



## **SAMPLE CO-SPONSOR GROUP STRUCTURE**

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

It is essential that co-sponsor groups ensure all the tasks associated with resettling a family occur in a timely manner, as outlined in the R&P Forms and Timeline Cheat Sheet. The structure listed below is an example of how many groups chose to organize committees around these tasks. It should be noted there is overlap between many committees which requires communication and coordination. The methods employed by each group to facilitate this coordination varies, but should be a mindful focus of the group leaders as committees complete their work.

**Another important aspect of a successful resettlement requires all volunteers share the mindset of prioritizing a family's move toward independence.** Most tasks require co-sponsor volunteers to take charge at first, but the tasks should be completed in partnership with family members in a coaching or instructional manner. Gradually decreasing support for each task until family members are capable of completing them independently is not always a straight path forward. However, all volunteers maintaining this mindset is essential for empowering families to gain back control over their lives.

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

- ❖ 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 the IRIS Community Sponsor Coach (CSC).
- ❖ Serve as primary contacts with IRIS.
- ❖ Check in with the refugee family regularly until they are established.

**Administrative Contact Person:**

- ❖ Creates a system to gather required IRIS forms and documentation.

- ❖ Communicates with committee chairs to ensure timely completion of forms and case notes.
- ❖ Uploads required documentation to the shared Google folder provided by the CSC.

### **Fundraising Coordinator(s):**

- ❖ Spearhead the effort to raise \$15,000-\$20,000 to defray family living expenses (primarily to subsidize the rent for up to a year).
- ❖ Research and implement online fundraising options as well as in-person events and campaigns.

### **Housing Committee:**

- ❖ Creates an inventory of possible 2 and 3 bedroom affordable apartments in the target area with willing landlords.
- ❖ Selects a neighborhood that is safe and as affordable as possible while considering the availability of public transportation for access to employment, shopping etc.
- ❖ Researches temporary housing options that could afford a family privacy and kitchenette amenities for a potential stay of a couple of days to a month.
- ❖ Upon notification of family arrival date, negotiates a 6 month to one year lease and obtains the apartment.
- ❖ Connects utilities.
- ❖ Is available to help with any landlord issues during the first 6 months.

### **Apartment Set-Up Committee:**

- ❖ Collects required furnishings through in-kind donations and purchases for items required to be new (IRIS provides a list of furniture, appliances and household items).
- ❖ Sets up the apartment with required items.
- ❖ Provides an initial pantry of culturally appropriate groceries according to the list provided by IRIS.

### **Welcome Point Person(s):**

- ❖ Meets family at designated arrival point (New Haven, JFK or Newark airport).
- ❖ Obtains and brings appropriate clothing for the weather.
- ❖ Arranges for a language interpreter to accompany Welcome committee member(s). (Coordinates with Interpreter Point Person.)
- ❖ Arrange for preparation of a culturally appropriate hot meal for arrival day.

### **Healthcare Committee:**

- ❖ Accompanies each refugee to a Refugee Health Assessment (RHA) within 30 days of arrival. (Research Community Healthcare Centers in your area who perform RHAs.)

- ❖ Identifies primary care and mental health providers in the area who are accepting new patients with HUSKY/Medicaid and who provide interpretation services.
- ❖ Brings refugees for first appointments with primary care providers and any specialists necessary for follow up.
- ❖ Helps family members make appointments and arrange transportation (public transportation or rides from Transportation Point Person) as needed.
- ❖ Assists with urgent or emergency medical needs.
- ❖ Educates family on forms of health insurance available as employment is procured. (Coordinates with the Employment Committee.)
- ❖ Coordinates with the Family Finance Committee to ensure follow-up with Access HealthCT is on-going as needed.

### **Education Committee:**

- ❖ Researches the school registration process and school resources for English Language Learners before the family arrives.
- ❖ Begins the school registration process as soon as a family arrives, working with the Healthcare Committee to ensure school-aged children are prioritized for initial health appointments so required school forms can be completed by providers.
- ❖ Finds free or low cost local ESOL classes for adults and helps to arrange childcare (through Childcare Point Person) and/or early childhood education programs for preschoolers.
- ❖ Enrolls adults in English language classes.
- ❖ Recruits volunteers to informally tutor children and adults.
- ❖ Discusses tutoring needs with other committees (e.g. preparing for job interviews, studying driving vocabulary, etc.).
- ❖ Ensures children are registered for school busing and explains this to parents and children (times, stops, etc.).
- ❖ Acts as liaison with public schools that children attend and educates parents on school procedures and practices.
- ❖ Researches after school/summer recreational activities through the schools and town recreation department.

### **Cultural Orientation Point Person(s):**

- ❖ Ensures family attends the federally required Cultural Orientation and Refugee Education (CORE) program at IRIS (3 consecutive days).
- ❖ Reinforces the topics covered in CORE throughout resettlement (program slides are available on IRIS website).
- ❖ Teaches the family the basics about living in the US: grocery shopping, clothes laundering, post office uses etc.
- ❖ Teaches family members how to operate all mechanical aspects of their home including plumbing, electrical appliances and lights, security, maintenance expectations etc.
- ❖ Discusses hygiene and dress, especially as it relates to job interviews and general community acceptance.

- ❖ Connects family to local diaspora communities, places of worship, cultural organizations etc.
- ❖ Conducts community orientation outings (e.g. visits to the library, local parks/playgrounds, community centers, etc.).

### **Public Transportation Point Person(s):**

- ❖ Researches public transportation options before family arrives.
- ❖ Instructs the family on how to use public transportation (fares, payment, routes, etc.).
- ❖ Shows family members how to get to important locations: schools, jobs, market, place of worship, hospital.
- ❖ Coordinates with the Employment Committee to discuss transportation options for potential job locations.

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

- ❖ Identifies 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, grocery shopping and in emergencies).
- ❖ Collects copies of drivers' licenses and insurance cards for all volunteer drivers.
- ❖ Reaches out to volunteer drivers when family or another committee identifies a transportation need.
- ❖ Obtains driver and notifies requester.
- ❖ Educates drivers on the needs of the family for certain appointments (e.g. initial healthcare appointments may require assistance from a driver to fill out forms, etc.).

### **Employment Committee:**

- ❖ Identifies potential employment opportunities before the family arrives.
- ❖ Very soon after arrival, ensures that all employable adults do an employment assessment and creates a resume for each (IRIS's CSC will advise you on conducting the assessment and provide guidelines, resources and templates).
- ❖ Assists with job searches (on-line and in-person), applications and the interview process.
- ❖ Connects job seekers to local employment agencies and services.
- ❖ Assists family members to meet the Jobs First Employment Services program requirements mandated by the Dept of Social Services (see Co-Sponsorship Manual).

### **Childcare Point Person(s):**

- ❖ Researches low cost or free childcare options before a family arrives including Head Start, Care4Kids and other local resources.
- ❖ Develops a list of volunteers who will provide childcare during adult appointments and in emergencies.

- ❖ Acts as a contact point for family or other committees when a need for childcare is identified.
- ❖ Reaches out to the volunteer list, secures needed childcare, and notifies requesters.
- ❖ Ensures volunteer childcare providers have completed an Abuse Prevention Training program as determined by your group leaders.

### **Finance Committee:**

- ❖ Develops a budget for the co-sponsorship, including all income (funds raised by co-sponsor, State Dept welcome grant, Temporary Family Assistance cash, SNAP, employment income) and expenses (rent, utilities, food, transportation, etc.).
- ❖ Oversees resettlement disbursements.
- ❖ Helps the family access all possible sources of funding, including applying at DSS for food stamps (SNAP), Temporary Family Assistance (TFA)/Refugee Cash Assistance, and Medicaid (Husky).
- ❖ Coordinates with the Healthcare Committee to ensure follow-up with Access HealthCT is on-going as needed.
- ❖ Educates family on how to monitor a DSS account online and respond to mailed requests for additional documentation.
- ❖ Identifies local food pantries and registers the family.
- ❖ Introduces the family to banking procedures.
- ❖ Develops and coaches family on household budget, managing resources, building a credit history, paying bills, etc.)
- ❖ Assists the family in applying for energy assistance programs or other local programs designed to support low-income families.
- ❖ Assists families with young children to apply for WIC and local diaper banks.
- ❖ Submits signed receipts to administrative point person for R&P fund reimbursement from IRIS.

### **Interpreter Point Person(s):**

- ❖ Develops a roster of individuals speaking possible family languages (Arabic, Dari/Farsi, Pashto, Swahili) who are willing to act as interpreters for family members
- ❖ Researches online and telephonic interpretation services available including the Tarjimly app.
- ❖ Schedules interpreters as needed/requested by other committees.

**Department of Motor Vehicles/Driver's Education Committee:** (Many co-sponsor groups determine at least one member of a family obtaining a driver's license is essential for a family to adequately move toward independence, especially in communities where public transportation is not comprehensive. However, this is not a service mandated by the State Dept. and is **optional** for co-sponsor groups.) Tasks would include:

- ❖ Researches the process of obtaining a driver's license on the DMV website.
- ❖ Educates appropriate family members on the process.
- ❖ Coordinates with the Education Committee for tutoring related to studying for the Learner's Permit Test.
- ❖ Assists the family in making appointments at the DMV as needed.
- ❖ Recruits volunteers to give driving lessons.
- ❖ Researches local driving schools to enroll family members in the required 8 Hour Safe Driving Course and potentially give driving lessons.
- ❖ Accompanies family members to DMV appointments as needed.
- ❖ Educates the family on best practices for purchasing a used car and obtaining insurance.