

Co-Sponsorship & The Long Welcome

Be Part of a Refugee Family's Resettlement Journey

What is Co-Sponsorship?

Co-sponsorship is a model of resettlement where a community group partners with a local resettlement agency to provide specific services and financial support to a newly arrived refugee family. This type of volunteer commitment is incredibly important to the work of welcome. Co-sponsors bring an essential level of commitment, continuity, and care for the refugees they serve and significantly multiply and extend the services refugees receive. Co-sponsors are overseen by one of our local resettlement agencies who provide each co-sponsor team with in-depth training prior to working with a family and continued support throughout their service period.

Co-Sponsorship Requirements

Across the LIRS network specific requirements for co-sponsor programs vary by local resettlement site, but in general co-sponsors are expected to do the following:

Form a Team and Select a Team Leader

Co-sponsor teams can vary in size and there is no universal requirement for team sizes. In our network teams tend to range from 6-10 core members who work directly with clients.

Commit to a Specific Time Frame of Service

Program lengths can vary from 3-12 months across the LIRS network.

Raise and Donate Financial Support

Co-sponsors are expected to raise a specific amount of money to which will be used to supplement essential needs of the family such as rent, healthcare, transportation, or groceries. LIRS local resettlement sites have set their own financial requirement for co-sponsor teams based on the cost of living in their area and needs of their clients.

Sign a Commitment Form with Your Local Resettlement Agency

Commitment forms are non-legally binding agreements between a co-sponsor team and a local resettlement agency. The commitment form outlines expectations of co-sponsors and duties they agree to perform.



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Devote Time Each Week to Assist the Family

The local resettlement agency will give co-sponsorship teams guidance on how much time they should expect to spend with the family. Co-sponsors can expect to be spending more time with the family in their first month after arrival as they learn to navigate their new community than later months.

Receive a Background Check

It is a standard best practice across the refugee resettlement field that all volunteers who work directly with refugees receive a background check. This is a way of safeguarding the clients we serve. Before anyone can volunteer to co-sponsor a resettled family, the agency will require a background check through their organization.

Complete an Orientation and Training

Co-sponsorship teams must attend a co-sponsorship training put on by the local resettlement agency where they will learn about the expectations and guidelines of the local agency's co-sponsorship program.

Follow Guidelines from Local Agency Staff

Local resettlement offices will provide co-sponsors with information about their program's expectations, avenues of communication, onboarding process, and guidelines.

Services Co-Sponsors Provide

Each one of the local refugee resettlement agencies in the LIRS network are required by our government partners to provide specific services called core services to each refugee they resettle. Co-sponsors help to provide certain core services in addition to other support services that aid in refugees' integration into their new communities. Local offices determine which core and support services they want co-sponsors to provide and have them outlined in their commitment form that co-sponsors sign.



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Examples of Core Services Co-Sponsors May Provide:

Home Set Up

Set up an apartment for an arriving refugee individual or family with all of the required furnishings and supplies listed in the home set up list.

Seasonal Clothing

Provide seasonal clothing and footwear for work, school, and everyday use for each member of the family, and diapers for infants and toddlers.

Welcome Meal & Stock the Pantry:

Prepare a culturally appropriate meal, ready for the individual or family to enjoy immediately upon arrival at their new home.

Airport Pick Up

Pick up the individual or family from the airport and welcome them to their new home. An airport pick up guide will be provided.

24-Hour Home Visit

Within one calendar day of the family's arrival visit to their home, complete the "Next Calendar Day Home Visit Form" which will be provided to you by the resettlement agency.

Transportation to Job Interviews and Job Training

In partnership with local agency staff, arrange for transportation of individual or family in situations where public transportation is not practical.

ESL Enrollment

Help adults enroll in English Classes within 10 working days of arrival. The resettlement agency will provide guidance on how to complete enrollment.



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Selective Service Registration

Register those eligible for selective service within 30 days of arrival.

School Enrollment

Enroll all eligible children in school within 30 days of arrival.

Examples of Extra Support Services Co-Sponsors May Provide:

Community Guide

Use your creativity to help the refugee family to learn more about their new community. This could look like taking the family to the local farmers market, a sporting event, a local museum, or have a picnic in the park.

Grocery Store Orientation

Go to the grocery store with the family and teach them how to navigate it.

General Health Orientation

Teach refugees about how to navigate the U.S. health care system and assist them in accessing appropriate providers of continued therapy or preventive treatment.

Financial Education

Help the individual or family create a budget, explain the U.S. banking system, etc.

English Language Tutoring

Focus on developing English skills with the individual or family.

Job Development

Help the individual or family with employment preparation (resume preparation, mock interviews, long term employment goal setting)

Public Transportation Orientation

Show the individual or family how to take the bus, explaining different bus routes, how to purchase a bus pass, etc.

Continued Transportation Assistance

Continue to help with transportation as needed

