



*Make a world of difference  
in the life of a refugee family.*



## CO-SPONSOR TEAMS 2019

Moving far away, learning a new language, and adjusting to a different culture are very difficult things for refugees to do alone. RefugeeOne and our co-sponsors alleviate those struggles by assisting with rent and basic needs and providing friendship to a family.

As a co-sponsor, your congregation, business, school, group of friends, neighborhood or alumni association, family, or community group can be the first friendly faces the refugee family sees when they land at O'Hare Airport.

Before they arrive, you may set-up their apartment, stock their pantry, and make a welcoming meal. You will provide funds to help with their expenses. Your group can visit them weekly for their first six months to help them practice English and discover the great opportunities Chicago has to offer. Your friendship and financial support will change their lives – and yours.

**RefugeeOne**  
4753 North Broadway  
Suite 401  
Chicago, IL 60640  
[refugeeone.org](http://refugeeone.org)



## Dear friends,

Refugees have lost nearly everything, save their courage, dignity and hope. RefugeeOne and those who partner with us do more than help refugees survive – we help them live fulfilling and flourishing lives.

As a refugee myself, I personally know the difference that caring individuals make to someone new to the U.S. I also know the extraordinary relationships that form when people like you welcome refugees into their lives.

Today, during the worst refugee crisis of our time, I thank you for being part of a welcoming community. As a co-sponsor, you can make a world of difference in the lives of refugees.

Melineh Kano, Executive Director

## About RefugeeOne

Since 1982, RefugeeOne has helped more than 17,500 refugees build new lives in Chicago after they fled war, terror, and persecution. Alongside volunteers like you, we are there to greet refugees at the airport, support children in school, assist with integration into American culture, help adults learn English and employable skills, and connect them to their first jobs.

-  95% of our refugee clients are fully self-reliant within 12 months of arrival.
-  150 local businesses proudly hire and employ our clients.
-  1,400+ volunteers help refugees succeed in their new Chicago home.
-  Our staff members collectively speak 35 languages.



# What will we do?

Select one person to be the contact with RefugeeOne, then choose at least 3 of the following activities, but as many as you want.

- #1 **FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE:** On average, it takes \$12,125 to help a refugee family of 5 to become independent. RefugeeOne receives some government funds to assist but there's always a gap.

Set a fundraising goal for your group – and be prepared to surpass it! Our partners regularly remark about the amazing generosity they experience when they simply ask for support.

RefugeeOne can share what other groups have done to raise funds, equip you with peer-to-peer fundraising tips, and set you up with a custom fundraising webpage.



Required  
\$8,000  
to  
\$10,000

- #2 **HOME SWEET HOME:** Help set up an apartment for an arriving refugee individual or family. RefugeeOne staff secures apartments for every refugee but your group can assist by collecting the items needed to furnish it (see page 4).

- #3 **AIRPORT ARRIVAL:** Organize a group of people to join RefugeeOne staff in welcoming the refugees at the airport and transporting them to their new home. The arrival of the family can be a profoundly moving experience for your group, as well as the refugees. You can make welcome signs and bring balloons, gifts, or flowers.

- #4 **PANTRY PROVISIONS:** Stock the individual or family's home with 2-3 weeks of food. We will provide a grocery list based on where your refugee family is from.

- #5 **WELCOME MEAL:** Provide a culturally appropriate hot meal, ready for the family to enjoy immediately upon arrival at their new home. We'll have menu suggestions for you.

- #6 **MENTOR:** Visit the family once a week during their first six months. Consider "job sharing" – meaning that 3-4 households or individuals alternate visits.

Practice conversational English and reinforce what they learn in class at RefugeeOne.



Show them the nearest grocery and drug stores, introduce them to public transportation, and ensure they have the basics they need for work, school, and everyday use. Plan outings to discover Chicago.

Keep each other and RefugeeOne informed about the progress and challenges you're observing. RefugeeOne will set you up with a Google doc so your team can communicate easily.

*Please limit your visits to twice per week to respect the family's independence and other priorities.*

- Or... **SOCIAL VISITS:** If a weekly mentorship is not possible, you can visit the family occasionally for a period of six months.

- #7 **TUTOR CHILDREN:** Provide weekly one-on-one tutoring for each child. Although many refugee children arrive in Chicago with little or no education, school policy requires that they be placed in grades based on their age. Help them practice English, catch up with their classmates, complete their homework, and have fun.

- #8 **JOB DEVELOPMENT:** RefugeeOne's employment team will help each employable adult learn English, apply for jobs, and learn to communicate with employers. You can help the family prepare for employment by practicing interview skills. You can also help RefugeeOne by connecting us to employers that might be open to hiring authorized, hard-working refugees.

# What help is available to us?

RefugeeOne provides case managers, daily English classes, job readiness training and job search assistance, mental health care, medical case management, and special programs for women and youth.

**We provide additional support to our co-sponsors. RefugeeOne will:**

- #1 Provide a dedicated one-on-one staff person to assist your group throughout your co-sponsorship.
- #2 Coordinate a training at a convenient time and location for your group. Get basic training in intercultural communication, review the responsibilities of RefugeeOne's case manager and other staff as well as the expectations for you as co-sponsors, and receive recommendations for mentoring activities.
- #3 Match you with a refugee or family, share their basic background, instruct you how to complete preparations for their arrival, and notify you of their flight information and any changes along the way.



- #4 Act as a liaison with the landlord to get you access to the family's apartment before they arrive.
- #5 Welcome the family with you at the airport, alongside bilingual RefugeeOne staff who speak the family's language.
- #6 Provide background checks on the individuals in your group who will work with the family.
- #7 Provide periodic emails with resources for teaching English, free activities to do together, and other tools that will help you support a refugee family.
- #8 Answer your questions, provide ongoing support, and share updates from the family's case manager, English teacher, youth program staff, and others working with the family.
- #9 Offer occasional workshops where you can learn directly from RefugeeOne program staff about how our employment, youth, wellness and other programs work.
- #10 Hold a debrief meeting to reflect on the experience, solicit your input, share a summary of monies RefugeeOne expended to support the family you co-sponsored, and discuss other opportunities for you to continue helping refugees.

# Frequently Asked Questions

## What is the difference between refugees and immigrants?

Refugees are people who have fled their countries to escape war or persecution. Many have witnessed or been victims of horrible atrocities. Refugees receive their official status from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and are selected for resettlement by the U.S. Departments of State and Homeland Security after extensive background checks and a 4- to 25-year wait. While most immigrants may safely return to their home countries, the fear of persecution prevents refugees from any attempt to return.



## Where do refugees come from?

In the past two years, RefugeeOne has welcomed more than 1,000 refugees from 23 countries. The largest groups came from the Democratic Republic of Congo, Syria, and Burma.

## Where will the refugees live?

In most cases, housing is located near RefugeeOne's Chicago office to allow refugees easy access to our programs and services. This includes Chicago's Rogers Park, West Ridge, Albany Park, and other neighborhoods with direct public transit to our offices, such as Skokie and Evanston.

## When do refugees start working?

When refugees arrive, they are legally able to work as Permanent Legal Residents. Most begin working within 3-4 months of arrival after progressing through English classes at RefugeeOne.

## Where do refugees work?

Generally, refugees with low English skills work in entry-level positions. RefugeeOne partners with 150 local businesses, including hotels, factories, retail stores, and maintenance companies, to refer qualified, screened applicants. Some of our top employers include Tyson Foods, Scrub Inc., Reynolds Wrap, Five Star Laundry, Hilton Hotels, and Eli's Cheesecake.

## How long does our commitment last?

We ask you to visit the family for six months, ideally each week. You can be helpful right from the start, but know that the family's first few weeks are the busiest as they attend to appointments, test for English training, and more. Planning your visits for evenings and weekends will generally work best for them. Many co-sponsors remain friends after the official 6 month commitment.

## How are our group's financial contributions used?

Your contributions are used for rent, utilities, household items, mattresses, work uniforms, medications, and/or food purchased by RefugeeOne as the family works to become self-reliant. Ten percent is reserved for overhead, including the staff that works directly with your family. If you raise more than the family requires, your additional funds will go to help another refugee family.

# Home Sweet Home

Co-sponsors are invited to set-up a home for their refugee family. RefugeeOne will find the apartment but your group can assist by gathering the items below and setting everything up before the family arrives.

The quantity of items marked with an asterisk (\*) will vary, based on the number of people in a family. Items in **Italics** must be new. All others can be gently used. Please maintain quality control to support the dignity of our clients.

## Kitchen Items

- Dishes\*
- Drinking glasses\*
- Coffee mugs and saucers\*
- Silverware\*
- Steak knives\*
- Silverware divider
- Set of mixing bowls
- Set of pots and pans
- Set of baking pans
- Serving bowls and dishes
- Set of cooking utensils, including measuring cups and spoons
- Tea kettle for stovetop
- Can/bottle opener
- 4 small plastic food storage containers
- 4 large plastic food storage containers
- Dish drying-rack with tray
- Broom with dust pan
- Mop and bucket
- Matches or lighter
- Pads of paper/notebooks/pens/pencils
- Fire Extinguisher**
- Cutting board**
- Colander**
- Potholders**
- Kitchen towels (two sets)**
- Dishwashing soap**
- Paper towels (minimum 2 rolls)**
- Large kitchen garbage can (with lid)**
- Large garbage bags**
- All-purpose spray with bleach**
- Scouring cleanser**
- Scouring pads and sponges**

## Furniture

- Bed frames (RefugeeOne will provide new mattresses)
- Chest of drawers for clothing
- Kitchen/dining table and chairs
- Sofa
- Armchairs
- Coffee tables
- Lamps



## Bathroom Items

- Waste basket
- Plunger
- Toilet brush
- Towel sets (bath/hand/washcloth)\***
- Several bars of hand/body soap\***
- Shampoo\***
- Deodorant\***
- Toothbrushes, toothpaste, and dental floss\***
- Disposable razors\***
- Shaving cream/lotion\***
- Feminine supplies (pads, not tampons)\***
- Toilet paper and facial tissue\***
- Disposable diapers (if necessary)\***
- Shower curtain w/hooks**
- First aid kit and oral thermometer**
- All-purpose spray cleaner w/bleach**
- Scouring cleanser, pads, sponges**

## Optional Items

- Iron and ironing board
- Postage stamps
- CTA bus passes
- Gift cards (Walgreens, CVS, Jewel, Target, Walmart)
- Bilingual dictionary
- Toys, children's books, stuffed animals
- Window fans
- Vacuum cleaner or carpet sweeper
- TV with digital converter box and antenna
- Radio/CD player
- Portable shopping cart
- Calendars (wall and personal calendars)**
- Back packs and school supplies**
- 40- and 60-watt light bulbs**
- AA, AAA & 9-volt batteries**

## Bedroom Items

- 40 hangers
- Alarm clock
- Laundry soap
- Laundry basket
- Blankets\***
- Comforters\***
- Baby blanket (if necessary)\***
- Sheet sets including pillow cases\***
- Pillows\***



# Are there other ways we can help?

Refugee assistance projects of a smaller scale are also extremely important and needed throughout the year. Below are alternative ways you can make a real difference.

- #1 **Volunteer** in our after-school program, at our office, in English classes, or alongside our medical case manager. Visit [refugeeone.org](http://refugeeone.org) to see current volunteer opportunities.
- #2 **Hire a refugee.** Give a refugee a chance to prove themselves at their first American job. Contact us about hiring qualified candidates.
- #3 **Fundraise.** Refugees arrive with only the possessions they carry. Ensure they have what they need by organizing an online fundraiser with our peer-to-peer tools.
  - \$2,600 = new beds and furnishings for a family of five
  - \$950 = one month's rent for a one-bedroom apartment
  - \$700 = household items and toiletries for a family of five
  - \$100 = 1-month CTA pass for a refugee to travel to work
- #4 **Organize a drive.** Occasionally, we need household goods, toiletries, school supplies, and other items. Check our website for the items we are currently seeking.
- #5 **Advocate** for policies that welcome refugees and treat them with dignity. Check out our website for information about current campaigns.



refugeeONE

For more information about co-sponsoring a family, contact:

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