



Priority



This is a HIGH priority task and should be regularly examined by the group.

Timing



This task should be started before the refugee arrives.

Group Participation



The entire refugee sponsoring group should be aware of privacy and confidentiality concerns.

Privacy and Confidentiality:

Newcomers have the right to privacy and confidentiality. Always think about how you would like people to treat you and your family, and strive to do the same.

Guidelines:

- Do not forward the newcomer's names, address, or telephone number to any person or organization outside of the sponsoring group without their specific permission.
- Do not publish photos, names or identifying information anywhere (social media, church/town newsletter etc.) without their specific permission.
- Continuously reflect on the power differentials that exist between the sponsoring group and the newcomers. Ensure they understand they can say 'no' without repercussions.
- Avoid sharing unnecessary private information about the newcomers within the sponsoring group. Only discuss matters with people directly involved with that aspect of settlement support.
- Make sure not to exclude newcomers from conversations when they are present, especially conversations about them.
- If people wish to contact the newcomers, ask the person for their contact information and pass it on to the newcomer(s).
- Do not expect settlement agencies and other organizations to keep you completely informed on their work with the newcomer(s). Workers are bound by privacy legislation.



Privacy and Confidentiality:

•Do not discuss newcomer's private issues with anyone without their permission. This includes discussions with other members of the sponsoring group as well as settlement organizations.

•With the heightened media attention on refugee settlement, it is important to act as a mediator and support the best interests of refugees when responding to media interest.

•Sponsors, donors, or volunteers may feel a sense of entitlement towards the newcomers and their lives. Sponsors must remain conscious and aware of crossing the line (and this line is different for everyone).

Visits:

•Be especially mindful of respecting the newcomer's home. Even if they are staying temporarily in a group member's house, or the sponsors are paying the rent, remember it is their space/home, not yours.

•Call ahead of time to make an appointment before visiting newcomers in their home. This shows that it is common practice to call before a visit as well as respecting their privacy.

•Visits with single female refugees must be carefully considered. Refugee newcomer women may have a history of abuse or sexual exploitation which has led to a lack of trust in men. Therefore, no men from the sponsoring group should be alone with sponsored newcomer women, especially in their own home.

AURA TIPS

1. A lot can be in the way you ask the question, consider:

Our group really wants to publish a picture of your family in the church newsletter, can we have your permission?

Vs.

There is an option to publish your picture, it doesn't really matter either way, and it's your decision. What do you think?

2. Treat the newcomer's privacy in the same way you would like to have your own privacy treated.

3. Some newcomers may really want to have their picture published, or their story told. The key is that they make their own informed decision.

5. Always use your best judgement and discretion.

6. The trust that will develop between your sponsoring group and the newcomers will depend greatly on how well they perceive your ability to protect their privacy and safety.