

GOOD NEIGHBOR TEAM  
**CO-SPONSOR**



MANUAL FOR CO-SPONSOR  
TEAM MEMBERS



# GOOD NEIGHBOR TEAM CO-SPONSOR



Good Neighbor Team Co-Sponsors are made up of community groups who are matched with a refugee or other immigrant family through a local World Relief site. These teams commit to walking alongside newcomers for 6-12 months through [providing the majority of initial resettlement services](#) upon arrival to the U.S. GNTs help newcomers integrate into a new community through financial, in-kind donations and volunteer service.

Some examples include meeting the family at the airport and providing a warm welcome, conducting the cultural orientation and arranging housing. It could also mean supporting access to medical and social services, and economic empowerment that will ultimately lead to self-sufficiency. The main objective for this unique opportunity is to learn and journey together from welcome to belonging.

***This manual is designed to be a guide in defining and implementing your role as a GNT co-sponsor team. We recommend that you revisit this manual frequently throughout your volunteer experience.***



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# WORLD RELIEF NETWORK



## U.S. LOCATIONS

World Relief currently has 17 United States offices that partner with local churches and community-based organizations to provide support for thousands of immigrants and refugees who are seeking a place to call home.

### CALIFORNIA

MODESTO  
SACRAMENTO  
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

### ILLINOIS

CHICAGOLAND  
QUAD CITIES

### MARYLAND

BALTIMORE

### MINNESOTA

MINNEAPOLIS-ST. PAUL

### NEW YORK

WESTERN NEW YORK

### NORTH CAROLINA

TRIAD  
DURHAM

### SOUTH CAROLINA

UPSTATE SC

### TENNESSEE

MEMPHIS

### TEXAS

NORTH TEXAS

### WASHINGTON

TRI-CITIES  
SPOKANE  
WESTERN WASHINGTON

### WISCONSIN

FOX VALLEY



# WORLD RELIEF 3 PILLARS OF WORK IN THE U.S.

*When you join World Relief, together we are recognizing the dignity and worth of our newest neighbors and allies by building capacity to receive and serve them across the United States demonstrating biblical welcome and hospitality.*



## Provide vital services

We provide newly arrived refugees and other immigrants with access to basic necessities and begin them on the journey to belonging through english classes, immigration legal services, employment services, and more.



## Build just and welcoming communities

We equip churches and community members with the information they need to educate, advocate and take action on behalf of our immigrant neighbors. We work to change systems and resulting injustices that marginalize refugees and other immigrants in the U.S.



## Bring people together

We connect churches and community members with immigrant families to foster transformative relationships, where both new and long-term community members flourish and find a sense of unity and belonging.

## 9 STABILITY FACTORS

*For over forty years as an official partner of the U.S. Department of State, World Relief has been providing the expertise, services and relational connections that our new neighbors need to flourish. We focus on 9 stability factors:*



Housing



Language Classes



Employment Services



Transportation Assistance



Community Connections



Health and Mental Health Counseling



Financial Guidance



School/Youth/Parenting Groups

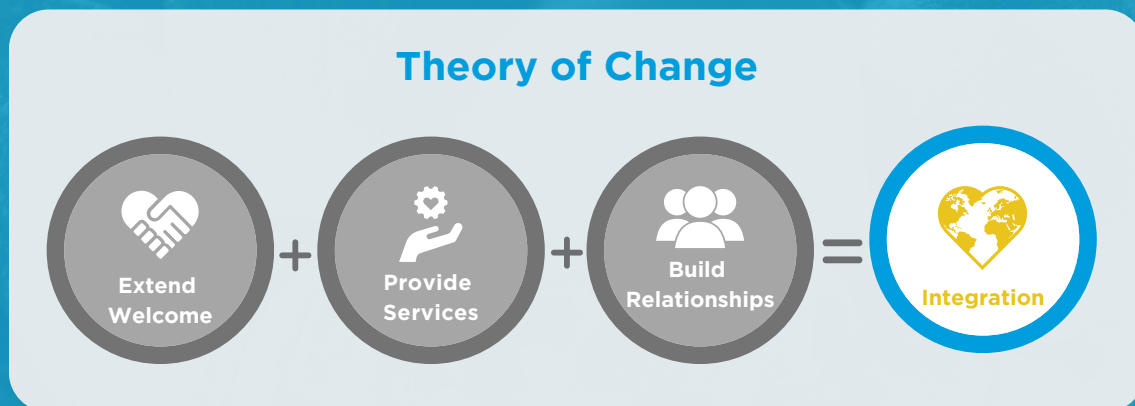


Immigration Legal Services

# Service Model Framework

*Theory of Change: Stability to Integration*

World Relief's service model adopts a framework that enables immigrants to reach a place of stability and from there, grow to full, healthy integration into new communities in the U.S. The framework is centered around this theory of change:



## **Extend Welcome**

Create communities that welcome and are prepared to integrate with immigrants and refugees.

## **Provide Services**

Basic services that reflect the known and stated needs of immigrant communities, provided in a culturally sensitive and appropriate way, to help individuals and families reach a stable base in a new community.

These services are designed to address the nine factors that lead to stability for the newcomer.

## **Build Relationships**

World Relief believes that genuine relationships between people are mutually transformative. It is in the context of true relationships that immigrants and new communities are integrated in a healthy way that supports the dignity, worth and value of all.



# GNT Co-Sponsor

## RESPONSIBILITIES

### Here are the steps to become a Co-Sponsor Team:

1. Form a team of 8-12 people who are 18+ or older
2. Complete the Application, Orientation and Co-Sponsor Knowledge Check Course
3. Attend the Local Office Training
4. Complete and receive clearance of all team member's background checks
5. Develop and submit team Welcome Plan Application
6. Receive application approval from World Relief
7. Fundraise the amount stated by World Relief local office
8. Begin any additional role specific training and onboarding
9. Submit a Green Light Form and prepare for placement

### Team Leader

A strong, committed team leader is essential to a successful Good Neighbor Team. A team leader values and is effective with communication, coordination, and delegation.

### Team Roles

Many teams will divide responsibilities among members, ensuring everyone on the team gets involved and shares the workload. Based on the size of the group, the varying degrees of responsibility across categories, and availability, some team members may oversee more than one category. Taking on a role of a team does not mean that the individual has to be the only person doing the task, rather that they are responsible to ensure its completion. The following pages will list the recommended team roles.

# GNT Co-Sponsor

## Team Role Recommendations

### Team Leader(s)

World Relief strongly recommends that each group have 2 co-leaders who:

- Sign the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)
- Recruit and finalize the team roster
- Assure each team member completes their application and onboarding process
- Serve as a liaison between the team and World Relief
- Follow-up with team members to ensure tasks are being completed
- Confirm team members log their time and donations
- Provide general guidance and coordination of the Good Neighbor Team

### Administrative Point Person

- Confirm all documents needed by World Relief are submitted in a timely manner
- Provide guidance and assistance to team members in utilizing the team's collaboration forum (such as Microsoft Teams)
- Provide guidance and assistance to team members in logging volunteer hours and donations
- Track the fundraising efforts of the team
- Provide administrative support to the team leader(s)
- Monitor that case notes are being entered correctly and being submitted
- Complete AR-11s and USPS Change of Address forms as needed throughout the resettlement period, advising the case on the importance of these forms
- Assist adult males between ages 18-25 to register for Selective Service

### Housing Point Person

- Identify neighborhoods that are accessible to public transportation and resources
- Navigate the rental market, to identify 2-4BR affordable apartments/house
- Identify landlords amenable to renting to a newly arriving refugee family
- Negotiate a one-year lease and help secure the apartment/house, upon notification of family arrival date
- Teach family how to operate all mechanical aspects of their home including plumbing, electrical appliances and lights, security, maintenance expectations
- Help the family develop a working relationship with landlord & address any issues
- Fill out the required paperwork for case file documentation

### Home Set-Up and Welcome Point Person

- Collect required furniture & household items (based on World Relief checklist)
- Stock fridge & pantry with groceries and staples prior to family's arrival
- Meet family at designated arrival point
- Obtain and bring appropriate clothing for the weather
- Arrange for an interpreter to accompany you to the arrival point & the family's apartment/house
- Arrange for preparation and pick-up/delivery of a culturally appropriate hot meal for arrival day



### **Interpreter Point Person**

- Recruit interpreters who speak the most common languages among newly arriving refugees, they do not need to be professional interpreters
- Determine if interpreters will serve on a volunteer basis or receive compensation
- Schedule interpreters for important meetings/appointments (especially arrival, cultural orientation, group introduction and explanation of roles, employment and financial meetings)

### **Healthcare Point Person**

- Assist with initial health screening (Refugee Medical Screening – RMS)
- Assist in securing primary care and referrals to health care providers
- Assist in securing dentist and dental care
- Help the family navigate and understand the healthcare system including appointments, their rights to interpreters, pharmacy and prescriptions, urgent care and emergency care, health insurance, self-advocating for their medical needs and preferences, billing, etc.
- Assist the family with a system of remembering appointments (a wall calendar is very helpful, and sometimes, clinics will text clients with appointment reminders)
- Coordinate with the GNT and World Relief to secure rides for appointments
- Connect the newcomer to mental healthcare resources as appropriate
- Assist with urgent or emergency medical needs

### **Finance Point Person**

- Develop a GNT budget, including funds being raised by GNT and federal “Reception and Placement” funds for the family
- Oversee disbursement of funds
- Helping the family understand the monetary and finance system in the USA
- Assist the family with signing up for a bank account
- Once employed, help the family understand electronic direct deposits, debit card usage, etc,
- Offer assistance with budgeting, building credit, savings, and managing resources, and pay bills
- Identify and help family access local resources: e.g., food pantries, diaper banks

### **Education Point Person**

- Learn the school registration process and school resources for English Language Learners before the family arrives
- Explore community college or higher education options for older youth
- Find free local ESOL classes for adults and help to arrange childcare (through Childcare Point Person) and/or early childhood education programs for toddlers
- Assist in registering adults in ESOL classes
- Help enroll children in school, afterschool, and/or summer school programming
- Help families navigate public school bus pick-ups & drop-offs
- Connect parents to family or community liaisons in local schools or school districts to build awareness about navigating the U.S. educational system
- Help families navigate and understand the school system including signing out for appointments, homework help at school, communication with teachers, parent-teacher conferences, etc.
- Provide or help family access English tutoring and/or homework help if needed

### **Transportation & Community Orientation Point Person**

- Research and learn to navigate local public transportation before family arrives
- Assist in providing access, guidance, and practice to using public transportation options
- Help with planning frequently used routes, using apps, note cards, and visuals to assist newcomers in have greater transportation independence and solutions
- Coordinate transportation options with the team when public transportation is not possible
- Help family consider obtaining a drivers license and vehicle ownership if appropriate

### **Social Services Point Person**

- Assist family in applying for social security card
- Assist family in registering with Department of Social Services (DSS) for Food Stamps, Medicaid, and Refugee Cash Assistance if not enrolled in Match Grant through World Relief
- Assist family with securing a State ID
- Assist family with enrolling in Women Infant Children (WIC) program, if applicable
- Assist family with enrollment in any other State or Federal benefit program in coordination with World Relief
- Help family to understand renewal processes and eligibility changes

### **Cultural Orientation Point Person**

- Get Trained and prepared to conduct Cultural Orientation, if not able to access a group orientation offered by the World Relief local office
- If there is a group Cultural Orientation already established at the World Relief local office, ensure family attends the federally required orientation
- Teach the family the basics about living in the US: grocery shopping, clothes laundering, etc.
- Discuss U.S. norms for hygiene and dress, especially as it relates to job interviews

### **Employment Point Person**

- Identify potential employment opportunities before the family arrives
- Assist employable adults with enrollment in employment services (if available) and provide employment case-worker support
- Assist with employment assessment and creation of a resume
- Assist with job searches, applications, and the interview process
- Once employed, offer support to foster job retention
- Assist with finding job appropriate clothing and supplies for employment (tools, lunch boxes, shoes, hats, etc.)
- Assist newcomer(s) who qualify for SSI (due to age or disability)

### **Childcare Point Person**

- Research and help family access regular childcare resources
- Develop a list of volunteers who will provide childcare during adult appointments and in emergencies
- Schedule and coordinate childcare volunteers as needs arise



# GNT Co-Sponsor

## ROLE EXPECTATIONS

### Core Resettlement Services

GNT Co-Sponsors take on the responsibility of providing the core services for a refugee family and maintain communication with the newcomer(s). We recommend that your GNT Co-Sponsor team be made up of 8-12 people. Ideally, there should be at least 3 people with daytime availability. It is important that there is clarity around who is responsible for each of the aforementioned core services.

### Why an exclusive role for administration?

As a GNT co-sponsor working with World Relief, you are responsible for completing and submitting forms and documentation to the World Relief case manager or GNT Coordinator in a timely manner. Familiarizing yourself with the required forms, case file documentation and timeline for submission is an important part of preparing for GNT co-sponsor. World Relief is subject to federal and state monitoring during which these items are reviewed. Given the importance of this aspect of GNT co-sponsor, at least one person should be designated to handle all administration in order to effectively manage paperwork and documentation requirements independent of the group's numerous resettlement activities.

### What is the role of the finance point person?

The finance point person is responsible for overseeing the expenditure of the resettlement funds and introducing refugee adults to family budgeting, credit, the banking system and taxes. The finance point person will be responsible for helping track fundraise efforts,



# GNT Co-Sponsor

## ACCESSING SOCIAL SERVICES

### Getting Started

To help provide guidance around accessing benefits and services, visit [United Way's 2-1-1 service](#). This is a great place to start to learn about community resources in your area.

### Social Security Administration (SSA) and Department of Social Services (DSS)

Unless the application was submitted at a U.S. port of entry, refugees must be taken to a Social Security Administration office in the nearest city to apply for their Social Security cards within 7 business days after their arrival. World Relief will provide you with Social Security card applications for each household member in advance of the family's arrival. You must also bring each person's I-94 (for refugees) or visas (for SIVs). Be sure that the application is for an unrestricted Social Security card. A refugee's card should not contain the notation "Valid for Work Only with DHS Authorization". At the conclusion of your appointment with Social Security, each family member will receive a receipt proving that they have applied for a Social Security card. This receipt will be needed when visiting DSS soon after the Social Security appointment. Allow 2-4 weeks to receive a card.

If the SS application was submitted at port of entry (as indicated in the travel letter), an EAD notice receipt should arrive within 3 weeks. SS cards should come 14 days after that. If not, follow-up at the local SS office within 3 working days of that 14 day deadline.

### I-94

The I-94 is an official record of entry into the United States. Refugees need them to apply for social security cards. SIVs do not. If delayed, World Relief will make official inquiries with Customs and Border Protection (CBP) to obtain the I-94(s) ASAP. Delays with the I-94 will unfortunately delay the receipt of a social security card, but, when reported, are usually resolved within 24-48 hours.



# GNT Co-Sponsor

## Housing



### Helpful Guidance

The housing person is responsible for finding appropriate housing (i.e., at least a 6-month lease). Since it is impossible to predict the arrival date of a refugee family, do not take on financial responsibility for housing until we have received an official Arrival Notice, typically two weeks before they arrive. While many community members may wish to offer to house the family in their homes, federal policy requires that refugees have their own living accommodations outside of short term temporary housing. This respects their privacy, helps to prevent over-dependency on hosts, and communicates your confidence in their ability to function independently.

It is important to get familiar with the local housing market and to find housing that is safe, sanitary, accessible and affordable for a newcomer family whose income may be limited during the first few years in this country. When identifying potential housing, use resources like online search tools ([Zillow](#), [Apartments.com](#), [Craigslist](#)), your own network, or even consult a real estate professional,

### House or Apartment Selection, Rental Assistance

World Relief strongly prefers that GNTs find apartments that refugees will have a good chance of being able to afford on their own at the end of their rental assistance period. If you live in an expensive and/or rural area with inadequate public transportation and/or affordable housing, we strongly recommend you search for housing options in nearby larger towns or cities to maximize affordability and self-sufficiency. Typically, areas that are more affordable are also more likely to have other useful resources such as ESOL, food pantries and public transportation.

### Newcomer Family Size

In most cases, World Relief resettles refugee newcomers ranging in case size from 1 to 10 members. We ask you to price apartments that range in size from 1 to 4 bedrooms.

### Security Deposits

Landlords will generally require a deposit equal to 1-2 months' rent. World Relief recommends that you try to negotiate to avoid payment for more than 1 ½ months.





## **GNT Co-Sponsor**

### Clothing and Household Furnishing

The GNT will procure the material goods that will be provided to the family in their new home: clothing, donated furniture, new mattresses and box springs, and household items. The expectation is that these will be basic items in good condition.

**World Relief provides a list of material needs items required by the federal government to be included in all housing setups items.**

Donations of furniture and household goods can be pledged in advance of the newcomer's arrival. Unless you are personally able to repair them, it is a good idea to only accept items in good condition! You should hold off on clothing donations until after you can determine the needs and sizes of your family. Some clothing you will need to be purchase new (socks and underwear) but providing too much new clothing or other goods may establish an expectation that your group cannot and should not continue to fulfill. Most groups find that they are to procure most of the needed items through donations. Provide clothing appropriate for the season and continue to provide clothing as seasons change throughout the resettlement period.

# GNT Co-Sponsor

## Employment

The employment point person assists with enrolling eligible newcomers in employment services and partners in finding employment opportunities. Since early self-sufficiency is the goal of the U.S. refugee resettlement program, early employment should be a top priority. Before your family arrives, conduct an inventory of job possibilities from among your team and wider communities. We encourage you to survey the employment landscape in your communities for entry level and reasonably accessible jobs that can accommodate English-language learners.

### Service Plan

By about the 10th day, the GNT case manager will come to visit the family's home to conduct the beginning of the family's service plan. The first component assesses strengths and needs of the family.

- Each able-bodied adult in the household will then be assessed for employability by answering questions about skills, education, and work, language and literacy skills, health status, professional goals/job availability, and personal needs/goals. This will be followed by an employment assessment to obtain details about employment history and timelines to facilitate resume creation.
- Family members who are non-employable will undergo assessments that concentrate on education, language, and literacy skills, health status, additional strengths/barriers, personal needs/goals, and reasons for lack of employability as appropriate.





# GNT Co-Sponsor

## Employment

The team should help employable adult individuals enroll in the employment services offered by the local WR office and follow the guidance given by the employment program staff, which will include assisting with some of the following services:

### Completion of I-9

Those with refugee status arrive fully authorized to work and will complete an [I-9](#) upon being hired.

Many employers will initially say they cannot hire a refugee unless they have a Social Security card or an Employment Authorization Document (EAD), but this is illegal. Listed below are helpful materials for the U.S. Department of Justice Immigrant and Employee Rights:

- [Immigrant and Employee Right to Work](#)
- [How employers can avoid discrimination in the form I-9](#)

### Job Applications

Once employable adults have been assessed and resumes are created, the employment point person should assure assistance complete job applications is provided.

### State Licensing and Certification Requirements

Unlike many countries represented among refugees, the US has thorough licensing procedures for many professions. It is important to explain to the newcomer that may be a lawyer, teacher, electrician, plumber, beautician, etc., that a license and/or certification is usually required in order to practice these professions in the US. The team can assist with researching and pursuing licensing and certifications if that is something the newcomer is interested in.

### Interviewing: Practice and Collaborate with ESOL

As the employment lead starts to get a sense of the newcomer's skills and capabilities, they should begin supplementing their ESOL learning with interview practice.





# PLACEMENT AND ARRIVAL



*The time has come to prepare  
for placement and arrival!*

Your team is assembled, and applications have been submitted. You have distributed team roles. Fundraising and training have been accomplished. The MOU has been signed and the Green Light Form has been submitted. World Relief gives your team the Green Light.

# PLACEMENT AND ARRIVAL

## Pre-Arrival Preparation

### Key Action Items Pre-Arrival

After receiving the Green Light and receiving notice of a case placement, the first few weeks requires thorough preparation for arrival. Make sure to:

- **Secure Interpreter(s):**
  - You will need regular, reliable access to an interpreter to help you facilitate important meetings and appointments with the newcomer family. Once you know the language of your family, you will quickly need to source interpreters for the arrival and all official meetings with World Relief.
- **Formalize Housing Arrangements (unless WR is procuring the housing):**
  - When looking for housing you will use a Site Visit Housing Checklist provided by World Relief. You will send copies of this checklist as well as the signed lease to World Relief.
- **Establishment of Utilities Accounts:**
  - Utility accounts will need to be transferred to the family once they have Social Security numbers, usually within 30 days of arrival.
- **Designation of Arrival Contact at Point of Arrival:**
  - World Relief recommends that a few team members, a small reception group, pick up the family at the airport in order to not overwhelm them. A main contact person should coordinate with World Relief on the details.







# PLACEMENT AND ARRIVAL

## The Day of Arrival

A small reception group, including an interpreter, must meet the family at their designated arrival and bring them to their new or temporary home. Remember that the newcomers will be tired and possibly apprehensive; this is not the time for a large welcoming party. Instead, offer the family a [culturally appropriate hot meal](#) and a chance to bathe and rest.

### Practical Tips for Meeting Refugees

- Track the family's flight online or call the airline to confirm the arrival time. A common flight tracking app is [FlightAware](#).
- Plan to wait. If the local airport is the families point of entry to the US, the procedures can take 1-3 hours
- If going to the airport, come equipped with a sign bearing the refugee's name in large letters. We also recommend writing welcome in the native language of the newcomer.
- Bring weather/season appropriate clothing (in one-size-fits-all styles) and bottled water

### Provide Culturally Appropriate Meal

- The hot, culturally appropriate meal is federally required to be provided
- After receiving the information on where the newcomers are arriving from, please plan ahead of time to make or purchase a culturally appropriate meal

### Provide Arrival Packet

- Names and telephone number to contact World Relief staff
- Optional: Include reference sheet with Good Neighbor Team photos, names, and roles.
- A map of the town, highlighting the home, safe routes for walking, and any nearby destinations (e.g. laundromat, library, supermarket).
- Pocket money and food allocation



# FY23 Post-Arrival Timeline

## First 30 Days



### Day 2

- Home visit next calendar day after arrival (includes weekends)
- Provide basic orientation regarding housing and personal safety matters, including emergency contacts and procedures.

### Day 7

- Apply for Food Stamps, Cash Assistance, and Medical Assistance
- Apply for Social Security card if not already applied at port of entry. Otherwise, verify receipt of card

### Day 30

- Document and implement a Service Plan with each refugee

- Orientation on Role of WR, Refugee Status (including Family Reunification and Travel Loan), English, Public Assistance, U.S. Laws, Community Resources & Services, Employment, Health, Budgeting & Personal Finance, Housing, Hygiene, Safety, Cultural Adjustment, Education, Transportation (within the R&P Period)

- Children enrolled in school

- Assistance with Selective Service registration, if applicable

- One home visit within 30 calendar days of arrival, but not before the 14th calendar day after arrival

- Assistance with enrollment into other services as applicable to the case and as eligibility requirements are met, ex. WIC/SSI

- Assistance with enrollment into ESL and employment services

- Refugee Initial Health Assessment (within 30 calendar days of arrival, when possible; non-Class A only) If unable to occur within 30 days, the delay must be documented in case notes and appointment must occur by day 90

### Day 1

- Airport Reception
- Culturally Appropriate, ready-to-eat meal available
- Home fully furnished upon arrival
- Sufficient food available until the receipt of cash and food assistance

### Day 5

- Intake Interview - Discuss roles & responsibilities of the RA and the client; beneficiary grievance policy
- Verify refugee documentation such as I-94, Bio, Assurance

### Day 10

- Assistance with completion of AR-11 and U.S. Post Office address change, including all initial and temporary housing upon arrival and subsequently throughout the R&P period

**THROUGHOUT R&P SERVICES  
Appropriate Language Interpretation &  
Pocket Money, as needed**

## THE FIRST WEEK

Conduct a home visit with welfare assessment the day after arrival, the Material Needs Support form is usually completed on the next day visit, take the family to SSA (if needed) and DSS, provide basic community orientation and conduct a case management intake. Intake interview is done in conjunction with the case manager.

## WITHIN 2 WEEKS

Case manager visit the family and conducts service plan and supplemental employment assessments

## WITHIN 30 DAYS

Complete second required home visit with welfare assessment. PDF-fillable template for the family and individual action plan components of the service plan to be completed, signed by all relevant parties, and submitted to the case manager

# POST-ARRIVAL TIMELINE

## 45 DAY VISIT

Case manager check-in at half-way mark of the 90-day R&P period, collect outstanding forms, and all participants work to identify issues/problems that need to be addressed approaching the end of the R&P period (90th day).

Team will ensure the family is on track to complete all Cultural Orientation (CO) topics by the 60th day, or 75th day if CO is provided in multiple session.

## 90 DAYS

Case manager will have a meeting to settle administrative matters at the end of the R&P period. Case manager, team lead person(s), and client will discuss setting of milestones for resolving outstanding issues and for achieving self-sufficiency at 180 days.

## 180 DAYS

Depending on the agreed commitment time and needs of the family, teams will either end their commitment and transition to a purely relational connection with the newcomer family, or continue with some responsibilities but work towards self-sufficiency in these areas. 3 months after the commitment ends the team should discuss if they would like to reengage as a GNT.

## 365 DAYS

Team responsibilities have ended. Initial housing lease ends and the family decides to stay or moves to another home or city.

# Team Preparation

## How to Teach Self-Sufficiency

Accompanying a newly arrived refugee to self-sufficiency is the goal of the resettlement program. Self-sufficiency means that one has the skills, knowledge and resources to navigate daily life. As a volunteer, your goal should be to gradually become less task-oriented and more of a friendly, community neighbor. Although it can take far longer to teach someone to do something for themselves, it creates the path towards empowerment and self-sufficiency.



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*The goal of resettlement is to ensure that newcomers can navigate the community and meet their needs themselves.*

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### **True Empowerment Seeks to Teach**

Empowerment is "The process of increasing the capacity of individuals or groups to make choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes". Thoughtful engagement in volunteering is a difficult and continual process. However, it is essential in being a healthy volunteer and promoting integration of newly arrived refugees.

### **Empowerment Reminds Us**

- Refugees and other newcomers are individuals who deserve respect and autonomy. Their lives, decisions and personal information are theirs alone.
- Services are intended to help move towards self-sufficiency; they are deliberate and progressive.
- Always follow the least intrusive path to service delivery.



# Team Preparation

## Issues to Anticipate

It will be important for the GNT to be prepared for potential issues that may arise. Approach topics as a friend who respects the dignity of the newcomer and be intentional.

### ▶ **Over Assisting and Over Giving**

We encourage groups during the initial resettlement period to ensure they are not assisting and/or giving the family too much. Remember the overarching goal is to help newcomers move towards self-sufficiency as soon as possible. The more empowerment that is employed towards encouraging self-sufficiency, the less likely the team should find itself over-assisting the family.

Over-giving can create dependency on the volunteers and can be counterproductive to the goal of self-sufficiency. It also has the potential to create complacency, unrealistic expectations and can impede meaningful friendship by creating a giver/taker relationship instead. When coupled with over-assistance, over-giving will make the end of assistance much harder.

### ▶ **Friendship Dynamics**

GNT Co-Sponsors typically end up cultivates long-lasting friendships and relationships with newcomers. Every culture and every person is different. Some newcomers come from cultures that may be more warm and others from more reserved cultures. Be careful not to jump to conclusions based on body language, expression, or how outgoing they are, but be intentional in trying to understand and make newcomers comfortable.

The first several weeks are very important for how your team and newcomer(s) will form a relationship. In the beginning, the relationship will be built more around tasks that will require your guidance and expertise. Eventually, the dynamics of your relationship will become more even-handed. As the newcomer(s) self-sufficiency steadily increases, the opportunity for sincere mutual friendship will increase. We never can know where deep friendships will form, but we can choose to be good neighbors. Respecting each other's boundaries and privacy, and remember not to over-promise.

# Team Preparation

## Helpful Reminders



### Your Role

An ambassador for your community, a friendly neighbor and a part of a newcomer's growing social capital in a new place.



### The Goal

To work yourself out of the role of a volunteer and into the role of a neighbor, as you 'teach to' instead of 'do for.'



### Mindset

You cannot be/do everything, utilize local resources, World Relief and especially focus on the assets of the newcomers and their community

## Healthy Boundary Tips

Know when to say 'no' regarding a task that you do not feel equipped for or when that task has already been taught. If newcomers request your help for a future need, first think through these questions:

- Is this something that the individual can try themselves this time (even if it will be a challenge for them)?
- Is it appropriate for me to be the person to assist with this task?
- Does the individual have a family member who should be assisting instead?
- Are other people needing to know of this need?
- Is this something I can teach or support them in instead of doing it?

## Expectations

It is important to acknowledge the expectations that you come to this work with. Volunteer work is not typically straightforward and can be unpredictable. Our ideas about what newcomer families' need are influenced by our own culture and upbringing, and they may be different from what the newcomer family desires.

# Team Preparation

## Key Practices for GNT Co-Sponsor



### Practice Cultural Awareness and Sensitivity

Cultural differences and similarities exist between newcomers and the receiving community. Our culture influences our behaviors, values and ways in which we learn and process the world around us. Please value and recognize the importance of your own culture, while at the same time valuing diversity. Honor the similarities that you share with newcomers while also honoring those differences that you do not identify with.

### Respect and Acknowledge Power Dynamics

GNT co-sponsor is a partnership with a newcomer family. It should not be viewed as an adoption or caretaker role. It is important to understand that your relationship is one of unequal power, as you are in a position of greater power. In order to work in partnership with a newcomer family, we ask that you acknowledge your power and enter this work thoughtfully. In order to create balance and avoid unhealthy power dynamics, be very aware of not doing anything that can be done by the newcomer themselves. Connect them to resources and networks whenever possible and try to make space for reciprocity.

### Avoid Paternalism

Paternalism is when you limit someone's autonomy based on what you think is for their own good. It is easier to make decisions for someone than you might think. It is not so easy to see someone make decisions that you feel are 'bad,' 'unnecessary' or are simply different than those you would make. The role of the GNT is not to choose the path but to provide access and show the options available to the newcomer so they can make informed decisions.



## Exercise Religious Tolerance

Please be extra sensitive and aware of how newcomer(s) may feel obligated to participate in the religious life of a GNT member. Be attentive to the newcomer(s) nationality and faith. Assure them that your friendship and support are not dependent on their involvement in any religious activities. You can be open about what you believe in without proselytizing. Proselytism is a coercive effort to convert someone. There may be appropriate moments to ask open, neutral, and non-judgmental questions about beliefs. Proselytizing, however, is strictly prohibited under the terms of the federal program.

## Respect Privacy

Newcomer(s) need and deserve privacy. The family's privacy in their new home is important. The landlord, and the family are the only people who should have keys to the home once the family has arrived. Early on, it should be established in friendly conversation that you will either text or call before coming over. It establishes an even playing field and mutual respect for each other's time and space.

## Addressing Social and Cultural Differences

It is important to be aware and when necessary respectfully discuss key social and cultural factors that newcomers and your group may encounter while you build your relationships. Examples may be racism, sexism, gender roles, cast or class systems, time orientation, etc.

## Be Trauma-Informed

Trauma-Informed Care is a framework which focuses on positives and strength-based approaches in order to empower an individual and prevent re-traumatization. At the start of your partnership, please refrain from asking questions about the newcomer(s) past experiences. If you ask to hear their story, they might feel obligated to tell you. Understand that some refugees are very willing to share their story of fleeing and how they arrived in the United States, while others might never wish to.

It is important for us to recognize that things we may view as character flaws might be coping mechanisms as reaction to trauma. These might be: Being late to meetings/appointments. Not answering phone calls. Asking multiple people for help on the same problem. Holding information back from someone trying to help.

## Language and Miscommunication

Avoid possessive language when working with newcomers, such as 'adoption' or 'our family.' These possessive words can inadvertently signal paternalism and 'power over.' Instead, ensure that the language that you use is mirroring your empowering actions. 'The family,' 'The (surname) family,' 'our group is accompanying a refugee,' 'we are welcoming a refugee family,' 'the refugee we are partnered with,' are all good ways to speak of this engagement.



*Coming to the U.S. was a dream. It is worth the work, the sweat, everything. The second we landed in the U.S. we were welcomed by the Church. They had an apartment for us, brought us food, drove us to the hospital every day, and became our friends. We could not have made it through this journey without them. We mourn, yes, but we are blessed. We're building our future here.*

*— Lamis, Syrian refugee*



# GNT CO-SPONSOR APPENDIX

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GOOD NEIGHBOR TEAM  
COSPONSOR MANUAL

2023