



Suggested Activities for Refugee Co-sponsors

The initial weeks after moving to the U.S. can be challenging for newly arrived refugees. We recommend visiting your family at least once a week in the first 3-4 weeks after their arrival, and less often afterward as they become more independent and start to adjust to life here. The activities below are crucial life skills and will empower your family to become self-sufficient and confident in their new life. We encourage you teaching them as many of these skills as possible.

1. Take your family food shopping

- 2 hours
- NO COST (EBT cards (food stamp) provided. Note: EBT cards ONLY pay for food, NOT hygiene products, clothing, toys, housing items...etc.
- Take your family shopping at their closest grocery store so they know where it is located and how to get there. Help them learn to use their EBT card and learn to read pricing. Their food stamps must last all month!

2. Help your family connect to a local food bank

- Several hours
- Food stamps are vital, but they don't always cover all the needs of your family. For example, food stamps do not allow for the purchase of hygiene products. You can help them connect to food banks throughout the valley and find out how often they can visit the food bank.
- The [Arizona Food Bank Network's website](#) and the 211 phone line will help you find these resources in English and Spanish.

3. Take your family clothes shopping

- 3 hours
- NO COST (Deseret Industry vouchers are provided to pay for the clothing)
- This is a fun opportunity to take newly arrived refugees and their children to get new clothing. It's easy for Americans but can be very overwhelming to refugees, and many of them don't know their size. You can teach them that!

4. Take your family to get their State ID

- 4 hours
- NO COST (vouchers are provided to pay for the ID)
- This is a great opportunity to help refugees navigate the U.S. system and its complicated paperwork. It's easy for Americans and refugees need it to get their first job!



5. Take your family to sign up for a bank account, sign-up for online banking if they have a phone, and direct deposit

- 4 hours
- NO COST
- This is a great opportunity to help refugees navigate the U.S. system and its complicated paperwork. It's easy for Americans and case managers aren't always able to do it for them! This is a good time to teach your family how to use a debit/credit cards, what the different between debit and credit is, talk about credit scores and budgeting/money management.

6. Teach your family to understand their rental agreement

- 2 hours
- NO COST
- Review what the contract states, what are the rental and utilities prices, what are fees, what are their rights such as asking for repairs, but also their responsibilities such as maintaining a clean apartment to avoid fees or eviction...etc., keeping doors and windows closed when the A/C is running, changing the battery in the smoke detector...etc.

7. Teach your family to understand their medical coverage and to navigate the healthcare system

- 2 hours
- NO COST
- Refugees are covered through AHCCCS (AZ Healthcare Cost Containment System). They receive coverage within days of their arrival. Our case managers will apply for this as soon as the family arrives. Renewal is yearly, based on income. Find more information here: <https://www.azahcccs.gov/>
- You can also find information about what refugees are eligible for [here](#).
- Review what their medical coverage is (see website above), explain what the difference are between various medical services: doctors, pediatric doctors, hospitals, ER/Urgent Care, preventative care, eye and dental care... etc., which ones are free, more or less expensive, the difference between free medical services (AHCCCS) and private insurances with copay, coinsurance, deductible..etc..

8. Take your family to get their immunization

- 3 hours
- NO COST



- When refugees arrive, they need to follow-up on their second round of immunization. We often need people to drive them from their home to the pharmacy, and back home. This is easy and makes sure that refugees maintain the re-quired health standards.

9. Teach your family how to take the bus to their English class, to family doctor, to our office and to their job

- 3 hours
- NO COST (bus passes are provided)
- Our case managers are required to show new refugees where weekly English classes are being held. You can help by taking refugees there on the bus and teaching them the bus route from their home.

10. Teach your family basic “survival” English

- Several hours
- NO COST
- Adults and older children in your family should know the following information after a few weeks/months: *their name - address - birth date - social security number (teach them NEVER to share their social)- their spouse’s name and birth date - any children’s names and birthdates - how to use 911*. Make a goal to teach it to them! You can find more ideas for “survival” English in the Manual.

11. Teach your family organizational skills

- Several hours
- NO COST
- How to get the mail regularly, how to organize the mail and paperwork in folders, how to respond to letters, make phone calls and schedule appointments, pay bills (never mail cash), how to keep on top of deadlines/due dates with calendars, lists, Post-it notes, phone reminders...etc., the importance of being on time in the U.S..., being aware of scams and robocalls, etc.

12. Teach your family to be involved in their children’s education

- Several hours
- NO COST
- How the U.S. school system works (grades, homework expectations, tests, lunches, daily/yearly school schedules...etc.), how to prepare the children for school each morning, how to organize



all the papers children bring home from school, how to assist with homework, how to attend Parent Teacher conferences...etc.

13. Gather toys for your family's children

- 3 hours
- Collect gently used toys and deliver them to your family.

The toys can come from your family/church or be bought gently used (Goodwill and Desert Industries are good places - make sure you sanitize toys before giving them).

- Many refugee children have their vital needs met, but few receive toys. This is a great opportunity to spread joy and show love to refugee families. Once you have collected the toys, we will arrange for you to deliver them to the family.

Other activities:

- Use your creativity to help your family learn more about their new community. Here are just a few ideas: introduce them to American traditions such as Halloween and Thanksgiving, introduce them to simple American/convenience foods (such as pudding, mac&cheese, jello, rice Krispy bars, etc.), learn about *their* culture, visit their local library, help them get cultural passes, play sports with the kids, attend the family's place of worship one week, go fishing, hiking, gardening, walk to a local park, plan a picnic, catch a sporting event, browse a farmer's market, visit Schnepf Farms, Phoenix Zoo, Arizona Science Center, Phoenix Children's Museum, Phoenix Public Library, Phoenix Art Museum, Heard Museum, Musical Instrument Museum, Japanese Friendship Garden, attend live music shows...etc. There are even more ideas in the Manual!

In addition to these opportunities, we will discuss what other needs the family may have that you can assist with. Also, those needs may arise naturally as you get to know them (for example, taking them to a job interview, a doctor's appointment, a parent/teacher conference, helping the parents and children with homework...etc.).

COVID-19 INFORMED CONSENT

To further stop the spread of the virus, and keep you and the clients we serve as healthy as possible; we require that volunteers adhere to the following:





General Practices for all times

Wear a mask. Stay 6 feet (about 2 arm lengths) from others. Avoid crowds and poorly ventilated places. Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.

In general, the more closely you interact with others and the longer that interaction, the higher the risk of COVID-19 spread. If you decide to engage in public activities, continue to protect yourself by practicing everyday preventive actions mentioned above.

You must notify our agency if you, members of your group or our clients have COVID symptoms, in which case your co-sponsorship commitment would be paused or performed remotely until all parties have recovered.

Please note that volunteers are not required to get vaccinated, but those who have been vaccinated can interact with volunteers in person, if they are following the procedures outlined here.

When driving in a personal vehicle together

Practice physical distancing. Limit the number of passengers in the vehicle to only those necessary (for example, choose one or two family members who are not at higher risk for severe illness to run the essential errands).

Improve ventilation. Improve the ventilation in the vehicle if possible (for example, open the windows or set the air ventilation/air conditioning on non-recirculation mode). If using a rental car, make sure to ventilate the vehicle during use.

Sanitize surfaces. If using a rental car, sanitize the door handles, steering wheel, and other surfaces before use.

Meals

Cosponsors who would normally cook or eat together with their refugee family should avoid shared meals at this time and/or only purchase meals when together at commercially prepared facilities/restaurants.

Shopping

- When you do have to visit a store in person, go during hours when fewer people will be there (for example, early morning or late night).



- If you are at [higher risk for](#) severe illness, find out if the store has special hours for people at higher risk. If they do, try to shop during those hours.
- If you normally bring your own reusable shopping bags, ensure they are cleaned before each use. Some locations have temporarily banned the use of reusable shopping bags during the COVID-19 pandemic, so check your state, local, store or market policies before bringing reusable bags.
- Disinfect the shopping cart, use disinfecting wipes if available.
- Do not touch your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Stay at least 6 feet away from others while shopping and in lines.
- Use marked entry or exit points and follow any directional signs or floor markings designed to keep people at least 6 feet apart.
- Only touch products that you plan to purchase, if possible.
- Consider not consuming any sample or purchase food or drink items from self-service stations.
- If possible, use touchless payment (pay without touching money, a card, or a keypad). If you must handle money, a card, or use a keypad, use hand sanitizer right after paying.

Hosting a Small Gathering

- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces and items between use.
- If gathering indoors, increase ventilation by opening windows and doors or by placing central air and heating on continuous circulation.
- Encourage guests to wash hands often or have hand sanitizer ready.
- Keep background music volume low so guests do not need to shout.
- Clean and disinfect commonly touched surfaces and any shared items.
- Cancel your gathering if you or someone who lives with you is sick or has been near someone who thinks they have or has COVID-19.