**Organizing a Co-Sponsorship Team – Planning Worksheet**

Thank you for your interest in potentially co-sponsoring a refugee family! Refugee resettlement is most effective when community members, like you, are willing to devote time, attention, and resources to ensure new arrivals receive a warm welcome and are empowered with the skills they need to be successful. Co-sponsorship is a significant commitment and, though rewarding, is often challenging. That is why the Alliance for African Assistance (AAA) has **a multi-step process** to support interested community members in organizing themselves and learning more so that they can assess their own readiness and fit to be co-sponsors. Clarifying expectations and setting proper coordination mechanisms in place long before being matched with a refugee family helps improve the co-sponsorship experience for Co-Sponsorship Teams, the refugee family, and AAA.

To help you get started, we recommend that you hold regular meetings with other interested individuals to discuss the reflection questions in this worksheet. Space is provided for you to type or write notes of your ideas, questions, and proposed actions. Feel free to use a different format if you prefer, but do keep track of your responses because they will guide you in knowing what to ask, the next time you have a forum with AAA, as well as what you will ultimately include in your co-sponsorship application to AAA, once you are ready to take that step.

The worksheet is organized around the three actions that AAA suggests community members who are interested in getting directly involved with newly arriving families take at the initial stage: 1) internally reflect, 2) internally organize, and 3) learn more.

1. **Internally reflect**

Every individual will have a personal response to each question below, which should be shared and discussed. After listening to one another and engaging more deeply around the topic, see how to collectively craft a group answer as well. Remember that a successful Co-sponsorship Team needs to be able to communicate openly and honestly about difficult topics and be able to challenge one another to grow and learn.

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| **Guiding questions** | **Individual responses** | **Collective thoughts** | **Action points** |
| What are your motivations for getting involved? |  |  |  |
| What about the process makes you most worried? |  |  |  |
| What are the biases and values that you bring into this work? |  |  |  |
| Do you have lived experience as an immigrant or refugee? Or experience working previously with these populations? What were the key takeaways to keep in mind? |  |  |  |
| If you don’t have previous experience, do you have relationships with former refugees and immigrants who can be involved in your group or advise on some helpful/hurtful practices? |  |  |  |
| What expectations do you have for the outcome of sponsoring? For yourself and the refugee family? |  |  |  |
| Are there activities that you would not be comfortable engaging in with the refugee family? |  |  |  |
| Under what conditions or circumstances would you no longer be interested or comfortable supporting a refugee family? |  |  |  |
| What boundaries do you feel you would need to put in place in order to have a successful, long-term relationship with the family? |  |  |  |

**B. Internally organize**

It is important to become aware of your strengths and weaknesses currently as a team. This will help you identify where you can contribute the most but also help you identify gaps which you might aim to fill with additional team members and/or research. This section is organized around the different responsibilities of co-sponsorship groups.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Guiding Questions** | **Existing strengths** | **Concerns/Gaps** | **Action points** |
| **Responsibility #1: Raise funds** | | | |
| What existing resources do you have access to for raising funds? |  |  |  |
| What fundraising platforms might be most successful with your audience? |  |  |  |
| What special efforts might you make to mobilize donations? |  |  |  |
| How much do you think you would be able to raise and how long would it take? – *recognizing the minimum amount required is $3000* |  |  |  |
| How would you manage collecting pledges and ensuring that the minimum amount can be collected at the time of being matched with a family? – *view sample pledge record form* [*here*](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/18VK__aAKyKDG85Y9b5G0ydYRLzUnuGFP/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=115846289707045844108&rtpof=true&sd=true) |  |  |  |
| **Responsibility #2: Collect in-kind donations** | | | |
| What existing resources do you have access to for collecting and storing material items (furniture, kitchen items, clothing, etc.)? – *view the list of required items* [*here*](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1MLl6Yrhh0kjMcivPR08UoES_2PaA7Cts/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=115846289707045844108&rtpof=true&sd=true) |  |  |  |
| What special efforts might you make to collect needed items for refugee families? |  |  |  |
| What types of items do you think you would easily be able to get and how long would it take? |  |  |  |
| **Responsibility #3: Provide core services and mentorship** | | | |
| Who in the team or broader group is best placed to assist with each integration pathway? Do you have links to any relevant programs? – *review some of the tasks involved in each pathway* [*here*](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1JDQ4XQ8NApomfkWMrc_t7oVKMQnOqunP/view?usp=sharing) |  |  |  |
| Housing |  |  |  |
| Public Transportation designs, themes, templates and downloadable graphic  elements on Dribbble  Transportation |  |  |  |
| Health health Vector Icons free download in SVG, PNG Format  Health |  |  |  |
| education-icon | People Empowering &amp; Restoring Communities  Education |  |  |  |
| community icon | Network icon, Poster design, Art projects  Cultural adjustment |  |  |  |
| Jobs and finance |  |  |  |
| How much time are you willing to devote to this type of work (hours per week + months)? – *recognizing that collectively several hours are expected over 9 months, with the first 3 months after being matched being the most intensive and gradually reducing with time* |  |  |  |
| Do you expect to have enough committed volunteers to sub-divide and create multiple Teams who can sponsor more than one family in the same period? |  |  |  |
| How many families (sequentially) do you expect your group might be able to take on? – *recognizing each family is a 9 month commitment post-arrival* |  |  |  |
| If open to being matched repeatedly, how much of a break would you need in between? |  |  |  |
| **Responsibility #4: Collaborate with AAA’s staff to document and report on progress** | | | |
| Who will be the leader of the team and serve as the primary liaison with AAA? |  |  |  |
| How will you divide tasks and ensure individual team members fulfill their duties? |  |  |  |
| How will team members document their actions and share learnings with each other? |  |  |  |
| How will individuals and the team ask for help when they need it? (to AAA or enlisting additional volunteers) |  |  |  |
| How will team members hold each other accountable to maintaining boundaries and confidentiality? |  |  |  |
| How will you practice self-care to prevent burn-out? |  |  |  |
| What liability risks do you foresee and how can they be mitigated? |  |  |  |

**C. Learn more**

Successful Welcome Teams think of themselves as learners as much as teachers. Direct engagement with the refugee family will teach team members so many things but it is important to do independent research and group learning prior to being matched in order to become better equipped with the skills needed to be effective mentors and cross-cultural guides.

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| **Suggested actions** | **Ideas** | **Actions taken** | **Outcome** |
| Individually or as a group, read, watch, and discuss more about topics such as:   * + - The refugee experience     - Cross-cultural communication     - Racism and implicit bias     - Trauma informed care     - Inclusion practices     - Power dynamics     - Allyship and empowerment approaches   *A list of suggested resource materials can be found* [*here*](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1HaU2a-2fIUf0eQqgmtKdw73_KJYIgjAo/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=115846289707045844108&rtpof=true&sd=true) |  |  |  |
| Work with city leaders or community groups to organize public conversations and education sessions on the types of topics shared above to help the broader community prepare to be more welcoming. |  |  |  |
| Look for online or local events where former refugees and immigrants share their lived experiences of integration and listen for the barriers to inclusion that they faced and the type of support that was most helpful. |  |  |  |
| Connect with groups similar to yours who have experience working with refugees in the past to learn what worked, what didn’t, what skills were important, what surprised them, etc. |  |  |  |

**Way Forward**

After deeply thinking through the why, what, who, and how of co-sponsorship, what is your conclusion? Are you ready to make a commitment to take on this rewarding and important work? Review the criteria Co-sponsorship Teams need to meet to qualify, in light of the work you have done.

* Have **at least 7 individuals** who are willing to take on leadership roles, with 1 person identified as the team leader and 1 person identified as the team coordinator who will liaise closely with AAA.
* Be capable of **raising and holding at least $3000** which will go to supplement rent for the family until they can become self-sufficient as well as **collecting furniture and other items** families need
* Be committed to accompanying the family, **collectively** **devoting several hours every week**, for 9 months post-arrival (approximately **12+ months total of involvement** including pre-arrival planning)
* Be willing to enter into a (non-legally binding) **written agreement** with AAA which outlines the duties the Co-Sponsorship Team commits to perform and the conduct team members agree to uphold
* Be **open-minded, flexible, and persistent learners** who are willing to attend training and provide as well as receive feedback from AAA before, during, and after being matched with a refugee

How would you rate your readiness to form a Co-sponsorship Team?

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| --- | --- | --- |
| YES, we are ready and feel we have enough team members and clarity around how we will operate to apply.  If so, the next steps are:   * submit an application and background checks * attend training * wait for an appropriate match\* * sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) * prepare for and welcome family * fulfill responsibilities for 9 months | YES, we remain interested BUT need to gather more team members and/or figure out some more logistics before we will be ready to apply.  We think this might take us \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ amount of time.  We need \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ support to make this happen. | We have decided that we are unable at this time to meet all the requirements for co-sponsorship but are still interested in being involved in some way, such as   * Doing one-time service projects   (i.e. furnishing an apartment)   * Organizing fundraising campaigns * Hosting community education sessions * Mentoring in less intensive ways (i.e. First Friends) * Other: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |

Whatever you decide, please get back in touch with AAA’s team to plan the way forward. We greatly appreciate all the time, energy, and thought you have already put into your involvement. AAA stands ready to support you in this journey! **Contact us at** **anchalee@alliance-for-africa.org**

*\*Please be aware that AAA cannot predict how long groups might have to wait to be matched. Matching is done based on family needs, co-sponsor resources,*

*and availability at the time AAA receives an arrival notice. Co-sponsorship Teams cannot select families based on nationality or any other criteria.*

**Planning Group Member Details**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Name** | **Contact info** | **Area of expertise/ strength** | **Availability notes**  (days of the week; hours per week) | **Interest level**  (core member\* / support volunteer) |
| 1 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 3 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 4 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 5 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 6 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 7 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 8 |  |  |  |  |  |

ADD AS MANY ROWS AS NEEDED

*\*Please be aware that core team members will take responsibility for tasks in a particular pathway and ensure that activities are documented properly and reported to AAA’s case manager. All core members and other members who will have direct contact with the refugee family need background checks. Support volunteers who mobilize or research in the background (without direct contact) don’t have the same requirement.*