

## The Circle of Welcome

**We invite you to be part of a refugee family's resettlement journey!** The Circle of Welcome, Global Refuge's co-sponsorship program, is a model of resettlement where a community group partners with a local resettlement agency to provide specific services and financial support to a newly arrived refugee family.

This type of volunteer commitment is incredibly important to the work of welcome. **Circles of Welcome bring an essential level of commitment, continuity, and care** for the refugees they serve and significantly multiply and extend the services refugees receive.

Circles of Welcome are overseen by one of our local resettlement agencies, who provide each co-sponsor team with **in-depth training** prior to working with a family and **continued support** throughout their service period.

**Please read on for more information about what it means to create a Circle of Welcome!**

### Circle of Welcome Requirements

Specific requirements for Circle of Welcome programs vary by local resettlement site throughout the Global Refuge network, but Circles of Welcome are generally expected to do the following:

- **Form a Team and Select a Team Leader**  
Circle of Welcome teams can vary in size and there is no universal requirement for team sizes. In our network, teams tend to range from 6-10 core members who work directly with clients.
- **Commit to a Specific Time Frame of Service**  
Program lengths can vary from 3-12 months across the Global Refuge network.
- **Raise and Donate Financial Support**  
Circles of Welcome are expected to raise a specific amount of money, which will be used to supplement essential needs of the family such as rent, healthcare, transportation, or groceries. Global Refuge local resettlement sites have set their own financial requirement for Circle of Welcome teams based on the cost of living in their area and needs of their clients.
- **Sign a Commitment Form with Your Local Resettlement Agency**  
Commitment forms are non-legally binding agreements between a Circle of Welcome team and a local resettlement agency. The commitment form outlines expectations of Circles of Welcome and duties they agree to perform.

- **Devote Time Each Week to Assist the Family**  
The local resettlement agency will give Circle of Welcome teams guidance on how much time they should expect to spend with the family. Circles of Welcome can expect to be spending more time with the family in their first month after arrival as they learn to navigate their new community than later months.
- **Receive a Background Check**  
It is a standard best practice across the refugee resettlement field that all volunteers who work directly with refugees receive a background check. This is a way of safeguarding the clients we serve. Before anyone can volunteer to create a Circle of Welcome for a resettled family, the agency will require a background check through their organization.
- **Complete an Orientation and Training**  
Circle of Welcome teams must attend a Circle of Welcome training put on by the local resettlement agency, where they will learn about the expectations and guidelines of the local agency's Circle of Welcome program.
- **Follow Guidelines from Local Agency Staff**  
Local resettlement offices will provide Circles of Welcome with information about their program's expectations, avenues of communication, onboarding process, and guidelines.

## What Circles of Welcome Provide

Each one of the local refugee resettlement agencies in the Global Refuge network is required by our government partners to provide specific services, called core services, to each refugee they resettle. Circles of Welcome help to provide certain core services in addition to other support services that aid in refugees' integration into their new communities. Local offices determine which core and support services they want Circles of Welcome to provide and have them outlined in their commitment form that Circles of Welcome sign.

- **Home Set Up**  
Set up an apartment for an arriving refugee individual or family with all of the required furnishings and supplies listed in the home set up list.
- **Seasonal Clothing**  
Provide seasonal clothing and footwear for work, school, and everyday use for each member of the family, and diapers for infants and toddlers.
- **Welcome Meal & Stock the Pantry**  
Prepare a culturally appropriate meal, ready for the individual or family to enjoy immediately upon arrival at their new home, and provide culturally appropriate foods to stock the pantry and refrigerator.

- **Airport Pick Up**  
Pick up the individual or family from the airport and welcome them to their new home. An airport pick-up guide will be provided.
- **24-Hour Home Visit**  
Within one calendar day of the family's arrival visit to their home, complete the "Next Calendar Day Home Visit Form," which will be provided to you by the resettlement agency.
- **Transportation to Job Interviews and Job Training**  
In partnership with local agency staff, arrange for transportation of individual or family in situations where public transportation is not practical.
- **ESL Enrollment**  
Help adults enroll in English Classes within 10 working days of arrival. The resettlement agency will provide guidance on how to complete enrollment.
- **Selective Service Registration**  
Register those eligible for selective service within 30 days of arrival.
- **School Enrollment**  
Enroll all eligible children in school within 30 days of arrival.

## Additional Support Services

While many of the services above are required, there are countless opportunities to help individuals and families adjust to their new communities. See below for some ideas!

- **Community Guide**  
Use your creativity to help the refugee family to learn more about their new community. This could look like taking the family to the local farmers market, a sporting event, a local museum, or having a picnic in the park.
- **Grocery Store Orientation**  
Go to the grocery store with the family and teach them how to navigate it.
- **General Health Orientation**  
Teach refugees about how to navigate the U.S. health care system and assist them in accessing appropriate providers of continued therapy or preventive treatment.

- **Financial Education**  
Help the individual or family create a budget, explain the U.S. banking system, etc.
- **English Language Tutoring**  
Focus on developing English skills with the individual or family.
- **Job Development**  
Help the individual or family with employment preparation (resume preparation, mock interviews, long term employment goal setting, etc.).
- **Public Transportation Orientation**  
Show the individual or family how to take the bus, explaining different bus routes, how to purchase bus passes, etc.
- **Continued Transportation Assistance**  
Continue to help with transportation as needed.

Questions? Please visit [globalrefuge.org/circleofwelcome](https://globalrefuge.org/circleofwelcome) to learn more!