



A GUIDE FOR *Welcome Teams*

FORMING A *WELCOME TEAM*

Thank you for supporting our mission to transform communities through just and sustainable responses to hunger, poverty, displacement, and disaster.

By forming a "Welcome Team," you are dedicating your time to furnishing the home of an arriving refugee family, providing them with essential items necessary for their successful integration into the community. Your efforts give these families the unique and life-changing experience of turning their house into a home. This is hugely impactful for refugee families arriving in the United States with very little, facing daily obstacles as they rebuild their lives.

This guidebook is designed to outline the process of furnishing homes and to answer any questions you may have about the process. We hope it serves as a valuable resource throughout your volunteer experience.



Our vision is a world where everyone has food, voice and a safe place to call home.

A NOTE OF THANKS

Thank you for joining us at CWS Durham in our mission to support refugees in their journey towards self-sufficiency and integration into our community. By furnishing homes for arriving families, you are doing more than just providing essential comfort—you are creating a sense of belonging and stability that is crucial for their successful integration into our community. Your hard work and compassion are the heart of our mission, and we are deeply grateful for your support.

Thank you for making a significant difference in the lives of our new neighbors. We are honored to have you on our team and look forward to the positive impact we will achieve together.

OUR SERVICES

This R&P Program serves refugees during their first **90 days** in the U.S. through securing and furnishing housing and providing cultural orientation, community navigation support, and basic needs assistance. As a refugee resettlement agency, CWS follows strict guidelines to provide core services.

U.S. Refugee Reception and Placement (R&P) Program

CWS Durham is a Local Resettlement Agency authorized by the U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) to accept applications from Ukrainian Humanitarian Parolees for ORR benefits and services. North Carolina has been welcoming refugees for over 40 years and CWS Durham is proud to work every day to keep that tradition alive. Our office opened in early 2009, partnering with the local community to provide refuge, opportunity, and hope to individuals and families fleeing persecution around the world. We provide services in accordance with numerous programs that qualifying clients have the opportunity to enroll in.

Matching Grant Program (MG)

The MG Program is an eight-month **employment** program that provides intensive case management services to help clients achieve economic self-sufficiency. This program provides case management services, employment services, and financial assistance along with other useful resources, such as English as a Second Language courses and Job Readiness training.

Preferred Communities (PC)

The PC Program is a year-long **intensive** case management program that provides particularly vulnerable refugees with individually tailored resources and connections to the wider community. Clients enrolled in this program develop a personalized self-sufficiency plan to help them achieve their unique goals, such as navigating the U.S. healthcare system on their own or finding quality childcare for a new baby.

OUR CORE PHILOSOPHIES

EMPOWERMENT

In our efforts to support newly arrived refugees, we recognize the challenges they face, including language barriers, financial constraints, and unfamiliarity with their new surroundings. Despite these obstacles, refugees possess the ability to make informed decisions and strive for self-sufficiency. Our mission is to empower them by providing the necessary tools and guidance, allowing them to take control of their journey and pursue their goals with confidence.

SELF SUFFICIENCY

When clients seek support, it's crucial to consider how we can assist them in a manner that fosters independence and self-sufficiency. Rather than simply solving their immediate problems, we should aim to empower them to learn and handle similar challenges on their own in the future. By providing guidance, resources, and encouragement, we can equip clients with the skills and confidence needed to navigate their journey towards self-reliance. This approach not only addresses their immediate needs but also promotes long-term growth and empowerment.



IMPORTANT CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE

As a refugee resettlement agency, we are dedicated to ensuring the safety and well-being of our clients, adhering to strict rules and regulations to provide high-quality care for a vulnerable population. Therefore, we expect volunteers to strictly follow the rules we put in place.

Our clients' privacy is very important to us. Many refugees come from crisis situation where their safety, autonomy, and privacy were not respected. It is crucial that every person we resettle knows they are safe in their new home and have control over who comes into their home.

We have two rules of confidentiality that every volunteer must follow:

1. **Do not post pictures of the apartment or surroundings on social media.**
2. **Do not visit the apartment or family after your set up is complete.**

You may speak to your friends and family about your experience, but do not mention the location of the apartment. These rules are designed to protect the privacy of our new neighbors and ensure that they know they are safe in their new home.



*Each and every volunteer who is given the address of the new home is responsible for maintaining confidentiality as an essential part of their work with CWS Durham. As the **group leader**, please be sure to communicate these guidelines to every volunteer who is given the address of the new home or visits the apartment for the set-up.*

PHOTOS

Please feel free to take pictures of your group during the collection process, as you load up the truck, or to take pictures of collected items inside of the apartment that do not identify where the apartment is located.

As long as these pictures do not identify the location of the apartment, you are free to share your experience as much as you'd like.



TEAM FORMATION

GETTING STARTED

As a Welcome Team, you are committed to furnishing the home of an arriving refugee family and coordinating logistics with CWS Durham. While essential items are required, you are encouraged to add special touches that transform a house into a home, considering the family's cultural background and unique needs. We recommend gathering at least six people when forming a team.

As you establish your group, designate a **Team Coordinator** who will serve as the liaison between the Welcome Team and CWS Durham. The Team Coordinator will be the main point of contact, responsible for coordinating the setup period, relaying any maintenance requests, and receiving information regarding the family composition and specific needs.

Ensure that you work with your group to coordinate logistics such as **transportation**, **storage**, and **item collection**. Welcome Teams are responsible for providing all essential housing items, storing them until the home is accessible, and transporting them to the home.

ITEM COLLECTION

USED ITEMS

Most items can be gently used. With this in mind, take advantage of 2nd hand sources.

Websites like Facebook Marketplace, the Nextdoor app, and Craigslist are worth visiting, as well as in-person stores such as TROSA Thrift Store, Goodwill, Durham Rescue Mission, and Habitat for Humanity Restore Warehouse.

Ask your network if there are anything from our list that they would like to donate or if they have friends who may be looking to downsize. You'd be amazed at how easy it can be to pick up the basic furniture or plates/linens/etc. that's needed for an apartment!

Take advantage of local yard sales. You are sure to find some good deals when "everything must go."

Create a sign-up sheet for team members to manage item collection, using a site like Sign-Up Genius!

NEW ITEMS

Certain items **must** be new, as indicated on our item checklist. Cleaning supplies, toiletry items, trash cans, and groceries are examples of items which must be purchased new.

Don't worry about getting expensive items – basic soap bars and cleaners will be just fine!

STEPS: AN OUTLINE

DECIDE ON A TIMEFRAME & FAMILY SIZE

First, your team needs to coordinate with CWS Durham to decide on when you'll be setting up the apartment and how many people your team can support. We ask teams to prepare to support households of either 4-6 or 7+ people, leaving room for some flexibility.

START COLLECTING ITEMS

If you have space to collect and store items, you are welcome to gather furniture or household goods ahead of time! Ideas for storage are included in this guide. Keep in mind that you won't have specific family details until 2-3 weeks before the setup period.

AWAIT THE FAMILY SPECIFICS

CWS Durham will provide your team with details about a specific family to support about a week before your planned setup date. This includes information about the family size, ages, sexes, country of origin, and arrival date. At this point, you can adjust your inventory to meet their specific needs.

CHOOSE YOUR START DATE

Choose the date that you will set-up the apartment and assemble your volunteers. Note that the home must be ready at least one day before the family arrives, ensuring that CWS has time to complete a final walk-through before the family moves in.

ALERT STAFF OF GAPS

Your group is expected to provide all necessary items for the apartment setup, but if there are any issues or gaps, communicate with CWS Staff as soon as possible. They might be able to assist or provide guidance.

Optional: Consider creating a welcome card or sign to leave in the apartment for the new family, adding a personal touch to their arrival.



Stable housing allows individuals to develop routines and connections to their local community, which are beneficial for mental health.

SECURING HOUSING



OBSTACLES

Securing housing for refugees presents unique challenges. Amidst a national affordable housing crisis, our Housing Specialists tirelessly advocate for clients and forms partnerships with local landlords and rental properties. Refugees often arrive with minimal funds, without rental history or credit scores, and without state identification and employment, all of which are necessary to secure housing in the United States. Our clients work with our CWS staff to secure these essentials after their arrival. Consequently, housing timelines can be unpredictable due to factors beyond our control, such as the terms set by apartment complexes and private landlords. We thank you in advance for your flexibility as we work to put housing plans in place and secure house keys.

TEMPORARY ACCOMODATIONS

We strive to set up families' homes before they arrive, allowing clients to go directly from RDU to their long-term home. However, sometimes CWS Durham receives very short notice of a family's arrival, sometimes with just 24-hour notice. In such cases, we may not have a home available, especially for larger families, and will need to house the family in temporary accommodations like hotels or Airbnb. We aim to expedite the moving process, getting families into their long-term housing as soon as possible, for several important reasons.

ACCESSING THE HOME

Once we have the key to the home, it will be placed in a lockbox on the front door. Your Welcome Team will receive the lockbox code to access the house keys at your convenience, whether it's early on a weekend or late on a weekday evening. We aim to provide each Welcome Team with at least two full weekends to set up, ensuring the family can move in as soon as possible. Upon completing the home setup, the Team Coordinator is tasked with alerting CWS Durham so that staff can plan accordingly.



STORAGE

Storage is often a concern for groups deciding to furnish a refugee apartment. Below are some strategies that have helped other teams manage storage effectively, and we hope they inspire solutions that work for your group as well. Here's what others have done.



PLAN AHEAD

Coordinate with your Welcome Team ahead of time and pre-plan which months of the year you'd like to plan to setup a home for an arriving family. For instance, if your team plans to setup a home in both June and December, you can coordinate with CWS Durham accordingly and only necessitate storage temporarily for the few weeks leading up to your pre-planned setup period.

UTILIZE GARAGES

Ask your team members if anyone has half of a garage they could dedicate to setup storage on a temporary basis.

REUSE YOUR SPACES

Is your Welcome Team a part of a larger organization? If your organization has extra space, consider asking if you could dedicate the room to this project for the month leading up to the setup. For instance, if your Welcome Team is a part of a Church organization, consider transforming underutilized classroom space into a storage opportunity.

COORDINATE WITH DONORS

Ask furniture donors to hold the items until move-in day. Then, day-off, go house to house using your transportation, whether it's a pick-up truck or U-Haul



TRANSPORTATION

Transportation is only a challenge if you forget to plan for it. We encourage you to identify a team member who has access to a truck or van well-ahead of time so that you do not have to rent a vehicle. Other teams have also rented a U-Haul or its equivalent for only a few hours, which can be an affordable option if you don't have access to a truck or van. Check with your local moving rental company for prices.

Because CWS is unable to assist with the transportation of furniture, it is key to ensure that you plan for transit beforehand. This is vital for a smooth move-in experience.

FINAL STEPS

Congratulations on completing your first housing setup! Your teamwork has truly made a difference in the lives of a recently arrived family. We deeply appreciate the planning, coordination, heavy lifting, and dedication your group has shown in creating a welcoming environment for our clients. What comes next? Ensure all essential items are in place using the checklist provided in this booklet. Once everything is set, notify CWS Durham that the home is ready for move-in. The family's Case Manager will promptly inform them, facilitating a swift move-in process.

Please understand that we cannot provide photo or video reactions of the family's arrival to safeguard their privacy. Rest assured, you've established a safe haven for the family during times of uncertainty. The mere knowledge that the community has rallied to support them can leave a lasting impact. On behalf of our entire team, thank you for your invaluable contribution.



ESSENTIAL ITEMS

BEDROOM

- one bed-set per person
 - Twin-size for single persons
 - Queen-size **required** for couples
 - set includes a mattress, bedframe, and (if necessary) a boxspring
- complete bedding sets per bed
 - each bed must be complete with sheets, a blanket, and one pillow per person
- one dresser per room
 - if there is a bedroom closet, clothing hangers can substitute a dresser

LIVING ROOM

- adequate seating with ideally one cushion per resident (i.e. a loveseat accounts for two residents, a couch accounts for three, a side-chair for one, etc.)

KITCHEN

- one kitchen table with one chair per resident
- one set of tableware per resident (forks, knives, spoons)
- one dish set per person (plates, bowls, drinkware)
- one set of mixing bowls
- one can opener
- one set of kitchen utensils (spatula, large stirring spoon, cutting knife, ladle, etc.)
- at least one saucepan, one frying pan, and one baking dish
- one garbage bin with lid
 - at least 12 gallons

BATHROOM & HYGIENE

- one shower curtain + rings
- razors (one per resident) and shaving cream
- one deodorant per person
- two dispensable hand soaps (kitchen/bathroom)
- bar soap
- one toothbrush per person
- one toothpaste tube
- one large shampoo bottle
- one pack of toilet paper
- feminine hygiene pads
- one small trash bin
- at least one bath towel per resident

CLEANING SUPPLIES

- one container of dish soap
- one multi-purpose cleaning spray
- one mop
- one broom + dustpan
- one box of trash bags
- one package of sponges and/or cleaning rags
- one toilet plunger
- one jug of laundry detergent

MISC.

- If there is not overhead lighting, a lamp is required per room (+ light bulbs)
- one alarm clock
 - batteries if necessary
- over-the-counter medicine
 - Tylenol, cough drops, cold medicine, first-aid kit, Pepto-Bismol

NOTE: We ask that Welcome Teams ensure all listed items are provided.

Important: Please refrain from placing any religious items in the home. CWS respects the right of each new family to worship as they wish, and it is important that all our volunteers uphold this principle. Many refugees have fled religious persecution, and we want their new home to be a safe and comfortable place for them when they first arrive. Thank you for your understanding and cooperation in making their transition as welcoming as possible.

PROVISIONING GROCERIES

Welcome Teams are encouraged to provide a week's worth of culturally appropriate grocery items for clients to utilize upon their arrival in the United States.

Providing culturally appropriate groceries to refugees means selecting food items that align with their cultural, religious, and dietary preferences, ensuring they feel respected and can maintain their health and dietary practices. This approach helps refugees feel more at home and reduces food waste by providing items they are familiar with and know how to prepare.



SHOPPING BY CULTURE

In addition to the essential basic grocery items listed, your Welcome Team is encouraged to provide additional grocery items that are culturally relevant to the family you are assisting. For inspiration, please check out these grocery lists organized by country by [clicking here](#).

GROCERY LIST

FRUITS

- one bag apples
- one bag grapes
- one bunch of bananas
- one bag of oranges

VEGETABLES

- one bag carrots
- 2 heads iceberg lettuce
- one bag onions
- one bag potatoes
- one tin minced garlic

PACKAGED GOODS

- black beans
- pinto beans
- spaghetti
- pasta sauce
- white bread
- 5lb + white rice
- tomatoes
- peanut butter
- flour
- sugar
- canola oil
- salt + pepper

MEAT & POULTRY

- fish
- halal chicken
- two dozen eggs

BEVERAGES

- gallon whole milk
- lemonade and/or apple juice
- instant black tea bags
- instant coffee

OPTIONAL ITEMS

After furnishing the home with all of the essential items, you are welcome to provide items that, while not necessary, may contribute to the comfort and welcoming of the home.

small appliances

- microwave
- coffee machine
- rice cooker
- tea kettle

practical items

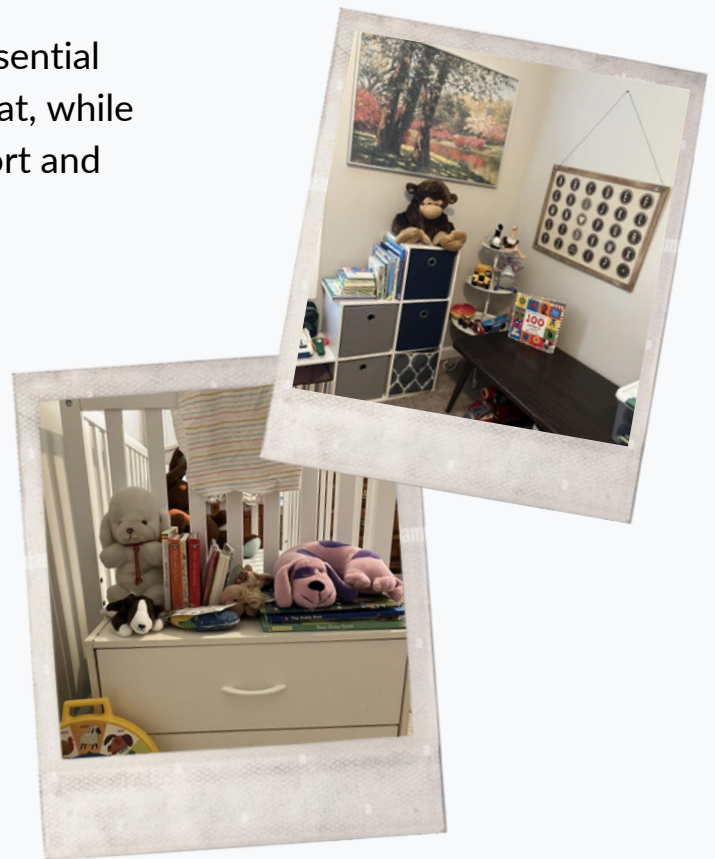
- sewing machine
- computer
- calculator
- laundry basket

entertainment

- books
- TV + movies
- DVD player
- card games
- children's toys
- sports equipment

decor

- rugs
- throw blankets + extra pillows
- storage bins
- art + posters
- side tables





FURTHER YOUR SUPPORT

GET FURTHER INVOLVED

FREQUENT HOUSING SETUPS

With a constant influx of clients arriving each week, we are always eager to work alongside Welcome Teams to set up and create warm and welcoming homes for clients on a regular basis. Whether it's once every three months, twice a year, or annually, you are welcome to communicate your ideal setup period with CWS Durham in advance. It's never too early to start planning.



FORM A CARE TEAM

Join the Communities Acting for Refugee Empowerment (CARE) Program to help close the economic gap for established refugee individuals and families. By forming a CARE team, you can provide social and financial support towards the educational and employment goals of refugees, helping them achieve economic self-sufficiency. This initiative connects refugee clients with community groups committed to fostering their skills and talents, enabling them to secure fulfilling work and experience economic security.



BECOME A CO-SPONSOR

Welcome newly arrived refugees to Durham through community sponsorship. As a community sponsor, your group of 7-10 members will partner with CWS Durham to support a refugee family. Over a 4-6 month commitment, you will assist with securing and setting up housing and helping them navigate their new community. Your efforts will help the family focus on language learning, cultural orientation, and employment, fostering their path to self-sufficiency.



Contact

HAVE QUESTIONS?

Wondering about how you can further support our clients? Have a question regarding your Welcome Team setup?

Please reach out to cwscommunityengagement@gmail.com.

Thank you for supporting our mission.