THE ROLE OF RESETTLEMENT AGENCIES

While refugees and other forcibly displaced people have been migrating to the U.S. and across the world throughout history, the current U.S. refugee admissions program (USRAP) was established by Congress in 1980 as a public-private partnership between the government and national and local non-profit organizations. To this day, refugees may only apply for resettlement if referred by the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), a U.S. embassy, or a designated international non-governmental organization, and they must fit within a humanitarian category designated by the U.S. President in consultation with Congress.

When a refugee family is approved for resettlement, they are matched with one of nine national refugee resettlement agencies in the U.S. These include:

- Church World Service (CWS)
- Ethiopian Community Development Council (ECDC)
- Episcopal Migration Ministries (EMM)
- HIAS
- International Rescue Committee (IRC)
- Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services (LIRS)
- U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI)
- U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB)
- World Relief (WR)

Each of the nine national resettlement agencies partners with a network of local affiliates to resettle refugees in communities across the U.S. The national agencies are responsible for placing refugees with one of their local affiliates and administering the Reception and Placement (R&P) grant. Many refugees have family or friends (known as U.S. Ties) already in the U.S. and they can reunite with them when they arrive. Refugees who have not disclosed having a U.S. Tie prior to arriving in the U.S. are placed in locations where they have the best opportunity to succeed – typically by attaining employment. Community support, including that of community sponsor groups, is a critical component of successful resettlement.

The Department of State’s Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) set four specific goals that local resettlement agencies participating in the R&P program must strive to achieve for each family during their first 90 days in the U.S. These include:
✓ The refugee is in a safe, stable environment.
✓ The refugee can navigate appropriate and relevant systems.
✓ The refugee family is connected to means of ongoing support for self/family.
✓ The refugee family understands their surroundings and situation.

Additionally, local resettlement agencies are responsible for assisting with providing required core services to refugee families during their first 90 days in the U.S. Below is a chart detailing the required services that resettlement agencies will work to provide refugee families with the help of sponsors.

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*This document summarizes certain sections of the R&P Cooperative Agreement. It does not replace the use of the agreement. Case file has to document on-going support and substance of regular contact throughout the R&P period.*