

TEAM LEADER GUIDE: HOW TO PREPARE A TEAM



Becoming a Good Neighbor Team (GNT) is a significant commitment. Whether you are assisting with just a few services in the initial resettlement or providing the majority of core services, your team has the ability to make a profound impact on the newcomer family. With this in mind, gathering committed members and organizing yourselves in a way that maximizes on each individual's strengths is key to a successful GNT. This guide will walk you through some best practices for organizing your team, establishing clear communication, and expectations.

TEAM ROLES

As the team leader, it can feel overwhelming with so much to do. If you try to do it all yourself not only can you burn yourself out, but you can inadvertently keep other team members from this transformative experience and newcomers from the opportunity to connect and build relationships with the other team members. This is why, being able to effectively delegate roles and responsibilities is so important. Please refer to the GNT Volunteer Guide/Manual for details on each of the possible roles team members can have. These are suggested roles based largely on the services required in the first 90-days but can be combined or altered to best fit the GNT's preferences and strengths.

Successful teams will match an individual GNT member's skills, experience, and availability with the appropriate role. Consider both hard and soft skills in these areas. For example, someone who is technically savvy and has strong attention to detail with experience in administrative work would likely be a good fit as an administrative point-person. Someone who is a clear communicator, sensitive and insightful with international experience may be a good fit to lead cultural orientation. Be intentional about assigning team roles and if roles need to shift along the journey, that is okay, as long as there is clear communication across the team.

TRAINING & CHECK-INS

The team leader should ensure that each team member has completed all member-required GNT training plus additional role-specific training before welcoming a newcomer. Part of role-specific training can simply be the research a team member completes to be informed about the community resources available on that topic and any community service providers contacts. Should the World Relief Coordination Staff recommend or require additional training along the way, the team leader should follow up with team members to ensure the completion of these trainings.

The team leader(s) should plan check-in meetings with the team throughout, and should check-in with individual team members when necessary. Use these times to discuss recent wins, challenges, updates, pray and build each other up. Ask how team members are doing and feeling about their role and experience so far. Make sure they have the support they need to assist with required services for the newcomers, and discuss how the newcomers seem to be doing as they start to navigate and integrate into their new home. Encourage strengths-based volunteering, relationship building over just services and doing, healthy helping and rhythms, and fun! The best way to teach this is to model it yourself to the team.

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COMMUNICATION

Effective communication within the GNT will be key to successfully welcoming a newcomer family to the U.S. and guiding them on a path to stability and integration.

As you are preparing your team, establish clear guidelines and expectations for communication in accordance with the World Relief office/program you are partnering with.

Every team should use a communication forum of some sort to streamline communication. World Relief may offer or require the use of MS Teams. All conversations and document sharing around the GNT should be conducted in MS Teams. There is also the capability to conduct video calls in MS Teams, should your team need to meet virtually.

Consider what communication guidelines you want to establish for the team.

- How and when will team members communicate that they've completed a core service? How soon after a service is completed are members expected to complete a case note (if required)?
- What will the protocol be for asking questions? Are they expected to be posed to the entire group for knowledge-sharing purposes, or only between relevant members? What are the expected response times?
- If the digital method used allows for "tagging" people, what are the expectations around that?
- Is everyone trained in the software to use it to the full benefit?

Consider what communication guidelines should be in place for the team and the newcomers.

- Engage with cultural humility and competence. It is best if this is a two-way conversation between the team and the family and agreed upon by both, rather than the team giving the newcomers rules to follow. This can help foster healthy relationships, share cultural knowledge and practices, mitigate confusion, and ensure that what needs to be done is completed.
- Will there be guidelines around communication outside of specified timeframes? Example: no calls or texts after a certain time except in urgent matters.
 - Make sure the whole team is unified if similar boundaries are to be communicated to the newcomer family. If one team member repeatedly responds to newcomer clients after hours and others do not, it is likely the family will reach out more often to the members who respond even if the issue/question is outside of that member's role.

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Addressing Team Dynamic Challenges & Conflict

With any group initiative, especially with this type of large undertaking, there can be conflicts that arise between GNT members. Successful GNTs will practice strong communication within set protocols. When conflicts arise, it's important to communicate the issue and discuss a resolution while creating a setting that feels safe and respectful. If an issue cannot be resolved by the individuals involved, the team leader(s) should be notified and take action to find a resolution.

If there is an issue within the team, consider the following steps:

1. Provide coaching and guidance: Issues may be able to be resolved quickly as a team with some coaching, listening sessions, and clear instructions. Address the issue directly, and review aspects of training or resources shared by World Relief. Sometimes, team members just need to hear a different perspective, be given new ideas, or be encouraged to work through a personal or relational issue. Depending on the situation and issue, this can be done with the individual needing support, or as a whole team. You, as the leader, can use your discretion.
2. If issues persist and/or grow, the next step is to notify World Relief for additional coaching and support. Share the issue and corrective steps that have been taken to so far, and what are the persisting problems. Follow the lead of World Relief and their process for volunteer correction.
3. If it still persists, World Relief will ask your church or organization to get involved with corrective planning and action steps.
4. If that does not resolve it, the last step is disengagement. This is very rare, but it may be necessary for World Relief to dismiss the team member from the team or make the hard decision of having the whole team discontinue.