

Sponsor Frequently Asked Questions

The U.S. Welcome Corps creates opportunities for more Americans to welcome refugee newcomers from around the world. Learn more about the program and how you can join the welcoming movement.

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What is the Welcome Corps?

Welcome Corps equips U.S.-based sponsors, working in groups of at least five, to welcome refugee newcomers as they begin life in America. As a sponsor in the Welcome Corps, you will secure and furnish initial housing, greet the refugee newcomers at the airport, enroll children in school, and help adults to find employment. These shared acts of welcome strengthen communities and make it easier for newcomers to adjust to life in the United States—providing access to critical services, social networks and initial financial and in-kind support.

In 2023, the Welcome Corps aims to mobilize and equip at least 10,000 Americans and lawful permanent residents to welcome refugees through private sponsorship and experience the community benefits of welcoming.

Welcome Corps is a private sponsorship of refugees program launched by the Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) as part of the Biden administration's commitment to restoring and enhancing the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP). In December 2022, PRM entered into an agreement with the Community Sponsorship Hub and its consortium of partners to design, implement and launch Welcome Corps. The Welcome Corps consortium includes six organizations with expertise in refugee resettlement, protection and welcome: Church World Service/ Refugee Welcome Collective, Community Sponsorship Hub (CSH), Integrated Refugee and Immigrant Services (IRIS), International Refugee Assistance Project (IRAP), International Rescue Committee (IRC) and Welcome.US.

Can you tell me a little more about the refugees who will be welcomed through this program?

Refugees have been forced to flee their home countries due to a fear of persecution based on race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group. They live in refugee camps and cities in countries of asylum until they can either return home, integrate into that second country, or be welcomed to a third country like the United States. Those refugees to be welcomed through Welcome Corps have been recognized by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and referred to the United States Refugee Admissions Program because resettlement is their only option. They have passed thorough screening by the United States government. Many of those who will be welcomed by sponsors in the first few months of Welcome Corps will come from Sub-Saharan Africa, where they have been waiting for years for a durable solution.

Beginning in mid-2023, Welcome Corps will expand to allow sponsor groups to identify a refugee in need of protection and welcome, facilitating their referral to the United States Refugee Admissions Program.

How is the Welcome Corps different from other forms of sponsorship?

Welcome Corps provides a new opportunity for American citizens and lawful permanent residents, regardless of their location in the United States, to welcome refugees from around the world. Through Welcome Corps, groups of at least five individuals pool their resources to raise a minimum of \$2,275 in cash and in-kind contributions per refugee newcomer being supported and draw on the knowledge of their communities to provide essential welcoming services such as initial housing and school enrollment. Sponsor group members commit to an initial sponsorship period of 90 days of support; however, relationships with the refugee newcomers are likely to last longer.

Sponsor groups don't need to know a refugee in order to welcome. Through Welcome Corps, sponsors will be matched with an arriving newcomer, already approved for resettlement to the United States.

In mid-2023, Welcome Corps will expand to allow communities to identify a refugee overseas in need of protection and welcome, facilitating their referral to the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program. In this way, the Welcome Corps will facilitate the reunification of family, friends, and colleagues torn apart by war; enable employers to identify refugees with the skills to contribute to their workforce; and support universities to identify refugee students with the talent to thrive on their campuses.

Newcomers arriving through Welcome Corps will have refugee status, employment authorization, access to key public benefits like health insurance, and can eventually apply for U.S. citizenship.

Where is the Welcome Corps offered?

Welcome Corps makes it possible for communities to welcome refugee newcomers across the United States. Sponsor groups are connected to virtual, ongoing support offered by experts in welcoming, and other tools and resources, including those focused on how to access local benefits and services.

Who can sponsor through the Welcome Corps?

Through the Welcome Corps, American citizens and lawful permanent residents can come together to form sponsor groups. To qualify, groups must have a minimum of five members who are over the age of 18 who live in or near the same community, and demonstrate that they have the capacity to welcome. It isn't necessary that groups name a particular refugee in their application.

It is expected that Welcome Corps will open opportunities for colleges and universities across the United States to sponsor refugee students on their campuses, providing critical financial, academic, and integration support to sponsored students. College and university sponsorship will allow diverse campus stakeholders, including staff, faculty, and students, to welcome refugee students, provide them with a softer landing, and set them up for academic and overall success. More information on college and university sponsorship of refugee students will be available by Spring 2023.

What are a sponsor's responsibilities?

Sponsor groups commit to providing welcoming services to an arriving newcomer family. They secure and furnish initial housing, provide for initial basic needs, and make connections to relevant services, such as health care, education, and employment services. Most importantly, sponsor groups offer friendship and support to those adjusting to life in a new community.

Welcome Corps provides sponsor groups with access to tools and resources, including a budget template, fundraising support, an arrival checklist, and ongoing guidance throughout the sponsorship period.

What is the financial commitment?

Sponsors raise a minimum of \$2,275 in cash and in-kind contributions per newcomer being welcomed. This is used to secure and furnish housing and provide for the newcomer's initial basic needs, until employment can be secured.

How long is the commitment?

Sponsors commit to providing friendship, guidance, and financial support for an initial sponsorship period of 90 days. As it often takes longer for an individual to integrate to their new community, sponsors also commit to making connections to ongoing supports and services, available from local organizations.

Even as the sponsorship commitment is for just 90 days, the relationships built, both with the newcomers and members of the sponsoring community, may last a lifetime.

What is the application process?

The application portal for Welcome Corps sponsor groups is now open. To be alerted about new resources and to receive other updates on the program, [click here](#).

Here are some things you can do now to begin the application process:

- **Form a sponsor group.** Find 4 friends, neighbors, or colleagues or connections to join your group. They don't need to be experts in welcoming; they just need to be willing to share their time and knowledge of your community.
- **Plan.** Begin outlining how you will welcome the refugee newcomers with whom you will be matched. You'll want to think about initial housing, essential furnishings, and connection to community services like schooling, language classes, and public benefits. A Welcome Plan guide will soon be made available to support you in your planning.
- **Start fundraising.** As part of your commitment to welcome, your group will need to fundraise at least \$2,275 in cash and in-kind contributions for each newcomer. You can begin that work now by setting up a fundraising account and reaching out to members of your community to encourage them to donate. [Access fundraising guidance here](#).

How are approved sponsors connected to a refugee family?

In the Welcome Corps application, sponsor groups share the size of family they are able to welcome, along with information about their community's resources. This information is used to identify a family that can benefit from the support of that community.

When will the refugee newcomer arrive?

The earliest refugee newcomers welcomed through Welcome Corps will begin arriving April 2023. It is expected that the application review process will take a few weeks, with the refugee newcomer(s) arriving 1 – 2 months after the sponsor group's approval. The sponsor group will receive updates throughout the process, including notification of the arriving refugees' flight so that they can greet the newcomer(s) at the airport and take them to their first home in the United States.