

Consider Co-Sponsoring a Refugee Family!

IRIS partners with community groups throughout Connecticut to help newly arriving refugee families get off to a strong start and become self-sufficient. Co-Sponsorship is an opportunity to participate in the tremendous mission of refugee resettlement and to do the welcome work that is vital to our communities. Multiple groups can work together to assist a refugee family. Below is an overview of the ideal features of a co-sponsoring community, but these are not rigid requirements. We want every community to have the opportunity to co-sponsor a family.

Recommendations for Co-Sponsorship

Location: Refugee families tend to fare best in communities where they have access to public transportation, employment opportunities, ESOL resources, and affordable housing. If these are not available in your town, we encourage you to identify a nearby location with the following features:

- In an area that has adult ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) classes
- In a school district that has resources for English-language learners
- Availability of entry-level jobs that do not require a high level of English
- Close to an affordable grocery store that takes SNAP (food stamps)
- Close to a hospital or health clinic that takes Medicaid and provides interpreters
- Accessible to public transportation, food pantries, & a diaper bank
- Availability of clean, safe, affordable apartments.

If your group is unable to resettle a family in a town with these features, IRIS can work with you to find creative solutions.

Co-Sponsoring Community Group

- Ability to raise \$15,000-\$20,000 to provide 3-6 months of assistance. (The amount varies according to the cost of living in the location the family is resettled. (Fundraising needs may exceed \$20,000 in high-rent areas.) Most of the funds raised will be used for rental assistance.
- Willingness to work *with* a refugee family to empower them to become independent.
- A co-sponsorship group leader (or co-leaders) with community organizing & project management skills. (e.g., excellent communication skills, the ability to encourage collaborative problem-solving within the group, and volunteer management skills.)
- A strong, well organized team with the skills necessary to help refugees access social services, assist with healthcare coordination, education, and employment. We recommend at least 30 volunteers who can, *as a group* devote a *total* of 40hrs/week for the first two months. **Note:** Co-Sponsorship is a 1-year commitment.
- Ability to recruit interpreters in at least two languages that are common among new arrivals (IRIS can provide suggestions on volunteer recruitment and supplementing with remote interpreter resources)

For more information, see the [IRIS Co-Sponsor A Family Web Page](#) or contact cosponsorship@irisct.org