

Community Sponsorship Local Program Overview

Lutheran Social Services of the National Capital Area - Maryland

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Hyattsville, MD 20782
<https://lssnca.org>

National Resettlement Agency: Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services (LIRS)

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General community sponsorship program description: LSSNCA clients arrive in the U.S. with the hopes of starting a new life in a safe environment. Families are expected to find employment, understand the education system, send their children to school, and learn English in order to gain self-sufficiency in the U.S. LSSNCA relies on Good Neighbor Partners (GNP) to help facilitate this transition by guiding and supporting families, rather than making decisions for them or completing all tasks on their behalf. By the end of the program, the families should feel independent and capable of supporting themselves through employment and accessing mainstream benefits.

Community sponsorship program name: Good Neighbor Partner Program

Time commitment: It depends on the GNP level. Level 1 is a 1-year commitment; Level 2 is a 6-month commitment; Level 3 is a 3-month commitment.

Service commitment: Level 1: Assist in setting up an apartment for an arriving refugee family. Provide all furnishings and household supplies required for resettlement. Rental assistance: Ensure the family can maintain housing by financially supporting LSSNCA's rental assistance program. Financial commitment must ensure 3 months of family's full rental payments and at least 6 months of partial rental assistance. Ensure family has transportation to/from appointments within the first 90 days. Provide 3 additional core areas of support.

Level 2: Assist in setting up an apartment for an arriving refugee family. Provide all furnishings and household supplies needed and required for resettlement. Ensure the family has transportation to/from appointments within the first 90 days. Provide 3 additional core areas of support.

Level 3: Plan multiple donation drives in your home, community, or congregation. Drives will collect furnishings and supplies for newly arriving families.

Core areas of support include: stocking the pantry in the family's new home, airport pick-up and welcoming the individual or family to their new home and community, providing a culturally appropriate meal that is ready for the family upon arrival, accompanying the individual/family to medical appointments and advocating for their healthcare access, developing English skills through conversation and practice, facilitating financial education, assisting in job

development or securing employment, and using creativity to connect the individual or family with resources or enrichment in the community.

Financial commitment: LSSNCA's GNP program requires each GNP at Levels 1 and 2 to contribute, respectively, \$500 and \$250, to be paid once the GNP is matched with a case and has signed the commitment form. These contributions will help support a portion of the extended administration costs of the program. In addition to this, each GNP at Level 1 must ensure 3 months of family's full rental payments and at least 6 months of partial rental assistance. In addition to this, GNPs at each level will collect in-kind contributions of household furnishings and supplies.

Preferred size of community sponsor groups: N/A

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, and Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) holders

Community sponsorship training: For GNP groups, a training with the core group of volunteers for the GNP is conducted. This includes an overview of LSSNCA, the programs and services the agency provides, as well as an in-depth conversation about the GNP program (description, FAQs, timeline). The agency also has a comprehensive manual for GNPs that covers all aspects of the GNP commitment. Materials used include: GNP description, GNP co-sponsorship levels, GNP timeline, GNP FAQ and glossary, GNP interest form and commitment form, and GNP manual/handbook.

Background checks: LSSNCA works with a background check provider to obtain background checks for all new volunteers spending an hour or more a week with the family or driving them at any point. The coordinator or point of contact for the GNP group will send a spreadsheet of names and email addresses for each volunteer. Each volunteer receives an e-invite directing them to the background check website, which they will visit to create an account and sign up in order to start the background check. All participants/volunteers are asked to pay a fee of approximately \$20 for the background check, although fees are waived for students and any interns/volunteers who are unable to pay the fee due to financial hardship. Results of the background check are typically available within 48 to 72 hours.