Moving far away, learning another language, and adjusting to a new culture are difficult experiences for anyone to face alone. Co-sponsor teams help alleviate those struggles for refugees by assisting with rent and basic needs, setting up a welcoming apartment, and mentoring them when they arrive in the U.S.

Your co-sponsor team may be made up of people from your faith community, neighborhood group, company, alumni association, or just your family and friends. The size of the group depends on what parts of the process you’re working in—you’ll likely draw on a larger network to fundraise and set up an apartment, but a mentor group should be about 6-10 people.

Your efforts can change refugees’ lives... and yours!
Dear friends,

Volunteers like you are a crucial part of refugees’ success as they rebuild their lives.

As a refugee myself, I know very well the impact that caring individuals have on someone new to the U.S. I also know the extraordinary relationships that can form when people like you welcome refugees into your life and community.

As a co-sponsor, you can make a world of difference in the lives of refugees. Thank you for helping create communities where refugees flourish.

Melineh Kano, Executive Director
Armenian refugee, resettled by RefugeeOne in 1984

About RefugeeOne

Since 1982, RefugeeOne has helped more than 20,000 refugees from all over the world build new lives in Chicago. Alongside volunteers like you, we’re there to greet refugees at the airport, help adults learn English and employable skills, support children in school, help them recover from trauma, and assist with integration into American culture.

- 95% of our refugee clients are fully self-reliant within 12 months of arrival.
- 100+ local businesses proudly employ our clients.
- 1,000+ volunteers are helping refugees succeed in their new home.
- RefugeeOne staff collectively speaks 30+ languages.
What do co-sponsors do?

Co-sponsors commit to raising support and mentoring for six months. You’ll begin by assembling a team of 6-10 people, choosing one to be the liaison with RefugeeOne. You’ll set a fundraising goal, choose whether or not to set up an apartment (see item list on the next page), and once you’re set with those things, we’ll schedule a mentorship training with your team.

RefugeeOne will take care of official paperwork, schedule initial medical appointments, enroll refugees in public benefits, and enroll kids in school. We also have in-house programs for English classes, job search assistance, mental health care, and additional youth services.

Your team will help a family navigate everyday life in Chicago, offer critical English language practice, and provide social support.

INTERESTED? Fill out this form and we’ll get back to you!

MAKE A HOME

Refugees often arrive with few personal belongings. RefugeeOne secures their first apartment, but you can turn it into a home.

• Collect apartment furnishings and have them move-in ready with short notice
• Set up the home a few days before arrival
• Stock 2-3 weeks of groceries
• Provide a culturally appropriate, warm meal on day of arrival

RefugeeOne will provide...

• Access to the rented apartment
• A list of required household items, a culturally appropriate grocery list and grocers, and simple menu suggestions for the welcome meal
• In-kind donation receipts as requested

RAISE SUPPORT

RefugeeOne receives some government funds to assist families, but more is needed to help families flourish. Your team will fundraise to fill in the gap. You’ll likely be surprised by the generosity you see when you simply ask.

The money you raise will help with initial expenses like rent, bills, and other needs for 4-5 months as a family works towards self-reliance. Donations are tax-deductible and dispersed through RefugeeOne.

• Raise $6,000 to $10,000 from your community

RefugeeOne will equip you with...

• A custom fundraising page for you to share
• Fundraising tips to help you succeed

BE A FRIEND

Consistent social and emotional support makes an incredible difference for refugees. Your team of 6-10 mentors share this 6-month commitment, trading off visits and divvying up responsibilities.

• Attend airport arrival (with posters and flowers!) alongside RefugeeOne staff
• Visit or check in weekly to practice English, help with job readiness, assist with everyday tasks, and explore Chicago together

RefugeeOne will provide...

• An orientation about core skills and expectations
• Periodic trainings to continue learning
• Background checks and liability waivers for each volunteer
• Periodic updates and a designated staff liaison
• A debrief at the end of your 6-month commitment
What makes a home?

If you choose to set up an apartment for a refugee household, you’ll be responsible for gathering and storing the items below until RefugeeOne secures the apartment for you to prepare. Usually, that’s just a few days before a family arrives! We get 5-14 days’ notice of new arrivals, in which time we’ll have to finalize housing arrangements before you are able to access the apartment.

The quantity of items marked with an asterisk (*) will vary, based on the number of people in a household. Items in *italics* must be new. All other items can be gently used. Please maintain quality control to support the dignity of every individual.

### Furniture
- Dressers*
- Lamps*
- Kitchen/dining table and chairs
- Sofa
- Armchairs
- Coffee table
  (RefugeeOne will provide mattresses, box springs, and bed frames)

### Kitchen
- Set of plates and bowls*
- Drinking glasses*
- Coffee mugs*
- Silverware* and silverware divider
- Steak knives*
- Chef’s knife and paring knife
- Set of mixing bowls
- Set of pots and pans
- Set of baking pans
- Serving bowls and dishes
- Set of cooking utensils
- Measuring cups and spoons
- Can/bottle opener
- Rice cooker
- Tea kettle for stovetop
- 4 large plastic food storage containers
- 4 small plastic food storage containers
- Dish drying rack with tray
- Broom and dust pan
- Mop and bucket
- Cutting board
- Colander
- Pot holders
- 4 kitchen towels
- Paper towels
- Large kitchen garbage can with lid
- Large garbage bags
- Dishwashing soap
- All-purpose spray with bleach
- Scouring cleanser
- Scouring pads and sponges
- Small fire extinguisher

### Bedroom
- 40 hangers
- Alarm clock
- Laundry soap
- Laundry basket
- Window fans*
- Blankets*
- Comforters*
- Sheet sets including pillow cases*
- Pillows*

### Bathroom
- Waste basket
- Shower curtain with hooks
- Set of towels (bath, hand, and washcloths)*
- Several bars of soap*
- Shampoo and conditioner*
- Lotion*
- Deodorant*
- Toothbrushes, toothpaste, and dental floss*
- Disposable razors and shaving cream*
- Feminine supplies (pads, not tampons)*
- Plunger
- Toilet brush
- Toilet paper and facial tissues*
- First aid kit and oral thermometer
- All-purpose spray cleaner w/bleach
- Scouring cleanser, pads, sponges

### Children and Babies (If Applicable)
- Age-appropriate books and toys
- Stroller (lightweight umbrella strollers preferred)
- Car seat (cannot be expired)
- Crib (Pack ’n Play preferred)
- Disposable diapers
- Wipes
- Baby blanket
- Backpacks and school supplies

A full up-to-date list with additional optional household items will be provided to you.
Who are refugees? How are they connected with RefugeeOne?
Refugees have fled their home countries to escape war or persecution and are unable to return home safely. They apply for protective legal status from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), then are selected and approved for resettlement by the U.S. Department of State and Homeland Security, after extensive interviews, screenings, and background checks. (The overwhelming majority of refugees worldwide are not resettled in a third country—currently less than 1% are resettled each year.) Approved cases are transferred to one of nine national agencies that facilitate resettlement. Our national partner agency, Church World Service, refers cases to us to carry out adjustment services in Chicago. We receive just 5-14 days’ notice of new arrivals.

Where do refugees come from?
RefugeeOne serves people from dozens of countries! The largest groups in recent years came from Afghanistan, Syria, DR Congo, Burma, and Ukraine.

Where do refugees work?
Generally, refugees with low English skills work in entry-level manual labor positions. RefugeeOne partners with local businesses, including hotels, factories, retail stores, and maintenance companies to refer qualified applicants. Some of our top employers include Tyson Foods, Eli’s Cheesecake, Scrub Inc., and Hyatt. If you know an employer that may be open to hiring authorized, hard-working refugees, let us know!

How are co-sponsors’ financial contributions used?
Your gifts subsidize rent payments, utilities, mattresses and bed frames, work uniforms, etc. as refugees work to become financially independent. Ten percent of your fundraising total is reserved for programs that work directly with refugees upon arrival. If the sum you raise is more than what’s needed to account for the financial assistance listed above, excess funds will support additional families.

When do refugees start working?
When refugees arrive, they are legally able to work as permanent legal residents. Most begin working within 3-5 months of arrival, after progressing through English classes at RefugeeOne.
How else can you help?

Other ways of involvement at RefugeeOne are also important and needed throughout the year. Here are more ways you can make a real difference for refugees:

#1 **Volunteer.** Become a one-on-one tutor for a refugee youth, a mentor for an adult, or volunteer with our English language classes. Visit refugeeone.org/Volunteer to see all current volunteer opportunities and fill out an application.

#2 **Hire a refugee.** Provide a life-changing opportunity in hiring a refugee for their first job in the U.S. Contact us about hiring qualified candidates at info@refugeeone.org.

#3 **Organize a drive.** Throughout the year we host drop-off days for specific household goods, school supplies, and other items. Check refugeeone.org/DonateStuff for the items currently needed and the dates you can deliver them.

#4 **Advocate.** Spread the word in your circles about RefugeeOne’s work. Call your representatives to voice support for policies that welcome refugees and treat them with dignity. For example call scripts and current campaigns, see refugeeone.org/Advocacy.

#5 **Donate.** Your contributions create opportunities for refugees to thrive through housing support, English lessons, job coaching, mental health care, and more. You can make a gift online at refugeeone.org/Donate.

INTERESTED IN FORMING A CO-SPONSOR TEAM?  
Fill out this form and we’ll get back to you!