Community Co-Sponsorship Program

Manual for Refugee Resettlement

November 2017 Edition

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IRIS Community Co-Sponsorship Program Manual for Refugee Resettlement
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CO-SPONSORSHIP TIMELINE IN BRIEF

Pre-Arrival

2-3 Weeks

- Information Session at IRIS or On Location
- Share information with your group and organize
- Submit Co-Sponsorship Application (aka Strengths Assessment)
- Information to training if application favorable

2-6 Weeks

- Prepare for training, read this manual!
- Training at IRIS in New Haven (held once per month)
- "Green Light" given to IRIS ... "We're ready"

2-10 Weeks
Total 6-19 Weeks

- Wait for family assignment
- Family Assignment and Confirmation of Commitment
- Pre-Arrival Meeting and Arrangements
- Arrival (JFK, EWR, or New Haven)

Post-Arrival

Week 1

- Next Calendar Day Visit
- Completion of Arrival Paperwork (supplied in advance)
- SSA/DSS Visits
- Case Management Intake

Week 2

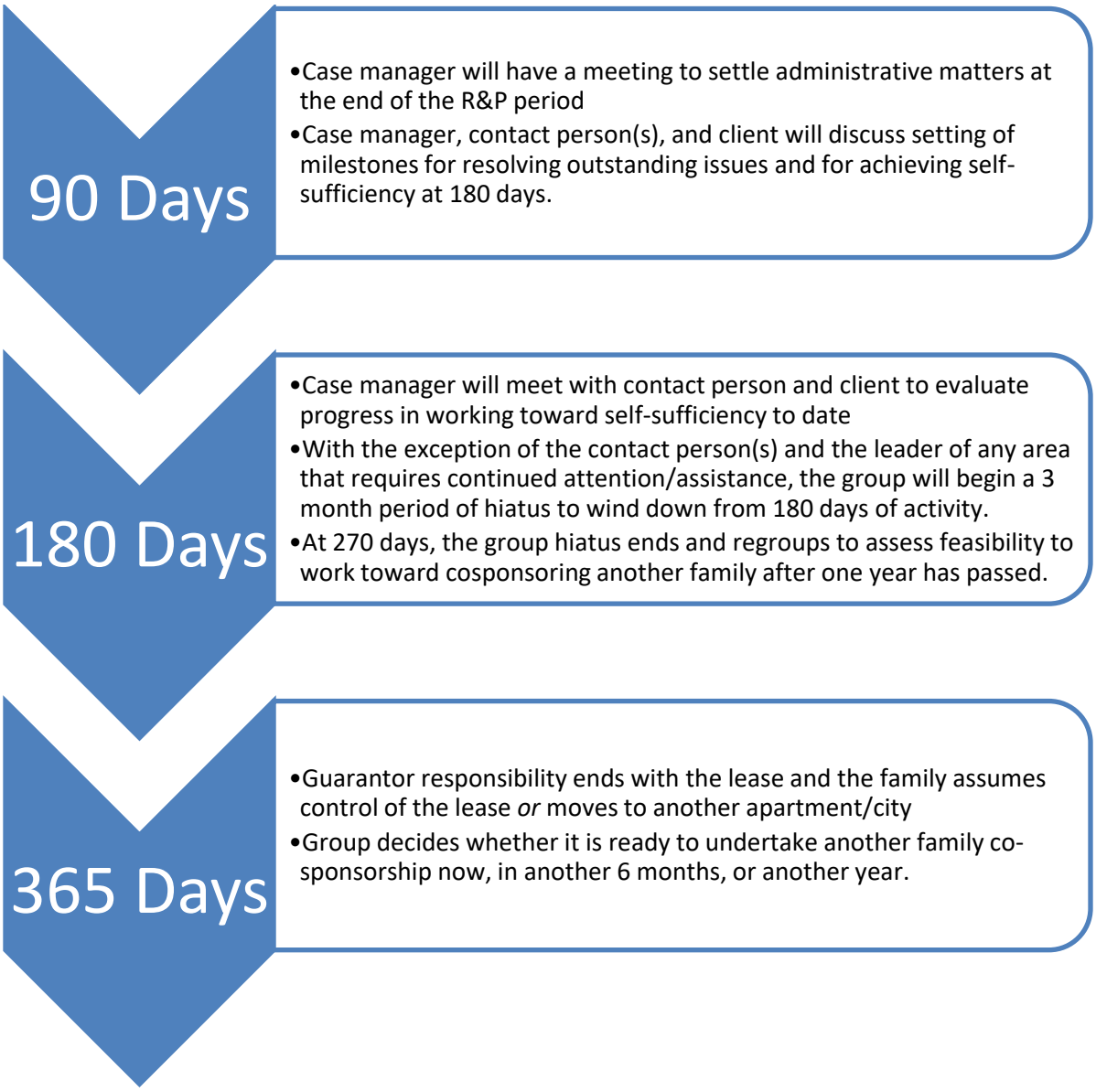
- First Case Manager Visit and Employment Assessment(s)
- Begin ESOL Classes
- Notification of CORE Dates

Weeks 3-4

- Begin employment search process
- Refugee Health Assessments (RHAs) for all family members
- Enroll children in school
- 30-Day Home Visit
- Cultural Orientation and Resettlement Education (CORE) in New Haven

CO-SPONSORSHIP MEETINGS AND BASELINE TRAJECTORY

CO-SPONSORSHIP MEETINGS AND BASELINE TRAJECTORY



Welcome to the mission of refugee resettlement!

By opening your doors and your hearts to refugees, you are responding to the greatest humanitarian crisis of our time. You are participating in America's most noble tradition, rooted in the ancient ethic of many cultures: welcoming the stranger. And you are letting strangers welcome you as friends and as partners in the work of building new communities. We hope that you will discover the rich blessing many other community groups have experienced in the challenging and joyful work of co-sponsoring a refugee family.

Respect is essential. Refugees have been through a lot. In most cases they have fled countries where there was little respect for their human rights. On the move and living in refugee camps for years, many experienced insults, humiliation, and a sense of helplessness. Arriving in the US, not speaking English, they are dependent on our services and assistance. Given our relationship with refugees, if we are not careful, we might treat them as just needy people. Please remember, one of our most important jobs in refugee resettlement is to help refugees regain their confidence and sense of control over their lives. We do this by treating them with respect.

We encourage you to approach your co-sponsorship as a *partnership* with a refugee family. You are not adopting a refugee family; you are working *with* them to start making a new home in the U.S. Your co-sponsorship promises to be an integral part in the process of enabling refugees to achieve **early self-sufficiency**. It is important to think always in terms of lending a hand up, never a hand out. Refugees have been made dependent by circumstances outside of their control. They want to be independent. The experience of working and doing things for themselves can help them to gain self-confidence and empower them to take control of their lives again.

This manual is designed to provide you with the information you need to embark on a successful refugee resettlement journey.

An Introduction to Refugee Resettlement

Who are refugees?

Refugees are a special type of immigrant. By US and international definition, they are people who have fled their home country because they were persecuted or because they had legitimate fears that they would be persecuted. They were singled out within their own country for abuse because of their nationality, religious beliefs, political views, or racial or ethnic background. Having left their homeland, they can no longer return without risking persecution.

When refugees flee their country they place their lives and their future at the mercy of any nearby nation that takes them in and provides some protection. Most refugee families spend years warehoused in compounds euphemistically called "refugee camps"… waiting for an opportunity to begin their lives over again. There are over 19 million refugees in the world today—the most since WWII. Less than 1% of the world's refugees get resettled to a country where they can make new homes.

How are refugees selected to come to the United States?

Refugees approved for resettlement in the United States have undergone a rigorous vetting process overseas. They have been interviewed several times before being granted refugee status by agency personnel of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). After applying for admission to the United States, they are interviewed again by Department of Homeland Security personnel, fingerprinted, and subjected to several background checks regarding former political or criminal activity.

The US vetting process of refugees is the most rigorous screening process in the world, involving the databases of the CIA, FBI, Defense Department, and other nations' intelligence agencies. It often takes two years to complete. Once a refugee has been approved, a medical exam is conducted both to make sure they carry no communicable diseases, and to determine what level of healthcare needs they will have in the US. Once approved for travel, refugees take out travel loans through the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to cover their airfare to come to the US.

The US government plans to invite 85,000 refugees from all over the world to come to the US in 2016. They will be assigned to one of nine national resettlement agencies (called "RAs" in refugee resettlement parlance), which –in turn – will place them with 350 local affiliated nonprofit organizations spread across the country. The three local affiliates in Connecticut are Catholic Charities in Hartford, the International Institute of Connecticut (IICONN) in Bridgeport, and IRIS in New Haven.

What is IRIS?

IRIS—***Integrated Refugee & Immigrant Services*****,** is a non-profit social services agency whose mission is to help refugees and other displaced people establish new lives, strengthen hope, and contribute to the vitality of Connecticut's communities. IRIS provides case management, employment counseling, education and youth services, healthcare coordination, and cultural orientation to newly arriving refugees. IRIS resettled approximately 240 refugees last year. Thanks to community co-sponsors like you, IRIS is resettling 75% more refugees this year. Of the 420 refugees coming through IRIS this fiscal year, out staff in New Haven will resettle 250 (60%), while co-sponsors all over the state will resettle 170 refugees who would not otherwise be able to come to Connecticut.

IRIS was established in 1982 as a program of Episcopal Social Service of the Diocese of Connecticut. Today it is an independent nonprofit with its own board of directors. IRIS is affiliated with two RAs, Episcopal Migration Ministries (EMM) and Church World Service (CWS). IRIS is located at 235 Nicoll Street, New Haven, Connecticut 06511. We are open to the public Monday through Thursday, 9am to 5pm, and Fridays from 9am-12pm. We can be reached by phone at (203) 562-2095, Fax (203) 562-1798 or e-mail, info@irisct.org. Please visit our website: www.irisct.org for more information.

How will IRIS work with your community group?

IRIS will work with your group both before and after the arrival of the refugee family your group will co-sponsor. We can provide guidelines on how to structure your core group of volunteers and will train members of your core group. In the process of matching a refugee family with your group, we will take into account the language resources of your community (e.g., if someone in

your community speaks Arabic, we may match you with a family from Iraq, Syria, or Sudan). But we will *not* select families based on nationality or religion.

Once at least three (3) of your core group members complete the IRIS co-sponsorship training and your group's application is favorably evaluated, we will wait for you to give us a ***green light,*** meaning that you're ready to resettle a refugee family on two weeks' notice.

In order to give IRIS the ***green light***, you should be sure that:

1) your core Resettlement Team of at least 10 is organized (with clearly defined roles and responsibilities), and ready to volunteer a total of 40 hours / week (e.g., 4 hrs/week per person, although some roles will require more hours/week, some less depending on the phase of the resettlement);

2) you're confident you can secure housing on two weeks' notice;

3) all of the furniture and household items are collected or at least identified;

4) the apartment set-up team is ready to prepare the apartment for the refugee family's arrival; and

5) your group has raised $4,000-$7,000 for ***up to 6 months of rental assistance*** (determined by IRIS within two weeks of arrival) and other initial resettlement costs, and is able to provide documentation of adequate funds *(Please see finance section for more details)*; and

6) you have completed, submitted, and received a favorable review of your group's application and have already collected information on the local rental market, DSS, ESOL, health care and employment prospects

Once we get the green light from you, we hope it will take *not more than two months* to match you with a newly arriving family.

Upon the end of the 120-day refugee ban imposed by the President, a new executive order was issued effective October 25, 2017 that imposes several limitations on the US refugee resettlement program. Among them is a 90-day continuance of the ban for nationals of 11 countries and additional, extensive security requirements that must be met by all refugees from all countries. These changes will have the effect of stopping nearly all refugee resettlement from Syria, Sudan, and Iraq; and will likely lead to further reductions in the total US refugee arrivals. For the most up to date information on these program limitations, visit the websites of our national refugee resettlement partners, Church World Service www.cws.org and Episcopal Migration Ministries www.episcopalmigrationministries.org.

Thankfully, the Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) program for Afghans who worked with US troops remains intact, and as of the end of October we have welcomed 53 people at record-breaking pace. We will provide any updates via our Facebook page and the IRIS Newsletter as they become available.

When we receive an arrival notice for a family that seems to be a good fit for your group, we will share the case information (names, ages, gender, languages, education, nationality, religion, health issues, and employment background) with you and ask that you take just two days to give us a confirmation that you will co-sponsor this family.

Challenging Cases

We had planned to keep all 'challenging' cases (due to medical, educational or other issues) in New Haven. But we've had an increase in the percentage of Syrian arrivals.
The federal government, to their credit, made it their mission to resettle Syrians in greatest need first. So we hope to place some more challenging cases with you, our amazing co-sponsors. *It will be to your great advantage if you can find a medical and/or psychological professional to join your team*. You will get information regarding the specific nature of challenging cases and will have the opportunity to assess your group's capacity to serve the family well. ***You can say "no"!*** This will not affect your status or IRIS's eagerness to place a family with your co-sponsorship group. Your answer should be a realistic assessment of your capacity - we depend on that candor. No group is, or is expected to be, an ideal co-sponsor for **every** refugee family.

Once IRIS has assigned a family to your group, the IRIS Co-Sponsorship Manager will discuss with you with basic information about the family to help you prepare for their arrival, and discuss case notes requirements. Your designated case manager (CM) will also relay flight information on the scheduled date and time of the family's arrival. The International Organization for Migration (IOM), which collaborates with the RAs to arrange for and facilitate transportation for your family, will either transport your family to a designated arrival point in New Haven **or** allow you to meet and receive your family at New York/JFK or Newark/EWR. For the latter option, coordination with your case manager will be required ahead of time in order to comply with international regulations.

In very rare cases, a family may be turned away from boarding the plane for health reasons or they might change their mind at the last minute. If the family designated to your group does not arrive, IRIS will quickly match you with the next appropriate family scheduled to arrive.

Once the refugee family has arrived, your case manager will continue to work closely with your group. S/he will visit the newly arrived family within the first ten business days to ensure that your group completed the intake interview (instructions will be provided by IRIS), to conduct an employment assessment for each adult, to provide general resettlement counseling, and to answer your questions. **Your case manager is your primary contact person at IRIS**. S/he is available primarily for email and telephone consultations. Since s/he will be managing co-sponsorships all over the state, please be patient: a 24-48 hour response time should be expected. Your Contact Person(s) and your case manager will maintain regular contact as the resettlement process progresses, especially when changes in living situation or employment occur. Such regular contact will make it easier for us to support you, cope with problems, and nurture our relationship as partners. If there is an urgent issue and you are not able to reach your case manager, call the Director of Case Management, Alexine Casanova Gaye.

How often do co-sponsored families need to come to New Haven?

The refugee family will need to come to New Haven *at least 3 times* during the first month to attend ***Cultural Orientation and Resettlement Education (CORE)*** at IRIS headquarters. This cultural orientation is held monthly, over three consecutive days with comprehensive presentations on key refugee resettlement issues (e.g., employment, acculturation, education, etc.). Your case manager will notify the Contact Person(s) of the dates which family members aged 18 years or older must attend. If children under 18 come to IRIS that day, please be sure that one of your volunteers comes along to provide childcare (in a small room adjoining the CORE session).

About Co-Sponsorship

What are the responsibilities of co-sponsorship?

We describe three essential responsibilities of the refugee cosponsor. The first responsibility is that of ***helper***, assisting the refugee with initial material needs and helping the refugee achieve economic self-sufficiency. The second is that of ***friend***, providing the crucial emotional support and guidance needed by the refugee to meet the challenges of overcoming great personal losses and making the major adjustments to a new culture. The third is that of ***advocate***, ensuring fair and decent treatment for the newcomer in this society—without discrimination — and promoting respect for the refugees' cultural heritage and identity.

The cosponsoring group signs a faith/community group commitment form (not legally binding) to provide the following core services to a refugee family for at least six months to help them become self-sufficient. These core services will be provided in full initially. Once a family member begins to work, the level of services will decrease gradually as the family moves toward achieving independence. Responsibilities of the cosponsoring group are to:

1) Secure short-term housing and provide rental assistance for ***up to 6 months*** (approximately $4,000-7,000; higher in high-rent areas. Please see the Finance Section for more details.) It is a federal requirement that each refugee family have a separate apartment—not merely a room in a house or a shared apartment.

2) Prepare the apartment for the refugee family's arrival with ***new mattresses and box springs purchased by you,*** donated (used) furniture, basic household goods and other necessities. IRIS will provide a home supply checklist of required items.

3) Arrange to meet the refugee family at a designated arrival point at IRIS in New Haven **or** at New York/JFK or Newark/EWR and provide transportation to their living accommodations. The latter requires coordination no later than 72 hours before scheduled arrival with your case manager in order to comply with IOM requirements (i.e., scanned photo of driver's license showing address, cell phone number of driver or cosponsor contact person[s]).

4) Provide basic, gently-used clothing (i.e., new clothes are not necessary) for the family, appropriate to the season. Since you will not know the sizes of the family members

before they arrive, it's best to hold off on collecting more than one item necessary for the season (e.g., a winter coat) per family member until after you meet them.

5) Provide initial basic necessities: a warm meal consistent with the family's culture, groceries, a cell phone, and a bus pass (if applicable). IRIS will provide a grocery list document that provides guidance on quantities of general and culturally-specific food items.

6) Assist the family in obtaining Social Security cards.

7) Assist the family in applying for HUSKY medical insurance, SNAP (food stamps), and either Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA – *for singles and childless couples only*) or Temporary Family Assistance (TFA - for parents with dependent children).

8) Bring each family member to a HUSKY accepting family doctor for their **Refugee Health Assessments (RHAs)**, preferably within 30 days of the family's arrival *(Please see the forthcoming Health Section for more details.)*

9) Bring the family to IRIS for a federally required cultural orientation program (over three consecutive days, dates TBD), during the first month of their arrival.

10) Enroll adult refugees in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes and assist with local school registration for refugee children ages 5 to 17.

11) Help find a job for each employable refugee and enroll refugees in job training or on-the-job training as necessary.

12) Help the family to become oriented in the community; show how to shop, use public transportation, use emergency telephone numbers, understand local customs and laws, obtain a government-issued I.D. (through the DMV), explain how bank accounts and money orders work, etc.

13) Encourage refugee adults to begin preparing to repay the interest-free travel loan from the International Organization for Migration (IOM) that covered their airfare to the US. About six months after they arrive in the U.S., they will start receiving bills for the monthly installment payments that were specified in the promissory note they signed. If they cannot afford the specified installments at that time, it is not difficult to work out a payment plan that is affordable for them through either CWS or EMM, who administer the travel loans on behalf of IOM. Your case manager will tell you which national refugee resettlement agency facilitated your refugee family's placement..

14) Help maintain the family's current address information after IRIS submits the AR-11 for each family member. *This form will need to be submitted any time the family moves, even into an apartment across the hall or in the same building,* ***until they become US citizens****.*

15) Maintain regular contact with your case manager: Submit pre- and post-arrival case notes by email, then establishing phone appointments as needed to review case notes and/or discuss other pertinent issues during the R&P period (i.e., within 90 days of the date of arrival).

What are the limits of co-sponsorship?

IRIS, as the federally recognized refugee resettlement agency affiliate, is contractually responsible to the US government for the services provided to refugees. You are helping us provide these services, but ultimately the contractual responsibility is ours.

1) The cosponsor is **not** required to pay for any travel expenses for the refugee to come to the US. The refugee is responsible for repaying her/his travel loan.

2) The cosponsor is **not** liable for debts or bills the refugee may incur.

3) While we all might feel a degree of responsibility for the decisions and actions of the new Americans we welcome to this country, it is worth reminding cosponsors that they are **not** responsible for the actions and decisions taken by refugees. Welcoming a refugee carries the same legal considerations as welcoming any new person into your community. We will do our best to provide advice and information, but the newcomer is solely responsible for her/his actions.

Liability

Refugees, as legal residents, are responsible for their own actions. For example, if a refugee were to commit a crime, neither IRIS not the cosponsor would be held accountable. You will have the opportunity to explain and reinforce US laws and regulations during case management intake (5 days after arrival, See Appendix A) and following your family's attendance at CORE.

With respect to liability coverage for those group members transporting the refugee family in their cars, the driver's and vehicle owner's insurance would be primary, followed by the insurance of the church or other organization on whose behalf the driver was acting (if any), and then by IRIS's insurance.

As the cosigner of the family's apartment or house lease, your group would be responsible for any damage to the apartment or house or if the lease is broken. (Please see the forthcoming Housing section.)

Confidentiality Agreements, Volunteer Screening, Safety Training and Background Checks

All core team members and sourced interpreters must sign a confidentiality agreement and submit them with the Green Light Form. In addition, your group is expected to carefully screen volunteers and certify that safety training for childcare volunteers has taken place, and background checks have been conducted for every volunteer and interpreter. Guidelines for these requirements are detailed in Appendix C of this manual.

Planning and Organizing

What are the first steps?

It is important to *identify a* ***contact person(s)*** who will communicate with IRIS and help to *generate a broad base of support* within your community. We have found that groups that organize and publicize their efforts well seldom have difficulty raising the funds necessary for refugee resettlement. We do not recommend drawing from your group's operating budget. Instead, you can hold fundraising events (concerts, movies, dinners, speakers on refugee/international issues, etc.) or solicit one-time contributions from the congregation or community through letters and appeals.

Please Note*:* You will need to designate a fiduciary (with 501c3 status) to hold your co-sponsorship funds. Often, a church, synagogue, or mosque will serve as a fiduciary for a co-sponsorship group. Please advise financial contributors to your co-sponsorship *not* to make checks payable to IRIS, since you will be using these funds directly for the expenses of the refugee family. (e.g, your group will provide rental assistance by making a check out directly to the landlord of the refugee family.)

Before IRIS invites your group to training, we must receive an **application** (available from the IRIS Outreach Coordinator.) At minimum, your group's contact person(s) should be selected to represent the group on the application. Upon favorable review of the application, up to eight (8) members of your group, including its contact person, will be invited to participate in an all-day co-sponsorship training at IRIS. It is required that at least three (3) members of your core resettlement team do the training program. Trainings are offered monthly, on a Tuesday or Thursday, from 9am-4pm at the IRIS office in New Haven. Unfortunately, we cannot offer trainings outside of business hours, because our trainings involve multiple staff members who facilitate sessions on their respective sectors.

What is the job of the contact person(s)?

This person is the primary contact for IRIS and your community group. *All communication between IRIS and your group should go through your* ***contact person(s)*** *(i.e. establishment of co-contact persons is highly recommended, especially for larger groups/coalitions).*
S/he will coordinate the overlapping activities of the other Resettlement Team members.
The **contact person** will sign the co-sponsorship agreement. S/he will check in with the refugee family regularly until the family is securely established in their surroundings. Depending on how your group operates, the contact person might have primary decision-making responsibility. Resettlement Team members will make regular reports to the contact person who will be responsible for maintaining contact with your case manager. We ask that you streamline all communication accordingly.

Should your group have a contact dedicated exclusively to administration?

YES! Refugee resettlement is bureaucratic across the board. As a refugee family's cosponsor working with IRIS, you are responsible for completing and submitting forms and documentation to your case manager in a timely manner. Form completion instructions and descriptions of required case file documentation are provided in the appendices of this manual. Familiarizing yourself with the required forms and case file documentation and the timeline for their

submission is an important part of preparing for the co-sponsorship experience. IRIS is subject to federal, state, and resettlement agency monitoring during which these items are reviewed and scrutinized. Given the importance of this aspect of co-sponsorship, one person and an active alternate must be designated to handle all administration in order to effectively manage paperwork and documentation requirements independent of the group's numerous resettlement activities.

What is the Core Resettlement Team?

The ***Core Resettlement Team*** takes on the responsibility for providing the core services of co-sponsorship for a refugee family and maintains communication with its contact person(s). We recommend that the Core Resettlement Team consist of at least 10 members responsible for each of the following areas of focus: finance (including Social Security/DSS), employment, housing, clothing/furnishings, ESOL for adults, children's education, health, acculturation, hospitality, and transportation. Please structure your Core Resettlement Team in such a way that it is clear who is responsible for each of the following core services.

Employment

The employment person is responsible for locating appropriate jobs for all refugees in the family who are able to work. Since early self-sufficiency is the goal of the U.S. refugee resettlement program, early employment should be a top priority. *The search for employment opportunities should begin even before the refugee arrives.* Before your family arrives, you are encouraged to conduct an inventory of job possibilities from among your groups and wider communities. The skills of refugees vary widely from farming to electrical engineering, and they are confirmed during the course of employment assessments, which are discussed below. Beforehand, however, we encourage you to survey the employment landscape in your communities for entry-level, and reasonably accessible jobs that can accommodate English-language learners.

Within 10 business days of the family's arrival, your case manager will visit the family at home with the employment person to conduct an **employment assessment** for every employable refugee in the household. Answers to extensive employment questions about literacy, language proficiency, health, education/employment/professional training history, availability, and career aspirations will be recorded in an assessment document for use by the employment person and her/his team in job searches for their family member(s). Once the employment assessment is complete, your case manager will send the contact person(s) each refugee's employment assessment in an Excel workbook that also contains tabs for each refugee's **resettlement plan**. Your employment person and contact person(s) will work on setting benchmarks for job searches and other key action plan points and write up a resettlement plan for each family reflecting their experience during the first 30 days (i.e., in the principal applicant's, or PA's, workbook). Each assessed refugee (and her/his interpreter, if applicable) will sign her/his **employment assessment and resettlement plan** before returning a copy to their case manager. From information in the employment assessment, the employment person will create a resume. IRIS can provide a template for the resume. The employment person(s) should meet with the job seekers very regularly to discuss progress, leads and search strategies.

Refugees arrive fully authorized to work and demonstrate this upon being hired by completing an I-9 (i.e., legal proof of work eligibility). Many employers will initially say they cannot hire a refugee unless she or he has a Social Security card or an Employment Authorization

Document (EAD), but this is illegal. If a job is offered before the Social Security card is received, IRIS will advise on best steps to take.

The ultimate objective is full-time, year-round employment with benefits. In some rural communities, it may be necessary to find employment in the nearest larger town or city. Part-time or seasonal jobs may be short-term options, but they can reduce the opportunity for self-sufficiency. However, it is important to emphasize the difficulty of finding *any* job and the imperative to take the first job that is offered. Even if it is not the job that provides self-sufficiency, it will lead to better or full-time employment with the same, or a different, employer. Getting a good job is easier when you already have a job. A part-time or seasonal job will also help familiarize the employable refugee adults with job demands and expectations in the US.

Keep in mind that public assistance is temporary[1], so refugees need to become economically self-sufficient through employment. Our policy is to set a deadline of ***3 to 6 months from arrival***, depending on the family's skills and needs (e.g., English language proficiency, medical issues) for achievement of full-time employment.

Because many refugees arrive from cultures where lifetime employment is the norm and the concept of upward mobility is foreign, it is essential that you explain clearly to the refugees you are helping that their first job might be the *first of many jobs* before they find employment that is suitable to their background or desires.

If further vocational training or academic education are desired, they should be encouraged on a part-time schedule that does not interfere with work. While financial aid is available to refugees because they are legal residents, it is **strongly advised** that your case manager be consulted before enrolling a refugee in any advanced ESOL courses, training courses, certificate programs, or degree-granting academic programs. Your case manager can direct you to resources that will explain the details, challenges and opportunities of pursuing various types of education that will not interfere with employment.

Job Applications

Once employable adults have been assessed and resumes are created, your employment person will need to help them complete job applications. Larger and/or franchised employers in various industries require completion of **online applications**. They can be very simple and completed in less than 30 minutes or, in some cases, can be lengthy and complex and take as much as 90 minutes to complete. Job-seeking refugee(s) will need an active email account in order to register and apply through many employer application systems. Likewise, an email account and address should be set up to provide on **print applications**, which are more common among smaller employers and family businesses.

IRIS does not assist with job applications unless we have a relationship with the prospective employer. We strongly advise you do the same. A 'relationship' might mean simply developing a day-of-application contact who can advocate for and/or track the application of the refugee

[1] Most families will get TFA for up to 21 months as long as they stay under its income limits and fulfill the requirements of doing paperwork review periodically when asked by DSS, and comply with the JobFirst program's requirements to provide ongoing verification of benefit-eligible activities (e.g., ESOL up to 15 hrs/wk, employment-focus English tutoring, and/or job search). Families can receive SNAP as long as they remain below its income limits, although the monthly benefit amount may go down when their income increases from employment.

applicant. You will be provided with a job log where you can enter application and contact information for networking, review and follow up.

Employment Agencies

Many factory-based and other technical jobs are only accessible through employment agencies. They can be good options for those refugees who have limited English proficiency and/or no work experience. While most employment agencies require some English proficiency, they can be persuaded, through dedicated contact, to offer refugees with limited English employment opportunities. The applications that these agencies require are lengthy and full of legal language that is difficult to explain. While awaiting family placement, it would be wise to canvas some employment agencies in your area and collect application forms for reference.

State Licensing and Certification Requirements

Unlike most of the countries represented among refugees, the US has thorough licensing procedures for many professions involving trade, technical, and professional skills. It is important to explain as soon as possible to a refugee who is very experienced lawyer, accountant, teacher, engineer, electrician, plumber, construction worker, or even beautician that a license and/or certification is required in order to practice these professions in Connecticut and other US states. Fulfilling licensing and/or certification processes must be a long-term goal while obtaining employment in the near-term. Of course, emphasizing a refugee's professional/trade skills in a resume or interview can still enhance prospects for obtaining a job of lesser quality. Nonetheless, it must be emphasized that an engineer or any of the above occupations with no English cannot expect to be employed in her/his profession and should be encouraged to pursue short-term paths in order to become established and earn money.

Interviewing: Practice! Collaborate with ESOL!

Most job application processes in the US are generally more formal than what most refugees experience in their home countries. Interviews can be daunting for those starting to learn English. As the employment person starts to get a sense of the refugee's/s' skills and capabilities, s/he should supplement their ESOL learning with interview practice. Understanding the scope of the job and being able to describe their work history in short sentences will build confidence. Reviewing industry-specific vocabulary during the search process will prepare the refugee(s) better for discussing the responsibilities for a job during the interview. Ideally, using visuals with descriptors in both English and the refugee's native language is best. Many such materials are available online or through refugees' ESOL instructors.

Federal/State Income Tax Forms (W-4) and Proof of Work Authorization (I-9)

All employers require completion of income tax and work eligibility paperwork soon after the date of hire. Employment agencies require these papers be completed in advance of a job assignment to expedite placement once a job becomes available. It would be helpful for the employment person to have some familiarity with the tax forms before refugee(s) become employed.

Income tax forms can be downloaded from the *Employment* section of the IRIS Co-

Sponsorship Google-Docs sharing platform.

On the CT W4 simply follow the income guidelines. On the Federal W4; err on the side of caution. For section 'G - Child Tax Credit' IRIS usually advises **not** entering exemptions on this line for the following reason. Too many exemptions creates the possibility that there will be an income tax shortfall at year end that must be paid back to the IRS. Too few exemptions will mean a tax refund check from the IRS; a far better outcome, which is why we err on the side of caution. On the I-9, use the Employment Authorization Card (EAD or EAC) as a 'List A' document (the only proof needed to complete the I-9. If your client has not yet received the EAC/EAD, two list B or C documents can be used such as the passport from the home country and the I-94.

Now that you have a job …

Getting a first job is a momentous and very important occasion for every refugee. Most refugees are struck by the formality of getting a job in the US. You can help refugees succeed in their jobs by emphasizing and reinforcing typical expectations employers have before *and after* a refugee is hired.

A refugee entering the US workforce should know the following for her/his first day and beyond:

- **Be on time!**
  This cannot be emphasized enough, especially in service industry and factory jobs. Punctuality is expected and must be taken seriously.

- **Sick? Call ahead!**
  In IRIS's experience, many refugee employees think they can call in sick after they were supposed to be at work. It is important for refugees to understand that if you are sick, you must call your boss before you're expected to be at work.

- **Be clean and dress neatly.**
  To many refugees, Americans seem obsessed with cleanliness. (Although some are disgusted by the practice of allowing dogs into the home and not taking off shoes at the door.) While good hygiene at work is expected in most American workplaces, it might not make sense to some refugees that they have to wear clean clothes or shower before going to work in a factory. Depending on the job, certain appearance standards will be communicated ahead of time, and cleanliness is either presumed or mentioned perfunctorily. If you notice that job-seeking refugees do not seem to be showering regularly, a tactful discussion about personal hygiene may be important before they interview or starting a new job. Introducing deodorant, and guidelines for attire (e.g., when to wash, what to wear, etc.) will be helpful in such situations.

- **Respect lines of communication and authority in the workplace**
  To some this is not an issue, but to others who may not be accustomed to formal workplace structures it can cause problems. You have the opportunity to be a refugee's ally, but it should be made clear that employer expectations must be followed so that a refugee does not become dependent on your employment person interceding too often. Onboarding paperwork will often include **codes of conduct**, which oftentimes must be

acknowledged via signature. It is important to review any guidelines presented to hired refugee(s) and explain their meaning.

- **"I found another job! See ya!"**
  Not so fast. In many countries, it is perfectly acceptable to just not show up to or leave a job abruptly. While Americans are certainly capable of and do engage in this behavior, it is problematic if a refugee does this early in her/his time in the US. Work history is very important, and explaining it is not only common, but expected. Thus having 10 jobs in one year will not bode well for a refugee. Rather, s/he needs to know that etiquette that requires giving 1 or 2 weeks' notice (depending on the job) is customary and more likely to preserve good rapport between the refugee and her/his boss. Of course, refugees are free to work wherever they want, as long as they can be hired. Nonetheless, they should be aware of common American customs surrounding work so that they can build a successful work history.

Housing

The housing person is responsible for finding appropriate housing (i.e., at least a 6-month lease). Since it is impossible to predict the arrival date of a refugee family, **do not take** on financial responsibility for housing until we have received an official Arrival Notice, typically two weeks before they arrive.

While many community members may wish to offer to house the family in their homes, federal policy requires that refugees have their own living accommodations. This respects their privacy, helps to prevent over-dependency on hosts, and communicates *your confidence in their ability to function independently*.

It is important that you locate housing that is safe, sanitary, **accessible,** and **affordable** to a family whose income may be limited during the first few years in this country.

If you live in an expensive and/or rural area with inadequate public transportation and/or affordable housing, we strongly recommend you search for housing options in nearby larger towns or cities to maximize affordability and the family's proximity to your group. Finding more sustainable housing for your refugee family will better enable their transition to self-sufficiency and independent mobility sooner.

IRIS will provide two documents for you to present to prospective landlords through our Co-Sponsorship Co-Sponsor Portal platform. One document explains the IRIS financial assistance policy. The other document is a letter from IRIS Director Chris George explaining the refugee resettlement program and vetting process.

Apartment Selection, Rental Assistance, and The "New Haven Standard"

IRIS strongly prefers that cosponsors find apartments that refugees will have good chance of being able to afford on their own at the end of their **rental assistance** period. The length of rental assistance is determined by the family's case manager and, in some cases, through consultation with the Director of Case Management, based on specific eligibility criteria. Please refer to Appendix C for detailed explanations of the policy and its parameters.

In our experience, refugee families fare best in sustainable communities, where the family is likely to remain based on favorable access to public transportation, employment, and ESOL resources. We have found that the following cities and towns offer the best mix of these resources with rents that fall below, at, or slightly above rates we call "The New Haven Standard".

Fairfield County	Bridgeport, Danbury, Norwalk*, Stamford*
New Haven County	East Haven, Hamden, Meriden, Waterbury, West Haven
Middlesex County	Clinton, Middletown
New London County	New London, Norwich
Windham County	Willimantic
Tolland County	Vernon
Hartford County	Bloomfield, East Hartford, Hartford, New Britain, West Hartford, Windsor Locks
Litchfield County	Torrington

* *These cities in Lower Fairfield County are more affordable than most towns west of Bridgeport along the shoreline but nonetheless require application of the New Haven Standard due to their very high rents.*

The "New Haven Standard"

When settling refugee families outside the cosponsor framework, IRIS endeavors to pay no more than the following for rents:

Apartment Size	New Haven Max
1BR	**$950**
2BR	**$1,100**
3BR	**$1,300**
4BR	**$1,500**

We realize, however, that such rental rates may not be available in some communities, particularly those in Lower Fairfield County. **For cosponsors who cannot find housing at the rental rates we recommend, the cosponsor would subsidize rent in excess of the New Haven Standard during the rental assistance period and for the duration of the lease (e.g., from 6 months to a full year).** Such cosponsors would need to raise more than the $7,000 limit which we initially placed on co-sponsorship rental assistance. For example, a co-sponsorship group who resettles a refugee family in a 2BR apartment in Stamford with a rent at $1600/month with a 1-year lease, would subsidize the rent for the full 12 months, where the rental assistance period allows for the family to contribute half of their DSS cash toward rent for between 3 and 6 months. When rental assistance ends, the refugee family would be responsible for no more than $1100 of the rent, while the co-sponsor will subsidize their rent payment with $500/month for the duration of the lease.

Please Note: *Such an arrangement should be the exception to the rule. We encourage co-sponsors, even in expensive parts of the state, to be persistent and to make every effort to find affordable and sustainable housing for refugee families.*

Family Size

In most cases, IRIS will be offering co-sponsors refugee families ranging in size from 3 to 5 members. So we ask you to price apartments that range in size from 2 to 3 bedrooms. However, occasionally we are assigned families of 6 or 7 that we would like to place with co-sponsors. So don't be surprised if you are asked to look for a 4 bedroom apartment.

Co-Signing Leases

If a landlord requires a co-signer on the lease, IRIS asks that the co-sponsorship group co-sign the lease. We've co-signed leases with refugees resettled in New Haven and have had positive outcomes for many years, and will continue to do so. However, we cannot co-sign leases throughout the state for many reasons. We don't have relationships with the landlords, we don't know every local rental market, we can't manage additional and diversified liability, or the growing administrative burden. We think you, the co-sponsorship committees, are the ideal co-signers (when necessary) of local leases. We can provide best practices and information to ease any concerns. And we will find an acceptable resolution for any group that has been depending on IRIS to co-sign a lease. (Just to clarify, the two co-signing parties in this arrangement will be the refugee family and their co-sponsoring group.)

Security Deposits

Once housing is rented, the housing person will need to arrange for the lease and utilities hook-ups. IRIS strongly prefers that cosponsoring groups use the funds they have raised for security deposits. This will free up a significant amount of the budget allocation from the government. Please avoid paying more than one month's rent for a security deposit. If the landlord asks for two months' security deposit, please try to negotiate for one month.

A note on smoking: Many refugees are accustomed to being able to smoke indoors in their home countries and their host countries in the Middle East and Africa. If there are smokers in the family you resettle, please explain to them the rules about smoking related to the apartment you find for them (e.g., how far away from the building they will have to go in order to smoke). Please reinforce these rules.

Clothing/Household Furnishings

The clothing/household furnishings person is responsible for procuring clothing, donated furniture, *new* mattresses and box springs, and household goods for the refugee family. (IRIS will provide Home Supply Checklist to keep track of these items.) Donations of furniture and household goods can be pledged in advance of the refugee(s)' arrival. Unless you are personally able to repair them, it is a good idea to accept only items in good condition! You should hold off on clothing donations until after you can determine the needs and sizes of your family. Some clothing you will need to purchase new (socks and underwear), but providing too much new clothing or other goods may establish an expectation that your group cannot and should not continue to fulfill. Most groups find that they are deluged with donated items and that their expenditures on clothing, household goods and furnishings is negligible. Indeed, it is a good idea to have in mind a Goodwill or thrift store to which you can give donated clothes and household goods you can't use!

Finances of Co-Sponsorship

The finance person is responsible for overseeing the expenditure of the resettlement funds and introducing refugee adults to family budgeting, credit, the banking system and taxes. It will be important that refugees learn about the need to build a credit history in America and the risks of relying on credit to pay bills.

Social Security Administration (SSA) and Department of Social Services (DSS)

Refugees must be taken to a Social Security Administration office in the nearest city to apply for their Social Security cards within five (5) business days after their arrival. Please be advised it can take 10 days to three weeks to receive a card. Be sure that the application is for an **unrestricted Social Security card**. A refugee's card should *not* contain the notation "Valid for Work Only With DHS Authorization." IRIS will provide you with Social Security card applications for each household member in advance of the family's arrival. At the conclusion of your appointment with Social Security, each family member will receive a receipt proving that they have applied for a Social Security card. This receipt will be needed when visiting DSS soon after the Social Security appointment.

In addition Social Security Card application, they will also need to bring a printout of their I-94s. Your case manager will supply completed SSA and DSS applications in advance of the refugee's arrival, and will supply scans of the I-94(s) to be printed prior to the refugee visiting the SSA office. (I-94s no longer exist as physical cards stapled to passports or Department of State admission letters. They are electronic and are usually available shortly after formal entry to the US. *Nonetheless, please allow at least 48 hours from the time of arrival for IRIS to supply the I-94s, as occasionally there are delays in their becoming available.*) If your family members have passports, **do not bring them to the SSA office.** The passport numbers on their I-94 corresponds to their "A" numbers listed on the State Department letter containing their pictures, biodata, and the point of entry stamp.

The finance person is also responsible for ensuring that the refugee family applies for public assistance through the Department of Social Services (DSS): HUSKY medical insurance, Food Stamps (SNAP), and either Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA) or Temporary Family Assistance (TFA). The family should be brought to DSS the day after their SSA visit. ***If the family's I-94s are not available three (3) days following arrival, you should bring the family to DSS so that their benefits are granted without further delay.*** Delays with I-94s can take days or weeks and are beyond our control, as it requires official inquiries by CWS or EMM with the Department of State.

General Principles

1. The cosponsor will follow the same basic finance policies that IRIS applies to refugees resettled without a co-sponsor in New Haven.
2. The cosponsor will work with IRIS to establish and manage a budget for the resettlement that takes into account all requirements and all funds.

3. Rent subsidies are provided to a refugee family for 3-6 months according to established IRIS policy. Rental assistance should last no longer than six (6) months, depending on the family's needs. In line with this, the cosponsor will help the family to develop a budget that factors in gradually decreasing financial assistance from the co-sponsor.

4. In addition to the financial assistance you will provide as a cosponsor, the following funds will be available to help pay the refugee family's expenses:

    - Federal Funds (a **one-time** grant from the US Department of State)

    - State Funds (a monthly allowance from the Connecticut Department of Social Services [DSS])

    - SNAP, formerly known as Food Stamps (a monthly allowance administered through CT DSS exclusively for food)[2]

5. In most cases, IRIS expects cosponsor spending of $4,000-$7,000 per family resettled (i.e., more in expensive areas). This figure even applies to large coalitions in which multiple groups are collaborating to cosponsor a family. In other words, groups would pool their resources and *collectively* allocate a maximum of $7,000 to each refugee family.

6. The major cosponsor expenses will be housing-related, such as the cost of subsidizing the refugee family's rent for the first few months and paying basic utility bills for the first 30 days until the responsible refugee family member receives her/his Social Security Number. Other cosponsor expenses include **new** mattresses and box springs for each family member (for small children under 8, a toddler's bed or "pack and play" may be more appropriate), as well as other items for the apartment that cannot be obtained through donations

Federal Funds Explained

For each refugee who arrives in the US, the US State Department provides the sponsoring resettlement agency (i.e., IRIS) a Reception & Placement (R&P) Grant of **$2,025**. The components of this per capita grant break down as follows:

- **$925**. Often called **"welcome money"**, this is for direct expenses of the refugee (e.g., a family of four would receive $3,700, or 4[$925]). The grant deposited into an IRIS account is specifically earmarked for the refugee. In a co-sponsorship arrangement, IRIS holds most of these funds to cover the refugee's/s' living expenses (e.g., rent paid directly to landlord, reimbursement to cosponsor for approved R&P expenses).

[2] At the pre-arrival meeting, your case manager will tell you what maximum benefit amount your family may receive for TFA and SNAP. Normally, maximum TFA is granted unless the family brings assets with them that were declared at their point of entry. The maximum SNAP amount, however, may be reduced by the DSS worker when they see the family is receiving rental assistance. Once the family is paying their rent either in full or up to the New Haven Standard, DSS will usually adjust the SNAP amount upward once they have proof.

- **$200 in Pool Funds**. While also deposited into an IRIS account, these **pool funds** may be used at the discretion of IRIS to help *the neediest refugees* resettled in New Haven without co-sponsors.
- **$900 in Admin Funds**. These funds are used at the discretion of IRIS to cover administrative support (i.e., primarily case manager salaries).

State Funds Explained

Temporary Family Assistance (TFA) is administered by the Connecticut Department of Social Services (DSS) and is funded by the federal government, Department of Health and Human Services. Each refugee family will apply for RCA or TFA through DSS as soon as possible after applying for Social Security Cards, and will usually have access to their RCA/TFA accounts within 2 to 3 weeks from arrival. The amount the family will receive is calculated based on several factors (e.g., family size) and will vary by DSS geographical region. **During the 90 day R&P period (3 months following arrival), while IRIS or the cosponsor will be helping refugees with their rent, IRIS requires refugees to spend half of their TFA funds every month for rent until they are able to generate enough income through employment to cover their expenses.**

What Does Federal R&P Money ("Welcome Money") Cover?

R&P money is provided by the federal government to ensure that refugees' basic needs are met upon arrival. It is expected of all groups that this money will be spent on the following items, for which these reimbursable expenses are explained below:

- **Rent**
  First month in full and partial rental assistance for subsequent months according to the IRIS Financial Assistance Policy.
- **Renter's Insurance**
  First month *if required by the landlord*
- **Pocket Money and Initial Food Allocation at Arrival**
  $50 will be given to each adult (anyone 18 or older) and $25 *for each child* will be given to the PA. The amount given for initial food allocation at arrival depends on family size (see below)
- **Second Food Allocation**
  To be provided to the family one week after arrival, where amount depends on family size (see below). The appropriate amount should be given to the family if their DSS cash and SNAP are not activated by their second week or subsequent weeks thereafter (rare).
- **Cell Phone**
  Cell phone itself and one month of service up to $60

- **Bus Passes**
  (Up to 90 days' worth, if applicable)

- **Initial Groceries**
  4-5 days' worth at time of arrival - specific amounts depending on family size (see below)

- **Utilities**
  First 30 days of gas and/or electric service. $100 maximum for oil.

- **Over-The-Counter Medications**
  Only if prescribed

- **New Mattresses and Box Springs**
  Up to $150 for twin and $200 for full/queen

- **Bedframes**
  Up to $70

- **Furniture Items (as listed on Home Supply List)**
  Up to $50 per person

- **Linens and Related Supplies (as listed on the Home Supply Checklist)**
  Up to $20 per person

- **Kitchen Items (as listed on the Home Supply Checklist)**
  Up to $20 per person

- **Toiletries (as listed on the Home Supply Checklist)**
  Up to $10 per person

- **Cleaning Supplies (as listed on the Home Supply Checklist)**
  Up to $10 per person

- **Car Seats**
  Up to $25 for booster, $75 for infant, $50 for toddler/intermediate

- **Culturally Appropriate Hot Meal for Day of Arrival**
  Specific amounts depending on the size of the family (see below)

- **Clothing**
  See clothing policy with requirements and specific amounts.

- **Baby Items (as listed on the Home Supply Checklist)**
  Up to $50 per baby

- **Crib or Pack-N-Play**
  Up to $100

Family Size	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Groceries	$60	$90	$115	$140	$160	$180	$200	$220
Hot Meal	$15	$25	$30	$35	$40	$45	$50	$55
Food Allocation at Arrival	$20	$30	$40	$45	$53	$60	$67	$73
Second Food Allocation	$45	$83	$119	$151	$180	$216	$238	$273

Your group is responsible for providing all of these items and must submit receipts for reimbursement in a timely manner. Car seats, mattresses, and toiletries **must be new**. All other items can be used in good condition. You will notice that the amounts that can be reimbursed are relatively low. The reason for this is that it is our expectation that your group will make every effort to reduce costs by finding donated items and the most inexpensive items when necessary.

Administrative Holds on Reimbursement Requests

If your group is behind on paperwork at the time you submit your reimbursement request, the reimbursement will not be released to your group until said paperwork is submitted.

Examples of Co-Sponsorship Rental Assistance Only

Refugee family of four (4), no English, two (2) children, health issues.
IRIS decides they need 5 months of rental support.

- 2BR apartment rent is **$1,200**/month
  High for New Haven, but close to state average
- R&P (Welcome Money) = 4($925) = **$3,700**
  Used for initial expenses such as cell phones, food, bus passes, over-the-counter (OTC) medications.
- TFA = approximately **$700**/month
  Current amount for New Haven

	Month 1*	Month 2	Month 3	Month 4	Month 5	Month 6	TOTAL
Federal R&Pfunds**	1,200 *rent*	600	0	0	0	0	**1,800**
State / TFA		350	350	350	350	350	**1,750**
Cosponsor Subsidy	1,200 *security deposit*	250	850	850	850	0	**4,000**
Job income						850	**850**
Total	**2,400**	**1200**	**1200**	**1200**	**1200**	**1200**	**$8,400**

*Cosponsor responsible for security deposit, R&P will cover first month's rent
**Also covers pocket money, utilities and cell phone, plus bus passes (about $700)

Refugee family of four (4), little/no English, healthy, school age children.
IRIS decides they need 4 months of rental support.

- 2BR apartment rent is **$1,000**/month
- R&P (Welcome Money) = 4($925) = **$3,700**
- TFA = approximately **$700**/month

Funding sources	**Month 1***	**Month 2**	**Month 3**	**Month 4**	**Month 5**	**Month 6**	**Total**
Federal R&P**funds	1,000 *Rent*	650	350	0	0	0	**2,000**
State Assistance/ TFA		350	350	350	350	350	**1,750**
Co-sponsor subsidy	1,000 *security deposit*	0	300	650	0	0	**1,950**
Job income					650	650	**1,300**
Total	**2,000**	**1000**	**1000**	**1000**	**1000**	**1000**	**7,000**

*Cosponsor responsible for security deposit, R&P will cover first month's rent
**Also covers first month of pocket money, utilities and cell phone, plus bus passes (approximately $700)

English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)/Education

The Education Person is responsible for overseeing education and English classes for all members of the family. (You might need more than one person for these tasks, or you could divide this responsibility into two parts; adult education and children's education.) This includes registering children for school and keeping in contact with teachers regarding their progress. If the children's parent does not speak English, the Education Person may be the contact person for the school system. Schools are mandated by law to provide ESOL and special assistance for all children who do not speak English fluently; the role of the resettlement group is to make it easier for schools receiving refugee students. We ask cosponsors to provide informal and "school readiness" tutoring a couple of hours a day for children during the period between arrival and enrollment in schools.

Equally important is providing opportunities – within days of arrival – for adults in the family to learn and practice English. **Learning English is absolutely essential to the refugee(s)' achieving independence**. Even refugees who already speak English will discover that American English is different from that which is used in other parts of the world.

There are several options for ESOL classes for adults, all of which should be considered around employment prospects and schedules to encourage self-sufficiency:

- **Adult Education ESOL Courses**

  ESOL classes are often available (day and/or evenings) through local public school systems throughout the state. Provided the adult refugee attends Adult Education in the town in which s/he resides, ESOL classes are free of charge. While most cities and large towns in the state have their own Adult Education programs, smaller towns may collaborate with other small towns to provide adult education offerings (e.g., Residents of Branford, Guilford, and Madison attend Adult Education in Branford).

- **Community College-Based ESOL Courses**

  For refugees who have a good baseline in English proficiency and could use more challenging coursework, community colleges around Connecticut offer ESOL courses with financial aid (usually in the form of grants). This is only feasible if the refugee arrives in enough time to register and obtain financial aid for a given semester. Should the refugee enroll and receive financial aid, s/he **must** complete the semester or risk having to pay back their grant. This option should be considered very carefully, and in consultation with your case manager.

- **Literacy Volunteers of America (LVA**)

  LVA runs English courses free of charge in many communities in Connecticut. Ideally, this could serve as a supplement to Adult Education courses, as LVA courses are offered less frequently.

- **Members of your Congregation or Community Group**

  Survey your congregation or community group for members who may offer to supplement a refugee's formal ESOL coursework with activities designed to facilitate English practice (e.g., movies, watching the news, cooking), especially once one or more of the adults in the household starts working.

Health

The Health person is responsible for coordinating medical care for the refugees. All refugees are eligible for HUSKY insurance (provided that they are income-qualified when they apply). If a refugee receives medical care before their HUSKY insurance has been activated (e.g., an emergency department visit upon arrival), eligibility needs to be back-dated at DSS to reflect coverage when service was provided.

HUSKY insurance in Connecticut covers all refugees based on parameters such as marital status, family size, and income. An overview of HUSKY insurance plans can be accessed here http://www.ct.gov/dss/cwp/view.asp?a=2345&q=490624.

If a refugee requires immediate medical care at any time before s/he has applied for or received their HUSKY ConnectCard, s/he is free to visit a HUSKY-accepting doctor or urgent care facility, if necessary, or the emergency department (ED) to receive care. Urgent care facilities should be identified prior to the refugees' arrival to confirm that they will treat a HUSKY patient who does not yet have her/his HUSKY ConnectCard. It is best to have done this work ahead of time in advance of any possible emergency situation. ED's are required to treat all patients regardless of insurance status. **They are nominally insured when they enter the US and will be covered retroactively (i.e., through back-dating at DSS) once HUSKY insurance is established.**

The Health person is responsible for scheduling a federally mandated **Refugee Health Assessment (RHA)** for each family member, preferably within the first month of arrival. Due to excess capacity issues among providers serving New Haven-based clients who visit the Yale-New Haven Primary Care Center, we now require all cosponsors to arrange for their family's RHAs through **HUSKY-accepting local physicians or community health centers**, who must adhere exactly to the medical protocols required by the Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH). Once the RHAs are completed and the results catalogued on the state RHA forms, they are to be returned to your case manager by mail or email/PDF so that s/he may submit the paperwork to DPH.

An example of an RHA form is posted on the Co-Sponsor Portal platform, along with the clinical guidelines to be followed by the physician conducting the RHA. If your healthcare provider has questions about RHA protocols, we can direct them to physicians at Yale New Haven Primary Care Center and the UCONN Medical Center in Farmington, who have generously offered to remotely coach physicians around the state.

The RHA will likely require two appointments, where blood work and titers tests are conducted to prepare for immunizations at the next appointment. Most vaccines will require a second course a month later. *Refugees need to be encouraged to communicate effectively with providers, as in many of their cultures they are uncomfortable asking questions and do not understand how to take control of their health and healthcare needs.* For that reason, it is strongly recommended that you make sure interpreters are available at your local healthcare provider. As a matter of federal law, healthcare providers receiving Medicaid funds are required to provide interpretation during appointments. UCONN Medical Center and other hospital-based or community health center-based providers are the most likely to both have the ability to conduct RHAs and have interpreters available.

It is highly recommended that you begin the process of finding HUSKY-accepting primary and specialty care providers who provide interpreters that may require placement on a waiting list.

Sometimes refugees arrive with or develop health conditions that require frequently scheduled doctor visits. The health person and the transportation person will need good communication to be sure appointments are scheduled and kept.

Handling Bills for Delivery of Healthcare and/or Prescriptions prior to HUSKY

Many clients receive prescriptions at the refugee clinic, and many have not yet received their insurance cards. If a person receives a prescription, it can be filled at any pharmacy that accepts their insurance as long as the s/he has an insurance card. It is recommended to ask the client for it as it can easily get lost.

Once your refugee family has received their HUSKY ConnectCards, they will present them at doctors' offices for appointments and pharmacies for prescriptions. Most major pharmacies accept HUSKY insurance for most prescriptions. As mentioned earlier, it is important to confirm that any healthcare provider to be visited by your refugee family accepts HUSKY insurance and/or covers their medications. If a certain medication is not covered by HUSKY, you should first contact the doctor and ask if there is a similar covered medication. If not, some research of pharmacies in your area will be required, during which you should inquire about discounts. Over-the-counter medications are not covered by HUSKY.

If a prescription must be filled before the refugees possess their ConnectCards, there are two options:

1. **East Rock Pharmacy at 767 Orange Street, New Haven**

   IRIS has a relationship with this pharmacy through which the pharmacy will fill refugee prescriptions before they receive their insurance cards, with the understanding that later they will be presented -- or called -- with the refugee's insurance information. If you choose to use East Rock, please be sure to identify the patient as an IRIS client.

2. **Claiming Prescriptions and Healthcare Delivered Prior to HUSKY**

   As mentioned above, if urgent healthcare needs arise prior to the refugee family's RHAs, you are encouraged to take a refugee family member to a HUSKY-accepting doctor/urgent care facility, or the emergency room. Once your family visits DSS, they will be given an eligibility letter that verifies application for HUSKY coverage. *This is not necessarily accepted as proof of insurance by healthcare providers or pharmacies, despite what the letter claims.* Thus, if you visit a HUSKY-accepting doctor/urgent care facility or an emergency room, the refugee patient will receive a bill. (Sample online) When the refugee receives the bill, you will need to call the billing office with the patient present so that s/he can verbally authorize you to speak on her/his behalf. Once the situation is described and the refugee's coverage has been verified, HUSKY will process the claim so that the refugee is not responsible for expenses associated with healthcare or prescriptions delivered prior to activation of HUSKY coverage. *Bear in mind that financial responsibility for such a claim is only absolved if HUSKY covers services and/or prescriptions delivered prior to proof of coverage.*

   Once the refugee family receives their HUSKY ConnectCards, their insurance coverage is activated.

Dental Work

Many refugees arrive in need of serious dental work. You will need to locate a dentist who accepts HUSKY insurance and/or provides pro bono services and/or interpreters.

Acculturation/Hospitality

Introducing the refugee family to our complex American culture will involve many members of the community as well as the co-sponsorship Resettlement Team. During the first few weeks there should be daily contact to make sure that all is OK and answer acculturation questions as they arise. Friendly visits and outings are among the most important ways we show the refugee family that they are welcome. However, scheduling visits and outings with your refugee family can become a logistical nightmare if you don't have an organized "central clearing house" for keeping their appointments. This can be a large calendar in the refugee's home or kept by an appointed member of the Resettlement Team (often the transportation person). Emphasize to your group that ***no one is to schedule even a brief outing*** with your family without checking and making a note on the calendar!

We strongly recommend that the hospitality person make a poster with the photos, names, and roles of each core resettlement team member to put on a wall in the family's apartment. This will help the family learn your core team members' names and faces and know who is responsible for what area of resettlement. We also recommend that anyone who comes to the home of the refugee family where a name tag and something that indicates that they are part of your group—so the family knows that this is a safe person whom they can trust.

Some of the areas of American culture that refugees will need to understand include:

- ***New Surroundings*** Refugees should be encouraged to visit community attractions and resources on their own. "Getting out of the house" is vital to establishing connection with their new community. A public library card can be a meaningful first source of community contact. (Many refugees appreciate free computer access available at public libraries, though some charge for printing.) Recreation and cultural activities should be made part of orientation.

- ***Grocery*** Go with the family at least the first time to buy their food at a nearby grocery. Show them how to shop economically, how to weigh vegetables, how to check out using SNAP. ***Be sure that in using the ConnectCard they ALWAYS use SNAP to buy food, as it is easy to get confused between the RCA/TFA and SNAP accounts on the same card.*** They may need to be instructed to ask for certain items (e.g., cigarettes, some over-the-counter medications, certain health and beauty items) rather than go behind the counter to take them. Show how to return bottles for deposit refund. Take the family to an ethnic food store periodically to be sure that they have the specialty items they need, especially if they keep *halal*. For those who may need help finding mosques as well as halal stores and restaurants in their areas, you may search for these by zip code through http://www.zabihah.com. To be clear, *kosher and halal are not necessarily considered substitutes for each other.*

- ***Laundry*** Show the family where they can wash clothes at a nearby laundromat or in their building/house, if applicable. Give careful instruction on selective washing, temperature, timing, soap use, and drying. Show how to use a moneychanger/ change machine if using a

laundromat. If using a washer/dryer in a building or house, be sure to explain the importance of cleaning the lint filter on the dryer to prevent fire.

- ***Post Office*** They will be interested in writing letters overseas as well as within the United States. Explain airmail letters and stamps, how to purchase them and how to use them. Show them where to find the nearest blue mailbox.

- ***Cell Phone*** The cosponsor will be responsible for acquiring one cell phone and one month of service for the refugee family to be ready at arrival. Once the family members have Social Security numbers, you can help them get one more cell phone via the Lifeline program (free cell phone, and free 250 minutes/month service – plus texting – for as long as they continue to be low-income). The best way we've found to apply for that program is online at www.safelink.com. The limit in the Lifeline program is one free phone per household. But if there is an adult son or daughter who lives in the same home but has a separate source of income (either a job or DSS cash assistance or SSI disability), then he/she is considered a separate household and can be eligible for a separate free phone.

  If the refugee arrives with a smart phone, s/he would be responsible for activating service in the US with a recognized provider.

  While it is not a covered expense under R&P, we recommend purchasing a phone card that the family can use to place a call to their home country when they arrive. The cell phone you purchase with service should only allow for unlimited calls within the US, as is the standard we have in place at IRIS. Phone cards can be used from cell phones to call internationally at a much lower rate than dialing directly. To get an idea of what kind of calling cards are available for families to call numbers in Syria, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey, Sudan, Egypt, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Rwanda, Tanzania, Malawi, Iran, or Afghanistan, you can survey options available through http://www.callingcards.com/ as a start. IRIS does not endorse a particular plan; you will discover many vendors online and some sold in convenience stores. Like with gift cards, it is best to investigate fees and taxes exclusive of the value on the front of the card (or as presented online).

  Unless the quality and consistency of cell phone coverage is particularly problematic in your area, we **do not** recommend spending money to install a landline, which is expensive to activate and maintain. If the refugee wishes to have access to the internet and/or television through a cable company or Frontier, they would be responsible for all associated expenses, including activation and monthly service.

  The refugee will need a cell phone to communicate with the Contact Person and a translator. You will need to teach the refugee how to use the phone, remember the phone number, and how and when to **dial 911** in an emergency, whether at home or while out and about. Since the level of cell phone service does not include international calling, calling cards are a good alternative to dialing direct long distance and can be used with cell phones. It is important to impress upon the refugee the initial expenses involved with cell phone service through smart phones and/or purchasing calling cards for international calls, such that using mail, email, and/or a friend or cosponsor's internet connection should be encouraged for long-distance communication, where practical, and at least until they are able to pay for such services themselves.

- ***Identification*** The Connecticut Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) issues non-driver photo IDs for a $22.50 (as of this edition). Refugees must present their I-94 printout, passport and/or Department of State Admission Letter, Social Security card, and two pieces of mail received at their address within 90 days of application to prove Connecticut residency.

Internet Service/WiFi, and Cable TV

It is increasingly common for refugees to arrive with smart phones, through which they are accustomed to calling their friends and family through WiFi rather than dialing directly. Nonetheless, **we do not recommend installing internet service prior to the family's arrival**. The normal monthly fees for internet access are prohibitively expensive at the outset and they may not be able to afford to maintain them long term. In addition to the calling card option presented above as way to allow the family to call home after they arrive, we recommend that you allow them to use one of your smart phones as a hot spot to enable them to call on their own phone using the free software to which they are accustomed. Longer term, the following is recommended for the family to access WiFi:

- Libraries, shopping malls, cafes, and other public places that have free WiFi signals
- Group member's smart phones while in transit or waiting for an appointment
- **Discounted internet access through your school district** is available for qualifying low-income families. Once the family's benefits through DSS are bona fide and you have received the benefit determination letters, you can assist the family in renting a router and getting internet service for about $20 per month. It is definitely worth waiting until this option is available because it is so cost-effective (and the children will need the access to do homework). This program is available through Frontier and most cable companies statewide in cooperation with all local school districts.

Cable TV is expensive and not recommended for the family so soon after arrival. It may be tempting to provide access to channels in other languages, but acquiring some channels can cost as much as $30 per month in some markets. The simplest solution to accessing foreign channels is **over the internet!** If a TV has a USB port, the computer can be hooked up and voila. If they want to order such service later when they have more money, that is their choice.

Transportation

The transportation person is responsible for arranging the refugees' transportation until the family is able to do this independently. When public transportation is available, he or she should introduce the refugee family to the system quickly and encourage them to use it. Both the transportation person and the refugee should maintain copies of public transportation schedules.

It is best if the location of the refugee's housing and employment do not require long-term reliance on the cosponsoring group for their transportation needs. We have found that lack of public transportation causes feelings of frustration and isolation that hinder independence. Hence our strong recommendation that your refugee family should be resettled in towns or cities near your group with adequate public transportation.

Some refugees will be interested in acquiring a car. Unless someone in the cosponsoring group is able to donate a used automobile, the refugee will need to work with the finance person to develop a plan for purchasing a car, maintaining it, and arranging for automobile insurance.

In most cases, the transportation person will need to arrange for driving instruction and/or help the refugee prepare for his or her driver's license. **The Connecticut DMV now offers the learner's permit test in Arabic, in addition to Russian and French.** However, s/he will still need to learn the information in the CT Motor Vehicles Drivers' Manual (currently in English only) and be able to read and interpret common signs. The road test is administered in English. A translator may be present to explain the process before the exam begins but may not be present during the actual test. Getting a driving license can be a trying ordeal, and many refugees do not pass it on their first or second attempt.

It is important to emphasize that until the refugee holds a valid Connecticut driver's license, s/he is expected to work with the employment and transportation persons in your group to obtain employment. Thus it is imperative that these group members coordinate closely in surveying the feasibility of jobs in terms of English proficiency, skills, and geographical constraints.

A Note on IDLs and US Driver's Licenses

In our experience, those refugees who know how to drive are understandably determined to get a US driver's license as soon as possible. Not only would this enable the refugee to work at jobs that require a US driver's license, it would allow them the kind of independent mobility they may have been accustomed to at home (i.e., especially in Iraq and Syria, where many people owned and drove cars).

In Connecticut, use of an international driver's license (IDL) for extended periods is only permitted if the driver is a visitor and is not intending to settle in the state. ***Refugees become residents of Connecticut as soon as they apply for benefits through the Department of Social Services (DSS).*** This means that once refugees become residents of the state, they may only drive legally with a valid Connecticut Driver's License. Thus use of IDLs by refugees is unlawful.

Now that the driver's test is administered in Arabic and French (the only languages most common among most IRIS clients), there is no need for traveling to other states to undergo examination and road testing in their native languages (i.e., primarily New York, New Jersey, Massachusetts, and Maine). ***This is not legal, because they are legal residents of Connecticut and, in effect, would be lying about their residence in the other state.*** While the practice is somewhat common among refugees in other parts of the country, it is nonetheless very risky. ***If during the course of their green card applications it is discovered that they were untruthful in obtaining a driver license outside their state of legal residence, they risk being disqualified***.

IRIS worked very hard with the Connecticut DMV to collaboratively and successfully bring a workable solution to a problem that put our clients at risk. Thus we ask you to work with your family to facilitate the DMV process in as practical a manner as possible, factoring in ability to carry insurance and to afford all auto-related expenses themselves.

Obtaining a Connecticut Driver's License

If the client does not have a driver's license from her/his country, s/he must first pass the knowledge test to obtain a learner's permit. S/he must then wait 90 days to schedule an appointment for a road test.

If the client does have a driver's license from her/his country, s/he can schedule an appointment for the road test immediately following passage of the knowledge test. The license itself may be valid or expired as long as it is government issued (i.e., not an international driver's license). If the license is not in English or only partly in English, it must be translated by a certified DMV translator. For additional information, please see Appendix C.

Preparing for Arrival

Waiting for a Family

Once you have given IRIS your ***green light***, IRIS will try to place a family with your group within one or two months.

IRIS generally receives notification of the final expected arrival time five to ten business days in advance. When IRIS thinks a case is appropriate for your group, the IRIS Co-Sponsorship Program Manager will promptly forward the information to your group's Contact Person(s). We ask that you take no more than 48 hours to decide if you can take the case.
Once you have agreed to take the case, you will respond to the offer of co-sponsorship via email along with the **Faith/Community Group Commitment Form**. Upon its receipt, a case manager will be assigned to your group and will schedule a pre-arrival meeting with your group's Contact Person(s) and welcoming committee.

Please be aware that sometimes refugee arrivals are scheduled on considerably shorter notice. Resettlement Team members involved in meeting new refugees need to be flexible and prepared for a possible last-minute scramble. On rare occasions, a refugee scheduled for arrival will not show up. These "No-Shows" can be a stressful experience for cosponsors who are waiting, and we seldom receive advance notice or even an explanation. If this happens, we urge you to open your hearts to the next available family waiting for co-sponsorship.

Key Action Items Pre-Arrival

- **Secure Interpreter(s)**

  From the day of arrival to the end of the R&P period, you will need regular, reliable access to an interpreter to help you facilitate important meetings and appointments with the refugee family. Ideally, you would have someone in your group who can interpret on a regular basis in one of the languages spoken by
  IRIS clients: Arabic, Farsi/Dari, Swahili, French, Amharic (Ethiopia), and Tigrinya (Eritrea). Other potential sources of low-cost or free interpreters are colleges/universities (e.g., Muslim student groups, Arab student groups), mosques,

churches (i.e., Coptic for some Ethiopians and some Eritreans), and cultural groups. Please note that SSA and DSS can provide interpreters via telephone on site, so you will not need an interpreter for those appointments unless that is your preference. IRIS can refer you to low-cost interpreters who might be able to travel to your area. Unfortunately, due to the volume of service provision at IRIS in New Haven, our volunteer interpreters are not available to cosponsors. ***Remember: Each interpreter you source must sign and submit a confidentiality agreement.***

- **Formalize Housing Arrangements**

  IRIS prefers that the Cosponsoring Group takes responsibility for covering the security deposit on the refugee's housing. IRIS will pay the first month's rent from the family's R&P funds. IRIS will need a copy of the executed lease as soon as it becomes available. If the landlord insists on a co-signer or guarantor, we would expect the co-sponsor to co-sign.

- **Establishment of Utilities Accounts**

  The Cosponsoring Group is responsible for establishing utility accounts prior to the family's arrival. Responsibility for the utilities accounts will be transferred to the family once they have Social Security Numbers, usually within 30 days of arrival. In the meantime, the accounts must be established by an individual in the group (e.g., Contact Person, Housing Person) using her/his Social Security Number, or by one of the organizational entities comprising the group using the Tax ID Number (e.g., church, synagogue, community group).

- **Home Evaluation, Safety, and Supplies**

  Your case manager will provide your group's Contact Person(s) with pre-arrival checklists that will ensure you have met the federal requirements that IRIS is contractually required to meet.

- **Designation of Arrival Contact at Point of Arrival**

  The International Organization for Migration (IOM) works with CWS and EMM to arrange and facilitate travel for the refugee family to the US. As soon as possible, your group must inform your case manager who will be the receiving contact for handover in one of these two scenarios:

  - **Meet Family at IRIS in New Haven**
    IOM will only transport the family from JFK/New York or EWR/Newark to New Haven. The receiving handover contact from your group will be called by the driver when s/he is one hour from New Haven. When s/he speaks to the driver, request that the driver pull into the area to the left of the Shell station on the corner of Willow Street and Nicoll Street that faces the front entrance for IRIS at 235 Nicoll Street. Street parking is generally plentiful near the office for arrivals taking place after 6PM but can be a challenge during business hours.

- **Meet Family at JFK or EWR**
  If coming to New Haven is not convenient to meet your family, particularly if you are in southwestern or western Connecticut, you have the option to meet your family at JFK or EWR and transporting the family back to your town directly. To do this, your case manager needs a scan of the driver's license(s) and the cell phone number(s) of those driving vehicles to forward to the IOM and authorize handover at the airport.

The Day of Arrival

A *small* reception group, including an interpreter, should meet the family at their designated arrival point (New Haven, JFK, or EWR) and bring them to their new or temporary home. Remember that the refugees will be both tired and apprehensive; this is not the time for a gala welcoming party. Instead, offer the family a culturally appropriate hot meal and a chance to bathe and rest.

We offer these practical tips for meeting refugees:

1) Track the family's flight online or call the airline to confirm the arrival time.

2) Plan to wait. Entry procedures can take 1-3 hours, so bring patience and perhaps a good book and/or a well-charged cell phone or tablet.

3) Come equipped with a sign bearing the refugee's name in large letters.

4) Bring warm clothing (in one-size-fits-all styles) if the refugees arrive during winter months.

The Resettlement Team should also provide each refugee with an arrival packet containing the following:

- Names and telephone numbers of an interpreter, the Core Resettlement Team Contact Person, and IRIS;

The Welcome Letter from the IRIS Executive Director in both English and the family's native language;

Pocket money and food allocations for the family to use until they receive their DSS cash (TFA) and SNAP, which can take 2-3 weeks. As noted in the finance section, this is to be given to the refugee in cash. The member of your group who made the cash withdrawal should keep her/his slip/receipt and submit for reimbursement from the refugee's R&P account.

Pocket Money is only provided at arrival based on the number of adults (18+) and children in the family. $50 is given to each adult and $25 is given to the PA for each child. ***Initial food allocation*** is given in cash with the pocket money at arrival based on family size (please refer to the chart under "What Does R&P Money Cover?" in the preceding Finance Section for amount).

The **second food allocation** to be disbursed one week after arrival and the following week if needed (i.e., if they have not received their TFA/SNAP by then. Please refer to the chart under

“What Does R&P Money Cover?” in the preceding Finance Section for amounts).

- A map of the town, highlighting the home, safe routes for walking, and any nearby destinations (e.g., laundromat, library, supermarket). Keep in mind, however, that it will likely be necessary to show the family how to get to these places. Many can come from cultures where reading maps is not emphasized, and many have not yet learned to read or write in their native language.
- A poster with your core team members’ photos, names, and roles.

POST-ARRIVAL

The US Department of State informs refugees, before they depart for the US, that a New Haven-based refugee agency called IRIS will assist in their resettlement. The refugees do not know about the co-sponsorship arrangement until they arrive. In the past, this has never been a problem. Nevertheless, we want to make sure that these new Americans are neither confused nor worried when they are greeted by a group of volunteers who want to take them to a location outside of New Haven.

A welcome letter addressed to the family in their native language will be written and signed by the Executive Director of IRIS, and supplied to the welcoming committee in advance so the interpreter can read it to the family. This letter will provide a simple explanation of the co-sponsorship program for which they have been selected. **Within 5 days of arrival, your group contact person must conduct a “case management intake” to provide an overview orientation of policies, American culture and laws, and referrals.** (See Appendix A for form explanation). Soon after arrival, more information about the IRIS Co-Sponsor relationship and self-sufficiency policies will be provided by your case manager in a meeting with the family, the Contact Person, and an interpreter. In turn, the cosponsoring group and your case manager will also have the opportunity to discover what expectations the refugees may have for their new life in the United States. It is important for both refugees and cosponsors to confront and clarify any misconceptions or miscommunication early in the resettlement process. To facilitate this relationship building, your case manager will arrange a visit with the Contact Person(s) at the refugee family’s home within 10 business days after arrival.

During this visit, your case manager will also conduct employment assessments for all employable adults in the household. The Employment Person needs to participate in this meeting and an interpreter will need to be present. Each employment assessment will cover questions about language proficiency, health, education, work history, availability, and any other information concerning and/or affecting employability. With interpretation, each assessment should take no more than one hour. Once the assessment(s) is complete, your case manager will send the assessment(s) to the Contact Person(s) as an Excel workbook that also contains the tabs to create a resettlement plan for each adult. Once the benchmarks on the employment assessment and the tabs comprising the resettlement plan are complete, all relevant tabs are to be printed out and have the interpreter, principal applicant and/or a family member sign before returning to IRIS. The Employment Person will use the information in the

assessment to create a resume for each assessed employable adult before formally beginning job searches.

Co-Sponsorship Baseline Trajectory – One Year

From the pre-arrival meeting through to about the 45th day, your group and your refugee family will have undergone a flurry of activity in establishing benefits, getting RHAs done, attending CORE, starting to learn English, and charting the course toward getting employed. After your case manager's first visit with the family on or around the **10th** day, you, your group, and your refugee family need to note three more important visits that will help you frame your co-sponsorship trajectory.

By about the **45th** day after arrival, your case manager will schedule a second meeting halfway through the 90-day R&P period with the family and Contact Person(s), at which time all matters and concerns are reviewed in advance of the end of R&P, when the family is expected to be self-sufficient (i.e., determined by when rental assistance and R&P ends based on health, employability, language proficiency, etc.).

As the **90th** day approaches, your case manager will visit the family and Contact Person(s) to settle financial documentation and set the course and milestones for continuing the path toward self-sufficiency at 180 days.

At around the **180th** day, your case manager will visit the family and the Contact Person(s) to evaluate the family's progress toward self-sufficiency. At this juncture, with the exception of the Contact Person(s), we expect the group to enter a period of hiatus to encourage the family to be independent and to rest from their 180 days of activity. Case manager meetings from this point forward would only take place when necessary.

As the **270th** day, the group would regroup to assess the feasibility of cosponsoring another family in light of the progress their current refugee family has made toward self-sufficiency. At **365** days, guarantor responsibility for the lease ends and the family either assumes control of the lease *or* moves to another apartment/city. At this point, the group would decide whether it is ready to cosponsor another family now, in another 6 months, or in another year, all depending on how successful the family's one year trajectory toward self-sufficiency is.

Draft Case Notes

Cosponsors will be responsible for writing, maintaining, and submitting draft case notes to your case manager for review and filing. They are a crucial component of the R&P period, as they serve as a form of narrative of the family's experiences. Key pointers about case notes are:

- **Objective, not subjective**
  Case notes should be in the third person, objective, clear, and to the point. Subjectivity and/or editorializing are not appropriate unless the situation requires it.

  e.g., "Met with landlord to discuss apartment rental. Negotiating with landlord on including heat in monthly rent. Expect follow-up next week"

  "Client is applying for a job at Whole Foods so he can work in the evenings and continue English lessons with spouse."

- **Reverse Chronological Order**

  Case notes are to be presented in reverse chronological order so that the most recent case note appears at the top of the document. Next to the date, indicate the subject for which this case note is being written.

  Examples

  4/23/16 Employment

  Volunteer drove client to a job interview with Dunkin Donuts on Main street. Interview went very well. Client was offered a job and told to report for training next Monday morning. Volunteer and client celebrated with coffee and munchkins.

  4/ 20/16 Health

  Volunteer drove client to dentist Smith on Valley Road for 4:00 appointment. Client's front teeth were repaired and his smile looks great, just in time for job interview in three days.

Regularly, the Contact Person(s) will submit draft case notes to her/his case manager, who will review them and may schedule a call with the Contact Person(s) to discuss, clarify, and/or review them.

To help you with this important task, a case note template is available for download through the Co-Sponsor Portal. The template contains language required by CWS or EMM and will be helpful in completing and submitting case notes about your refugee family. Cosponsor case note guidelines are provided in Appendix C of this manual.

How can we help refugees to reunite with their families overseas?

Many times refugees will have family members they would like to bring into the country. They should contact the IRIS Immigration Legal Office to schedule an appointment to discuss family reunification application procedures.

Important Advice for Cosponsors

Exercise Religious Tolerance and Sensitivity

IRIS has a strict policy against proselytizing. It is important to realize that religion is a fundamental part of one's identity, and anything that could make refugees feel obligated to participate in the religious life of their cosponsors can be disastrous both psychologically and emotionally for refugees. Instead, put them in touch with others of their nationality and faith and assure them that your friendship and support are not dependent on their involvement in your congregation. Please make every effort to avoid making any gesture that could be construed as proselytizing.

Privacy, Please

In the midst of all the activity your group will experience in welcoming and resettling a refugee family, it is important to remember that the family, while likely hospitable, needs and deserves privacy. Your group may be the guarantor/co-signer of the lease, but it does not mean that multiple group members should have keys; your refugee family may be put off knowing that several people have means to access their home. The family's privacy in their new home is more important than the convenience keys among group members would provide. ***The co-signer of the lease, the landlord, and the family are the only people who should have keys to the apartment once the family has arrived.***

By the same token, every effort should be made to only visit the family when invited or when an appointment or meeting is scheduled. The family needs down time without visitors to help mitigate the stress of the myriad resettlement activities and functions they are dealing with. Early on, it should be established that you will either text or call before coming over. It establishes an even playing field and mutual respect for each other's time and space.

Be "Trauma-Informed"

Many communities who welcome refugees want them to tell their stories publically. Unless they actively express interest in doing so, refugees should not be asked to speak about their refugee experience. Be aware that telling a persecution story can re-traumatize refugees. They have had to tell their stories multiple times to UNHCR and
US State Department officials, in order to get refugee status and approval to resettle to the US. Once they are here, they can *choose* whether or not and under what circumstances to talk about the persecution they have experienced. Please respect this choice. By the same token, persecution experiences are by no means taboo. If refugees want to speak with you about what they have fled in their home countries, you will have a tremendous opportunity to be compassionate listeners.

We at IRIS do not ask our clients why they are refugees, and we require that our volunteers and co-sponsorship partners follow this policy as well. This is part of being *trauma-informed,* whereby it is assumed that refugees have experienced trauma to some degree, regardless of how they may appear to us. In addition to applying great sensitivity by not asking for tales of their experiences, it is helpful to adopt a trauma-informed orientation with your family, as the

effects of trauma can be deceiving (e.g., being late for or missing appointments, forgetfulness, inconsistent behavior or moods).

If you notice any behavioral symptoms that are worrisome or problematic and are unsure of how to proceed, please reach out to your case manager or a mental health professional in your community who can help you find appropriate resources.

Mandatory Reporting

As a matter of federal and state law, any individual entrusted with caring for or working with children is required to report suspected or actual child abuse and/or neglect to the Connecticut Department of Children and Families (DCF). While all IRIS clients receive information on stringent US laws covering domestic violence and child abuse/neglect during CORE, occasionally parents may still revert to disciplinary practices that are not acceptable in this country. If you witness or learn of child abuse or neglect endured by the children in your refugee family, it must be reported to DCF.

Certain professionals, such as teachers, doctors, nurses, social workers, case workers (including those at IRIS), guidance counselors, lawyers, and emergency medical technicians (EMTs) are ***required*** to report child abuse and neglect, whether it is suspected or confirmed. If anyone in your group is one of these professionals and is told about abuse or neglect, s/he is also ***required*** to report it to DCF. The mandatory reporter has the right to report to DCF anonymously so that the investigation into abuse or neglect can proceed without her/his direct involvement or the knowledge of the offending family member.

You should contact your family's case manager if you are unsure about whether there is a need to report to DCF. If your case manager deems that the incident must be reported, s/he will suggest that you contact DCF accordingly, since you are closest to the incident and can provide authentic, critical details. If you are uncomfortable doing so, your case manager will be obligated to report based on the information you shared.

If it comes down to DCF investigating the incident, a DCF case worker will contact the family directly in the family's language to arrange for a meeting in their home. DCF is highly trained to deal with cultural issues surrounding adjustment, family dynamics, stress, and anxiety. In our experience with cases involving IRIS clients in New Haven and elsewhere, DCF has aimed first and foremost to work through issues surrounding a given incident with the intent to help the family, not punish the family. Only under the most severe circumstances would measures to be taken to remove a child from the home.

While the need to engage in mandatory reporting is decidedly rare, it is important for your group to know who among you are mandatory reporters and to discuss how such incidents would be handled. Failing to report suspected or actual child abuse/neglect that is allowed to escalate without intervention can result in a fine. In Appendix C, you will find a summary of legal requirements concerning child abuse/neglect in the State of Connecticut that contain details such as which professionals are mandated to report, definitions, and the scope of DCF's authority.

Addressing Social and Cultural Differences

For many refugees, they are arriving in a land replete with a colorful diversity of races, gender roles, faiths/religions, nationalities, and orientations that they may never have seen before. We have found that most refugees are warm, hospitable, and kind and interact well with our staff and volunteers in an atmosphere of mutual respect.
Nonetheless, it is important to discuss key social and cultural factors that your family and your group may encounter while you build your relationships.

Racism

We are all aware of the pervasiveness of racism in the history of our country. Many refugees are also aware of this history and of contemporary issues with regard to race relations: e.g., police shootings of African-Americans and overt discrimination toward Muslims.

This is not to say that some refugees do not come here with racist attitudes. In many Arab cultures, for example, sub-Saharan Africans are often viewed with disdain and contempt. At the same time, some Africans may be deeply distrustful of white people. At IRIS, ethnic/racial groups tend to gravitate toward their own kind, which is a natural tendency and somewhat expected. Nonetheless, we find that increased proximity breaks down barriers as they get used to being in class together, or through working in a diverse workplace.

The challenge for cosponsoring groups is to be aware of racial and cultural attitudes in your communities and the communities in which your family settles. Conversations with neighbors and school officials before your family arrives will be very important. Your refugee children could be the only Iraqi, Congolese, or Afghan child in the school, which may be predominantly white or black. In the best case scenario, they will be embraced by their neighbors and classmates. If elements of racial bias, bullying, or harassment materialize, it will be important for the education person and the contact person to immediately address the issues, while keeping the case manager informed.

Sexism

In many cultures represented among our refugees, the family structure is very traditional, wherein the father is the head of the household and the mother is expected to stay home to tend to the home and care for the children. In some cases, young girls are not permitted to engage in the same kinds of activities that are common among young boys and girls in American culture. For example, sometimes a young girl is expected to come home right after school while her brother is allowed to play soccer with his friends. Similarly, a mother may wish to work and establish her own sense of identity, only to be told not to by her husband. Sometimes this simply reflects adherence to their own cultures without incident, and sometimes cultural adjustment pressures can escalate into situations involving domestic violence.

IRIS addresses domestic violence specifically as part of our federally required Cultural Orientation and Resettlement Education (CORE) program, which all adult refugees are required to attend within roughly one month of their arrival. With respect to less overtly violent

sexism, it is important to be aware while allowing the family to proceed with cultural adjustment at their own pace. By simply being yourselves, you can help this process along, for example, by showing how men and women in your group work together without regard to gender and/or "expected" gender roles (e.g., women in positions of leadership, men not afraid to look after children or cook dinner). Of course, this is a delicate balancing act depending on where your family is from. Women from Syria, Iraq, or Afghanistan may be averse to being alone in a room with a non-related man. And likewise, some men may be hostile toward women whom they perceive to encroach on their authority. In any case, it would be wise for your group to do some additional research, especially once you know who your family is and where they are from.

Homophobia

In all of the countries our refugees are from, LGBTQ rights and freedoms are nonexistent. Indeed, LGBTQ people who suffer persecution are eligible for refugee status and some have been resettled in the US, including New Haven. It is not as common, however, as very few refugee-eligible LGBT people are willing to describe their persecution in the kind of detail required for the rigorous vetting process by the US government. Hence, some may simply apply for refugee status based on other legitimate incidents of persecution (e.g., religion, political affiliation) rather than reveal their sexual orientation as the reason for requesting protection. Those who do come to the US due to persecution based on sexual orientation tend to travel alone and would thus be resettled by IRIS in New Haven.

Homophobia could be a concern for cosponsoring groups is if you have openly LGBTQ committee members, fellow congregants or friends. This is not to suggest that openly LGBTQ individuals should not be part of the core resettlement team that will be interacting frequently with refugees. Quite the contrary. As in the example above with respect to sexism, being yourselves is the best way to help acculturate and educate a refugee family with respect to homophobia. It is unlikely, in our experience, that a refugee would ask, "Are you gay?" or express disdain about an LGBTQ person in front of us. Nonetheless, as the refugee family gets to know people in your group better, and as they start to meet more Americans, you may see signs of inquiry start to emerge when certain cultural biases kick in. For example, a middle-aged gentleman may never bring up whether he is married or not, but that is often one of the first questions an Iraqi man or woman might ask when getting to know him. How he, or any LGBTQ person, answers is ultimately up to her/him, and of course, it depends on the refugee. It all comes back to being your authentic selves while respectfully allowing your refugee family the space to be more culturally sensitive and aware.

The Refugees Might Decide to Leave

Occasionally, refugees choose to move away from their initial resettlement community. This may happen within the first few months, or after a year or more. (In some cases – about 1 in 40 - refugees may move very soon after arriving.) They may move to join relatives or friends, to pursue an avenue of economic support, or to live in a particular kind of climate. Our role is to provide objective information about the pros and cons of moving. In the end, however, refugees are free to make this choice. While it may disrupt our plans (and your plans) or even appear to be a bad choice for the family, we try to view it as a sign of their own independence and, of course, they are allowed to leave. It should not be viewed as a failure.

One of the best antidotes to our feelings of disappointment is to cosponsor another family soon!

Working Toward Independence

Refugees may tend to become overly dependent upon you as a cosponsor. From the day they arrive you will need to work toward independence.

You can help by:

1. Helping them to work toward **economic self-sufficiency** as quickly as possible. This is the fundamental goal of co-sponsorship.
2. Working to develop **healthy two-way friendships** rather than dependent ones.
3. Taking the time to **listen and learn** from them. Their culture, food, language and experiences are fascinating. You will benefit and show them respect while they will gain a sense of dignity and pride in talking about what has been important to them.

A Final Word: Refugee Resettlement is Rewarding … and Messy!

We are all human beings, and anything could happen to one of us, or one of the refugees, at any time. We are dealing with state bureaucracies that will occasionally throw a wrench in your wheels. Your refugee family – like any family - is dealing with life's unpredictable twists and turns.

Keep calm. Cosponsoring refugees is hugely rewarding and a big responsibility. IRIS is here to support you, provide advice, answer questions, and work with you through difficult situations you may encounter. The IRIS Co-Sponsorship Manager has access to the wealth of experience and expertise represented among IRIS staff and long-time volunteers. **You are never alone!**

Many community groups in Connecticut have participated in this wonderful program. If you would like to speak with a group that has had experience resettling refugees, please contact IRIS for their contact information.

Access to the private **Co-Sponsor Portal** containing program forms and resource documents through the IRIS website will be available first to those group members who attend and sign in at a Co-Sponsor Training session. Once trained group members have access to the portal, additional members can be added by contacting the IT Coordinator at IRIS.

Glossary of Acronyms

CIRI	Connecticut Institute for Refugees and Immigrants (formerly IICONN)
CORE	Cultural Orientation and Resettlement Education
DSS	Department of Social Services
EBT	Electronic Benefits Transfer
ELL	English Language Learner
ESOL	English Speakers of Other Languages
IICONN	International Institute of Connecticut (now CIRI – Connecticut Institute for Refugees and Immigrants)
IOM	International Organization for Migration
PA	Principal Applicant
RA	Resettlement Agency
RCA	Refugee Cash Assistance
RHA	Refugee Health Assessment
R&P	Reception and Placement
SIV	Special Immigrant Visa
SNAP	Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
SSA	Social Security Administration
TFA	Temporary Family Assistance
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Appendix A:

Form Completion Guidelines and Timeline

FORM TERM BASICS

PA Name
PA = Principal Applicant, or the member of the family who applied for refugee status on behalf of her/his family. Usually, the PA is the father of the family.

Case Number/#
Typically one family is covered by one case, and therefore one case number. Sometimes adult members of a family come as single cases with different case numbers. Case numbers have a two letter code and a six digit number after the dash. For example, JO=123456 indicates the case was created in Jordan. The case number(s) for your family/family members will be supplied to you at your pre-arrival meeting.

Case Size
This is the size of the case, which may or may not include all family members. You will know at the time of your pre-arrival meeting how many cases and case numbers you will have.

DOA
DOA = Day of Arrival. This will be needed on several IRIS and other government forms.

All forms described below are downloadable from the Co-Sponsor Portal on irisct.org

PRE-ARRIVAL

Faith/Community Group Commitment Form

One of the contact persons for your group must complete sign, and submit this form upon accepting an offer of co-sponsorship from IRIS. Upon receipt, this form will be uploaded to the database of one of our national refugee resettlement agencies, Church World Service (CWS) or Episcopal Migration Ministries (EMM) for reference and contact, if necessary.

Local Resettlement Agency

Please complete but leave the staff contact field blank. We will fill that in once your case has been assigned to one of two co-sponsorship case managers.

Community Group

Provide the name, type, address and contact information for your community group.

Check all activities!

Your group is expected to check all activities listed on the form. The period of time in which these activities would be performed is 180 days.

R&P Home Evaluation and Safety Checklist – *due within 24 hours of family arrival*

This form must be completed and signed either by your housing person or by one of your group's contact persons. It is meant to demonstrate that your group has performed a visual inspection of the property, as well as an evaluation of all items listed. Any items that are not in order before the family arrives must be listed in the "follow up needed" column. Once they are resolved, appropriate notation(s) are to be made in the "date follow up completed" column.

R&P Home Supply List – *due within 24 hours of family arrival*

This form must also be completed by your housing person or by one of your group's contact persons. The items listed are those that are required by the government and must be catalogued. Your group is free to provide other items that are not on this list with cost-consciousness in mind. This completed list must be reviewed with the PA through an interpreter so that s/he and the interpreter can each sign it. Under "case manager name", provide the printed name and signature of one of the group's contact persons.

R&P Core Services Checklist – *due by the 90th day*

This form is to be used by your group's contact person to keep track of service provision from pre-arrival through to the 90th day of your refugee family's R&P Period. It is a critical piece of documentation that must be part of your refugee family's case file to show how and when core services were performed and/or facilitated by your group. The contact person will need to keep this form handy to track services as they happen. The PA and her/his interpreter must print and sign their names with the date, while the contact person would print, sign and date as their reviewer. ***This form will be collected at the final R&P meeting around when the family's 90th day falls.***

POST-ARRIVAL

Next Calendar Day Home Visit Form – *due in 24 hours*

One of the contact persons must visit the refugee family's home and conduct a home visit using this form the day following their arrival. With an interpreter present, go through all items listed and mark as appropriate, noting any concerns or issues that are raised.

Note: Housing orientation, safety procedures, and emergency contacts need to be provided when the family arrives so that they understand how to use appliances and fixtures in the bathroom and kitchen, as well as how to call 911 with the phone you will have provided them. Nonetheless, all items on the form must be reviewed during the next calendar day home visit to ensure understanding once the family has had some time to rest.

Client Contact Information Sheet – *due in 24 hours*

Completing and uploading this sheet as soon as possible allows us to have current cosponsor information, including phone numbers, right away.

Cosponsor Case Management Intake Form – *due on or before the 5th day*

This form is a checklist of items that a co-sponsoring partner contact (CPC) is to explain and review with the help of an interpreter to the PA. It is particularly important that the release forms be explained (completion guidelines below), signed and submitted as soon as possible.

If you need guidance on how to explain the travel loan or how the green card process works, your case manager can provide some talking points for you to cover. These topics will be explained during CORE in detail. In the meantime, however, it is strongly advised that you provide a cursory overview of some of the American cultural and/or legal items listed on the form so that the PA and her/his family are duly informed. If not already submitted, your case manager will collect this form at your first meeting with the family.

Authorization to Release Information Form – *due in 24 hours*

This release form must be completed and signed by each adult in the household, and one parent will list her/his children on her/his form. This form allows IRIS and, by extension, your group's contact person(s) access to important medical, legal, and financial records in the event that the PA or one of her/his family members is in an emergency of some kind. In addition, the form provides for release of information to and from refugee resettlement agencies, federal and state agencies, and local schools, health departments, and other organizations.

Please check all items on this form for release and leave any items that say "other" blank. Please date the form and have the client (PA), interpreter, and CPC each print and sign their names. And please have this form ready for collection at the family's first meeting with your case manager.

Co-Sponsor Photo and Interview Release Form – *due in 24 hours*

This release form must be completed and signed by each adult in the household, and one parent will list her/his children on her/his form. This allows IRIS to fully understand the photo and interview preferences of the parents and of their children when various media organizations inquire or when IRIS holds an event where pictures are being taken. ***It is critical that this form be completed in advance of the family's first meeting with the case manager.*** Knowing your family's photo and interview preferences as soon as possible will make it much easier for you and for IRIS to plan for any occasion that would require verification of their consent to be photographed or interviewed. Please have this form ready for collection at the family's first meeting with your case manager.

DSS Authorization for Disclosure of Information

Recently the Connecticut Department of Social Services (DSS) has required that their own release form be completed and filed with them in order for one or more members of your group to be able to speak on behalf of the adults in your refugee family. This form should be presented at the time of application so that your group's contact person or DSS person can seamlessly inquire over the phone or in person on behalf of the family. Before submitting this form (or

forms, for each adult), please be sure to make a copy of the completed and signed form for yourselves and for IRIS.

POST-ARRIVAL

Employment Assessment and Resettlement Plan

Employment Assessment

By or around the 10th day, your case manager will come to visit the refugee family's home to conduct employment assessments for all employable adults through an interpreter provided by your group. S/he will conduct the assessment and record responses on an Excel workbook on her/his laptop. When the employment assessments are complete, your case manager will send the contact person(s) the entire workbook containing the following tabs in order:

- Case Information
- Employable Assessment
- Non-Employable Assessment
- Family Needs Assessment*
- Action Plan*

**Resettlement Plan – due on or before the 30th day*

Following the employment assessment, one of your contact persons needs to consult with members of your core resettlement team before working with each employable adult to write up a resettlement plan for the family. The resettlement plan comprises the **family needs assessment** and **action plan** tabs in the Excel workbook. Samples of each resettlement plan component are viewable on the Co-Sponsor Portal and are based on an actual IRIS refugee's plan. Once both tabs are complete, the names and signatures of the PA and/or other employable adults in the family need to be placed as appropriate along with the signatures of the co-sponsor and the interpreter at the bottom of the action plan tab.

Once all employment assessment and resettlement plan components are complete and signed, mail or scan in PDF the entire workbook (with the exception of the non-employable assessment) and send it to your case manager for the case file.

It is in your family's best interest that the employment assessment and the resettlement plan are completed as soon as possible. In our experience, occasionally DSS will require evidence of an employment plan in order for the family to receive cash assistance. The employment assessment and resettlement plan provide evidence that IRIS and your group have evaluated employable adults' skills and employability and will be providing them assistance in finding work. IRIS is working with the state to streamline policies across the system so that DSS understands IRIS's role in providing employment assistance and therefore grants the maximum amount of cash assistance at the time of application, which will take place *before* the

employment assessment is conducted. ***It is important that you communicate any issues that may arise at your DSS appointment as soon as possible.***

30th Day Home Visit Form – ***due within 24 hours of visit***

This form must be completed, signed and submitted on or before your refugee family's 30th day in the country. It serves as an additional confirmation of follow-up of any initial issues that may have been apparent after the family's arrival.

Appendix B:

Case File Documentation

DSS Benefit Determination Letters – *copies due within 24 hours of receipt*

When you bring your refugee family to DSS to apply for cash assistance, SNAP (food stamps), and HUSKY (health insurance), the case worker will review the paperwork that we have supplied to you beforehand and process all paperwork. At the conclusion of the appointment, they should tell you verbally what the family will receive once their benefits have been activated.

Make sure that your refugee family is enrolled in **Temporary Family Assistance (TFA)**, ***not*** **Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA)**. RCA is for childless couples and singles only. Some DSS workers mistakenly think because they are refugees that RCA is automatically the appropriate program. There are major differences between the programs and it must be confirmed that a family with dependent children have TFA. ***Once the correct cash assistance program is confirmed, ask the DSS worker for the family's DSS Client ID numbers and forward them to your case manager as soon as possible.***

About 2-3 weeks after the DSS appointment, the family should receive a torrent of mail from DSS. It is very important that your group has established a place or receptacle for all mail so that no DSS correspondence is misplaced.

The DSS and Finance persons should review all DSS documentation to confirm the amounts granted for cash assistance and SNAP. While the maximum cash assistance amount is usually granted, sometimes SNAP is adjusted slightly downward since the family is receiving rental assistance. Once you have determined that the benefits information is correct and the head of household's EBT (also called a "Connect Card") has been activated, please forward copies of **all** DSS documentation received so that we have them for reference in the case file. It is crucial that your group and IRIS be on the same page with respect to benefits so that, if our intervention is required, we have complete information.

Resume(s) – *due on or before the 30th day*

Once you have copies of the employable adults' employment assessments, your employment person will create a resume(s) for use in job searches. We would need copies of all employable adults' resumes.

Referrals for ESOL, Food Bank, and/or Diaper Bank– *copies due on or before the 10th day*

We require documentation in the form of a letter or registration form confirming that adult family members in the household have been registered in ESOL, a local food bank, and/or a local diaper bank. All applicable referrals should be sent to your case manager soon after they are done.

School Registration – *copies due within 48 hours of enrollment*

For those families with school-aged children, we require a letter or other official document confirming registration and enrollment of any children in the family's school district. This should be supplied as soon as possible.

Selective Service Registration – *copy due within 24 hours of registration*

If any males in the family are between ages 18 and 25, they **must** register for Selective Service. This can be done online or on paper. Proof of Selective Service Registration should be forwarded as soon as it is done. If the registrant moves at any time before he turns 26, *he must notify the Selective Service that his address has changed.* In that event, we would also need a copy of the address change.

AR-11 – Federal Change of Address

When your refugee family arrives, your case manager will formally change the family members' address from IRIS to their new address in Connecticut. Your case manager will send you the confirmations for each family member for their records.

Any time the family changes their address before they become US citizens, they MUST file an AR-11 for each family member within 10 days of the change.

They can download or complete the AR-11 on line.

Copies of DSS and HUSKY Cards – *copies due within 24 hours of receipt*

Once the family receives their DSS and HUSKY cards, please copy them and send them to your case manager for the case file.

Apartment/House Lease – *copy due on or before the 30th day*

Once the family arrives, within the first week the contact person(s) should meet with the PA and explain the concept and purpose of the lease. S/he should sign the lease, not only because s/he and the family live in the leased property but also to build credit for future housing rentals. Once the PA signs the lease, please forward a copy to your case manager.

IOM Promissory Note – *copy due on or before the 30th day*

In the IOM bag given to the adults when they travel to the US, you will find a copy of the promissory note detailing the terms of the loan agreement they signed in order to travel. We need a copy of the note for the case file, and your group should review it in order to be familiar with its terms. The payment amount and schedule are negotiable through CWS or EMM, whichever national resettlement agency facilitated their case placement with IRIS.

State Department PRM Letter and Passports – *due within 24 hours of arrival*

All refugees enter the country with a letter containing their pictures and biodata issued by the US Department of State Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM). We must have a copy of this letter for the file, as it is often the only legitimate identification the family has until they obtain a Connecticut ID or driver's license. The copy of this letter should be furnished at the first meeting between the case manager and the family.

Occasionally, families have passports, even though the PRM letter is used and stamped to enter the US. If they have passports, please copy the picture and biodata pages for each family member's passport and send them to your case manager.

Co-Sponsor Case File Checklist

This is an internal form used by case managers and interns in the Community Co-Sponsorship Program to monitor your compliance in submitting required forms and documentation for your refugee family. You are invited to use it as a checklist to keep track of your progress. It is exhibited in Appendix C of this manual.

Appendix C:

Co-Sponsor Case File Checklist

IRIS Rental Assistance Policy

Green Light Form

Confidentiality Agreement

Volunteer Screening, Safety Training and Background Check Guidelines

Volunteer Background Check Policy and Procedure

Co-Sponsor Case Note Guidelines

Green Card Information from IRIS Immigration and Legal Services

Driver's License Guidelines for Holders of Bona Fide Home Country Licenses

Summary of Legal Requirements Concerning Child Abuse/Neglect

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Co-sponsor Case File Checklist

Client (PA): _____ Case Size: ( ) Case Number: _____

Arrival Date: _____

Cosponsor (CS): _____

Case Manager: _____ Contact: _____

File Reviewed by: _____ Date: _____

Content	Due	On File	Note
Faith/Community Group Commitment Form	Before arrival		
Client Contact Information Sheet	24 hours		
R&P Home Evaluation and Safety Checklist	24 hours		
R&P Home Supply List	24 hours		
Next Calendar Day Home Visit Form	24 hours		
Co-sponsor Photo & Interview Release Form	24 hours		
Authorization to Release Information	24 hours		
IOM Promissory Note (copy)	24 hours		
Refugee Travel Letter (copy)	24 hours		
DSS Client ID numbers *available the day of visit*	Day of DSS visit		
DSS Determination Letters (copy) *mailed to client 2-3 weeks after visit*	After DSS visit		
DSS Connect cards (copy) *mailed to client 2-3 weeks after visit*	After DSS visit		
Husky cards (copy) *mailed to client 2-3 weeks after visit*	After DSS visit		
Cosponsor Case Management Intake	5 days		

Content	Due	On File	Note
ESL registration (copy)	10 days		
Lease (signed by client)	30 days		
30 Day Home Visit Form	30 days		
Food bank referral	30 days		
WIC documentation	30 days		
Budget	30 days		
Resettlement Plan (EA/action plan)	30 days		
Resume	30 days		
Cultural Orientation (CO) Assessment	30 days		
Refugee Health Assessment (RHA)	30 days		
School registration (copy) *or proof of registration*	After enrollment		
Employment Information Sheet	After employment		
Medical Follow-up Note	Varies by case		
R&P Core Services Checklist	90 days		
Other			
Other			

Weekly Case Notes:			
WK 1			
WK 2			
WK 3			
WK 4			
WK 5			
WK 6			
WK 7			
WK 8			
WK 9			
WK 10			
WK 11			
WK 12			

INTEGRATED REFUGEE
& IMMIGRANT SERVICES

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IRIS RENTAL ASSISTANCE POLICY[3]
Guidance for IRIS Co-Sponsors

In most cases, refugees need at least 3 months after arriving in the United States to become economically self-sufficient. IRIS aims to estimate how long a client will need to become self- reliant based on certain factors, and helps the client budget accordingly. IRIS will use designated one-time government funding for the family (i.e., $925 per family member, called the "Reception and Placement Grant", or "R&P") as well as IRIS co-sponsor funds to meet client needs for rental assistance, depending on the client's efforts to reach self-sufficiency and the and the length of assistance determined.

Amount IRIS will reimburse the first month of rent from the family's R&P grant and the IRIS Co- Sponsor will pay the security deposit. Beginning in the month that starts after the family has started receiving DSS cash (usually the second month), clients will be required to contribute 50% of their monthly DSS cash assistance toward their rent. IRIS and/or the IRIS Co-Sponsor will contribute the balance of the rent for the time period specified below. In the rare event that clients are not eligible to receive DSS cash assistance (e.g., due to declaration of significant assets upon entering the country), a decision regarding the amount of rental assistance they will receive each month will be made on a case by case basis.

Decision-making Decisions related to IRIS rental assistance are usually made within ten (10) working days of arrival whenever possible. Decisions are made for initial and any subsequent requests for rental assistance by your designated IRIS Co-Sponsorship Case Manager in consultation with the IRIS Co-Sponsor Contact Person and IRIS senior management (i.e., Director of Case Management and/or Executive Director).

Substantial Barriers to Employment The following conditions or circumstances (and/or others of similar severity) will be considered substantial barriers to employment.

1) No employable adult (18 or older and not a full-time student) in the family speaks English at "Level 3" or better (i.e., ability to hold conversations and communicate well).

2) Only one adult (18 or older and not a full-time student) is present in a household that contains one or more children under age 14. **OR** Day care and/or after-school care for children is needed in order for employable adult(s) to be able to work sufficient hours (or a sufficiently flexible schedule) for self-sufficiency. (If the family has a strong preference for one adult to stay home and care for the children, and refuses to consider employment options for this adult, then the presence of small children will <u>not</u> be

[3] Excerpted from the IRIS Financial Assistance Policy Version 2.1, August 2016

considered a substantial barrier to employment.)

3) One or more adults whose employment is needed in order for the family to be self-sufficient has a health condition that needs to be either treated or accommodated in order to make employment and self-sufficiency possible. (That is, only certain kinds of work are possible, or a health condition must be controlled before employment is feasible.)

Duration of assistance for households expected to become self-sufficient via employment

- Clients who have no substantial barriers to employment (see list above) will be eligible for 3 months of IRIS rental assistance. (For this purpose, one month is the time period between, for example, March 12 and April 12, or Sept. 5 and Oct. 5. The number of days included in the time period may vary, due to the number of days in different months. The final month of rental assistance can be pro-rated if necessary.)

- Clients who have one substantial barrier to employment will be eligible for IRIS rental assistance until 4 months after arrival.

- Clients who have two substantial barriers to employment will be eligible for IRIS rental assistance until 5 months after arrival.

- Clients who have three or more substantial barriers to employment will be eligible for IRIS rental assistance until 6 months after arrival.

If employment that makes the client self-sufficient is obtained before the end of pre-determined IRIS rental assistance, the assistance will continue as planned, giving the client the incentive of having both employment income and rental assistance for that time period.

Duration of assistance for households with no employable members

Clients whose plan for achieving self-sufficiency does not involve employment (because all household members are either minors or age 65 & older or disabled or required to be a full-time caregiver for an elderly/disabled person) must prepare to live within the budget of their long term source of income (usually SSI). They will receive 3 months of IRIS assistance and be expected to be fully responsible for rent when the household begins receiving its long-term source of income (usually SSI). (This means the month following the first payment if payment

is received in the middle of the month or the month that payment is received if payment is received on the 1st of the month.) If they have not yet begun to receive their long-term source of income three months after arrival, they may be considered for exceptional rental assistance.

Additional Rental Assistance

If a client does not become self-sufficient by the time their rental assistance runs out, and either the client requests additional support or the IRIS Co-Sponsorship Manager and/or the IRIS Co-Sponsor foresee that the client will not be able to pay rent on time or in full, exceptional rental assistance can be considered.

- If the client has made efforts to progress towards self-sufficiency (attended English class, kept appointments with her/his IRIS Co-Sponsor, applied for jobs, paid their portion of rent on time and in full, showed general respect for all IRIS policies and met expectations regarding behavior, cooperation, communication, etc.), they may be granted an additional month of rental assistance by either IRIS or the IRIS Co-Sponsor. Their case can be considered again each month until they become self-sufficient.

- If the client has not made these efforts, other factors especially as related to the specific nature of the client's lease agreement may also affect the decision. Sometimes IRIS will be obliged to provide additional assistance outright or in cooperation with the IRIS Co-Sponsor in order to meet legal obligations under the lease or to preserve the working relationship with the landlord. If granted, this assistance will be a direct payment to the landlord. In some cases, if repayment is considered likely and necessary because of the client's lack of compliance, IRIS and/or the IRIS Co-Sponsor may consider the assistance in the form of a loan to the client. If so, a realistic timeframe for repayment will be determined and a loan agreement must be signed by the client before the assistance can be given.

If a client is granted additional rental assistance, the contribution from the client will be the following, where the Co-Sponsor contributes the difference:

- 1st month after end of rental assistance period: 62.5% of ***income*** (i.e., work and/or DSS)
- 2nd month after end of rental assistance period: 75% of ***income***
- 3rd month after end of rental assistance period: remain at previous month's payment amount, but assistance is given in the form of an interest-free **loan**. The client and Co-Sponsor should sign a simple agreement stating that the client will begin repaying the loan to the Co-Sponsor as soon as her/his income permits.

Any rental assistance will be made in the form of a direct payment to the landlord. A client's eligibility for additional rental assistance will be reassessed each month.

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Cosponsor "Green Light" Form

DATE: _____

COSPONSOR GROUP NAME: _____

Please check each of the following:

- ☐ Our Core Team of at least 10 is organized with clearly defined roles and responsibilities. Together, we are ready to devote 40 hrs/week to resettlement tasks for the first month.
- ☐ We have vetted volunteers who will be working directly with refugees: We have verified that all volunteers have had a background check through Verified Volunteers (IRIS will provide a link). In addition, those who will be alone with children must also have done some form of youth protection training (e.g., "safe church" training.) For all volunteers who will be driving refugee family members, we have a copy of their drivers licenses and proof of insurance.
- ☐ We have had all the Core team members and interpreters sign the IRIS confidentiality agreement.
- ☐ Our Health point people have familiarized themselves with the IRIS resources on Refugee Health Assessments (RHAs) and Mental Health and have identified an RHA provider in our area
- ☐ We have identified primary care providers and mental health providers in our area who are taking new patients, accept HUSKY, and provide interpreters.
- ☐ We have a mental-health emergency plan in place.
- ☐ We are confident that we can secure affordable housing on 10-15 days' notice. (2, 3, or 4BRs)
- ☐ Someone or institution affiliated with our group is willing to co-sign the lease.
- ☐ All furniture and household items are collected or at least identified
- ☐ The apartment set-up team is ready to prepare the apartment
- ☐ We have raised $4,000-$10,000 for up to 6 months of rental assistance.
- ☐ We have identified interpreters who are willing and available to assist with all important meetings in at least 2 of the following language(s) (Please check any and all that apply):
  ☐ Arabic ☐ Farsi/Dari ☐ Pashto ☐ Swahili ☐ Kinyarwanda ☐ Tigrinya ☐ Amharic

For groups that have already co-sponsored at least one family

- ☐ The refugees we have cosponsored are self-sufficient with regard to finances and transportation.
- ☐ Our group is not providing any continuing services to the family.

Contact Person(s) Name(s) and Signature(s): [can be typed electronically]

_____

Green Light Approval from IRIS

_____

INTEGRATED REFUGEE
& IMMIGRANT SERVICES

235 Nicoll Street
Second Floor
New Haven, CT 06511

TELEPHONE: (203) 562-2095
FAX: (203) 562-1798
EMAIL: info@irisct.org
WEB: irisct.org

CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

To: All IRIS Volunteers and Staff

From: Chris George, Executive Director

Re: Access to Refugee Client Records and Information

Your work at Integrated Refugee & Immigrant Services (IRIS) will involve access to names and other information regarding IRIS clients.

IRIS adheres to the highest standards of confidentiality in the management of client information. This means that:

- Your knowledge of names of IRIS clients or your possession of any other information about IRIS clients is to be shared with absolutely no one outside of the agency unless required by law to do so.
- Discussion of client-related information within the agency and cosponsor partner organizations is to be limited to what is necessary and appropriate to the completion of work assignments and other client-centered tasks.
- Information shared with any community organization outside IRIS and its cosponsor partner organizations is to be limited to information on bio-data as needed.

Violation of confidentiality will be viewed very seriously.

By signing below you verify that you have read and understood the information presented above.

Signature _____

Date _____

Print Name _____

Please turn over to read and sign to acknowledge understanding of the IASC Six Core Principles Relating to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

IASC Six Core Principles Relating to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

1. Sexual exploitation and abuse by humanitarian workers constitute acts of gross misconduct and are therefore grounds for termination of both employment and the right to participate in IRIS programming and initiatives.

2. Sexual activity with children (persons under the age of 18) is prohibited regardless of the age of majority or age of consent locally. Mistaken belief regarding the age of a child is not a defense.

3. Exchange of money, employment, goods, or services for sex, including sexual favors or other forms of humiliating, degrading, or exploitative behavior is prohibited. This includes exchange of assistance that is due to beneficiaries.

4. Sexual relationships between humanitarian workers and beneficiaries are strongly discouraged since they are based on inherently unequal power dynamics. Such relationships undermine the credibility and integrity of humanitarian aid work.

5. Where a humanitarian worker develops concerns or suspicions regarding sexual abuse or exploitation by a fellow worker, whether in the same agency or not, he or she must report such concerns via established agency reporting mechanisms.

6. Humanitarian workers are obliged to create and maintain an environment which prevents sexual exploitation and abuse and promotes the implementation of their code of conduct. Managers at all levels have particular responsibilities to support and develop systems which maintain this environment.

I acknowledge that I have read and understand the **IASC Six Core Principles Relating to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse**, have received a copy of this policy and agree to comply with the policy. *I understand that agreeing to comply with this policy is a condition of employment and/or participation in volunteer activities at IRIS. I understand that violating this policy may result in disciplinary action, suspension and/or termination of employment and/or the right to participate in IRIS programming and initiatives.*

Date _____

Employee/
Volunteer Signature _____

Print Name _____

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VOLUNTEER SCREENING, SAFETY TRAINING, AND BACKGROUND CHECK GUIDELINES FOR CO-SPONSORS

Volunteer Screening

As an IRIS co-sponsor, you are expected to carefully screen all volunteers who want to work with your group. We ask that groups get to know their volunteers well enough to judge their cultural sensitivity, interpersonal skills, and attitude toward refugees. By checking the box on the Green Light Form, you are confirming that you have a volunteer screening process in place.

Safety Training

If your community group is a religious organization that requires safe conduct and boundary training for childcare workers or volunteers, and if your volunteers working with children have done that training, you may check the box certifying that Safety Training has been done for those who work with children. The most basic childcare practice, that IRIS requires all groups to follow, is to require at least two adults be present at all times with the refugee children. OR: is to require that an adult volunteer never be alone with a single child; there must always be either a second adult or a second child present.

Background Checks

Following recommendations from our national refugee resettlement partners, IRIS now requires groups to conduct a background check ***for all active volunteers and interpreters.*** The $21 cost for each check would come out of your group's budget and will be facilitated through the IRIS account of Verified Volunteers. The group contact person will need to send a roster of active volunteers and interpreters to her/his IRIS case manager so that we can monitor the completion of background checks centrally. Checks can be undertaken individually by each volunteer and interpreter and results will be revealed within 48-72 hours. Please see "Volunteer Background Check Policy and Procedure" in this appendix for detailed information and directions.

Current Co-Sponsorship Volunteers

Co-sponsor group volunteers who are still active as of February 1, 2018 and will have contact with refugee clients who have been in the US less than 12 months (i.e., refugees who arrived on or after February 1, 2017) are required to have background checks by **February 1, 2018**.

New Groups and Re-Ups

For groups that are in the co-sponsorship pipeline (new groups and re-ups), IRIS will require background checks through Verified Volunteers of *all* volunteers from November 1, 2017.

Volunteer Background Check Policy and Procedure

November 2017 (Referenced Templates and Letters To Be Added)

The following outlines the policies and procedures of IRIS in regard to volunteer and intern background checks using the service Verified Volunteers. This policy will demonstrate which staff members hold responsibility for conducting volunteer and intern background checks; the process for all volunteers and interns before, during, and after they are asked to submit a background check through Verified Volunteers; the role of co-sponsorship groups; and the process for volunteers or interns for whom payment of the background check costs would be a barrier to volunteering at IRIS.

Section I. Volunteer Coordinator

The role of the Volunteer Coordinator is to oversee the application process for all who apply to volunteer or intern with IRIS.

The application process to become a new volunteer or intern at IRIS is as follows:

1. Apply via online application at irisct.org, for those who will be volunteering at IRIS in New Haven. Those applying to volunteer with Co-sponsors will follow the application procedures of each co-sponsor group.
2. Application is reviewed by Volunteer Coordinator or Volunteer Coordination intern for those who will be volunteering at IRIS in New Haven to ensure that applicant has the appropriate experience and availability for the volunteer/intern position. Applicants in New Haven are referred to staff member (varies based on volunteer/intern position) for interview.
3. Staff member alerts Volunteer Coordinator that they would like to accept the applicant into their department.
4. Character reference checks are completed.
5. Volunteer receives an email invitation to orientation which includes a background check invitation link to Verified Volunteers. For co-sponsor volunteers, each group will have a designated volunteer coordinator responsible for sending interested volunteers a background check invitation.
6. Volunteer is responsible to complete online background check through Verified Volunteers platform before attending orientation in New Haven or with co-sponsor group.
7. Verified Volunteers send background check results electronically to IRIS Volunteer Coordinator (for IRIS New Haven volunteer) or co-sponsor leaders (for co-sponsor led volunteer) for review. If any adverse events are identified, the following steps will occur:
    a. Pre-adverse action notice sent to volunteers who are flagged in background check.
    b. Volunteers have two weeks to respond to adverse action letter with explanation of their background check results
    c. IRIS or co-sponsor team lead makes final decision about whether or not to accept volunteer and sends second letter (formatted below) informing volunteer of decision.
8. Accepted volunteers attend an orientation with Volunteer Coordinator, Acculturation Programs Coordinator, or Co-Sponsor team.

Section II. Co-sponsorship Groups

All co-sponsorship groups will be required to follow IRIS policies regarding background checks. Co-sponsor group chairs will identify the individual within their group responsible for managing their group's Verified Volunteers account and communicate contact information (Full Name, Phone Number, Email Address, Preferred Username) for that individual to the IRIS Co-Sponsorship Manager. The IRIS Volunteer Coordinator will provide that information to Verified Volunteers to set-up an account for the group within the IRIS "parent" account. The co-sponsor account will be set-up by Verified Volunteers within 2-3 days of their receipt of the information. An email notification will be sent by Verified Volunteers to the co-sponsor account manager with instructions on set-up, a training demonstration and full access to Verified Volunteers webinars and staff for additional training.

Co-sponsorship group Verified Volunteers accounts will function as a chapter of the IRIS account and will only have access to the volunteers from their site location. IRIS will have access to all co-sponsorship group accounts should the need arise.

Co-sponsorship groups will be responsible for following the Verified Volunteers and IRIS adverse action policies in regard to flagged background checks as detailed in Section V. Adverse Action Protocol.

Section III. Financial Costs to IRIS

IRIS will cover the cost of background checks for those with financial hardships (see guidelines below) in New Haven. All other New Haven-based volunteers will pay the cost of their own background check.

Co-sponsorship groups will decide independently whether their group or their volunteers will pay for the background checks and whether any financial hardship exceptions are to be made.

Section IV. Financial Hardship Qualifications

Some volunteers or interns may qualify for assistance with paying for their required background check. Any person seeking to have IRIS cover the cost of their background check must meet one or more of the following criteria:

- Full time students currently enrolled in an educational program (high school, college, university, etc.);
- Currently receiving any DSS benefits (SNAP, TANF, Medicaid); and/or
- Recently unemployed.

The Volunteer Coordinator will be responsible for reviewing all requests for financial hardship assistance using the above criteria. If the applicant is deemed to have a financial hardship they will be emailed a new link to Verified Volunteers allowing them to defer the cost of the background check to IRIS.

Section V. Adverse Action Protocol[1]

IRIS will request that Verified Volunteers "flag" a background check when the following records are discovered in a potential volunteer's check:

- A violent criminal record, including sex crimes, convictions for child or domestic abuse, or drug-related convictions.

- Fraud or theft convictions, including bankruptcies, thefts, and identity theft.

In all occasions when a potential volunteer is flagged (regardless of their skill set or potential usefulness as a volunteer), they will be notified by the IRIS Volunteer Coordinator (or by co-sponsor group volunteer coordinator) that an "adverse action" report from the results of their background check is being reviewed. This will happen through the following steps, as required by law:

1. Pre-Adverse Action Notice sent to let potential volunteer know their background content is not in compliance with IRIS's background check policy (see attached template email).
2. IRIS will provide them access to their background check report, a copy of "A Summary of Your Rights under the Fair Credit Reporting Act," and five business days to dispute the accuracy or completeness of information in the report. This allows the applicant time to respond to the findings and dispute any inaccuracies.
3. If the volunteer does not dispute the contents of their background check within five business days, or if they dispute the contents but the IRIS staff person and their direct supervisor (or co-sponsor leader) are not satisfied with the response, then IRIS or co-sponsor leader will send a "post adverse action" letter (this notice should be sent in writing) indicating that the matter is closed and the potential volunteer is ineligible for volunteer programs. The following information must be included in the letter: [2]
    a. State that the adverse action is based either in whole or part on information contained in the background report provided by the Consumer Reporting Agency (CRA).
    b. Name, address, and toll free telephone number of the CRA you used.
    c. Statement that the CRA supplying the background report had no hand in the decision to take adverse action and cannot give specific reasons for it.
    d. Notice of applicant's right to dispute the accuracy or completeness of the provided information (covered in the Pre-Adverse action).
    e. Notice of applicant's right to another free consumer report. This is provided upon request of the CRA within 60 days.
    f. While oral adverse action notices are allowed, written notices provide proof of FCRA compliance.

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[1] Adapted using Verified Volunteers article "Navigating the Adverse Action Process for Volunteers" by Laura Stroud on 12 May 2016.

[2] Adapted using Verif1rst article "Adverse Action Notice: Common Compliance Questions" by Ryan Howard on 04 May 2017.

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If it's not documented, it didn't happen!

COSPONSOR CASE NOTE GUIDELINES

Three types of case notes are required in order to document the set-up, arrival, and resettlement of refugee families by cosponsors in the first 90 days and thereafter: *Mandated Case Notes*, *Weekly Summaries*, and *Incidental Case Notes* (the content of these may be included with the Weekly Summaries). All of these should be completed by the main contact person based on information from the primary team members involved in each task. In some cases this will be the same person.

Mandated Case Notes

IRIS has provided a Case Note Template for Cosponsor Cases that utilizes the federally mandated language (noted in red type) for each of the core services that must be noted within the first 90 days. This is available on Google Docs (see "case notes" folder) or downloaded from the Cosponsor Portal on the IRIS website (requires a passcode) beginning May 15, 2017. There are 13 required notes beginning with Pre-Arrival Set Up continuing through the CORE/cultural orientation assessments (to be completed after the CORE training held at IRIS). **Fill in the missing information**, **add additional information where possible**, and **date each note**. Include names and necessary details where possible. Cut and paste the entire note in an email and submit it to your case manager Jan Holton (jholton@irisct.org) or Greg Marino (gmarino@irisct.org).

These mandatory case notes run concurrent with the weekly case note summaries until they are complete (most are complete by day 30). Afterward, the weekly case note summaries will suffice unless there are incidents or events that require special notation.

Incidental Case Notes

Incidental Case Notes are required to document any special circumstances or events that affect the client (especially within the first 90 days) including for example: major problems, emergency medical or mental health difficulties, delays or disruptions in cash assistance or SNAP, conditions that threaten employment, and the like. All notes should include the name of the client (family member) affected, names of cosponsor person/s and agencies involved in assisting the client during the event. Provide as many relevant details as possible about the event and outcome (day, time, circumstances, who was present, location of the event, who responded, outcome, expected follow up, etc.). This note may be attached to the Weekly Summary Note for that week but should exist as a separate note.

Weekly Case Note Summaries

Weekly Case Note summaries are intended to provide an overview of the key events and services affecting the clients during each week throughout the 90-day R&P period. These should be written in narrative form and in reverse chronological order (always put the most recent note at the top if you choose to create a continuous weekly log). All notes should be written in the third person voice, objective, clear, and to the point and reflect the facts of the event/s and/or outcomes being described.

> **Ex**. This week included attention to multiple medical matters. Sue Jones (name of person) took the three youngest children, Abdul, Safaa, Mohammad, accompanied by their mother Fatima to the dentist (Dr. Smith, D.D.S.) where the three children had appointments for initial exams and cleanings. All three had extensive cavities that will require multiple follow up visits which are now scheduled. Children handled the exam well and were calm and cooperative. Fatima was nervous but thankful for the good care provided by the dentist….

Do not include unnecessary opinions or other non- essential information. (Ex. The lines were very long and we had to wait 3 hours which made us late for lunch.). Do not list the days of the week and name the events of the days.

Monthly Case Note Summaries

Following the 90-dau R&P period, we would request you to send your case manager monthly summaries. While they are not mandatory, they nonetheless would highlight both progress toward self-sufficiency and any particular problems and/or issues for your case manager's information.

JH 5/2017

GREEN CARD APPLICATION, FORM I-485 - MEDICAL EXAMINATIONS, FORM I-693 (Rev 8/2017)

The Form I-485 application requires you to submit a Form I-693 Medical Examination. You can choose any civil surgeon listed on the USCIS website, www.uscis.gov. Below we list two doctors in New Haven who have provided IRIS clients with this service regularly, but you are free to go to anyone on the USCIS list. The doctor's office has the Form I-693. You will need to sign the medical exam form at the doctor's office. Please read the full instructions here: https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/files/form/i-693instr.pdf

You must call the doctor's office to verify the fee, find out what medical records (including vaccination records) you need to bring to him/her, and schedule an appointment. You can ask your IRIS health advocate or case manager for advice on how to obtain your medical records. Bring your vaccination records with you when you go to the civil surgeon.

Be sure the civil surgeon knows you are a refugee (the I-693 is completed differently for non-refugees). If you are a refugee and already had a medical exam overseas, you do not need to repeat the entire exam – unless your medical exam overseas found you to have a Class A medical condition. (A Class A condition is a communicable disease of public health significance per HHS regulation; a failure to present documentation of having received vaccinations against vaccine-preventable diseases; present or past physical or mental disorder with associated harmful behavior or harmful behavior that is likely to recur; and/or drug abuse or addiction.)

Please make sure the civil surgeon knows that he/she must only complete Parts 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, and 9 of the form. Parts 1 and 2 are filled out by the applicant; part 3 is filled out by the interpreter; and parts 4, 6, and 9 are to be filled out by the civil surgeon.

After your examination, please bring the sealed envelope to IRIS Immigration Legal Services. Do not open the envelope. We will send the sealed envelope with the Form I-485 to USCIS. The Form I-693 is valid for one year.

Dr. Patrick Asiedu, Chapel Medical Group
1308 Chapel Street, New Haven, CT 06511
(203) 865-5111
**Call the doctor's office to confirm hours open and the medical exam fee*

- No walk-ins. Must call ahead to schedule an appointment
- Bring medical records, I-94 and govt. issued photo ID (CT ID card or Driver's License, Employment Authorization Card, or Passport)
- Dr. Asiedu's office accepts some health care plans, including Husky, but there may be deductibles.
- Older clients (65 and older) will need Pneumonia vaccination
- Additional charges may be added, if clients need any additional services (i.e. flu shots).
- Insurance Policy: The client has to pay upfront and if the insurance covers what the client had already paid for, then the client will be issued a refund (check mailed by billing department).

Dr. Mallick Q. Alam, New Haven Walk-In Medical Center
77 Grand Avenue, New Haven, CT 06513
(203) 562-8697
**Walk-in clinic. No appointment needed. Call the doctor's office to confirm*

- Fees: Standard fee is $75 plus insurance. Fees can change depending on what a client might need; USCIS may also require different seasonal vaccines (i.e. flu shots).
- Accepts most insurance: Husky, Anthem Blue Shield, Aetna, United Health Care.
- Bring medical records, I-94, Social Security Card and a govt. issued photo ID (CT ID card or Driver's License, Employment Authorization Card, or Passport.)
- Older clients (65 and older) will need Pneumonia vaccination.

Driver's License Guidelines
for Holders of Bona Fide Home Country Licenses

1. Go to ct.gov/dmv
2. "How can we help you?" Click on circle with "Driver's licenses & ID's"
3. Under heading "Applying for a License" click on ">Driver's License"
4. Under "Verified Driver's License" Click on "Ages 18 and older"
5. You will see in bold letters "Individuals exempt from this 90-day requirement are:" The third bullet is "Any customer that held a driver's license in the past. This includes...out-of-country license. Must provide expired license...from previous state or country."

For additional questions, call 1.800.842.8222, press 1, then 2, then 1.

A list of approved DMV translators can be found here: http://www.ct.gov/dmv/cwp/view.asp?a=805&q=558024

SUMMARY OF LEGAL REQUIREMENTS CONCERNING CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT

from p. 2 of CT Form DCF-136 10/1/02 (Rev)

PUBLIC POLICY OF THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT

To protect children whose health and welfare may be adversely affected through injury and neglect; to strengthen the family and to make the home safe for children by enhancing the parental capacity for good child care; to provide a temporary or permanent nurturing and safe environment for children when necessary; and for these purposes to require the reporting of suspected child abuse, investigation of such reports by a social agency, and provision of services, where needed, to such child and family.

WHO IS MANDATED TO REPORT CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT?

Battered Women's Counselors
Chiropractors
Dental Hygienists
Dentists Physical
Department of Children and Families Employees
Licensed/Certified Alcohol and Drug Counselors
Licensed/Certified Emergency Medical Services Providers
Licensed Marital and Family Therapists
Licensed or Unlicensed Resident Interns
Licensed or Unlicensed Resident Physicians
Licensed Physicians
Licensed Practical Nurses
Licensed Professional Counselors
Licensed Surgeons
Medical Examiners
Members of the Clergy
Mental Health Professionals
Optometrists
Parole Officers (Juvenile or Adult)
Pharmacists
Therapists
Physician Assistants
Podiatrists
Police Officers
Probation Officers (Juvenile or Adult)
Psychologists
Registered Nurses
School Coaches
School Guidance Counselors
School Paraprofessionals
School Principals
School Teachers
Sexual Assault Counselors
Social Workers

Any person paid to care for a child in any public or private facility, child day care center, group day care home or family day care home which is licensed by the State.

Department of Public Health employees responsible for the licensing of child day care centers, group day care homes, family day care homes or youth camps.

The Child Advocate and any employee of the Office of the Child Advocate.

DO THOSE MANDATED TO REPORT INCUR LIABILITY?

No. Any person, institution or agency which, in good faith, makes or does not make a report, shall be immune from any civil or criminal liability provided such person did not perpetrate or cause such abuse or neglect.

IS THERE A PENALTY FOR NOT REPORTING?

Yes. Any person, institution or agency required to report who fails to do so shall be fined $500.00 - $2,500.00 and shall be required to participate in an educational and training program.

IS THERE A PENALTY FOR MAKING A FALSE REPORT?

Yes. Any person, institution or agency who knowingly makes a false report of child abuse or neglect shall be fined not more than $2,000.00 or imprisoned not more than one year or both. The identity of such person shall be disclosed to the appropriate law enforcement agency and to the alleged perpetrator of the abuse.

WHAT ARE THE REPORTING REQUIREMENTS?

• An oral report shall be made by a mandated reporter by telephone or in person to the DCF Careline or to a law enforcement agency as soon as practicable, but not later than 12 hours after the mandated reporter has reasonable cause to suspect or believe that a child has been abused or neglected or placed in imminent risk of serious harm. If a law enforcement agency receives an oral report, it shall immediately notify Careline. Oral reports to the Careline shall be recorded on tape.

• Within forty-eight hours of making an oral report, a mandated reporter shall submit a written report to the DCF Careline.

• When the report concerns an employee of a facility or institution which is licensed by the State, the mandated reporter shall also send a copy of the written report to the executive head of the state licensing agency.

DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Child Abuse: any child or youth who has a non-accidental physical injury, or injuries which are at variance with the history given of such injuries, or is in a condition which is the result of maltreatment such as, but not limited to, malnutrition, sexual molestation, deprivation of necessities, emotional maltreatment or cruel punishment.

Child Neglect: any child or youth who has been abandoned or is being denied proper care and attention, physically, educationally, emotionally, or morally or is being permitted to live under conditions, circumstances or associations injurious to his wellbeing.

Exception: The treatment of any child by an accredited Christian Science practitioner shall not of itself constitute neglect or maltreatment.

Child Under 13 with Venereal Disease: a physician or facility must report to Careline upon the consultation, examination or treatment for venereal disease of any child not more than twelve (12) years old.

DO PRIVATE CITIZENS HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY FOR REPORTING?

Yes. Any person having reasonable cause to suspect or believe that any child or youth under the age of eighteen (18) is in danger of being abused or has been abused or neglected, may cause a written or oral report to be made to the Careline or a law enforcement agency. A person making the report in good faith is also immune from any liability, civil or criminal. However, the person is subject to the penalty for making a false claim.

WHAT IS THE AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES (DCF)?

All children's protective services are the responsibility of the Department of Children and Families.

Upon the receipt of a child abuse/neglect report, the Careline shall cause the report to be classified, evaluated immediately and forwarded to the appropriate investigation unit for the commencement of an investigation within timelines specified by statute and policy.

If the investigation produces evidence of child abuse/neglect, the Department shall take such measures as it deems necessary to protect the child, and any other children similarly situated, including, but not limited to, immediate notification to the appropriate law enforcement agency, and the removal of the child or children from his home with the consent of the parents or guardian or by order of the Superior Court, Juvenile Matters.

If the Department has probable cause to believe that the child or any other child in the household is in imminent risk of physical harm from his surroundings, and that immediate removal from such surroundings is necessary to ensure the child's safety, the Commissioner or designee shall authorize any employee of the Department or any law enforcement officer to remove the child and any other child similarly situated from such surroundings without the consent of the child's parent or guardian. The removal of a child shall not exceed ninety-six (96) hours. If the child is not returned home within such ninety-six hour period, with or without protective services, the Department shall file a petition for custody with the Superior Court, Juvenile Matters.

WHAT MEANS ARE AVAILABLE FOR REMOVING A CHILD FROM HIS HOME?

• 96-Hour Hold by the Commissioner of DCF (see above)

• 96-Hour Hold by a Hospital – Any physician examining a child with respect to whom abuse or neglect is suspected shall have the right to keep such child in the custody of a hospital for no longer than ninety-six hours in order to perform diagnostic tests and procedures necessary to the detection of child abuse or neglect and to provide necessary medical care with or without the consent of such child's parents or guardian or other person responsible for the child's care, provided the physician has made reasonable attempts to (1) advise such child's parents or guardian or other person responsible for the child's care that he suspects the child has been abused or neglected and (2) obtain consent of such child's parents or guardian or other person responsible for the child's care. In addition, such physician may take or cause to be taken photographs of the area of trauma visible on a child who is the subject of such report without the consent of such child's parent's or guardian or other person responsible for the child's care. All such photographs or copies thereof shall be sent to the local police department and the Department of Children and Families.

• Custody Order – Whenever any person is arrested and charged with an offense under Section 53-20 or 53-21 or under Part V, VI, or VII of Chapter 952, as amended, the victim of which offense was a minor residing with the defendant, any judge of the Superior Court may, if it appears that the child's condition or circumstances surrounding his case so require, issue an order to the Commissioner of the Department of Children and Families to assume immediate custody of such child and, if the circumstances so require, any other children residing with the defendant and to proceed thereon as in cases reported.

WHAT IS THE CHILD ABUSE CENTRAL REGISTRY?

The Department of Children and Families maintains a registry of reports received and permits its use on a twenty-four hour daily basis to prevent or discover child abuse of children. Required confidentiality is ensured.

DCF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT CARELINE: 1-800-842-2288

STATUTORY REFERENCES: §17a-28; §17a-101 et. seq.; §46b-120.