



## Welcome Corps Refugee Private Sponsorship FAQs

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### What is the Welcome Corps program?

#### What is a private sponsorship program?

Private sponsorship is a new program called Welcome Corps that helps private citizens navigate being a sponsor for refugees. Groups of at least five individuals can apply to sponsor refugees and help them acclimate to life in the U.S.

#### What is the Welcome Corps?

Welcome Corps was created by the U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM). The program launched in January 2023 in coordination with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

The Welcome Corps is a new service opportunity for Americans to welcome refugees seeking freedom and safety and, in turn, make a difference in their own communities. Together, sponsor groups welcome refugees by securing and preparing initial housing, greeting refugee newcomers at the airport, enrolling children in school, and helping adults to find employment. For more information, visit Welcome Corps website: [welcomecorps.org/](https://welcomecorps.org/).

Link to video: [Secretary Blinken Announces Launch of the Welcome Corps](#).

#### How is resettlement through Welcome Corps different from resettlement through an agency or co-sponsorship?

Co-Sponsorship is when a volunteer is partnered with a local resettlement agency. Welcome Corps does not depend on the resettlement agency. A resettlement agency may not be

available in every state. The Welcome Corps program aims to expand the U.S. capacity to resettle more refugees by supporting and equipping private citizens to sponsor refugees.

### **How are refugees referred to the Welcome Corps program?**

Individuals referred to Welcome Corps are refugees who have already been approved for resettlement by the U.S. government, and who have completed security vetting and health screening. This process is currently operated by Resettlement Support Center (RSC) Africa and will be expanded in the future. Once a refugee opts into the Welcome Corp program, they will complete a survey about their needs. Welcome Corps will examine the survey and match with a Private Sponsor Group.

### **Are refugees coming through Welcome Corp eligible for Refugee Reception and Placement services from resettlement agencies?**

No. Refugees arriving under Welcome Corps are not eligible for reception and placement services. The private sponsor groups are responsible for providing the core services for the refugees they sponsor. The intent of Welcome Corps is to resettle more refugees without additional strain on the resettlement agencies.

## **Who is eligible for the Welcome Corps program?**

### **I am a refugee overseas interested in being resettled to the United States. Can the Welcome Corps help me get resettled?**

To be resettled in the United States, all refugees must be approved for resettlement by the U.S. government through the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP). The Welcome Corps is not a new resettlement or immigration pathway outside of the USRAP — it is a domestic assistance program that allows private sponsors to support refugees who arrive in the United States, after being approved for resettlement through the USRAP.

If you are a refugee approved for resettlement to the United States, you will be informed by staff at the Resettlement Support Center nearest you if you are matched to a group of American individuals, referred to as a private sponsor group (PSG). These individuals have volunteered to participate in the Welcome Corps to help you adjust to life in the United States once you arrive here. For more information on the eligibility and admissibility criteria for the USRAP, please visit [About Refugee Admissions — United States Department of State](#).

### **What immigration status will individuals from Welcome Corp have?**

Individuals coming through the Welcome Corps have refugee status. They are entitled to public benefits and authorized to work. After one year, they can adjust their status for permanent residence and can apply for citizenship after five years.

**Will privately sponsored refugees be able to come to the U.S. faster than other refugees?**

No. Privately sponsored refugees will not be expedited. The Welcome Corps is a program that oversees the resettlement of refugees through private sponsorship groups. The refugees must be approved and referred by the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP).

**What is a Private Sponsor Group?**

**What is a Private Sponsorship Group (PSG)?**

Private Sponsorship Groups are responsible for providing core resettlement and support for the first 90 days of the refugees arrival to the United States. PSGs will

- Form a group of five or more U.S. Citizens or permanent residents in the same community
- Complete training and other requirements
- Raise funds to support the resettlement process

**Does Welcome Corps provide funding for Private Sponsor Groups or Organizations?**

Funding is not currently available. Please reach out to Welcome Corp for the most current information: [welcomecorps.org/](http://welcomecorps.org/).

**What are the core responsibilities of the Private Sponsor Group?**

- 90-day minimum commitment
- Financial commitment - \$2,375 per refugee sponsored (this amount will vary from year to year).
- Provide core services including
  - Secure housing
  - Basic necessities, including furnishings and household items
  - Airport greeting
  - Domestic medical health screening
  - Help to apply for a social security card
  - Help to apply for public benefits
  - Employment assistance
  - English classes
  - School enrollment for children
  - Interpretation and translation services
  - Cultural connections and orientation to local communities
  - Transportation assistance

More information is at [Core Private Sponsorship Services](#).

### **How long is the Private Sponsor Group committed to serving the refugee?**

The official commitment for Private Sponsor Group is 90 days, however we encourage Private Sponsor Groups to consider supporting and mentoring the refugee family beyond the initial 90 days to help the family connect to services, navigate resources and build support systems to be successful in their new local community.

### **What is the financial commitment to privately sponsor refugees?**

Sponsors must raise a minimum of \$2,375 in cash and in-kind contributions per refugee newcomer being welcomed. This is used to secure and furnish housing and provide for the refugee's initial basic needs, until they secure employment.

### **What support is available for individuals to form a Private Sponsor Group?**

Welcome Corps will support Private Sponsor Groups throughout the process including:

- Application support
- Online trainings
- Checklists and guides
- Connection to a Private Sponsor Organization (PSO)

For additional information, visit [welcomecorps.org/resources/faqs](https://welcomecorps.org/resources/faqs).

### **Who can be a sponsor?**

- U.S. Citizens or permanent residents ages 18 or older
- Live in the community where the refugee will reside.
- Complete background checks

For more information, visit [welcomecorps.org/get-started/](https://welcomecorps.org/get-started/).

## **What is the matching phase of Welcome Corps?**

### **What is matching?**

Matching is Phase 1 of Welcome Corps and it launched January 2023. During matching, refugees from Sub-Saharan Africa are matched with Private Sponsor Group. Private Sponsor Groups are matched with refugee families they do not previously know.

### **What information is provided to the Private Sponsor Group about the refugee they are matched with?**

The Private Sponsor Group will receive basic information about the family including names, date of birth, native language, home country, current country they are residing in now, English level, education level and work experience. The Private Sponsor Group will be notified when flights

are booked so they can secure housing, set up their house with necessities and prepare for airport greetings.

**Are refugees coming through Welcome Corps eligible for Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) services?**

Yes. Refugees coming from Welcome Corps are eligible for ORR services. ORR services include refugee cash assistance, refugee medical assistance, employment placement and English language training.

**What is the naming phase?**

**Can I sponsor someone I know?**

Private Sponsor Groups will be able to identify and refer refugees they know during phase 2, or “naming” process. Phase 2 is anticipated to launch late 2023. During the naming process, PSGs will be allowed to identify and refer refugees they know for sponsorship. The refugee will be referred to USRAP for consideration to be resettled in the U.S.

**Can my family member or friend in the U.S. apply to sponsor and resettle me in the U.S.?**

Currently, private sponsors are matched with refugees who they did not know previously and who have been approved for resettlement to the U.S. through the U.S. Refugee Admissions Process (USRAP). Later this year, Welcome Corps will expand to allow private sponsors to identify a specific refugee overseas whom they wish to sponsor.

All refugees referred to the USRAP by private sponsors will need to complete the same processing requirements as all other USRAP applicants to be approved for resettlement, including the determination of eligibility for refugee status through an interview overseas conducted by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, security vetting by U.S. government law enforcement and intelligence agencies, and a medical screening.

**What can I do to prepare for when applications open to sponsor a refugee I know?**

- Follow instructions to form a Private Sponsor Group (PSG).
- Take the Welcome Corps Essentials Training at [welcomecorps.org/resources/essentials-training/](https://welcomecorps.org/resources/essentials-training/).
- Attend the Welcome Corps application support webinar at [welcomecorps.org/resources/application-support-session/](https://welcomecorps.org/resources/application-support-session/).
- Review resources and create your plan to sponsor the refugee at [welcomecorps.org/resources/](https://welcomecorps.org/resources/).

## **What is a Welcome Plan?**

### **What is a Welcome Plan?**

The Welcome Plan is a critical piece of your Private Sponsor Group application. This Welcome Plan asks Private Sponsor Groups to explain how they will support sponsored refugees during their first 90 days in the United States. Each community is unique, and this tool is intended to guide your group in identifying resources in your community. Information is at [Private Sponsor Group Welcome Plan](#).

### **My community is rural and about an hour's drive from the nearest city, what can I do to support refugees so they are not feeling isolated?**

Work with Welcome Corps to develop a plan to address how rural communities can compensate and connect refugees to services. Reach out to other refugee communities for ideas about how they can help increase social and cultural connections. You may also contact the Utah Refugee Services Office for suggestions.

## **What resources are available to support sponsor groups?**

### **How do Private Sponsor Groups learn about local resources and connect refugees to services?**

Each PSG will be connected to a Private Sponsor Organization that is familiar with local communities and resources that can help connect PSG to specific resources for the refugees.

### **What is a Private Sponsor Organization (PSO)?**

Private Sponsor organizations may be local, regional or national organizations who help to recruit, support and oversee PSGs. Private Sponsor Organization helps guide the PSG throughout the resettlement process to carry out core services for refugees. Private Sponsor Organizations may also intervene on issues of concern that may arise between the refugee and the PSG.

### **Who can be a Private Sponsor Organization (PSO)?**

- Have 501(c)(3) or 501(c)(4) status
- Demonstrate financial literacy and health
- Demonstrate organizational capacity to support and oversee PSGs
- Demonstrate capacity to support and oversee a minimum of 50 PSGs per year
- Complete the required training and onboarding

### **What happens if there are conflicts between the refugee and the private sponsor group?**

As the private sponsor group has a minimum of five individuals, there will be other members within the group that can continue to support and provide the core responsibilities of the PSG. The refugee and/or the PSG may contact the affiliated Private Sponsor Organization for support and intervention.

### **What are some tips to secure housing?**

The uncertain arrival date for the refugee newcomer family you are sponsoring creates a need for temporary housing. Use this resource to identify potential temporary or short-term housing options and move to securing more permanent housing: [Tips for Securing Housing](#).

### **Does Welcome Corps have a fundraising guide for sponsors?**

Welcome Corps has this useful fundraising guide: [Sample Private Sponsor Group Structure and Roles](#).

### **How do Private Sponsor Groups access interpretation and translation for refugees?**

For a list of translation apps for simple conversations, visit [switchboardta.org/resource/apps-for-translation-and-interpretation/](http://switchboardta.org/resource/apps-for-translation-and-interpretation/).

Additional local translation services include:

- **Insync Interpreters**  
[www.insyncinterpreters.com/](http://www.insyncinterpreters.com/)  
Phone - 866-501-2002  
Email - [info@insyncinterpreters.com](mailto:info@insyncinterpreters.com)  
9149 South Monroe St, Suite C  
Sandy, Utah 84070
- **CommGap International**  
[commgap.com/](http://commgap.com/)  
Phone - 801-944-4049  
Email - [info@commgap.com](mailto:info@commgap.com)  
7069 Highland Drive, #201  
Cottonwood Heights, Utah 84121

### **What is cultural orientation?**

As a sponsor, you play an important role in helping refugees feel safe, supported and welcome in their new local community. These are resources that will help Private Sponsor Groups to be more informed about the refugee experience and cultural considerations.

- **Resources for Community Partners and Sponsors:**  
[coresourceexchange.org/resources-for-community-partners-and-sponsors/?mc\\_cid=b02b651ec3&mc\\_eid=cfd1b9d22](http://coresourceexchange.org/resources-for-community-partners-and-sponsors/?mc_cid=b02b651ec3&mc_eid=cfd1b9d22)

- **Navigating Identity and Inclusion in Refugee Resettlement:**  
[switchboardta.org/courses/navigating-identity-and-inclusion-in-refugee-resettlement/](https://switchboardta.org/courses/navigating-identity-and-inclusion-in-refugee-resettlement/)
- **Cultural Humility in Cultural Orientation:**  
[coresourceexchange.org/guide/apply-cultural-humility-in-cultural-orientation/?mc\\_cid=3fd0eebd2e&mc\\_eid=cfdd1b9d22](https://coresourceexchange.org/guide/apply-cultural-humility-in-cultural-orientation/?mc_cid=3fd0eebd2e&mc_eid=cfdd1b9d22)

## **What documentations do refugees need to apply for?**

### **What documentations do refugees need to apply for?**

Refugees need to submit form I-765. Refugees can apply for federal and state benefits prior to receiving a Social Security Number (SSN). However, to be approved for most benefits, the refugee may need to show proof that they have applied for an SSN. Therefore, submit form I-765 within 30 days of arrival. Form I-765 is also an application for Employment Authorization Document (EAD), as this is a key document used by employers to verify employment status.

### **How do I help refugees apply for a social security number (SSN)?**

- Go to the nearest Social Security Administration office
  - 175 East 400 South, Suite 500, Salt Lake City
- Bring form I-94
- Complete Form SS-5
- Save a copy of receipt

### **What is form I-94?**

Form I-94 is the Arrival/Departure Record that is issued to refugees from the Department of Homeland Security upon admission to the U.S. Form I-94 does not expire and can be used as employment authorization and identification for 90 days.

### **How do I help a refugee obtain Utah State identification?**

- Go to the nearest Driver License offices - locations can be found at [dld.utah.gov/office-locations-and-hours/](https://dld.utah.gov/office-locations-and-hours/).
- Bring form I-94.
- Bring a social security card.
- Bring two documents of Utah residence address.
- Pay \$23.00 fee.

### **How do I help a refugee obtain a Utah Driver License?**

A refugee, asylee or humanitarian parole can apply for a Utah limited-term driver license. The following is required for obtaining a limited-term driver license:

- Must be at least 16 years old



- Visit Driver License office
- Pass eye exam
- Proof of legal resident and identity (Form I-94 or permanent resident card)
- Social Security Card
- Two documents of Utah residence address
- People under age 19 must carry a learner permit for six months. Age 19+, must carry a learners permit for 90 days.
- Pass a 50-question written knowledge test.
  - Refugees may take the test in their native language with the assistance of a state-certified in-person interpreter.
- Driving skills test which can be done through a driver education course or at the DMV with an appointment.
- For additional information, visit [dld.utah.gov/minor-refugee-asylee-hp/](http://dld.utah.gov/minor-refugee-asylee-hp/).

## What is Refugee Medical Screening?

### What is Refugee Medical Screening?

Refugees need to have a medical screening completed within 90 days of arrival to the U.S. The purpose of the medical screening is to follow up on medical issues identified overseas, identify persons with communicable diseases of potential public health concern, identify health issues that may interfere with well-being and integration, and connect refugees to new primary care providers.

### If you're within one hour of Salt Lake City:

- **St. Mark's Family Medicine**  
1250 E 3900 S #260 Salt Lake City, UT 84124  
801-265-2000  
Click on the link to view the [Insurance accepted](#).  
Appointment availability varies, call to request appointment.
- **University of Utah Newcomer Health Clinic**  
168 N 1950 W, Salt Lake City, UT 84116  
801-646-6399  
Click on the link to view the [insurance accepted](#).  
Appointment availability varies, call to request appointment.

### If you're within one hour of Hyrum/Logan:

- **Hyrum Medical Clinic**  
26 West Main Street  
-435-245-6248

If your community sponsorship group is located beyond these areas around Utah, we request your support to find a provider willing to do an ad-hoc refugee health screening. We can provide

a list of resources, checklist and more to the provider so they can feel confident to know what to look/screen for during the health screening. Feel free to connect to our team's general inbox with any questions and request for additional information, [rhprogram@utah.gov](mailto:rhprogram@utah.gov).

## How do I help refugees apply for eligible benefits?

### How do I help refugees apply for eligible benefits?

Refugees are eligible to apply for employment, SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program), Medicaid, cash assistance and child care. The Refugee Services Office provides a step-by-step overview of the process to apply for services. Sponsors can find eligibility requirements for each program, how to use benefits, and policy manuals for each program by visiting [jobs.utah.gov/](http://jobs.utah.gov/).

### To apply for benefits

- Visit [jobs.utah.gov/mycase-app/ui/](http://jobs.utah.gov/mycase-app/ui/) or
- Visit the Refugee Services Office at 150 N 1950 W, SLC UT 84116, or call 801-618-5096

## Where can I find additional information about Private Sponsor Groups?

### Where can I find additional information about Private Sponsor Groups?

- Here are some helpful links from Welcome Corps
  - Website [welcomecorps.org/](http://welcomecorps.org/)
  - FAQs [welcomecorps.org/resources/faqs/](http://welcomecorps.org/resources/faqs/)
  - Application for Private Sponsor Groups [welcomecorps.org/get-started/](http://welcomecorps.org/get-started/)
  - Toolkit [welcomecorps.org/get-started/](http://welcomecorps.org/get-started/)
- You can also contact the Utah Refugee Center
  - Lam Nguyen, Refugee Sponsor Coordinator  
[Lnguyen@utah.gov](mailto:Lnguyen@utah.gov) or 801-901-2072
  - Utah Refugee Center  
[jobs.utah.gov/refugee/center/index.html](http://jobs.utah.gov/refugee/center/index.html)  
150 North 1950 West, SLC UT 84116  
[refugeecenter@utah.gov](mailto:refugeecenter@utah.gov)  
801-618-5096