

## What is a Circle of Welcome (COW)?

- Minimum of six, up to 10-15 volunteers
- Two leaders preferred
  - Communication with the COW
  - Rallying and organizing the team
  - Direct collaboration with LSC staff (mainly the Outreach Coordinator)

## Requirements for Leaders:

Complete LSC paperwork packet and background checks. COW leaders will need to vet their team members. Complete LSC training session (usually offered online) with the other COW volunteers (1.5 hours). The leaders are responsible to provide LSC teammates in a monthly log of the hours the group spends working with /helping the families every month

## Commitment:

As a COW, your team commits to walk with this family in friendship and assist with (and in some cases, completing) the core services for 6 months to one year. Team leaders commit to engaging in regular, timely communication with LSC teammates/ Outreach Coordinator to make sure that services are provided and not duplicated. Your COW commits to partnering with LSC staff to assist in moving the family toward self-sufficiency. Your COW agrees to follow LSC lead on timelines and priorities of the needs and services, respecting the role of the case manager, and taking a “crew mindset” into all interactions. Your COW should expect challenges with the unexpected nature of refugee services (including the language barriers) and act with flexibility and resilience.

The COW provides significant support and resources to resettle a family. COWs provide transportation, assistance, setting up a household, and community orientation. COWs are not required to provide a financial contribution, however, mileage and assisting with donated or purchased items for a family initially is typical.

## Circle of Welcome Activities:

- The COW should be prepared to provide a two-time gift of groceries for the families when they move into permanent housing, and before they arrive at temporary housing from the airport.
- The COW should be prepared to purchase a culturally appropriate meal for the clients when they arrive from the airport.
- The COW should be prepared to assist with the move to temporary housing, as well as help source donated furniture/household items for the housing set-up.
- The COW should be prepared to assist with transport to medical appointments and grocery shopping, when the family is in the first few months of arriving to the US (R&P program).
- The COW should be prepared to assist with the core services. Core services include; transport to health screenings, the move to permanent housing, providing the culturally appropriate meal on arrival, assisting with job applications, assisting with SSA appointments, enrolling the clients in ESL class, helping with bus training, etc. LSC teammates will provide direction regarding timelines and communicate needs as they arise for refugee families. LSC teammates will communicate and assist the COW in identifying the appropriate timelines to begin moving from an intense support role into a relationship-only role, encouraging the clients in self-sufficiency.