

Welcome Corps Program

Helping Refugees Resettle in the U.S.

A Brief Overview

Welcome Corps Program

Designed by the U. S. State Department (SD) and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to empower everyday Americans to form Private Sponsor Groups (PSGs) to:

- Sponsor refugees arriving through the U. S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP)
- Directly support their resettlement
- Make a difference welcoming them into their communities.
- Help these refugees build new lives in the U.S. and realize their full potential.

View message from U. S. Secretary of State Anthony Blinken (next slide).



Rotary's Vision for the Future

Together, we see a world where people unite and take action to create lasting change – across the globe, in our communities, and in ourselves.

Information about Refugees

Refugees Eligible to Participate in the Welcome Corps Program:

- Individuals outside of the U. S. who have been forced to flee their home countries due to persecution or a fear of persecution based on race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion.
- Often live in refugee camps and cities outside of their home countries until they can either return home, locally integrate within the country to which they fled, or be permanently resettled to a third country like the United States.
- Have been found to be refugees by the U. S. Department of Homeland Security's U. S. Citizenship and Immigration Services.
- Have been approved for resettlement in the U. S. through the U. S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP)

Additional Information about Refugees

- Have passed health and security clearances.
- Have been assigned official refugee status.
- Can legally work in the U.S.
- Will be eligible for citizenship in five years.

Consortium Partners

Consortium Partners working with SD and HHS:

- Church World Service/Refugee Welcome Collective
- Community Sponsorship Hub (CSH)
- Integrated Refugee and Immigrant Services (IRIS)
- International Refugee Assistance Project (IRAP)
- International Rescue Committee (IRC)
- Welcome.US

Partner Sponsor Groups

Who Can Serve as Private Sponsor Groups

- American citizens and lawful permanent residents.
- Must have at least 5 members over the age of 18 who live in or near the same community.
- Can be formed by neighbors, work colleagues, members of faith groups, book clubs, and another group of adults who together meet the requirements.
- Must demonstrate they have the capacity to welcome refugees.
- Do not need to identify a particular refugee in their application. Welcome Corps will match sponsors to refugees for resettlement to the U. S.

Responsibilities of Private Sponsor Groups

- Welcoming refugees at the airport
- Providing Financial Support for the first 90 days (\$2,275 per refugee)
- Securing safe, sanitary, and affordable housing, along with furnishings and housing supplies.
- Obtaining important documents (e.g., social security card, employment authorization, state ID)
- Helping children enroll in school and obtaining childcare /child development services
- Helping adults find employment
- Locating where to shop for food and clothing

Responsibilities of Private Sponsor Groups (contd)

- Accessing public benefits and services (e.g., Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), health services)
- Obtaining support to improve their English communication skills
- Accessing translation services
- Facilitating cultural connections and providing an orientation to the community
- Accessing transportation support.
- Collaborating with refugee family to transition from sponsorship to self-sufficiency of the family
- Providing reports, along with the refugee family, on how the sponsorship program is going.

Criteria to Serve as a Private Sponsor Group

Requirements to Participate as a Private Sponsor Group:

- Five or more individuals are needed to sponsor a single refugee or family.
- \$2,275.00 per refugee is needed.
- Sponsor groups need to have raised at least 60% of the total funding needed to apply to be matched with a refugee or refugee family.
- Commit to help refugees with re-settlement efforts for at least 90 days.
- Complete and submit for review a Welcome Plan application.
- Application review will take a few weeks.
- Sponsored refugees will arrive 1-2 months after the PSG application is approved.
- PSG will receive updates throughout the process, including flight details, so that they can greet refugees at the airport and then take them to their first home.

Additional Information

Information about Refugees provided to Partner Sponsor Group ahead of time:

- Country of Origin
- Names and birthdays of all family members
- Job and educational history
- Languages spoken
- English-Speaking Ability

Goals of Welcome Corps Program for Year One

- Have 10,000 Americans welcome 5,000 refugees.
- Many of the refugees who will be welcomed by private sponsors in the first few months of the Welcome Corps will come from Sub-Saharan Africa, where they have been waiting for years.
- Beginning in mid-2023, Welcome Corps will expand to allow private sponsors to identify refugees in need of protection whom they wish to sponsor and refer refugee applicants for consideration to the U. S. Refugee Assistance Program , subject to program criteria established by the U. S.

Additional Information

Complete information about the Welcome Corps Program, including application details, how the program will be implemented, and how Private Sponsor Groups will operate, is available at <https://welcomecorps.org>.

To learn more, can register to participate in an information sharing session scheduled on one of the following dates at 6:00 p.m. (CST):

February

9, 16, 23

March

2, 9, 16, 23

You can register by doing the following:

- Go to <https://welcomecorps.org>
- Scroll down to the link titled *Join a Live Session*
- Register for the date you wish.

Private Sponsor Groups will receive information about resources and periodic updates.

District 5930 Contacts for Welcome Corps Program (Will provide updates to District)

- Tim Dowling: tdowling@albmlaw.com
- Greg Perkes: Gperkes@perkeslaw.com

QUESTIONS?