

Community Sponsorship

Frequently Asked Questions

1) Who is Refugee Council USA (RCUSA)?

RCUSA a national coalition of nonprofits, inclusive of the nine national Resettlement Agencies, who advocate for and with refugees in the United States. RCUSA promotes efforts to protect and welcome refugees, asylees, asylum-seekers, and other forcibly displaced populations.

2) What is meant by community sponsorship?

We define community sponsorship as when a group commits to provide financial and/or in-kind support and certain volunteer services to previously or newly arrived refugees, asylees, asylum seekers, or other forcibly displaced populations. It is a broad umbrella under which traditional co-sponsorship as defined in the Reception and Placement Cooperative Agreement falls.

3) Why focus on community sponsorship?

We believe that community sponsorship can support refugee integration by connecting refugees more directly to community members; has the potential to increase public support for refugee resettlement by connecting community groups with refugees and the strengths they bring; and can continue to engage Americans in the act of welcome even as new refugee arrivals slow.

4) What kind of support should we expect to receive through RCUSA?

In addition to the support provided to you by your Resettlement Agency headquarters, RCUSA will promote your community sponsorship and other volunteer activities through its newly revamped website, www.rcusa.org; host a listserv on community sponsorship in which your organization can participate; offer community sponsorship-related webinars for RCUSA-affiliated organizations like yours as well as for those interested in community sponsorship; and provide access to community sponsorship-related resources developed by RCUSA, your Resettlement Agency colleagues, and other partners around the world who are also actively engaging in community sponsorship.

5) What do you need from us?

To support you in growing and promoting your work, please do the following: 1) If you haven't already done so, complete [this survey](#) telling us about your community sponsorship program. 2) Join our community sponsorship listserv by emailing communitysponsorship@rcusa.org and share your materials and best practices. 3) When requested once per year, please complete a brief survey letting us know about your community sponsorship activities so that we can collectively track our progress.

6) How will the information that we provide to RCUSA be used?

The information that you provide through your survey response will be used to connect individuals and groups across the United States interested in refugee welcome with community sponsorship, volunteer, and advocacy opportunities near them via [the RCUSA website](#); identify trends in community sponsorship activities; and connect and support those of you involved in this vital work.

7) Do we still need to complete the survey if we don't have a community sponsorship program?

Yes, please complete the first section through question number 11. The information that you provide will allow us to list your organization and its current volunteer and/or advocacy opportunities on RCUSA's website.

8) Refugee arrivals are low. What if we don't have cases to be matched with community sponsors?

Many organizations are harnessing the good will of local community groups and matching groups interested in welcoming refugees with other newcomer populations in need of support. If this is something that you would like to explore further, please contact us at communitysponsorship@rcusa.org.

Community groups interested in welcoming refugees also have the potential to impact policy. You can support them in advocating for higher refugee arrivals by providing them with [this guidance](#) and connect them to us through communitysponsorship@rcusa.org.

9) How does this work differ from Amnesty International USA's (AIUSA's) Longer Table Initiative (LTI) and work currently be done by Integrated Refugee and Immigration Services (IRIS) in New Haven, Connecticut?

AIUSA and Episcopal Migration Ministries (EMM), the national headquarters of IRIS, are both members of Refugee Council USA. AIUSA continues to promote community sponsorship opportunities, along with other LTI activities, among its local and student groups and members. IRIS supports affiliate offices in developing community sponsorship activities with a focus on full co-sponsorship.

10) To whom should we reach out with questions?

Please contact us at communitysponsorship@rcusa.org.