

# HOST HOME GUIDE



Resettlement Host Homes provide a safe place for refugees to rest and wait for permanent housing in the U.S. They can help orient new arrivals in the community and make them feel welcome. Resettlement Hosting normally lasts 1-2 weeks; at that point they move into their own home.

## — PREPARING TO HOST —

**Please review the following resources: [Culture Shock](#), [Mental Health](#), [Relationship FAQs](#), and [Trainings](#). All are found on our website's [Host Home Toolkit](#) page, under "Start Here."**


### **Cultural Information**

The Volunteer Coordinator will email with an opportunity to host which you can opt into. Once you have agreed, the Volunteer Coordinator will give more information about your guests, including arrival time, language/s spoken, country of origin, and any other relevant information. You can research the guests' cultural and linguistic background, but recognize that cultural humility is the most valuable characteristic you can bring to this experience, since one cannot truly understand someone's needs or culture before spending time the individual.

- [Cultural Orientation Resource Exchange](#) includes useful links and information on certain refugee populations.
- [Every Culture](#) has information on multiple cultures and country backgrounds.
- [The Cultural Orientation Research Center](#) has an archived library of information on refugee groups pre-2013.
- [Overcoming Barriers](#): a toolkit for helping refugees adjust to life in the United States (US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, 2010).

### **Food**

Once you know the size and background of the family that you will host, you can get some basic groceries and plan for their first couple meals at your house, before taking them grocery shopping.

- Basic guidelines relevant to common cultural groups: [Grocery Shopping & Lists](#)
- If you have guests from a Muslim country, they will most likely eat halal food. This means no pork, no gelatin, and all meat must be Halal or Kosher certified. All vegetables, fruit, grain, and all seafood are halal. You can search Google for "halal meat near me" or look for this stamp on meat in the mainstream grocery stores.
- Price Right on University Ave has a Halal section. Look for this symbol: 

Usually, a caseworker acquires a hot meal upon the case's arrival at the airport. You can offer to cook or purchase this meal from a culturally appropriate restaurant.

### ***Personal Care***

Prepare bedding and towels for your guests. If needed, the Case Worker will provide for the client's toiletries upon their arrival at the airport. Extra personal supplies may be available from World Relief, including air mattresses, blankets, towels, etc. If this is a need, you can ask the Volunteer Coordinator to help.

### ***Household Norms***

Before your guests arrive, have your household members list the basic rules or habits of the house. When the guests arrive, communicate these rules (try to keep the list short) with the assistance of the caseworker and interpreter. Some of these rules may include smoking outside, using the trash system, and not entering certain rooms. It may also be helpful to write these out and place them around the house.

### ***Gifts***

Besides groceries and small gifts (such as you would give to a friend), please do not buy gifts for your guests. Do not give large gifts or make any non-essential item purchases on their behalf, since this creates an uncomfortable power imbalance in your relationship, and can cause complications. Contact World Relief with any questions or concerns, or if your community would like to make donations to the family.

### ***Airport Pickups***

You may (and are welcome to) accompany World Relief Staff to the Frederick Douglass Greater Rochester Airport to greet your soon-to-be guests & help with transportation. Talk to the Volunteer Coordinator if you'd like to join in an airport pick up.

## **— STARTING THE HOST HOME EXPERIENCE —**

The same day (or night) of the guests' arrival, the host, Case Worker and Interpreter will help you facilitate quick home orientation to familiarize them with their new surroundings. However, it can be helpful to continue showing your guests the norms of your household. Keep in mind that some guests may have lived in middle- or upper-class homes in their home country, while others may come from lower income backgrounds. Show each part of your home one at a time so the interpreter has time to translate if needed. Below are some tips about home orientation for you to consider as you communicate to guests about your home:

### ***Layout***

Give the family a guided tour of your house, pointing out the use of each room. Demonstrate usage of locks, windows, light switches, and other security measures. It's a good idea to give a refresher later in the stay.

### ***Bathroom***

Demonstrate how the toilet flushes and that toilet paper can be flushed, but other items cannot. Many countries have different norms around toilets, so be ready to explain this a few times. Show the shower/bath and how the faucet works for both, especially hot and cold water, soap, and the bathroom fan. Assign towels and wash clothes to the guest.

### ***Kitchen***

Invite the guest to watch and imitate you as you demonstrate the use of your kitchen appliances. Show how to use the stove, refrigerator, freezer and toaster. For more complex items like the microwave, garbage disposal, dishwasher, and blender, you may want to introduce appliance use slowly, over the time that they are in your home.

### ***Phone/Internet***

Explain how to make local calls and contact their caseworker or 911 in case of emergency. You may want to make a practice call to a friend or neighbor. If guests wish to call their family or friends in their country of origin, they will most likely use apps like WhatsApp. They may come with their own smart phones and need

access to Wi-Fi. If not, you may want to offer your device for them to make initial internet-based calls to friends and family back home or in the area. World Relief provides a sim card if the guest has their own phone, or, within a few days, one phone per family. If your guest's sim card stops working, they should communicate with the caseworker through your phone. Sim cards are loaded with 1 month of data/minutes, and if the client uses this up, the reload cost must be paid out of their resettlement funds (preferably saved for rent while looking for a job).

### ***Laundry***

Many guests come from countries where laundry is done by hand, so washers and dryers may be new to them. Explain different loading procedures, colors, detergents, dials, and water temperatures. Offer to do a load of laundry together.

### ***Pets***

Introduce your guests to the pets soon after they arrive, and let them know about basic courtesy/expectations (i.e., letting the dog or cat out or in, appropriate ways of petting, etc.) Even if your pet is caged, you should still make sure your guests are aware of them.

## **— WHILE HOSTING —**

### ***Home Activities***

As the family recovers from their long flight, try not to overwhelm them with activity in the first few days. However, the time the guests spend with you is a learning opportunity (for everyone!). Treat them as a part of your family: encourage them to cook, clean and participate in household activities with you.

### ***English***

If your guests speak little or no English, you may wish to help them begin to learn by making flash cards with them for household items and taping them around the house. It's fun to also learn words & phrases in your guest's native language(s).

### ***Community Orientation***

You may want to spend time familiarizing your guests to resources in your neighborhood (for example: grocery stores, ethnic food marts, post office, and the local library). They will also need to become familiar with the bus system, so taking a few trips together to locations like the World Relief Office is an enormous help. Please reach out to the Volunteer Coordinator if you would like resources for any of these activities.

### ***Emergencies***

In case of an emergency, call 911. For medical issues, clients have Medicaid insurance backdated to their date of arrival. Contact the case worker and the housing coordinator immediately in cases of emergencies.

### ***U.S. Ties***

Your guests will most likely have U.S. ties, such as friends or relatives. World Relief recommends encouraging time spent with these relationships because these ties will help anchor and cultivate a sense of belonging for new arrivals. If you have any household rules relating to non-hosted guests (the U.S. ties), communicate these expectations to the ties as well as your guest (for example, length of visits and times to visit, or COVID protocol). The amount of time your guest spends with their tie depends greatly on their employment, family situation, relationship, and distance.

**World Relief's Involvement During the Host Stay**

<b>World Relief Resettlement Team will...</b>	<b>Typical Timeframe</b>
Apply for social security number & work permit	Application in first week; card received up to 3 months later
Apply for cash assistance, food stamps, and medical assistance.	Within first 7 days
Enroll in English classes, employment services, public assistance, personal finance class, health assessment, additional services.	Within first 30 days; beginning of services up to 3 months later
Search for & apply for permanent housing	Within first 30 days
Enroll children in school after move to permanent housing	Time varies
Other services as needed, including cultural orientation	Until end of 90 day resettlement period.
<b>Host Homes will...</b>	<b>Typical Timeframe</b>
Provide a free, fully furnished place to sleep, cook, and live for as long as the host home and guest both agree.	1-2 weeks
Provide groceries (donations or coming out of family's pocket money)	1-3 days
Assist guests to access grocery stores (giving directions, accompanying, or driving)	Duration of hosting
Encourage guests to communicate needs to their case worker	Duration of hosting
Proactively communicate concerns, suggestions, questions, or changes to Volunteer Coordinator	Duration of hosting
Offer friendship and community activities	According to the interest and capacity of the host home volunteer and guests together.
Talk to the Host Home Coordinator if you are interested in volunteering with your guests beyond what is outlined in this guide.	Duration of volunteering

**Please Note:**

If guests ask you to help them with registering for government services, applying for an apartment, or starting school registration, have them contact their caseworker instead, and please let the Volunteer Coordinator know. Usually, their caseworker has already initiated the enrollment and it is simply taking time to come through.

**Volunteer Coordinator Contact Information:**

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**World Relief Core Service Timeline**

The timeline is accurate for Fiscal Year 22. The timeline indicates the time by which each service is applied to/requested, not when the client gains access to the service. Some of these services such as Social Security, school enrollment, or health screening are delayed due to forces outside of World Relief’s control.

