



AFGHAN PLACEMENT PROGRAM

COMMUNITY PARTNER MANUAL



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WHO IS CWS

CWS is a national resettlement office that supports a network of 30 offices across the country. Each of those offices offers community sponsorship inclusive of co-sponsorship for faith and community groups located within 100 miles of a CWS office and individual volunteer opportunities.



AFGHAN ASSISTANCE AND PLACEMENT PROGRAM OVERVIEW

What is the APA program?

The Afghan Placement and Assistance (APA) Program was put into motion in late August 2021 by the State Department and launched on September 1st. Most Afghan nationals will be paroled into the United States through the APA program. This program will offer temporary legal status in the United States and expedited work authorization. Individuals will be resettled with existing refugee resettlement agencies and connected to various means of support for a 30 to 90-day service period. During this program period, resettlement agencies will provide basic core services that are similar to core services under the United States Refugee Admissions Program. This includes, but is not limited to, airport reception, accessing safe and appropriate housing, providing adequate food supplies, accessing seasonal clothing, accessing health care and other public benefits, as eligible, assistance with school enrollment for minors, cultural orientation and limited financial assistance. The APA program is expected to serve over 75,000 Afghan parolees across the United States.

What do Afghans receive from the APA Program

- Afghan parolees will receive initial relocation and support services during the APA program service period to support their resettlement into their new communities. Services provided through the APA program include:
- Reception services
- Decent, safe and sanitary housing
- Household items and furniture
- Culturally appropriate, ready-to-eat meal upon arrival
- Adequate food supplies
- Seasonally appropriate clothing
- Home visits
- School enrollment
- Selective Service registration, as applicable
- Transportation support
- Cultural Orientation
- Assistance enrolling in English Language Training
- Assistance enrolling in employment services, as appropriate and eligible
- Assistance accessing health services, as possible
- Assistance enrolling in public benefits, as eligible
- Limited financial assistance

APA COMMUNITY PARTNER

Role of APA Community Partners

The role of APA community partners is to respond to the urgent need to serve tens of thousands of Afghan arrivals. APA co-sponsors will assume full responsibility for implementing APA program services and meeting the material needs of Afghan arrivals for the first 30-90 days after arrival. As a community partner, your role is vital to the integration of newly arrived refugees. You are a bridge-builder to the community at large and an ambassador of welcome for your city/town.

Role of CWS

Each APA Community Partner will be matched with a CWS Community Sponsorship Associate who provides training, onboarding and ongoing weekly coaching. The Community Sponsorship Associate will maintain the case file based on these communications and securely transmitted documents.

The Community Sponsorship Associate will conduct a virtual home visit prior to arrival to assess housing conditions. A home visit will be conducted by professional resettlement staff within the first 30 days to monitor R&P services, quality of housing and client well-being.

The direct assistance funds will be managed by the Community Sponsorship Associate and issued via gift card to each adult client as pocket money or directly to a vendor to meet material needs. In urgent situations, the affiliate or CWS RP staff will travel to the site to provide support.

CWS will lift up exceptional co-sponsors to serve as mentors to new co-sponsors and facilitate collaborative calls between RP co-sponsors.

Requirements to serve as an APA Community Partner

Community sponsors are strictly prohibited from providing inherently religious activities such as religious worship, instruction, or proselytizing as part of their community sponsorship activities and may not require program beneficiaries to profess a certain faith or participate in religious activities in order to receive services.

In order to serve as an APA Community Partner, interested groups must demonstrate the following readiness factors to serve:

- Must have secured a safe, sanitary, affordable apartment or house for the family that is available for at least 6-12 months. Average rental rates for the CWS network at \$813 (1 bedroom), \$1,012 (2 bedroom), and \$1,254 (3 bedroom). Homes with more than 3 bedrooms are also in great need!
- Must have identified a Dari or Pashto interpreter within the group or in the community
- Availability to devote 10-40 hours per week to support a new family in the first weeks
- Availability of at least one member to participate in weekly coaching sessions with a CWS Community Sponsorship Associate
- All members of the group must pass a CWS background check including criminal and credit checks
- All members of the group must complete CWS' APA Community Partner Training
- All members of the group must be fully vaccinated for COVID-19 or receive a medical or religious exemption as per CWS' COVID Vaccination Policy.
- All members of the group must agree to core CWS policies including Code of Conduct including prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse, Anti-Human Trafficking Policy, Child Safeguarding Policy, Policy on Gender Equality, Racial Equity Platform, Accountability to Affected Populations Framework and Security Policies.



CWS POLICIES AND BACKGROUND CHECKS

APA Community Partners are expected to agree to and abide by the following policies which govern CWS staff conduct.

[CWS Code of Conduct](#)

[CWS Child Safeguarding](#)

[CWS Anti-Human Trafficking](#)

[CWS Policy on Gender Equity](#)

[CWS Racial Equity Platform](#)

[CWS Accountability to Affected Populations Framework and Security Policy](#)

[CWS COVID Vaccination Policy](#)

PLANNING AND ORGANIZING FOR WELCOME

Getting Started

Once your community group has decided to welcome an Afghan individual or family, it is time to organize. Organization for APA Community Partners starts with gathering information and indicating your interest in serving as a co-sponsor.

APA community partners will need to move through these steps:

Information Gathering

1. Gather information and indicate interest through the [Welcoming Afghans webpage](#)
2. Complete the Community Partner Readiness Assessment

Onboarding

1. All members of the group must complete CWS' APA Community Partner Training
2. All members of the group must receive background check screenings and complete the agreement form inclusive of CWS policies

Arrival and co-sponsorship commitment period

1. Arrival and period of committed involvement with Afghan arrival(s)

Point Person

In order to maintain good communication with the CWS Community Sponsorship Associate and keep the group on task, it is important to identify a point person. The point person's role is to keep communication flowing from the sponsorship team to the resettlement agency. The role of the point person is not to shoulder the responsibility to complete each task. It is imperative that this person can set healthy boundaries, is understanding of the group's limitations and knows how to delegate responsibilities.

Committees/Roles

Organizing your group into committees is not required but may provide a helpful way to divide tasks and keep the goal of respectful accompaniment. Committees could include:



Housing: Assists in securing a home, gathering household and furniture items and setting up the house.



Transportation: Coordinates the transportation needs and driving lessons of the family.



Health: Assists the family in coordinating follow-up medical and dental appointments.



Cultural Adjustment: Assists the family in understanding the community (finding the grocery store, library, parks etc.) Leads Cultural Orientation sessions which teaches the family elements of American culture and life.



Schooling: Assists parents/guardians in understanding the school system.



Jobs and Finance: Collaborate with employable individuals to understand budgets and network for employment.



CORE SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES

Core Afghan Placement and Assistance Activities

This list serves as an outline and overview of the tasks that you and your group will be engaged in to support Afghan parolees as an APA Community Partner. As an APA Community Partner, your organization will be responsible to perform all required services as directed by the APA program requirements.

Core Service Activity	Timeline
Pre-Arrival Tasks	
Arrange safe, sanitary and affordable housing	Pre-Arrival
Set-up housing with essential furnishings	Pre-Arrival
Home Evaluation and Safety Check conducted	Pre-Arrival
Arrival Tasks	
Provide culturally appropriate, ready-to-eat food on arrival including baby food as needed.	Day of arrival
Provide appropriate seasonal clothing for work, school and everyday use	Day of arrival/post-arrival
Airport pickup	Arrival
Post-Arrival Tasks	
Housing and Personal Safety Orientation	1 calendar day
First Home Visit	2 calendar days
Intake interview	5 business days
AR-11 (Change of address form)	10 days post arrival
Second home visit	30 days
Selective Service registration	30 days
Social security card application	90 days
Public benefits application: cash assistance, Medicaid, SNAP- as eligible	90 days
ESL enrollment, as appropriate and eligible	90 days
Employment program enrollment, as appropriate and eligible	90 days
School enrollment	90 days
Health Services, as appropriate and eligible	90 days
Assisting with accessing immigration legal services, as appropriate	90 days
Cultural Orientation	90 days
Cultural Orientation Assessment	90 days
Distribute pocket money for each adult	throughout first 30 days

Core Community Partner Activities

Core service items that are government required activities are noted

Team Management

- Attend sponsorship group orientations
- Sign volunteer commitment forms, CWS policy agreements, and submit background checks
- Set-up a team calendar (google docs/calendar/communities have been helpful for past groups)
- Make a photo book for the family with key team members' pictures and names (teams have also put pictures of their organization/place of worship on the cover)

The following activities are divided by suggested committees:

Housing

Pre-Arrival

- CORE SERVICE- Secure safe, sanitary, and affordable housing (CWS Home Evaluation and Safety Checklist)
- CORE SERVICE- All required furniture and household items were provided (CWS Home Supply List)
 - Collect household items— see home set-up guide
 - Organize set-up day at the house
 - Ensure safety and procurement of all necessary items by completing the Home Evaluation and Safety Checklist

Post-Arrival

- CORE SERVICE- Provide Housing and Personal Safety Orientation (48 hour home visit form)
 - See handout with instructions
- Assist the family to understand how to contact their landlord for maintenance requests
- Assist the family to understand small household care items (in collaboration with cultural adjustment committee)
 - Changing batteries in smoke alarms
 - Taking the trash/recycling out
 - Mowing the grass or shoveling snow

Transportation

Pre-Arrival

- Create a sign-up system to easily post and track transportation needs
- Start recruiting transportation volunteers
- Start familiarizing committee with local public transportation maps/routes

Post-Arrival

- CORE SERVICE- transportation needs after arrival
 - Health appointment
 - Local Social Security office
 - Clothing bank to ensure that the family has enough seasonal clothes. This can be from a local clothing bank, local store, or through clothing donations from the community sponsor.

- Ongoing transportation assistance
 - Are bikes appropriate for their location? If so, see if there is a bike that can be donated
 - Practice taking the bus/public transport with family members
 - Walk to places that are within walking distance
 - Share information about how to study for the drivers permit test
 - Download the practice test App on the family's phone

Strengths-Based Reminder: Driving the family to appointments is necessary in the first month, however, remember that the goal is to ensure the family knows how to transport themselves to important locations/appointments. There will be a time when it is most appropriate for you not to drive the family to where they need to go.

Health

Pre-Arrival

- CORE SERVICE- Prepared for and made appropriate arrangements for client(s) with special needs, if applicable (Case Note)

Post-Arrival

- CORE SERVICE- Set-up a first health appointment and connection with a primary care physician
- Assist with transportation to the initial health appointment (Case Note)
- Teach basic health practices in the United States
 - When to go to the ER or urgent care and when to schedule an appointment with a primary care physician
 - Locating first aid items in grocery stores and understanding how to use them
 - Storage of medicine and care for kids with fevers/colds
- Tutor basic nutrition and medical care in the United States
- Assist the family in setting up a calendar for health appointments

Strengths-Based Reminder: Medical facilities use interpreters and translated materials when necessary. All communication from a health provider should be directly to the family instead of to volunteers on behalf of the family.



Cultural Adjustment

Pre-Arrival

- Find Cultural Orientation tutors

Post-Arrival

- CORE SERVICE- Provide Cultural Orientation (CO Assessment)
 - See cultural orientation curriculum
- Give a 'welcome to the community' tour, pointing out local landmarks and places you can explore together in the coming weeks/months
- Walk through the family's home with them asking if they need any items or appliances explained to them
- Visit the closest supermarket
- Schedule a fun trip for the first month (visit a farm outside of the city, movie night, potluck etc.)

Schooling

Pre-Arrival

- Find tutors to partner with the children/parents in studying

Post-Arrival

- CORE SERVICE- Make a school enrollment appointment and transport family to enrollment meeting (Case Note)
- Make sure the kids are outfitted for school- clothes, backpack, supplies
- Establish homework helpers to assist with tutoring
- CORE SERVICE- Assist the adults in finding an English as a Second Language (ESL) class (Case Note)
- Practice English with the family using language based on their current needs (such as medical words before a doctor visit) or reinforcing lessons taught at ESL class
- Advocate for the parents/guardians as they learn the school system

Strengths-Based Reminder: Always guide school staff/teachers to speak with the parents/guardians regarding schooling concerns instead of to volunteers.

Jobs and Finance

Pre-Arrival

- Organize volunteers to tutor budgeting and personal finance skills
- Research costs of living for your community and consult with the housing committee to determine appropriate rent ceiling
- Research possible employers in the area
- Research employment programs in the area that might offer employment programming to aid the individual and your group (career link, temp services, other public employment specialist programs)

Post-Arrival

- CORE SERVICE- Secure employment for employable adults (**Case Note**)
- CORE SERVICE- Create a budget with the client(s) to review income and expenses (**Earnings and Expenses Form**)
- Build a resume for the employable adults and locating possible employers.
- Did the adults have a profession that they are interested in working towards? Perhaps they hold a degree overseas and wish to work towards becoming certified here in the United States. Take some steps towards showing them what some steps are that they could take to work back to that career (study English, take some classes, etc.)

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES: THE WARMTH OF WELCOME

Many times, this transition to a new culture and community can be one of loneliness and isolation for newcomers. They have lost not only their homes, but their family, friends and community. The welcoming work of Co-Sponsors does not solely exist to teach and assist with the tasks of transition but also to provide 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 new arrival. 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! On the next page, you will find a list of ideas of what you could focus on during social visits.



Ideas for social activities

Seasonal Activities

- The 3 'Ss' of Snow! – Sledding, Snowmen and Shoveling
- Visit a local orchard in the fall
- Visit a local park
- Free swim days at the local pools
- Carve pumpkins
- Share culture with one another during a holiday
- Fourth of July picnics, hanging festive lights in December, etc.
- Learn about and celebrate a holiday that's special to the Afghan family

Community Activities

- Visit a local farmers market
- Walk to the closest grocery store
- Visit the library (free events typically take place for members throughout the year)
- Walk to the closest park with the family
- Pay attention to free local events and attend together
- Visit a museum or zoo
- Attend a sporting event (professional or local)
- Go for a walk around the neighborhood

Home Visit Activities

- Make a craft together (artwork/sewing/simple kids crafts)
- 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 (chocolate chip cookies etc.)
 - Ask to learn how to make a traditional dish from Afghanistan
- 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)
- Play a game such as Uno or tic-tac-toe
 - Figure out which children's games are universal across borders! Tic-tac-toe, hopscotch, jacks, 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 the landlord before changing any landscaping)
- Draw chalk pictures together on the sidewalk/driveway
- Listen to each other's favorite type of music

AFGHAN CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS

APA Community Partners are asked to be considerate of Afghan culture and customs as they work to welcome Afghan arrivals to their community. It is important to acknowledge that integration requires neither the newcomer nor the welcoming community to give up their history, culture, or identity but to respect one another.

This section will provide some general information about Afghan culture. It is necessary to acknowledge that any cultural overview must be taken with an understanding of the diversity of customs, beliefs, attitudes, and practices which reside within any nationality group. Do not take cultural backgrounders as truth for the individual you are welcoming, rather, look to the individual or family to provide you with an understanding of their preferences as they transition to your community.

[USA Hello provides a backgrounder](#) designed for educators of Afghan students in the United States.

Take-Aways

- Afghans are diverse in political orientation, religion, ethnicity, social class, and attitude toward modernization.
- There are 19 different ethnic groups in Afghanistan.
- Family is of great importance.

[The Cultural Atlas provides cultural background](#) which highlights core concepts, greetings, dos and don'ts, etiquette, and other topics of importance. Their [Do's and Don'ts section](#) is filled with good take-aways to consider some common considerations when welcoming Afghans. Cultural Atlas is an Australian agency, and you will notice some considerations specific to Australia, however, the information is applicable for our communities within the United States as well.

Take-Aways

- Be sensitive of the experiences and trauma of arriving Afghans. Do not push an individual to share their story or information about their journey to the United States.
- Unless it is invited as okay- handshakes and forms of greeting which touch people of other genders should be avoided. Greetings where opposite genders touch are typically reserved for close family or friends.
- When speaking of the people group use the term 'Afghan.' 'Afghani' refers to the currency and not the Afghan people. Similarly, do not use 'Arab' or 'Middle Eastern' in that Afghanistan is in South Central Asia and none of the local ethnicities are Arab.

BOUNDARIES AND EXPECTATIONS

CWS and APA Community Partners serve as integration concierges, advising Afghan arrivals over time on steps they can take to achieve their goals and ensuring that they are aware of resources that can help them on their journey. CWS and APA Community Partners do this in collaboration as they work together to provide initial services inclusive cultural and community orientation and a range of integration services and community referrals depending on case need.

It is important for co-sponsors to consider their boundaries and their role when welcoming newcomers. As a community partner, your job is not to solve every problem or to do for others what they can do for themselves.

Your role is to equip, educate and guide—to empower! As you navigate your role as a co-sponsor, you must remember to set boundaries for yourself.

You Are

A partner of CWS in providing services. An ambassador for your community, a friendly neighbor and a part of a newcomer Afghan's growing social capital in a new place.

The Goal

To work yourself out of the role of a co-sponsor and into the role of a neighbor as you 'teach to' instead of 'do for.'

Remember

You are not alone in your welcome of newcomers. You cannot be/do everything and must know when to refer questions to local professionals and service providers in your community.

Healthy boundary tips:

- Do not borrow from or lend money to the individual you are welcoming
- When sponsorship groups assist a family financially, please be in contact with your CWS point of contact for guidance to help ensure that this financial gift is in the best interest of the family.
- If the individual 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? Ex. Is this needing to be reported back to CWS?
- 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!

Expectations

It is important to acknowledge the expectations that you come to this work with. Perhaps you have welcomed refugees before and expect this new volunteer experience to mirror the past. Perhaps you expect to develop friendships or share the skills you have learned throughout your career.

Co-sponsorship work 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. 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.

TEACHING VS. DOING

The APA program mirrors our country's refugee programming in that fast self-sufficiency is a goal. Self-sufficiency means that one has the skills, knowledge and resources to navigate daily life.

As a co-sponsor, 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.

Helping (Doing for)	Empowering (teaching to)
Driving someone to all their appointments	Taking the bus together as a mutual learning experience, teaching them how to buy a ticket and read the bus map. Or walking together...even though the walk might be 25 minutes and a drive 5 minutes.
Calling the doctor/case worker/teacher/ to make an appointment for the family	Teaching the family how to call to make appointments on their own (<i>even if they do not speak English</i>). Perhaps you could practice through role playing telephone calls or write out note cards using key words or pictures. Many places have access to phone interpretation. Knowing how to say in English 'I need interpretation' is important.
Sorting through the family's mail, tossing away unimportant things and keeping important bills.	Make a list with the family of what items are important to keep (with samples and pictures of the company logo) e.g., utility bill, letter from USCIS, letter from school.

STRENGTHS-BASED AND EMPOWERMENT MODELS OF RESETTLEMENT

Amongst the refugees and immigrants CWS serves there are ample illustrations of resilience in the face of extraordinary challenges. Rather than approaching refugees as victims in need of our help, strength-based practitioners acknowledge the tremendous strength newcomers have and focus on building an individual's agency in providing for themselves and their family.

Believing in People

Strength-based practitioners hold the fundamental assumption that people can improve the quality of their lives. That means believing in the potential of every person and trusting that they, along with their families and communities, hold the answers to the challenges they face. Even in the most trying of circumstances, every refugee that comes through a resettlement agency has shown remarkable strength in one way or another. As helpers, we can remind Afghans of their resilience in the way we view them, the language we use and with respectful, empowering approaches to practice.

There are always “likeable” individuals who make it easy to believe in people’s strengths and trust their ability to solve their own problems. This respectful and hopeful attitude can be much more difficult to maintain with other people in other situations when solutions seem nonexistent without our “expert opinion.” Those are the times when it becomes especially important to consult with others around you and CWS staff in order to ensure that actions taken remain focused on long-term empowerment.

The Empowerment-Based Service Model

Definition of empowerment: “The process of increasing the capacity of individuals or groups to make choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes.”

Basic Tenants of Empowerment Model:

- All services are tied to self-sufficiency; they are deliberate and progressive.
- Always follow the least intrusive path to service delivery.
- Newcomers are individuals who deserve respect and autonomy. Their lives, decisions and personal information are theirs alone.

The goal of the APA 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.

Self-sufficiency in the holistic sense 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 (including knowing who to turn to for help when those resources or skills are lacking). The acquisition of these skills and knowledge base is the first and most important step in a newcomer's path to rebuilding their lives.

The empowerment model of service is based on the concept that everyone has the potential to succeed, and it is our role to help build the foundation for them to do this.

CWS asks APA Community Partners to be aware and deliberate in their service. To ask themselves at each step: How does my action help this person become more self-sufficient? How can I change this from a favor into a lesson? 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?

CONSIDERATIONS WHEN WORKING IN RESETTLEMENT

Power, Culture & Diversity

Cultural differences and similarities exist between newcomers and the receiving community. Our culture influences our behaviors, values and ways in which we learn and process the world around us. Please value and recognize the importance of your own culture, while at the same time valuing diversity. Honor the similarities that you share with newcomers while also honoring those differences that you do not identify with.

Power

Many co-sponsors speak the dominant language (English) and are a part of the dominant culture of the United States. When you work with a newcomer, it is important to understand that your relationship is one of unequal power, as you may often be in a position of greater power. In order to work in partnership with the refugee we ask that you acknowledge your power and enter this work thoughtfully.

‘Power Over’ and ‘Power With’

‘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 Afghans, ‘power over’ means that between the two of you, 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.

Take, for example, navigating public benefits and filling out reporting forms for local government offices. Finding the answers for the individual 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.’

Acknowledging your power

There are 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 individual you are accompanying to say 'no' to you. If you extend an invitation to your place of worship or to another event, the individual might feel like they must attend because you are assisting them.

Similarly, your 'power over' can influence how the individual 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 who have experienced the trauma of displacement are very willing to share their story of fleeing and how they arrived in the United States, while others might never wish to.

Perceptions of Success

The decisions that newcomers 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.

Consider the act of parenting school-aged children. Your version of successfully engaging in this time of life might be to enroll your children in after-school activities and attend them out of support for your child. Another family might choose to not support extracurriculars. This does not mean a lack of success. Newcomer immigrant families typically work hard and long shifts in order to provide for themselves. Because a newcomer does not make the same choices as you in their lives does not diminish their success.

Paternalism

An imbalance of power can contribute to paternalism in this partnership. Paternalism is when you limit someone's autonomy based on what you think is for their own good.

It is easier to make decisions for someone than you might think. It is not so easy to see someone make decisions that you feel are 'bad,' 'unnecessary' or are simply different than those you would make.

Imagine this initial transition to a new culture and community as a river that newcomers must cross. The role of 'teacher' that you and the resettlement agency play is to point out the steppingstones across the river. Your role is not to choose the path, carry across or hide the paths that you would not utilize yourself.

Religion

Although it is natural to share what is important to you with others, we require that our partners not engage in proselytism. Proselytizing is defined as inducing someone to convert to one's own religion. In all that you do, make sure the individual understands that your help is not contingent on their participation in your church or religion; we do not want them to feel they have to become like us in order to receive our care and assistance.

LGBTQIA+ Refugees

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.

Trauma-Informed Care

Trauma-Informed Care is a framework that focuses on positives and strength-based approaches in order to empower an individual and prevent re-traumatization.

It is important for us to recognize that things we may view as character flaws might be coping mechanisms as reactions to trauma. These might be:

- Being late for meetings/appointments
- Not answering phone calls
- Asking multiple people for help on the same problem
- Holding information back from someone trying to help

Continued Education

[TED Talk: "The danger of a single story"- Chimamanda Ngozi Adichi](#)

["Dignity"- Donna Hicks](#)

[Community Sponsorship and Allyship – Amnesty International](#)

Language and (Mis)Communication

The language that we use in everyday life has power. Avoid possessive language when working with refugees, such as 'adoption' or 'our family.' These possessive words can inadvertently signal paternalism and 'power over.'

Instead, ensure that the language that you use is mirroring your empowering actions. 'The family,' 'The (surname) family,' 'our group is accompanying a refugee,' 'we are welcoming an Afghan family,' 'the Afghan arrival we are partnered with,' are all good ways to speak of this engagement.

Miscommunication

There are many people, organizations and structures involved in a newly arrived Afghan's life. A few might include you as the co-sponsor group, the government benefits office, the doctor's office, the Department of Health and the school district. Each organization might then connect the family to more local agencies who have specialized programs. Those could be childhood development specialists, counselors, after-school programs, women's/men's/youth groups, cultural agencies and support groups. A newcomer's life is full of people and agencies! This increases the chances of miscommunication between those serving the family.

Tips for when miscommunication happens:

- Reach out to others in your group for clarification that you might lack
- Work with the family in order to make a clear 'map' of the agencies working with them

At times, you might be welcoming a family who speaks very limited English. They might know who called them and why, but not know the English to confidently relay the information to you. This is okay and preferable to you receiving calls for the family and then finding interpretation to relay messages along. The family must remain in control of managing their lives.

Communicating Across Language Barriers

Communicating with one another across a language barrier is challenging. Interpreters are not always going to be available to assist, and this can lead to miscommunications and frustrations, particularly at the start of your volunteering.

You may find yourself surprised after weeks or months that you and the family find ways to communicate beyond fluent spoken language. Your friendship might be built less upon shared conversations and more upon shared experiences while teaching how to navigate the community.

Here are some tips:

- Speak clearly, not louder.
- If you are not understood, try to use different words.
- Use your phone to show pictures. For example, pull up photos of a grocery store when asking if the family would like to go.
- Be aware that phone translation apps are not perfect and can sometimes be confusing.
- Write messages down
- Know if the person you are speaking with has a relative or friend who you can call for assistance when you MUST have interpretation.
- Be mindful that this is a labor for the person you are asking
- Be mindful to not ask a child to interpret



CWS PARTNERSHIP WITH COMMUNITIES OF FAITH

Member Communions

Church World Service was formed in 1946, in the aftermath of World War II. Seventeen denominations came together to create an agency "to do in partnership what none of us could hope to do as well alone." The mission: Feed the hungry, clothe the naked, heal the sick, comfort the aged, shelter the homeless. Seventy years later, CWS remains a faith-based organization transforming communities around the globe through just and sustainable responses to hunger, poverty, displacement and disaster.

CWS now partners with 37 Protestant, Anglican, Orthodox, Peace and Historic Black member communions that encompass a diversity of denominations, traditions, histories and cultures, and represent some 30 million Americans in all 50 states. In the United States, CWS and member communions work together at the national level to promote the resettlement of refugees, advocate for justice, and welcome newcomers into our communities.

Faith Communities in Solidarity

From its inception, CWS has collaborated with representatives of member communions in the carrying out of its mission, drawing on their relationships and shared commitment to mobilize local faith leaders and their congregations. CWS hosts monthly Faith Solidarity Calls to convene a group of denominational leaders at the national level working to ensure faith communities are engaged in solidarity with refugees. Many of these same faith leaders participate in the Interfaith Immigration Coalition, where CWS is one of the key organizers, to advocate for just and humane immigration policies, including the restoration of a more generous refugee resettlement program. In addition to partnering with CWS, many of these organizations are leaders of their own initiatives to mobilize communities in response to global migration and displacement.

The 37 CWS member communions are listed below along with websites for denomination specific refugee and immigrant programming. You will find a variety of ways in which these partners work to enhance refugee resettlement in communities across the country. You may find that many of these communions have initiatives as well as additional resources to support refugees and asylum seekers in your community.

African Methodist Episcopal Church
African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church
Alliance of Baptists
American Baptist Churches USA
Armenian Church of America
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
Christian Methodist Episcopal Church
Church of the Brethren
Community of Christ
The Coptic Orthodox Church in North America
Ecumenical Catholic Communion
The Episcopal Church
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Friends United Meeting
Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America
Hungarian Reformed Church in America
International Council of Community Churches
Korean Presbyterian Church in America
Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church
Mar Thoma Church

Moravian Church in America
National Baptist Convention of America
National Baptist Convention, U.S.A., Inc.
National Missionary Baptist Convention of America
Orthodox Church in America
Patriarchal Parishes of the Russian Orthodox Church in the U.S.A.
Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends
Polish National Catholic Church of America
Presbyterian Church (USA)
Progressive National Baptist Convention, Inc.
Reformed Church in America
Serbian Orthodox Church in the U.S.A. and Canada
The Swedenborgian Church
Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch
Ukrainian Orthodox Church in America
United Church of Christ
The United Methodist Church



PARTNER AGENCIES

Bureau of Population, Refugees & Migration

The State Department's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration focuses on refugees, other migrants and conflict victims. Their mission is to provide protection, ease suffering and resolve the plight of persecuted and uprooted people around the world on behalf of the American people by providing life-sustaining assistance, working through multilateral systems to build global partnerships, promoting best practices in humanitarian response and ensuring that humanitarian principles are thoroughly integrated into U.S. foreign and national security policy.

This office does not operate refugee camps, or otherwise give aid directly to refugees. Instead, in the interests of effectiveness and efficiency, it works with the United Nations and other international organizations, as well as with non-governmental organizations, that operate these programs for refugees.

Office of Refugee Resettlement

The Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services helps new populations maximize their potential in the United States by linking them to critical resources that assist them in becoming integrated members of American society.

ORR provides time-limited cash and medical assistance to new arrivals, as well as support for case management services, English as a Foreign Language classes, and job readiness and employment services—all designed to facilitate refugees' successful transition to life in the United States and help them to attain self-sufficiency.

ORR supports additional programs to serve all eligible populations beyond the first eight months post-arrival, including micro-enterprise development, ethnic community self-help, agricultural partnerships, Matching Grant and Preferred Communities. (Link <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/orr/about/what-we-do>)

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) is the government agency that oversees lawful immigration to the United States. Their mission statement is to secure America's promise as a nation of immigrants by providing accurate and useful information to newcomers, granting immigration and citizenship benefits, promoting an awareness and understanding of citizenship, and ensuring the integrity of the immigration system.