



Catholic Charities
Diocese of Charlotte

Welcoming the Stranger

Refugee Apartment Sponsorship Kit

*"For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me."
(Matthew 25:35)*

Who Are Refugees?

A refugee is someone who has fled their country of nationality, usually to a neighboring country, because of a “well-founded” fear of persecution based on race, religion, nationality, political beliefs or membership in a particular social group. After fleeing their country, most refugees live in refugee camps until they are accepted for residence by another country. The wait for acceptance ranges from one month to eight years. Only ½ to 1% of these applicants are approved to come to the United States.

How Does Refugee Resettlement Work?

The US Refugee Program is a public/private partnership. After the US State Department arranges for safe travel of refugees, they are assisted by local resettlement agencies and refugee service providers. The State Department provides limited funds to these agencies to set up housing, look for jobs, rally private community support and otherwise help the refugees fit into their new country. The North Carolina Division of Social Services also provides for refugee public assistance (also federally funded) in the form of medical assistance and cash assistance. Refugees are eligible for up to eight months after arrival in the country and eligibility criteria parallel the state’s Medicaid and welfare programs. Application for this assistance is made at the local DSS.

How Many Refugees Resettle in the U.S. Each Year?

The United States limits the number of refugees accepted for resettlement each year. A total of 69,987 refugees were resettled in the U.S. in 2014.

How Many Refugees Does Catholic Charities Diocese of Charlotte (CCDOC) Resettle Each Year?

Catholic Charities Diocese of Charlotte resettles between 300 - 400 refugees annually. Since 1975, CCDOC has resettled over 15,000 refugees representing 27 nationalities.

What Does Catholic Charities Diocese of Charlotte Do for Refugees?

The CCDOC Refugee Resettlement department provides a wide array of services to refugees assigned by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) in collaboration with the U.S. Dept. of State. These services include assistance with housing, social services, health care referrals, school registration, community and cultural orientation. The office also provides employment assistance, interpretation services and transportation to initial appointments. Instruction in English as a Second Language is available through referrals to the community college. In addition, CCDOC began a youth program in 2006 for refugee children who attend public school.

Do Refugees Contribute Toward Their Resettlement in the U.S.?

Yes, refugees pay taxes and re-pay their travel expenses. The primary goal of the resettlement process is to help refugees work toward self-sufficiency as contributing members of society and, eventually, attain their citizenship.

What is the Impact of Refugee Resettlement?

With the assistance of Catholic Charities, refugees gain success as contributing members of their communities and the local economy. The majority of adults who are able to work are successful in finding employment within three to five months. Most gain financial independence within two to three years while 60 – 75% eventually, become homeowners. Many others are business owners, athletes, carpenters, dentists, doctors, dress makers, engineers, interpreters, landscapers, nuns, nurses, pharmacists, pastors, students in baccalaureate programs, tailors, teachers and wood workers. Teachers report that students in the after-school program achieve and maintain an A/B average. Many refugee children complete post-secondary education.

Apartment Sponsorship

Refugee Apartment Sponsorship is a commitment to locate, gather and put in place furnishings, household items, beds, linens and other essentials for a two or three bedroom apartment for newly arriving refugees. A large, organized group could facilitate this by soliciting donations from its members to essentially start from scratch and provide everything a newly established household will need to function effectively.

Listed below are some ideas that groups can use to become involved depending on their size and desired level of commitment. Assess your resources and appoint a core committee to organize your volunteers. Once the commitment is made by the group, a lead contact person is identified to recruit members for a Refugee Resettlement Committee (RRC). This individual will act as liaison and work in conjunction with the CCDOC Volunteer Coordinator to facilitate delivery of donated items.

The committee members will work together on gathering gently used furniture. A checklist is provided below. As items are collected, they are stored at an agreed upon location. When the gathering process is complete, the liaison notifies the Volunteer Coordinator at CCDOC who will then pair the group with a soon to be arriving family. A key and the address to the apartment will be provided to the RRC lead as soon as possible preceding the family's arrival. Once the key is secured, the RRC can begin transporting furniture and household items and arranging them in the apartment in preparation for the refugees' arrival.

Sometimes, apartment sponsors will also make a cash contribution to CCDOC for the benefit of the refugee program at the time of their commitment. Contribution could provide for case coordination, interpreting and translation, job orientation and job placement, thus enabling refugees to become better educated and equipped to participate in their new American communities as well as progress towards self-sufficiency.

Our main objective is to provide a comfortable place for our families to land and feel welcomed. We want them to have all the "comforts of home". They are weary and likely missing family and friends. Our goal is to give them enough of the basics that they can focus on the task of integrating into their new community and settling in to their new life here.

If you have questions or concerns regarding apartment sponsorship, please call Catholic Charities at (704)370-3262.

Apartment Setup List

1. Furnishings:	✓	Notes
Bed Frames		
Twin bed complete (board and mattress)		
Double bed complete (box spring and mattress)		
Queen bed complete (box spring and mattress)		
Set of drawers, shelves or other unit appropriate for storage of clothing		
Kitchen table		
Kitchen chairs (one per person)		
Couch or equivalent living room seating (in addition to kitchen chairs)		
Other living room seating		
Lamp (1/ room unless installed lighting is present)		
Coffee table		
Lamp table		
2. Kitchen Items	✓	Notes
Plate, bowl, glass, mug / person		
Coffee pot		
Tea kettle		
Pans: at least 1 sauce & frying pan		
Stock Pot (8 qt.)		
Baking/ roasting dishes and / or pans		
Mixing/serving bowls		
Table & tea spoons		
Dinner Forks & Knives		
Kitchen Clock		
Kitchen utensils		
Can opener		
Spatula set		
Cutting board		
Cutlery tray		
Sink Set (dish rack)		
Rice cooker (14 cups)		
Kitchen towels		
Pot holders		
Colander / pasta drainer		
Cooking knives		

3. Linens and Other Household Items	✓	Notes
Towels		
1 set sheets, pillowcases and blanket per bed		
One pillow for each person		
AM/FM digital alarm clock radio		
Paper, pens and/or pencils and note pad		
Hangers		
Light bulbs		
Shower curtain & hooks		
4. Cleaning Supplies	✓	Notes
Dish washing soap		
Napkins & paper towels		
Bath & kitchen cleansers; scouring powder		
Sponges		
Laundry detergent		
Laundry basket		
Tall Waste baskets		
Small Waste basket		
Mop and broom		
Dust pan & brush		
Trash bag rolls		
Food storage bags		
Toilet bowl brush		
5. Toiletries	✓	Notes
Toilet paper (12-pk.)		
Shampoo & conditioner set		
One toothbrush per person		
Toothpaste		
Deodorant		
Shave cream / razors		
Soap		
Brushes/combs		
First Aid supplies		

Welcome Kits

For smaller groups that cannot commit to sponsoring a complete apartment, welcome kits are a more desirable option. Or, they can be assembled in conjunction with the sponsorship of an apartment by subgroups within the sponsoring organization. These are just ideas. Feel free to be creative. Again, the goal is to provide a comfortable welcome for our travel weary refugee families.

Food Baskets

When a family arrives, their kitchen is stocked with two weeks of food. These baskets are designed to supplement that initial stock. Providing a longer term supply of staples will allow the family to utilize the financial assistance they receive for fresh, perishable items. Some ideas:

- Rice
- Pasta
- Cooking oil
- Salt and pepper
- Basic spices
- Flour
- Sugar
- Canned tomatoes
- Spaghetti sauce
- Juice
- Paper towels

Personal Care Items

Most refugees arrive with next to nothing. This kit will provide a supply of personal care items for a newly arriving family. Items can be placed in a new bathroom trash can or some other appropriate, reusable container. Some ideas are:

- Shampoo
- Bath soap
- Hand soap
- Toothpaste
- Toothbrushes
- Deodorant
- Razors and shave cream
- Hair brushes/combs
- Feminine supplies
- Toilet paper
- First aid kit
- Tissues

Linens

Basic linens are provided in the apartment setup. It's desirable to have spare sets. Some ideas:

- Sheets (any size except king)
- Bath and hand towels and washcloths
- Bathmat
- Blankets
- Pillows

Cleaning Products

Smaller items can be placed in a new mop bucket.

- Broom
- Dustpan
- Mop
- Sponges
- Countertop cleaner
- Dish drying rack
- Dish soap
- Laundry detergent
- Paper towels
- Toilet bowl cleaner and brush (with holder)

Kitchen Essentials

Items can be collected in a new kitchen garbage can. Other appropriate, reusable containers can also be used.

- Plates
- Bowls
- Glasses
- Flatware
- Pots and pans
- Rice cooker
- Baking dishes
- Food storage containers
- Foil and plastic wrap
- Trash bags
- Napkins

School Supplies

Groups of items can be provided in a new child's backpack.

- Paper / notebooks
- Crayons
- Pencils
- Pencil sharpener
- Ruler
- Pencil box
- Blunt scissors
- Glue sticks
- Index cards