



# IRIS Community Co-Sponsorship Overview October 2019



<https://youtu.be/IX54vHnVLoQ>

- Community Co-Sponsorship is an approach to resettlement that takes the program back to its **historic roots**: it invites communities to be full partners in welcoming refugees, asylum seekers, and other types of immigrants
  - Community groups share financial and case management responsibility with the resettlement affiliate(s) to which they are connected, assuming some duties traditionally covered by resettlement staff – **Building awareness and ownership among community members**
  - **Co-sponsorship models are beginning to show they can strengthen integration (especially employment) and build long-term resilience**
- This is an overview of community co-sponsorship – providing basic data on outcomes, on the costs associated, and on how the program is structured at IRIS
- For more detailed information on community co-sponsorship, please contact Ann O’Brien: [aobrien@iristct.org](mailto:aobrien@iristct.org)

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# Overview – What is Community Co-Sponsorship?

## Background

- For hundreds of years, refugees had been welcomed by private citizens, often affiliated with churches or synagogues.
- But in 1982, after Congress signed the Refugee Resettlement Act, the U.S. government stepped in - **agreeing to provide funds to private voluntary agencies who would mobilize community support**
- Since then, U.S. refugee resettlement has been a public-private partnership between the Departments of State and Health and Human Services with nine national “voluntary agencies”, which have a total of 200 affiliated nonprofits spread across the country.
  - The government’s involvement has helped to **standardize** and **strengthen** services for refugees, but it also contributed to a reduction in community involvement in refugee resettlement.
  - Nevertheless, the traditional community-based approach to welcoming refugees has been kept alive by some refugee resettlement agencies

## What defines Community Co-Sponsorship?

- Typically, a **group commits in writing to partner with a Resettlement Agency to provide financial and/or in-kind contributions and certain volunteer services to an arriving or previously arrived refugee, asylee, or asylum-seeking individual or family.**
- At IRIS, a Community Co-Sponsor is responsible for providing **virtually all of the resettlement services** that a refugee resettlement agency would provide.
  - This includes all of the basic Reception and Placement (R&P) services required by the Department of State
  - It includes furnished housing, connection with services, and assistance in the areas of health, education, Language, and employment

Refugee Council USA and Amnesty International USA estimate that approximately 14 affiliates around the country are practicing a ‘full’ version of community co-sponsorship similar to IRIS’s

# The U.S. State Department (PRM) Fully Endorses Community Co-Sponsorship -Language from the Cooperative Agreement



## Section 16. Specific Conditions: Reception and Placement Program Core Services

### **d. Delegation of Functions by the Recipient**

1. *Unless otherwise provided herein, the responsibilities assumed by the Recipient shall be delegated only to an affiliate designated in the approved proposal, **who may re-delegate such responsibilities to a local co-sponsor**, provided such co-sponsor is identified on the applicable assurance form submitted to the RPC. **When the Recipient relies on an affiliate or local co-sponsor to provide a service, the Recipient shall remain responsible for ensuring that the service is provided.***
2. *Any local co-sponsor to whom the Recipient's responsibility for providing core services is re-delegated by an approved affiliate **must be located in the affiliate's approved area of geographic responsibility**, as designated in the proposal. When the affiliate has an agreement with a local co-sponsor to provide material needs support or core services, **the affiliate shall remain responsible for ensuring that the services are provided.***
3. *The Recipient, and any affiliate and/or local co-sponsor to which a delegation is made, must carry out its responsibilities in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.*



# Community Co-Sponsorship

Creating welcoming communities,  
one family at a time

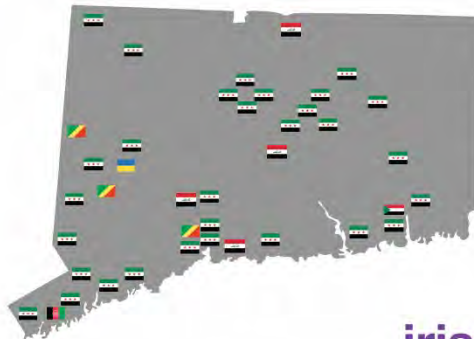


IRIS's Community Co-sponsors are part of a growing global movement of community-based refugee resettlement. Community Co-sponsors play an integral role in helping refugees become self-sufficient. Co-sponsorship is a collaboration among IRIS, your community group, and a refugee family.

In a co-sponsorship, IRIS delegates most resettlement tasks, such as, securing affordable housing, collecting furniture and household items, and helping refugees access public benefits. Co-sponsors also enroll children in school, facilitate job searches, and more.

**"In many instances, including ours, the need to pool resources to form a robust co-sponsorship group has brought together interfaith communities comprised of members of a wide variety of faith groups and traditions united by a shared religious commitment to welcome the sojourners among us. In our case, our group is supported by Muslim, Baha'i, Jewish, and several Christian faith communities.**

**The result has been a win for the refugee families with and from whom we have been fortunate to work and become friends, as well as a win for those of us in our co-sponsor group who have learned much from and about individuals we likely never would have met."** — Rick Chamiec-Case, Co-Chair of Interfaith Partnership for Refugee Resettlement (IPRR), Newtown



Since December 2015, IRIS has engaged 47 community groups to resettle 61 refugee families (308 people total) in 32 towns and cities across the state.

**Co-sponsored refugees have more success finding jobs and improving their outcomes in general than other refugees.**

IRIS's early data indicates 90% of co-sponsored refugees are employed within 4 months or sooner after arrival, compared with 70% in New Haven.

**Muslim refugee teaches Hanukkah doughnut-making at New Haven synagogue**

Aminah Alsaleh is a Muslim refugee from Syria resettled in 2016 by IRIS with support from a local community Co-sponsor, the Jewish Community Alliance for Refugee Resettlement.

During Hannukah in 2017, she led a jelly-doughnut making workshop for a local synagogue, sharing her talents for cooking for large groups and helping create bonds across communities and faith groups.



*New Haven Register, 2017*

**A long walk to the altar**

Reem Alhaji and Khaled Mohammad are Muslim refugees from Syria resettled in 2017 by IRIS and a local community co-sponsor, New Start Ministry.

5 months after they were resettled, Reem and Khaled renewed their vows before a Christian pastor at a Jewish synagogue, surrounded by the team assembled to help them through the process of immigration to the U.S.



*Republican American, 2017*

**Meet the Hamou Family**

The Hamous are a Syrian family that came to Connecticut in 2016. Three churches from the Lyme/Old Lyme area – First Congregational, Christ the King, and Saint Anne’s Episcopal – worked collaboratively with IRIS to co-sponsor the family.

The multi-church team found housing, medical care, education for the children, and employment for the parents, Hani and Yaldiz. The family is thriving and loves the quiet and peace that life in Old Lyme provides, after the chaos and turbulence of their experience fleeing Aleppo and transiting through Turkey.



*Lyme and Old Lyme Neighbors, 2017*



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# Emerging Evidence that Co-Sponsorship Models Can Support Resilience and Integration

## Background

- **In Canada**, groups have compared the outcomes from ‘privately’ sponsored (more similar to co-sponsored) refugees to outcomes from government-backed refugees, finding that privately sponsored refugees were finding jobs and learning the local language (English or French) more quickly (see next slide)
- **In the U.S.**, there has been limited comparative analysis on co-sponsored vs. traditionally sponsored refugees, but some ‘rough analysis’ suggests that co-sponsored refugees are finding jobs slightly more quickly than traditionally sponsored refugees
  - IRIS’s co-sponsored refugees also report high levels of satisfaction with **the co-sponsorship experience and are happy with the education and employment support**
  - Additional research and analysis are underway and will provide further evidence of co-sponsorship’s benefits for refugees

# Evidence on Co-Sponsorship from Canada – positive outcomes, including in employment and language attainment

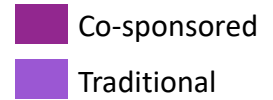
Policy Options, “*The success of the privately sponsored refugee system*”,  
July 20, 2018

Recently, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) conducted a [Rapid Impact Evaluation](#) to assess the early outcomes of Syrian refugees admitted between November 4, 2015, and March 1, 2016.

**...This study showed that privately sponsored refugees (PSRs) [similar to co-sponsored] had better outcomes than government-assisted refugees (GARs).**

And only 32.7 percent of PSRs said they encountered difficulties in learning English and/or French and faced language barriers when they first arrived, compared with 55.1 percent of GARs... **Over half of adult PSRs (52.8 percent) reported that they were currently employed in Canada, compared with just 9.7 percent of Syrian GARs.**

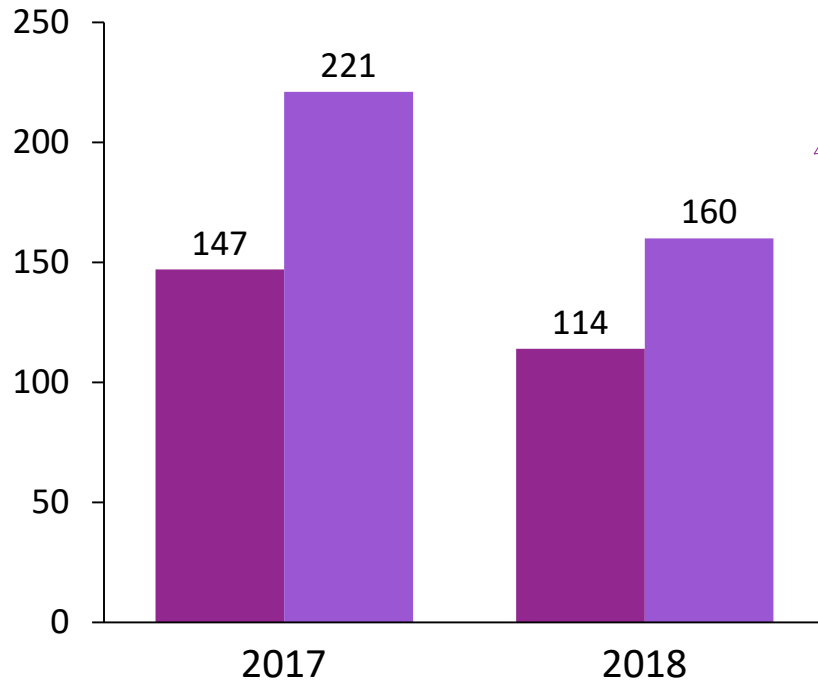
Available: <https://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/july-2018/success-privately-sponsored-refugee-system/>



# IRIS's co-sponsorship outcomes – employed co-sponsored clients have found jobs a few months faster than 'regularly' resettled

## *IRIS's data – days to find a job*

*Among those who have started employment*



For our clients who have become employed, **total days to find a job has been decreasing**

**Co-sponsored refugees are attaining jobs in general more quickly** than refugees resettled via the traditional approach, but some of this is likely data gaps

Note: Includes all clients who have arrived since 2015 and who have consequently started a job; excludes anyone who has not found a job –both those who are seeking and are not seeking employment

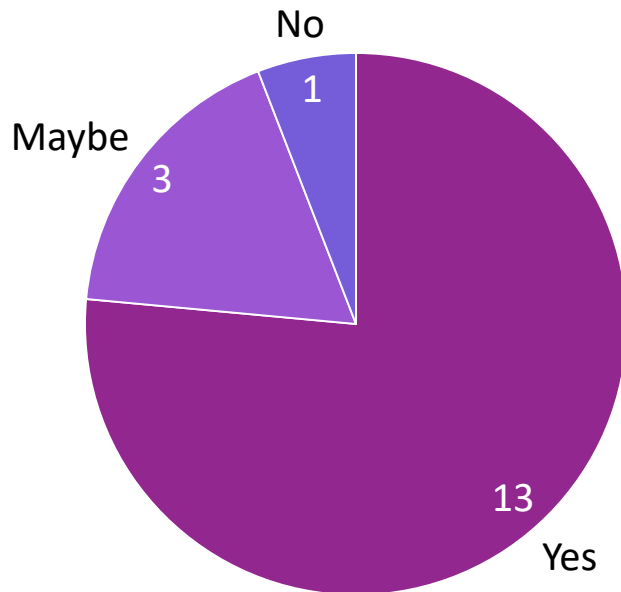
Source: ES Masterlist, downloaded June 14; Years are Calendar, Not FY

# IRIS's co-sponsored clients generally think it's a benefit to be co-sponsored and hope to stay where they are

***Do you think it's an advantage for your resettled family to be co-sponsored?***

*2017 Survey (May/June and September)*

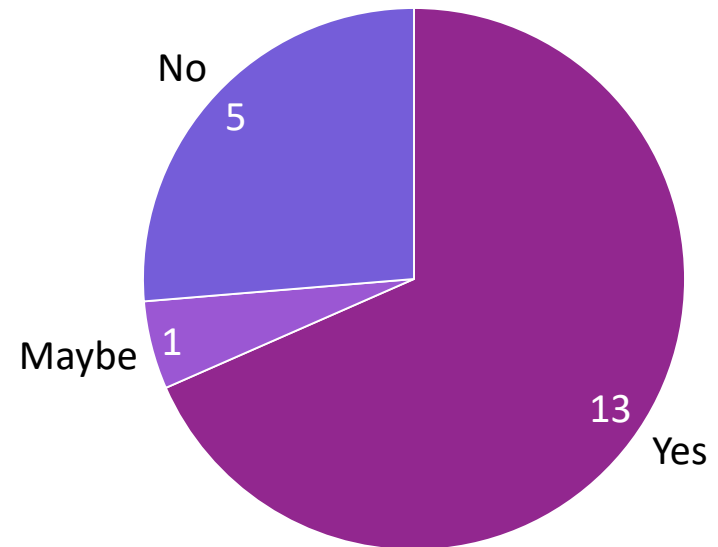
***Responses***



***Do you hope to stay where you are living now?***

*2017 Survey (May/June and September)*

***Responses***



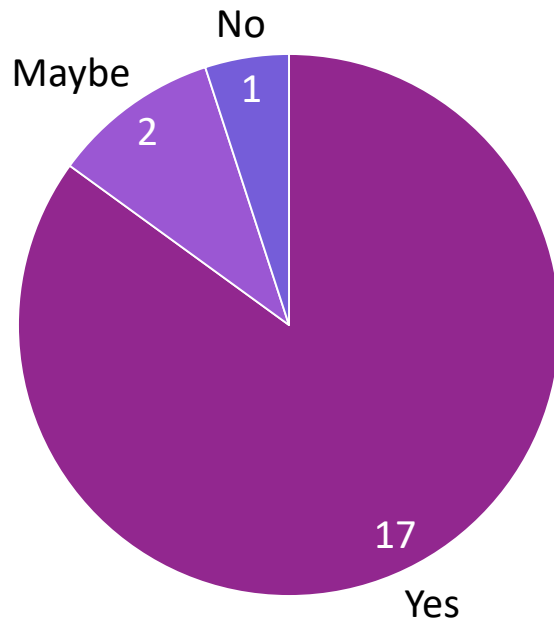


# Co-sponsored clients are happy with the education opportunities for their children and are able to pay their bills

***Are the education needs of your children being met?***

*2017 Survey (May/June and September)*

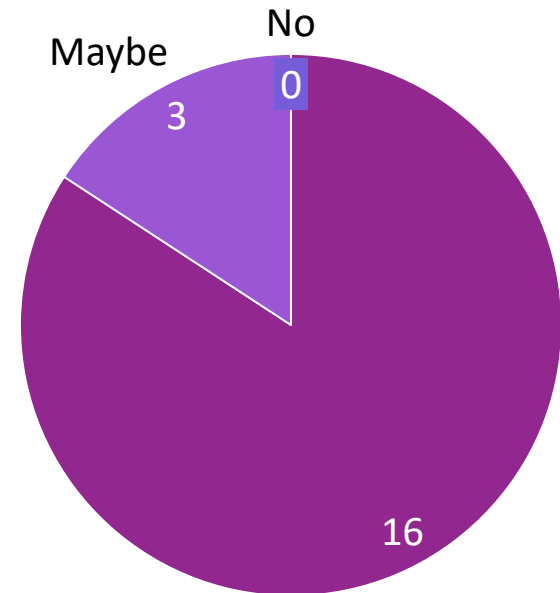
***Responses***



***Are you able to pay the rent and other bills?***

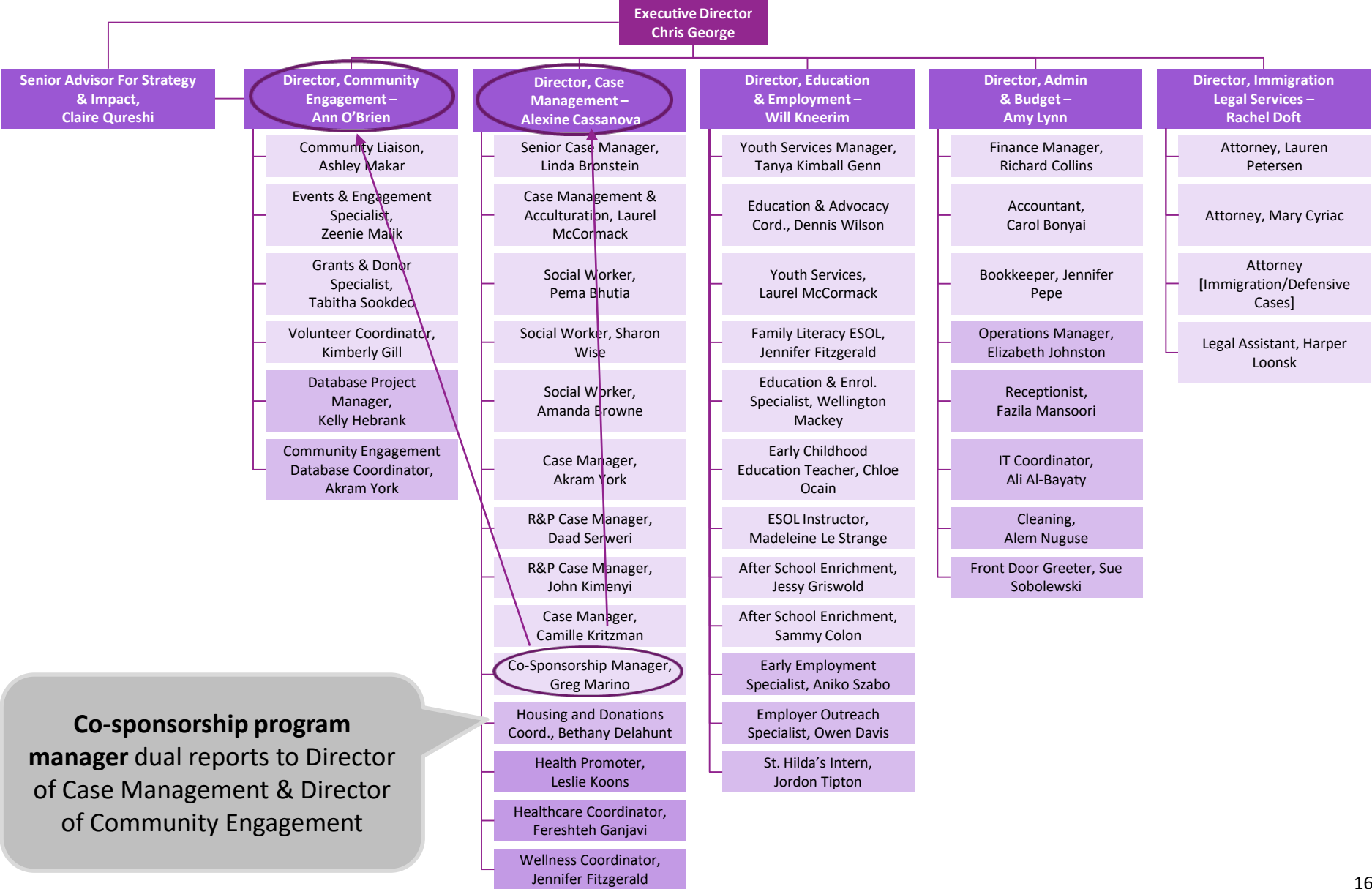
*2017 Survey (May/June and September)*

***Responses***



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# At IRIS, Co-Sponsorship is Part of Case Management and of Community Engagement



**Co-sponsorship program manager** dual reports to Director of Case Management & Director of Community Engagement

## Critical functions

### ***Co-Sponsorship Program Coordination***

- Assess Co-Sponsorship Committees' (CSCs') self-assessments (with Community Liaison)
- Facilitate co-sponsorship training days and adjust/update training materials as needed
- Lead development of Co-Sponsorship Manual and other tools
- Lead development of online resources for CSCs in coordination with IT Coordinator
- As new arrival notices are received, discuss potential co-sponsorship placements with management team
- Communicate regularly with supervisors to ensure that programmatic issues are understood and addressed as needed

### ***Case Management***

- Conduct a pre-arrival meeting with the core members of the CSC to review requirements and expectations
- Coordinate with CSC lead to ensure that all pre-arrival preparations meet requirements (checklists are completed, travel arrangements made, apartment is ready, purchases are made, etc.)
- Conduct a home visit within 2 weeks of arrival to meet family, review intake information and conduct Employment Assessment
- Conduct a home visit around 45 days after arrival to ensure that progress is being made towards resettlement goals
- Conduct a home visit around 90 days after arrival to clarify and support transition from period of intensive services (R&P) towards self-sufficiency
- During the first 90 days, communicate at least weekly with each CSC lead to keep track of progress in all areas including employment, education, ESOL and health and ensure case notes and all other documentation are up to date
- Ensure that all required documentation is included in case file by the end of the R&P period
- Conduct a home visit around 180 days after arrival to ensure that transition towards self-sufficiency is progressing and that clients are looking ahead to decision-making after their first lease ends

## Additional functions

### ***Co-Sponsorship Program Coordination***

- Help train other IRIS staff about co-sponsorship (as needed)
- Represent IRIS and the co-sponsorship program in various public forms

### ***Case Management***

- Provide continued Post R&P case management services to co-sponsored clients and co-sponsors as needed for up to 5 years after arrival, per ORR.

# Details: IRIS has estimated it would cost an affiliate ~\$17,600 to conduct a four case (20 ppl) co-sponsorship pilot (1/2)

	Hours	Rate	Amount
<b>Tools &amp; Template</b>			
Co-sponsorship Application Development	40	20	\$800
Co-sponsorship Manual Development	40	20	\$800
			<b>\$1,600</b>
<b>Staff Time</b>			
<b>Executive Director Time</b>			
Exec Dir – Engagement with VOLAG/National	10	40	\$400
Exec Dir – Outreach to Community Groups & Support	40	40	\$1,600
<b>Total Exec Director</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>\$2,000</b>
<b>Community Engagement / Outreach Time</b>			
Outreach time	5	20	\$100
Planning for training	3	20	\$60
Actual training	8	20	\$160
Total per case (5 people)	16	20	\$320
<b>For Four cases</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>\$1,280</b>
<b>Co-Sponsorship Project Manager time</b>			
Pre-arrival meeting	5	20	\$100
10-day employment assessment training	5	20	\$100
45-day meeting	5	20	\$100
90-day meeting	5	20	\$100
180-day, six-month meeting	5	20	\$100
Planning, communication, and data collection	25	20	\$500
Total per case (5 people)	50	20	\$1,000
<b>Total for Four Cases</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>\$4,000</b>

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on next slide



## IRIS has estimated it would cost an affiliate ~\$17,600 to conduct a co-sponsorship pilot (2/2)

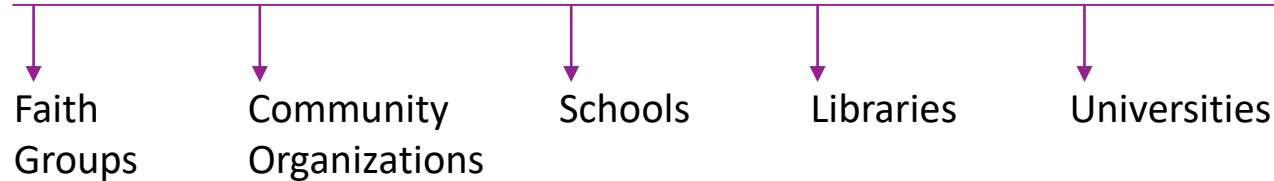
	Hours	Rate	Amount
Internal staff training time	40	20	\$800
<b>Total direct salary costs</b>	<b>354</b>	-	<b>\$8,080</b>
Benefits	22%	-	\$1,664
Taxes	8.31%	-	\$638
<b>Total direct staff costs</b>	-	-	<b>\$10,502</b>
Indirect cost salaries	21.09%	-	\$1,704
Benefits	21.67%	-	\$369
Taxes	8.31%	-	\$142
<b>Total indirect staff costs</b>	-	-	<b>\$2,215</b>
<b>Operating expenses</b>	<b>20.48%</b>		<b>\$1,655</b>
<b>Sub-total</b>			<b>\$15,972</b>
<b>Contingency</b>			<b>\$1,597</b>
<b>Total set up &amp; small program</b>			<b>\$17,569</b>

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**3-9 months to launch and then ongoing**

● **Cultivate refugee ambassadors**

● **Speaking Engagements**



● **Respond to every request (and redirect if necessary)**

- Interaction with refugees
- Interest in getting involved: volunteer opportunities
- Media

*Documentary Screenings*

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*Touring Photo Exhibits*

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*Interactive Simulations*

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*Suggest Presentation Topics*

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*Book discussions/ Development*

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*Theatrical Partnerships*

## 3-6 months

- **Connect with “community liaison”**
- **Orientation/ Info sessions**
- **Follow up by liaison, matchmaking (if needed)**
- **Share application**
- **Feedback**
- **Approval of application**
- **Invite to training**
- **Proceed to full day training**

**Groups forming  
and organizing  
at same time**

**3-6 months, varies by group**

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- **Participants read manual before training**
  - **At least all functional team leaders must attend**  
(goal: train as many volunteers as possible)
  - **Group moves toward greenlight:**  
Finishes organizing team, collecting furniture, fundraising, securing interpreters, background checking, etc.
  - **Group submits greenlight form**
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## 2-3 weeks

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- **Arrival notice**  
Within 24h decide if family is a good case for co-sponsorship  
Review greenlit group capabilities and decide which to offer case to
  - **Offer of co-sponsorship**  
Group has 48 hours to accept or decline
  - **Group accepts**
  - **Pre-arrival meeting (asap after placement confirmation)**
-

## First 45 days

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- **Arrival**
    - Delegation of all R&P tasks begins
    - IOM contact, airport or drop off
  - **Post-Arrival -- by 10th business day**
    - First visit by CM
    - Group's compliance (tasks, finances, anti-fraud)
    - Ensure client well-being
    - Understanding of rights and expectations
  - **Weekly CN or phone check in to monitor progress**
  - **Post-Arrival -- by 45th business day**
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## 45 days - 1 year +

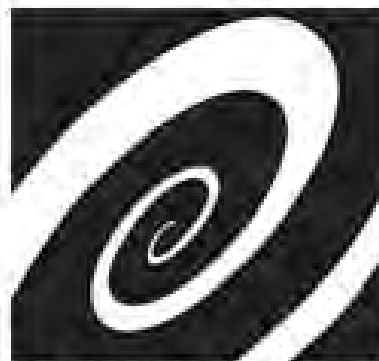
- **45-day visit**
  - 2nd visit with family
  - Review progress on resettlement plan and R&P requirements, troubleshooting
  - Focus on employment and financial responsibilities
  
- **90-day visit**
  - Verify completion of required tasks
  - Beginning of phase 2: signs of separation/independence
  - Reinforce goal of self-sufficiency/employment
  
- **6 month visit “hand-off”**

Important change in relationship, should not be any more financial assistance
  
- **Evaluation and feedback loops**
  - Client interviews, collection of statistics
  - Group focus groups and feedback

# Co-Sponsor Volunteers and Refugee Clients

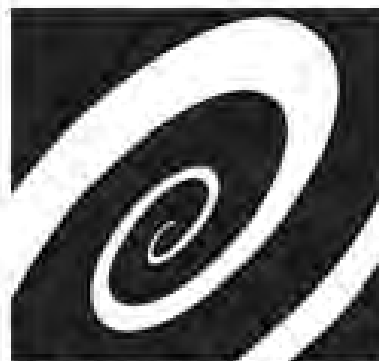


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**OPEN SOCIETY  
FOUNDATIONS**

[Video 2](#)



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[Video 3](#)