

# Dedham Refugee Resettlement Committee

## Volunteer Committees

Each Committee is responsible for recording time spent and donations. Catholic Charities must be kept up to date to date so they can do reporting to USCCB and ORI.

**1. Housing and Pre-arrival:** Locate an affordable and acceptable apartment and coordinate lease signing, initial payments, and utility set-up. Furnish apartment with furniture, food, and supplies.

### Tasks:

- a) Apartment search: Develop and follow leads for an affordable apartment. Contact local realtors and landlords. Refugee won't be able to sign the Lease till after arrival, although initial funds will be provided. Need a committed landlord. We need to be aware that if the family has a child under age 6, we need an apartment that is de-lead or was built after 1978. Must try and connect utilities in advance of arrival. Could be a challenge.
- b) Clean apartment, if needed.
- c) Prior to signing the lease on the apartment, continue to move furniture and supplies to storage facility. Coordinate the move of furniture and supplies to new apartment and do set up, arrangement, and stock kitchen and bath. Wash all new linens and make beds etc. Request new mattresses and box springs from Saint Vincent de Paul or "Our Brother's Keeper."
- d) Check apartment window coverings for curtain / shades.
- e) Ensure that someone is familiar with all appliance operations so that she / he can show the family after arrival.
- f) Show the family how to dispose of trash and / or recycling.
- g) Make copy of house keys.
- h) Provide an English/? Dictionary for the apartment, and / or locate a translation app for your smart phone.
- i) Purchase food for the first few meals as well as stocking the kitchen. The stock should include basic cooking supplies – spices particular to their cultural, ethnic groceries. These groceries should be obtained locally and at a price that the family will be able to replace over the coming weeks
- j) Get age appropriate items for children – books, games, building toys, but not so much they are overwhelmed. We need to keep it simple. Also obtain sports equipment, if the children play sports.
- k) Create a document with the names and phone numbers of volunteers the family will be interacting with initially.
- l) Update a Google shared Calendar to be viewed on the Refugee web page.
- m) Committee Coordinator(s) to provide updates at collaborative meetings.

**2. Education:** Accompany and advocate for family during school registration, initial evaluations, and specific school assignments. Work with adults in the family, if they want to access education and training beyond what is initially offered.

**Tasks:**

- a) Set up appointments at the schools, or central offices, to do registration and screening. Request a translator be provided by the school, if needed for registration. Record appointments on shared Calendar.
- b) Work with the family to set expectations for schooling in U.S. – homework, dress, transportation to and from school, lunches brought or provided by the school, extracurricular activities etc.
- c) Review the school calendar with the family so they know when holidays are and can plan for local summer camps, etc. These camps, workshops, etc. should not require sustained transportation from the collaborative. The family members should be able to get to these activities on their own.
- d) Committee Coordinator(s) to provide updates at collaborative meetings.

**3. ELL/ESL:**

- a) Recruit ELL (English Language Learner) tutors and manage scheduling as a supplement to the initial partial day Program.
- b) These workshops, etc. should not require sustained transportation from the collaborative. The family members should be able to get to these activities on their own.
- c) Committee Coordinator(s) to provide updates at collaborative meetings.

**4. Employment:** Work with Jewish Vocational Services (JVS) to support job placement.

**Tasks:**

- a) Work with refugee to find employment near their apartment.
- b) Help with interview skills and reinforcing confidence for job interviewing.
- c) Help to educate on “work culture” in the U.S.
- d) Accompany adults to initial visit to a Refugee Employment Services (RES) Center. Our closest is Jewish Vocational Services (JVS), Boston. Check on progress towards employment. They provide basic job placement and English for employment.
- e) JVS does not have to be the only Employment service that the collaborative uses. If members have relationships with other services, they should be utilized also.
- f) Committee Coordinator(s) to provide updates at collaborative meetings.

**5. Finance / Budget:** Maintain contact with Collaborative/POWR Team and family regarding financial needs and budgeting. Distribute funds and report to the Collaborative the status of available funds.

**Tasks:**

a) Assist family to understand government supports, food stamps, etc. DTA – Department of Transitional Assistance provides food stamps and limited financial support for up to 8 months RCA/TAFDC. Also, each refugee receives a one-time sum to help with housing. Catholic Charities will meet with family soon after arrival to explain in detail their particular situation and how funds will be utilized. Our assistance should be made clear at this time as well with an expectation that we will be covering a limited amount for a given time. The expectation is that employment will begin as soon as possible and our contribution will be adjusted accordingly, and soon ending.

Independence is the goal, not dependence.

- b) The appointment with DTA is set up by Catholic Charities. If a member of this Committee or Post Arrival Committee should accompany family to DTA appointments, DO NOT INFORM DTA that church group is subsidizing rent.
- c) Work with family to develop a budget and adjust budget when family members have work income.
- d) Work with family to establish a bank account and how to maintain a check book and budget for household bills and rent. (Online options if applicable).
- e) Educate family on U.S. tax filings and support initial filings.
- f) Some families have received travel loans from an International Organization for Migration and must pay them back after a 6-month grace period. May have to advocate to postpone payment, if refugee hasn't started work. Budget planning should include these payments.
- g) If we will be assisting with additional funds, all money goes directly to Landlord or vendors- NOT to family members. Money is never given to family. Core Collaborative Group will be updated to the original plan and any needed changes along the way.
- h) Committee Coordinator(s) to provide updates at collaborative meetings.

**6. Fundraising / Publicity:** Raise funds to supplement limited Federal support, food supplies, household needs, utilities, and transportation. Also, communicate information about POWR Team needs and needs of the family to members of the Collaborative and to the wider community.

**Tasks:**

- a) Respond to needs as conveyed by Finance / Budget Committee.
- b) Determine means to generate funds, events, appeals, and organize events.
- c) Establish relationships with area retailers and / or charitable institutions to provide goods and services for refugee families.
- d) Committee Coordinator(s) to provide updates at collaborative meetings.
- e) Become familiar with the privacy needs of the refugee family.
- f) Promote the need for an affordable apartment.
- g) Promote events within the Collaborative Community.
- h) Submit articles to newspapers on the journey of the refugee family. Review “MEDIA Guidelines for POWR Partnerships” as provided in Catholic Charities POWR Volunteer Training Manual. Have the family sign photo release, if they are comfortable with photo use.
- i) Promote the plight of Refugees in the local community.
- j) Support Fundraising efforts.
- k) Committee Coordinator(s) to provide updates at collaborative meetings.

**7. Health Advocates:** Accompany family to medical visits and to advocate for their medical needs until they can manage this.

**Tasks:**

- a) Coordinate with Catholic Charity staff to get the family to initial medical screenings (referred to as RHAs – Refugee Health Assessments) and these can only be conducted at approved medical centers. These exams are requested by Catholic Charities. Be sure to get the children’s Medical Forms and Immunization Forms filled out so children can start school.
- b) Family is eligible for MA Health insurance benefits as soon as Applications are submitted, even when they haven’t received the MA Health cards.
- c) In the first weeks, help the family manage follow up appointments and see that the shared Calendar has a record of appointments with the names and phone numbers of anyone accompanying them or providing transportation.
- d) Once the initial assessments are completed, advocate for a doctor who will be the primary care provider in their neighborhood, for the adults and children.
- e) Teach the family how to use Mass Health and how to manage getting prescriptions filled and paid.
- f) Be available to be an advocate, if a hospitalization is required.
- g) Committee Coordinator(s) to provide updates at collaborative meetings.

**8. Hospitality – Arrival:** Coordinate Logan Airport arrival and initial “Welcome Receptions.” Provide meals for the first week.

**Tasks:**

- a) Coordinate small welcome at Logan.
- b) Coordinate ethnically appropriate dinners for the first week. See Catholic Charities POWR Volunteer Training Manual for recipes.
- c) Plan “Welcome Reception” for the refugee family and the supporting Church groups.

**Hospitality – Post Arrival:** The Hospitality committee will oversee the entire Post Arrival process and communicate with all collaborative team members. The entire collaborative depends on the public calendar for the family for the first few busy weeks that can be accessed with various post arrival committees.

Catholic Charities will coordinate a visit to Social Security and the Dept. of Transitional Services (DTA) to apply for food stamps under the SNAP Program. Households of 1 receives maximum of \$194 a month up to family of 4 receiving \$649, which will be adjusted once there is work income. Purchases are made on an EBT card similar to a debit card. Refugee need I-94, travel document, income verification and Lease to apply and this is coordinated by Catholic Charities staff. DTA has a month to approve the SNAP Application and emergency food stamps are provided.

Committee Coordinator(s) to provide updates at collaborative meetings.

**Ongoing Hospitality and shopping:** Arrange area tours and outings. Plan socials within the Collaborative. Accompany the family on shopping trips until they become familiar with the process.

**Tasks:**

- a) Coordinate activities that are fun for the family and help them become familiar with the community. This may involve Church youth groups meeting the children in the family. Record activities on the shared Calendar.
- b) Locate a Church for them, should they want to attend one.
- c) Introduce them to organizations from their home country.
- d) Take them grocery shopping to get them acquainted with products. Grocery and other stores should be appropriate to their budget. Many new arrivals find our many choices overwhelming.
- e) Locate an ethnic grocery store that offers familiar products.
- f) If they are interested in sports, help them become familiar with area teams or sports.
- g) On rare occasions, a family may need morning babysitting, if both parents are attending morning job training. This can be provided if volunteers are available. It’s perfectly fine to say “no” to a request.

- h) Aim to Empower Clients to do things for themselves. Intervention should be for initial orientation. Critical matters and should be instructional as well as solution oriented. Aim for self-sufficiency over convenient solutions.
- i) Avoid Helicoptering. This serves to dis-empower the family.
- j) Committee Coordinator(s) to provide updates at collaborative meetings.

**9. Technology:** Assist the family with selecting, installing and training on technical devices

**Tasks:**

- a) Help order and setup appropriate internet access, including WiFi.
- b) Help appropriate family members with cell phone purchase and setup.
- c) Help appropriate family members setup Email accounts.
- d) Share family contact information with the collaborative.
- e) Help appropriate family members with laptops and / or devices required for learning.
- f) Help family navigate essential web sites related to employment, healthcare and learning.
- g) Maintain the shared Google calendar and provide occasional reports.
- h) Committee Coordinator(s) to provide updates at collaborative meetings.

**10. Transportation:**

**Tasks:**

- a) Provide “T” and Boston area Maps
- b) Instruct family members how to use the Charlie Card to ride the bus, subway, etc.
- c) Determine when transportation will be required in the first month, and solicit drivers to accommodate. Family members are expected to be self-sufficient with transportation within a month or so.
- d) Avoid Helicoptering. This serves to dis-empower the family. Aim towards self-sufficiency.
- e) Committee Coordinator(s) to provide updates at collaborative meetings.