Supporting Asylum Seekers
A Toolkit for Congregations
Supporting Asylum Seekers: A Toolkit for Congregations

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Legal Disclaimer

Please note that this toolkit is not a substitute for personalized advice from a knowledgeable lawyer. If you need the help of a trained professional, please consult an experienced attorney licensed to practice in your state. We provide this material for informational purposes only, and cannot vouch for or guarantee the results of any legal or other advice gleaned from these materials or received from any of the organizations, attorneys, or law firms mentioned herein.
Dear friends,

Thank you for your interest in this resource, **Supporting Asylum Seekers: A Toolkit for Congregations**. This toolkit represents the experiences, ministry models, faith, and hard work of a number of congregations, organizations, and the individuals who gave so freely of their time and talents to make this resource possible. This is the first edition of the toolkit; we intend to update and publish new editions regularly.

This toolkit arose as Episcopal Migration Ministries (EMM) heard from individuals and congregations across the Church who reached out in response to events, policy changes, and news stories about immigrants, asylum seekers, and refugees. Every email and every call was punctuated with the question, “How can we help?”

“How can we help?” when we read stories of asylum seekers seeking protection at the U.S. southern border?

“How can we help?” when we learn that there is an immigration detention center located within our diocese?

“How can we help?” change hearts and minds and respond with love to the needs of our brothers and sisters who migrate, seeking safety and a chance at life?

“How can we help?” when children of God are being dehumanized, demonized, and the political rhetoric becomes ugly?

At the same time that we at EMM were hearing from folks across the Church, we had also just launched our **Partners in Welcome** program. **Partners in Welcome** is EMM’s ministry network and learning community, created to support individuals and congregations as they respond to the call to love their neighbors - especially immigrant, refugee, and asylum seeker neighbors - as themselves. Through **Partners in Welcome**, EMM offers coaching, guidance, learning resources, and connections to a variety of issues in the immigration and refugee space.

Even more importantly, **Partners in Welcome** provides a platform for Episcopalians to share about their own ministry models, teach best practices and lessons learned, and grow in their faith as they launch, build, and strengthen their own local ministries with, alongside, and in support of immigrant and refugee communities.

This toolkit is one initiative born out of **Partners in Welcome**, a resource for individuals and congregations, composed by EMM staff and **Partners in Welcome** members with volunteer and professional background in ministry and work with refugees and asylum seekers.
We hope that as you read this document, you will find many possibilities that answer the question, “How can we help?”

In the toolkit, we guide you through:

- Basics and Background on Forced Displacement, Refugees, and Asylum Seekers
- Engaging in Ministry:
  - Discerning Your “Why”
  - Discerning the “How”: Important Considerations for This Work
  - Discerning the “What”: Different Models of Ministry
- Broadening and Sharing Your Ministry

We are living at a time when refugees, asylum seekers, and immigrants are often in the news and too often considered a political “issue.” These people are not a political issue; they are human beings and children of God in desperate need. We can help meet those needs, while also lifting up the vulnerable so that they can stand on their own. Welcoming our neighbors as we would welcome Christ is not a political issue; it is an issue of our identity as followers of Jesus, as members of the Episcopal branch of the Jesus movement, and as people who made promises at our baptisms:

Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself?

Will you strive for justice and peace among all people,
and respect the dignity of every human being?

To these questions, together we answer with a resounding, “We will, with God’s help.”

We hope and pray that this toolkit empowers you and your congregation to discern and live into the ministry of welcome to which you are uniquely called, and inspires you to continue building a relationship with EMM in the days, weeks, and months ahead. To make a gift to support EMM, please visit www.episcopalmigrationministries.org/give.

If we can ever be of assistance or support, please don’t hesitate to reach out.

In peace and with gratitude,

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Acknowledgements

We would like to extend our gratitude to the many individuals, congregations, and organizations who came together with Episcopal Migration Ministries to make Supporting Asylum Seekers: A Toolkit for Congregations a reality. Their generosity and wisdom will extend far and wide, supporting congregations and groups across the country as they work to support and welcome their newest neighbors who are seeking a safe place to call home.

Future Editions

The original edition of this toolkit was released in October 2019. The toolkit will be updated regularly, and we welcome suggestions, additions, and feedback.

If you have a ministry model to share, a story to tell, a case study to offer, suggested edits, or other items that should be included in future editions of Supporting Asylum Seekers: A Toolkit for Congregations, please let us know: https://episcopalmigrationministries.org/contact-us/.
Opening Prayers

Grant, Almighty God, that your Holy Spirit may be present in the hearts and minds of all who use this toolkit. May we be open to your loving guidance and seek your wisdom as we prayerfully consider the ways to meet the needs of our brothers and sisters who are seek asylum and a place to call home. In the midst of our struggle for justice and humane treatment of those who seek refuge, let us not lose sight of the need to dispel the darkness in our own hearts and soothe the hurt that leads to bitterness; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Lead us, O God, into the active ways of love for our sisters and brothers who have no place to call home or lay their heads this night. Our hands are Christ’s hands, our feet are Christ’s feet, and we lay before you yourselves, to be the hands and feet that serve and tend the needs of the refugee and all those who flee violence. Strengthen us in this work, dispel our frustrations, heal our broken hearts, that we may be balm in a wounded world; through Jesus Christ, our Lord and Wounded Healer. Amen.

Psalm 69: 1-18, Prayer for Deliverance from Persecution
To the leader: according to Lilies. Of David.

1 Save me, O God, for the waters have come up to my neck.
2 I sink in deep mire, where there is no foothold; I have come into deep waters, and the flood sweeps over me.
3 I am weary with my crying; my throat is parched. My eyes grow dim with waiting for my God.
4 More in number than the hairs of my head are those who hate me without cause; many are those who would destroy me, my enemies who accuse me falsely. What I did not steal must I now restore?
5 O God, you know my folly; the wrongs I have done are not hidden from you.
6 Do not let those who hope in you be put to shame because of me, O Lord God of hosts; do not let those who seek you be dishonoured because of me, O God of Israel.
7 It is for your sake that I have borne reproach, that shame has covered my face.
8 I have become a stranger to my kindred, an alien to my mother’s children.
9 It is zeal for your house that has consumed me; the insults of those who insult you have fallen on me.
10 When I humbled my soul with fasting, they insulted me for doing so.
11 When I made sackcloth my clothing, I became a byword to them.
12 I am the subject of gossip for those who sit in the gate, and the drunkards make songs about me.
13 But as for me, my prayer is to you, O Lord. At an acceptable time, O God, in the abundance of your steadfast love, answer me. With your faithful help rescue me from sinking in the mire; let me be delivered from my enemies and from the deep waters.
14 Do not let the flood sweep over me, or the deep swallow me up, or the Pit close its mouth over me.
16 Answer me, O Lord, for your steadfast love is good; according to your abundant mercy, turn to me.
17 Do not hide your face from your servant, for I am in distress—make haste to answer me.
18 Draw near to me, redeem me, set me free because of my enemies.
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**Kay Gilley** has been active in St. John’s Refugee Study Group (discernment) and subsequent Refugee Committee since January 2017, and as part of her role, she has served on resettlement teams for three refugee families. She has also been active in the DMV Congregation Sanctuary Network, completing training for Rapid Response and Accompaniment and participating in many street protests. She developed and led a Rapid Response training for members of St. John’s Refugee Committee. Kay resides in the Washington, D.C. area.

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**Debbie Smith** is from the Diocese of Missouri. She has worked in refugee resettlement professionally and as a congregational volunteer, taught college English and English to adult speakers of other languages, and has been a freelance writer and editor. Currently she is teaching and writing.

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has served in a variety of ministries that support those in poverty, fleeing violence, refugee resettlement, and border ministries. She is now a seminarian at Seminary of the Southwest in Austin, Texas with a concentration in Latinx Studies.

Christine Zeller-Powell is a member of St. Mary’s Episcopal Church in Eugene, Oregon. She manages the Refugee Resettlement and Asylum Seeker Assistance Programs at Catholic Community Services (CCS) of Lane County. As a volunteer, she led the Refugee Resettlement Coalition of Lane County for two years. Now working at CCS, she provides case management and some legal services to refugees, asylum seekers, and those granted asylum in Lane County.

Lynn Zender is a member of the Church of St. Martin in Davis, California. She is “retired” from a career as a social worker where her emphasis was in community development and mental health. For the Episcopal Diocese of Northern California she is the Co-Chair of the Commission for Intercultural Ministries, the liaison for EMM, and chair of the Welcoming the Stranger Immigration and Refugee Committee. Since this spring, she has been the Coordinator for the Families Together Project in Davis—a new program which has sponsored two families from Guatemala seeking asylum.
The Episcopal Church’s History in Immigration & Refugee Work

The Episcopal Church has engaged in ministries of welcome, service, and public policy advocacy with and for immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers, and displaced persons for over a century. The current rise in anti-immigrant and nativist rhetoric, policies, and politics in the United States and across the globe carries historical echoes. In times such as these, whether at the turn of the 20th century or in response to Nazi atrocities, The Episcopal Church has often responded with compassion, living into our Gospel call and Baptismal Covenant to seek and serve Christ in all persons, to love our neighbors as ourselves, to strive for justice and peace, and to respect the dignity of every human being.

As followers of Jesus, we welcome, serve, and raise our voices in support of refugees, asylum seekers, and immigrants.

To learn more about The Episcopal Church’s history in this work, please join Episcopal Migration Ministries’ Partners in Welcome network and view the Episcopal Migration Ministries: A Heritage of Welcome Learning Module in the online portal.
Basics & Background
Definitions & Acronyms

**A Number or A#:** A unique nine-digit number assigned to a noncitizen by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). Also see “USCIS Number.”

**Accompaniment:** Accompaniment is the process of providing practical and moral support to those facing the immediate threat of deportation by supporting them at immigration-related check-ins or court appointments, appealing to the humanity of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officials reviewing their cases, and supporting those seeking asylum and their families in the event of a detention.

**Acompañante:** A Spanish word for a person who accompanies the asylum seeker or other immigrant.

**Alien:** Any person who is not a citizen or national of the country in which they reside.

**Asylee:** An asylee is a person that has been granted asylum and is protected from being returned to his or her home country, is authorized to work in the United States, may apply for a Social Security card, may request permission to travel overseas, and can petition to bring family members to the United States. Asylees may also be eligible for certain benefits, such as Medicaid or Refugee Medical Assistance.

**Asylum:** The protection granted by a nation to someone who has left his or her native country as a refugee.

**Asylum Seeker:** An asylum seeker is someone whose request for asylum has yet to be processed. There are two ways in which a person may apply for asylum in the United States:

- **Affirmative Asylum:** A person who is not in removal proceedings may affirmatively apply for asylum through U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), a division of the Department of Homeland Security. If the USCIS asylum officer does not grant the asylum application and the applicant does not have a lawful immigration status, he or she is referred to the immigration court for removal proceedings, where he or she may renew the request for asylum through the defensive process and appear before an immigration judge.

- **Defensive Asylum:** A person who is in removal proceedings may apply for asylum defensively by filing the application with an immigration judge at the Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR) in the Department of Justice (DOJ). Asylum is applied for “as a defense against removal from the U.S.” Unlike the criminal court system, EOIR does not provide appointed counsel for individuals in immigration court, even if they are unable to retain an attorney on their own.

**Bond:** A bond is an amount of money, set by an immigration judge, that must be paid by a detainee (or others) as a condition for the person’s release from detention to ensure that the person attends future court proceedings. Bonds are often set at very high amounts that detainees are unable to afford.
Compa/Compañero: Compa is short for compañero, a Spanish word meaning companion. This term is sometimes used by accompaniment networks and volunteers to refer to the person being accompanied.

Customs & Border Protection (CBP): An agency of DHS responsible for securing the United States and its territories by preventing the illegal entry of people and goods while facilitating legitimate travel and trade.

Convention Against Torture (CAT): U.N. Convention Against Torture (8 C.F.R. §§ 208.16–208.18) is an international treaty banning torture, which the U.S. ratified in 1994. Protection from deportation under CAT is limited because it protects only people who fear torture—an even more severe harm than persecution. A person seeking CAT protection must establish a more than 50% chance that he or she would be tortured if returned to his/her home country. The applicant does not have to show the torture would be on account of a protected ground, but must prove that government authorities would be responsible for the torture or would know about the torture and allow others to carry it out.

Deferred Enforced Departure (DED): Deferred Enforced Departure (DED) is in the President’s discretion to authorize as part of his constitutional power to conduct foreign relations. Although DED is not a specific immigration status, individuals covered by DED are not subject to removal from the United States, usually for a designated period of time.\(^1\)

Department of Homeland Security (DHS): Department of the Executive Branch of the U.S. government charged with homeland security: preventing terrorism and managing risks to critical infrastructure; securing and managing the border; enforcing and administering immigration laws; safeguarding and securing cyberspace; and ensuring resilience to disasters.

Department of Justice (DoJ): Department of the Executive Branch of the U.S. government with the primary responsibilities to enforce the law and defend the interests of the United States according to the law; to ensure public safety against threats foreign and domestic; to provide federal leadership in preventing and controlling crime; to seek just punishment for those guilty of unlawful behavior; and to ensure fair and impartial administration of justice for all Americans.

Department of Labor (DoL): Department of the Executive Branch of the U.S. government that fosters and promotes the welfare of the job seekers, wage earners, and retirees of the United States by improving their working conditions, advancing their opportunities for profitable employment, protecting their retirement and health care benefits, helping employers find workers, strengthening free collective bargaining, and tracking changes in employment, prices, and other national economic measurements. In carrying out this mission, the Department administers a variety of federal labor laws including those that guarantee workers' rights to safe and healthful working conditions; a minimum hourly wage and

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overtime pay; freedom from employment discrimination; unemployment insurance; and other income support.

**Displacement:** Refers most commonly to instances where there is no choice but to move, either temporarily or permanently, within or across borders.

**Employment Authorization Document (Form I-765/EAD):** A general term used to describe a card issued by USCIS on Form I-765 with the title “Employment Authorization Card.” This card is issued to immigrants who are authorized to work in the United States in order to prove their employment authorization. The card contains a photograph of the individual and can be used as an official government issued photo ID card. A person who has been issued this card usually has open-market employment authorization, but there are exceptions. The period of validity for these cards varies depending on the status of the immigrant.

**Environmental Migrants:** The International Organization for Migration (IOM) defines environmental migrants as anyone who, for reasons of abrupt or progressive changes in the environment that adversely affect their lives or living conditions, are pushed to leave their usual homes, or choose to do so, either temporarily or permanently, and who move either within their territory or across international borders.

**Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR):** The Executive Office for Immigration Review is an office within the U.S. Department of Justice (DoJ) whose mission is to adjudicate immigration cases by fairly, expeditiously, and uniformly interpreting and administering the nation's immigration laws. Under delegated authority from the Attorney General, EOIR conducts immigration court proceedings, appellate reviews, and administrative hearings.

**Host country:** A country that is providing initial asylum to a refugee. For example, Turkey, Lebanon, and Jordan are host countries to thousands of Syrian refugees. Refugees often stay for years or decades in host countries.

**Humanitarian Parole:** Humanitarian Parole is an extraordinary measure sparingly used to bring an otherwise inadmissible person into the United States for a temporary period of time due to a compelling emergency. Those who are granted parole are known as parolees. A parolee cannot obtain any permanent benefit with a grant of humanitarian parole, but they can apply for a temporary work authorization to be permitted to work while in the U.S. If they so choose, parolees are able to seek asylum in the U.S.; a humanitarian parolee must apply for asylum within one year of entering the U.S.


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I-94 or Form I-94: The Arrival/Departure Record issued to noncitizens entering the United States by CBP. In the event of a grant of asylum, USCIS will issue an I-94 to the asylee.

Immigrant (Permanent Resident Alien): The U.S. Department of Homeland Security defines an immigrant as, “An alien admitted to the United States as a lawful permanent resident (LPR). Permanent residents are also commonly referred to as immigrants; however, the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) broadly defines an immigrant as any alien in the United States, except one legally admitted under specific nonimmigrant categories (INA section 101(a)(15)). An illegal alien who entered the United States without inspection, for example, would be strictly defined as an immigrant under the INA but is not a permanent resident alien. Lawful permanent residents are legally accorded the privilege of residing permanently in the United States. They may be issued immigrant visas by the Department of State overseas or adjusted to permanent resident status by the Department of Homeland Security in the United States.”

(U.S.) Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE): The principal investigative arm of DHS, ICE’s primary mission is to promote homeland security and public safety through the criminal and civil enforcement of federal laws governing border control, customs, trade, and immigration.

Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) of 1965: An Act of Congress that, along with other immigration laws, treaties, and conventions of the United States, relates to the immigration, temporary admission, naturalization and removal of undocumented immigrants.

Internally Displaced Persons (IDP): Internally displaced people (IDPs) have fled their homes to escape violence or persecution, but have not crossed a border. Unlike refugees, IDPs stay within their own country and remain under the protection of their government, even if that government is the reason for their displacement.

Lawful permanent resident (LPR): Any person not a citizen of the United States who is residing in the United States under legally recognized and lawfully recorded permanent residence as an immigrant. Also known as “Permanent Resident Alien,” “Resident Alien Permit Holder,” and “Green Card Holder.”

Migration: The process of moving within or across borders, either temporarily, seasonally or permanently. Some migration involves an element of choice, and is thus considered to be voluntary in nature. The migration discussed in this toolkit is forced migration, meaning those migrating have been forced to flee their homes on account of persecution.

Parole: Immigrants in detention who entered the United States at an official port of entry may be released from detention on parole (different from being released on bond; see definition of bond). For more on parole vs. bond, read this explainer from Human Rights First.

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7 Human Rights First, “Parole vs. Bond.”
**Parole in place:** Parole may also be granted to aliens who are already physically present in the United States without inspection or admission. This use of parole is sometimes called “parole in place.”

**Permanent Resident Card (Form I-551):** Also known as the green card or alien registration card, this card is issued by USCIS to immigrants as evidence of their lawful permanent resident status in the United States. For Form I-9, the form used for employment eligibility verification, the Permanent Resident Card is acceptable as proof of both identity and employment authorization. Although some Permanent Resident Cards contain no expiration date, most are valid for 10 years. Cards held by individuals with conditional permanent resident status are valid for two years. An LPR card can only be revoked by an immigration judge.

**Port of entry:** Any location in the United States or its territories that is designated as a point of entry for aliens and U.S. citizens, such as airports, ports, and border checkpoints. All district offices and service centers are also considered ports, because they become locations of entry for individuals adjusting their immigration status.

**Pull factors:** The factors and drivers that lead people to go to a particular country. These include political stability, human rights, and economic opportunity.

**Push factors:** The factors and drivers that force people to migrate or flee their home countries. These factors include political persecution, conflict and instability, violence, and economic factors.

**Refugee:** Refugee is a legal term and a legal status, designed by the UN, for someone who has been forced to flee his or her country because of persecution, war, or violence. A refugee has been determined to have a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group. Refugees usually cannot return home for many years, as the source of their persecution, or their well-founded fear of persecution, is still present. War and violence are leading causes of refugees fleeing their countries. The 1951 Geneva Convention is the main international instrument of refugee law. The Convention clearly spells out who a refugee is and the kind of legal protection, other assistance and social rights he or she should receive from the countries who have signed the document. The Convention also defines a refugee's obligations to host governments and certain categories or people, such as war criminals, who do not qualify for refugee status. The Convention was limited to protecting mainly European refugees in the aftermath of World War II, but another document, the 1967 Protocol, expanded the scope of the Convention as the problem of displacement spread around the world.  

**Sanctuary:** Sanctuary has come to mean many different things in different contexts. Sanctuary can refer to sheltering or harboring an undocumented person. It can also refer to other ways that people can accompany and support those who are undocumented or facing deportation. Sanctuary is not a legally meaningful term.

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Sanctuary is invoked (in most cases) when an immigrant has been issued an order of deportation and that person's legal support team needs more time to continue the legal process to advocate for permission for the immigrant to remain in the country. The person may resort to taking shelter in a house of worship during those proceedings (which may extend many months) and, as a result, may not leave the premises. In most cases, the attorneys for that person are in communication with immigration authorities about the location of their client. Congregations should note that harboring an undocumented person is considered unlawful.

Sanctuary is not a legal status — while the Obama Administration authored guidance asking ICE to avoid detaining an individual who is seeking sanctuary in a “sensitive location” like a house of worship, there is no law that prevents ICE from entering the building and detaining that individual (or other individuals in the building at the time).9

**Sanctuary and The Episcopal Church:** The Episcopal Church, through General Convention, does have a policy in support of the Sanctuary Movement. In 2015 the resolution that was passed calls upon The Episcopal Church to “recommit to the spirit of the New Sanctuary Movement by supporting congregations so they can assist immigrant individuals, unaccompanied minors, families, and communities by being centers of information, services and accompaniment, and by supporting families facing separation in the absence of comprehensive, humane immigration reform.”10 In 2018, the General Convention passed resolution C-009, Becoming a Sanctuary Church,

General Convention Policies on Sanctuary  
Becoming a Sanctuary Church (2018-C009)  
Recommit to Giving Sanctuary to Immigrants (2015-D057)

Church Insurance Company offers Sanctuary Church Endorsement Coverage.

**Sponsor:** The term “sponsor” is used in various ways and, depending on the context, can mean wholly different things.

In the refugee resettlement context, the sponsor is the agency that will resettle a particular refugee case (individual or family). The agency provides an assurance that they will receive and resettle a refugee family in accordance with the U.S. Department of State’s Reception & Placement program. As of September 2019, there are nine agencies11 in the U.S. that hold Reception & Placement cooperative agreements with the Department of State. These agencies, and their local refugee resettlement offices/affiliates, are the sponsors of all the refugees who arrive through the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program.

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9 “FAQs for Congregational/Group Sponsorship,” Asylum Seekers Sponsorship Project, last modified January 30, 2019, https://drive.google.com/file/d/1acn7KiVGrZjbed0sv7StdRzjUg2-jamY/view?usp=sharing
11 The nine agencies are Episcopal Migration Ministries, Church World Service, Lutheran Immigration & Refugee Service, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Migration & Refugee Services, HIAS, World Relief, Ethiopian Community Development Council, USCRI, and International Rescue Committee.
From the Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund:

In the context of immigrants who are detained and seeking asylum, a sponsor is an individual who:

- is a U.S. citizen or legal permanent resident;
- is willing to ensure that the asylum seeker is not a flight risk and will attend all immigration court hearings after release from detention; and
- is willing to provide the asylum seeker with a place to live, either in a host home situation or through another housing option.

To become the sponsor of an asylum seeker being released from detention, the prospective sponsor must:

- have current legal immigration status in the U.S. (U.S. Citizen, Legal Permanent Resident);
- provide proof of housing;
- be able to provide asylum seeker with safe housing;
- be able to provide asylum seeker with basic necessities;
- provide proof of income; and
- ensure that asylum seeker attends all ICE/Intensive Supervision Appearance Program (ISAP) check-ins and scheduled court dates.\(^{12}\)

Even if living in a separate residence from the asylum seeker(s), the sponsor takes on a very active role, especially at first, to be sure that the asylum seekers get acclimated to life in the U.S. with plenty of support. They will need assistance with learning local laws, grocery shopping, clothes shopping, acquiring cell phones, etc. For the first weeks or months, frequent contact and availability is needed. This is why it is helpful to have a team of people who are working in concert with the named sponsor to offer all the support needed.\(^{13}\)

For more information on sponsorship in the context of asylum seekers being released from immigration detention, please read:

* Sikh-American Legal Defense and Education Fund:  
  FAQ for Asylum Seeker Sponsorship

* Standing Up for Racial Justice/Freedom for Immigrants/Innovation Law Lab Collaboration:  
  FAQ for Congregational/Group Sponsorship

**Temporary protected status (TPS):** Temporary Protected Status is a way for people to remain legally in the United States when their home countries face conflict or natural disaster. It has been used for the past several decades to allow hundreds of thousands of people to remain in the United States

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\(^{13}\) Asylum Seekers Sponsorship Project, “FAQ for Congregational Sponsorship.”
legally. The Secretary of Homeland Security may designate a foreign country for TPS due to conditions in the country that temporarily prevent the country’s nationals from returning safely, or in certain circumstances, where the country is unable to handle the return of its nationals adequately. As of September 2019, the following countries are currently designated for TPS: El Salvador, Haiti, Honduras, Nepal, Nicaragua, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, Syria, and Yemen.¹⁴

USCIS may grant TPS to eligible nationals of certain countries (or parts of countries), who are already in the United States. Eligible individuals without nationality who last resided in the designated country may also be granted TPS. The Secretary may designate a country for TPS due to the following temporary conditions in the country: ongoing armed conflict (such as civil war); an environmental disaster (such as an earthquake or hurricane); or other extraordinary and temporary conditions. Grants of TPS are initially made for periods of six to 18 months and may be extended.

**USCIS Number:** A unique, 9-digit number assigned to a noncitizen by the Department of Homeland Security that is listed on the front of Permanent Resident Cards (Form I-551) issued after May 10, 2010. See also Alien Registration Number, Alien Number, or A-number.

**U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS):** A federal agency that oversees lawful immigration to the United States. Its functions include, but are not limited to, granting employment authorization to eligible immigrants, issuing documentation of employment authorization, maintaining Form I-9, and administering the E-Verify employment eligibility verification program.

**Visa:** A U.S. visa allows the bearer to apply for entry to the U.S. in a certain classification (e.g. student (F), visitor (B), temporary worker (H)). A visa does not grant the bearer the right to enter the United States. The Department of State is responsible for visa adjudication at U.S. Embassies and Consulates outside of the United States. The Department of Homeland Security’s U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) immigration inspectors determine admission into, length of stay, and conditions of stay in the U.S. at a port of entry. The information on a nonimmigrant visa only relates to when an individual may apply for entry into the U.S. DHS immigration inspectors will record the terms of their admission on your Arrival/Departure Record (I-94 white or I-94W green) and in their passport.

**Withholding of Removal:** This form of protection has stricter requirements than asylum. Withholding of removal protects only those individuals who can show that they would face a more than 50% chance of persecution on account of one of the protected grounds (race, religion, nationality, political opinion or group membership) if returned to their country. While some of the bars to asylum, such as the one-year-filing deadline, do not apply to withholding of removal claims, the standard to qualify is more stringent.

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Forced to Flee: Global Forced Displacement

Today, the world is facing the largest forced displacement crisis in history:\textsuperscript{15}

- 70.8 million people have been forcibly displaced from their homes
- 25.9 million people are refugees
- 41.3 million people are internally displaced
- 3.5 million people are seeking asylum

Whereas migrants are people who voluntarily choose to migrate for reasons such as work, family reunification, or education, forcibly displaced people are forced to flee their homes due to persecution, violence, conflict, or war.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MOTIVATION</th>
<th>VOLUNTARY</th>
<th>FEAR OF SERIOUS HARM</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>INTERNAL</td>
<td>Internally Displaced Person (IDP)</td>
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<td>INTERNATIONAL</td>
<td>Migrant</td>
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<td>Refugee - has received refugee status</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Asylum Seeker - is seeking refugee or protected status</td>
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</tbody>
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Why would someone be forced to flee?

The reasons someone would be forced to flee their home are called “push factors.” Some examples:

- Someone has been jailed and tortured because of how they worship.
- A family is threatened with violence because of political comments a family member made.
- People around them are mysteriously disappearing.
- People face threats of or real physical harm, persecution, or death if they speak their ethnic language or practice their religion.
- Adults are intentionally not given work opportunities.
- Children are bullied at school or not allowed to go to school because of their cultural background.

Other larger forces and factors play into forced displacement, including climate change and its effects\textsuperscript{16} (e.g. resource depletion, which drives conflict) and domestic and gender-based violence.\textsuperscript{17}

Refugees, Internally Displaced Persons, and Asylum Seekers

It is important to understand the difference between those factors which are related to migration (voluntary motivation) and those related to official refugee and asylum-seeking status (fear of serious harm).

Under international & U.S. law, a **refugee** is a person who has fled his or her home country, has crossed an international border, and has been found to have a well-founded fear of persecution based on religion, race, nationality, or membership in a particular social or political group, and their home country’s government is unable or unwilling to provide them protection. Refugees receive official refugee status from the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) or from the country in which they are seeking asylum.

If a person fleeing persecution remains within the borders of her or his country of nationality they are designated an **internally displaced person**.

**Asylum seekers** are seeking refugee or protected status and protection due to persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution in their home countries. In the United States, when an asylum seeker receives this protected status, they are known as an **asylee**.

In other words, the distinction between a refugee and an asylum seeker is their official legal status:

*refugees have received refugee status; asylum seekers are seeking protected status.*

How do those who migrate decide where to go?

When people are fleeing for their lives, they often travel to the nearest safe country to seek protection. Other reasons, or pull factors, may play into the decision of where to go, including:

- Political stability
- Political freedom and lack of persecution based upon ethnicity, religious beliefs, or social and cultural affiliations
- Improved employment and economic opportunities
- Better infrastructure that results in adequate facilities and services
- Better health care and medical facilities
- Opportunity in terms of employment, education, social class mobility
- Lower crime rates
- Known people, friends, or family
- A generally higher standard of living
- Personal and financial safety

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18 Note that refugees who are resettled do not have a choice in where to go; they are referred to a resettlement country for resettlement. (They may be referred to a country in which they already have family members who had previously emigrated or been resettled.)
Seeking Protection

Once refugees and asylum seekers have fled their homes, how do they find protection and long-term, stable solutions where they can rebuild their lives in peace, with legal status and pathways to permanent residence and citizenship?

Refugees

For refugees, who have fled their homes and found initial asylum in a host country (for example, Syrian refugees in Turkey), there are three long-term solutions to their situations:

1. **Voluntary repatriation**: Refugees may voluntarily go home when it is safe to do so. (It is illegal to forcibly return someone to their home country when they continue to have a well-founded fear of persecution there. This is known as the international legal principle of non-refoulement.)

2. **Local integration**: A host country may allow refugees to stay and fully integrate, meaning they are granted most or all of the same rights as citizens, including work authorization, access to education, etc.

3. **Resettlement**: When it is not possible to return home, locally integrate into the country of first asylum, and when refugees are found to be particularly vulnerable, they may be referred to one of 27 resettlement countries for resettlement.

It is important to note that unfortunately, many refugees are caught in limbo without the ability to integrate into the country that provided initial asylum, to resettle to a third country, and without the prospect of returning. The average stay in a refugee camp is 17 years. In some protracted refugee situations, stays in refugee camps can last for generations.

Refugees in the United States have already received refugee status abroad and enter the country through what is known as the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program, or refugee resettlement program. To learn more about the U.S. refugee resettlement program, please [join](#) or sign in to your Partners in Welcome account and view the [Refugee Resettlement 101](#) Learning Module in the online portal.

Refugees arriving through the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program have access to a number of federal, state, and local programs that support them in their first few months or years in the United States. By contrast, asylum seekers do not have access to any of these kinds of support until they receive official status as asylees.

Asylum Seekers

Asylum seekers, like refugees, have fled their home countries on account of persecution or well-founded fear of persecution. However, they have not yet received legal “refugee” or protected status.
Asylum seekers who request asylum in the United States are seeking official protected status. (Refugees, on the other hand, are granted protected status - refugee status - by the United Nations or by the country in which they first sought asylum.) The U.S. asylum process is lengthy and challenging: it can take between six months and several years, and only a small percentage of applicants are granted asylum. In the United States, when an asylum seeker receives protected status, they are known as an asylee.

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19 In 2016, nearly 20,500 people were granted asylum (11,729 were affirmative applications; 8,726 were defensive applications), which is about 28 percent out of the 73,081 cases. “Fact Sheet: U.S. Asylum Process,” National Immigration Forum, last modified January 10, 2019. [https://immigrationforum.org/article/fact-sheet-u-s-asylum-process/](https://immigrationforum.org/article/fact-sheet-u-s-asylum-process/).
Fleeing persecution, a person requests asylum at the border from a Customs and Border Protection (CBP) office.

Transferred to ICE and taken to an immigration detention center.

Has a credible fear interview with a trained asylum officer.

Referred for a court date with an immigration judge.

Released from detention on parole to await their hearing.

Remains in immigration detention to await their hearing.

Asylum request is heard in court.

If granted, asylum is granted.

If denied, deported.
Asylum Process

Whereas refugees who arrive to the United States through the refugee resettlement program receive refugee status abroad, asylum seekers are individuals who are physically present in the U.S. or at the border and are asking to be recognized as refugees. An asylum seeker can be granted asylum if they meet the definition of a refugee as defined in the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA). The asylum process has several possible paths and outcomes, which are outlined below. Please refer to the Asylum Process graphic as you read through the following section.

Grounds for asylum

Individuals applying for asylum must show that they have been persecuted or have a well-founded fear of persecution in their home country on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion. The federal courts and the Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA) have created much case law on what constitutes membership in a particular social group and persecution based on political opinion.

At the border

Individuals seeking asylum who are arriving at the U.S. border must pass a “credible fear” interview with an asylum officer showing that they have a credible fear of persecution in their home county. If these individuals pass their credible fear interviews, they are placed in removal proceedings. Removal proceedings are initiated when a “Notice to Appear” is filed with the Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR). If these individuals do not pass their credible fear interviews, they will be subject to expedited removal and will not have the opportunity to present their case in front of an immigration judge.

Individuals seeking asylum at the border are placed in mandatory detention until they establish a credible fear of persecution or are returned to their home country. Detention of asylum seekers who have passed credible fear interviews is not mandatory. Asylum seekers may or may not be released from detention, depending on a number of factors. An immigration judge may choose to release a detained asylum seeker on a minimum bond of $1,500; on “conditional parole”; or with a grant of “parole” (sometimes referred to as “humanitarian parole” to distinguish it from other types of parole).

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21 Immigration and Nationality, 8 U.S. Code § 1158 (b)(1).
22 Immigration and Nationality, 8 U.S. Code § 1101 (42).
23 Ibid.
24 Immigration and Nationality, 8 U.S. Code § 1225 (1)(B).
26 Immigration and Nationality, 8 U.S. Code § 1226 (a).
27 Immigration and Nationality, 8 U.S. Code § 1182 (d)(5).
Defensive petition for asylum

Whether they are released or remain in detention, an asylum seeker who has passed a credible fear interview may file an application for asylum (Form I-589). **Typically, an application for asylum must be filed within one year of arrival in the United States.** For an asylum seeker in removal proceedings, an application for asylum must be filed with an immigration judge. The Immigration Court system has a backlog of cases. Many, if not most, asylum seekers filing applications for asylum with an immigration judge can expect a minimum of a one- to two-year wait before having a hearing on the merits of their asylum claim.

The immigration judge will make a decision after a court-like hearing during which the asylum seeker argues for asylum and the Department of Homeland Security attorney(s) and the immigration judge question(s) the asylum seeker’s credibility and case. The immigration judge’s final decision can be appealed by either side. Appeals first go to the BIA and then may proceed to federal appeals courts.

Affirmative petitions for asylum

Individuals who are not in removal proceedings who wish to file applications for asylum file these applications with USCIS. Through this “affirmative asylum process,” an individual’s asylum claim is adjudicated by an asylum officer with USCIS. There is great variation in the length of time between when an individual files an affirmative application for asylum and when an interview with an asylum officer is granted. Previously, waiting periods of several years were common. Now, the policy is last in, first interviewed so some affirmative asylum cases are heard within 6-8 weeks of filing.

If an asylum officer grants an individual asylum, the case is reviewed by a supervisor before becoming final. If the case is approved, USCIS will issue an I-94 showing the grant of asylum. If an asylum officer denies an application for asylum and the asylum seeker does not otherwise have a legal immigration status, the denial of the application will trigger removal proceedings and the case will be referred to an immigration judge for complete review. If the person has another immigration status, such as temporary protected status (TPS), the denial will trigger “asylum only proceedings.”

Work authorization and public benefits

If the asylum application is still pending 180 days after being filed, the asylum seeker can apply for work authorization (Form I-765). The filing fee for the I-765 is automatically waived when an asylum seeker first applies for work authorization. If an asylum seeker is applying to renew their work authorization, the fee is not automatically waived.

Asylum seekers are not eligible for public benefits, such as SNAP (food stamps), TANF (cash assistance), or Medicaid, with the exception that asylum seekers are eligible for coverage of true medical emergencies, pregnancy, and childbirth under the Citizen Alien Waived Emergency Medical program (CAWEM).

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28 As of May 2019, there were 850,000 backlogged cases. “Burgeoning court backlog of more than 850,000 cases undercuts Trump immigration agenda,” Washington Post, May 1, 2019, https://www.washingtonpost.com/immigration/burgeoning-court-backlog-of-more-than-850000-cases-undercuts-trump-immigration-agenda/2019/05/01/09c0b84a-6b69-11e9-a66d-a82d3f3d96d5_story.html
Humanitarian Parole
Officials with Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) have the discretion to allow individuals seeking asylum to enter the United States under humanitarian parole.\(^2^9\) Being granted humanitarian parole under INA Section 212(d)(5)(A) for a period of at least one year means that individuals are eligible to apply for work authorization for the duration of the parole and may be eligible for public benefits depending on the rules of the state in which they reside. Humanitarian parole is granted to a small percentage of asylum seekers arriving at the U.S. border. **Typically, individuals granted humanitarian parole (“parolees”) who wish to remain in the United States must affirmatively file petitions for asylum before the specified end of their parole (within one year of arriving in the U.S.).** If parolees have been granted work authorization, they may wish to file their petitions for asylum at least six months before the end of their parole so that they are eligible to receive work authorization as asylum seekers before their parolee-based work authorization ends.

Grant of asylum
Individuals who are granted asylum are referred to as “asylees.” Asylees are eligible for public benefits such as SNAP, TANF, SSI, and Medicaid. Asylees are authorized to work without needing a valid Employment Authorization Document (EAD) but sometimes choose to apply for an EAD (Form I-765) because it can be a useful form of government identification. Asylees can apply to have certain family members join them in the United States. One year after being granted asylum, asylees are eligible to apply for legal permanent resident (LPR) status (sometimes referred to as a “green card”). Asylees are exempt from public charge considerations when applying for LPR status. The $1,225 filing fee for the application for LPR status (I-485) can be waived for eligible asylees; asylees must show they are eligible by filing form I-912, Request for Fee Waiver. Five years after being granted LPR status, asylees can apply for citizenship.

Other options if asylum is denied:
Withholding of Removal under the INA
Referred to as “Withholding of Removal” under the INA, under INA Section 241(b)(3)\(^3^0\), non-citizens may not be removed to a country where their “life or freedom would be threatened...because of the alien’s race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion.” Applicants for asylum are also applicants for restriction on removal.\(^3^1\) Practically speaking, if an individual can make a case for being granted asylum, but is barred from being granted asylum (i.e. because they did not file within one year of arrival), they may be granted Withholding of Removal. Withholding of Removal does not make an individual eligible to apply for LPR status or citizenship. Individuals granted Withholding of Removal are eligible for fewer public benefits, have to pay fees to renew their work authorization, may be required to check-in with ICE indefinitely, and may be removed to a third country that will accept the individual. Also, Withholding of Removal may be terminated by the U.S. government if it determines that conditions in the individual’s home country have improved.

\(^{2^9}\) *Immigration and Nationality, 8 U.S. Code § 1182 (d)(5)(A)*

\(^{3^0}\) *Immigration and Nationality, 8 U.S. Code §208.16*

\(^{3^1}\) *Immigration and Nationality, 8 U.S. Code §208.3(b)*
Convention Against Torture

Individuals applying for asylum typically also apply for relief under the Convention Against Torture (CAT). There are two options under CAT: “Withholding of Removal” and “Deferral of Removal.” To qualify for relief under CAT, an individual must show that they are “more likely than not to be tortured in the country of removal.” The torture must be committed by government officials or with government acquiescence. Relief under CAT does not make an individual eligible to apply for LPR status, citizenship, public benefits, or work authorization. Relief under CAT most commonly comes into effect when an individual has been convicted of a serious crime inside or outside the United States, has persecuted others or is connected to a terrorist organization. Individuals who are only eligible for CAT relief are typically in mandatory detention and may remain in detention if deemed a danger to the public. Also, relief under CAT can be terminated by the U.S. government if it determines that conditions in the individual’s home country have improved.

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32 Immigration and Nationality, 8 U.S. Code §208.16
Engaging in Ministry
Prayers

A Franciscan Blessing

May God bless you with a restless discomfort about easy answers, half-truths, and superficial relationships, so that you may seek truth boldly and love deep within your heart.

May God bless you with holy anger at injustice, oppression, and exploitation of people, so that you may tirelessly work for justice, freedom, and peace among all people.

May God bless you with the gift of tears to shed with those who suffer from pain, rejection, starvation, or the loss of all that they cherish, so that you may reach out your hand to comfort them and transform their pain into joy.

May God bless you with enough foolishness to believe that you really CAN make a difference in this world, so that you are able, with God’s grace, to do what others claim cannot be done.

And the blessing of God the Supreme Majesty and our Creator, Jesus Christ the Incarnate Word who is our brother and Savior, and the Holy Spirit, our Advocate and Guide, be with you and remain with you, this day and forevermore.

Anonymous

Prayer for Those Serving Asylum Seekers and Refugees

Almighty and Loving God, whose love knows no boundaries and whose mercy extends beyond human walls, give us the strength to love in times of hate and to show mercy to those who suffer, especially our brothers and sisters who seek refuge, who are fleeing violence, and all who seek a place to call home.

May we never seek to deceive another. May we never return anger with hatred. May our own frustrations and resentments never cause suffering in another. Guide our actions and our speech to honor the God we serve. Be our Light on the Way of Love to serve our sisters and brothers who wander the earth longing for a home. Amen.
Prayer for Asylum Seekers and Refugees

Hold your children this night, dear Lord, who have no place to rest or call home. Comfort those who are lonely and afraid in a strange land. Protect and sustain the children who have been taken from their parents and give them peace. May your Holy Spirit dwell with those who weep this night from fear and give us all a reason to hope for a better future. May Christ be the arms which hold close all who are afraid and may the presence of Jesus be known in the hearts of those who seek refuge and safety. In the name of the one who himself was once a refugee, Jesus. Amen.

Psalm 69: 19-36, Prayer for Deliverance from Persecution
To the leader: according to Lilies. Of David.

19 You know the insults I receive,  
and my shame and dishonour;  
my foes are all known to you.
20 Insults have broken my heart,  
so that I am in despair.  
I looked for pity, but there was none;  
and for comforters, but I found none.
21 They gave me poison for food,  
and for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.
22 Let their table be a trap for them,  
a snare for their allies.
23 Let their eyes be darkened so that they cannot see,  
and make their loins tremble continually.
24 Pour out your indignation upon them,  
and let your burning anger overtake them.
25 May their camp be a desolation;  
let no one live in their tents.
26 For they persecute those whom you have struck down,  
and those whom you have wounded, they attack still more.
27 Add guilt to their guilt;  
may they have no acquittal from you.
28 Let them be blotted out of the book of the living;  
let them not be enrolled among the righteous.
29 But I am lowly and in pain;  
let your salvation, O God, protect me.
30 I will praise the name of God with a song;  
I will magnify him with thanksgiving.
31 This will please the Lord more than an ox  
or a bull with horns and hoofs.
32 Let the oppressed see it and be glad;  
you who seek God, let your hearts revive.
33 For the Lord hears the needy,  
and does not despise his own that are in bonds.
34 Let heaven and earth praise him,  
the seas and everything that moves in them.
35 For God will save Zion  
and rebuild the cities of Judah;  
and his servants shall live there and possess it;
36 the children of his servants shall inherit it,  
and those who love his name shall live in it.
Discerning Your “Why”

The ministry of supporting asylum seekers, regardless of the model, can be time- and labor-intensive. Unless you individually volunteer with an existing accompaniment network or other organization, we would encourage you to bring together like-minded individuals to create a ministry team.

As your team is coming together, take time to center yourselves in prayer, scripture, and discernment around your sense of call and vocation to this work: your “why,” purpose, or mission. Additionally and importantly, your team should take time to get to know what is going on in your local community, map resources, and begin to build relationships with immigrant-led organizations.

The Episcopal Church Foundation’s Vestry Papers offers a series of articles that may help guide your group in its initial discernment and articulation of its mission:

- **Getting to the Why** by Miguel Angel Escobar
- **Part I of Getting to the ‘Why’: Shared Purpose** by Miguel Angel Escobar
- **Part II of Getting to the ‘Why’: Growing Leaders** by Miguel Angel Escobar
- **Creating Strong Teams** by Ella Auchincloss
- **Why articulate your mission and vision?** by Nancy Davidge and Susan Elliot.

There are several existing resources from Episcopal Migration Ministries and other departments of The Episcopal Church, Presiding Bishop Michael Curry’s staff, that you may explore to help guide your group in the process of prayer, learning, and continuing discernment:

- **Epiphany 2019 Bible Study from Episcopal Migration Ministries**: The Season after Epiphany is important for EMM. It is in this season that we read the Gospel of Matthew, Chapter 2, and learn why the Holy Family became refugees. EMM offers a free Bible study based on Epiphany readings for Revised Common Lectionary Year C, which is adaptable for any time of year. Request the [2019 Year C Curriculum](#).

- **Civil Discourse Curriculum from the Office of Government Relations and Lifelong Christian Formation Department**: The Civil Discourse Curriculum, available at no cost, is a five-week curriculum to guide discussions about politics, policy, and legislation, while strengthening our relationships with one another. The Curriculum, written by the Episcopal Church Office of Government Relations and the Formation Department, encompasses five primary themes: Civil Discourse in Context: An Introduction; Tenets for Civil Discourse; Values-based Conversations; Complexities of Policy; and Sacred Space for Debate.

- **Sacred Ground, part of The Episcopal Church’s Becoming Beloved Community work**: Sacred Ground is a film- and readings-based dialogue series on race, grounded in faith. Small groups are invited to walk through chapters of America’s history of race and racism, while weaving in threads of family story, economic class, and political and regional identity. The
10-part series is built around a powerful online curriculum of documentary films and readings that focus on Indigenous, Black, Latino, and Asian/Pacific American histories as they intersect with European American histories. Sacred Ground is part of Becoming Beloved Community, The Episcopal Church’s long-term commitment to racial healing, reconciliation, and justice in our personal lives, our ministries, and our society. This series is open to all, and especially designed to help white people talk with other white people. Participants are invited to peel away the layers that have contributed to the challenges and divides of the present day – all while grounded in our call to faith, hope and love.

- **Called to Transformation: An Asset-Based Approach to Engaging Church and Community** is centered around the belief that individuals, groups, and communities have the gifts they need to address the needs they see around them. 1 Corinthians 12 tells us that each of us are given different gifts to serve the community and we are all a part of the body of Christ working together. Developed by The Episcopal Church and Episcopal Relief & Development, **Called to Transformation** is a tool for you to use as you embark on an asset-based approach to ministry.

**Get to Know Your Community**
We strongly encourage any group using this resource to map their community and get to know local and regional immigrant-led organizations, mutual assistance associations, and ethnic community-based organizations. Especially if your team is primarily composed of U.S. citizens or permanent residents, begin by forming relationships with organizations that have taken leading roles in advocacy and support for immigrants by immigrants. Show up to learn, to listen, and to support, and **not** to take the lead.

We recommend the following resources for critical engagement on and exploration of these issues and questions:
- **Toxic Charity: How Churches and Charities Hurt Those They Help, And How to Reverse It** by Robert Lupton discusses new models for charitable groups who want to help - and not sabotage - those they serve. **When Helping Hurts: How to Alleviate Poverty Without Hurting the Poor... and Yourself** by Steve Corbett discusses similar issues.
- **Waking Up White, and Finding Myself in the Story of Race** by Debbie Irving is a book that explores white privilege and the dominant culture, cultural competence, racial justice, and a variety of related issues.
- The American Friends Service Committee, the Unitarian Universalist Association, and the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee collaborated to produce a four-session online course called **Changing systems, changing ourselves: Anti-racist practice for sanctuary, accompaniment & resistance.**

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Stand Up for Racial Justice (SURJ) offers “How Whiteness, the Savior Complex, and Power Dynamics Affect the Sponsorship Experience.”

Discussion and Reflection Questions
These are some suggestions for discussion and reflection questions to continue asking as you discern and develop your ministry:

- Where and how is God already at work among the immigrant community in your area?
- What can your ministry do to align with organizations (ideally immigrant-led) already working in your community?
- What other faith communities or partners could you engage with for this ministry?
- Who is this for? (Does this ministry really serve others, or does it serve our own sense of guilt, obligation, fear, or hopelessness?)
- Who is not at the table? What voices are missing from the conversation?
- How are the people you serve increasingly empowered to use their unique gifts and skills to pursue their dreams?
- What are you learning from the people you serve? How are you being transformed, personally and as a group?

Conversation and Guidance
Any team is welcome to reach out to Episcopal Migration Ministries for conversation, connection, and advice. Please contact us; we look forward to hearing from you.

https://episcopalmigrationministries.org/contact-us/
Discerning the “How”: Important Considerations for This Ministry

To this point in the Toolkit, we have discussed the importance of discerning your sense of call and purpose in this work — your “why” — as well as some reflection and discussion questions for ongoing discernment.

In this section, current and former refugee resettlement professionals and accompaniment volunteers offer wisdom, guidance, and important considerations for your ministry - the “how.” Some of the below may ring true to your experience, as you engage in different ministry models, and some may not. Every ministry experience will be unique.

For future editions of this Toolkit, we welcome additional contributions, especially to this section. The more lived experience and wisdom we can share from volunteers, practitioners, organizations, and congregations, the stronger, more supported, and more sustainable our ministries will be.

Serving Vulnerable Populations

Asylum seekers are a particularly vulnerable group. First, they have fled danger or persecution, which, depending on the situation, may threaten to follow them into the United States. Even if they are safe, they may not feel safe for a long time. Second, the treatment of asylum seekers in the U.S. has become unpredictable because government policy is subject to change based on political dynamics, executive orders and other issues. And third, like other vulnerable populations, asylum seekers generally lack resources, power, and privilege. While congregations and most individual volunteers may not have professional training in protecting and dealing respectfully with vulnerable populations, it’s important to learn as much as possible in order to help, not harm, your new neighbors. The Church and the human-services professions offer guidance.

Seek and Serve Christ in All Persons

What motivates your ministry team, as Christians, to provide companionship and support to asylum seekers? Whether it’s the Great Commandment, Matthew 25, the promises of the Baptismal Covenant, or something else, teams should be aware that they are both serving Jesus in the asylum seekers they meet and functioning as the hands and feet of Jesus as they serve.

Safe Church

The Safe Church policies of The Episcopal Church,34 which should already be familiar to many Episcopalians, make an excellent touchstone for working with asylum seekers. Every diocese should have these policies and trainings in place. They address appropriate behaviors and boundaries in working with

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both children and adults, with a focus on understanding power differentials—between adults and children or clergy and laypersons—and the pitfalls of dual relationships.

In addition to preventing sexual misconduct, a safe-church mindset will help the team remember that their relative power in the relationship with asylum seekers may compel the asylum seekers to agree to things they don’t want to do or allow the team access beyond the asylum seeker’s comfort level. It’s difficult for anyone to say no to a person with power over them, and what a volunteer means as a kind offer may be taken as pressure. An example of this dynamic may include inviting the asylum seeker to attend church services. Such an invitation may be intended as a kind offer but could be taken as pressure or understood as a *quid pro quo*: “We will continue to help and support you *only if* you come to church with us or convert to our religion.”

With respect to the complications of dual relationships, team members should try to remember that they are supporters and companions, not friends nor parents, of their new neighbors. Aside from the fact that friendship is understood very differently from culture to culture, calling yourselves friends may lead to unreasonable expectations of reciprocity on both sides, which in turn could put undue pressure on asylum seekers and lead to disappointment among members of the team. While long-term friendships do sometimes emerge from an initial relationship of companioning, teams would do well not to expect it or project it onto their new neighbors.

In addition to the basic protections implicit in respecting the dignity of all and abiding by safe-church protocols, team members may need to consider how best to serve children, older adults, and people with disabilities or other types of special needs. To serve them both appropriately and safely, teams will need to be aware not only of federal and state law regarding civil rights and public assistance, but also of the political climate in their city and state. Even if the asylum-seeker adults or children are eligible for certain government services or public benefits, the government workers you encounter may so seldom engage with asylum seekers that they are not aware of eligibility. A local refugee resettlement agency or legal aid organization may be able to provide guidance. Be cautious when proceeding in these cases, in particular when working with undocumented people or those who have overstayed their visas. It may be best for team members or congregations to tap personal connections and resources to leverage informal help rather than to risk drawing attention to your vulnerable neighbors by accessing official channels. Every case is a little different and requires a mindful and sensitive approach.

Developing a Healthy, Just, and Anti-Racist Approach

There are natural and unavoidable power imbalances in ministry with asylum seekers. For example, an asylum seeker may not speak English, may not be literate, and may not understand U.S. systems. Even still, your role is to walk alongside, not to “do for.” The best way to handle power imbalances is to be aware of them and work to mitigate their impact on the relationship.

This is easier said than done, and requires ongoing discernment, learning, self-analysis, and building a relationship with the asylum seeker that both uplifts their own sense of agency and encourages their independence and self-determination.
Furthermore, while the work and the relationship will be between individuals, it is important to understand and acknowledge the larger cultural matrix in which you are engaging this work. This means learning, analyzing, and deepening your awareness on topics including, but not limited to, the dynamics of racism and xenophobia in the United States, institutional oppression, the ever-changing U.S. political and policy landscape, the history and present of U.S. and other countries' foreign and domestic policies that contribute to forced displacement, etc. In addition, teams should study and think critically, together, about older, paternalistic, “charity” models of service provision and how to engage a more asset- and strengths-based approach to ministry, mission, and outreach.

We recommend the following resources for critical engagement on these issues and questions:

- Stand Up for Racial Justice (SURJ): “How Whiteness, the Savior Complex, and Power Dynamics Affect the Sponsorship Experience.”
- The American Friends Service Committee, the Unitarian Universalist Association, and the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee collaborated to produce a four-session online course called Changing systems, changing ourselves: Anti-racist practice for sanctuary, accompaniment & resistance.
- How to Be an Antiracist by Ibram X. Kendi.
- See earlier “Get To Know Your Community” section.

Cultural Competence

The importance of cultural competence (or cultural competency) has become a major focus of continuing education in health care and other fields in the past few years. Cultural competence involves knowledge of other cultures, nonjudgmental acceptance of cultural differences, and adaptation of behaviors to enable successful communication, cooperation, treatment, and inclusion of diverse groups, while at the same time remaining grounded in a sense of shared humanity.

Working with asylum seekers requires finding the balance between treating your new neighbors like anyone else and recognizing that their culture and experiences may present challenges to their adaptation to the U.S. and to your mutual understanding. Country of origin, urban or rural background, and education — not to mention individual beliefs and attitudes — all contribute to how a newly arrived person will function in and adapt to U.S. culture.

Teams should learn what they can about the culture that their new companions come from and the typical reasons people are fleeing their country to seek asylum in the U.S. (Asylum seekers do not all come from Latin America. Those your team works with could be from any country in the world.35) Teams should try to anticipate in what areas cultural differences could affect their new neighbors’ experience and life in the U.S.; doing so will help them get comfortable in their new community and will

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help both team members and your new neighbors avoid misunderstandings and other difficulties. An
internet search should yield timely, relevant information. The CIA World Factbook is a place to start for
basic information about your new neighbors’ country of origin. Some cultures are addressed in the
refugee backgrounders found on this archived website from the Center for Applied Linguistics.
Britannica includes a section entitled “Daily Life and Social Customs” in each of its country entries.
Teams may also find useful cultural information on travel sites such as Lonely Planet. The asylum seekers
themselves may be a good resource for cultural information, but understand that it is not their job to
educate you. Do your homework, and do not assume you know more than the person you accompany.

A word of caution: be aware that descriptions of a country’s dominant culture may not apply to those
who have fled persecution in that country.

A principle of working with adults is to begin where they are. Teams should not assume their new
neighbors know nothing or know everything about life in the United States. Indeed, some asylum
seekers have been in the United States or similar countries for many years. It’s helpful to find out what
their assumptions, expectations, and hopes are before launching into an explanation. Areas in which
cultural differences are common include:

- Physical and mental health care and health care
- Work
- Educational practices
- Time management
- Behavioral norms between males and females
- Treatment of individuals who identify as LGBTQIA
- Equal rights and respect

Resources such as this one from the Cultural Orientation Resource Exchange (CORE) for refugees may
be helpful in understanding the types of cultural information new neighbors need. Teams should adapt
these materials for their work with asylum seekers. (CORE resources are intended for a refugee
audience; remember that asylum seekers do not receive the types of U.S. government support provided
to refugees.) If you have questions or would like advice as to how best to use cultural orientation tools,
please contact EMM: https://episcopalmigrationministries.org/contact-us/.

For Cultural Competence learning resources for members of your ministry team, we encourage you to
explore Community Tool Box’s “Cultural Competence in a Multicultural World”.

Trauma-Informed Service
Like cultural competence, trauma-informed care—or in the case of ministry teams, service—is a
relatively recent topic of focus for social services and health care practitioners that deserves attention in
working with asylum seekers. Like refugees, asylees (those granted asylum), by legal definition, have
credible fear of persecution. Asylum seekers and asylees have likely experienced some type of trauma,
whether acute or chronic. That does not mean that all asylum seekers have post-traumatic stress
disorder (PTSD); individuals respond very differently to their experiences. However, it may mean that
the trauma they have experienced continues to affect them physically, emotionally, mentally, and socially.

Teams that are standing with asylum seekers, accompanying them to ICE check-ins, or helping them
adjust to life in your community should realize that traumatic experiences may continually affect them in
many ways. It is not a team member’s role to tease out exactly what the trauma has been or to attempt
to address the effects. Team members should avoid asking invasive questions about the experiences that
cased their new neighbors to flee their homes. If the topic arises, listen non-judgmentally.

It can be helpful to give asylum seekers advance warning about upcoming holidays that involve fireworks,
which sound remarkably like gunfire, and to be sensitive about television and movies, video games,
radio/podcasts, and conversational topics. The goal is to avoid topics, sounds, or events that may be
triggering or retraumatizing.

Teams should identify local, culturally competent, and trauma-informed mental and medical health care
providers and have this list available as needed. While mental health care is becoming more normalized
in the United States, it is still stigmatized in some cultures. Seek out advice and support from mental
health care professionals as to whether and how best to discuss opportunities to access mental health
care with those you welcome and accompany.

Members of your team may also benefit from trainings on topics such as Mental Health First Aid for this
and other ministries.

Sustainability: Know and Be Clear on Your Capacity

If and when you engage in any model of ministry to support and welcome asylum seekers, it is important
to be clear on what you or your group can and cannot do. There have been cases where an individual
wants to be a “host home” for an asylum seeker, or a congregation wants to engage in “Welcome
Team” type ministry, but they are not prepared for the commitment, and asylum seekers are left to
avigate a complex legal process while also dealing with abandonment. Of course, you want to avoid this
at all costs.

Before agreeing to support an asylum seeker, clearly define the work that each member of the team is
able to take on, and clearly communicate to the person you are supporting.

The key to serving in a way that is sustainable is maintaining healthy boundaries, which includes avoiding
misunderstandings by clearly articulating each person’s responsibilities, identifying whose responsibility it
is to help solve a particular problem, and recognizing each person’s limits. In the later section on
ministry models, we provide more information about possible ministry models and roles.

Confidentiality, Privacy, Consent, and Social Media Concerns

Given the vulnerability of asylum seekers, team members and congregations probably already realize that
protecting asylum seekers’ privacy is an important part of keeping them safe. At the same time, if a
A congregation’s ministry team is walking alongside a family or individual as a congregational team, the congregation will likely want to be kept apprised of their new neighbors’ welfare. The top priority has to be the safety of your new neighbors. Here are some guidelines to help groups find the balance.

- **Consent:** Teams should make sure that their new neighbors welcome and consent to their involvement. If the team is working through another organization, such as an interfaith coalition or social service agency, that organization may have a consent process in place for asylum-seeking participants. If not, determine in advance how your ministry team will ascertain that your new neighbors agree to your visits, accompaniment, or material support. Team members should not provide the asylum seeker’s phone number or address to others without their permission. Do continue to ask permission whenever you consider offering some new type of assistance or attention. Always follow the lead of the asylum seeker.

- **Volunteer screening:** Belonging to a parish does not guarantee that a person knows or will abide by best practices in working with others, especially with vulnerable populations. Teams may want to determine the “rules of engagement” for their accompaniment or support and ask volunteers to sign an agreement. (Sample agreements follow later in this toolkit.) Typical dos and don’ts include respecting individuals’ boundaries, not disclosing identifying information, not accepting gifts, not taking photographs, not lending or giving money, making any gifts come “from the congregation” rather than from an individual, and not proselytizing (in a broad sense, politically or culturally as well as religiously). What works will vary by context; for those working through a congregation, it’s a good idea to consult clergy and lay leadership. For those working through another organization, a formal background check may be required, as well as other behavior contracts, and different standards may apply. If an Episcopal congregation decides to require background checks for all volunteers, the diocese may be able to assist.

- **Safeguarding volunteers’ privacy:** The need for privacy goes both ways. While the team will recognize and respect their new neighbors’ need for security and anonymity, they should also respect one another’s privacy. Team members should not disclose other team members’ personal information without consent. It often works well for a team to have a primary contact: someone who is comfortable being the point person for panicked calls about a sudden illness or other emergency, and/or someone who can coordinate visits to the new neighbors. If your team is providing accompaniment, you may want to coordinate ICE check-ins through a third-party agency. Be aware that it is not unheard of for law enforcement to pursue those who assist people who are undocumented.

- **Congregational sharing and social media:** A congregation may want to pray for their new neighbors by name, but for their safety, receive their consent to use their first names only; avoid identifying the newcomers by their status (be it “asylum seekers” or “undocumented”). Sharing what’s happening with “the family we’re working with” at announcements should not include specific locations or services. You may find that, after some time, those you are supporting wish to speak on their own behalf. Congregations and individuals should not publish (or “share”) pictures of or information about the family in print or electronic media. For example, in printed announcements at church, references should be vague enough that a potential predator could
not use what is said to locate and harm an asylum-seeking individual or family. If the congregation or members engage in political advocacy for the cause of asylum seekers or immigrants in general, they should not use the identifying information about the individuals with whom they’re working as examples, either orally or in writing.

Successful Volunteer Models

By the time you have finished reading this guide, you may think that accompanying or supporting asylum seekers would be an overwhelmingly daunting task. The model of an individual or congregational team taking on the support and/or accompaniment to ICE check-ins is a common one, but there are alternatives. If this work is beyond the capacity of the team or congregation, you may want to partner with another local congregation. Interfaith or ecumenical partnerships in aid of a just cause can yield wonderful side benefits. If you lack full congregational support, you may wish to explore individual volunteer opportunities with a social services agency to support asylum seekers, such as preparing apartments, providing household basics, or driving to appointments.

Managing Your Expectations and Emotions

Accompanying and welcoming asylum seekers is an enormous commitment. In addition to the hard work and time commitment of this ministry, there is also the uncertainty of the outcome of the asylum seeker’s case and the ambiguity that may exist in the relationships. Even in the best of circumstances, what starts as enthusiastic, wholehearted engagement of a ministry team may give way to doubts about the project and varying degrees of burnout among participants.

In this ministry, individuals and congregations must respect the humanity and independence of those they seek to walk alongside: you are not parents nor friends. Even if a member of your team is the official “sponsor” for an asylum seeker, you are not responsible nor legally liable for the person’s actions. Ultimately, you have no control over the asylum seeker’s decisions or how they view their relationship with you. Accompaniment or Welcome Team members are companions, guides, helpers, maybe long-term, maybe not.

There are several emotional/relational dynamics that may develop, especially in longer-term and more relational ministry models like Welcome Teams:

- Volunteers may overestimate the extent to which their new neighbors regard them as friends and may begin to feel “used” when they realize that what they may have taken for friendship isn’t.
- Individual team members may easily fall into the feeling that they have to solve every problem or that they have a special relationship of confidence with the asylum seeker.
- If communication breaks down between volunteers/team members, multiple team members may end up fulfilling the same request or need (resulting in two doctor’s appointments, multiple donations/purchases of an item, etc.).
For a Welcome Team-style ministry, the initial drive to provide physical and practical support eases after a few weeks, and more subtle issues may arise in areas such as parenting, learning English, or attitudes and cultural beliefs about work. Team members may find it difficult to take a nonjudgmental stance while still communicating U.S. laws and norms.

You may find you don’t “like” those you’re supporting. Strategies used with long-term neighbors or family members may be inappropriate or ineffective with newcomers to the United States and its cultures.

In working with asylum seekers, uncertainty of the outcome of the asylum case may intensify the complexity of expectations and emotions. It’s impossible to anticipate the outcome of any given ICE check-in or court appearance; your new neighbors could be detained or deported. In practical terms, what would your team do then? How will you stay engaged? If you’ve signed a lease and rented an apartment, what will happen to the lease? How will your team and congregation process the sadness, anger, and frustration?

Shifting expectations, complicated feelings, and uncertainty about outcomes are natural and probably unavoidable, though the specifics will vary. To stay engaged while maintaining emotional and practical boundaries is an enormous challenge that your ministry team should anticipate. Some suggestions for tackling it:

Teams may wish to:

- Create and follow policies for the team’s work. (For example, don’t provide material goods, transportation, etc. without consulting other members of the team; have one point person for coordinating visits and concerns; assign specific team members to address individual areas such as health, education, work. As a team, you’ll need to determine your processes.)
- Plan and attend frequent information-sharing meetings and debriefings as a group.
- Ask for congregational prayers not only for the newcomers and the work itself but also for the active team. This will help the team stay aware of and be supported through the emotional challenges of the work.
- Invite a member of the congregation’s pastoral care team or a clergyperson to serve as a listener or pastoral-care provider for your team.
- Reach out to social service organizations with experience in serving refugees, asylum seekers, or immigrant populations. Ask if they might be able to send someone to speak on different topics, help troubleshoot tricky situations, or provide additional education and guidance.
Discerning the “What”: Different Models of Ministry

After your team has discerned your “why” and started conversations about the “how” — your values and approach to your ministry — it is time to assess the possible models of ministry to support asylum seekers, asylees, and people who are undocumented: the “what” of your ministry.

This guide primarily focuses on the ministry of what we term “Welcome Teams,” which we define as longer-term support of humanitarian parolees, recently arrived asylum seekers, or those recently released from detention in need of support from a caring community. We have used our experience as a refugee resettlement agency and adapted aspects of refugee resettlement ministry to empower congregations to understand, organize, and provide longer-term welcome and support to asylum seekers as they go through the asylum legal process.

That said, there are other models of ministry with asylum seekers that you could explore and pursue, depending on your location, the organizations already active in your community and expert on these issues, the gifts and skills present in your group, and other factors. Additionally, we cannot say strongly enough how important it is to connect with existing organizations, especially immigrant-led organizations, who are active in this work, before attempting to reinvent the proverbial wheel.

The various models of ministry fall under these general categories:

- Welcome Team Ministry
- Detention Visitation Ministry and Accompaniment of Asylum Seekers in Detention
  - Posting Bond & Sponsorship
- Accompaniment Ministry Outside of Detention
Welcome Team Ministry

Important note: Unlike refugee resettlement ministry, which is formalized, highly structured, and conducted in partnership with a local refugee resettlement affiliate following federal regulations, supporting asylum seekers has no such structure nor regulations. Any congregation endeavoring to take on this ministry should understand that this is a major moral, spiritual, temporal, and financial commitment; it is a commitment made from deep faith, living into the Gospel call to love your neighbor and baptismal promise to respect the dignity of every human being.

In this section, we offer ideas on ways to structure your Welcome Team, recommended checklists for various activities, and important considerations for engaging this ministry.

Connecting with Someone in Need

If your group discerns a call to this type of ministry, please reach out to Episcopal Migration Ministries. Opportunities for this type of ministry are growing as organizations are collaborating and formalizing their own processes for this work. EMM will receive your request and work to connect you with appropriate organizations seeking sponsors and longer-term support for asylum seekers.

Organizing Your Team

There is no one “right” way to organize your Welcome Team to provide longer-term support to asylum seekers. Here, we offer ideas and recommendations on ways to organize your team into smaller committees, based on the experience of ministry teams across the country who have worked in refugee resettlement ministry (co-sponsorship) and/or with asylum seekers. Not all teams will need all of these committees; we offer them here as examples to help teams discern where and how their gifts may be best utilized.

Legal Service/Support: A Legal Services/Support committee is a quintessential committee for any Welcome Team. This committee would be a small group focused on building a relationship with an asylum seeker (compa) and taking action in accordance with their requests and those of their attorney. If the compa does not already have an attorney, this team identifies a low-cost or pro bono immigration attorney who can take their case. **NOTE: Providing advice about legal matters and completing forms is considered practicing law. Volunteers who are not licensed attorneys should be careful to not commit the unlicensed practice of law.**

This volunteer committee supports the asylum seeker as he/she works with an attorney and goes through the legal process. This may include accompanying the asylum seeker to court appointments, ICE check-ins, and assisting the asylum seeker in gathering information and documents requested by the attorney for preparation for the credible fear interview, requests for change of venue, applying for the Employment Authorization Document, and completing the asylum application, etc.

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36 Contact Episcopal Migration Ministries: [https://episcopalmigrationministries.org/contact-us/](https://episcopalmigrationministries.org/contact-us/).
**Administration - Finance:** This committee would manage the finances of the Welcome Team, liaising with the fundraising committee about revenues and with the other committees about expenses. This team could be staffed by multiple people, or by one person who would serve as volunteer treasurer/bookkeeper.

**Administration - Fundraising:** This committee would take on the work of appropriately communicating to the wider community about the work of the Welcome Team and their fundraising needs. The fundraising committee might organize a special collection during a worship service, solicit monetary and in-kind donations from individuals, host a fundraising event, launch an online giving campaign, or other actions to raise money to support the Welcome Team’s work and the needs of the family. This team should take great care with considerations of [privacy and confidentiality](#).

**Administration - Shopping & Donations:** If the Welcome Team chooses to include a Shopping & Donations Committee, this committee would liaise with the other committees and create and execute donation drives, shopping lists, and assist in the delivery of items to committees that request them. This committee is ideal as it creates a single “point person” or “point committee” that coordinates all shopping needs, so that members of various committees are not buying items in duplicate. This committee would also maintain an inventory of all items purchased and used in the Welcome Team’s work to prevent unnecessary expenditures throughout the process.

**Housing:** Asylum seekers will need housing while they go through the legal process. The housing volunteer committee would secure long-term transitional housing (housing for a few weeks to more than six months). The committee should be mindful of the group’s/congregation’s capacity (e.g. how long can you afford to pay rent? Or, how long can someone host the asylum seeker in their home?), be aware of logistical considerations (proximity to public transportation, services/appointments, etc.) and access to social support.

Housing may be offered in a private residence - “host homes.” Best practices for host homes include creating “House Rules” and developing clearly communicated verbal and written agreements with the compa/guest. An example of “House Rules” follows in the next section on sample forms.

**Clothing, Food, Material Needs:** Until asylum seekers receive their work authorization and are able to partially or fully financially support themselves, they will need assistance to meet their material needs. A Clothing, Food, and Material Needs Committee would focus on securing the needed items for the asylum seeker at the start of the team’s work, and set up a process of checking-in to identify and meet ongoing or emerging material needs.

**Language/Interpretation:** Ideally, at least one member of the Welcome Team will be a fluent speaker of the language the asylum seeker speaks. Whether or not that is possible, this committee would work to ensure that communication between the Welcome Team and the family goes smoothly, sourcing interpreters as needed (sometimes at a fee), using Google Translate when necessary, etc.
Medical and Mental Health: Asylum seekers will have medical and mental health needs, just like any of us, but also may have heightened medical/mental health needs due to their long journey and past trauma. The medical and mental health team would identify local health care providers to provide the needed care (including culturally competent and trauma-informed providers), arrange transportation as necessary (or identify volunteers who can assist with transportation), and assist with any follow-up or ongoing support that is needed.

Education: Asylum seekers, be they children or adults, will have educational needs. Children are eligible to be enrolled in public school, regardless of status. Adults will usually require English language instruction and would likely benefit from cultural orientation education. The education committee would focus its energies on the educational and cultural orientation needs of the asylum seekers, including asking the family members if they would like one-on-one meetings with team volunteers who could serve as conversation partners, tutors, and mentors.

Finance & Family Budgeting: Once the family has begun to stabilize, it is important to support them as they think medium-term and long-term: budgeting for the months ahead, including after the adults have received work authorization and while the asylum case is still pending, as well as for a longer-term hopeful future, after the family has been granted asylum. This committee would help the adults in creating their family budget and financially planning for a self-determined, independent future, including such things as establishing a bank account, building good credit, buying their first vehicle or home, getting a small business loan, etc.

Social, Emotional, Spiritual Needs: Asylum seekers have gone through a harrowing journey, and are in the midst of a challenging and uncertain time as they go through the legal process. Opportunities to socialize, build relationships, and receive social and spiritual support are vital. The social and spiritual needs committee would discern with the asylum seekers how to meet emotional and spiritual support needs, perhaps through connecting with community events or opportunities, regular visits from team members they trust, and/or connecting with a religious or spiritual community of their own choosing. A particular challenge for asylum seekers is the amount of idle time they might experience once they have settled in their new home/environment. Finding meaningful outlets for asylum seekers to share their gifts and skills can be helpful in overcoming a sense of helplessness, even depression, with too much idle time and can even help with recovery. This often means creative approaches to volunteering or other ways for the asylum seekers to contribute to their own future and/or be able to give to others.

Community Activity: This volunteer committee could be collapsed into the Social, Emotional, and Spiritual Needs Committee. The Community Activity committee would offer an invitation to the asylum seeker to get to know the wider community through activities. This could include visiting the local public library or swimming pool, enjoying a walk or pick-up soccer in a local park, etc. Until such time as the asylum seeker or family are comfortable to access and enjoy community activities and events independently, a volunteer or two may be needed for such outings.

Employment/Job Placement: This team would assist adults - with the immigration attorney, as necessary - in applying for work authorization, and prepare them for eventual job interviews and job
placements while they await their EAD (employment authorization document). The team may reach out to friends, family, and colleagues who are business owners or employers to find possible employment opportunities, help the adults prepare for job interviews, and provide some training in specific skills and/or assistance in re-licensing or re-certifying if possible and necessary. This committee listens to and follows the lead of the asylum seeker adults, encouraging but not coercing a particular job opportunity or course of action.

Time Commitment

Some Welcome Team (and accompaniment) activities are discrete, one-time activities, such as accompanying an asylum seeker to an ICE check-in. However, as described in the Accompaniment section that follows later in this Toolkit, asylum seekers often need additional support beyond accompaniment, and congregations are well-positioned to organize themselves to be able to provide this support through Welcome Team-style ministry.

As a rule of thumb, a Welcome Team minimum time commitment should be six months to one year for providing support such as housing, clothing/food/material needs, and other types of support as outlined in the section above. This length of time is variable depending upon the needs of the asylum seeker, whether or not you are connected to an established accompaniment network (that is providing more services/support), and whether or not the asylum seeker has received work authorization, started employment, and is financially self-reliant.

Liability

Asylum seekers are responsible for their own actions. As the Welcome Team, you should explain and reinforce U.S. laws and regulations as well as U.S. cultural customs (see section on Cultural Orientation, below).

With respect to liability coverage for those group members transporting the asylum seeker/family in their cars, the driver’s/vehicle owner’s insurance would be primary, followed by the insurance of the church or other organization on whose behalf the driver was acting. You will need to determine whether your congregation/organization’s insurance covers volunteers.

If your congregation/organization is the co-signer on the lease for the family’s apartment or house, read and review the lease carefully so you understand your legal responsibilities for any damage to the apartment or house, or if the lease is broken. You may want to explore renter’s insurance policies and discuss with the adults in the family.

If you are an Episcopal congregation, you may want to check with Church Insurance to learn about any additional coverage you may want to add to your policy. Church Insurance Company offers Sanctuary Church Endorsement Coverage.

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37 Asylum seekers are not eligible to apply for a work permit until 150 days after the asylum petition has been filed, and then are not allowed to work for 180 days thereafter.
Cultural Orientation Topics

Cultural orientation may or may not be helpful and important for the asylum seekers you are supporting, depending on their time in the U.S., their background and education, and their experiences already navigating complex systems that have brought them to their present place.

Lesson plans and resources for refugee resettlement cultural orientation are available from the Cultural Orientation Resource Exchange on topics such as:

- Health & Hygiene
- Employment
- Supporting Your Child in School
- U.S. Laws
- Money Management
- Digital Awareness

Regardless of other topics that may arise, it is important for your team to explain the team’s role, including:

- The Welcome Team is not a government agency or social service agency.
- Description of the Welcome Team: Who is the Welcome Team? (Is it an organization? A congregation? Members of a larger entity? Be clear whether or not the asylum seeker’s immigration attorney is part of the Welcome Team, and how the Welcome Team will work with the asylum seeker and attorney.)
- How long will the Welcome Team support the asylum seeker, and in what ways?
- Provide a list of community organizations that can provide additional support above and beyond what the Welcome Team has committed to.

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38 The Cultural Orientation Resource Exchange is for refugee resettlement professionals, but materials there may be adapted and made relevant for an asylum seeker audience. If you have questions or would like advice as to how best to use cultural orientation tools, please contact EMM: https://episcopalmigrationministries.org/contact-us/.
Checklists & Tools for Welcome Teams

Welcome Team work is intensive; organization and communication are key!

We have adapted EMM refugee resettlement tools and checklists to assist you in this work. Unlike refugee resettlement, there are not federal standards as to how a Welcome Team or anyone should provide support to asylum seekers. These checklists and tools outline the step-by-step processes and activities that your Welcome Team may undertake as part of its ministry.

Guidance on Forms
This section provides guidance on the purpose and how to use the following forms:

- Sample Welcome Team Planning Worksheet
- Sample Self-Sufficiency Budget
- Sample Welcome Team Activities
- Sample Home Evaluation & Safety Checklist
- Sample Home Supply List
- Sample Next Day Home Visit Checklist
- Sample Agreement for Volunteers
- Volunteer Guidelines and Expectations
- Sample Agreement for Compa/Guest
- Sample House Rules
- Resume Template

Sample Welcome Team Planning Worksheet
The Welcome Team Planning Worksheet provides a list of all the items your team will need to discuss, deliberate, and decide upon prior to commencing your ministry. The decisions you make here about the duration and types of support you provide should be communicated clearly, and reiterated as necessary, to those you welcome and support.

Sample Self-Sufficiency Budget
The Sample Self-Sufficiency Budget is an Excel template that Welcome Teams may use to financially plan for their ministry of supporting asylum seekers and for the asylum seeker’s eventual financial self-sufficiency. You may duplicate months as necessary to create a budget calendar that lasts for the duration of your time commitment to this work. Using this or a similar budgeting tool, take time to discuss with those you are supporting the length of time you are able to support them, including how you will help them prepare for job interviews and employment after they have received work authorization. Explain to the asylum seeker and show how, once he/she is employed, Welcome Team financial support will gradually decline as the asylum seeker takes on more financial responsibility on his/her journey to financial self-sufficiency. Note this budget template does not include medical expenses.
Sample Welcome Team Activities Checklist
This checklist is a composite of many activities checklists prepared by refugee resettlement professionals and congregational accompaniment and welcome teams across the U.S. It is a living document and we welcome your contributions, observations, and feedback to help us improve this tool over time.

The checklist outlines activities week by week:
- Before Arrival
- Arrival & Week 1
- Weeks 2-4
- Weeks 5-8
- Weeks & Months to Come

And under category headers:
- General
- Finance & Fundraising
- Legal Accompaniment
- Clothing, Food, and Material Assistance
- Education
- Social & Emotional Needs
- Housing
- Employment/Job Placement
- Medical/Mental Health

Supporting an asylum seeker has many associated tasks, but it is important to remember that this work is contingent upon the consent of the person you are supporting. Work on communicating well and regularly, both with your fellow volunteers or team members and with those you are supporting, using tools like Google Translate as needed.

- Ask questions instead of making assumptions.
- Remember you are in a supportive role: you are not “in charge,” not in a parent-child relationship.
- Refer to “Managing Your Expectations and Emotions” and “Considerations: Serving Vulnerable Populations” in the toolkit for additional words of the wise that will help inform your approach to this ministry.

Sample Home Evaluation & Safety Checklist
This form was adapted from an existing EMM form that is used for refugee resettlement. This form does not define requirements for Welcome Team work, but instead provides strong recommendations to ensure that those you welcome are provided a housing environment that aligns with these minimum suggested standards. We encourage teams to go above and beyond these minimum standards, while also ensuring sustainability for those you welcome (for example, do not sign a lease on a rental property that the family would not be able to afford on minimum-wage jobs, once employed).
**Sample Home Supply List**
This form was adapted from an existing EMM form used for refugee resettlement. This form does not define requirements for Welcome Team work, but instead provides strong recommendations to ensure that those you welcome are provided with the basic necessities as outlined in this supply list.

We encourage you to take care in selecting items with which to furnish the residence: ensuring items are in good repair, sturdy, and safe; that items will last many months or years with regular use.

**Sample Next Day Home Visit Checklist**
This form was adapted from an existing EMM form used for refugee resettlement. Depending on how long the asylum seeker has been in the United States, their country of origin, and their English skills, it may not be necessary to go over basic items such as light switches in each room, how to use the toilet or stove, etc. That said, this form provides a comprehensive list of appliances, household safety items, and other topics that may be useful to discuss and that you might otherwise take for granted are universally understood.

**Sample Agreement for Volunteers**
This document provides sample policies and agreements for volunteers, and may be adapted to your context and the needs of your group.

**Volunteer Guidelines and Expectations**
This form was created by St. Martin’s Episcopal Church in Davis, California (Diocese of Northern California) for their Families Together Project. It may be used and adapted by other congregations and volunteer teams.

**Sample Agreement for Compa/Guest**
This document provides sample policies and agreements for those you welcome and serve, and may be adapted to your context and the needs of your group and whether or not housing is a “host home” arrangement.

**Sample House Rules**
This document is a sample of house rules used in Host Home housing arrangements.

**Resumé Template**
This document is a sample template of a resumé that may be adapted by an asylum seeker as he/she prepares for job interviews and employment (after receiving work authorization).
This document is a Sample Welcome Team Planning Worksheet that congregations and groups may use as a resource for their ministries. While by no means required, we invite you to send your completed form to Allison Duvall, aduvall@episcopalchurch.org, so we may use them as a resource to support others in their work. Additions/changes you make to these forms may be reflected in updates to the Supporting Asylum Seekers Toolkit.

### Welcome Team Planning Worksheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Welcome Team Name</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community Partner(s), if applicable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Leader</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteers and contact information</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Names and contact information of the primary points-of-contact for the asylum seeker/family</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duration of support for the asylum seeker/family</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Types of support that will be provided (check ☐ if applicable and describe)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Housing for _____ months</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Payment of rent and utilities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Grocery/food support in form of ________________</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Material needs, including ________________</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Transportation, including ________________</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Education support, including ________________</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Medical/Mental Health support, including ________________</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Employment support, including ________________</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Legal accompaniment (following up on asylum seekers’ and/or attorney’s requests), including</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Social/emotional support, including ________________</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Additional financial support in amount of ______, concluding on ________________ [date]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team work, policies, and guidelines:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Team has adopted Volunteer Guidelines and/or Agreement and each volunteer has signed.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Volunteers have received a background check.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Team has established policies and protocols around confidentiality.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Team has discussed and will abide by Safe Church Policies.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Team has established policies around how cash and material goods will be disbursed to the asylum seeker/family, and agreed upon a policy regarding gifts.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Team has established a clear system of communication and a regular meeting schedule.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Supporting Asylum Seekers: A Toolkit for Congregations

#### Sample Self-Sufficiency Budget

**Name(s):** Jane Doe  
**# of Adults:** 2  
**Team Point of Contact:** SAMPLE  
**# of Minors:** 2  
**Date of Arrival:** 1/31/2012  
**Total Number of Family Members:** 4

**Monthly Income Needed for Financial Self-Sufficiency:** $1,793 (expenses below + $200 savings)

### MONTH 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes/Start Date</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employed</strong></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MONTHLY EXPENSES</th>
<th>Welcome Team Responsibility</th>
<th>Responsibility of Sponsor or Asylum Seekers' US Ties</th>
<th>Asylum Seeker's Responsibility</th>
<th>FAMILY'S INCOME</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rent:</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>Employment - Adult #1</td>
<td></td>
<td>$0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Utilities:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gas:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other:</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sub-Total:</strong></td>
<td>$925</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food*:</td>
<td>$668</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL EXPENSES</strong></td>
<td>$1,593</td>
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</table>

### MONTH 2

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</thead>
<tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rent:</td>
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<td>Employment - Adult #1</td>
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<tr>
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## Month 3

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<td>Gas: $25</td>
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<td>Food Stamps $0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transportation:  $100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Savings: $0</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL EXPENSES   $1,593</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL INCOME     $0</td>
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## Month 4

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<tr>
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</thead>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>Food Stamps $0</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL EXPENSES   $1,593</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL INCOME     $0</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### MONTH 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>MONTHLY EXPENSES</strong></td>
<td><strong>Welcome Team Responsibility</strong></td>
<td><strong>Responsibility of Sponsor or Asylum Seekers' US Ties</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rent:</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sub-Total:</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food*:</td>
<td>$668</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL EXPENSES:</strong></td>
<td>$1,593</td>
<td><strong>TOTAL INCOME:</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Guidance:** We encourage Welcome Teams to use this budget template to financially plan for their ministry of supporting asylum seekers. Duplicate months as necessary to create a budget calendar that lasts for the duration of your time commitment to this work. Take time to discuss with those you are supporting the length of time you are able to support them, including how you will help them prepare for job interviews and employment after they have received work authorization. Explain to the asylum seeker and show how, once the asylum seeker is employed, Welcome Team financial support will gradually decline as the asylum seeker takes on more financial responsibility on his/her journey to financial self-sufficiency. **Note** this budget template does not include medical expenses.

### MONTH 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employed</th>
<th>Yes/Start Date</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>MONTHLY EXPENSES</strong></td>
<td><strong>Welcome Team Responsibility</strong></td>
<td><strong>Responsibility of Sponsor or Asylum Seekers' US Ties</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rent:</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL EXPENSES:</strong></td>
<td>$1,593</td>
<td><strong>TOTAL INCOME:</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This document is a Sample Accompaniment/Welcome Team Checklist that such teams may use as a resource for their ministries. While by no means required, we invite you to send your completed form to Allison Duval, aduvall@episcopalchurch.org, so we may use them as a resource to support others in their work. Additions/changes you make to these forms may be reflected in updates to the Supporting Asylum Seekers Toolkit.

### A. BEFORE THE FAMILY ARRIVES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Person(s) responsible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identify members of your Team, define main contact person(s), organize smaller teams and define volunteer roles.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individuals who will be in direct communication with the family should download and be comfortable using WhatsApp, a preferred messaging/calling app used by many immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify interpreter(s) to assist you in communicating with the compa(s). Ideally, interpreter(s) would be full member(s) of your team.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop a list of volunteers, phone numbers/email addresses, and each volunteer’s availability (An online coordinating application such as Care Calendar or LotsaHelpingHands can be helpful: <a href="http://www.carecalendar.org">www.carecalendar.org</a> or <a href="http://www.lotsahelpinghands.com">www.lotsahelpinghands.com</a>.)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure volunteers have all signed relevant Volunteer and/or Confidentiality Agreements, received Safe Church training, and received a background check.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asset-map your community and create a comprehensive list of service providers, organizations, and partners who you can look to for assistance and/or to whom you can refer the family if needed. Communities with refugee resettlement agencies may have such lists in place; consult the agency’s website or information line.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete Welcome Team Planning Worksheet to determine the duration and type(s) of support you will provide.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Download and print English and Spanish copies of LIRS' e-book First Steps: <a href="https://www.lirs.org/first-steps/">https://www.lirs.org/first-steps/</a>. Encourage team members to read.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### FINANCE & FUNDRAISING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Person(s) responsible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Set-up an account/process by which to responsibly handle income/expenses for this work.</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raise funds and create budgets outline how you will support the family for ____ months.</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There will be planned and unexpected costs that arise that your team members/volunteers may determine are reasonable to meet the needs of the family. (Example: Clothing purchases at local thrift shops; school supplies.) Determine how/whether your organization will reimburse reasonable expenditures.</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### LEGAL ACCOMPANIMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Person(s) responsible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Establish regular contact with the accompaniment network, organization, or attorney arranging the connection with the asylum seeker(s) in need of support.</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify local immigration attorney to take on the family’s case. If not pro bono, identify the sources of financial support to cover legal fees.</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### CLOTHING, FOOD, MATERIAL ASSISTANCE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Person(s) responsible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identify low-cost and ethnic community grocery stores that the family is likely to use regularly (Aldi, Lidl, Middle Eastern/Mediterranean, African, Mexican/Central American groceries) and that are walkable or public transportation-accessible to their home.</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify a nearby laundromat, a Laundry Love ministry, or other place where the family will be able to do laundry at affordable rates.</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### EDUCATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Person(s) responsible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If there are children in the family, make contact with the local public school family resource center to learn if the school is able to provide additional assistance to the children who will be enrolling (i.e. clothing for school, backpack, school supplies, etc.).</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HOUSING</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Begin to identify possible rental properties that are affordable (family could reasonably assume costs of lease after securing employment) and identify and build relationships with sympathetic landlords, rental companies, or Air B&amp;B/VRBO hosts who may be willing to consider a long-term rental. Make sure to consider accessibility and proximity to schools, grocery stores, public transportation, and community services.</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>MEDICAL/MENTAL HEALTH</strong></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identify medical and mental health care providers who offer pro bono or sliding scale services to low-income patients. Ascertain if they have medical interpreters on site or if they use a language line for interpretation. Make sure they provide trauma-informed care.</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Once arrival date is known:

#### GENERAL

- Arrangements made for asylum seeker(s) to arrive. □
- Transportation secured for arrival, if necessary. □

#### HOUSING

- Housing secured, and if applicable, lease signed. □
- Home/apartment set-up organized and completed. (This may be an event requiring many volunteers and management/coordination of the volunteers.) □
- Contact local utilities company to set up accounts and start service. If utilities accounts are in the name of the person(s) you are supporting, which can be beneficial to assist them in establishing a credit history, you may be asked to pay an additional deposit if they do not yet have a social security number. □
- Home Supply List completed, all goods secured. □
- Consider providing comfort or entertainment items, especially if children are expected. Almost everyone will enjoy a soccer ball or indoor basketball hoop! □

#### CLOTHING, FOOD, MATERIAL ASSISTANCE

- Volunteers buy or prepare culturally appropriate food for day of arrival and day after arrival. □
- Secure seasonal clothing as necessary. (Example: If it is winter and very cold where you are, secure coats/scarves/mittens for all members of the family, who may be coming from a warmer climate.) □

### B. ARRIVAL & WEEK 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>☑ &amp; Date</th>
<th>Person(s) responsible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

#### GENERAL

- Meet family at airport or bus station and transport them to their new home. Have an interpreter present when family arrives. If there are small children, make sure car seats are available. □
- During the first week, schedule time to meet with the family to establish rapport, discuss the role of the team and volunteers and the nature and duration of the support you will provide. If your team has adopted a volunteer agreement form and an agreement form for the asylum seeker(s), now is an appropriate time to discuss and sign these documents. □
- Provide the family with a means by which to contact team members, like a phone calling card, a pay-as-you-go cell phone, etc. □

#### HOUSING

- Visit the family the day after their arrival and complete the Next Day Home Visit Checklist, which includes housing and personal safety orientation. Make sure you have an interpreter present. □

#### CLOTHING, FOOD, MATERIAL ASSISTANCE

- Culturally appropriate, ready-to-eat food, plus one day’s worth of additional food supplies and staples including baby food as needed (available on arrival) □
- Appropriate seasonal clothing required for work, school, and everyday use, including proper footwear, and diapers for children (available on arrival). □
- Furniture and household items in good condition (available on arrival) □
With the family, schedule time to go shopping for clothing at Goodwill/thrift store and for other necessities.

A few days after arrival, schedule time to go grocery shopping with the family. If possible, use public transportation so the family begins to learn how to independently navigate. Adults may or may not need the support/guidance of volunteers to navigate the store; they may not need any assistance at all if the store employees speak a common language.

If possible, provide pre-paid grocery store "gift cards."

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MEDICAL/MENTAL HEALTH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If circumstances necessitate immediate medical/mental health attention, arrange to bring family to health care provider within first week after their arrival.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

C. WEEKS 2-4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GENERAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provide list of family members’ full legal names and birth dates only to volunteers who would need this information (for medical/mental health, school enrollment, etc).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEGAL ACCOMPANIMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arrange meeting for family with their immigration attorney. If requested, assist by securing an interpreter for the meeting. If requested by the family and/or the attorney, members of the Legal Services/Support Team may attend the meeting.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CLOTHING, FOOD, MATERIAL ASSISTANCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>As needed and in line with the commitments the Team has made (duration and types of support), volunteers should accompany adults in family to grocery stores, providing less guidance over time in order to facilitate the adults’ independence. Welcome Team should provide pre-paid grocery store cards, or other means of purchasing groceries, to the family until 1) they have received work authorization, secured employment, and are able to pay for groceries themselves; and/or 2) they have received asylee status and are eligible for SNAP (food stamps).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EDUCATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enroll children in school 30 days after family’s arrival. As needed, schedule meetings with school officials. (Note copies of I-94 cards, other immigration papers, and proof of residence will likely be needed for the meeting.) Determine what services family can access through school family resource coordinator.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOCIAL &amp; EMOTIONAL NEEDS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If it seems appropriate and natural, ask the family members if they would like to attend religious services of the faith/denomination they prefer, taking great care to ensure they understand there are no expectations on your part that they participate in any faith community or tradition. If they would like to explore a faith community, work with a local church, synagogue, mosque to assist with transportation for the family to attend.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EMPLOYMENT/JOB PLACEMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If the family members have humanitarian parolee status at present, they may apply for work authorization and a social security card. “If you are lawfully present in the United States and plan to apply for work authorization, you can apply for both work authorization from (USCIS) and request a Social Security card from Social Security at the same time. For more information on this process, read Apply For Your Social Security Number While Applying Your Work Permit.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

2. Children have the right to receive a public education regardless of their status. It is the family’s responsibility to ensure that their child enrolls in school. The government-issued Notice to Appear documentation is sufficient identification.
3. Online English as Second Language lesson plans and resources: [https://www.linguahouse.com/esl-lesson-plans](https://www.linguahouse.com/esl-lesson-plans)
While awaiting work authorization, speak with the adults about their work history, their skills and interests. Provide coaching on preparing their resume, on American workplace culture, job interviews, etc.

**MEDICAL/MENTAL HEALTH**

Provide a general health care system orientation to the adults in the family, follow-up on their questions.

Schedule an appointment for adults and children at medical/mental health care provider(s) to determine any immediate health care needs. (Secure interpreter, as needed.) Bring copy of I-94 and any other immigration forms and identification cards/birth certificates to the appointment. Depending on the provider, allow ample time for appointments. Ensure that family members with acute health care requirements receive appropriate, non-discriminatory and timely medical attention.

Take children to local Health Department for immunizations and TB screenings. Determine if any other health care appointments are needed to proceed with school enrollment and follow-up.

If necessary, assist family members in accessing appropriate providers of continued therapy or preventive treatment for health conditions affecting the public health.

Determine Medicaid eligibility; prepare to file appropriate paperwork. Team may wish to seek out counseling/advice from the immigration attorney as to how assistance such as Medicaid could/would affect family in future.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3. WEEKS 5-8</th>
<th>☑</th>
<th>Person(s) responsible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visit the family again in their home. Review the items in the Next Day Home Visit Checklist, and do any follow-up needed. Teach family how to request and/or perform home upkeep (contact landlord for fixing appliances, cut own lawn, etc.).</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow-up on any requests from the adults and/or from the immigration attorney</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If the family is interested, schedule fun outings (the library, the park, the pool, a community event or festival, etc.)</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow-Up: For any uncompleted tasks/activities from previous weeks, continue working with the volunteer teams and the family to complete tasks or discern whether or not they are necessary.</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4. WEEKS &amp; MONTHS TO COME</th>
<th>☑ &amp; DATE</th>
<th>Person(s) responsible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Once the adults in the family receive work authorization, assist them with transportation to job interviews. Once adults secure employment, assist them in creating a transportation plan to get to and from work, ideally using public transportation (to avoid burning out volunteers and prevent a cycle of dependency upon the volunteers).</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continue to orient the members of the family to the community. If adults are literate, provide written orientation materials in their native language, as possible.</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use CORE (Cultural Orientation Resource Exchange) materials to discuss important topics before and as they arise. Ensure that: 1) the family can navigate appropriate and relevant systems; 2) family understands where they can access ongoing support (food kitchens, community services, the type/duration of assistance the Welcome/Accompaniment Team will provide, etc.); 3) family understands their surroundings and their situation (reiterate legal information as provided by immigration attorney, as necessary).</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As needed and in line with the commitments the Team has made (duration and types of support), volunteers should accompany adults in family to grocery stores, providing less guidance over time in order to facilitate the adults’ independence. Welcome Team should provide pre-paid grocery store cards, or other means of purchasing groceries, to the family until 1) they have received work authorization, secured employment, and are able to pay for groceries themselves; and/or 2) they have received asylee status and are eligible for SNAP (food stamps).</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

4 www.COResourceExchange.org
This document is a Sample Home Evaluation & Safety Checklist that congregations and groups may use as a resource for their ministries. While by no means required, we invite you to send your completed form to Allison Duvall, aduvall@episcopalchurch.org, so we may use them as a resource to support others in their work. Additions/changes you make to these forms may be reflected in updates to the Supporting Asylum Seekers Toolkit.

### A. Affordability

This section should be completed prior to the asylum seeker or family's arrival, or prior to their move to a new residence if such a move occurs during the time period when your team is providing support. To the extent possible, the family should be able to assume payment of the rent once they receive work authorization and become employed, based upon projected family income from all sources. The family should be left with sufficient resources for other essential expenses (food, transportation, utilities, etc.) after rent payments are made.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Length of lease agreement:</th>
<th>Monthly rent: $</th>
<th>Security deposit: $</th>
<th>Waived: Yes / No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### B. Acceptability

Housing is decent, safe and sanitary based on federal housing standards or local or state standards if they are higher.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Both the housing site/complex and neighborhood appear safe</th>
<th>☐ Yes</th>
<th>☐ Follow up needed</th>
<th>☐ Date fixed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### C. Disability Accommodations

In cases of individuals with disabilities, housing should be free of, or permit the removal of, architectural barriers and otherwise accommodate known disabilities, to the extent required by law.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identified disability:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accommodations provided:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the housing accessible?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### D. Space

Local minimum standard for habitable area requires a minimum number of bedrooms/sleeping areas for the number of people living there. The local minimum standard is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># of Bedrooms:</th>
<th># of People:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

| ☐ Yes | ☐ Follow up needed | ☐ Date fixed |

### E. Lead Safety Check

Houses built before 1978 often used lead paint. If that paint is peeling or flaking, it can easily end up on the floor where children play. This paint can then be ingested by children, causing potential lead poisoning. For this reason, housing built before 1978 should have no peeling or flaking paint inside.

| Residence is either built after 1978 or meets all lead safety requirements | ☐ Yes | ☐ Follow up needed | ☐ Date fixed |

Note any concerns or follow up needed regarding affordability, acceptability, accessibility, and space of housing:
### F. Safety

*All areas and components of the housing (interior and exterior) should be free of visible health and safety hazards and in good repair. Complete a thorough check of the house to ensure the following:*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Follow up needed</th>
<th>Date fixed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>There is no visible bare wiring</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is no peeling or flaking interior paint or plaster</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is no visible mold</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are no detectable dangerous or unsanitary odors</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency escape route(s) have been identified and are accessible</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire extinguishers can be easily located and are accessible where required</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All windows and outside doors have working locks</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate number of working smoke detectors (check all detectors to make sure batteries are working)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Windows are in working order with no evidence of broken glass</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heat, ventilation, lighting, and hot and cold running water are adequate</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electrical fixtures are in good repair (check for light bulbs, check to see if the electricity works)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### G. Appliances and Fixtures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appliances and Fixtures</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Follow up needed</th>
<th>Date fixed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kitchen: residence equipped with a stove, oven, and refrigerator in good repair</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bathrooms: residence equipped with sink, flushing toilet, and shower or bath in good repair</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### H. Garbage and Extermination

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Garbage and Extermination</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Follow up needed</th>
<th>Date fixed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Easily accessible storage or disposal facilities for garbage</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No evidence of current rodent or insect infestation</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note any repairs or maintenance and action-plan to remedy issues before family arrival*

---

Based on the above findings on ___________ (date), I/we find this housing meets the basic minimum standards described in this form.

Person(s) completing this form:

_________________________       _________________________       ________________________
This document is a Sample Home Supply List that congregations and groups may use as a resource for their ministries. While by no means required, we invite you to send your completed form to Allison Duvall, aduvall@episcopalchurch.org, so we may use them as a resource to support others in their work. Additions/changes you make to these forms may be reflected in updates to the Supporting Asylum Seekers Toolkit.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A. Furniture</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>B. Kitchen Items</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mattress and box spring for each family member</td>
<td></td>
<td>One place setting of tableware</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(married couples and small children of same gender</td>
<td></td>
<td>(fork, knife, spoon) per person</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bed share beds)</td>
<td></td>
<td>One place setting of dishes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bed frame(s)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(plate, bowl and cup) per person</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One set of drawers, shelves or other unit</td>
<td></td>
<td>Pots and pans: at least one</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>appropriate for storage of clothing per</td>
<td></td>
<td>sauce pan, frying pan, and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bedroom</td>
<td></td>
<td>baking dish</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One couch or equivalent seating per family</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mixing/serving bowls</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(in addition to kitchen chairs)</td>
<td></td>
<td>One set of kitchen utensils</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(such as a spatula, wooden spoon, serving</td>
<td></td>
<td>(such as a spatula, wooden</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>utensils</td>
<td></td>
<td>spoon, knife, serving</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitchen table (per family) and chair (per person)</td>
<td></td>
<td>utensils, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitchen table (per family) and chair (per</td>
<td></td>
<td>Can opener</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>person)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additional furniture and kitchen items provided for family:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>C. Linens and Other Household Supplies</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>D. Toiletries (new)</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One bath towel per person</td>
<td></td>
<td>Toilet paper (list number of rolls)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One set of sheets for each bed</td>
<td></td>
<td>Shampoo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blanket(s) of comforter(s) for each bed</td>
<td></td>
<td>Soap</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One pillow and pillowcase for each person</td>
<td></td>
<td>One toothbrush per person</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alarm clock (phone is sufficient)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Toothpaste</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper, pens, and/or pencils</td>
<td></td>
<td>Personal hygiene items</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(such as deodorant, feminine</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>hygiene products, and razors)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additional Linens, Household Supplies, and Toiletries provided for family:
### E. Cleaning Supplies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>F. Baby Items (if applicable)</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dish soap</td>
<td></td>
<td>Baby food</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bathroom/kitchen cleaner</td>
<td></td>
<td>Clothing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laundry detergent</td>
<td></td>
<td>Diapers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sponges or cleaning rags and/or paper towels</td>
<td></td>
<td>Car seat (children under 4 – see state guidelines)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waste baskets (1 kitchen, 1 per bathroom)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Crib (children under 3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trash bags (list number of boxes)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mop or broom</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Additional Cleaning Supplies and Baby Items provided for family:**

### G. Other Items and Food

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate clothing for work, school (uniforms if necessary) and everyday use for each family member: Clean clothing, in good condition, for all members of the family (including proper footwear)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food available on arrival: Culturally appropriate, ready-to-eat food, plus one day’s worth of additional food supplies and staples (including baby food, as needed)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food within one day of arrival: Food or food allowance at least equivalent to what SNAP/food stamp allocation would be for that family, were they eligible, as well as continued food assistance (or referral to food assistance programs) until individual/family is able to provide food for themselves</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional items appropriate to family size and composition: For example, large families should receive enough cookware to prepare a meal for all individuals; additional plates and utensils may be appropriate for a single individual.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Additional items provided for family**

---

Names of person(s) completing this form:

_________________________       ________________________      _________________________

Interpreter Name(s): _______________________     _______________________

---
### A. Housing Orientation

#### Demonstrate How to Use:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐ Stove/Oven</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Refrigerator/Freezer (appropriate food storage)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Shower/Bath</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Hot/Cold Water</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Toilet</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Heating and Air Conditioning (appropriate temperature settings)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Lights in Each Room</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ All Door Locks (interior and exterior doors)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ All Windows, Window Locks, and Screens</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Doorbell or Intercom System</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Mailbox (location/key)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Home Telephone and/or Cell Phone</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Any Other Appliances</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Ask the following (or similar) questions to ensure understanding of housing orientation.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Can you tell/show me how to make the temperature warmer or colder in your home?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can you tell/show me how to ensure the stove/oven is turned off when you are done using it?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can you show me how to lock/unlock the door/s to enter your home?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note any housing orientation topics which need additional review to ensure understanding:**

### B. Assessment of Condition of Housing

**Ask the following three questions to identify housing issues. Please note any issues in space below.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have you noticed anything in your home which is not working properly?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you have any questions or concerns about your home?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you feel safe in your home and neighborhood?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Inspect home to identify any housing issues and respond to questions below. If checking yes, describe in space below.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Does the home have any visible health or safety hazards (mold, pests, etc.)?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are there any missing furniture/household items (see home supply list)?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If a member of the case has a physical disability, does the home meet his/her needs?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note any repairs or maintenance needed, missing furniture/household supplies, or other concerns/issues:**

---

This document is a Sample Next Day Home Visit Checklist that congregations and groups may use as a resource for their ministries. While by no means required, we invite you to send your completed form to Allison Duvall, aduvall@episcopalchurch.org, so we may use them as a resource to support others in their work. Additions/changes you make to these forms may be reflected in updates to the Supporting Asylum Seekers Toolkit.
C. Safety Procedures and Emergency Contacts

Review the following information with compa/s.

- [ ] How to safely answer the door/check who is at the door
- [ ] Importance of keeping doors to the outside locked
- [ ] Safety regarding keeping windows open or closed and locked
- [ ] Smoke detector (explain sound of alarm, low battery, and what to do if it goes off when cooking)
- [ ] Fire extinguisher (if required, show location and how to use)
- [ ] Emergency escape routes (from housing)
- [ ] When and how to call 911 (provide written copy)
- [ ] How to contact volunteers
  - [ ] Compa/s address and phone number (provide written copy to each adult compa)
  - [ ] Adult 1
  - [ ] Adult 2
  - [ ] Safety precautions for client/s with children  [ ] N/A
    - [ ] Appropriate supervision of children
    - [ ] Car/child safety seat and seat belt requirements

Ask the following (or similar) questions to ensure understanding of safety procedures and emergency contacts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Did adults demonstrate understanding?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What number would you call if there was an emergency (such as a medical emergency)?</td>
<td>[ ] Yes  [ ] No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What would you do if the smoke detector alarm went off?</td>
<td>[ ] Yes  [ ] No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note any topics and information which need additional review to ensure adults’ understanding:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>D. Assessment of Welfare and Basic Immediate Needs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ask the following questions to determine if basic immediate needs have been met.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>[ ] Yes  [ ] No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do you or any of your family members have urgent medical or medication needs?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you have a supply of food or money to purchase food?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you know where and when you will get more food?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you have enough food to last until that time?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you have seasonal clothing for your immediate needs (including footwear)?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you been provided with pocket money?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you need diapers or baby food (as applicable)?</td>
<td>[ ] Yes  [ ] No  [ ] N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you have any other needs or concerns?</td>
<td>[ ] Yes  [ ] No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note any concerns or follow up needed regarding provision of basic needs:

Person Completing the Home Visit and This Form: ________________________________

Date: __________________
Sample Agreement for Volunteers

Opening Paragraph: Provide a description of the work of the ministry team and the organization/network through whom you’re working, as relevant and appropriate. This might include a written description of the support you intend to provide, for how long, and other expectations or guidelines of the ministry.

In order to make this experience productive and enriching for all concerned we ask you to agree to the following:

I,___________________agree to volunteer as part of ____________, which is providing [describe nature of the support being provided] for an asylum seeker/family (hereafter called “compa”).

I understand that the compa has a right to safety, privacy, and security. If they experience inappropriate behavior from _______ volunteers, or behavior that makes them feel unsafe, including but not limited to attempts to influence their faith practice or choices, inappropriate relationships, or publicity (like social media) about them without my permission, they are encouraged to report this to the team leader or to ____________________. They have been informed that they are free to discontinue the relationship with _______ at any time, and that doing so may result in loss of support from _______ such as housing, material needs, etc.

I understand that I am not to take photos, videos, or any other media of the compa without their permission, and that I am not to release any such media without their understanding and permission. I understand that posting any photo or video on social media could put the compa in danger.

I understand that, as a volunteer, I also have a right to safety, privacy, and security. The compa has been instructed to keep volunteers’ contact information confidential, not to post photos or videos of volunteers on social media, and to engage with respect and honesty. If I ever feel unsafe or experience inappropriate behavior, I will report this to our team leader.

I understand that I may be privy to sensitive information and documents, including legal documents, medical documents, or conversations with the compa’s attorney or healthcare providers. I will hold this information in strictest confidence, and rigorously follow rules of sharing information only on a “need to know” basis.

I understand that as a volunteer, I am mandated to report any suspicion of child/elder abuse or neglect.

I understand that as a volunteer, I am required to report any concerns the compa may express about harming him/herself or another person.
I will not offer personal gifts - material or cash - to the compa; I understand all support will be given in a formal way by the team. I will liaise with my team about items that have been provided to ensure that items are not given in duplicate or triplicate.

I understand as a volunteer, I am not to provide funds to the compa for any obligations he/she may have outside of this country (remittances). (If the remittances are used for nefarious purposes, even without the compa’s knowledge, this could run afoul of U.S. law, which prohibits such remittances for illegal purposes (i.e., drug trafficking) or in support of violent political groups (terrorists, paramilitary groups, etc.). Those aiding and abetting such an activity are subject to criminal prosecution.)

Once the compa receives work authorization, I understand as a volunteer that _________ (our Welcome Team) will begin declining financial support over a ____ month period of time. During this time of declining support, I will continue to abide by group guidelines and refrain from offering gifts, cash, transportation, and/or other supports that may go against the declining model.

Signature_________________________________________ Date________________________________________

Team Point Person_________________________________________
Families Together Project Volunteer Guidelines and Expectations

Our foremost goal in the Families Together Project is to welcome two refugee families into our community who were affected by the U.S. administration’s family separation policy. We are pleased to have them with us enriching our community. We need to ensure that they are safe, given the best chance of pursuing asylum and given power and control over their lives.

As volunteers that requires us to act with diligence, caution, and respect. So please read the following, sign the bottom, and turn it in to the chair of your Good Neighbor Team:

1) Please only use first names when referring to the families and do not share the address or neighborhood of the families or their sponsors with anyone without authorization of one of the co-chairs of the Good Neighbor Team.

2) Please refrain from taking photos of the families. No stories, photos, or identifying information of the families should be shared because their safety and privacy is of utmost importance.

3) The asylum process is both profoundly personal and legally sensitive. The asylum applications are between the families, their legal team and the courts. Volunteers are not to ask family members about their reasons for seeking asylum. If you become aware of the families’ personal histories, please be a silent repository for that information.

4) Out of necessity, volunteers may have access to families’ homes, stories, and personal information while still being relative strangers. Our goal is to give the families as much autonomy and privacy as we can. This may mean withholding unsolicited advice, refraining from asking personal questions or excusing yourself from personal conversations with teachers and medical providers. A good starting point is to ask yourself whether you would ask this question, listen to this conversation, or give this advice to a neighbor or coworker that you had known for an equivalent amount of time.

5) We ask that any gift or donation be discussed first with the co-chairs of the family’s support team. We couldn’t support these families without your incredible generosity, yet gifts can put the families in awkward positions and can have unintended consequences.

6) Only donate if you are able to do so while letting go of expectations or emotional attachments related to whether the item is accepted and/or how it is used.

7) Be very careful about asking for consent. Our inability to communicate with our families in their primary languages, the cultural chasm, and the power differential at play in our interactions with our families makes true informed consent complicated to obtain. Any consequential decision such as whether to accompany a family member into a doctor’s exam room, attend a parent teacher meeting, or share information should not be made in the moment but rather in consultation with the co-chairs and sponsors.

Thank you for being part of the Families Together Project. We couldn’t do this without you. If you have further questions, please contact Project Coordinator [name] at [phone] and/or [email address]. Finally, please sign and either turn this form in hard copy or electronically to [name] or send her an email stating that you have read and understand the contents of the above Guidelines.

_____________________________  ____________________
Your Signature                                                      Date

June 2019
Sample Agreement for Compa/Guest

Adapted from Client Agreement Form from Refugee Immigration Ministry (RIM) in Malden, Massachusetts

Opening Paragraph: Provide a description of the work of the ministry team and the organization/network through whom you’re working, as relevant and appropriate. This might include a written description of the support you intend to provide, for how long, and other expectations or guidelines of the ministry.

In order to make this experience productive and enriching for all concerned we ask you to agree to the following:

I, __________________ agree to receive support from __________, including [describe nature of the support being provided].

I understand that I have a right to safety, privacy, and security. If I experience inappropriate behavior from ______ volunteers, or behavior that makes me feel unsafe, including but not limited to attempts to influence my faith practice or choices, inappropriate relationships, or publicity (social media) about me without my permission, I will report this to the team leader. If I am not comfortable in reporting to the team leader, I understand that I can report to __________. I understand that I am free to discontinue the relationship with ______ at any time, and that doing so may result in loss of support from ______ such as housing, material needs, etc.

I understand that any details about my story will be treated with respect and confidentiality, and not released or told to anyone without my permission. I understand that photos or videos of me will not be posted online or shared through any means without my permission.

I understand that the volunteers who support me also have a right to safety, privacy, and security. I will not share information about the volunteers, including their names or phone numbers, without their permission. I will not post photos or videos of volunteers to social media without their permission. I will not engage in abusive or dishonest behavior in my dealings with volunteers.

I give permission to __________ volunteers to be in touch with [my attorney, healthcare provider, etc.] and access [list documents] as needed to support me. I understand that information about me, my case, and other details will be shared with volunteers and staff only on a need-to-know basis and that the strictest rules of confidentiality will apply to all information which I share.

I understand that ______ volunteers are mandated to report any suspicion of child/elder abuse or neglect.
I understand _____ volunteers are required to report any concerns I may express about harming myself or another person.

I will not ask for or receive cash or material gifts from _____ individual volunteers. I understand that volunteers from ________ will work together and with me to determine what support I need and for what length of time (including but not limited to furniture, clothing, food support, transportation, etc.).

I understand that ________ volunteers cannot provide funds for obligations outside of this country (remittances).

Once I receive work authorization, I understand that ________ will decline their financial support over a period of ___ months from that time.

I agree to abide by the following:

☐ I will obey all the laws in the USA.
☐ I will not sell or possess illegal drugs.
☐ I will not work until I have work authorization.
☐ I will not be involved in any criminal activities.
☐ I will be truthful about my plans and resources with the ______ volunteers.
☐ I have an attorney who is ____________________ phone: ___________________
☐ I will not drive a car without a U.S. driver’s license and adequate insurance.
☐ I have had a health exam and I will comply with all follow up and medical procedures. This includes follow up for immunizations.
☐ I will agree to practice good self-care during this stressful time.
☐ I will be respectful to all volunteers.
☐ I will work with _____ to arrange to volunteer with other organizations of my choosing while I wait for work authorization.
☐ I understand that if I violate any of the above, ______ may terminate our relationship and end their support.

Name _________________________________

Signature________________________________________     Date____________________

Team Point Person_______________________________________

Sample Agreement for Compa/Guest Page 2 of 2
Sample Household Rules for Hosting Asylum Seekers

These rules should be customized for each host and guest to accommodate for issues around children, pets, personal preferences, dietary restrictions, and other issues unique to each living arrangement.

1. Ask when you have questions.
2. Ask when you would like to use something that belongs to someone else.
3. Lock the front door when you come in.
4. Keep sliding door closed when not in use.
5. Hang up wet towels.
6. Clean up kitchen after using it.
7. Food and drink are only allowed in the kitchen, dining room and on the patio.
8. No cast iron in the dishwasher.
10. Used toilet paper goes in the toilet.
11. Knock if the bedroom or bathroom door is closed.
12. Let each other know your plans or change of plans.
13. Keep personal items in bedroom or personal space when not in use.
OVERVIEW

I am a highly motivated person with full and legal work authorization in the United States. I have significant experience as an independent contractor in the HVAC field. My schedule is flexible.

WORK EXPERIENCE

Independent Contractor HVAC
Abidjan, Ivory Coast
2007-2013

- Installed, diagnosed and repaired heating, air conditioning and ventilation systems
- Performed maintenance inspections, and adjusted, cleaned and calibrated various systems to ensure proper system operations
- Diagnosed malfunctioning heating, air conditioning and ventilation systems to determine the cause of the malfunction
- Prepared quality records and reports describing procedures, actions taken and recommended solutions
- Managed overall operations as an independent contractor with various clients
- Provided excellent customer service to meet client demand in a competitive environment

EDUCATION

Adult Education
English as a Second Language (ESL) Classes
Anytown, AK
2015-Present

HVAC Vocational Program
[Name of School]
Morocco 2013-2015

High School Diploma
[Name of School]
Abidjan, Ivory Coast
2004-2007

SKILLS AND STRENGTHS

Languages:
- French: Fluent (Speaking, reading and writing)
- English: Intermediate and improving
REFERENCES

FIRST NAME LAST NAME of Welcome Team Volunteer
Organization/Business
567 Main Street
Anytown, AK 99500
Phone: (xxx) xxx-xxxx
Email: example@gmail.com

Provide additional references from Welcome Team and others, as possible
Detention Visitation Ministry and Accompaniment of Asylum Seekers in Detention

As you map your community, you may find that an immigration detention center is located nearby. Freedom for Immigrants maintains a national map of immigrant detention centers and the only national network of detention visitation programs.

Those hearing a call to accompany an asylum seeker in detention may consult Freedom for Immigrants’ comprehensive detention visitation guide and several of the case studies included later in this guide.

If there is not an active visitation ministry to a detention center in your area, we recommend that you reach out to community organizations in your area to build partnerships and support, and then reach out to an existing detention visitation ministry to learn how they got started.

There are many ways to support people in detention through direct and indirect means. Some activities associated with accompanying asylum seekers in detention include:

**Supporting the Detainee**
- Visitation
- Letter writing
- Legal referrals
- Commissary support
- Books
- Court accompaniment
- Writing letters of support
- Medical/mental health advocacy
- Advocacy for release/parole

**Supporting the Detainee’s Family or Sponsor**
- Connect to resources (local and national: legal services, social services, mental health care)
- Informational support about visitation, sending money, case status
- Transportation: to the detention center, court, to the attorney
- Spiritual and emotional support
- Job placement and training
- Financial assistance
- Short-term lodging for family members visiting from out of town
- Translation and interpretation
- Housing

**Other Activities:**
- Public policy advocacy
- Community education
- Volunteer coordination
- Media relations
- Fundraising
“The Lord Is Your Strength”: Accompanying Ben\textsuperscript{39} through Detention and Release: A Case Study

The following is the story of The Rev. Leeann Culbreath, a deacon in the Diocese of Georgia, and her friendship with Ben, an asylum seeker. This story serves to demonstrate the importance and power of accompanying those in detention.

***

When I picked up the black plastic phone receiver in the jail visitation room to talk with my friend Ben for the first time in 2016, I couldn’t imagine how our friendship would unfold. He couldn’t either; I was his first visitor after 2.5 years in immigrant detention, an asylum seeker from Africa with only one contact in the United States.

Ben was the third person I had visited in immigrant detention. Another detained man told me about him and his ministry among the men in the facility. As a fellow pastor, I wanted to meet him to learn more about the spiritual needs and religious services inside.

Ben and I bonded quickly, and over the course of 2.5 years and countless more visits through plexiglass, we became chosen family. I (and others) accompanied him through detention and his release, and he accompanied me on a journey of hope as I learned to navigate the immigrant detention and legal system. “The Lord is your strength,” he always reminded me, especially when the way was rocky and dark.

Below is a snapshot of that accompaniment to date (though Ben has been released from detention, he still has to fight his asylum case in one of the toughest immigration courts in the country).

**Visitation:** Our friendship began with a one-hour visit through plexiglass. I visited Ben as often as possible, and others visited him as well. The visits encouraged him and helped us all learn about conditions in immigrant detention. When he was transferred briefly to another facility and could have contact visits, I invited our bishop diocesan to visit him and offer unction and a blessing. That meant a great deal to Ben.

**Letters/phone calls:** When we could not visit, we exchanged letters (he wrote far more than I did!) with updates and Scripture verses. In time, as he had funds in his account, he called me (I could not call him). He never failed to call me and send letters on holidays.

**Prayer:** We were prayer partners throughout the journey. I prayed for his ministry in detention, for his health, and for his case; he prayed for my ministry as it developed, for the non-profit that eventually formed (South Georgia Immigrant Support Network), and for my family. He continued to remind me at every turn, “The Lord is your strength.”

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\textsuperscript{39} “Ben” is a pseudonym.
**Direct Support:** Friends and I offered financial support and books so he could make phone calls and to support his ministry. Our diocese provided $75/month for commissary support for 6+ months so he could purchase high-protein food items from the commissary, which were prescribed by a doctor for his health condition but the facility did not accommodate. We were not permitted to send care packages of any kind to persons in detention.

**Legal support:** Ben already had a pro bono attorney through Catholic Charities when I met him, helping him utilize all legal options available after his asylum case was initially denied. He filed a *habeas corpus* petition on his own to fight for release after prolonged and unnecessary confinement.

Another friend sought and found a law firm willing to fight the *habeas* petition in court, pro bono. It took nearly a year for the hearing, and several months after the hearing for a ruling, and then another month or so for the government to appeal the ruling (which they did). Five attorneys from the firm were present at the hearing, and three of us from Ben’s support team also attended to demonstrate Ben’s strong community support. The judge referred to a letter of support from the bishop in the hearing, so we know our advocacy efforts made a difference.

The case was reviewed again by another judge, who upheld the original ruling, and Ben finally won humanitarian parole in February 2019. Throughout the process, members of Ben’s support team offered encouragement and wrote letters of support to the court.

**Health care Advocacy:** As mentioned above, Ben had ongoing health issues that remained untreated in detention. It took the facility over 2 years to finally respond to his requests to see a specialist for a known chronic condition. Left untreated, it could result in serious, debilitating health issues. The treatment was relatively simple—daily animal protein—but the facility did not provide it. I emailed ICE officials in the Atlanta Field Office and submitted a formal complaint to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security’s Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties (CRCL). Four months later, they responded saying that they “investigated” the claim and found no wrongdoing. His support team began reaching out to medical doctors in the area who might provide pro bono medical assessments, and we kept Ben’s legal team updated on health concerns. We garnered monthly commissary support so he could purchase some high-protein snacks to supplement his diet (but those were usually high-sodium, which impacted his blood pressure).

**Post-release:** Finally, in February 2019, Ben was released on humanitarian parole. Though he had a relative sponsoring him, the relative was unable to provide transportation or housing following release. Ben’s support team provided housing with a family, transportation, clothing/toiletries (he had nothing), cell phone, meals, and accompaniment to church services. We also assisted with renewing prescriptions and check-ups at a health clinic. I accompanied him to his ICE check-in in Atlanta several days after release and helped him reconnect with friends in the Atlanta area. We provided gift cards and helped him begin to develop a support system in Atlanta to see him through until he received work authorization. We have continued to assist with transportation to ICE check-ins (via Uber or volunteers) and with phone costs. In August 2019, he received work authorization, an essential step toward a stable future.
Throughout this journey with Ben, I have witnessed the cruelty of detention and the mind-boggling labyrinth of the immigration system. I have also experienced the power of hope and love to overcome obstacles and keep pressing forward. My faith and ministry have been transformed. I now see the essential role that people of faith can play in the individual lives of those oppressed by our broken immigration system, as well as in the collective work of justice for all of our immigrant neighbors. God has called and equipped the church to do both. Indeed, the Lord is our strength.

The Rev. Deacon Leeann Culbreath  
Episcopal Diocese of Georgia  
Founding Co-Chair, South Georgia Immigrant Support Network
Posting Bond & Sponsorship

Release on Bond or Parole
Sometimes immigrants or asylum seekers held in detention have the opportunity to be released on bond or parole if “bond” - like bail - is paid. Bonds are often set at very high amounts that those held in detention are unable to afford. Various organizations, including Freedom for Immigrants and RAICES, receive charitable donations which are then used to post bond so that immigrants are released from detention.

Some Episcopal dioceses, like the Diocese of San Joaquin, have set up their own immigration legal support and/or bond funds (SJRAISE, Episcopal Diocese of San Joaquin Refugee and Immigrant Support and Empowerment). The National Bail Fund Network maintains a national directory of immigration bond funds, https://www.communityjusticeexchange.org/nbfn-directory. A listing is included in the Resources for Further Learning section at the end of this toolkit.

Sponsorship
Your team may discern a call to raise funds to post bond for an asylum seeker in detention. Learn whether or not the organization through which you are posting bond also offers opportunities and support for teams to continue their work through sponsorship, meaning an individual in your team could sponsor someone so they may be released from detention while they seek asylum.

A sponsor is an individual who:

- is a U.S. citizen or legal permanent resident,
- is willing to ensure that the asylum seeker is not a flight risk and will attend all immigration court hearings after release from detention, and
- is willing to provide the asylum seeker with a place to live - either in a host home situation or through another housing option.

To become the sponsor of an asylum seeker being released from detention, the prospective sponsor must:

- have current legal immigration status in the U.S. (U.S. Citizen, Legal Permanent Resident),
- provide proof of housing,
- be able to provide the asylum seeker with safe housing,
- be able to provide the asylum seeker with basic necessities,

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40 Immigrants in detention who entered the United States at an official port of entry may be released from detention on parole. Immigrants in detention who entered the United States between (not through) official ports of entry may be released on bond. For more on Parole Vs. Bond, read this explainer from Human Rights First.
- provide proof of income, and
- ensure that the asylum seeker attends all ICE/ISAP (Intensive Supervision Appearance Program) check-ins and scheduled court dates.

Even if living in a separate residence from the asylum seeker(s), the sponsor takes on a very active role, especially at first, to be sure that the asylum seekers get acclimated to life in the U.S. with plenty of support. This is one of the reasons why we recommend that you form a team for this longer-term work: it is a lot for one person to handle, and much more manageable when working with a group that functions as a “Welcome Team,” the model of ministry we discussed in an earlier section in this toolkit.

Freedom for Immigrants offers a platform where individuals (and groups) interested in sponsorship and supporting community-based alternatives to detention can register their interest and be connected to opportunities to help: [https://www.freedomforimmigrants.org/sponsor-freedom](https://www.freedomforimmigrants.org/sponsor-freedom).

Similarly, the Asylum-Seekers Sponsorship Project ([https://www.asylumsponsorshipproject.org/](https://www.asylumsponsorshipproject.org/)) also provides opportunities for groups and congregations to be involved. Episcopal Migration Ministries has connected with the Asylum-Seekers Sponsorship Project and is gathering a list of interested congregations in advance of scheduling an informational webinar with them. If you are interested in learning more, please contact EMM: [https://episcopalmigrationministries.org/contact-us/](https://episcopalmigrationministries.org/contact-us/).
Accompaniment Ministry Outside of Detention

People who are undocumented have either come into the country illegally or not submitted their asylum claim within a year, have overstayed a visa, or came to the country as children. Many congregations have been interested in supporting long-standing undocumented residents of the United States through ministries like accommodation, know your rights trainings, or providing “sanctuary” — in some instances harboring an individual inside a church.

The term “accompaniment” has traditionally been applied to the ministry of walking alongside immigrants and asylum seekers, at their request and often organized through an accommodation network, by physically accompanying them to ICE check-ins and immigration hearings, as well as taking action on activities requested by the asylum seeker and/or their attorney. There are many accompaniment networks throughout the country that enlist and provide training to volunteers.

Accompaniment is the ministry of providing moral and practical support, “standing with” asylum seekers and other immigrants as they interact with the U.S. immigration system.

Accompaniment is intended to positively influence outcomes for the asylum seeker (compa) through activities in which the accompanier (acompañante) witnesses to the asylum seeker’s character and need for asylum, their contributions to the community, and the strong community support they have. In addition, the presence of an acompañante can mitigate or lessen the stress and potential (re)traumatization that may occur in a compa’s interactions with immigration authorities. Accompaniment is a ministry of presence, support, and witness.

Practically speaking, accompaniment takes different forms in different places, as accompaniment networks and volunteers work with immigration legal teams to respond contextually to the individual circumstances of the compa as well as factors in their own community, ICE offices, and immigration courts.

Accompaniment of those outside of detention may include:

- Accompaniment to ICE Check-Ins (providing transportation as necessary), including assistance with logistics before, during, and after the check-in
- Accompaniment to Immigration Court (providing transportation as necessary), including assistance with logistics before, during, and after the court proceeding
- Legal referrals
- Fundraising for and/or posting bond (for release from detention) or paying legal fees
- Writing letters of support from the community
- Assistance with paperwork
- Interpretation and/or translation
- Providing transportation when needed
Should members of your group discern a call to this ministry, the first step is to get connected with a local accompaniment network, who are experts in this work.

**Networks**

There are many existing accompaniment networks throughout the U.S. Individual volunteers can connect with these networks for training, to sign up for volunteer shifts, etc. This list is not exhaustive; if you have an organization to recommend for inclusion on this list, please contact us. Some of these organizations focus on different aspects of accompaniment, so visit their websites to learn more about the work they do.

*Freedom for Immigrants* is a national organization that offers resources, a bond fund, a hotline, detention visitation network, and more.

*Sanctuary DMV* - Washington D.C. metro area  
*New Sanctuary Movement Atlanta*  
*NorCal Resist*  
*Court Accompaniment with Colorado Rapid Response Network*  
*First Friends of NY/NJ*  
*Ny New Sanctuary Coalition*  
*Amor Rhode Island*  
*South Georgia Immigrant Support Network*  
*El Refugio (Southwest Georgia)*  
*Casa de Paz (Colorado)*
Broadening and Sharing Your Ministry
Broadening & Sharing Your Ministry

In addition to accompaniment and Welcome Team activities, we urge you to also engage in public policy advocacy. In order to ensure that our immigration system is more humane and just, we will need Congress to pass legislation. Another way to engage in the ministry of “standing with” those navigating the U.S. immigration system is to work to positively influence local public opinion and government policy. This section outlines the different ways we can work to make our communities more welcoming to newcomers of all kinds, including asylum seekers.

Public Policy Advocacy

The Episcopal Church believes advocacy is a Biblical and Christian imperative that makes us stronger disciples of Christ. As we live into our Baptismal Covenant, we are called to live into our values as Christians and carry out public witness of caring for the world’s most vulnerable. We make our voices heard in policy-making decisions through advocacy. When we advocate, our objective is to help our country develop more just, humane, and compassionate laws.

Policy positions of The Episcopal Church are determined by the General Convention, the governing body of the Church, and the Executive Council, which governs the Church between General Conventions.

The Church’s official policy positions on immigration date to resolutions as far back as the 1930s, which called for the loosening of restrictive and racially discriminatory immigration policies. Then throughout the 20th century, resolutions urged congregations to participate actively in sponsoring refugees for resettlement and to advocate for civil rights protections for undocumented immigrants.

Today, Episcopal resolutions and action on immigration focus on several themes: family unity, appropriate and sensible immigration enforcement, challenging the discrimination and racism inherent in many restrictive immigration policies, offering long-term & stable policy solutions for immigrants through a pathway to citizenship, and protecting human rights and due process. Other themes include offering protections for refugees, uplifting LGBTQ refugees and immigrants, and addressing root causes of migration by promoting peace and development.

The Office of Government Relations (OGR) advocates for the policy positions of the Church to the U.S. government and broader policy community in Washington DC. OGR also works to protect the human rights and safety of refugees by supporting the refugee resettlement work of Episcopal Migration Ministries. For policy updates and action alerts from The Episcopal Church’s Office of Government Relations, join the Episcopal Public Policy Network (EPPN), a grassroots network of Episcopalians across the country dedicated to carrying out the Baptismal Covenant call to “strive for justice and peace” through the active ministry of public policy advocacy. Through the EPPN action center, you can contact your member of Congress directly via email, participate in direct advocacy, and spread awareness in
your community. You can also receive the information and resources necessary to engage in local and state public policy advocacy.

To learn more about the migration-related issue areas that The Episcopal Church tracks and policies for which we advocate, please visit OGR’s website.

Education and Conversation

One way to change hearts and minds, and encourage support, is through conversation.⁴³ A community event focused on celebrating our relationships and living out our faith can be a doorway for those curious about the complexities of the immigration system.

In the earlier “Discerning Your ‘Why’” section in this toolkit, we provided links to EMM’s Epiphany Bible Study, The Episcopal Church’s Civil Discourse Curriculum, and the Sacred Ground Curriculum, amongst other resources. These curricula provide helpful guidance on how to have courageous conversations on challenging topics.

If your team or congregation is interested in further education and training in refugee and immigrant advocacy, Episcopal Migration Ministries offers Love God, Love Neighbor (LGLN), an intensive training that equips participants to be advocates, allies, and ambassadors for refugees and the ministry of refugee resettlement. LGLN provides an in-depth exploration of the global displacement crisis, US refugee policy, the refugee resettlement process, faith-based advocacy for refugees, positive messaging, and organizing to welcome and support refugees in your home community. The training is expanding to include conversations about broader immigration issues, racial reconciliation and justice, and asset-based community development. We are actively seeking partners to help host these events. If you’d like to explore bringing LGLN to your community, diocese/province, or state, please contact us.

Media Engagement

In order to build support and increase understanding, people need to hear stories – stories that challenge the assumptions they hold about refugees and immigrants and their relationship to the community. Stories play a powerful role in shaping our perceptions and opinions. They make a message feel personal and allow us to see ourselves as connected to the situation.

Telling the story of our newest neighbors, or encouraging them to tell their own story, is one way we can advocate for refugees, asylum seekers, and immigrants. You can share your story with your congregation, your community, through Op-Ed’s or Letters to the Editor, or on social media. Remember: Always follow the rules of confidentiality and privacy when you share your story.⁴⁴ Below are questions you can use to create the framework of your story:

⁴³ Civil Discourse Curriculum, The Episcopal Church, www.episcopalachurch.org/OGR/general-advocacy-resources.
• Who is this story about? Who are the main characters?
• If this is a story about asylum seekers, what were the circumstances that brought them to your community?
• If this is a story about people who are supporting asylum seekers, how did that support start? What inspired it or what was the first action?
• What has this person/group done to improve or change your community? What problems are they trying to solve?
• How is your community better because of this activity?
• What would this person’s/group’s neighbors, employers, teachers, etc. say about them? Get real quotes if possible.
• What is the situation today? Do they need help or action to get to the next step?
• What can we all learn from this situation? What opportunities do we have to be like this person?

It is important to make sure you have permission to share the stories of refugees, asylum seekers, or immigrants in your community.45 There is an implicit power imbalance in this storytelling. When a person shares their story, they have little to no control over how it’s used with donors, decision makers, or the public. It’s important to make sure you are sharing their story ethically and with their express permission. We do this best when we:

1. Tell them why their story is important.
2. Show them how you will use their story. Show examples of other stories to help people understand how their story will be used. You can use news clippings, a web page, or email newsletter.
3. Obtain free, prior, and informed consent. Allow people to withdraw their consent regarding sharing of their story, at any time.
4. Encourage them to bring someone they trust to the interview and/or meeting with legislative office.
5. Remember that quotes are sacred. Someone’s language might not be perfect and they might not speak English well. Don’t fix a word or a part of a quote in the name of perfection. It’s their story and how they talk may be an important part.
6. Respect images. Ensure all videos/photos portray the subject in a dignified way. Ask yourself, “Is this an image I would like if it was me?”
7. Make them part of your victory. If you achieve a particular goal (a change of law, a signature added to a letter, etc.) make sure you share this with them.
8. Above all else, ensure that their safety is the most important consideration. If you have any concerns about a person’s health or safety, don’t use their story.

Outlets

Use a letter to the editor to respond to an article or editorial; use an op-ed to share your perspective and opinion on asylum. Unlike a letter to the editor, which is written in response to an article or editorial, an op-ed is an opinion piece that conveys a knowledgeable argument. You have a unique voice and are already qualified to write as an expert of something.

There are a few key questions to ask yourself before outlining an op-ed:

1. What are you arguing for?
2. Why is this relevant right now?
3. What is your unique perspective?
4. What change do you want to see?

For guidance on where and how to place an op-ed, visit: [https://www.theopedproject.org/](https://www.theopedproject.org/)

**Media Relations**

As you engage in this ministry, you may find that others in your community, including the media, learn about your work and want to speak with you for a story. Episcopal Migration Ministries and The Episcopal Church have experienced media professionals that can work with you to shape your response to media. For assistance, contact Kendall Martin - kmartin@episcopalchurch.org.

It is important to remember that security concerns may prevent an asylum seeker or asylee from being able to use his/her real identity in an interview. All reporters should be asked to commit to protecting the individual’s identity, if the individual so requests. It is best to have a media-savvy individual accompany an asylum seeker/asylee to and during the interview. Even though most reporters have the best of intentions, an interview can become overwhelming for newcomers. It is best to send an individual with authority and with sufficient media experience who is willing to step into an interview to redirect a question or to end an interview if it is moving in an inappropriate direction. Plan to follow up with the reporter a couple days to a week after the interview. Ask about the direction the story is taking and if they have any questions.

If you are receiving phone calls or the media is on your doorstep:

- Always remember: You do not have to respond immediately. If media calls, you can take a message and call them back. Responding before you are ready can lead to mistakes.

**Preparing for interviews:**

- Do your research ahead of time so you are confident and knowledgeable.
- Ask for a list of questions and talk with the reporter about what you can and cannot talk about.
- Consider having a written statement to leave with the interviewer.
- Anticipate questions; have prepared responses.
- Practice answering questions, especially for controversial topics.
• Know who will be interviewing you.
• Determine how much time is available. You can determine a time limit in advance.
• Remember that audiences often remember impressions, not facts.

Don’ts and Dos during the interview:

• Don’t talk about things that are not part of your domain. For example, let law enforcement announce law enforcement items, medical personnel release medical, etc.
• Don’t answer a question that hasn’t been asked and don’t elaborate unnecessarily.
• Don’t fall for that "A or B" dilemma.
• Don’t use jargon, acronyms, or overly familiar expressions.
• Don’t accept "what if" questions. Avoid hypotheticals.
• Don’t accept "laundry list" questions.
• Don’t go off the record.
• Don’t think you have to answer every question.
• Don’t speak for someone else or guess what someone might have been thinking. If asked this type of question, respond with “I can’t imagine how they might be feeling.”

• Do build bridges.
• Do use specifics.
• Do use contrasts, comparisons.
• Do be enthusiastic and animated.
• Do be a listener.
• Do be accurate and honest.
• Do be your casual likable self. Use your regular voice and, if you are on camera, lean forward, use your hands, and keep your eyes on the interviewer.
• If you don’t have the answer or can’t answer, say that you “don’t know the answer to that question,” offer an alternative recourse, and move on to another topic.
• If you are being interviewed for television, don’t look at the camera while you are talking.
• If you are being interviewed in person, nod your head when your answer is complete so the interviewer goes on to the next question.

Talking Points

The Episcopal Church is committed to advocating for humane immigration policies that respect the dignity and worth of every human being and reform our immigration system. These talking points reflect the position of The Episcopal Church and can be used when responding to media or drafting statements. For assistance with talking points specific to your situation, please contact EMM:

https://episcopalmigrationministries.org/contact-us/.

• The United States is obliged by international and domestic law to provide protection to people fleeing persecution, including asylum seekers.
• The men, women, and children fleeing their country and seeking asylum in the U.S. are not only exercising a legal right to do so, but are also deserving of our care and compassion.

• Rather than prevent those persons from seeking the protection they need, the U.S. should respond by improving our existing system and investing in efforts to address root causes of migration in the first place.

• We recognize the need to have appropriate security measures in place to prevent human trafficking, drug smuggling, and other criminal activities, but these measures must not undermine our legal and moral obligations to those seeking protection nor come at the detriment to human life or our legal obligations to those seeking protection.
Resources for Further Learning
Resources for Further Learning

If you have resources or other items that should be included in this list, please let us know! Contact us here: https://episcopalmigrationministries.org/contact-us/.

Resources from Other Denominations and Faith-Based Organizations

- Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service: Asylum Seekers supplemental to First Steps
- Church World Service: Call center to connect asylum seekers with local communities

Resources from Service, Advocacy, and Legal Organizations

- Asylum-Seekers Sponsorship Project
- LexRAP (MA): Frequently asked questions
- Freedom for Immigrants: Guide to Visiting People in Immigration Detention
- RAICES Webinar: Accompaniment After Detention
- Immigrant Legal Resource Center
- CLINIC: A Guide to Obtaining Release From Immigration Detention
- National Immigrant Justice Center: Timeline of Trump administration’s efforts to end asylum
- Sanctuary Movement: resources for and information about sanctuary coalitions and congregations
- CLINIC: Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc.: educational resources on many topics
- Black Alliance for Just Immigration: educates and engages African American and black immigrant communities to organize and advocate for racial, social and economic justice
- United We Dream: immigrant youth-led community
- American Immigration Council: educational resources and state immigration fact sheets
- Migration Policy Institute: nonpartisan research and educational resources

Free or Low-Cost Immigration Legal Services

- AILA: American Immigration Lawyers Association
- CLINIC: Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc.
- EOIR Free Legal Services Provider List
- Human Rights First
- Immigrant Defense Project
- Immigration Law Help
- KIND: Kids in Need of Defense
- National Immigration Law Center
- National Immigration Project
- National Lawyers Guild
- RAICES: Refugee and Immigrant Center for Education and Legal Services (Texas)
### Bond & Bail Funds

**National organizations funding bail across the U.S.**

- The American Bar Association
- Freedom for Immigrants National Bond Fund
- Haitian Immigrant Bond Assistance Project
- LGBTQ Freedom Fund
- National Bail Fund Network
- National Bail Out
- National Bail Out
- Queer Detainee Empowerment Project
- RAICES Bond Fund

**Information on Community Bond and Bail Funds**

Community Justice Exchange maintains a national directory of criminal bail and immigration bond funds. Below funds are listed by state.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Fund Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arizona</td>
<td>Pima Monthly Meeting Immigration Bond Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>California</td>
<td>Bay Area Immigration Bond Fund</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Immigrant Families Defense Fund</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Orange County Justice Fund</td>
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<td></td>
<td>San Diego Immigrant Rights Consortium -- Borderlands Get Free Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>Colorado</td>
<td>Immigrant Freedom Fund of Colorado</td>
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<tr>
<td>Connecticut</td>
<td>Immigrant Bail Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>Iowa</td>
<td>Eastern Iowa Community Bond Project</td>
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<tr>
<td>Massachusetts</td>
<td>Beyond Bail &amp; Legal Defense Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>Michigan</td>
<td>Kent County Immigration Bond for Our Neighbor’s Defense Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minnesota</td>
<td>Minnesota Freedom Fund</td>
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<td></td>
<td>New Hampshire</td>
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<td></td>
<td>NH Conference UCC Immigrant and Refugee Support Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>LIFE Bond Fund (New Sanctuary Coalition)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>New York Immigrant Freedom Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ohio</td>
<td>3R Fund for Immigrants</td>
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<tr>
<td>(includes Northern Kentucky)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>Fronterizo Fianza Fund</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Hutto Community Deportation Defense &amp; Bond Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vermont</td>
<td>Vermont Freedom Bail Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>Virginia</td>
<td>Cville Immigrant Bond Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>Washington</td>
<td>Fair Fight Immigrant Bond Fund</td>
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</table>

### Accompaniment Networks

Freedom for Immigrants is a national organization that offers resources, a bond fund, a hotline, detention visitation network, and more.

Sanctuary DMV - Washington D.C. metro area
New Sanctuary Movement Atlanta
NorCal Resist
Court Accompaniment with Colorado Rapid Response Network
First Friends of NY/NJ
NY New Sanctuary Coalition
Amor Rhode Island
South Georgia Immigrant Support Network
El Refugio
Casa de Paz (Colorado)
Know Your Rights

- **ACLU**: many resources for different scenarios in several languages
- **American Friends Service Committee**
- **CLINIC**
- **iAmerica**: multiple languages available
- **Immigrants Rising**
- **Informed Immigrant**
- **Mayan League**: videos and information in Maya Mam and Maya Ixil
- **NAKASEC**: red card and app
- **National Immigration Law Center**

Educational Resources for Immigrants and Volunteers

- **Cultural Orientation Resource Exchange**
- **Immigrant Learning Center**

Episcopal & Other Ministries Serving Asylum Seekers

- **Episcopal Refugee & Immigrant Center Alliance**
- **Refugee & Immigration Ministry**
- **Refugee Net**
- **DASH Network (Dallas Ft. Worth)**
- **CASP Vermont**
- **Room for Refugees**: U.K.-based organization, looking to expand in U.S.
Experiences from the Borderlands

We welcome border dioceses, congregations, and organizations to submit stories, information about ministries, and other information for inclusion in future editions of this toolkit. Please contact EMM.

Team Brownsville (West Texas)

A group of Brownsville educators began to gather last July 2018, when we realized that people were waiting outside, in the hot Matamoros, Mexico sun, sitting on the bridge, waiting to legally request asylum. People were sitting in 100-degree sun with no shelter, no food, and no water.

The U.S. law had changed regarding presenting oneself for asylum, a process known as metering and now people were held back from crossing the bridge to present themselves to CBP agents.

We started by taking tote bags with bottles of water and snacks to waiting asylum seekers. We felt very helpless and didn’t really know where to begin. There were families with children as well as single men and women. We saw many Central Americans as well as Cubans and people from different African countries: Eritrea, Ethiopia, Cameroon and Guinea.

Around the same time, we were informed that there were asylum seekers being released from valley detention centers, who often traveled up to three days from Brownsville to wherever their families were, many times on the east or west coast. Some volunteers began to go to the bus station to meet these individuals and see what their needs were. We soon discovered that some asylum seekers had been sleeping on the sidewalk outside the bus station, because their buses didn’t leave until the next day. They often had no resources other than their bus ticket, no way to buy a meal or drink, much less a hotel room for the night.

Gradually, we became a volunteer group with two missions; to help asylum seekers that were waiting to present themselves on the Mexico side and to help asylum seekers that were released from the immigration detention centers on the Texas side. Although our ways of assisting and the population has changed over the past year, our missions remain the same. We serve people where we find them at our border. Whether on the bridge or bus station, we try to meet people’s physical, emotional, and spiritual needs as best we can.

Currently, we have about 20 local volunteers who are active with our Team Brownsville group. Participation can range from involvement with preparation and distribution of meals and supplies on both sides of the border, organizing clothing and supplies in our storage areas, to maintaining contact with volunteer inquiries, and donations from supporters. We also have volunteers coming to work with us from all over the United States and a few from Canada. We welcome volunteers and they assist us by taking some of the responsibility of making the dinner meals we serve in the bus station and on the bridge, as well as distributing supplies to the waiting asylum seekers.
We are an interfaith group, with volunteers coming to us from a variety of faith backgrounds. The group of asylum seekers that we serve also come from different faith backgrounds, so we are very respectful of their beliefs. Different volunteers offer their gifts of prayer and praise to the waiting asylum seekers. We have had pastors and priests of various denominations do religious services on the bridge, as well as providing praise music and prayer in a more informal way.

Team Brownsville became an official 501c3 non-profit in June 2019. We work closely with other non-profits in our area who are serving the needs of asylum-seeking people. Some of these agencies include two different shelters that receive, feed and have shower facilities for waiting asylum seekers. We also work with other advocacy groups who provide services such as legal assistance or medical assistance.

We have had a variety of Episcopal based groups come to volunteer and minister to our asylum seekers on the Brownsville/Matamoros border. From local Episcopalians at the Church of the Advent-Brownsville, to larger groups from several dioceses including West Texas, Texas, and Central Florida, the word is getting out that asylum-seeking people need our attention and ministry. We are currently arranging volunteer teams of Episcopalians from the Diocese of Delaware and Diocese of Vermont.

On July 22, 2019, a U.S. government plan called Migrant Protection Protocols began on the Matamoros/Brownsville border. For our waiting asylum seekers, this means that they will be returned to Mexico after being processed for an asylum request. The real life consequence of this is that people are sleeping on the streets of Matamoros with no resources, nothing to eat, no jobs. The timeline for them to finish their asylum process is up to two years.

We can’t know how this will work in the long run, but we do know that it will change our work in some fundamental ways. As our numbers decrease in Brownsville, because people are no longer allowed to go on to their families, our numbers are increasing dramatically in Matamoros. We are currently serving around 300 people per night, with new people arriving every day.

Scripture gives us a clear mandate for this ministry:

“…for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me…” Matthew 25:35

Andrea Rudnik
Church of the Advent Episcopal
Brownsville, Texas
Co-founder and leader of Team Brownsville
August 14, 2019