

SAMPLE CO-SPONSOR GROUP STRUCTURE

(Adapted from the Newest Neighbors Co-sponsor Group of New Canaan, CT)

Group Co-leaders: IRIS strongly recommends that each group have 2 co-leaders who coordinate co-sponsorship activities

- Ensure that all committees are established, fully staffed, and performing necessary duties
- Coordinate overlapping activities of the committees
- Collect reports from the committees and provide regular reports to IRIS Case Manager
- Serve as primary contacts with IRIS
- Check in with the refugee family regularly until they are established

Administrative Contact Person

- Create a system to gather required IRIS forms and documentation and send it to IRIS staff

Fundraising Coordinator(s)

- Spearhead the effort to raise \$6,000-\$10,000 to defray family living expenses (primarily to subsidize the rent for the first 3-6 months)

Housing Committee

- Select a neighborhood based on school quality, public transportation and availability of appropriate groceries
- Create an inventory of possible 2 and 3 bedroom affordable apartments in target area with willing landlords
- Upon notification of family arrival date, negotiate a one year lease and obtain the apartment
- Connect utilities
- Be available to help with any landlord issues during first 6 months

Apartment Set-Up Committee

- Set up housing with required furnishings (IRIS provides a list of furniture, appliances and household items)
- Provide initial pantry of culturally appropriate groceries according to list provided by IRIS

Welcome Point Person(s)

- Meet family at designated arrival point (New Haven, JFK or Newark airport)
- Obtain and bring appropriate clothing for the weather
- Arrange for a language interpreter to accompany you (work with Interpreter Point Person)
- Arrange for preparation of a culturally appropriate hot meal for arrival day (IRIS will provide a menu or introduction to a cook)

Healthcare Committee

- Accompany each refugee to a Refugee Health Assessment (RHA) within 30 days of arrival (either at the Yale Refugee Clinic, or IRIS can help you identify RHA providers in your area)
- Identify primary care and mental health providers in area who are accepting new patients with HUSKY/Medicaid and who provide interpreters.
- Bring refugees for first appointments with primary care providers and any specialists necessary for follow up

- Help family make appointments and arrange transportation (public transportation or rides from Transportation Point Person) as needed
- Assist with urgent or emergency medical needs, while involving IRIS for guidance.

Education Committee

- Learn the school registration process and school resources for English Language Learners before the family arrives
- Find free local ESOL classes for adults and help to arrange childcare (through Childcare Point Person) and/or early childhood education programs for toddlers
- After they have received all health clearances, register children for school and adults in English language classes
- Ensure children are registered for school busing and explain this to parents and children (times, stops, etc.)
- Act as liaison with public schools that children attend

Cultural Orientation Point Person(s)

- Ensure family attends the federally required orientation program at IRIS (3 consecutive days)
- Teach the family the basics about living in the US: grocery shopping, clothes laundering, banking, etc.
- Teach family how to operate all mechanical aspects of their home including plumbing, electrical appliances and lights, security, maintenance expectations
- Discuss hygiene and dress, especially as it relates to job interviews and general community acceptance

Public Transportation Point Person(s)

- Research public transportation options before family arrives
- Instruct family on how to use public transportation (fares, payment, entering and exiting procedures)
- Show family members how to get to important locations: schools, jobs, market, place of worship, hospital

Ride Coordinator(s) (for initial appointments and special transportation needs)

- Identify a list of drivers willing to take refugees to initial appointments (medical, Dept of Social Services, Social Security office, DMV, job interviews, Cultural Orientation at IRIS on 3 consecutive days, and in emergencies)
- Collect copies of drivers' licenses and insurance cards for all volunteer drivers
- Reach out to volunteer drivers when family or another committee identifies a transportation need. Obtain driver and notify requester

Employment Committee

- Identify potential employment opportunities before the family arrives
- Very soon after arrival, ensure that all employable adults do an employment assessment and create a resume (IRIS will conduct the assessment and can provide advice, guidelines, resources and templates)
- Assist with job applications and the interview process
- Help adults find jobs and become economically self-sufficient as soon as possible

Childcare Point Person(s)

- Develop a list of volunteers who will provide childcare during adult appointments and in emergencies
- Act as contact point for family or other committees when a need for childcare is identified
- Reach out to volunteer list, secure needed childcare, and notify requester

Finance Committee

- Develop a budget for the co-sponsorship, including all income (funds raised by us as co-sponsor, State Dept welcome grant of \$925 per person, Temporary Family Assistance money, Food Stamps, employment income) and expenses (rent, utilities, food, transportation, etc.)
- Oversee resettlement disbursements
- Help family access all possible sources of funding, including applying at DSS for food stamps (SNAP) and Temporary Family Assistance (TFA), identify a local food pantry and register the family
- Develop and coach family on household budget, managing resources, building a credit history

Interpreter Point Person(s)

- Develop a roster of individuals speaking possible family languages (Dari, Pashto, Farsi, Arabic, Swahili) who are willing to act as interpreters for family members
- Ensure that interpreters attend important meetings/appointments (especially arrival, initial intake, employment and financial meetings)