

TRANSPORTATION



When a newcomer first arrives, it will be very challenging for them to get around. They will need a lot of help with transportation for at least the first month. Until they are able to obtain their driver's license and have their own car, they will primarily use public transit, walk, ride a bicycle, or rely on people in the community, including your team.

THINGS TO CONSIDER

From the beginning of your team helping the newcomers with transportation, keep in mind the mindset of “doing with” rather than “doing for”. Your transportation assistance is ultimately to help them achieve the goal of being able to safely get around on their own when they want or need to, and according to their budget. This means taking advantage of teachable moments when you are with them. Make sure your whole team is on the same page of empowerment.

PROVIDING RIDES

The World Relief office may coordinate and request driving needs for newcomers in order to get them to their initial resettlement appointments. Your team will most likely be a part of this as well. There may be other times that the newcomers directly ask you for a ride, outside of the initial resettlement appointments and other transportation requests from World Relief. Your team can coordinate and decide if these are doable. As your team organizes vehicle transportation, be sure there is clear communication between you, the World Relief office, and the newcomers. If the newcomers have US family ties or are already connected to another group in the community, they may ask them for help as well.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Even before the newcomers arrive, it is best practice for your team to familiarize yourselves with your local transit system so that you all are prepared to help if needed. Some World Relief offices may have partnerships with the local transit to provide bus training for newcomers. In that case, your team could help them practice learning various routes they will need to use and going on a few rides with them. In areas where public transportation is less available or non-existent, it is important for your team to be aware that transportation may be a higher need for the newcomer, and to prepare accordingly.

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GETTING THE CHILDREN TO SCHOOL

When families are registering their children for school, the school district will usually provide transportation information and options. This could be bus schedules and pick up locations, safe walking routes for children and parents, pick up and drop of procedures, etc. Whatever information is shared, discussed, and decided on, make sure the parents and children are involved and know what to do. Your team may need to practice getting to school with the family for the first couple of weeks until they are confident to do it on their own. A couple of examples are: going to the bus stop with the parents to drop off and pick up the children, or walking with the children and parents to school.

OTHER OPTIONS

Other modes of transportation that newcomers might use are biking, ridesharing, walking, and taxi services, although taxis can be very expensive and most likely won't be sustainable for the family. Your team can help provide safety orientation for each mode of transportation that they are interested in using. Such as for biking, they should have helmets, bike lights, bike locks, know how to safely store their bikes, and know the rules and signals for biking, etc.

REMEMBER TO

- Log your volunteer hours
- Log case notes for any bus training