

# MONTHS 3-6

## GUIDANCE FOR GOOD NEIGHBOR TEAMS

### CONGRATULATIONS, YOU'RE HALFWAY THERE!

The first 3 months are an intense time for a newly arrived family (and their GNT!) Now that the R&P (Reception and Placement) case is officially complete, many of the most urgent needs have been handled and systems are starting to come together.

The goal for your GNT continues to be to empower the family to care for their own needs, and offer friendship, companionship, and orientation to life in the US. Continually ask yourself, "Would I do this for a friend?"

While the family's case worker has moved on with new families, if a problem seems particularly sticky, feel free to reach out to your GNT Coordinator and ask for guidance. It may be appropriate to ask a case worker about the best strategy to move forward.

### WHAT TO EXPECT NOW FOR YOUR TEAM:

- Continue to pray for your family!
- Continue to attend monthly trainings offered by World Relief to develop your skills and understanding of walking beside refugees, and to share your own experiences and suggestions with other volunteers. GNTs can learn from one another.
- Now that you have more points of experience for reference, refer back to our [page of online resources](#) for volunteers, or ask your GNT coordinator for access to our online courses to help develop your understanding.
- Please continue to log your volunteer hours!
- Remember that your time and friendship will mean more to your family than anything else you can give.

### SOME IMPORTANT MILESTONES AND GOALS FOR THE FAMILY:

#### Mail to watch out for:

- At 4/5 months, the family will need to complete recertification paperwork for their SNAP benefits.
- Billing statements from RGE, Spectrum, etc.
- Additional DHS paperwork which may need to be responded to in a timely manner
- Travel loan paperwork

### Employment:

- If they begin to work, they must report this to DHS within 10 days. Failing to do this may result in a bill for benefits they receive while working but that they are not entitled to get. [THIS FORM MUST BE COMPLETED IN FULL BY THE EMPLOYER, ONLY \(monroecounty.gov\)](#)
- If your family members have jobs, but feel dissatisfied, it's important that you encourage them **not to quit** without talking first with an employment counselor at CFC or OACES. Many job-related conflicts can be smoothed over through a conversation with the manager, and this way loss of income and confusion with benefits can be avoided.
- Our clients can go back to CFC or OACES as many times as they want for 5 years.

### Paying Rent and Bills:

- During this time the family will transition from assistance with their rent, to paying rent and other bills on their own. Please help your family understand this process, including where and how to pay rent, whether it is online or through mail, bank check or money order. Doing this helps your family be independent and helps World Relief maintain good relationships with the landlords who rent to our clients.
- You can show your family how to pay their RGE, Spectrum, etc., bills online with their debit card
- Your family may be eligible for HEAP benefits in the winter on their heating bills. You can help them apply for this. [Home Energy Assistance Program \(HEAP\) | OTDA \(ny.gov\)](#)
- Our R&P team will have set up your family with a bank account. Reinforce how to use it and the associated debit card.

### Travel Loan

- At around 6 months, the family will need to begin to repay their travel loan. You can help them look out for this information that will arrive in the mail. It's important not to miss payments, as being regular with these will help them to build good credit history. Clients can pay online at worldrelief.org, under the Travel Loan section or call 800-901-1908; 800-903-1924 or 800-901-1951. [Travel Loans - World Relief](#)

### Budgeting

- As members of the family begin to work, they will lose some of their public benefits. You can help them understand ways to reduce their expenditures by teaching them which stores have lower prices, how to save money by turning down their thermostat when not home, or at night while sleeping, etc.

- WIC – If your family contains a pregnant woman, new mother, or young children under age 5, applying for WIC could help reduce their food expenses by covering certain healthy food items. Learn more about that here: [Monroe County, NY - Women, Infants & Children Program \(WIC\)](#)

#### **FURTHER POTENTIAL ORIENTATION TOPICS AND LOCAL RESOURCES**

Your family may or may not need assistance with these suggested things. Use your judgement!

- Introduce your family to their local library. If they can get here, they can get help to access many other public benefits.
- Show them common over the counter medications and how to use them.
- Show your family where to find donated clothing and food items near them, if needed.
- Consider showing your family where to buy used clothing such as Goodwill, Salvation Army, or Savers.
- Understanding their path to citizenship (this will vary depending on how the family arrived in the US)
- Knowing where to get dental and eye care (World Relief has a list of providers that take Medicaid)