

## **Lutheran Social Services (LSS) Refugee Resettlement FAQ - updated 4.22.22\***

*Thank you for your interest in helping to provide a warm welcome for refugees arriving to their new homes! Here are some of the most Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's) and answers.*

### **What items are being collected by LSS right now?**

- VISA gift cards and local grocery gift cards for use by refugee individuals and families. These are especially helpful to purchase needed items that have not been donated.
- Complete kits of household items to make refugee home move-in ready (Please see question below for details).
- New socks and underwear for men, women and children in all sizes. **Please note:** At this time we are unable to accept other clothing items. We will update this information should the need for these items arise.

### **What kinds of kits do you need? And what do they include?**

There are various sets of items (or “kits”) that are needed for new arrivals, which people can assemble. They include Kitchen Kits, Toiletries Kits, Linens/Household Kits, and Cleaning Kits. Please see the full list of items needed for each of these types of kits [HERE](#). Unfortunately, we are not able to accept incomplete kits at this time. Complete kits should be securely packaged as individual kits, taking care that any liquid items are sealed, and with a listing of what is inside clearly labeled on outside.

### **When and where should I drop off items that have been collected?**

Gift cards can be mailed to: LSS Refugee Resettlement, 6737 W. Washington St., Ste. 2275, West Allis, WI 53214.

Drop off times for large numbers of complete kits can be arranged by contacting the Refugee Resettlement staff at [refugee@lsswis.org](mailto:refugee@lsswis.org). They will advise the location to which they can be delivered. If you have only 1 or 2 kits to drop off they may be taken to:

LSS Refugee Resettlement Office  
3974 Howell St., Ste. 2  
Milwaukee, WI 53207

(We are located on the second floor of First Federal Bank. *Please enter through the front door Howell Avenue entrance only.*)

### **Do you need furniture or other items?**

While we do need specific furniture items for refugees we do not currently have the capacity to store, pick up or deliver larger items to refugee homes. The only option at this time to have Welcome Home Teams collect and bring donated items to a home during set-up. (See question below about Welcome Home Teams.)

### **What are Welcome Home Teams and how can my group get involved?**

A wonderful way for groups to be involved in a one-time service project is to serve as a Welcome Home Team. These teams collect all the items needed to help prepare an apartment or house for the arriving refugees and set up the home so it is move-in ready and stocked with the basics to get them started comfortably. The LSS Refugee Welcome Home Complete Supply List can be found [HERE](#). If your group is interested in helping in this capacity, please contact [refugee@lsswis.org](mailto:refugee@lsswis.org).

### **What is Refugee Co-Sponsorship and how can my group get involved?**

We are in great need of churches and other community groups to assist as a co-sponsor team for refugees. Co-sponsors walk alongside LSS' Refugee Resettlement staff in supporting refugees during their first six months as they acclimate to their new life here. Co-sponsors assist as a local resource in several ways, and involves both financial and volunteer support. Information Sessions for Co-Sponsors cover all the details and can help you decide if this option is a good fit for your group. Contact [church.relations@lsswis.org](mailto:church.relations@lsswis.org) and ask for the link to the next available virtual information session. Beginning April 19, these meetings will be held the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday evening of each month at 6:30 pm. There is no obligation by attending an information session.

### **What volunteer support do you need? How can I help as an individual?**

There are many ways that individual volunteers can help. Some roles require background checks, training and specific time commitment; others do not. Some may require local proximity to Milwaukee; others can be done from a distance. Information Sessions for Individual Volunteers provides an overview of the refugee resettlement process, the many ways volunteers can help, and describe the application process. Please contact [church.relations@lsswis.org](mailto:church.relations@lsswis.org) and request the link to the next available virtual information session. These are currently held on the first Thursday of each month at 5:30 pm.

Examples of volunteer roles include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Organizing a drive for supplies, collecting them and delivering them to LSS.
- Assisting with grocery shopping for a new family.
- Providing transportation for a refugee until they learn the bus system or learn to drive.
- Serving as a cultural mentor to help a refugee acclimate to life in the US.
- Providing clerical assistance to the Refugee Resettlement staff.
- Helping to prepare a home before the arrival of the refugee family.
- Helping as an English language tutor using LSS provided lessons and materials.
- Be a homework helper to kids.
- Sharing pro bono professional services or specialized skills that could benefit the program.
- Writing letters or cards of welcome to new families.

### **Are you looking for pictures of volunteer activities?**

Yes, we would love to see pictures of your groups or individuals putting together kits, dropping off supplies or any other activities you would like to share. Photo releases will be needed for each person in the photo. You can find those [here](#). Please fill and sign and return to [communications@lsswis.org](mailto:communications@lsswis.org).

### **How many new refugees will LSS serve this year?**

LSS has planned for 300 refugees and up to 200 Afghans. Due to the changing nature of resettlement work, the actual capacity will be impacted by the level of financial support that is received by private donors. Bottom line: we can serve more people if we receive more financial support. And as we all know, the need is great and world events continue to require a response to humanitarian needs.

### **Are Afghan refugees still coming from Fort McCoy?**

Fort McCoy was the largest, and one of several, temporary processing centers in the US following the emergency evacuation of Afghan individuals and families. All these temporary processing centers closed in February of 2022. LSS does expect to receive more Afghan refugees as they continue to be processed through other sites overseas.

### **What about the Ukrainians who are fleeing the war in their country?**

Like the rest of the world we are hoping for a peaceful resolution and that those who had to leave their homes may have the opportunity to return once the conflict is over. If they are not able to return to their home country, they often want to stay as close as possible to maintain a connection to their culture. We have served refugees from the Ukraine in the past and will be ready to serve more in the future if and when we are called upon to receive them by our national agency, Lutheran Immigration & Refugee Service (LIRS). Your continued support of our program will allow us to respond and welcome those needing a safe place as they start new lives. If you are interested in more information on legal status, federal services, and the process for refugees to apply for support, please visit <https://www.state.gov/refugee-admissions/>.

### **I have job openings available or I know of a company that is hiring. Could I offer a job to the people you are serving?**

The LSS Refugee Resettlement team supports families and individuals through training and connections so they can become employed and self-supporting as quickly as possible. Please email [refugee@lss.org](mailto:refugee@lss.org) for more information. Please note that employment cannot be linked to co-sponsorship groups.

### **Where will the refugees be resettled?**

The US Department of State requires that refugees be resettled within 50 miles of an affiliate Refugee Resettlement program like Lutheran Social Services. There are currently six resettlement agencies in the State of Wisconsin. Refugees allocated to LSS will be resettled within 50 miles of its Refugee Resettlement Program office in Milwaukee. Jewish Social Services in Madison, World Relief Fox Valley in Appleton, Ethiopian Community Development Council in Wausau, International Institute of Wisconsin in Milwaukee, and Catholic Charities in Green Bay are the other affiliate programs in Wisconsin. (Note, there was an adjustment to this rule that applied only to the Afghan refugees that were being resettled from the temporary processing centers in late 2021 and early 2022. This allowed for greater distances of up to 100 miles from a resettlement agency.)

### **Are there other ways that I can help?**

Yes. Cash donations of any size will help cover the cost of rent, utilities, household items and other basic needs. Please visit [www.lsswis.org](http://www.lsswis.org) to make an online donation or text LSSREFUGEE to 41444 on your mobile phone and follow the prompts. In addition, checks payable to Lutheran Social Services – Refugee can be mailed to Lutheran Social Services, P.O. Box 88868, Milwaukee, WI 53288.

**Thank you for your love, compassion and belief in the infinite worth of every individual!!**

*We appreciate your patience as we respond to the increased needs this program is addressing.*

*Your messages are important to us and we will respond as quickly as possible.*

*\*Please check back for updates to this list of FAQ's as new questions and/or needs arise.*