

Practical Help and Resources *for Immigrants and Refugees*



For many immigrants and refugees, adjusting to life in the United States can be daunting. The following list highlights some specific areas in which a newcomer may need help.

U.S. culture and social skills

- ▶ Social courtesies and taboos
- ▶ Punctuality and time orientation
- ▶ Direct communication (“yes” means yes and “no” means no)
- ▶ Personal space
- ▶ Gender equality
- ▶ Tipping

Housing

- ▶ Renting (the lease, maintenance issues, moving)
- ▶ Rent assistance

Jobs

- ▶ How to find jobs (including résumé and interviews)
- ▶ Pay and benefits
- ▶ Minimum wage and working overtime

Finances

- ▶ Budgeting
- ▶ Checking and savings accounts
- ▶ Credit cards
- ▶ How and when to file taxes
- ▶ Identity theft and avoiding common scams





Health

- ▶ Dialing 911
- ▶ The Emergency Room versus urgent care clinics
- ▶ Healthcare financial assistance
- ▶ Dental care
- ▶ Vaccinations and preventing illness

Shopping

- ▶ Locating food assistance providers
- ▶ Using store cards, coupons and rebates
- ▶ Thrift stores and garage sales
- ▶ Return policies

The law and legal help

- ▶ Knowing one's legal rights
- ▶ Becoming a U.S. citizen

Children

- ▶ Child health and safety
- ▶ Punishing children in public
- ▶ Bullying

Education

- ▶ Learning English (ESL – English as a second language)
- ▶ Finding a school for your children
- ▶ Parent-teacher conferences
- ▶ Community colleges, universities and vocational schools





Cars and driving

- ▶ Learning the rules of the road and getting a driver's license
- ▶ Buying and registering a car
- ▶ Car insurance
- ▶ Child seats
- ▶ What to do if stopped by the police
- ▶ Traffic tickets
- ▶ Drinking and driving
- ▶ Honking

Community resources

- ▶ Public libraries
- ▶ Transportation options
- ▶ Recreation centers and outdoor activities



[*The Immigrant Guide*](#) is an excellent resource filled with practical information about living and succeeding in the United States. Links to other helpful resources can also be found at this website.





Support for Refugees

A number of national agencies are actively seeking volunteers to help resettle refugees and asylum seekers. Volunteer opportunities include welcoming refugee families at the airport, helping these families get settled and learn their way around, practicing conversational English and other acts of care that will help make their transition to a new country easier.

Resettlement agencies in the U.S. include:

International Rescue Committee

www.rescue.org

Volunteer opportunities in 28 U.S. cities

Lutheran Family Services

www.onelfs.org

Volunteer opportunities in the Midwest and Rocky Mountain region

World Relief

www.worldrelief.org

Volunteer opportunities in 17 U.S. cities

Catholic Charities

www.catholiccharitiesusa.org

Volunteer opportunities in numerous U.S. cities

