

## STATEMENT OF MUTUAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF IRIS AND ITS CO-SPONSORED CLIENTS

Version 1.1  
September 2019

The following outlines the rights and responsibilities of IRIS and the clients it serves with regards to one another. This statement provides a foundation for mutual understanding and cooperation as IRIS aims to support its clients in their resettlement in Connecticut.

In serving its refugee clients, IRIS follows the requirements that are outlined in the annual Cooperative Agreement between the United States Department of State and the national resettlement agency, Episcopal Migration Ministries, of which IRIS is an affiliate.

IRIS has the authority to determine and define the services that it provides in addition to these requirements. Co-Sponsorship Groups, in partnership with IRIS, are expected to work with IRIS in acknowledging, communicating, and facilitating co-sponsored clients' rights. In the event that a co-sponsored client becomes subject to sanction based on her/his actions, the co-sponsor group will work with IRIS to enforce such sanction.

### I. CLIENT'S RIGHTS

All clients of Integrated Refugee & Immigrant Services (IRIS) have these rights:

- 1) The right to **receive services without discrimination** based on age, color, disabling condition, ethnicity, gender, marital status, national origin, race, religion or sexual orientation.
- 2) The right to **be involved in developing the plan of services they will receive.**

IRIS believes in setting personal goals and meeting the specific needs of each client and that the client's involvement in the definition of his/her service plan is a key to successful resettlement.

- 3) The right to **refuse specific services.**

Clients can refuse specific services, but due to federal and internal IRIS guidelines around participation, they may also lose part or all of their financial and other assistance.

IRIS staff must explain any consequences of any such refusal. Clients must accept responsibility for these consequences.

- 4) **The right to confidentiality:**

IRIS considers all information about its clients to be strictly confidential. This means information about clients is **not** discussed by the staff or shared with any person who does not have a professional need to know about it. People who may have access to client information include IRIS staff, IRIS Co-Sponsor Groups, interns and volunteers as well as people who work outside the agency.

Information about a client can be released only when the client (or a minor client's parent/legal guardian) gives written permission for IRIS and IRIS Co-Sponsor Groups to do so, usually via the Authorization to Release Information and Photo/Interview Release forms. This applies to most types of information, including the use of photographs the client might be in.

The only situations where IRIS is legally required to release certain information without a client's written permission are:

- Cases of suspected abuse or neglect;

- If IRIS staff or an IRIS Co-Sponsor believes that a client is thinking about harming him/herself or someone else, or
- There is a court that requires us to release information about the client.

If any of these situations occur, IRIS will inform the client about the release of information if it is legally permissible, and if it is safe for the client and others to do so.

- 5) The right to **language assistance** to help with communication.

IRIS only provides interpretation services in certain circumstances. Clients should not expect to find immediate language assistance if they spontaneously come to the office. For important meetings with your case manager and others, your co-sponsor will arrange for an interpreter to be present.

However, IRIS staff, interns and volunteers will always make every effort to communicate with clients in a linguistically appropriate way, often depending on the availability of volunteers. For scheduled meetings initiated by or agreed to by IRIS staff, IRIS will arrange for interpretation services.

- 6) The right to **review his/her case file**.

Clients who wish to review their case file should make an appointment with their case manager.

- 7) The right to **information about other community services that the client is eligible to receive**.

In cases where IRIS cannot provide the information or services that a client requests, if IRIS deems that it is not the most appropriate agency to meet the request or if the client prefers another agency, IRIS staff will do their due diligence to identify the most appropriate agency or source of information and communicate this information to the client.

In some cases, IRIS will be able to refer a client to another agency, but in some cases, for reasons out of IRIS' control, this may not be possible.

- 8) The right to **file a complaint or grievance** without fear of retaliation if you have a serious concern about a decision made about your case, an IRIS service, or an IRIS staff member or co-sponsor volunteer.

In that case, the client must make an appointment to discuss the issue with the Director of Case Management in New Haven. If it is not resolved, then the client can make an appointment to discuss further with the Executive Director. In the event that the client wishes to complain about the Executive Director, the client should contact a member of the IRIS Board of Directors.

If the client feels a need to file a complaint to authorities outside of IRIS, (s)he should contact Episcopal Migration Ministries or the State Refugee Coordinator. IRIS will provide clients with the relevant contact information.

## II. CLIENT RESPONSIBILITIES

These rights are associated with the following responsibilities. Adult clients are ultimately responsible for being active participants in their own resettlement and integration process and working toward individual, family and program goals.

Clients must:

- 1) **Keep all scheduled appointments** or cancel any appointment with 24 hours notice.
- 2) **Provide all relevant information** related to their planned services to their co-sponsor and case manager. Withholding information or lying may be grounds for termination of services.
- 3) **Cooperate with all IRIS staff, interns and volunteers and follow service plan.**  
Consistent refusal to cooperate with reasonable IRIS expectations may be grounds for termination of services.
- 4) **Act in a socially responsible manner** towards IRIS staff, interns and volunteers, IRIS property and other clients.

Abusive behavior towards others, disruption of the services at any IRIS facility, or damage to IRIS or others' property may be grounds for termination of services.

### III. IRIS' RIGHTS

Integrated Refugee & Immigrant Services (IRIS) retains the following rights:

- 1) The right to **determine if IRIS is the appropriate agency to address the client's needs and requests** based on our resources, capabilities and mission and on our obligation to meet the expectations of all federal and state mandated programs.
- 2) The right to **limit or discontinue services if the client does not meet his/her responsibilities.**  
Clients will be provided with a copy of IRIS' Sanctions and Termination of Services Policy.

### IV. IRIS' RESPONSIBILITIES

Integrated Refugee & Immigrant Services (IRIS) is responsible for:

- 1) **Serving all clients with respect and dignity** regardless of age, color, disability, ethnicity, gender, marital status, national origin, race, religion, or sexual orientation.
- 2) **Involving clients** (and parents/legal guardians, as appropriate) in the development of their service plans.
- 3) **Assuring that clients receive the highest possible quality of service.**
- 4) **Maintaining client confidentiality on all levels.**
- 5) **Referring clients to another community agency or other source of information** if IRIS cannot provide a client with the services he needs or requests, if IRIS deems that IRIS is not the most appropriate agency to meet the request or if the client prefers to be referred.
- 6) **Providing clients with access to information about IRIS policies** including this one and IRIS grievance policy.

I have reviewed this statement with my case manager and I understand my rights and responsibilities as a client of IRIS. I also understand that IRIS has rights as well as responsibilities toward me.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Principal Applicant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Additional Adult Client

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Co-Sponsor Representative

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Interpreter

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of IRIS Co-Sponsorship Manager

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date