of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, and there was a severe famine over all the land; yet Elijah was sent to none of them except to a widow at Zarephath in Sidon. There were also many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian.” When they heard this, all in the synagogue were filled with rage. They got up, drove him out of the town, and led him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they might hurl him off the cliff. But he passed through the midst of them and went on his way.

- **Philippians 2:3–5**

Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus....

- **Hebrews 13:2**

Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it.

- **1 John 4:19–21**

We love because he first loved us. Those who say, “I love God,” and hate their brothers or sisters, are liars; for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen. The commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also.

World Refugee Day

Worship materials related to UNHCR's World Refugee Day, June 20, are posted on the LIRS website each year. Visit www.lirs.org for details. Although these materials are designed for World Refugee Day, you may find them useful on other occasions.

A Litany for Ministry With Uprooted People

Leader: Almighty God, thanks be to you for your love and goodness showered on us each day. We praise you for the gift of your Son, our Savior, in whom we have forgiveness and abundant life. We give you thanks for your Holy Spirit who keeps us in faith.

Congregation: We thank you for the gifts of life, family, friends and home. We are grateful especially for the care of others in our times of need. Lead us to show our thankfulness to you by caring for others in their times of need.

Leader: O God, teach us how to show your justice and kindness to uprooted people who are often unknown, forgotten or cast aside in our world today. Give us courage to step out in faith with you, to speak out and befriend the men and women, boys and girls who need freedom and healing to make life whole.

Congregation: Stir us by your love. Move us to be messengers of your good tidings to the afflicted, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, to comfort all who mourn, to give them a garland instead of ashes so that you may be glorified.

Leader: Almighty God, we pray for peace in our world. We pray for the leaders and people of other nations as well as our own, that all may see the glory of your ways and seek to work for peace.

Congregation: Show us our part in creating this peace at home and abroad. Teach us how to proclaim your care and wisdom in deeds and words that transcend cultures and backgrounds. Help us to recognize that people of different cultures and backgrounds can also be your messengers of love to us. Show us how to work with them in ways that are pleasing to you.

Leader: Our God our Savior, we thank you for renewing and restoring our lives every day. Turn us around when we have lost our way. Open our hearts to open doors for uprooted people.

Congregation: We thank you for the resurrection surprises you continue to bestow. Inspire and lead us that we may lift up your love for humanity in ministry with uprooted people. This we ask in Jesus' name. Amen.

A:7 Other Resources

You are not alone in the co-sponsorship process! LIRS, its affiliates and co-sponsors such as you resettled over 9,000 refugees in 2004. These resources have been created in order to assist you in your co-sponsorship efforts. In addition, your case manager is an invaluable resource. Be sure to consult him or her when your team has questions.

Resources not mentioned may be available; call LIRS at 410/230-2700 if needed materials are not available at your local office.

Basic Information on Refugees and Refugee Resettlement

- FAQs on refugee resettlement — www.lirs.org/InfoRes/faq.htm
- U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees — www.unhcr.ch
- U.S. Committee for Refugees — www.refugees.org
- U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement — www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/orr/programs/overviewrp.htm (*Describes the process of refugee resettlement in the United States.*)
- U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services — uscis.gov/graphics/howdoi/refapp.htm (*Describes how one becomes eligible for refugee resettlement in the United States.*)

Resources for Cultural Information

Most importantly, check with your case manager to learn if there is a community already in your area you can connect with to learn first hand about the culture of the refugee family.

- Cultural Orientation Resource Center — www.culturalorientation.net/index.html
- The World Factbook — www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook (*Presents basic information on every country in the world.*)

Support for Your Congregation's Social Ministry

- Visit www.lirs.org to learn about advocacy efforts on behalf of refugees and immigrants.
- The following materials from LIRS are available online at www.lirs.org, or in print by calling 410/230-2700 or e-mailing lirs@lirs.org:
 - *Responding to the Call: A Manual for Congregations Reaching out to Immigrants Through Ministries of Service and Justice* —
 - “Responding to the Call: Reaching Out to Immigrants Through Social Ministry” — LIRS brochure that provides guidance for congregations. Call 410/230-2700 or e-mail lirs@lirs.org to request a copy.
 - “Opening Hearts, Opening Doors for Refugees,” an LIRS brochure that gives an overview of refugee resettlement ministries.
- Read questions frequently asked by refugees at www.culturalorientation.net/faq.html.
- Lutheran Office for Governmental Affairs — www.loga.org (*Provides action alerts on current policy issues, links to elected officials, and guidelines for organizing advocacy within your congregation.*)
- ELCA Committee for Multicultural Ministry — www.elca.org/cmm
- ELCA Division for Church and Society — www.elca.org/dcs
- Multicultural ministry resources from Augsburg Fortress — www.augsburgfortress.org/multicultural
- Living The Faith: A Guide to Strengthening Multicultural Relationship
- Cross-Cultural Programming Guide

Social Services Resources

- Visit www.lirs.org to download or order *Pocket Knowledge*, a manual geared toward asylees, but useful for explaining basic rights and services available to all newcomers to the United States.
- Visit www.lirs.org to view archived issues of the RefugeeWorks Employment Quarterly newsletter, which focuses on employment issues.
- Visit www.humanrights.state.mn.us for information on basic rights regarding housing and other necessities.

Books on Refugee Issues

- *In the Middle of Everywhere*, by Mary Pipher
Examines the transition of resettlement and provides practical ways in which individuals can welcome and support refugees during that transition.
- *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down*, by Anne Fadiman
Introduces the cultural challenges inherent in refugee resettlement through the lens of one Hmong family's struggle with the American medical system.
- *Do They Hear You When You Cry*, by Fauziya Kassindja
The personal account of a young Togolese woman's fleeing female genital mutilation and her experience as a detainee upon arrival as an asylum seeker in the United States.
- *Behind the Burqa: Our Life in Afghanistan and How We Escaped to Freedom*, by Sulima and Hala as told to Batya Swift Yasgur
Tells the true story of two sisters' struggle in Afghanistan during Taliban rule, their flight from Afghanistan and their eventual resettlement in the United States.
- *Lost Boy No More*, by Pastor Abraham Nhial
In this memoir the author's tells his story of being orphaned at a young age in Sudan, fleeing from persecution, and eventual being resettled in the United States.

Information on Immigration Law

- FAQs on immigration law and immigration detention — www.lirs.org/InfoRes/faq.htm
- Immigration myths and facts — www.aila.org
- National Council de la Raza — www.nclr.org (*Provides fact sheets with good general information on immigration law.*)