Community Sponsorship
Training Handbook

A Guide for Community Sponsors partnering with Catholic Charities of Central and Northern Missouri to Resettle Refugees in Mid-Missouri

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WELCOME TO COMMUNITY SPONSORSHIP

Thank you for your interest in becoming a Community Sponsor with Catholic Charities of Central and Northern Missouri’s Refugee Services. You are responding to the greatest humanitarian crisis of our time, and we are grateful for your involvement with refugee resettlement. As a Community Sponsor, you must be prepared to deal with the unexpected as with any human relationship, so we have developed these training materials to help prepare you for the experience. In addition to general information about refugee resettlement, you will also find guidelines and expectations for this partnership. We hope that you will discover the rich blessings in the challenging and joyful work of sponsoring a refugee family.

INTRODUCTION

Catholic Charities of Central and Northern Missouri is a 510(c)(3) non-profit social services agency, and the charitable arm of the Catholic Diocese of Jefferson City, that provides a range of programs and services to underserved and vulnerable populations. The agency covers a 38-county service area and serves all regardless of faith, culture or situation. CCCNMO provides compassionate social services that respect the dignity of each person, and reaches outward to engage the local community in this mission.

Catholic Charities Refugee Services is the only local refugee resettlement agency in Mid-Missouri. This office was created in 1975, and was originally housed under the auspices of the Diocese of Jefferson City. When Catholic Charities of Central and Northern Missouri was founded in 2011, the offices were added to the non-profit agency. Catholic Charities Refugee Services is an affiliate of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), one of nine national resettlement agencies in the U.S. with whom refugees are placed through a cooperative agreement with the US Department of State.

Our local Refugee Services has resettled more than 4,000 refugees in Mid-Missouri since 1975. Our services include case management, employment services, education and youth services, healthcare coordination, English language training, and cultural orientation to newly arriving refugees. Our agency also provides ongoing support services to refugees and other eligible populations up to five years after arrival.

WHO ARE REFUGEES?

Refugees are people who have fled their home country because of persecution or legitimate fears that they would be persecuted because of their nationality, religious beliefs, political views, or racial or ethnic background. There are currently there are more than 26 million refugees around the world.

Among several countries who accept and resettle refugees, the United States of America receives refugees from countries across the globe. To determine how many refugees the U.S. will accept each year the president, in consultation with Congress, determines a ceiling for refugee admissions. Refugees who are approved for resettlement in the United States have undergone a rigorous vetting process overseas, often taking at least two years to complete.

Once a refugee has been approved to resettle in the U.S., a medical exam is conducted both to ensure they do not carry any communicable diseases. Prior to travel, refugees take out travel loans through the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to cover their airfare to come to the United States.

Unless refugees have relatives or friends in mid-Missouri, they are unable to chose where they are resettled. As the only local resettlement agency for mid-Missouri, CCCNMO receives refugees and journeys with them through the resettlement process in local communities. Our agency’s primary goals for resettlement are:

- Early self-sufficiency versus dependency
- Self-sufficiency builds confidence in self-reliance (that one can make it in a new country and culture)
- Acquisition of the English language by non-English speakers to function well in U.S. society
WHY COMMUNITY SPONSORS AND VOLUNTEERS?

Upon arrival, refugees are not isolated but live within the community. The best support for acculturation and assimilation for refugees is through the community. Community Sponsorships are vital to the integration of newly arrived refugees sponsors can:

- Build bridges to the community at large and an ambassador of welcome for their community.
- Introduce refugees to their new community as a friendly neighbor, and can be part of a refugee’s growing social capital in a new place.
- Equip, educate and empower refugees to thrive in their new homes.

Catholic Charities Refugee Services has seen first-hand the promising impact Community Sponsorships have as an enriching experience for refugees, while also inviting community members to participate in and become advocates for refugee resettlement.

APPLICATION FOR COMMUNITY SPONSORSHIP

To become a Community Sponsor for refugees, organizations must submit an application, and upon acceptance complete the appropriate onboarding tasks before being matched with a refugee group or family.

Community Sponsorship groups should be comprised of at least five (5) members of the core resettlement volunteer team, including a designated primary contact person (or persons) to represent the group on the application.

Upon application approval the director, president or head official for the sponsorship group will sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Catholic Charities of Central and Northern Missouri formalizing the sponsorship relationship. Members of the group will then be invited to participate in the Community Sponsorship training with CCCNMO, where handbooks will be provided and more detailed information on what to expect and how to prepare for resettlement work.
REQUIREMENTS FOR COMMUNITY SPONSORS

- When CCCNMO receives a refugee arrival notice, the agency will assign families to selected Community Sponsors based on family needs, sponsor resources and availability.
  - CCCNMO will share the case background information (ages, gender, languages, education, nationality, religion, health issues, and employment experience).
  - Sponsorship groups cannot select families based on nationality or any other criteria.
  - Sponsors will take just two days to give a confirmation that they will co-sponsor the family.
- Once agreed, the leader of the community organization/co-sponsors will sign a Memorandum of Understanding. Though not a legally binding contract, it aims to clarify the roles and responsibilities of both Catholic Charities and the community co-sponsorship group during the co-sponsorship period.
- Upon the receipt of the signed Memorandum of Understanding, a CCCNMO case manager will be assigned to the sponsorship’s group and will schedule a pre-arrival meeting with your group’s designated contact person(s) to go over last-minute details and expectations for the first few weeks.
- Community Sponsors will coordinate with CCCNMO to ensure that newcomers access all assistance and information they need in accordance with regulations of the federal government.
- Sponsors will meet the service and documentation requirements for refugee resettlement with support and guidance from CCCNMO.
- Sponsors will also provide a social network and opportunities for personal exchange.

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Becoming a Community Sponsor means taking on a great responsibility. As a Community Sponsor, CCCNMO will delegate most of the resettling tasks of a refugee group or family to you. This involves hard work and substantial commitment that should not be entered into lightly.

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REQUIREMENTS FOR COMMUNITY SPONSORS

- Have 501(c)3 status or a benevolent association, registration with the Missouri Secretary of state and liability insurance to cover group members and other volunteers.
- Conduct a community self-assessment and apply with CCCNMO to become a Community Sponsor
- Raise $2000-$4000 (depending on the location of the group and the cost of living in that location).
- Attend all required orientation and training sessions.
- Sign a Memorandum of Understanding detailing the roles and responsibilities of the group and Catholic Charities in the resettlement of a family.
- Ensure that all volunteers in the group complete a background check on file with CCCNMO.
- Ensure that all volunteers in the group complete VIRTUS training.
- Once a family is matched with the co-sponsorship group, there are many tasks the group will be required to perform, in coordination with Catholic Charities and the co-sponsorship group’s assigned case manager/community sponsorship coordinator.
- Ensure that resettlement services must be accompanied with appropriate language interpretation and documentation (per USCCB requirements).
• Secure housing, furnishings and providing rental assistance as needed.
• Welcome the family upon their arrival and provide for their basic needs such as food, clothing, and transportation.
• Assist the family in applying for social security cards and all the public benefits they are eligible for including medical insurance, food stamps (SNAP) & cash assistance.
• Ensure that the family has access to primary medical care including a required exam as well as any specialized care, as needed.
• Ensure that adults are enrolled in English language classes and children are enrolled in school.
• Assist in finding employment for at least one family member to achieve financial self-sufficiency.
• Coach the family as needed so that they understand their financial needs and obligations.
• Conduct community orientation – show the family where and how to shop, how to pay bills, how to use public transportation, use emergency telephone numbers, understand local laws and customs, etc.
• Provide transportation to CCCNMO office and classes.
• Maintain regular contact with the CCCNMO case manager and/or community sponsorship coordinator, submit all required paperwork, case notes and financial documentation in a timely manner.
• Comply with all CCCNMO guidelines related to co-sponsorship responsibilities and limits (explain).
GROUP ROLES

Each member of the Community Sponsorship group will take on a specific role and responsibilities: which include contact person(s), administrator(s), leader(s), and core service team members.

THE GROUP’S LEADER(S)

- Oversees the process of applying, onboarding and asking community to get involved with their time, talent and monetary support.
- Generates a broad base of support from within community or group, and in doing so seldom has trouble publicizing efforts or meeting the funding requirements of community sponsorship.
- Organizes fundraising efforts (events, one-time donations or campaign appeals) directed to organization members.

CONTACT PERSON(S)

- Primary contact point between CCCNMO and Community Sponsorship group. Our agency asks that all communication between CCCNMO and your group is streamlined your contact person(s) to keep both entities organized.
- Collects regular reports from the sponsorship group to update CCCNMO and case managers
- Checks in with the refugee family regularly until the family is securely established in their surroundings.
- Might have primary decision-making responsibility.

ADMINISTRATOR

- Should become well acquainted with the required forms and case file documentation and timeline for their submission is an important part of preparing for the co-sponsorship experience. Responsible for completing and submitting forms, case notes, and documentation to CCCNMO in a timely manner.
  - Catholic Charities is subject to federal, state, and resettlement agency monitoring during which these items are reviewed and scrutinized.
- Must be organized, detail-oriented, and thorough.

CORE SERVICE TEAM MEMBERS

- Suggested to consist of at least seven (7) members, responsible for coordinating with CCCNMO in the following areas:
  - Housing/furnishings/clothing
  - Finances
  - Obtaining documents
  - Transportation
  - Employment
  - Health
  - Language classes
  - Children’s education
  - Community integration
  - Hospitality
  - Administration.
- Structured so that members understand who is responsible for each of these core services
- Makes regular report on progress of core services for the refugee group or family to the contact person(s).
GROUP RESPONSIBILITIES

DOCUMENTATION

Federal refugee resettlement programs require all aspects of the resettlement process to be documented in a timely, accurate, and thorough manner. The administrator of your community sponsorship group should collect, organize, and share all documentation related to the refugee(s) with Catholic Charities.

If assisting a refugee family in filling out an application for public benefits social services, or any other reason, a copy of the application should be maintained before submitting the original application. You group is responsible for maintaining originals and copies of all documentation related to the refugee, including all the following:

- Receipts for expenses made on behalf of the refugee(s)
- Receipts for items donated to the refugee(s)
- Client acknowledgments of cash disbursements
- Client acknowledgments of cash and in-kind donations
- Housing applications, leases, utility bills, and other housing-related documents
- School enrollment forms
- Public benefits applications or social service applications or referrals
- Any document received from social security administration or a government benefits office
- All mail received within the first 90 days of arrival
- Documents related to service providers.

MAINTAINING THE NOTES LOG

- CCCNMO will provide a list of documentation requirements for each resettlement service and a notes log.
- The community sponsorship group will be responsible for maintaining notes of all services provided to the family.
- It’s best to assign one member of your group (the administrator) to maintain the note log and update it on a weekly basis.
HOUSING

Basic Requirements:

- Federal policy requires that refugees have their own living accommodations. This respects their privacy, helps to prevent over-dependency on sponsors, and provides confidence in their ability to function independently.
- Sponsors will find housing that is safe, sanitary, accessible, and affordable to a family whose income may be limited during the first few years in this country.
- Ideal housing locations are those where families are more likely to have useful resources such as good public transportation, English language learning facilities, and food pantries.

Co-Signing Leases:

- Refugee groups or families should be listed as tenants on their lease agreements, and they will be expected to sign the lease shortly after arrival.
- CCCNMO recommends trying to secure short-term leases if possible (3-6 months).
- Most landlords will require a guarantor or co-signer, since the family will have no credit history; in such cases, CCCNMO asks that the sponsorship group co-sign the lease.
- When securing housing, it is important to walk through the entire apartment/house looking for chipped or peeling paint, especially around windows and doors.

Security Deposits:

- Landlords will generally require a deposit equal to 1 month of rent. CCCNMO recommends that the community sponsors try to negotiate to avoid payment for more than 1 month and also recommends negotiating to avoid or reduce any application fees.
- While the security deposit is an eligible expense for reimbursement, CCCNMO prefers that sponsorship groups use the funds they have raised to provide security deposits. At the end of the lease the deposit will be returned to the group, depending on any maintenance or repair costs incurred by the landlord as outlined in the lease.

Lead Inspections:

- CCCNMO requires that prospective housing built before 1978 should be inspected for lead before any child under 6 years old is resettled there.
- When securing housing, it is important to obtain a lead disclosure report signed by the landlord as an addendum to the lease.

Household Furnishings/Clothing:

- The core resettlement team member for “clothing/household furnishings” is responsible for procuring, valuating, and documenting the material goods that will be provided to the family in their new home. CCCNMO will provide a list of required items (include clothing, donated furniture, new mattresses and box springs, and household items) these items must be documented and reported back to CCCNMO.
  - These items have to be in good condition that one would feel comfortable giving to a friend.
  - Some clothing will need to be purchased new, for example, socks and underwear.
  - Donations of furniture and household goods can be pledged in advance of the refugee(s)’ arrival.
- Catholic Charities Refugee Services has household furniture and goods that may be available to your co-sponsorship group should your group need assistance procuring the required household and clothing items.
- Valuation of items can be based off the purchase price (receipt required) or the Salvation Army’s online donation value guide.
- Refugee groups or families must also sign acknowledgments of receipt of in-kind donations and their value.
- CCCNMO will provide forms for housing supply checklists and client donation acknowledgment to track the provision of material goods to the family per federal program requirements.
FINANCES

• The core resettlement team’s appointed “finance” team member is responsible for overseeing the expenditure of the resettlement funds.
• The finance team member is also responsible for introducing refugee adults to family budgeting, credit, using a bank and taxes, and ensuring that the family gets financial assistance and other benefits for which they are eligible.

Social Security Administration (SSA):

• CCCNMO will provide the Social Security card applications for each household member in advance of the family’s arrival
• Refugees who have not already applied for a social security card upon arrival must be taken to a local Social Security Administration (SSA) office to apply for their Social Security cards within five (5) business days after their arrival. (This timeline may be delayed by a mandatory quarantine period or closure of SSA offices due to COVID-19)
  • Each refugee’s I-94 or Visa/Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) must also be presented (Do not present passports, even if the refugees have them).
  • Be sure that the application is for an unrestricted Social Security card; the 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 the government’s financial assistance office soon after the Social Security appointment.
• It may take ten days to three weeks to receive a Social Security card.

Government Benefits Office:

• The finance person is also responsible for ensuring that the refugee family applies for food stamps (SNAP), and either Match Grant (MG), Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA) or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).
• The family should be brought to the public assistance office the day after their Social Security Administration visit.
• If the family’s I-94s are not available three (3) days following arrival, the family should be brought to the public assistance office so that their benefits are granted without further delay.

Catholic Charities’ Approach to Financial Assistance:

• Community sponsors are generally expected to follow the same financial policies that CCCNMO applies to refugees resettled without a sponsorship group; this usually means an expectation of the family’s financial self-sufficiency within three (3) to six (6) months.
• The sponsorship group must work with CCCNMO to establish and manage a budget for resettlement.
• In addition to the financial assistance that a sponsor will provide, federal funds will be available to help pay the refugee family’s expenses during the first 30-90 days.
• CCCNMO anticipates community sponsors will spend $2,000-$4,000 per family resettled, though spending can vary widely depending on specific needs and circumstances.
• The family’s resettlement funds for the Reception & Placement program generally provide for rent and utilities for up to three (3) months.
• The family may be eligible for additional rent and utility assistance from CCCNMO depending on their enrollment in additional services. In line with this, the sponsorship group’s developed budget should factor in decreasing financial assistance from the community sponsors. Should the family not meet its goal of self-sufficiency within 3-6 months, financial assistance can be extended but the family’s contributions will continue to increase.
Federal Funds Explained:

- For each refugee who arrives, the US Conference of Catholic Bishops provides Catholic Charities Reception & Placement funds in the amount of $1,225 to be spent on behalf of each refugee.
  - $200 of the $1,225 per capita may be held by CCCNMO in flex funds.
  - Flex funds may be used at the discretion of CCCNMO to help the neediest refugees: families who do not have co-sponsors, or for particularly vulnerable cases.
- In a co-sponsorship arrangement, CCCNMO usually uses these funds to reimburse the community sponsorship group for eligible expenses.
- Expenses eligible for reimbursement include rent, groceries, a cell phone, bus passes, utilities, mattresses, furniture and other household items, car seats and baby items, and clothing.
- It is important for refugees to understand that the federal funding for financial and material assistance in the initial resettlement period will not continue, and that the family is expected to become self-sufficient.

Refugee Benefits:

- At the pre-arrival meeting, CCCNMO will provide information on what maximum benefit amount the refugee family may receive for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Match Grant (MG) and food stamps (SNAP).

Match Grant Program:

- The Match Grant program provides additional housing and cash assistance to families who have a large likelihood of reaching self-sufficiency within six months.
- Families enrolled in the Match Grant program are not eligible for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).
- Families not enrolled in Match Grant, maximum Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) is granted unless the family brings assets with them that were declared at their point of entry.
- If the family is enrolled in Match Grant, the family cannot access TANF or other cash assistance; however, the family is eligible for food stamps (SNAP).
- The maximum food stamps (SNAP) amount, however, may be reduced by the government when they see the family is receiving rental assistance.
- Once the family is paying their rent, the public assistance office will usually adjust the food stamps (SNAP) amount upward once they have proof.

State Funds Explained:

- Cash assistance through State programs are available to refugees; the State cash assistance amount the refugee family will receive is calculated on several factors and will vary.
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) is administered by the Missouri Department of Social Services Family Support Division.
- Each refugee family will apply for Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA), Match grant (MG), or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) soon after applying for Social Security Cards.
- Families enrolled in Match Grant will receive additional cash, rent, and utility assistance from CCCNMO for up to 180 days or until the family is self-sufficient.
- Refugees who alternatively enroll in other cash assistance programs usually have access to their Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA) or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) accounts within 2 to 3 weeks from arrival.
- Beginning in the second month after arrival, the families will be expected to contribute at least half of the cash assistance they receive towards rent.
Medical Insurance:
- Most refugees will be eligible for Medicaid or the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) which is available for several years
- Depending on their income, some refugees get short-term health insurance called Refugee Medical Insurance (RMA), which is available for up to eight months
- Refugees not eligible for Medicaid, CHIP, or RMA may be able to get medical insurance through their employer or the Government’s Marketplace

EMPLOYMENT
- The community sponsorship group’s named “employment” team member is responsible for finding appropriate jobs for all refugees in the family who can work.
- Achieving early self-sufficiency, early employment should be a top priority.
- Refugees arrive fully authorized to work; upon being hired they complete an I-9, legal proof of work eligibility.
- The search for jobs should begin even before the refugee arrives, skills of refugees vary widely from farming to engineering. CCCNMO encourage surveying the employment landscape in local communities for entry-level, and reasonably accessible jobs that can accommodate English-language learners.
- Many employers may initially say they cannot hire a refugee unless she or he has a Social Security card or an Employment Authorization Document (EAD), but this is illegal.
  - If a job is offered before the Social Security card is received, CCCNMO will advise on best practices to move forwards with.
- Within ten business days of the family’s arrival, CCCNMO will visit the family at home with the community sponsorship’s named employment team member to conduct an employment assessment for every employable adult in the home; answers to extensive employment questions will be recorded for use in job searches.
  - Once the employment assessment is complete, CCCNMO will send the sponsorship group’s contact person(s) each refugee’s employment assessment that also contains each refugee’s resettlement plan.
- From information in the employment assessment, the employment person will create a resume.
- The community sponsorship employment team member will work on setting benchmarks for job searches and other key action plan points and write up a resettlement plan for each family reflecting their experience during the first thirty days. They should meet with the job seekers very regularly to discuss progress, leads and search strategies.
  - Each assessed refugee, and her/his interpreter, will sign her/his employment assessment and resettlement plan before returning a copy to CCCNMO.

Income Reporting:
- Once a refugee family member starts working, s/he must report her/his income to the government.
- Recently employed refugees must report their income after they have been paid at least twice either weekly or biweekly.
- The government will use the wage information and recalculate their benefits to determine eligibility.
Employment Services:
• Adherence to the State’s employment services policies is generally required for anyone receiving cash assistance through the State. Failure to comply with State policies can result in a reduction or suspension of benefits.
• It is important to read through every letter related to Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). CCCNMO has a Refugee Temporary Assistance Connection (RTAC) case manager who works with families enrolled in Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).
• The community sponsorship group will coordinate and collaborate with the Catholic Charities Refugee Temporary Assistance Connection (RTAC) case manager regarding State employment services and access to Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) benefits.
• Most families will get Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) for up to thirty-six months if they stay under income limits, fulfill periodic documentation requests, and comply with the government’s requirements to provide ongoing verification of benefit-eligible activities.
• Pregnant women may be exempt from employment requirements and may be eligible for statewide subsidized programs that provide discounted childcare and additional services.

Periodic Report Form for Food Stamps:
• After at least three months, the government may send a periodic report form to verify the refugee family’s continuing eligibility for food stamps (SNAP).
• It is important to act upon this form as soon as possible and to document when the requested information was provided.
• Families may receive food stamps (SNAP) if they remain below its income limits, although the monthly benefit amount may go down when their income increases from employment.

Medical Insurance:
• Most refugees will be eligible for Medicaid or the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) which is available for several years.
• Depending on their income, some refugees get short-term health insurance called Refugee Medical Insurance (RMA), which is available for up to eight months.
• Many refugees who are not eligible for Medicaid, CHIP, or RMA may be able to get medical insurance through an employer or the government’s Marketplace.

EDUCATION:
• School enrollment for children must be coordinated through our agency youth services coordinator in consultation with the assigned caseworker.
• The core service team member assigned children’s education should take the lead on school enrollment for refugee children, who should be enrolled in the local public school system as soon as possible upon arrival.
• Begin by connecting with school administrators in the local public schools of the neighborhoods where the refugee family resides.
• Request the resources they offer to English language learners and efforts they can make to accommodate newly arrived immigrant students. Ask about languages spoken among the student and teacher populations.
• For children less than five (5) years of age, provide the refugee family the information of Head Start or other free school-readiness programs in your area for children aged 3-5 and any free or discounted daycare options for children under three (3).
CHECKLIST OF KEY ACTION ITEMS

PRE-ARRIVAL

☐ Secure Interpreter(s):
  • It is important to have reliable access to interpreter/s to help facilitate important meetings and appointments with the refugee family.
  • Interpreters are required for the arrival and all core service meetings with the family and CCCNMO.

☐ Formalize Housing Arrangements:
  • When looking for housing, use a safety checklist provided by CCCNMO. Send copies of this checklist as well as the signed lease to CCCNMO upon securing housing. Lists can be found online at cccnmo.diojeffcity.org/community-sponsorship.

☐ Establishment of Utilities Accounts:
  • The community sponsorship’s designated team member must establish utility accounts prior to the family’s arrival.
  • Responsibility for the utility accounts will be transferred to the family once they have Social Security numbers, usually within 30 days of arrival.
  • In the meantime, the accounts must be established by the group using its Tax ID Number or an individual in the group (e.g., Contact Person, Housing Person) using her/his Social Security number.

☐ Designation of Arrival Contact at Point of Arrival:
  • Community sponsors can choose to meet the family at the airport or meet them at the CCCNMO office after arrival.
  • If sponsors want to go to the airport, they will need to send CCCNMO a copy of the driver’s licenses and cell phone numbers of those driving vehicles. Take into consideration the number of seats in vehicles, space for luggage, and any car seats or special seating arrangements ahead of arrival.

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 refugees will be both tired and apprehensive; this is not the time for a gala 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.
  • Plan to wait. Entry procedures at Kansas City of Saint Louis can take 1-3 hours.
  • If going to the airport, come equipped with a sign bearing the refugee’s name in large letters.
  • Bring weather/season appropriate clothing (in one-size-fits-all styles) and bottled water.
  • Community sponsorship resettlement team members should also provide the family with an Arrival Packet containing the following:
    - Names and telephone numbers of an interpreter, Co-sponsors and Catholic Charities contact information.
    - Pocket money and food allocation.
    - A map of the town, highlighting the home, safe routes for walking, and any nearby destinations. (Keep in mind, however, that it will likely be necessary to show the family how to get to these places. Many can come from cultures where reading maps is not emphasized, and many have not yet learned to read or write in their native language.)
    - A poster or handout with the community sponsorship’s core volunteer members’ photos, names, and roles.
POST-ARRIVAL

FIRST WEEK:

- The day after the arrival, conduct a home visit and complete a CCCNMO Home Visit Form and provide the completed Home Visit Form to CCCNMO the day of or after the visit.
- Within 5 days of arrival, the co-sponsor must:
  - Take the family to the local social security office (SSA)
  - After SSA, take family to the government public assistance office
  - Provide basic community orientation including an introduction to public transportation
  - Provide an overview orientation of policies, American culture and laws, and referrals.
- CCCNMO will organize a meeting with the community sponsorship members, the family, and an interpreter. During this meeting more information about the CCCNMO community sponsorship relationship and self-sufficiency policies will be provided by CCCNMO staff.
  - It is important for both refugees and co-sponsors to confront and clarify any misconceptions or miscommunication early in the resettlement process.
  - Also, during this meeting, Catholic Charities will conduct employment assessments for all employable adults in the household. The core services employment team member and/or contact person needs to participate in this meeting and an interpreter must be present.
  - Each employment assessment will cover questions about language proficiency, health, education, work history, availability, and any other information concerning and/or affecting employability.
  - Once the assessment is complete, CCCNMO will send the assessment(s) to the community sponsorship's contact person(s) with a resettlement plan for each adult.
  - Once the benchmarks on the employment assessment are complete, the co-sponsors’ employment volunteer will use the information to create a resume for each assessed employable adult before formally beginning job searches.
FIRST YEAR:

• **The First 90 Days:**
  
  • Most of the tasks required from the co-sponsor are completed within 30 days and the Reception & Placement period officially ends at 90 days. These 90 days will be a very busy time and they will pass very quickly.
  
  • The community co-sponsorship group and CCCNMO will be in frequent contact to ensure that everything goes as smoothly as possible. At 90 days the role of the community sponsor will shift; the family should be able to do most of their life tasks without your assistance; the co-sponsor group needs to be proactive in encouraging such independence.
  
  • Occasionally the co-sponsor may need to provide a refugee family member with transportation to an appointment that is essential but not easily reachable by public transportation. In such situations, it is important to not tack on several other errands at once lest the family think you will do this after every appointment.
  
  • At this juncture, the family should understand the sponsors are not “on-call” and that sponsors are available to help them via mutual agreement, not necessity; this is the most respectful way to approach it, as it levels the playing fields and reinforces the partner nature of the relationship.

• **Six months post-arrival:**
  
  • There should be a significant shift as the family will have made significant progress towards self-sufficiency.
  
  • Careful budgeting at the beginning will prepare the family for the end of assistance. Regular conversations about budgeting and finance are needed to underscore the importance of managing finances and resources toward self-sufficiency.
  
  • In most cases co-sponsors stay very involved with the family throughout their first year even when they are no longer providing any financial assistance.

• **One-year post-arrival:**
  
  • Usually as the one-year mark approaches the community sponsorship group will be involved in helping the family determine whether they will stay in their current housing or move to another location.
LONG TERM CONSIDERATIONS OF RESETTLEMENT WORK

OVER-ASSISTING AND OVER-GIVING

Community sponsors may be inclined to procure provisions beyond the basic necessities to help provide for family needs, but this could create unrealistic expectations by the family, and enmity and jealousy among the sponsored and non-sponsored families. Keep in mind that refugees are generally expected to undertake most of their own shopping, transportation, and rent/bill payments. For these reasons, and taking into consideration that over-giving can be either overt or inadvertent, CCCNMO urges community sponsor groups to follow the agency’s guidelines and refrain from purchasing expensive furniture or other household items for families.

It is important to remember the goal of resettlement work is to make sure the family is as independent and as self-sufficient as soon as possible. More assistance with family members through tutoring, transportation, and tasks is often necessary at the beginning, but will wane over time. CCCNMO expects that issues surrounding mobility, employment, and transportation (which are common) should be worked out so that the family should be generally independent while the group takes fewer active roles in routine activities.

Essentially, over-giving can and often does create complacency and unrealistic expectations. When coupled with over-assistance, over-giving will make the end of eventual assistance that much harder. Special occasions should be special, but it is good to strive for balanced and practical approaches. For example, taking the entire family to an expensive outing can be fun but also could embarrass the parents, who could never afford to do so. Community sponsorship groups should be mindful of the privilege gap between group members and the family when planning activities. Similarly, donating a car unconditionally to the father before he has his driver’s license and/or a job; this takes away the real experience most Americans must have before getting a car: getting a job and affording medical insurance.

FRIENDSHIPS

Community sponsorships nearly always cultivate long-lasting friendships and relationships.

While CCCNMO understands the importance of approaching refugee groups and families with a friendly disposition during meetings and interactions, the agency recommends that the friendships being built are managed with care.

Some refugee clients come from cultures that may find the outgoing, enthusiastic, and friendly dispositions common in American culture uncomfortable and strange. If a family is reacting this way:

- It is not necessarily a sign of hostility;
- It is likely a sign of being somewhat guarded given all the changes they are experiencing.
- It is important to note that the first several weeks are very important for how the community sponsorship group and the family will form a relationship.

At first the relationship is likely to be somewhat lopsided in the sponsor’s direction given the many tasks that will require the sponsor’s guidance and expertise. Eventually, the dynamics of this relationship will become more even-handed. As time goes on, and the family’s self-sufficiency steadily increases, the family may still need some assistance from time to time but not necessarily like when they arrived. In building a relationship based on partnership:

- Don’t be overbearing or assume that you are or will be friends
- Respect each other’s privacy
- Be straightforward in giving advice and not to over-promise
- Partnership with the family is more likely to develop with mutual understanding and respect that will endure
UNDERSTANDING CULTURE AND BIASES
The first step to being a community sponsor is to uncover your own background and perceptions of the world and appreciate that they are a result of your upbringing, experiences, and context. What is “normal”, “appropriate”, and “respectful” to one person may not be that way for others.

In your role as a community sponsor, you hold a certain amount of power and privilege since you can volunteer, organize with your group, and have access to resources and ways to making your voice heard. As the saying goes, with great power comes great responsibility, so follow the co-sponsor guidelines provided to you by Catholic Charities to ensure you are fulfilling your role appropriately. Also be aware that the people you sponsor or advocate with may recognize and respond to your position and power in different ways.

If you are a documented citizen or resident in the United States and have never been a refugee or asylum-seeker, your legal status in this country and your experience of safety and security is likely to be very different from people who have had the experience of being displaced. Being aware of this difference can help to increase your sensitivity and openness to learning about others’ experiences.

You may also hold other types of power, due to certain aspects of your identity, socioeconomic status, educational background, the part of town in which you live, or your level of familiarity with U.S./local culture. Keep in mind that these may affect your perceptions of others and what is acceptable, and their perceptions of you.

APPROPRIATE LANGUAGE INTERPRETATION
Appropriate language interpretation is necessary to ensure proper understanding and effective communication, and can be provided by someone who speaks the client’s native language or a language in which the client is fluent or using an in-person or phone interpreter.

Appropriate language interpretation is required for all core resettlement services. Using the client’s native language may be necessary to ensure that all adult members of the case are receiving the information directly in a language in which they are fluent. It is important to document how that interpretation is provided in the case notes for services. Keep in mind that while one adult member of the case may be fluent in a second language (for example, English), other adult members of the case such as a spouse or adult children may not be.

CCCNMO will provide the community sponsorship group with access to phone interpretation services to ensure that appropriate language interpretation is provided for core services. CCCNMO requires community sponsorship groups to identify interpreters available to assist the group, and phone interpretation services should be used only when interpreters are not available. Access codes and means to use the telephone interpretation services must be provided to the family, and reported to CCCNMO in case notes.

RESPECT, AN ESSENTIAL PART OF SPONSORSHIP RELATIONSHIPS
Never forget, refugees have been through a lot. These people have fled countries where there was little respect for their human rights, and may have been on the move and/or living in refugee camps for years. Many refugees have experienced insults, humiliation, and a sense of helplessness. Arriving in the US, not speaking English, they are dependent on our services and assistance, but they are not to be pitied.

They must be treated with the utmost respect for their journey, their culture, and their individuality. As community sponsors, remember that one of the most important jobs in refugee resettlement is to help refugees regain their confidence and sense of control over their lives. Part of this is helping them become self-sufficient as soon as possible.

While it might be counter intuitive, confidence in their ability to handle difficulties and struggle well, and insistence that they be as independent as they are capable of being, are signs of respect while giving them things that they don’t really need are signs of condescension. Sometimes community sponsors liken their relationship to the family they are helping to a parental one, which CCCNMO strongly discourages. Community sponsors will not be adopting refugees as their children; it is disrespectful to envision the role of co-sponsors in this way. Catholic Charities encourage all to approach community sponsorships as a partnership, not parental relationship.
PATERNALISM

An imbalance of power can contribute to paternalism in this partnership. Paternalism is the policy or practice on the part of people in positions of authority of restricting the freedom and responsibilities of those subordinate to them in the subordinates’ supposed best interest. In resettlement work, paternalism occurs when a resettlement group, or sponsorship group, limits refugee’s individual freedoms “for their own good”. While this is not always done with malice, it can be challenging to see someone make decisions that you feel are ‘bad,’ ‘unnecessary’ or are simply different than those you would make.

We encourage you to imagine this initial transition to a new culture and community as a river that newcomers must cross. The role of ‘teacher’ that community sponsorship groups and the resettlement agencies play is to point out the stepping stones across the river. Your role as a community sponsor is not to choose the path, carry across or hide the paths that you would not utilize yourself.

POWER, CULTURE AND DIVERSITY

Cultural differences and similarities exist between newcomer refugees and the receiving community. Understanding how our own culture influences behaviors, values, and ways in which we learn and process the world around us is crucial to address when working with refugees. In resettlement work, it is important to value and recognize the importance of your own culture, while at the same time valuing and recognizing the importance of diversity. CCCNMO expects that community sponsors honor the similarities that you share with newcomers while also honoring those differences that you do not identify with.

When you work with a newcomer, it is also important to understand that your relationship is one of unequal power, as you are in a position of greater power. To work in partnership with the refugee, it is important that you acknowledge your power and enter this work thoughtfully.

*Teaching to* and *doing for* can be explored through the lens of *power over* and *power with*. In the context of working with newly arrived refugees, *power over* means that between the resettling group and the refugee; as community sponsors you hold the knowledge of how to navigate the systems and structures in your community. *Power with* is the process of working to balance that power through teaching. When you show someone how to care for a need themselves, you are giving away some of the power that you held over them and leveling your relationship.

To put this in practical terms, one example *power over* and *power with* is often seen when navigating public benefits and filling out reporting forms for governmental offices. Finding the answers for the refugee and telling them which forms to sign is *power over*. Going with them to the office and teaching them how to connect with a case manager there to assist with forms is *power with*.

As you work in this field, you will experience many ways in which your *power over* another might impact the way that they interact with you. Be aware that it might be hard for the refugee you are accompanying to say “no” to you; for example if you extend an invitation to your place of worship or to another event, the refugee might feel like they must attend because you are assisting them.

Similarly, your *power over* can influence how the refugee responds to questions you might ask. At the start of your partnership, please refrain from asking questions about their 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.
EXERCISING RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE AND SENSITIVITY

As a rule, CCCNMO requires that community sponsorship groups and individuals within those groups may not engage in **proselytism**. Proselytizing is defined as inducing someone (by coercing or pressuring an individual) to convert to one’s own religion.

Many refugees have spent years fleeing persecution because of their faith, and this may be their first chance to live without fear that someone has an agenda to change them in some way. In all that you do, make sure the refugees understand that your help is not contingent on their participation in your church or religion.

It is important to realize that religion is a fundamental part of one’s identity, and anything that could make refugees feel obligated to participate in the religious life of their community sponsors can be disastrous both psychologically and emotionally for refugees.

Instead, put them in touch with others of their nationality and faith and assure them that your friendship and support are not dependent on their involvement in your group or congregation. Please make every effort to avoid making any gesture that could be construed as proselytizing; it is strictly prohibited.

Also note that some refugees may not adhere to or practice any religion. Do not assume that they will or suggest to them that they should adhere to any religion.

**PRIVACY**

During all the activity your group will experience in welcoming and resettling a refugee family, it is important to remember that the family, while likely hospitable, needs and deserves privacy. Your group may be the guarantor or co-signer of their lease, but it does not mean that multiple group members should have keys or that you should not ring the doorbell before entering.

The co-signer of the lease, the landlord, and the family are the only people who should have keys to the apartment once the family has arrived. By the same token, every effort should be made to only visit the family when invited or when an appointment or meeting is scheduled.

The family needs down time without visitors to help mitigate the stress of the myriad resettlement activities and functions they are dealing with. Early on, it should be established that co-sponsors will either text or call before coming over. It establishes an even playing field and mutual respect for each other’s time and space.
TRAUMA-INFORMED HELP

Many communities who welcome refugees want them to tell their stories publicly. Unless they actively express interest in doing so, refugees should not be asked to speak about their refugee experience. Your group should be aware that telling a persecution story can re-traumatize refugees.

By the time of resettlement, many refugees have had to tell their stories in detail multiple times to obtain their refugee status and approval to resettle to the United States. Once they are here, they can choose whether and under what circumstances to talk about the persecution they have experienced. Please respect this choice.

By the same token, persecution experiences are by no means taboo. If refugees want to speak with you about what they have fled in their home countries, you will have a tremendous opportunity to be compassionate listeners. It is important for us to recognize that things we may view as character flaws might be coping mechanisms as reaction to trauma. These coping mechanisms 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

CCCNMO does not ask clients why they are refugees, and we require that our volunteers and co-sponsorship partners follow this guideline as well. It is helpful to adopt a trauma-informed orientation with your family. If you notice any behavioral symptoms that are worrisome or problematic and are unsure of how to proceed, please reach out, through proper channels, to CCCNMO, the refugee’s case worker, and/or a mental health professional in your community who can help you find appropriate resources.

MANDATORY REPORTING

As a matter of federal and state law, any individual entrusted with caring for or working with children is required to report suspected or actual child abuse and neglect. While all CCCNMO clients receive information on laws covering domestic violence and child abuse and neglect, occasionally parents may still revert to disciplinary practices that are not acceptable in this country.

If you witness or learn of child abuse or neglect endured by the children in your refugee family, it must be reported. Certain professionals, such as teachers, doctors, nurses, social workers, case workers, including those at Catholic Charities, guidance counselors, lawyers, and emergency medical technicians are required to report child abuse and neglect, whether it is suspected or confirmed. If anyone in your group is one of these professionals and is told about abuse or neglect, they are also required to report. The mandatory reporter has the right to report anonymously so that the investigation into abuse or neglect can proceed without their direct involvement or the knowledge of the offending family member.

You should contact your Catholic Charities case manager if you are unsure about whether there is a need to report to authorities. If your case manager deems that the incident must be reported, they will suggest that you contact the required governmental authorities accordingly, since you are closest to the incident and can provide authentic, critical details. If you are uncomfortable doing so, your case manager will be obligated to report based on the information you shared.

While the need to engage in mandatory reporting is decidedly rare, it is important for your group to know who among you are mandatory reporters and to discuss how such incidents would be handled. Failure to report suspected or actual child abuse/neglect that is allowed to escalate without intervention can result in legal consequences.
RACISM

Hopefully we are all aware of the pervasiveness of racism in the history of our country. Many refugees are also aware of this history and of contemporary issues about race relations for example, police shootings of African Americans and overt discrimination toward Muslims.

This is not to say that some refugees do not come here with their own racist attitudes. Nonetheless, we find that increased proximity to diverse groups of people breaks down barriers as people get used to being in class together, or through working in a diverse workplace.

The challenge for community sponsorship groups is to be aware of racial and cultural attitudes in your communities and the communities in which your family settles. Conversations with neighbors and school officials before your family arrives will be very important.

Your refugee children could be the only Iraqi, Congolese, or Afghan children in the school, which may be predominantly white or black. In the best-case scenario, they will be embraced by their neighbors and classmates. If elements of racial bias, bullying, or harassment materialize, it will be important for the core services team member for childhood education and contact person to immediately address the issues, while keeping CCCNMO informed.

Issues of race, when they come up, should be discussed with refugees as equals. Everyone can learn from another’s perspective. If you feel that a refugee has a racist point of view, question it but listen to the reply and encourage the refugee to ask questions of you. Do not assume that your point of view is better.

SEXISM

In many cultures represented among our refugees, the family structure is very traditional, wherein the father is the head of the household, and the mother is expected to stay home to tend to the home and care for the children. In some cases, young girls are not permitted to engage in the same kinds of activities that are common among young boys and girls in American culture.

For example, sometimes a young girl is expected to come home right after school while her brother is allowed to play soccer with his friends. Similarly, a mother may wish to work and establish her own sense of identity, only to be told not to by her husband. Sometimes this simply reflects adherence to their own cultures without incident, and sometimes cultural adjustment pressures can escalate into situations involving domestic violence.

CCCNMO addresses domestic violence specifically as part of our federally required Cultural Orientation and Resettlement Education (CORE) program, which all adult refugees are required to attend within roughly one month of their arrival. With respect to less overtly violent sexism, it is important to be aware while allowing the family to proceed with cultural adjustment at their own pace. By simply being yourselves, you can help this process along, for example, by showing how men and women in your group work together without regard to gender and/or “expected” gender.

In general, do not try to impose your views on the family but encourage discussion and exchange among the family and members of your group.
LGBTQIA+ CONSIDERATIONS

Refugees who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or intersex may have faced many unique challenges and be reluctant to disclose their sexual orientation or gender identity to affiliate staff or their own family members. It is critical that LGBTQIA+ refugees are aware of support networks available to them to ensure they do not face isolation within their own ethnic or national communities here in the United States.

In some of the countries our refugees are from, LGBTQ rights and freedoms are nonexistent. Indeed, LGBTQ people who suffer persecution are eligible for refugee status. It is not as common, however, as very few refugee-eligible LGBTQ people are willing to describe their persecution in the kind of detail required for the rigorous vetting process by the US government. Hence, some may simply apply for refugee status based on other legitimate incidents of persecution (e.g., religion, political affiliation) rather than reveal their sexual orientation as the reason for requesting protection.

Homophobia could be a concern for community sponsorship groups if you have openly LGBTQ committee members, fellow congregants, or friends. This is not to suggest that openly LGBTQ individuals should not be part of the core resettlement volunteer that will be interacting frequently with refugees. Quite the contrary, as in the example with respect to sexism, being yourselves is the best way to help acculturate and educate a refugee family with respect to homophobia.

It is unlikely, in our experience, that a refugee would ask, “Are you gay?” or express disdain about an LGBTQ person in front of us. Nonetheless, as the refugee family gets to know people in your group better, and as they start to meet more Americans, you may see signs of inquiry start to emerge when certain cultural biases kick in.

For example, a middle-aged gentleman may never bring up whether he is married or not, but that is often one of the first questions an Iraqi man or woman might ask when getting to know him. How he, or any LGBTQ person, answers is ultimately up to her/him, and of course, it depends on the refugee. It all comes back to being your authentic selves while respectfully allowing your refugee family the space to be more culturally sensitive and aware.

WORKING TOWARD INDEPENDENCE

The goal of the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program and of each of our staff, our clients and the community members who support them is self-sufficiency. Simply stated, a person who is self-sufficient can provide for themselves without the help of others. For newcomers to the United States, this goal is both incredibly difficult and necessary.

Every refugee that comes through a resettlement agency has shown remarkable strength in one way or another. As co-sponsors, you can support refugees in the way you view them, the language we use and with respectful, empowering approaches to practice. Do not encourage refugees to depend on you because it makes you feel good to help them.

From the day they arrive, make sure the refugees and the community sponsorship group member focus on independence. Self-sufficiency signifies much more than being able to pay the rent and put food on the table without handouts. It means that one has the skills, knowledge, and resources to navigate daily life. The acquisition of these skills and knowledge base is the first and most important step in a refugee’s path to rebuilding their lives.

Our staff and volunteers are asked to be aware and deliberate in their service. Ask yourself, “How does my action help this person become more self-sufficient?” or “How can I take steps so that next time this person will have the skills to do this task on their own or without any assistance?”
TEACHING VS. DOING
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. Your goal should be to gradually become less task-oriented and more of a friendly, community neighbor. This takes a high level of intentionality as the ways we typically think of helping people tend to be rooted in activities and accomplishing tasks.

Additionally, it can take far longer to teach someone to do something for themselves than it does to just do it for them. It is not inherently bad to help someone by doing a task for them. However, the goal of resettlement is to ensure that refugees can navigate the community and their needs themselves. Amongst the refugees we serve there are ample illustrations of resilience in the face of extraordinary challenges. Rather than approaching refugees as traumatized victims, strength-based practitioners acknowledge the tremendous strength refugees have demonstrated to cope.

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES
Many times, this transition to a new culture and community can be one of loneliness and isolation for refugees. They have lost not only their homes, but their family, friends, and community. The welcoming work of community sponsorship does not solely exist to teach and assist with the tasks of transition but also to provide a social support to newly arrived families.

It can be easy to overlook the importance of social activities during the first months of accompaniment with a refugee. Check in with the family who you are partnered with to see when they would like you to visit. With the language barrier, you might feel uncomfortable making social visits without a firm ‘task’ to accomplish. Push yourself to reach outside of your comfort zone! Here is a short list of ideas of what you could focus on during social visits:

- Make a craft together, artwork/sewing/simple kids crafts/color with sidewalk chalk.
- Color together with the younger family members and practice simple English words as well as words from their native language.
- Eat a meal together, share how to make a traditional American dish; ask to learn how to make a traditional dish from the family’s country of origin.
- Sit and share an update from your life. Show pictures from a recent family gathering/birthday party/school field trip you just took. Be mindful of displaying wealth, such as large homes or expensive vacations.
- Figure out which children’s games are universal across borders! Tic-tac-toe, hopscotch, jacks, Uno and jump rope are played around the world.
- Stop in and just say ‘hello’ and visit for some time.
- Create a vegetable garden together. Check with landlord before changing any landscaping.
- Listen to each other’s favorite type of music.

EXPECTATIONS
It is important to acknowledge the expectations that you come to this work with. Volunteer work in refugee resettlement is often unpredictable instead of straightforward. How one family transitions to their new community might look quite different from another, and you shouldn’t expect to duplicate a previous experience shared with one family.

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. You may notice behaviors or practices that concern you (for example, donated items may not be cared for as you would like or might be sold instead of kept.) Keep in mind, your lifestyle will be different than the lifestyle of the family you are in partnership with.
PERCEPTIONS OF SUCCESS

The decisions that refugee make in creating their lives here in America are their own, and we must encourage their autonomy in doing so. It is easy to apply your own definition of success onto a newcomer and worry that they are not ‘doing well’ or ‘succeeding’ in their acclimation to a new community. Know that newly arrived refugee families typically work hard and long shifts to provide for themselves. Because a refugee does not make the same choices as you in their lives does not diminish their success.

DECISIONS TO RELOCATE

Occasionally, refugees choose to move away from their initial resettlement community. This may happen within the first few months, or after a year or more. Refugee groups or families may move to join relatives or friends, to pursue an avenue of economic support, or to live in a particular kind of climate.

Our role is to provide objective information about the pros and cons of moving. In the end, however, refugees are free to make this choice. While it may disrupt our plans (and your plans) or even appear to be a bad choice for the family, we try to view it as a sign of their own independence and, of course, they are allowed to leave. The decision of a refugee family to relocate should not be viewed as a failure. One of the best antidotes to our feelings of disappointment may be to sponsor another family soon.

ADVOCACY

As a welcome team or community sponsor, it is important that you are walking in solidarity with refugees by educating and advocating for welcoming policies at the local, state, and federal levels. Make sure to engage the voices, stories, and leadership of refugees in all your advocacy and community organizing activities. Always nurture authentic relationships with refugees that foster the goal of self-sufficiency ensuring there is clear communication and transparency about how to engage in storytelling, advocacy, or public events. Together we can help influence the public narrative on how the resiliency of refugees benefits your community.

HEALTHY BOUNDARY TIPS

- Do not borrow from or lend money to the refugee family.
- When community sponsorship groups assist a family financially, they should be sure to check with CCCNMO caseworkers or staff for guidance to help ensure that this financial gift is in the best interest of the family.
- Do not feel like you need to give out your home phone number or address.
- If the refugee requests your help for a future need, first think through three items:
  - 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?
  - Does this request need to be documented and/or reported back to CCCNMO?
- Know when to say ‘no’ regarding a task that you do not feel equipped for, or when that task has already been taught.
- Know when to ask for help. When in doubt, ask!

We are all human beings, and anything could happen to one of us, or one of the refugees, at any time.
Your refugee family – like any family - is dealing with life’s unpredictable twists and turns. Keep calm. Sponsoring refugees is a big responsibility. CCCNMO is here to support you, provide advice, answer questions, and work with you through difficult situations you may encounter. This work is challenging, and also deeply rewarding. Welcome, we look forward to working alongside you to help our new neighbors rebuild their lives here.