

What is co-sponsorship?

Co-sponsorship is a form of community sponsorship in which individuals from a community, club, faith, employee or other group join together to welcome a refugee newcomer family they are paired with into their community, providing them with initial services they need to rebuild their lives in the U.S.

Co-sponsor groups work in collaboration with a local resettlement office for the duration of their co-sponsorship work. There are four main components to co-sponsorship:

1. Financial or in-kind donations
2. Delivery of core services and support to the family for a set period
3. Documentation and sharing of support provided, progress made, and challenges encountered
4. Formal commitment between the group and the local office through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

How is co-sponsorship different from other forms of sponsorship?

Co-sponsorship is unique from other forms of sponsorship as co-sponsors work in close collaboration with a local resettlement office to help welcome a refugee family they are paired with. Groups sign an MOU with the office, complete training and background checks, and support the family with key activities during the first 90 days and other welcoming activities beyond their initial resettlement. Co-sponsor groups work in partnership with the local office and newcomers have support from the resettlement staff in addition to their co-sponsor group.

What are the roles and responsibilities of participants in a co-sponsor group?

The roles and responsibilities for each co-sponsor group will vary based on the local resettlement agency's co-sponsorship program. Duties typically range from airport pickup, providing English language learning support, securing housing and navigating public transit to accessing medical services and other available benefits, helping to secure employment, making grocery runs, sharing a meal and exploring the best spots in the community together.

Co-sponsor groups typically assign a group leader. Other group members then organize into different roles, committees, or focus areas. These often include housing, health, transportation, education, employment, finance and orientation. Your group members' roles and contributions may change over time depending on the newcomers' unique goals. Group members often contribute to multiple committees depending on their own interests and strengths.

*Content developed as part of Engage to Change,
a project of CWS funded under an agreement paid for by the U.S. Department of State.*

What is the time commitment required?

Co-sponsorship time commitments vary by resettlement office, but are typically 6-10 months. Initially, co-sponsors can anticipate busy weeks after arrival. After the first weeks, time commitment tapers as responsibilities shift from completing core services (furnishing a home, scheduling and attending appointments, school registration) to community support (dinners, play dates, weekend outings).

What if I cannot commit to the full program? Can I still participate for a portion?

Co-sponsors must commit to the full length of the program. Newcomer families count on the support provided by co-sponsors and the time requirement outlined by the local resettlement office.

What are core services? Which core services will our co-sponsor group be required to take on?

[Core services](#) are initial services provided to newcomers resettled through local resettlement offices as part of the United States Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) Reception and Placement (R&P) program. Local resettlement offices delegate which services are the responsibility of the co-sponsors and which will be completed by resettlement office staff. This selection will vary by affiliate. Typically, staff take on the more technical core services and delegate other core services, like furnishing a home, helping a newcomer schedule and attend medical appointments, and enrolling newcomers in English classes.

Is there a minimum amount of funding my co-sponsor group needs to raise?

This will vary by resettlement office, but on average, co-sponsor groups are required to raise US\$3,000-\$7,000. A co-sponsor group will know in advance how much the resettlement office they are working with requires. In some instances, the amount raised can be through the donation of in-kind items, including home furnishings, clothing and groceries.

What training and resources will be available to our group?

The [Community Sponsorship Essentials](#) (CSE) training, co-developed by Welcome.US, Refugee Welcome Collective (RWC) and Community Sponsorship Hub (CSH), is required for co-sponsor groups. Resettlement offices may also include supplemental onboarding and training pertaining to specifics of their co-sponsorship program and locality. Support is given by the local office during the sponsorship commitment and additional training and technical assistance can be accessed from the [Refugee Welcome Collective](#).

Will roles and responsibilities between the affiliate and co-sponsor group be agreed upon in advance?

Yes. Roles and responsibilities for resettlement offices and co-sponsors will be outlined in a non-legally binding MOU agreement between the co-sponsor group and the local resettlement agency.

Is an MOU with each group and resettlement office a requirement?

All co-sponsor groups are required to sign an agreement with the resettlement office. The signed agreement is of benefit to all because it lays out the roles and responsibilities of both the co-sponsors and the affiliate.

How do co-sponsors track and report their activities?

Co-sponsors are required to take detailed notes on the activities and support they provide to the newcomer family they are paired with. The refugee resettlement program is highly bureaucratic and requires considerable documentation that must be available to monitors from national resettlement agencies, the State Department, and others. This means one of the key responsibilities as co-sponsors is providing the local resettlement office with case notes about your activities that can serve as evidence that the required services were delivered. The RWC App is a tool your group can use to help track your activities and case notes in coordination with the local office you work with.

What does the onboarding process look like for selected participants?

The onboarding process may look different depending on the local resettlement office your group is paired with. Onboarding will likely include an orientation and organizing meetings with group members. In addition, co-sponsors will undergo a Community Sponsorship Essentials for Co-Sponsors training, as well as supplemental training(s) from the local resettlement office.

Who is responsible for conducting the background checks of co-sponsors?

Background checks are required for each co-sponsor group participant and will be performed as part of the local resettlement agency onboarding.

How does a co-sponsorship group communicate with the local resettlement agency and how frequently?

Each co-sponsor group will assign a team lead that will be the main point of contact between the co-sponsor group and the resettlement office. The frequency of required check-ins will vary by office and will be discussed during onboarding.

Am I required to speak another language to participate?

It is helpful to note any additional language skills you have, but most co-sponsors do not speak the newcomer's primary language. You will be surprised how much you and the newcomer can communicate – even with limited shared language.

Can my family and friends participate?

Yes! You can incorporate your family members and friends if you would like, but please note they will need to undergo the same vetting process as all other co-sponsors taking part in the program.

What happens at the end of the program?

There is no requirement to provide additional support at the conclusion of the program, though many co-sponsors and newcomers stay in touch as a supportive community. However, that is not an expectation and is at the discretion of co-sponsors and newcomers. Sponsoring newcomers is not only the boldest act of welcoming, but it's also incredibly transformational for both co-sponsors and newcomers alike. Bonds and memories are often created that last a lifetime.

Is there an expectation of exchanging personal information?

We recommend finding the best communication method between the co-sponsor group members and newcomers. That will likely be text message or email, but groups can also choose to have specific group members serve as primary points of communication.