

ADMINISTERING CULTURAL ORIENTATION AND ASSESSMENTS



Cultural Orientation (CO) is the pre-departure and post-arrival education provided to help newcomers acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes they need to adapt to life in the United States and become fully integrated into their new communities. Please consult with the World Relief office regarding Cultural Orientation. Your group will either help newcomers attend a WR Cultural Orientation or provide the orientation yourselves. This vital information will help newcomers understand and navigate life in the US.

OVERVIEW

Pre-Departure Cultural Orientation

Provided by trained staff at the Refugee Support Center before newcomers depart for the United States. This Cultural Orientation (CO) prepares them for resettlement by providing practical information on the culture and laws of the United States. It assists them to develop realistic goals and know what to expect upon arrival. It will also prepare them for travel. However, keep in mind, this Pre-Departure CO is optional and an arriving newcomer may not have opted to participate.

Post-Arrival Cultural Orientation

In the United States, staff, interns, and volunteers at Resettlement Agencies welcome newcomers by providing Cultural Orientation specific to the surrounding community. This Cultural Orientation will provide practical information about how to get around, look for a job, and access local services such as healthcare and education.

Both the Pre-Departure and post-arrival Cultural Orientation are important and will help newcomers thrive in their new environment. Cultural Orientation is designed to help newcomers become self-sufficient more quickly.

INFORMATION HUB FOR CULTURAL ORIENTATION

All Cultural Orientation information is provided by the Cultural Orientation Resource Exchange (CORE). CORE provides information and resources on the Cultural Orientation for newcomers, but they also provide resources for those working with refugees. Noteworthy are [the Backgrounders](#) of various countries that refugee populations come from.

Your team can access CORE's website and other resources here:

<https://coresourceexchange.org/>

For client-facing resources, refer your newcomers here: <https://settlein.us.org/life-in-the-u-s/>

At the upper right hand of the webpage, you will be able to select the language of the newcomers. Each topic covered by the Cultural Orientation is listed on this page, and can be downloaded as a pdf. Each topic also has an audio option.

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TOPICS COVERED DURING CULTURAL ORIENTATION:

- Employment
- Housing
- Education
- Role of the Local Resettlement Agency
- Health
- Your New Community
- Refugee Status
- English
- Budgeting & Personal Finance
- Transportation
- Hygiene
- Public Assistance
- U.S. Laws
- Cultural Adjustment
- Safety

Cultural Orientation Assessment

After Cultural Orientation has been provided, the assessment will need to be administered. Cultural Orientation Assessments are intended to ensure that all newcomers are able to demonstrate general Cultural Orientation understanding by the end of the R&P period focusing on post-arrival knowledge and safety topics.

Conducting Cultural Orientation

Should your group be responsible to conduct the Cultural Orientation, each GNT will be responsible for creating their own group's Cultural Orientation policy, just as each WR office/affiliate creates its own CO policy. This policy must be in accordance with World Relief's national CO policy and provide details on the CO role within the GNT, CO training within the GNT, and CO delivery structure. The World Relief national and local CO policy can be requested from the local World Relief office.

For example:

- Will CO be provided in just one session? Otherwise, how many CO sessions will be provided, and which topics are to be covered in each session?
- Are you using materials from CORE? If not, what materials are you using?
- What is your method of CO delivery (in-person, virtual)?
- When is CO to be completed, and when will the CO assessment be conducted?

The group may refer to the local office's CO policy as a helpful template in writing their own. When the group's CO policy is completed, it is to be submitted to the local WR office/affiliate. This policy is to be followed for each newcomer case the GNT resettles.

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Conducting Cultural Orientation Assessment

All newcomers must be able to demonstrate general Cultural Orientation understanding by the end of the R&P period. In order to determine this, you will need to administer a CO assessment for each adult independently from one another. The CO assessment should be completed within approximately the 80th day for every newcomer, or at least before the end of 90 days. This consistency ensures that every newcomer has approximately the same amount of time to learn Cultural Orientation topics. It also provides adequate time to follow-up on any CO topics that need review or clarification. [Access the assessment here.](#)

The assessment consists of 11 questions. The questions address only a small part of what is covered in most CO programs. Although some newcomers may be familiar with the topics covered, the assessment should not be used to exempt anyone from Cultural Orientation.

Oral Assessment

The assessment can be conducted orally when the newcomer is unable to complete a written assessment. The oral assessment is best conducted in person, not over the telephone as visual aids, body language, and vocal prompts are permitted.

Verbal Assessment

Unlike the oral version, the written CO Assessment is a good option for literate newcomers who can read English and independently complete written work. It is permitted for them to write their responses in either English or their preferred language, provided a translator is able to precisely translate their answers.

Follow-up (if necessary)

If scoring showed that a review of specific topics is necessary, follow-up with newcomers on these topics. Be sure to provide notes on follow up in in case notes.

REMEMBER TO

- Log your volunteer hours
- Log case notes if required of GNT
 - CO provision with listed topics
 - CO Assessment and scoring, with any follow-up that may have occurred.