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Introduction

The Parish Refugee Resettlement Ministry: A Vision for Welcoming Newcomers

For I was… a stranger and you welcomed me… (Mt. 25:35)

The Purpose of this Manual

This manual is intended to serve as a reference guide for diocesan resettlement office efforts to recruit, train, and manage parish involvement in the resettlement of refugees. As such, the manual is intended primarily for the staff of the diocesan resettlement office:

• Resettlement Director
• Case Manager
• Parish Development Coordinator (aka Volunteer Coordinator)

However, it also includes resources and information that the diocesan staff can share with leaders at the parish level as the parish leaders seek to establish their programs, recruit and train additional parish volunteers, and help the resettlement ministry become an integral part of parish life. As such, programs can very much use a “train-the-trainer” approach with the resources in this manual.

The Church’s Mission to Newcomers

The Church has a long tradition -- in both the Old and New Testaments as well as in the rich body of Catholic Social Teaching (including papal encyclicals, bishops’ statements and pastoral letters) – that consistently reinforces our moral obligation to treat the stranger among us as we would treat Christ himself. Pope Francis underscores the essence of Catholic Social Teaching on solidarity with the “stranger among us” in his World Refugee Day statement, imploring people and institutions around the world to never fail to assist the refugee, the migrant, the immigrant, the newcomer – “for their face is the face of Christ.”

This manual focuses on how to translate this vision of a welcoming Church at the parish level. The first chapter will provide information on the theological underpinnings of this welcoming vision which can be used by both diocesan and parish staff to recruit and motivate others to get involved in resettlement ministry.

The Focus on Parishes

Participating in refugee resettlement ministry gives the Catholic faithful the opportunity to fulfill the Gospel mandate to welcome the stranger among us and to serve others. Furthermore, the nearly 17,000 Catholic parishes in the U.S. have the capacity and organizational structure of staff, lay people, groups and activities to organize volunteer services and donations to meet refugees’ needs. While parishes may structure their refugee resettlement ministry in different ways, this manual is intended to help the diocesan resettlement office staff to assist the parish leadership in creating a permanent structure for working with refugees.

The USCCB/MRS wishes to thank Sarah Annay Williamson, www.sarahannayphotography.com, for giving permission to reprint her photos, which she first produced for the USCCB/MRS resettlement affiliate program at Catholic Charities in Jacksonville, Florida.
Diocesan Level
Diocesan or Catholic Charities Refugee Resettlement Office

Refugee Resettlement Director
*Primary responsibility for administering the resettlement program*

Coordinator/Committee Garners Support from Various Parish Organizations:
- Parish Community Groups: i.e., Knights of Columbus, Men’s and Women’s Ministries, Seniors Group, Parish Picnic Committee
- Educational: Adult Education Groups, Bible Study, Faith Formation, Youth Ministry
- Spiritual Groups: Eucharistic Ministers, Cursillo, Holy Name Society
- Outreach and Awareness Groups: Peace and Justice, Respect Life, Emergency Assistance, Welcome Home, Food Pantry, Social Action

Parish Level Refugee Resettlement Ministry
*Support from Pastor, Parochial Vicars, Deacons, Parish Council*
*Different Models for Organizing Response*

Parish Refugee Sponsorship Coordinator and Committee
Parish Social Action Sub-Committee

Coordinator/Committee Garners Support from Various Parish Organizations:
- Parish Community Groups: i.e., Knights of Columbus, Men’s and Women’s Ministries, Seniors Group, Parish Picnic Committee
- Educational: Adult Education Groups, Bible Study, Faith Formation, Youth Ministry
- Spiritual Groups: Eucharistic Ministers, Cursillo, Holy Name Society
- Outreach and Awareness Groups: Peace and Justice, Respect Life, Emergency Assistance, Welcome Home, Food Pantry, Social Action
Welcoming the Stranger Among Us

The first step on a parish and diocesan level is to build relationships, become friends, know newcomers by name, get to know about their family and their life’s journey.

Welcoming the Stranger Among Us
USCCB Pastoral Statement

The biblical mandate and the rich tradition of Catholic Social Teaching is what propels and fuels the Church in its mission to welcome and protect the human dignity of the stranger among us.

In the pastoral statement, Welcoming the Stranger Among Us, the bishops give us an outline for achieving unity in diversity and calls us to conversion, communion, and solidarity which will foster the New Evangelization.

Conversion

We don’t welcome them because they are Catholic, but because we are Catholic.

This statement summarizes well what the bishops mean by the “call to conversion”. We are called to remember our immigrant and baptismal heritage to truly become a sign of universality through conversion of mind and spirit – to become more welcoming and hospitable.

Communion

The second call put forth by the bishops in the Welcoming the Stranger pastoral statement is the “call to communion”. They seek to answer the question “how do we build communion in our diocese, in our parishes, in our schools?” and provide the following guidance:

We are called to offer a genuine and suitable welcome, to share together as brothers and sisters at the same table, and to work side by side to improve the quality of life for society’s most vulnerable members. In doing so, we work to bring all the children of God into fuller communion and we live out the mark of unity in the local church.

The role of the diocesan resettlement office is essential in fulfilling this call.
Solidarity

The bishops of the United States together with their brother bishops in Mexico expounded upon the “call to solidarity” initially outlined in the *Welcoming the Stranger* pastoral statement, in their joint pastoral letter, “Strangers No Longer: Together on the Journey of Hope.”

The *Strangers No Longer* pastoral statement intended to “break the silence” on the Church’s teaching on the rights of immigrants, with the underlying principle being that no law can trample the basic human dignity of migrating people.

The three steps for promoting solidarity with our immigrant and refugee sisters and brothers as outlined by the bishops are as follows:

- The **first step** is to break the silence, to announce the Church’s teaching on immigrants and refugees.
- The **second step** is to be the advocating voice for people who have not found their voice.
- The **third step** is to walk with immigrants and refugees in their journey to their new home.
Appendix of Resources

Biblical Quotes

Deuteronomy 10:19. “So you too should love the resident alien, for that is what you were in the land of Egypt.”

Exodus 20: 1-17. “Then God spoke all these words: I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.”

Exodus 22:20. “You shall not oppress or afflict a resident alien, for you were once aliens residing in the land of Egypt.”

Leviticus 13:34. “You shall treat the alien who resides with you no differently than the natives born among you; you shall love the alien as yourself.”

Leviticus 19:33. “When an alien resides with you in your land, do not mistreat such a one.”

Leviticus 24:22. “You shall have but one rule, for alien and native-born alike. I, the LORD, am your God.”

Matthew 2:13-23. “When they had departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Rise, take the child and his mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I tell you. Herod is going to search for the child to destroy him.” Joseph rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed for Egypt. He stayed there until the death of Herod, that what the Lord had said through the prophet might be fulfilled, “Out of Egypt I called my son.”

Matthew 25:35-36,40. “For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me….Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.

1 John 3:20. “If anyone says, ‘I love God,’ but hates his brother, he is a liar; for whoever does not love a brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen.”

Additional Resources for Biblical Quotes

http://www.ucc.org/justice_immigration_worship_biblical-references-to

Pastoral Statements and Related Resources from the U.S. Bishops
Read, download or order print copies of the following pastoral statements in both English and Spanish at the following links:


- Welcoming the Stranger Among Us – Prayer Cards in Multiple Languages
  [http://store.usccb.org/SearchResults.asp?Search=welcoming+the+stranger&Submit=](http://store.usccb.org/SearchResults.asp?Search=welcoming+the+stranger&Submit=)


- Excerpts from Strangers No Longer: Together on a Journey of Hope:


- Parishes Organized to Welcome Refugees (POWR) Parish Volunteer Kit on My Membership: [http://tinyurl.com/jmbzp97](http://tinyurl.com/jmbzp97)

**Understanding Catholic Social Teaching on the Rights of Migrants and Refugees:**


- Backgrounder on Catholic Social Teaching and Migration:

- Catholic Bishops Call for Comprehensive Immigration Reform:

**Video Resources**

The Dignity of Immigrants: [http://www.catholictv.com/immigration](http://www.catholictv.com/immigration)
Recruiting Parishes

Audience:
Parish Development Coordinator (Agency/Diocesan Level)

Actions
I. Promote Parish Refugee Resettlement Ministry
II. Recruit Parishes
   A. Assess Parishes
   B. Prepare For Meeting With Pastor & Parish Leaders
   C. Build Relationships With Parish Leadership
   D. Educate Parish Leadership
   E. Solicit Parish Commitment To Ministry

Appendix Of Resources
A. Attachment 1 – Parish Resource Network Diagram
B. Attachment 2 – Parish Assessment, Interview And Visitation Worksheet
I. Promote Parish Refugee Resettlement Ministry

Whether your diocese has just established a refugee resettlement office or you are looking to invigorate your outreach to parishes in support of the refugee resettlement ministry, one of the best ways to start is to develop and execute a promotional plan for parish refugee resettlement ministry.

Contemplate target audiences to engage in your efforts and envision ways to reach them.
BRAINSTORM - Whom do you want to reach and how do you want to reach them?

- **Pastors and Priests**
  - Draft message for the bishop to place in the bishop’s column in the diocesan newspaper/website.
  - Draft article/letter for the bishop’s newsletter to clergy.
  - Conduct a presentation at diocesan clergy days, deanery meetings, or presbyteral/priest council meetings with the bishop.

- **Deacons**
  - Request an in-person meeting with the diocesan diaconate coordinator and ask that he invite a few key deacons.
  - Send electronic correspondence to all deacons via the diocesan deacon coordinator.
  - Deliver a talk at the appropriate diocesan deacon gathering.

- **Catholic Faithful**
  - Create an ad or write an op-ed for the diocesan newspaper on refugees and the Catholic mission to serve newcomers.
  - Conduct an interview with local Catholic radio stations or newspapers on the plight of refugees, the diocesan refugee program, and how Catholics can get involved.
  - Utilize diocesan social media to promote human interest stories about the resettlement program and refugees.
  - Attend, present, and exhibit at Catholic convocations and gatherings in the diocese to build recognition for the program and to make personal connections.
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Building familiarity with the refugee resettlement ministry program and developing personal relationships will help as you recruit new parishes or expand the capacity of existing parishes.

**Social and Ethnic/Cultural Ministries**
- Coordinate with the diocesan social ministry director and ethnic ministries coordinators to send promotional materials on parish resettlement ministry directly to their constituencies and networks.
- Attend, exhibit, and present at conferences and gatherings organized by ethnic and social ministries in the diocese.

**Diocesan Youth** (including those participating in parochial-based youth ministries and religious education as well as children and youth in Catholic elementary schools, high schools, and colleges/universities).
- Young people are often some of the most willing volunteers in the diocese, as their schools, youth ministry and religious education programs are actively working to develop their moral leadership capacity through both faith-based education and service.
- Consider expanding your outreach to include Catholic schools (those in the parish schools as well as secondary educational institutes in the diocese). Contact the diocesan superintendent of schools to inquire about ways to reach the schools and let them know how they can get involved with the refugee resettlement ministry (supplementing parish efforts or working independently).
- Contact the diocesan youth ministry director and religious education director about upcoming opportunities to speak to young people about refugees and ways to support the refugee resettlement ministry.
II. Recruit Parishes

A. Assess Parishes

The following sections are focused on recruiting parishes to participate in refugee resettlement ministry; however, some of these same practices would be applicable if you were looking to recruit diocesan high schools, ethnic/cultural apostolates, or other civic groups to participate in the program as well. Some initial steps for consideration include:

- Establishing a goal for the number of parishes that you want to approach to initiate a new refugee resettlement ministry.
- Determining the kind of parish that you wish to focus on over the next year. For example, you may want to target parishes that have established social ministries or active ethnic ministries.
- Requesting assistance from the chancery staff – review diocesan records and the diocesan website to garner basic facts on the parishes that you are seeking to recruit (see Attachment entitled, “Parish Assessment/Interview/Visitation Worksheet”).
- Approaching parishes that have lapsed refugee resettlement ministry (in addition to parishes that have never had one). Leadership, structures, and membership in parishes change regularly over time. There may be new and receptive audiences who will be willing to champion the welcoming parish vision. Keep these options in mind as you prepare for your meetings with parish leaders and in conducting your parish interviews.

B. Prepare for Meeting with Pastor & Parish Leaders

To prepare for in-person meetings with pastors and parish staff, review the sample parish structure diagram in the Appendix (Attachment 1). Consider various ways that a refugee resettlement ministry could be incorporated into this structure:

- How would the refugee resettlement ministry work effectively with committees already in place, in terms of utilizing and incorporating their talents and resources?
- How could we best use this structure to maximize relationship-building and secure needed commitments?

Before you make the initial contact with a targeted parish, consider the following:

- The purpose of the initial meeting:
  - To introduce yourself if you haven’t already done so
  - To develop a relationship
  - To create a sense of legitimacy or credential for you and the refugee resettlement program
  - To set the stage for future meetings
- The persons you will want to meet with:
  - Key leaders in the parish – pastor, priests, pastoral staff, and/or social ministry leaders
  - People recommended to you by your office or other offices within the diocese (cultural and social ministries, peace and justice office, etc.).

How you will arrange the meeting (i.e., by phone or email) and the key elements:
- who you are
- whom you work with
- who suggested that you call (if not a cold call)
- why you called when you can arrange a thirty-minute meeting

- Ask the pastor if he will recommend a pastoral associate, a staff member, a deacon, or a social ministry volunteer that you can contact should he decline an appointment.

### C. Build Relationships with Parish Leadership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conduct a 30-Minute One-on-One Interview with the Pastor and Key Parish Leader(s)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>o Credentials (5 minutes)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• State your name, your position and the name of your agency, who recommended you, and why you are there</td>
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<td><strong>o Focus (20 minutes)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Begin talking briefly about your role in the mission of refugee resettlement services and why you are passionate about your work. Share a brief video as appropriate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Turn the conversation to the pastor/leader(s).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Does the pastor/parish have any special interests or issues on which they focus?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What significant programs or initiatives are currently taking place in the parish?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Direct service</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Public policy/advocacy initiatives</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Justice, peace and global solidarity initiatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Community organizing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How are decisions made at the parish level? What is the leadership structure? What is the pastor’s leadership style?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>o Next Steps (5 minutes)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• May I call you again to discuss the potential for the parish’s participation in refugee resettlement ministry?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Can you identify anyone else that you think I should contact?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Follow-Up

- After the interview, take fifteen minutes to reflect on what happened and write down important factual information about the person(s) you met with and what happened (use Attachment 2 as a resource).
- Keep a file of all interviewees.
- Send a “thank you” message and follow through on anything you said that you would do in the meeting.

Determine and Cultivate Target Parish Audiences and Constituencies

- With knowledge from your interview and subsequent communications with the parish, further refine with whom you will need to cultivate relationships at the parish level (utilize Attachment 2 again as a reference).
- Ask your key contact for recommendations of potential leaders and volunteers from various constituencies:
  - Leaders – people who are respected and trusted in the parish/community and who --
    - possess a profound belief in others (not looking for personal recognition)
    - maintain values as the basis for action
    - have a good sense of humor
    - have genuine curiosity about the world and life and exhibit great compassion
    - represent the clergy, laity and staff
  - Volunteers/Workers – people who are willing to follow through on tasks and projects and who --
    - have a strong sense of duty; diligence
    - show initiative, interest; willingness to learn
    - are team players

D. Educate Parish Leadership

- Work with your key parish contact to set up a presentation to educate key leaders and volunteers (as you identified in the step above) about refugee resettlement ministry and what you are trying to accomplish.
- Utilize the USCCB/MRS Parish Volunteer Kit PowerPoint presentation [http://tinyurl.com/jmbzp97](http://tinyurl.com/jmbzp97) – for your presentation. Allow times for questions and answers following your presentation.
- Allow the parish time to discuss your presentation; they may need to schedule a parish council meeting or talk to other individuals in the parish.
E. Solicit Parish Commitment to Ministry

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<tbody>
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<td>1.</td>
<td>Contact the parish to inquire if they have made a decision regarding the development of a parish refugee resettlement ministry. If they have not yet made a decision, but are interested, ask them when they expect to make the decision. Call back on that date.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>If the parish is not able to develop the ministry at that time, don’t give up on them. Check back in a few months or a year.</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>Be patient. Developing relationships takes time. Building a foundational relationship with the parish will pay off in the long term.</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>If the parish agrees to develop this ministry, then the parish leaders will need to determine how it will be integrated into their structure. You may be able to help them based on the parish assessment that you have conducted.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Tips**

*Maintain contact with the diocesan social ministry/concerns office.* Inform them regularly of your progress with the parishes, and ensure open communication between the social ministry office and the resettlement program. Parishes may want to take some time before they are ready to implement this ministry. Your persistence and follow-up with the parish is critical at this state.

- *Maintain contact with key persons at the parish throughout the decision-making process.* The efforts made by the bishop, key diocesan offices, and staff will strengthen your ability to generate commitments by pastors to integrate within their parish structure a formal committee whose explicit ministry is to help the diocesan resettlement program assist refugees.

Following a “train-the-trainer” model, the subsequent section of this manual is intended to help you (the Parish Development Coordinator) to train and assist the parish refugee sponsorship coordinator/leadership team to recruit and train other parish volunteers and to help the resettlement ministry become an integral part of parish life (see diagram on page 3).
Appendix of Resources

Attachment 1 – Parish Resource Network Diagram
## Parish Assessment

*To be completed by the Parish Development Coordinator using diocesan records and data to the extent possible prior to the one-on-one parish interview (Note: These are not interview questions)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Parishioners in the Parish</th>
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<tr>
<td>Number of Families</td>
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<td>Ethnic Composition</td>
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<td>Pastor’s Length of Tenure</td>
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<td>Number of Priests Assigned</td>
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<td>Number of Parish Staff (including Deacons)</td>
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### One-on-One Interview Questions

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<th>Does the pastor/parish have any special interests or issues on which they focus?</th>
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<td>What significant programs (e.g., RENEW, Stewardship) or other initiatives are currently taking place in the parish?</td>
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<td>What direct services does the parish provide?</td>
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<td>Does the parish engage in public policy/advocacy?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Does the parish have any programs dedicated to justice, peace and global solidarity?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What is the parish’s involvement, if any, in community organizing?</td>
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<td>How are decisions made at the parish level?</td>
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<td>What is the leadership structure? What is the pastor’s leadership style?</td>
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<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other comments/observations about the parish and surrounding community</td>
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</table>

### Potential Parish Leaders

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position, Committee</th>
<th>Email</th>
<th>Phone</th>
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19
Preparation and Organizing Parishes

This section of the manual is intended primarily to help the diocesan parish development coordinator recruit volunteers to participate in the parish refugee resettlement ministry, particularly to recruit a parish refugee sponsorship coordinator and a core team of parish volunteers to assist the coordinator.

Parish Development Coordinator (Diocesan Level)

Actions:

I. Recruit Parish Volunteers
   A. Marketing Opportunities for Recruiting Parishes
   B. Key Elements to Communicate in Recruiting Parishioners

II. Identify Parish Functions and Determine Parish Model
   A. Essential Features of Parish Models
   B. Determine the Parish Model
      i. Role of the Primary Parish Refugee Sponsorship Coordinator
      ii. Role of the Case Manager
      iii. Division of Labor

   1. Essential Features of Parish Models

III. Strategize with Parish Refugee Sponsorship Coordinator and Prepare Annual Plan
   A. Assessing Parish Capacity
   B. Parish Annual Plan
   C. Parish Resettlement Ministry Agreement
   D. Resettlement Assistance Agreement (MRS/RF-10)
I. Recruit Parish Volunteers

A. Recruitment Opportunities

• Homilies: Draft some talking points for the homily or for an announcement at the end of Mass.

• Parish Bulletin, Web Site, and Electronic Newsletters: Draft “Did You Know” facts about refugees and Catholic social teaching on migration; announce upcoming informational meetings and volunteer opportunities.

• Informational Meetings: Host a coffee after Masses on weekends or a meeting in the evening in the Parish Hall during the week.

• Informational Table: Staff an informational table in the church vestibule after all Masses one weekend.

• Youth and Adult Religious Education Classes: Ask to visit religious education classes and make a short presentation; or ask that the teachers hand out informational flyers or make an announcement about an upcoming informational meeting.

• Parish Committee and Group Meetings: Schedule speaking engagements or visit regularly scheduled meetings of parish groups to talk about the resettlement program.
  o Parish Community Groups: i.e., Knights of Columbus, Men’s and Women’s Ministries, Seniors Group, Parish Picnic Committee
  o Educational: Adult Education Groups, Bible Study, Faith Formation, Youth Ministry
  o Spiritual Groups: Eucharistic Ministers, Cursillo, Holy Name Society, Prayer Groups
  o Outreach and Awareness Groups: Peace and Justice, Social Action, Respect Life, Emergency Assistance; Food Pantry

• National Migration Week Masses and Activities: Utilize the U.S. bishops’ annual National Migration Week observance held following the Feast of the Epiphany in January as a special time in the liturgical year to help raise awareness and recruit volunteers.

B. Key Elements to Communicate when Recruiting Parishioners

First Element: Promote a Conversion of Minds and Hearts

Present Catholic Social Teaching as it pertains to the rights and dignity of migrants and refugees. Utilize the resources in the Welcoming the Stranger section of this manual to help inform parishioners about the Church’s rich history of welcome and ministry to migrants and refugees and counter anti-immigrant sentiments.

Second Element: Present the Refugee Resettlement Ministry

• Tell refugees’ stories and appeal to parishioners’ hearts
Share a brief story or present a short video interview with a refugee.
• Communicate the trauma and difficulties of leaving home and coming to a new country.
• Describe how volunteers in other parishes, working with resettlement staff, helped the refugees in the story.
• If you have a particular refugee population in need of assistance, or a case that you want the parish’s help with, describe the situation and its needs.
• Describe how the parishioners’ work with refugees will be a life-changing experience for both the refugees and the parishioners.

**Provide a brief overview of the resettlement process.**
• Once parishioners can visualize what refugees have gone through to come to this country, provide a brief overview of the refugee resettlement process.
• Utilize the Refugee Processing Flow Chart [https://tinyurl.com/zlt3ml](https://tinyurl.com/zlt3ml) to show how refugees are processed through a national refugee resettlement agency (i.e., USCCB/MRS) and how they ultimately come to a diocese where the parish becomes involved.
• Explain the role of the local refugee resettlement program and how it interacts with the parish.

**Third Element: Offer Opportunities to Participate in Refugee Resettlement Ministry**
• Offer opportunities to attend a training or meeting to organize the parish’s refugee resettlement ministry.
• Subsequent steps in the manual explore the organization and training of the parish volunteers.

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**Engaging Parishes in Refugee Resettlement Toolkit**

Would you like to involve your parish and community groups to become involved in refugee resettlement? This presentation includes a step-by-step guide how your agency can strengthen its parish connections to boost volunteerism. The toolkit presents specific ideas related to conducting a needs assessment, designing a volunteer program and tracking program outcomes.

[http://tinyurl.com/jmbzp97](http://tinyurl.com/jmbzp97)
II. Identify Parish Functions and Determine Parish Model

A. Parish Functions in Resettling Refugees

Parishes involved in refugee resettlement ministry will be engaged in a wide range of resettlement-related functions and tasks according to the needs of the refugees, the needs of the resettlement program, and the capability of the parishes. Providing a range of services and resources to refugees, organized through various subcommittees, allows an opportunity for meaningful and mutually beneficial interaction between parishioners and refugees. The following are core functions and related tasks of the parish refugee resettlement ministry in assisting a refugee family.

### Welcome/Hospitality

**Time Commitment: One month**

Provides newly arrived refugees with an initial American contact. Examples of welcome/hospitality tasks include:

- Greeting refugees at the airport and accompanying them to their new home
- Providing welcome baskets
- Acculturation services that help the newly arrived refugees understand American culture (how-to brochures, seminars, field trips)
- Organizing a small parish reception for refugees about a month after arrival (include native foods as possible)

### Housing

**Time Commitment: Ongoing for four to six months**

Finds appropriate housing for the refugee family and organizes a fundraising campaign to support the family’s rent deposit, rent, and utility needs for up to six months.

### Food

**Time Commitment: Two days before arrival**

Stock the refugee family’s apartment with 7-10 days’ worth of groceries, household supplies, and toiletries. Include native food items as possible.

### Material Needs

**Time Commitment: Three to four weeks**

Provides household items and clothing to refugees. Coordinates donation drives as well as the pick-up and delivery of items to the refugee family. Examples of the kinds of items needed include:

- Furniture: *tables, chairs, couches, beds, lamps*
- Kitchen items: *pots, pans, cooking utensils, dishes, cups, flatware*
- Linens: *bed sheets, blankets, towels*
- Clothing: *items for men, women, children and infants*

### Education/Language Training

**Time Commitment: Ongoing for at least six months**
Coordinates English tutoring/English as a Second Language (ESL) classes for the refugee family and helps refugee children to enroll in school. Specific functions include:

- Facilitating enrollment in ESL classes or organizing individual/family tutoring in the homes or neighborhoods where refugees live
- Providing space and refreshments for the tutoring sessions/classes
- Providing educational materials, childcare and transportation for the tutoring sessions
- Helping refugee children to enroll in school; picking up forms and instructions; helping them to complete needed forms and gather necessary documentation (immunization records, proof of address, refugee documentation)

**Job Development**

*Time Commitment: Ongoing for up to six months (or until refugee adults find employment)* Provides assistance to diocesan case manager in obtaining jobs and helps refugees move towards self-sufficiency.

**Transportation**

*Time Commitment: By appointment for one month*

Providing transportation to appointments for the first month and orientation to local public transportation services. Refugee families will have approximately 12 different agency appointments during their first month in the U.S. The subcommittee members will:

- provide airport reception
- transport family to Catholic Charities (within 2-3 days after arrival) for case management services
- transport family to Social Security Office (within first week)
- transport family to Social Services Agency (within first week)
- transport family to Refugee Health Center (date determined by Catholic Charities referral)
- transport family to Department of Motor Vehicles (after Social Security card is received during 3rd or 4th week)
- transport family to school (two trips; 1st trip – complete forms; 2nd trip – after immunizations have been done)
- conduct city tour with family using bus and light rail as appropriate. Provide introduction to public transit and accompany them on first trips to:
  - Catholic Charities
  - Grocery store
  - Local school
  - Thrift store or flea market

**B. Parish Models for Resettling Refugees**

Parishes should be encouraged to commit to working with refugees as one of their core and ongoing ministries and to integrate this ministry into their structures. Although this structural commitment can take various forms; the ideal situation is for the parishes to establish a unique *refugee resettlement*
that is structured around the gospel mandate to welcome the stranger and upon which the explicit parish resettlement activities and tasks are built and carried out.

Below you will find some examples of how parishes have successfully structured their refugee resettlement ministry.

In this case, the diocesan parish development coordinator would work with the pastor and parish leaders to form a new **Refugee Sponsorship Committee** in the parish.

**Step 1:** Recruit a **Refugee Sponsorship Committee Coordinator**

**Step 2:** Recruit volunteer subcommittee chairpersons who would assume responsibility for overseeing and coordinating the afore-mentioned specific functions and tasks.

**Step 3:** Direct each subcommittee chairperson to recruit several parishioners to carry out their specific functions and task.

**Step 4:** Encourage the subcommittees to regularly meet together with the Refugee Sponsorship Committee Coordinator to ensure all functions are being addressed prior to and following the arrival of each refugee family.

In this model, parishes would choose one of their existing ministries, such as the social action or social concerns ministry, to facilitate their refugee resettlement ministry. It is important in this instance that the necessary functions are fully incorporated and that the parish does not perceive the commitment to be a one-time project of a given ministry, but is rather integral to its ongoing mission.

**Step 1:** Determine whom from the existing ministry (i.e., social concerns) will serve as the **primary Refugee Sponsorship Coordinator** for the refugee resettlement ministry.

**Step 2:** The primary Refugee Sponsorship Coordinator should identify other groups and subcommittees within the parish that might take on one or more of the functions and tasks of the refugee resettlement ministry. For example:

- Knights of Columbus: Transportation Subcommittee
- Parish Women’s Group: Giving Tree Subcommittee
- Parish Youth Ministry: Welcome Committee
- Social Concerns: Housing and Fundraising
- St. Vincent de Paul Society: Food
- Hispanic Ministry: Education
Certain parishes may not have the resources to commit to assist with every need of a specific refugee family, but instead agree to help the diocesan/Catholic Charities resettlement office with particular activities such as donation drives or ESL classes. In these cases, the parish should still appoint a primary refugee sponsorship coordinator to liaise with the diocese/agency and be sure to structurally incorporate the activity into the parish’s annual plans (i.e., a toy drive every Christmas organized by the parish’s Women’s Ministry or an annual Thanksgiving basket project organized by the Parish Social Action Committee).

Role of the Parish Refugee Sponsorship Coordinator
In the diocese’s work with parishes, a primary parish refugee resettlement ministry coordinator is essential to ensuring a well-run refugee resettlement ministry. This coordinator will be the person who oversees the resettlement functions and tasks of the parish and will also be the main liaison for the diocesan resettlement program. Regardless of what ministry model the parish decides upon, the parish coordinator should work with leaders of the different subcommittee functions (welcome/hospitality, housing, transportation, employment, etc.) to ensure their volunteer teams are conducting the necessary and appropriate activities. To this end, it is important that effective communication mechanisms are in place and that the necessary documentation of the services to refugees they are assisting is completed.

Role of the Diocesan/Catholic Charities Case Manager
Once the parish development coordinator has recruited and helped to organize the parish, the diocesan/Catholic Charities case manager must work closely with the parish sponsorship coordinator. The case manager is responsible for development and monitoring of the resettlement plan in collaboration with the parish. At this point, it’s important that the parish understands its role as one of supplementing, not replacing the work of the diocesan/agency resettlement program. The case manager should also be in close communication with the parish coordinator regarding the effective utilization and coordination of parish volunteers. All of these key responsibilities should be documented in written form (through a memorandum of understanding or guidelines) and agreed to by both parties.

Maintaining an Appropriate Division of Labor
It is important to involve the assistance of more than a just handful of dedicated volunteers. If a small group of people in a parish takes on the bulk of responsibilities for all of the resettlement ministry functions, they may be able to manage the activities successfully in the short-term, but are soon likely to exhibit “burn out” or other signs of being stretched too thin.

Essential Features of Any Parish Model

- Close coordination of parish efforts between the agency resettlement case manager and the primary parish coordinator to achieve a shared understanding of each party’s roles and responsibilities as well as decision-making authority.
- Appropriate division of labor.
- Sustainability
**Tips**

- At the beginning of the recruitment phase, discuss the importance of working together as a group.
- Within the parish at large, encourage frequent outreach and opportunities for parish volunteers to sign up to help with various resettlement functions.
- Ensure that the parish refugee sponsorship coordinator stays in touch with the parish volunteers. People who volunteer to help should be contacted soon afterwards to maintain interest.

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### III. Strategize with the Parish Resettlement Sponsorship Coordinator and Prepare the Annual Plan

#### A. Assessing the Parish Strengths and Weaknesses

The diocesan/agency parish development coordinator and the case manager should strategize with the parish refugee sponsorship coordinator to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the parish in order to determine how they might best utilize the parish’s available resources to help the refugees. Likewise, it is important to help parish leaders work effectively to mitigate problems such as poor communication that will affect the delivery of services or break down the collaborative process the resettlement program has worked to achieve.

**Best Practices from the Field**

One parish had more than 100 volunteers sign up on various resettlement-related committees. Leaders who were responsible for communicating with their respective committee members were established for each committee. Some chairs did not communicate well with their committee members, with the result that many members lost their motivation, became busy with other projects, and were no longer available to help. Furthermore, some committee chairpersons themselves became disengaged because the parish refugee sponsorship coordinator did not communicate with them on a regular basis. A new parish coordinator was designated who began an email group where all committee chairpersons could communicate quickly and easily. These committee chairpersons began similar email groups within their own committees. The motivation of the parishioners and the assistance they provided increased significantly as a result.

**Tip:** In addition to basic email groups, there are a plethora of free services available to promote group communication. Available privacy settings allow the group administrator to make the groups “invite-only.” Some of the most widely-used include: Yahoo Groups, Shutterfly Share Sites, and Facebook Groups.
B. Parish Refugee Resettlement Annual Plan

- Review the essential functions of parish refugee resettlement ministry in the previous section and determine what activities the parish will be involved in over the course of the year.
- With the parish refugee sponsorship coordinator, look at the parish calendar to identify other events in the parish that might conflict with the needs of the refugee resettlement ministry. This long-range planning helps you and the resettlement program to understand when and how a particular parish will be available and what activities they will engage in when they are not actively resettling a refugee family.
- The diocesan/agency staff can use the information from the annual parish plans to inform their own strategic approach to the parish refugee resettlement ministry.
- The annual plan should be considered as a management tool for the parish and used as the basis for completing a written agreement with the diocesan/agency resettlement program (see example below).

Twice a Year
Assistance with resettlement of two refugee cases during the year, preferably at least four months apart.

March and October
Furniture and household goods donation drives.

August and September
Preparation for five Thanksgiving food baskets for refugee families.

December
Toy drives for refugee children.

Ongoing
Search for housing and employment opportunities.

C. Parish Refugee Resettlement Ministry Agreement

Once a parish commits to the parish refugee resettlement ministry, it is good policy for the diocesan/Catholic Charities resettlement office to enter into a formal memorandum of understanding or other agreement with the parish to ensure a proper understanding of roles and responsibilities. In this way, all involved in the ministry have a shared understanding of what it will entail. This kind of agreement is particularly useful when a parish is not providing the full range of possible resettlement services to a specific refugee family. In those situations, the agreement would outline the various activities in which the parish would be involved, such as donation drives, ESL classes, or other such discreet services to newly arriving refugees at large.
D. Resettlement Assistance Agreement (MRS/RF 10): Outlining Roles and Responsibilities of the Parish for Individual Refugee Cases

When a parish agrees to assist a specific refugee individual or family, the parish coordinator and the case manager should complete a case-specific written agreement, referred to in the USCCB/MRS Reception and Placement Program Operations Manual (POM) as the “resettlement assistance agreement” (MRS/RF-10, Attachment) http://c.ymcdn.com/sites/usccb.sitc-ym.com/resource/collection/16B49E4C-D9EE-48BD-99F1-FDA90E5AF361/MRS-RF10_Resettlement_Assistance_Agreement_Rev_09-2010.pdf. This agreement details the roles and responsibilities the parish will undertake, as well as the specific resettlement program functions. The case-specific written agreement should prevent misunderstandings regarding who is responsible for what in the resettlement plan. Completing a written agreement for each case the parish sponsors allows the resettlement program to adapt to the specific needs of each refugee case. It also helps the resettlement agency document the full range of services provided as required by the federal funding agencies.

This will be fully covered in the next chapter on “Developing and Managing the Resettlement Program.”

Engaging Parish Mentors

Catholic Charities of Louisville shared a New POWR Mentorship Presentation with the POWR network, which is geared towards Catholic parishes, but can certainly be adapted for other audiences. The presentation includes an overview of the resettlement process, with visually appealing charts, info graphics and pictures http://tinyurl.com/ybhhj3fd
Training Parish Volunteers

Audience

This section of the manual is intended to help the parish development coordinator, in cooperation with the resettlement case manager (diocesan level staff), to train the parish refugee sponsorship coordinator/team (parish level volunteers). Following a “train-the-trainer model” once the primary parish coordinator and core group of volunteers have been trained, they could also use the resources in this section to train additional volunteers and grow the program.

Actions

A. Develop Training Format
B. Orient Parish Volunteers to the United States Refugee Resettlement Program
C. Focus on Self-Sufficiency as the Key to Successful Resettlement
D. Outline Resettlement Program and the Parish’s Roles and Responsibilities

Volunteer Training

The Parishes Organized to Welcome Refugees (POWR) program in Boston shared a brand-new POWR Training Manual and the corresponding POWR Training Manual Presentation. These materials are mean to explain the pre- and post-arrival process to volunteers, donors and parish partners, as well as provide some concrete ideas how POWR teams can help. The document includes population-specific food supply lists, a home safety check list, Frequently Asked Questions for volunteers and much more.

The Refugee Resettlement Ministry Curriculum

The Refugee Resettlement Ministry Curriculum is a K-12 Catholic School curriculum developed at Catholic Charities of Jacksonville, which is designed to raise awareness for the refugee cause. It can easily be replicated elsewhere. http://tinyurl.com/yaagqhb5
A. Develop Training Format

Training is an essential part of preparing parishes to engage in the refugee resettlement ministry as well as sustaining their involvement.

At this point in the process, the parish development coordinator should have already conducted a general information session for the congregation which led to the initial recruitment of volunteers for refugee resettlement ministry. Now that a core group of volunteers has been recruited and the parish model and leadership structure have been determined, the parish development coordinator, in cooperation with the case manager, should work to train the parish refugee sponsorship coordinator and core parish volunteers. In turn, they will gain the capacity and knowledge to recruit and train additional volunteers as necessary. The local POWR program at Catholic Charities Jacksonville, FL, produced an excellent volunteer education video (at http://youtu.be/ntXYiy6IRMc).

| Information Sharing by the Trainer: | Consider the method(s) you will use to provide the core information to the participants. Be creative—touch their hearts as well as their minds, and use a variety of ways to communicate your message (PowerPoint presentation, video, music, posters, pictures of refugees and refugee workers, stories, and good humor). |
| Participant Sharing and Feedback: | Engage the participants throughout your presentation; ask them questions relating to their experience, and encourage them to ask questions or share comments. |
| Other Presenters: | Consider who else might serve as a presenter at the training session—other diocesan resettlement staff; a member from another parish involved in this ministry; a former refugee who shares his/her story. A number of voices speaking about this vital ministry will energize the presentation. |
| Reflection Time: | Much new information will be shared with the participants and it can be overwhelming. Build in time to reflect on the importance of the message and capture the hearts and minds of the participants. |
| Free Time: | Build in time for people to get up and stretch. |
Different parishes will have different scheduling preferences, thus flexibility is key. Training is expected to last about six hours in total. This could be accomplished on one Saturday, two consecutive three-hour weekend sessions, or at two-hour weekday sessions for about three weeks.

B. Orient Parish Volunteers to the United States Refugee Resettlement Program

Provide an Overview of Refugee Resettlement

• Provide a broad perspective on the refugee situation worldwide in addition to sharing information about your local refugee resettlement program and refugee communities.

| Resources          | www.refugees.org | Annual assessment of
                   | www.unhcr.org     | the conditions affecting
                   |                    | refugees, asylum
                   |                    | seekers, and
                   |                    | internally
                   |                    | displaced
                   |                    | persons.

• Share background information about your resettlement program:
  o History
  o Mission
  o Services Provided
  o Staff
  o Facts and Figures - -
    ▪ Countries of origin
    ▪ Numbers of refugees resettled
    ▪ Other facts and statistics

• Highlight refugee stories and your local community’s support of the program
Explain “Who is a Refugee?”

Although parishioners will only be assisting you with refugees (and not solely be responsible for their resettlement), they should know the different types of legal status of people on the move.

- A refuge* is a person who “owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular group, or political opinion is outside the country of his/her nationality and is unable to or, owing to such fear, unwilling to avail himself/herself of the protection of the country” (1951 UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees). A key factor is that they are forced to flee because of circumstances surrounding them.

- Cuban or Haitian entrants and asylees are like refugees, the difference being the application for and granting of refugee status takes space after they are already present in the United States.

- An immigrant is a foreign-born individual who voluntarily leaves his/her country of origin and has been admitted to reside permanently in the United States as a lawful permanent resident.

- A migrant simply refers to any person on the move—either voluntarily or involuntarily—in his or her own country, internationally, or both.

In countries of first asylum (i.e., the country refugees first enter after fleeing their homeland), refugees need emergency help. The ordeal of flight leaves them hungry and often ill. Most of today’s refugees flee from one developing country to another, where shelter and necessary supplies are almost always inadequate for the refugees and the local population itself. Many countries have made tremendous efforts and sacrifices to accommodate those seeking asylum. Durable solutions for refugee crises, however, extend beyond countries of first asylum to the international community. Yet, less than 1% of all refugees worldwide are resettled in a third country, with most consigned to indefinite stays outside their country of origin.

In light of these incredible losses, refugees being resettled into the United States and throughout the world continually show extraordinary courage and hope as they struggle with grief, strive to adjust to stresses of resettlement, and meet the challenges of learning to live in a new culture.

The United States Refugee Resettlement Process

The term “refugee processing” refers to the way in which refugees are identified internationally and then received into the United States. There are three stages of overseas processing followed by the reception and placement of the refugees in the United States. The following flowchart -- https://tinyurl.com/zlt3ml -- provides an overview of the pre-arrival refugee resettlement process, including overseas processing, allocations, verification, and refugee travel.
**United States Reception and Placement**

An International Organization for Migration (IOM) representative meets the refugee at his /her port of entry into the United States and, when necessary, ensures that s/he makes onward travel connections. Cuban and Haitian entrants are paroled into the United States and processed for placement and resettlement by USCCB/MRS staff in Miami. The sponsoring resettlement program (for USCCB/MRS, this is the local diocesan resettlement program) arranges for the refugee to be met at the final U.S. destination and transported to initial living quarters. The sponsoring program ensures the refugee has housing, food, and clothing for a minimum of thirty days. The sponsoring resettlement program also links the refugee with appropriate local social services such as cash and medical assistance programs, conducts job development programs, and provides orientation, to name a just a few of the activities. Refugee status indicated on the refugee’s admissions document (Form I-94) provides authorization for employment upon arrival to the United States. In the case of Cuban/Haitian entrants, a separate Employment Authorization Document (EAD) is often issued. Still, the status of entry conveys authorization to work.

USCCB/MRS promotes a resettlement model in which case management is the central coordinating element for the many services and activities designed to move them to self-sufficiency as soon as possible by removing barriers to employability. This preferred model of resettlement also emphasizes the development of additional community resources, particularly volunteers and parishes that supplement the resettlement program’s resources in working with newly arriving refugees.

The USCCB/MRS Parishes Organized to Welcome Refugee (POWR) program has developed a Parish Volunteer Training Kit, which is also available on My Membership, at [http://tinyurl.com/jmbzp97](http://tinyurl.com/jmbzp97)

**C. Focus Self-on Self Sufficiency as the Key to Successful Refugee Resettlement**

USCCB/MRS’ goal in providing refugee resettlement services is to create new life opportunities in which refugees fully participate in society and their new community. USCCB/MRS places emphasis on providing transitional services to refugees while protecting their personal dignity at a time of vulnerability.

**The Experience of Refugees Resettling in the Local Community**

Assisting in the resettlement of refugees means being a part of a caring and supportive community to help them begin their new lives. As refugees are resettled in the local community, it is critical that all who will walk with them during their first days and months treat them with dignity.
and respect. Showing an interest in learning about these newcomers’ culture, history, customs, language, religious institutions, and so forth, will foster cultural awareness and sensitivity.

**Respecting the Faith Tradition of All People**

Although it is the Catholic Church—through the diocese and local parish—that is reaching out in service to refugees, the faith traditions of all who make their new home in the community must be respected. By virtue of the Gospel, the Church extends a welcome for all to join in the life of the local parish. It is not appropriate and is prohibited by the federal funding agencies for the parish volunteers to attempt to proselytize any refugee who is of another faith tradition. It is, however, appropriate to inquire of the refugee whether he or she would like to participate in a local community of his or her faith tradition, including the local parish as applicable for professing Catholics among the refugees being resettled. Resource referrals would be very helpful for the refugee.

**What is Expected of Refugees as New Arrivals?**

**Employment:** Beyond meeting their basic needs, the most important aspect of helping a refugee resettle is finding employment. Most refugees try to get a job as quickly as possible. Many refugee families—like many American families—find that both husband and wife must work to achieve self-sufficiency. Lack of English language skills will most often not prevent refugees from getting a job, but it may limit the kind of job they can obtain when they first arrive. Changing and upgrading jobs is common as their English and job skills improve. Many new arrivals study part-time to improve their English language and job skills while they work.

**Adaptability and Cooperation:** Successful resettlement depends on a refugee’s ability and willingness to adapt to the new environment. Cooperation with the resettlement program is key to a successful transition. Refugees should be encouraged to be realistic and optimistic. More than two million refugees have resettled in the United States in the past two decades. The vast majority, having made the transition to their new life, have become valued members of American society.

It is important to remember that many refugees have lost not only family members and their homeland but also their sense of competency and self-respect. The parish refugee resettlement ministry can help refugees regain their confidence most quickly if volunteers remain sensitive to the refugee’s feelings of frustration and inadequacy. Parish volunteers can help by tactfully providing information about U.S. culture without judgmental comparisons between the refugee’s native culture and U.S. culture. Refugees will most likely be experiencing grief and culture shock when they arrive; some depression is unavoidable. As friends, volunteers can help by just being there, letting the refugees know that they are glad they are here and accepting them the way they are.

**What Can Refugees Expect if They are Resettled in the United States?**

The United States is a land of great diversity. Refugees may be resettled into small towns or big cities. If they have close relatives already in the United States, they will probably be resettled near
family members. If they do not, USCCB/MRS will determine the best place for them based on the
diocesan resettlement capacity and the availability of jobs and services. Refugees are placed with the
understanding that they will go to the assigned site and remain there during their initial resettlement
unless circumstances dictate otherwise.

The refugee resettlement program, often called the “sponsor,” is the most important source of
information and assistance during the first months of adjustment to life in the United States. A case
manager from your resettlement program will meet the refugees at the airport, arrange for housing,
and prepare a resettlement plan that outlines the steps to move the refugee toward self-sufficiency
and effective functioning in the United States.

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**Refugee Camp Simulation**

Catholic Charities of Louisville offers a Refugee Camp Simulation Guide, *Seeking Refuge: Forced to Flee*. Students participating in the immersion project walk through a simulated camp, station to station to get an idea of what life in a refugee camp is like. The project is aimed to engaging students in refugee work, raising awareness for the refugee cause and recruiting future donors and volunteers.

[https://cclou.org/flee/](https://cclou.org/flee/)
D. Outline Refugee Resettlement Program and Parish Roles and Responsibilities

All involved need to be clear about the various roles and functions of both the refugee resettlement program and parish in resettling refugees.

**Ensures Services are Provided**
Makes sure that caring and responsive services are provided to the refugee while maintaining the appropriate standard of services in accordance with the federal guidelines for the Reception and Placement (R&P) program.

**Ensures Compliance with the R&P Program Operational Guide**
Ensures adherence to the standards of service outlined in the R&P Program Operational Guide.

**Orients Parish**
The Parish Volunteer Coordinator, in cooperation with the Case Manager, should **facilitates the orientation of the parishes to the Operational Guide** providing pertinent information about the specific resettlement program:
- Operational structure
- Staffing
- Reporting relationships
- Services
- Resources
- Policies
- Challenges

The orientation should describe the functions and services that apply most directly to the welcoming and resettlement of refugees, who is responsible for each of these functions in the resettlement program, and how they are implemented.

**Trains Volunteers**
The orientation for the leaders of the parish program should inform them of the resettlement program’s particular needs. What particular tasks need to be done and how can they help?
- Are ESL teachers needed?
- Are donations needed to furnish homes?
- Does the program need help with transportation?

Using the R&P Program Operational Guide, suggest how people can share their time, talent and treasure in a myriad of ways.

**Develops a Case-Specific Resettlement Plan**
- The Volunteer Coordinator and the Case Manager need to develop a case-specific plan for each newly arriving refugee that specifies the activities to be completed by the parish and those to be completed by the resettlement program.
- Revisit the previous section of this manual for tips on organizing parishioners around particular resettlement tasks.
Provides Resources

- Informs the parish about resources to assist them in this ministry.
- **Organizes** the activities of the parish refugee resettlement ministry.
- **Provides resources and assistance to the refugees** in accordance with the resettlement plan and in collaboration with the Case Manager.
- **Communicates** about work in progress and the results with the Case Manager.

Time Commitment

- The resettlement program is required to provide support and services for a minimum of **three months**. The parish should expect to be involved with the refugee family for at least six months, although parishes and individual volunteers may wish to maintain an ongoing friendship with their new neighbors.
- As we learned in the previous chapter, resettlement activities and models will vary from parish to parish; so too will the amount of time required to accomplish any particular task.
- Communicate the estimated time commitment to the primary parish contact and parish volunteers from the outset based on the kinds of activities the parish is taking on – are they only organizing one activity, like ESL, or are they engaging in all aspects of resettlement, like transportation, furnishings, job search assistance, etc.?

Volunteer Policies Concerning Liability

- Many relevant resources on managing volunteers, developing volunteer-led refugee programs are available on the USCCB/MRS My Membership Website at [http://tinyurl.com/jmbzp97](http://tinyurl.com/jmbzp97)
- Each diocese has its own set of policies and procedures for screening and approving potential volunteers. Also, local laws and regulations governing the resettlement program’s liability in the use of volunteers should be reviewed and appropriate policies and procedures should be created if they do not already exist.
- When a parish defines or revises its volunteer policies, it may wish to include the following:
  - Accepted standards of behavior and working conditions (e.g., confidentiality, gift giving/receiving, harassment policies, and safety standards).
  - Orientation, training, monitoring, support and recognition.
  - Reporting and record-keeping requirements.
  - Reimbursement and compensation.
  - Liability and insurance coverage.
- Local chapters of the United Way, state agencies on volunteerism, and the National Association of Volunteer Administration ([www.avaintl.org](http://www.avaintl.org)) are good sources of volunteer information.
Volunteer Communication Issues

Intercultural Communication
- Be mindful of how to listen and speak to one another.
- Be patient, respectful, and understanding of language differences.

Open and Honest Expression
- Take the initiative on matters of communication.
- All involved in the parish refugee resettlement ministry should maintain and encourage a healthy and effective level of communication with each other—you, others in the resettlement program, volunteers, the parish staff and pastor, the parish community, and others in the community whom the parish refugee resettlement ministry engages.
- Encourage parish volunteers to keep the Parish Refugee Sponsorship Coordinator informed of significant developments, accomplishments, problems, and concerns.
- In turn, the primary parish contact should do the same with the Case Manager.

Conflict Resolution
- Disagreements and misunderstandings can arise during the course of a parish assisting in refugee resettlement.
- When conflicts occur between a volunteer and a refugee or among volunteers, they should seek resolution with the primary parish contact for resettlement ministry. The Parish Refugee Sponsorship Coordinator should in turn communicate with the Case Manager. In addition, the Parish Development Coordinator may also play a role in conflict resolution.

Confidentiality Policy

USCCB/MRS is committed to a confidential relationship between refugees and resettlement case managers. A guiding principle for volunteers working with refugees should be that all information concerning any aspect of the individual’s resettlement should remain confidential. If a volunteer is in doubt about sharing information of any kind with a refugee or has received information of a confidential nature about a refugee, the volunteer should immediately consult with the primary parish contact for the refugee resettlement ministry to resolve the matter. The USCCB/MRS Program Operations Manual (POM), which one? Is the R&P POM available? Where? The Match Grant POM has just been posted. presents principles of confidentiality in refugee resettlement.
Developing and Managing the Resettlement Plan

Refugee case management is a demanding job, and parish volunteer can help you relieve some of your burden as a case manager. The following section is intended to assist you in managing and incorporating services provided by a parish.

Coordinating case management with the activities of the parish volunteers can often be one of the most difficult aspects of working with parishes. Overly zealous, but well-intentioned volunteers can be a challenge to manage without proper guidelines for providing services. In order to ensure that each refugee is properly managed through the many activities performed by resettlement program staff, parish volunteers, and other community professionals involved in the resettlement process, a well-structured case management system is essential. This system should be designed so that the roles of all involved are clearly defined. Case management systems composed of well-planned but flexible procedures will effectively assist the resettlement program in providing core services and the parish in providing complementary services.
A. Developing a Case-Specific Written Agreement with the Parish

Once parish volunteers have been recruited and trained, allow some time to discuss the scope of the services to be provided by the parish volunteers. This crucial element ensures that each refugee receives the fullest possible services. The outcome of such a discussion between your resettlement program and the parish should be a specific written agreement for each case the parish agrees to assist. The agreement will detail the parish’s roles and responsibilities with the case as well as the specific resettlement functions.

Your Parish Development Coordinator should schedule a meeting between:

- you (the Case Manager)
- the primary parish contact
- the leaders of the various parish refugee resettlement ministry functions, and
- any other key members of the parish

in order to develop a case-specific written agreement. This meeting should be the point at which the Parish Development Coordinator transfers to you the responsibility for working with the parish. However, your Parish Development Coordinator should continue to facilitate a smooth relationship between the parish leadership and your resettlement program. For example, if issues arise or relationships break down in the parish refugee resettlement ministry, the Parish Development Coordinator should intervene.

At this meeting with key members, you can review in detail the needs of the refugee(s) and identify areas where parish support is needed. The USCCB/MRS Core Services Checklist (in the appendix at the end of this chapter), should be used as a guide in this discussion. The R&P Program Operational Guidance and USCCB/MRS Refugee Resettlement Case Management Manual (see appendix) should also be introduced in this review. As discussed in the third chapter, the parish will ideally be organized around different resettlement functions. How these functions are carried out should be discussed at this time.

To Do’s at the Meeting

- Assess the volunteers’ willingness and ability to participate
- Help the parish volunteers identify the resources they have available or can generate on behalf of the refugee

By analyzing how the resources can respond to the refugee’s needs, the parish can determine its scope of activities and level of support, from which you can draft a case-specific written agreement. This agreement should state explicitly the agreed-upon roles and responsibilities of both the parish and you, the Case Manager, while allowing for some flexibility. A copy of the signed agreement should be maintained in the refugee’s case file. See the Resettlement Assistance Agreement and the Refugee Resettlement Parish Volunteer Assistance Agreement in the resource at the end of this chapter.
B. Review Case Management Functions: Planning Meeting with the Parish Development Coordinator, Case Manager, and Primary Parish Contact

All involved parties should understand that you, the Case Manager, are ultimately responsible for ensuring that the refugee receives all services described in the resettlement plan. Parish volunteers should clearly understand that their role is secondary and complementary to yours. All major decisions regarding the well-being of the refugee should be made by you.

While you do retain overall responsibility for ensuring the provision of services to the refugee, the parish volunteers can be actively engaged in taking ownership of how to implement these services. Based on the case-specific written agreement, work with the parish to develop a pre-arrival resettlement plan providing clear direction as to how and when each agreed-upon action will be completed.

The Role of the Case Manager

- Coordinate services
- Arrange for the allocation of program resources
- Be the principal point of contact for the refugee within the resettlement program
- Be in close contact with the primary parish contact during the resettlement process while
  - ensuring that all services provided to the refugee are in accord with the case-specific written agreement and meet the goals and timeline of the resettlement plan.
  - monitoring the refugee's movement towards self-sufficiency.

The Role of the Primary Parish Contact

- Coordinates parish refugee resettlement ministry activities with you, the Case Manager.
- Responsible for the flow of information between the parish, the refugee, you, and at times the Parish Development Coordinator.
- Ensures that parish volunteers fulfill their assigned tasks.
Communication Plan
The first step in establishing a system of communication between you and the primary parish contact is to create a communication plan. Establishing dates, times, and methods of communication is a good idea. If necessary this protocol can be included in the written agreement with the parish. Communication between you and the primary parish contact should include the following:

- Services provided to the refugee
- Number of hours of volunteer time spent working with the refugee
- Mileage driven by volunteers in serving the refugee
- Concerns of the refugee and/or parish volunteers

C. Develop Resettlement Plan

You are responsible for completing—for every refugee (pre- and post-arrival)—a resettlement plan that outlines the provision of services and notes the responsible parties. As described under section B. above, a resettlement plan should be developed based upon the case-specific resettlement agreement (MRS/RF-10 form). This resettlement plan should detail the timeframes, persons responsible, and the specific activities relating to each function that the parish agreed to carry out in the case-specific written agreement. Other service provisions completed by other parties should also be noted in the resettlement plan, as well as the refugee’s personal goals and desires.

D. Ensure Volunteer Case File Documentation/Ongoing Monitoring.

Refugee case management calls for continually monitoring the refugee’s progress in working with professional services designed to meet his or her individual needs. The refugee is in contact with healthcare providers, job developers, ESL providers, school teachers, employers, childcare providers, public assistance workers, and parish volunteers, among others. Effective case management enables each provider in the continuum of care to serve the refugee without disruption of services. Therefore, coordinating and documenting the efforts of each service provider is an important key to effective case management.

You and the Parish Development Coordinator should emphasize to the parish that you, the Case Manager, as the principal coordinator of services, are responsible for maintaining comprehensive case files. As a refugee begins receiving service from the many individuals involved in the complex task of resettlement, the services provided and the refugee’s progress should be properly documented in the refugee’s case file. Ideally, the training program provided to parish volunteers will emphasize the importance of documenting all services provided. Keeping records of the work provided by volunteers is also an effective way to raise cash and in-kind support for the resettlement program. It is a good idea to include in both the parish’s general written agreement and the refugee case-specific written agreement that volunteers are responsible for submitting forms that document the services provided to the refugee.
E. Intervene to Ensure Successful Resettlement

You or other appropriate resettlement program staff may need to intervene in situations where parish volunteers are not completing the agreed-upon activities, or where they are not completing the activities according to the case-specific written agreement. While the case management system should be flexible, its primary purpose is to make sure that the services provided are responsive to the needs of the refugee and are designed to move them to early self-sufficiency. There have been cases where parish volunteers believe they are acting in the best interest of the refugee, but where their actions have actually undermined the goals laid out the resettlement plan.

Listed in the next section are some common pitfalls that can occur when parishes are involved in providing service to refugees, as well as some corresponding strategic interventions to assist you.

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**Tips for Successful Volunteer Documentation**

- Have well-crafted, accessible forms on which the refugee services provided by the parish can be documented.
- Give parish volunteers a log for them to record the services they provide to the refugee, the amount of time they spend, and any mileage they may accrue while providing these services.
- Logs should be completed by each parish volunteer according to the timeframe established in the written agreement.
- The logs should be collected by the parish contact and given to you, the Case Manager.
- The Case Manager should enter the information into the refugee’s case file.
- See Parish Volunteer Form located in the appendix.
F. Managing Potential Pitfalls

Pitfall 1: The parish assumes too much authority during the resettlement process.
- State clearly and repeatedly that the resettlement program is the official sponsor of the refugee case and the parish supports this sponsorship role in a secondary, though important way.
- Inform parishes early on about the respective roles for both the parish and the resettlement program.

Pitfall 2: The refugee becomes too dependent on the parish.
- As the Case Manager, you should let refugees know during their initial orientation that the parish will be helping them and they must respect the time and other limitations of the volunteers.
- Parish volunteers should be made aware of this potential pitfall and should be advised to communicate with the primary parish contact if they receive inappropriate requests for assistance or involvement such as:
  - involving the parishes in family conflicts.
  - calling parish volunteers at all hours of the day and night.
  - making last minute requests for things that could have been planned earlier.

Pitfall 3: Parish volunteers are too involved in the daily lives of the refugees.
- Sometimes in their zeal to help the refugees, parish volunteers impose their views on refugees, assuming a “we know best” attitude that does not respect the dignity and culture of the refugee.
- Proper training, provided from the beginning, can help volunteers understand that refugees have a right to privacy and self-determination.

Pitfall 4: Parish volunteers do not fulfill their responsibilities.
- Parish volunteers are no different from any other volunteers in that they do not always follow through on their tasks in a manner that is desired.
- In some cases having the wrong person be the primary parish contact can sabotage the entire parish effort.
- In situations where a parish volunteer is obviously not working effectively, you will likely be aware of this and should inform the primary parish contact and your Parish Development Coordinator, who may need to review the volunteer’s role.
- At times, the Parish Development Coordinator, you, and the primary parish contact, and relevant volunteers may need to convene to discuss these issues.
- If the volunteer is still not fulfilling her or his responsibilities, yet play a central role in the resettlement ministry, then the parish leadership may need to be consulted.
- Parishes, however, may not expect this and may be surprised and frustrated when things don’t work out as they had planned.

Pitfall 5: Parish volunteers become frustrated with the refugees.
- In spite of the best laid plans, refugees will often follow their own inclinations, even if they don’t seem in agreement with the resettlement plan or the parish’s wishes. Out-migration, family break-ups, and unreasonable expectations are not uncommon occurrences in working with refugee and should necessarily be viewed as a sign of failure.
- Many volunteers have been excited by finding refugees their first job only to discover shortly
afterwards that the refugee has quit or moved out the area.

- The resettlement program must ensure the parishes are prepared from the start of their involvement to encounter such situations.

**Pitfall 6: Parishes overextend themselves with regard to duration of service to refugees.**

- Sometimes the parish volunteer places too little emphasis on “self-sufficiency” and finds himself or herself committed to prolonged involvement that has some instances extended for a year or more without fostering independence and self-sufficiency.
- Realistic timeframes agreed upon in the beginning help minimize this occurrence.

**G. Evaluate Cases**

Once a parish’s involvement with a refugee case is over, there is a natural temptation to move on and prepare for the next case. However, before you and the parish do so, it is important to evaluate the work of the parish and to bring to closure the working relationship between the parish and the refugee.

A central step in evaluating the parish’s contribution to the resettlement process is to determine the refugee’s self-sufficiency at the end of the service period. While this is the primary and desired goal, success is not exclusively linked to self-sufficiency. It is important to acknowledge and reinforce through public affirmation those interventions and activities that worked well.

**H. Establish Closure Process**

Formal recognition of the services provided through the parish allows both the refugees and the parish to acknowledge accomplishments and officially terminate the “caregiver” component of the relationship. For some parishes and refugees, there may be a firm parting of ways. For others, their relationship will grow into one that involves ongoing interaction and hopefully lasting friendships.

Often in this process, refugees are looking for an opportunity to thank the parish—perhaps by preparing a small meal as a way of expressing gratitude—and vice versa. Parish volunteers may want to share with refugees the impact that this experience has had on their lives or how the individual helped shape their outlook on the world. This is, after all, the essence of the parish refugee resettlement ministry.
Appendix

Additional resources can be found on the USCCB/MRS My Membership website, at:
http://community.usccb.org (Login- your email; Password- migration1234)

USCCB/MRS R&P Core Services Checklist
You can find this resource on the USCCB/MRS My Membership Website (#R&P-Training)
http://tinyurl.com/yatp3y5m

R&P Supply Documentation Checklist
http://tinyurl.com/ydxw2wd3

Refugee Resettlement – Parish Volunteer Assistance Agreement
http://tinyurl.com/yxjyrzns

The R&P Program Operational Guidance
http://tinyurl.com/y93mv55p

USCCB/MRS Refugee Resettlement Case Management Manual
http://tinyurl.com/yasd34kh

Parishes Organized to Welcome Refugees Report
http://tinyurl.com/ydgb2xz3

Parish Volunteer Record Form and Time Tracking
http://tinyurl.com/ya4ysje

Sample Parish Resettlement Ministry Program Flyer
http://tinyurl.com/yaeuruoo
Sustaining Parish Support

To be successful in the long term, the parish refugee resettlement ministry must be built upon the foundation of a network of parishes actively engaged with the diocesan refugee resettlement program on an ongoing basis. It is vitally important for parishes to be affirmed and recognized for their indispensable role in helping refugees begin new and productive lives in their host communities. Following is a “roadmap” that provides several ways to accomplish this goal.

**A. Help Parishes Evaluate Results**
- Develop a mechanism to elicit feedback from parish volunteers and leadership.
- Review the evaluations and determine what changes are necessary in order to improve the functioning of the ministry.

**B. Recognize and Celebrate the Service of Parishes/Volunteers**
- Hold an annual program-wide volunteer luncheon.
- Honor volunteers with a luncheon of ethnic foods native to the refugees.
- Visit the pastor to thank him for his support.
- Acknowledge volunteers’ contributions in the parish bulletin or at Mass.
- Convene a social event for all the parishes that work with refugees. Present a plaque to each parish.

**C. Cultivate Ongoing Parish Support**
- There are projects to keep the parish involved until a refugee family arrives including:
  - locating affordable and appropriate housing.
  - contacting storage companies and other resources to solicit donated space.
  - conducting fundraising activities to support parish refugee resettlement ministry.
  - researching potential employment opportunities.
  - engaging in advocacy efforts.
  - developing opportunities to increase awareness of refugees and Catholic social teaming on welcoming the stranger.
- Provide materials about the refugee resettlement program to parish leadership on an ongoing basis.
- Place brief updates about the refugee resettlement program and the refugee populations in need in the parish bulletin.
- Plan an event for parish leadership and key parishioners, inviting them to such activities as:
  - resettlement agency Christmas parties.
  - National Migration Week activities.
  - orientation classes.
  - cultural celebrations.
  - picnics.
  - award lunches.

**D. Review Overall Parish Refugee Resettlement Ministry Strategic Action Plan**
- Solicit feedback from the diocesan offices that have collaborated to develop the ministry.
- Develop an evaluation mechanism to solicit feedback periodically, including program forums.
such as directors’ or staff meetings.

c. Inform diocesan contacts of any changes made due to their feedback.

### E. Maintain Diocesan Ties

a. Include regular information about the ministry in the diocesan, agency, or resettlement program newsletter.

b. Encourage diocesan involvement in such events as National Migration Week celebrations, multicultural activities, or other refugee resettlement functions.

c. Assist the resettlement director in consistently informing program and diocesan peers about the progress of the ministry during staff meetings and other appropriate forums.

d. Utilize the materials that were already developed to promote the ministry to the parish by simply adapting them for the diocese (e.g., newspaper articles, bulletin updates, profiles of refugee families).

### F. Solicit Bishop’s Ongoing Support

a. Keep the bishop informed of some of the highlights of your work with the parishes.

   i. Send him clippings of newspaper articles, bulletin announcements, and other items that demonstrate the success of the parish ministry not only in terms of helping the refugees but also of giving opportunities to the parishioners to grow in their faith and learn about other cultures.

b. Invite him to resettlement program or parish gatherings with the refugees.

   i. Bishops can be asked to celebrate special Masses during National Migration Week.

   ii. Bishops can be asked to write letters to parishes to recognize their work.