

## **Sample Cosponsorship Resettlement Team Structure with Committee Descriptions**

Due to the Afghan crisis that brought thousands of refugees to America, WJCI is working to establish and support 15-20 new "Host Groups" in 2022. Under the direction of a resettlement agency, including HIAS and IRIS, each group will receive training and assistance to help refugees find housing, furnishings, clothing and other essentials, and to lead a family in securing education for their children, English language instruction, job interview skills, and employment. Here are the committees that each Host Group will need to form:

### **Group Co-leaders:**

Choose two co-leaders who:

- Ensure that all committees are established, fully staffed, and perform necessary duties.
- Liaise with the resettlement agency and act as point of contact.
- Coordinate committees' overlapping activities.
- Serve as primary contacts for team members and family.
- Check in regularly with the refugee family.
- Ensure that all volunteers have undergone background checks through IRIS or HIAS, youth protection training, and co-sponsorship training.
- Ensure that each committee has required documentation.

### **Fundraising Coordinator**

- Spearheads effort to raise funds, primarily for 3-6 months—but realistically up to 12 months— of rental assistance

### **Housing Committee**

- Identifies affordable neighborhoods that are accessible to public transportation and other resources, such as Halal grocery stores. Consider safety, diversity, affordability, and a sense of welcoming,
- Must consider communities in your area that share the cultural background and/or language of the refugees.
- Navigates the rental market to identify 1-4BR apartments, depending on family size.
- Identifies landlords amenable to renting to a newly arriving refugee family and willing to allow a guarantor or co-signer on the lease.
- If your family is matched with a client who has a physical disability, identify specific needs to ensure that the new home is accessible.
- Upon notification of the family arrival date, negotiate a one-year lease and secure the apartment.
- Connect utilities.
- Help the family develop a working relationship with the landlord & address any issues that arise.

### **Housing Set-Up Committee (may be combined with the Housing Committee)**

- Collects required furniture & household items
  - Use NextDoor, Craig's List, Furniture Sharehouse, personal networks and other local resources to find required furniture..
  - Gathers housewares & supplies (Use NextDoor, committees, networks etc. to gather donated kitchen supplies from list provided by Resettlement Agency)
  - Items to purchase: mattresses, bedding, bathroom and cleaning supplies must be new
- Sets aside, if possible, two days for:
  - Cleaning
  - Team of people to pick up, gather and set up furniture on designated day(s)
- Groceries
  - Purchase groceries using a list of culturally appropriate groceries and stocks fridge & pantry with groceries and staples prior to family's arrival.

### **Welcome Point Person(s)**

- Meets family at designated arrival point.
- Obtains and brings weather-appropriate clothing.
- Must arrange for an interpreter to accompany you to the arrival point & the family's apartment.
- Arranges for preparation of a culturally appropriate hot meal for arrival day. (This can be coordinated with other Host Groups who have recently welcomed families.)
- Google Translate is a useful tool for volunteers and the family.

### **Community Connections Committee - Responsible for welcoming and introducing the family to their new neighborhood.**

- Researches the neighborhood. You will be the family/individual's guide.
- Looks at public transportation, grocery stores, laundromats, pharmacies, distance of schools, library and parks.
- Creates a binder for the family with information about the community.
  - Include the names and numbers of your committee as contacts.
  - May also include photos since there will be so many new faces.
  - List emergency information for fire or medical emergencies.
  - Include information about the apartment - fire escape, garbage, recycling, any rules or restrictions.
- \*Creates an Information / Safety card, have it translated and printed.
- Helps to provide ways for the family to adjust to American culture.
- Helps navigate shopping at the grocery store, pharmacy, etc. (Sign up for store rewards cards, how to identify sales, who to ask for help).
- Creates opportunities for families to pursue interests and hobbies such as soccer, summer camp, by connecting them with local resources.
- Coordinates outings to NYC, a trip to the movies, etc. Fundraising does not include trips to the city and outings. It is important to show the family what is accessible and not cost prohibitive. A Host Group may decide to pay for educational programming for children over the summer. Most local communities run summer programs at a reasonable rate.

## **Finance Committee**

- Identifies a non-profit entity to serve as a fiduciary for holding co-sponsorship funds (Signing a legal agreement is recommended if outside of a Host Group's member congregations/organizations.)
- Identifies an entity within the group or affiliated with the group to co-sign the apartment lease.
- Develops a co-sponsorship budget, including funds raised by co-sponsor & federal "Reception & Placement" funds for the family. Be ready to explain to the family how it works.
- Oversees resettlement disbursements
  - The US State Department provides the sponsoring resettlement agency (i.e., IRIS) a Reception & Placement (R&P) Grant of \$2,275 for each refugee that arrives in the United States.
  - The grant funds breakdown as follows:
    - \$1,025. of the R&P grant covers direct expenses of each refugee (e.g., a family of four receives \$4,100 or 4x\$1,025).
    - The grant is deposited into an account specifically earmarked for the refugee.
    - In a co-sponsorship arrangement, a resettlement agency typically uses these funds to reimburse the co-sponsorship/Host Group for eligible expenses. Typical reimbursable expenses include rent, groceries, cell phone, bus passes, utilities, mattresses, furniture and other household items, car seats, baby items, and clothing.
    - \$1,050 in Administration Funds. This amount goes directly to the resettlement agency to cover the agency's services and operating costs.
- Helps family access public assistance, primarily through your state's Department of Social Services (DSS): food stamps (SNAP), Medicaid, Temporary Family Assistance (TFA) benefits.
- Identifies & helps the family access local resources: e.g., food pantries, diaper banks, etc.
- Develops and coaches family on household budget & managing resources (for rent, utilities, food, transportation, & other living expenses)
- Helps families develop a system for paying bills.

## **ESL/Interpreter Point Person(s)**

- Recruits interpreters who speak the most common languages among newly arriving refugees (currently, Swahili, Dari/Farsi, Pashto, Arabic); professional interpreters not necessary.
- Determines if interpreters will serve on a volunteer basis or receive compensation.
- Schedules interpreters for important meetings/appointments (especially arrival, initial intake, medical, employment and financial meetings).
- If you are unable to find volunteer interpreters, your Host Group will need to collect funds to pay for these services because interpretation is required by the State Department for service provision throughout the initial resettlement period.
- If your family speaks Dari or Farsi you can use Google Translate and download Persian. Google Translate is a useful tool for volunteers and new families.

## **Transportation Committee**

- Gathers a team of drivers
  - Drivers who are available during the day for medical appointments
  - At least one driver who can be available on short notice
  - Purchase child car seats. These need to go with the Airport Team and then they will stay with the family. Anyone who drives the family will need to use them.
  - Each Resettlement Agency requires all volunteers to have a background check and drivers need a DMV background check as well.

## **Healthcare Committee**

- Accompanies each refugee to a Refugee Health Assessment (RHA) within 30 days of arrival.
- Identifies primary care and mental health providers in the area who are accepting new patients with Medicaid and who provide interpreters (either in person or by phone).
- Accompanies refugees to first appointments with primary care providers and any specialists necessary for follow-up
- Empowers refugee adults to navigate the healthcare system and advocate for themselves as patients: make appointments, request interpreters with medical providers, take public transportation, or request rides when necessary.
- Assists with urgent or emergency medical needs.

## **Education Committee**

- Locates the best school for each child.
- Must gather and learn the school registration process and school resources for English Language Learners before the family arrives. They should enter school within week one or two of arrival. (A signed lease is required to register for public school. Schools may also require an assessment to determine best class placement.)
- Registers children for school and adults in ESOL classes. Helps family navigate public school bus pick-ups & drop-offs.
- Acts as liaison with public schools that children will attend
- Finds free local ESOL classes for adults and helps to arrange childcare (through Childcare Point Person) and/or early childhood education programs for toddlers.
- Ensures English language classes are available via public transportation.
- Must be prepared to provide one-on-one English tutoring on a regular basis.
- Form a small team of tutors and homework helpers for both children and adults.

## **Employment Committee**

- Looks for entry-level jobs in areas that don't require English proficiency or require minimal proficiency (i.e. factory work, cleaning, service industry)
- Must build or plug into a network to locate potential employers.
- Most of this team's work will take place after the family arrives.

Ready to improve the lives of new refugee arrivals? Email [info@wjci.org](mailto:info@wjci.org) for more information on getting started.