

Community Sponsorship

Promoting Refugee Integration; Strengthening Public Support for Refugee Resettlement

Refugee Council USA is pleased to partner with our Resettlement Agency members to grow and promote community sponsorship opportunities across the United States. This will be accomplished through a survey of existing community sponsorship opportunities, the collection and homing of community sponsorship resources and best practices within RCUSA, and the further development of our searchable, online database of community sponsorship opportunities accessible to the general public.

Community Sponsorship

Community sponsorship has long been a part of the United States Refugee Admissions Program. RCUSA defines community sponsorship as when a community group commits to provide financial and/or in-kind contributions and certain volunteer services to newly or previously arrived refugees, asylees, asylum seekers, and other forcibly displaced populations.



Potential Benefits of Community Sponsorship

While the research on community sponsorship in the United States is limited, anecdotal evidence indicates that community sponsorship can:

- **Promote refugee integration**

Community groups — when properly recruited, trained, and managed — can provide excellent services and critical social support to newly and previously arrived refugees, asylees, and asylum seekers.

- **Ensure that refugee families receive a warm welcome to their new communities**

With the refugee program highly politicized in recent years, resulting in pockets of anti-refugee sentiment, community sponsorship ensures that regardless of where refugees are resettled, there will be a group of individuals prepared to make them feel at home as neighbors in the community.

- **Increase public support for refugee resettlement**

There is no better way for Americans to learn about the refugee experience than to serve as community sponsors – welcoming and helping a refugee family as they arrive and adjust to a new culture. With this knowledge, community sponsors can educate others in their communities and advocate with their elected officials for more welcoming policies and stronger support services.

From a Sponsor

“This community really rallies around these refugees, and we welcome them. They’re not refugees anymore. They are our community members, and I think our community is stronger because of refugees in our area.”

Danielle, Community Sponsor, Arkansas

- ***Continue to engage Americans in the act of welcome even as new refugee arrivals slow to a trickle***

Community sponsorship can serve to support asylum seekers, asylees, and refugees resettled earlier but who need additional support. All these populations, along with community groups, can reap the benefits of sponsorship. And in the process, community sponsorship can continue to take hold in communities throughout the country.

Support for Your Organization

Listing of Your Community Sponsorship and Volunteer Opportunities on the RCUSA Website

RCUSA will promote your community sponsorship and other volunteer activities through its newly revamped website. On the site, individuals can search for opportunities near them and be connected to the appropriate Resettlement Agency staff to support them through next steps. If you wish to have your organization listed on the site, please complete this survey and email communitysponsorship@rcusa.org.

Listserv Membership

By joining the RCUSA listserv, you can share best practices in community sponsorship with other agencies across the United States, learn about new community sponsorship resources developed, and receive invitations to upcoming community sponsorship trainings that can support your agency in its work. To join, please email communitysponsorship@rcusa.org.



Training

RCUSA will partner with Resettlement Agencies and other RCUSA-affiliated organizations, community sponsors, and sponsored refugees to host remote and in-person trainings on topics such as Equipping Community Sponsors as Advocates, Fundraising for Community Sponsorship, and Community Sponsorship and Allyship.

Access to Resources to Grow Your Community Sponsorship Work

You can share your resources and gain access to others through the RCUSA community sponsorship clearinghouse. Resources will include trainings for community sponsors, PowerPoints, sponsorship manuals and checklists, guidance on sponsorship development, and more. Details about the clearinghouse will be shared via the RCUSA listserv.

For more information, please see our [Frequently Asked Questions document](#) or write to us at communitysponsorship@rcusa.org.

**Refugees thrive when their communities welcome them
and are involved in their integration.**