

## Community Sponsorship Local Program Overview

### Lutheran Services Carolinas

1118 Union St.

Columbia, South Carolina 29201

<https://lscarolinas.net>

**National Resettlement Agency:** Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS)

**Community sponsorship contact:** Lindsey LeDuc  
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**General community sponsorship program description:** Circle of Welcome is a program that LSC runs to partner with local churches and organizations to match them with newly arrived refugee families. Churches and organizations are trained and actively provide assistance through apartment set-up, transportation, English Language Training, mentorship, and in-kind donations. Churches and organizations also assist LSC with admin expenses associated with assisting newly arrived refugee families.

**Community sponsorship program name:** Circle of Welcome

**Able to work with community sponsors outside of service area:** Those outside of the service area can be matched with families to provide virtual English Language Training or mentorship, and financial and/or in-kind donations.

**Time commitment:** 6 months

**Service commitment:** LSC does not require Circle of Welcome teams to commit to any specific services. Services that teams might wish to provide include, but are not limited to, apartment set-up, transportation to initial appointments, English Language Training, and mentorship.

**Financial commitment:** LSC prefers that groups raise between \$3000 and \$5000 to go towards administrative costs and refugee expenses, but they do not require them to do this if the financial burden will keep the group from participating. LSC prefers that the funds raised be sent to their office to be spent on the refugee's behalf. LSC may hold up to half of the funds provided by sponsors to defray the cost of community sponsorship management.

**Preferred size of community sponsor groups:** 8-12 committed individuals

**Types of cases matched with community sponsors:** Newly arrived refugees with friends or family in the area, newly arrived refugees without friends or family in the area, previously arrived refugees with friends or family in the area, previously arrived refugees without friends or family in the area, Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) holders, and asylees.

**Community sponsorship training:** Training consists of one introductory meeting that provides possible teams with a general overview of refugee resettlement. Once a team is formed, the team is required to complete a three-hour

training with a trained LSC staff member. The team is provided with Circle of Welcome training materials provided by LIRS. This includes a handbook, videos, and a PowerPoint that highlights key factors in sponsoring a family and structuring a new team.

**Background checks:** Each new volunteer is required to complete state Central Registry and SLED Checks. Driver's licenses are run for possible road violations. Federal checks for central registry and SLED are also completed. The cost of these checks is covered by LSC.