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## GETTING STARTED – Co-sponsorship

*Co-sponsorship is a shared commitment between Iris and a community group to help a refugee family resettle in Connecticut and become self-sufficient. After doing an IRIS information session, **potential co-sponsors need to do a strengths assessment** (provided by IRIS) and begin organizing a Core Team (of **at least ten dedicated members**), assigned to the following responsibilities:*

### CONTACT PEOPLE (1 to 2)

- Serve as primary contact between your group, Iris, and the refugee family. We've found that having 2 contact people works best for communication and coordinating your group's efforts.
- Ensure that the co-sponsoring group utilizes interpreters for important meetings with the refugee family (e.g., the arrival, the initial intake, employment, and financial meetings)

*The contact people will coordinate the overlapping activities of the other committee members and will check in with the refugees regularly until the family is securely established in their surroundings. Team members will make regular reports to the contact people who will be responsible for maintaining contact with the IRIS Co-sponsorship Manager (weekly for the first two months.)*

### SAFE HOUSING

- Secure an apartment or house rental: Safe, Clean, Affordable (ranging from \$900-\$1400, depending on the size), Appropriate Size & Location
- Set up housing with furniture, household goods, and other basic necessities
- Connect utilities

*Iris will give you a list of required furniture, appliances, and other household items, and a list of culturally appropriate food for the kitchen. Note: Iris requests that co-sponsors co-sign the lease, if required by the landlord. Do not sign a lease until you're assured of the family's arrival.*

### WELCOME

- Meet family at designated arrival point (in New Haven or at an airport: JFK or Newark)
- Bring appropriate clothing for weather
- Arrange for a language interpreter to accompany you
- Arrange for the preparation of a culturally appropriate hot meal for the day of arrival

*Iris will give you the place, date, and time of arrival as soon as we get it. We will give you a menu of culturally appropriate dishes or introduce you to a family who can cook the hot meal.*

### TRANSPORTATION

- Drive family from designated arrival point home
- Drive to appointments: Medical; Department of Social Services (DSS); Social Security office; DMV; Job interviews; Cultural Orientation at Iris (3 consecutive days)
- Locate public transportation options and teach family how to navigate them

## HEALTH CARE

- Bring refugees to Yale-New Haven Primary Care Center Refugee Clinic within 30 days of arrival for an initial health assessment (required by State Department for each refugee). This entails 2 appointments for each adult, and 2 appointments for each child. (These appointments will be scheduled by IRIS as conveniently as possible, but it is NOT likely that they can be scheduled on the same two days; therefore co-sponsors should anticipate making multiple trips to New Haven in the first 30 days.)
- If close to New Haven, coordinate with IRIS to ensure family's follow up care at Yale-New Haven Hospital Primary Care Center (PCC) and specialists, as required.
- If farther from New Haven, identify providers in your area who accept HUSKY/ Medicaid and bring refugees for first appointments with primary care providers and any specialists necessary for follow-up. Yale-New Haven PCC doctors will ensure a handover of the medical information and care plan to the identified local primary care provider.

***After the initial Health Assessment in New Haven, the Health point person of the co-sponsoring team would be responsible for helping refugees make appointments and assisting with transportation as necessary. In the case of any urgent or special medical needs, Iris can provide guidance and should be consulted***

## EDUCATION & CULTURAL ORIENTATION

- Bring family to Iris for a federally required orientation program (3 consecutive days)
- Register children in school and adults in English language classes
- Teach the family the basics about living in the US: clothes laundering, grocery shopping, banking, navigating public transportation, etc.
- Provide acculturation support and coaching: serve as a helper, friend, and advocate

***This point person should learn how to navigate the school registration process and school resources for English Language Learners before the family arrives. For cultural orientation, Iris can provide the committee with the basic cultural tips for working with a refugee family. If you're co-sponsoring in New Haven, adults can come to the Iris daily English class and children ages 1-4 can attend the Iris Early Learning program, space permitting. If further from New Haven, the Education point person should find local ESOL classes for adults and help to arrange childcare and/or early childhood education programs for toddlers.***

## EMPLOYMENT

- Help adults find jobs and become economically self-sufficient as soon as possible after arrival
- Assist with job application process and interview process

***This point person should identify potential employment opportunities before the family arrives, especially by tapping in to your group's network. Soon after the family arrives, this person should ensure that all employable adults do an employment assessment and make a resume. (Iris can provide guidelines, resources, and templates.) The Co-Sponsorship Manager can give advice on the kinds of jobs that might be attainable and suitable for the family and the best strategies for finding such jobs.***

## FINANCE

- Oversee resettlement fund-raising and disbursements  
**Note:** Funds that are specifically for a co-sponsorship should not be sent to Iris; they should stay with the co-sponsoring group.
- Coach family on household budget, managing resources, building credit history
- Help family access all possible sources of funding, including applying at DSS for food stamps (SNAP) and Temporary Family Assistance (TFA); identify local food pantry

*The finance point person will be responsible for developing a budget for the co-sponsorship, including all income (State Department Reception & Placement (R&P) “welcome” grant of \$925 / person, Temporary Family Assistance from DSS, Food Stamps, and employment income) and all other expenses. This point person will also help the family with budgeting and accessing local food pantries. If the family lives close to New Haven, they are welcome to shop at the Iris food pantry every Wednesday morning.*