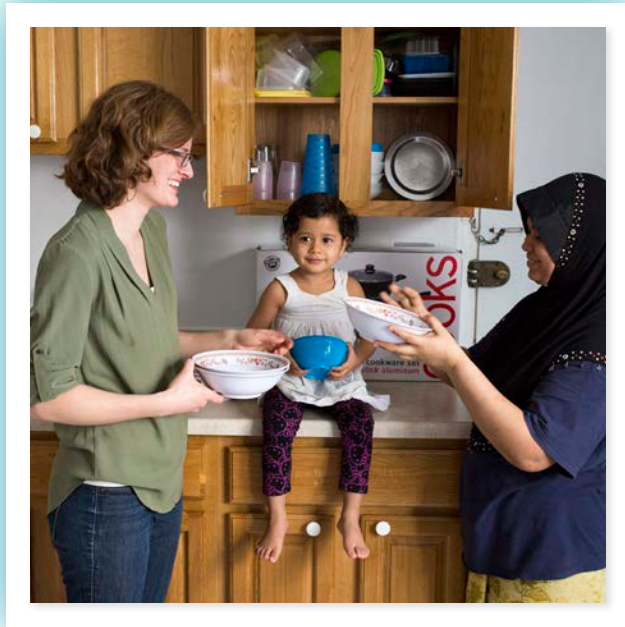


Welcome to America! Pack



Your Guidebook



Who is a Refugee?

Refugees are people who were forced to flee their country due to war or persecution. They want to return home, but they can't.

Refugees who resettle in the U.S. have been vetted, approved, and invited here by the U.S. government. When refugee families walk off the airplane and into their new life in the United States, they come with nothing but a few suitcases—or even less. They face the difficult challenge of starting over in an unfamiliar country while learning a new culture and language. Volunteers can make a profound difference in the lives of refugees as they work to rebuild their lives.

Through the *Welcome to America! Pack* program, you can provide a warm welcome for one of these courageous families when they arrive in our communities. You'll turn an empty apartment into a home by collecting, delivering, and setting up all of the basic household items for the kitchen, bath, and bedroom, as well as a first month's supply of food staples.

You'll meet and personally welcome a refugee individual or family when they first arrive in the U.S., providing them with a warm greeting and the essential supplies they need. This personal welcome is even more important than the items! [Thank you for your interest in welcoming refugees!](#)

"Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the Kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world... I was a stranger and you invited me in.'"

Matthew 25:34-35



Getting Started

- 1. Set a goal date.** You can collect a *Welcome Pack* on your own. Or you can get a group of friends and family, or a small group from work or church, who want to help welcome a refugee family! Then set a goal date with the Exodus Program Manager to complete the collection of all items. Exodus will remain in contact during the collection time to provide encouragement and answer questions. Collecting all the items typically takes 1-4 weeks.
- 2. Share the online sign-up.** If you're collecting as a group, we will create a unique personalized website for you to share with your group via email or social media. You can keep track in real time of who has signed up for which items, and which items still need to be collected.
- 3. Collect all the items.** Begin gathering items with the intent of welcoming a family of four. As the date approaches, Exodus will confirm the exact number of individuals. You can then move forward with the specific bedding and towels needed. All items must be new. New items are mandated by the U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement and provide welcome with dignity. The cost of a complete *Welcome Pack* is approximately \$600.
- 4. Prepare to deliver the *Welcome Pack*.** Be ready to deliver the Pack and set up the apartment for a newly arriving refugee(s) on or after your goal date. The Exodus Program Manager will communicate with you regarding the anticipated date and time of arrival, apartment address, and family information—including their names, ethnicity, and country of origin. Ideally, we are aware of the date a week prior, but often receive only a day or two of notice.
- 5. Deliver your *Welcome Pack*!** An Exodus representative will join you for the entire delivery process, meeting you outside the apartment of the refugee individual or family on the agreed upon day/time.

Frequently Asked Questions

How do I start?

Decide if you'll welcome a family on your own or with a group of friends, family, coworkers, or church members. Then set a collection goal date with the Exodus Program Manager. Volunteers often schedule 1-4 weeks to collect the items. The Exodus Program Manager will stay in touch to provide encouragement and answer questions.

How do I invite other people to participate?

The online sign-up is a unique website we create for you that you then personalize and share via email or social media with your group. Keep track in real time of who has signed up for what, and which items still need to be collected.



How do I know what quantities to collect?

Collect all items with the intent of welcoming a family of four. As the date approaches, Exodus will confirm the exact family size. You can then collect the actual numbers needed for items such as bedding and towels.

When do I deliver the *Welcome Pack* to the family?

Be prepared to deliver the *Welcome Pack* and set up the apartment of the new arrival(s) on or after your goal date. The Exodus Program Manager will provide the anticipated date and time of arrival, apartment address, and family information—including their names, ethnicity, and country of origin. Ideally, we are aware of the date a week prior, but often receive only one or two days' notice. Once you have the date, you can invite friends, family, and members of your group to join you!

What if I collect the pack before I have a delivery date?

In most cases, you will have some time between the *Welcome Pack* collection and the delivery date. We ask that you please store the items until you have been matched with a newly arriving refugee family.

What happens on the day I deliver the *Welcome Pack*?

An Exodus representative will meet you outside the apartment and join you during the entire delivery process as you welcome the refugee family. You'll set up the refugee family's apartment with the items you brought, i.e. hang towels, make beds, set up the kitchen, etc. The set-up process usually takes about 1-2 hours. A refugee's first day in America is something they never forget. What a gift to be personally welcomed by you on this memorable day!

What does it cost to prepare a *Welcome to America! Pack*?

It varies but typically a completed *Welcome Pack* costs around \$600.

Why do all the items need to be new?

New items are mandated by the U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement and provide dignity to refugees.

Can I add something special for the family?

Yes! You can personalize your *Welcome to America! Pack* with welcome signs, greetings cards, flowers, or any other personal touches.

How can I communicate with the refugees I'm welcoming?

Remember that gestures, smiles, and a welcoming demeanor go a long way in conveying welcome. Google Translate can be a helpful tool. Please refrain from asking questions regarding their country or the reason for their resettlement. If a refugee individual or family offers information, an empathetic response and listening ear are most appropriate.

Can I take pictures?

Feel free to take photos of your group setting up the apartment! But please do not take photos and/or videos of the refugee individual or family. If a photo opportunity arises, the Exodus representative will let you know.

What if I want to stay connected with the refugee family?

You can become a *New Neighbor!* Through this program, volunteers commit to visit a refugee family once a week for three months to answer basic questions about life in the U.S., help them practice English, and introduce them to their community. In doing so, volunteers also help ease a refugee family's loneliness. Exodus provides training, resources, and ongoing support to *New Neighbors*.

Learn more at exodusworldservice.org/serve-chicago-area/#neighbor



Resources to Get You Started

Sign-Up Tool

The online sign-up is a unique website we create for you that you then personalize and share with your group via email or social media. Keep track in real time of who has signed up for which item and which items still need to be collected.

Opportunities to Learn About Refugees

Welcoming a new refugee family is an opportunity to better understand a refugee's journey. If you or your group would like to learn more about refugees from around the world and in your local community, Exodus has many resources, including:

- Speakers
- Multimedia and interactive presentations designed for youth or adults
- Refugee journey simulations
- Cross-cultural trainings
- Bible Study
- Customized education events



Let us know if you or your group would like to learn more!

Contact [Carissa Zaffiro](mailto:carissa.zaffiro@exodusworldservice.org) at carissa.zaffiro@exodusworldservice.org.

Other Ways to Serve

This resource describes the *Welcome to America! Pack* program; you can read about other ways to serve and learn about refugee neighbors at exodusworldservice.org.

Questions? Contact Us

Exodus World Service
780 Busse Highway
Park Ridge, IL 60068

630.307.1400 · 312-REFUGEE
programs@exodusworldservice.org

Family Welcome to America! Pack

Sign up now to provide a warm welcome to a refugee family when they first arrive in Chicago! Refugees often arrive in the U.S. with only a few personal possessions. Help turn an empty apartment into a home by collecting and delivering all the basic household items the day they arrive.

All items must be new. Gifting new items to refugees shows respect and provides dignity. The following items are required by the U.S. Government Office of Resettlement.

This is a great project for an individual, small group or entire congregation.



KITCHEN

- Dishes for 8*
- 8 Mugs*
- Dish Rack
- Silverware Tray
- Silverware for 8*
- 8 Drinking Glasses*
- Set of Mixing Bowls
- Set of Pots and Pans
- Baking Pans
- Set of Cooking Utensils
- Set of Sharp Knives
- Can Opener
- Cutting Board
- 3 Kitchen Towels
- Dishwashing Soap
- 2 Sponges w/Scrubby Side
- Tall Trashcan + Trash Bags
- Plastic Wrap
- 2 Rolls of Paper Towels
- Tea Kettle
- Rice Cooker (Burmese Families)

CLEANING ITEMS

- All Purpose Cleaner Spray
- Can of Scouring Powder

- Toilet Brush
- Laundry Soap
- Broom and Dust Pan
- Laundry Basket

BEDROOM

- 4 Comforters*
- 4 Sets of Sheets w/Pillowcase*
- 4 Pillows
- Alarm Clock*
- 25 Hangers

BATH

- 4 Bath Towels*
- 4 Washcloths*
- Shower Curtain w/Hooks
- 4 Bars of Hand Soap*
- 2 Bottles of Shampoo
- 4 Tooth Brushes*
- 2 Tubes of Toothpaste
- Deodorant*
- 15 Disposable Razors
- Feminine Supplies (pads)
- 4 Rolls of Toilet Paper
- Bottle of Hand Lotion
- 2 Boxes of Kleenex
- Small Trashcan

FOOD ITEMS

- 5 lbs. Sugar
- 10 lbs. Flour
- 5 lbs. Rice
- 5 lbs. Onions
- 10 lbs. Potatoes
- Bottle of Cooking Oil
- Box of Salt
- Box of Iced Tea
- Jar of Instant Coffee
- Can of Black Pepper
- Case of Coke/Pepsi

MISC ITEMS

- Pad of Paper
- Envelopes
- Pens/Pencils
- Fan
- Calendar
- Small Tool Kit
- 4 Light Bulbs
- Scissors

**Once you're matched with a specific refugee family, we will share the amount and sizes needed.*

Individual Welcome to America! Pack

Sign up now to provide a warm welcome to a refugee individual when he or she first arrives in Chicago! Refugees often arrive in the U.S. with only a few personal possessions. Help turn an empty apartment into a home by collecting and delivering all the basic household items to a refugee the day he or she arrives.

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- Baking Pans
- Set of Cooking Utensils
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CLEANING ITEMS

- All Purpose Cleaner Spray
- Can of Scouring Powder

- Toilet Brush
- Laundry Soap
- Broom and Dust Pan
- Laundry Basket

BEDROOM

- Twin Comforter
- Set of Twin Sheets w/Pillowcase
- Pillow
- Alarm Clock
- 10 Hangers

BATH

- Bath Towel
- Washcloths
- Shower Curtain w/Hooks
- 2 Bars of Hand Soap
- Bottle of Shampoo
- Tooth Brush
- Tube of Toothpaste
- Deodorant
- 15 Disposable Razors
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