

## Resettlement Timeline: First 90 Days

The following is a snapshot of what newly-arrived refugee families experience during their R&P period, which lasts 90 days. It should be noted that unforeseen events and situations can at times disrupt the linear layout of services delivery, making certain services delayed or secondarily prioritized. This should be rough guide to the next 90 days with your refugee family.

### WEEKS ONE & TWO

#### What to Expect:

- Family is visited by WR staff the **day after arrival**
- Family goes to **Social Security** to apply for Social Security Numbers
- Family attends an **formal office visit** at WR-Triad's office to:
  - set up utilities in families
  - Employment orientation
  - Apply for food stamps, cash assistance and Medicaid
    - Married refugees with no kids or single refugees without children: Refugee Cash Assistance and Refugee Medicaid
    - Household's with kids: Work First and Family Medicaid
- WR assists with initial **groceries** and access to cash from Resettlement Welcome Money
- Adults age 18+ enroll in **ESL** classes
- Family has been taken to the Shalom Project for weather appropriate clothing

#### What Not to Expect:

- **Family is visited every day by their case manager.** It is true that WR staff will interact with the family by helping them get to/from appointments, but the case manager will not be in the home having a conversation with the family each time s/he visits.
- **Family is receiving all benefits.** Food stamps, Cash Assistance and Medicaid generally take anywhere from 2-4 weeks to receive
- **All adults are attending ESL.** Barriers include lack of space in the class, lack of childcare, and/or not having yet been trained on how to get to/from class.

#### How to Advocate for Your Family:

- If the family has run out of groceries but has not communicated that to WR: if they have money you can assist them with shopping. If they have no money please ask them to talk to WR about requesting money
- If someone in the family is sick or appears in need of medical assistance, reach out to WR staff to see what the best way to handle the situation maybe
- **Reassure the family** that it's normal to feel overwhelmed! Resettlement is hard, but as they complete enrollments and start settling into a schedule, things will slow down a bit for them. There will always be challenges, but there will also be opportunities to learn.

#### Spending Time with Your Family:

- Initially of your contact with the family maybe task orientated. Try building a relationship while taking to appointments.
- Just stopping by their house may be appropriate if the family has no phone.

## WEEKS THREE & FOUR

### What to Expect:

- Children are registered in **school**
- Children under 5, and pregnant mothers, are enrolled in **WIC**
- Family receives a **second home visit** from WR staff
- **Cultural orientation** classes have started, some topics of which include:
  - Refugee status, rights, and responsibilities in the US
  - Healthcare system
  - Importance of ESL/job search, and of attending school
  - Transportation
  - Clothing and other community resources
- **Social Security cards** have usually arrived by now and been delivered to the family
- Family has been scheduled for their **refugee health screening** through Forsyth County Health Department but may not have attended yet
- Plans for **bus training** (or showing how to walk) to ESL classes will have been made, and may have already occurred

### What Not to Expect:

- **All children are attending school.** Even though children may have been registered for school, they may not yet have gone to complete registration at their individual school(s). Sometimes this is due to school staff availability, school schedules (i.e., if it is winter break), or because schools are working with the transportation company to arrange busing.
- **Families understand everything that is going on.** Families get a LOT of mail and phone calls from many different places once they have been registered for services. We do not expect them to know everything, nor do we expect them to remember all of the things we have previously discussed. That's why we always encourage asking questions!
- **Families can do everything on their own.** While we encourage self-sufficiency, families who have been in the US for one month generally still need some help with figuring out their new surroundings. Sometimes, they will need different concepts explained a few times in order to feel confident that they understand.

### How to Advocate for Your Family:

- Again, **encouragement.** The family may still feel uneasy about the resettlement process. Families are in the part of their resettlement where they are transitioning to more independence, and that can be scary for many reasons.
- More **reassurance.** It is normal for families to still feel overwhelmed. Explain to your families that as they settle into more of a routine they may feel better about the process.

### Spending Time with Your Family

- You may still be task focused. Remember wait at appointments can be fun times with your family. And help build a lasting relationship.
- Social gatherings with the team and the family are appropriate. As well as hosting dinners/lunches with them.

## MONTH TWO

### **What to Expect:**

- Family should be **receiving all benefits** (food stamps, cash assistance, Medicaid)
- Family has met with a **World Relief employment services** team member.
- Adults will have applied for State ID
- Family has attended their **health screening**
- Case manager has conducted **cultural orientation** through two classes in the office with the family
- All adults are **attending ESL** regularly (unless childcare or limited class space remains a barrier), and all children are **attending school** each day

### **What Not to Expect:**

- **WR staff members are frequently visiting the family.** We always tell families that they will see us a lot the first month, and less in the second and third ones, because they will be more involved with ESL/school and other appointments. It's not because we don't care about them – it's because we are serving many families at the same time and need to be available to everyone.
- **Families are always happy.** Families are usually beginning to see how soon they will be "on their own" and without their case worker, who has so far navigated their access to all important services. Families may also really start missing people back home, doubt whether they are capable of handling everything here, and worry about the future. The fact that this is very normal should be reinforced.
- **WR knows everything.** It is unlikely the family shares all their concerns with us. In fact, since you as volunteers get to build such wonderful relationships with families and meet them in ways we as staff cannot, you might find you learn more about their struggles and concerns than we do in our more limited roles.
- **Families always fully understand their experience.** It is sometimes difficult for families to see that certain processes take time, and that resettlement agencies are limited in the services they can offer. This may lead families to express frustration and unhappiness with their resettlement experience.

### **How to Advocate for Your Family:**

- If the family tells you they have non-medical appointments they need to get to, remind them that they have been shown how to take the bus and encourage them that they are capable of getting there themselves. Feel free to review a bus route/map with them, but **please do not agree to drive the family everywhere.** This works against the goal of self-sufficiency and creates a level of dependency that will not be helpful to the family long-term.
- **Encourage the family to share concerns with WR staff.** Sometimes, we have the answers and just need to be asked the questions. When we don't have the answers, we can often find someone who does!

### **Spending Time with Your Family**

- You should be moving away from task oriented things. And spending more free time with your family.
- Your family may be coming to you for advice but should be making their own decisions.

## MONTH THREE

### **What to Expect:**

- WR should have complete **cultural orientation assessments** with adults age 18+
- Family may have a general **understanding of their budget** and know how/when to pay their bills with support
- Family should have a **Bank Account**
- Family will know when **Cash Assistance, Medicaid and Food Stamps** need to be reapplied for
- Family should have had an appointment with their **Primary Care Physician**

### **What Not to Expect:**

- **All the family's questions have been answered.** Each day, refugee families are learning new things, which leads to new questions. They will probably wonder about things now that they never considered when they first arrived.
- **The family feels completely satisfied with their resettlement experience.** As noted previously, WR is often unable to give clients the level of support that they feel they need. Families frequently wish they had seen WR staff more or had more time with WR staff.

### **How to Advocate for Your Family:**

- **Talk about how far the family has come in such a short amount of time!** What are they able to do on their own now, that they could not do when you first met each other?
- If the family is interested, offer to **review their budget** with them. By the end of case closure, the family will likely have started to pay a portion of their monthly rent, as well as utilities, phones, etc.

### **Spending Time with Your Family**

- Unless there are unique challenges, at this point you should be largely social with the family and potentially working with them on areas of greater development. Meeting to have meals together and socialize should be main points of contact.
- Your family may see you as more of friends. With regular contact, this is a natural progression.

## CASE CLOSURE

- WR staff **meets with family on or shortly before day 90** to verify that all required services have been completed, and that the family is comfortable with what occurred throughout the first 90 days.
- Any outstanding issues related to core services will be **followed up** on by WR staff
- Family receives a few **important reminders**:
  - WR is always available to answer questions over the phone
  - First travel loan bill usually arrives 5-6 months after arrival
  - Family is eligible to apply for Green Cards 12 months after arrival
  - Immigration questions about Green Cards or other programs should be directed to WR's immigration department, whose phone number is 336-887-9007
- We **thank the family** for allowing us to join them on the first few steps of their new journey! It is a privilege we are grateful to have.

## CASE WORKER EXPECTATIONS

Each case worker balances a case load of several families at different stages in the resettlement process (**first 90 days**). Many of these cases have been partnered with a GNT who offers supporting services. Other cases that are not matched with a volunteer team rely more heavily on WR staff to provide all necessary services. The work of WR is guided by the Cooperative agreement (contract) established by the US Department of State's Bureau of Populations, Refugees, and Migration. The chart below details WR's core responsibilities with each client. Services outside of this scope are not part of the WR's role but may be provided as the situation and staff capacity allows.

<b>Core Responsibilities of a Case Worker</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2-3 Home Visits (minimum) to evaluate welfare</li><li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Applying for Benefits (Food Stamps, Medicaid, and Cash Assistance)</li><li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Applying for Social Security Cards</li><li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Registering adults in ESL classes</li><li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Referral for Employment Services</li><li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Assistance in establishing utility accounts</li><li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Registering children in school</li><li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Referral for the Initial Health Screening</li><li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Assisting with medical referrals throughout the R&amp;P period</li><li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Providing Cultural Orientation</li><li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Providing food and pocket money throughout the R&amp;P period as available and as needed</li><li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Paying rent/utility bills as R&amp;P funds are available throughout the R&amp;P period</li><li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reviewing how funds were spent at time of case closure (shortly before the 90<sup>th</sup> day)</li><li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Collaborating with the Resource Coordinator to confirm housing has been secured, basic needs are available in the home, and that needed repairs have been communicated with the landlord</li><li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Arranging for any necessary training for the use of the public bus, accessing grocery stores, and paying bills</li><li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Answering client questions</li><li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Maintaining accurate documentation through case files, case note logs, and reports</li></ul>
Depending on eligibility, some cases may receive additional services from the case manager: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Assistance with enrolling in WIC (Women, Infants, &amp; Children)</li><li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Assistance with filing SSI Disability applications</li><li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Filing Selective Service Registrations (males between 18-26)</li></ul>

A case worker provides initial services for up to **90 days**. During this time, the case worker will work towards ensuring that each client is connected with means of ongoing support and services. WR has internal programs that can serve a client well beyond the 90<sup>th</sup> day and many connections to organizations and resources within the community. Each case will be provided with a letter that details ongoing services at the time their case is closed. For questions regarding eligible services, please contact our general office line at 336-765-2857.

## GNT TEAM SUGGESTIONS

Hopefully, in reading through this document, you have begun to understand how important volunteers like you are in helping our newly-arrived refugee families feel welcome and supported in the Triad! To ensure appropriate communication and services delivery during the R&P period, please follow the guidelines here:

- When you take a family to an appointment, please provide a **summary** of what occurred to the family's case worker. This ensures that the family receives the best and most comprehensive services possible.
- **If your family shares concerns with you about their case manager, encourage the family.** Keep in mind that families are often frustrated when the reality of life in the US does not meet their expectations, and that many families also experience a certain degree of culture shock as they get used to a very new environment. There is also often the expectation that case workers – especially those who share the same background or ethnicity as the family – be available at any time of any day to visit or do something for the family, which is not always feasible. We encourage you to listen to the family's frustrations and help the family feel heard and validated. If you feel that it's a concern that WR needs to know, encourage the family to share with WR staff.
- **Encourage your family to call their case worker if the family shares a need with you that you are not able to handle.** Do not let the family rely on you to get a message to their case worker. Empowering them to be their own best advocates is a great skill to teach the family. As we always say to our families, if we don't know there's a problem, we can't find a solution!

## WHAT TO EXPECT: CASE CLOSURE & BEYOND

Once a family's case is "closed" with our R&P program, it can seem like there is a major drop-off in a family's circle of support. Families certainly feel this, and may express their uneasiness to their case manager and/or your team. Here are a few helpful ideas for addressing these concerns:

- **At the end of the family's first 90 days in the Triad, the family's case manager will put together a "case closure" letter of where the family is at.** That way, if there is anything you should be aware of, that information will be easily accessible. The letter includes when DSS servicers will end and when to apply again, when to apply for Greencard and who to call, as well as travel loan information.
- Have a **conversation about how much the family has already learned** since arriving in the Triad, and have the family identify some of their own areas of growth.
- **Encourage the family to stay connected to their own community**, which is composed at least in part of many individuals who've "been there before," and whose success and perseverance can be a model for this family.
- **It's okay to struggle a bit.** Families will have challenges no matter how long they've been in the Triad, and it is important for them to continue to develop coping and problem-solving skills as they go. Your guidance is priceless, but so is the opportunity presented by the challenge!
- **New questions will come up, and it's okay if you don't have the answers.** Many of the questions families have in the months following case closure are questions they never could have come up with in the first few days, due to there being no context for them at the time. World Relief is always a resource to attempt to answer those new questions now, but so are many other connections the family has made along the way. You can be helpful to the family as well, keeping in mind that finding ways to empower a family with knowledge is always preferable to simply doing something for the family, or attempting to fix everything for them.
- **Communication (particularly by mail!) remains very important.** As family members start to get jobs, have children in school, and make other connections, they are going to get a lot of mail. They may get notices that certain programs are set to close due to failure to provide proof of employment, etc. It is very important the family looks at their mail regularly – perhaps with your assistance too – and that any questions that arise are directed to the appropriate entity, whether that be the DSS or WR staff.