

*U.S. Department of State*  
**Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration**  
**Office of Admissions**  
Reception and Placement Program

**Reception and Placement of Refugees Admitted to the United States for Resettlement**

**OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE TO RESETTLEMENT AGENCIES**

April 12, 2001

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The following guidance is intended to describe with greater specificity the Reception and Placement (R&P) program services included in the Cooperative Agreement Between the Government of the United States and the Voluntary Agencies with whom the Department of State partners in the provision of R&P services for newly arriving refugees. This guidance provides the minimum standards for R&P services delivered during the applicable service delivery period for arriving refugees; voluntary agencies that do more than what this guidance calls for are to be commended and encouraged to continue with such practices.

The Department of State expects voluntary agencies to undertake best efforts to ensure that housing for refugees meets locally accepted standards for health standards and safety and that other minimum standards are met, but also recognizes that compliance with some aspects of this guidance may not always be possible. Compliance requires the cooperation of the refugee and his or her family members, especially in cases involving an anchor relative. In cases when non-cooperation by the refugee or his or her family members makes compliance difficult or impossible, the voluntary agencies should ensure that the refugees and relatives are counseled and that any such counseling is noted in the case file. Likewise, there may be other barriers to full compliance that are beyond the control of the voluntary agencies. In such instances, the circumstances should be documented.

## **HOUSING**

- **Acceptability:**
  - Housing should be safe, sanitary, and in good repair.
  
- **Space:**
  - Housing should provide minimum habitable area for each occupant in accordance with locally accepted standards.
  - There should be an appropriate number of bedrooms or sleeping areas for the family.
  
- **Safety:**
  - All areas and components of the housing (interior and exterior) should be free of visible health and safety hazards and in good repair, including, for example:
    - No visible bare wiring;
    - No peeling or flaking interior paint for dwellings built before 1978;

- No visible mold; and
- No detectable dangerous or unsanitary odors.
  
- **Housing should include the following:**
  - Identified and accessible emergency escape route(s);
  - Fire extinguishers in accessible locations where required;
  - Working locks on all windows and outside doors;
  - Appropriate number of working smoke detectors;
  - Windows in working order;
  - Adequate heat, ventilation, lighting, and hot and cold running water; and
  - Electrical fixtures in good repair.
  
- **Appliances/fixtures:**
  - Kitchen: each residence shall be equipped with stove, oven, and refrigerator in good repair.
  - Bathroom(s): each residence shall be equipped with sink, flush toilet, and shower or bath in good repair.
  
- **Garbage and Extermination:**
  - There should be easily accessible storage or disposal facility for garbage.
  - There should be no evidence of current rodent or insect infestation.
  
- **Disability Accommodation:**
  - In cases of refugees with disabilities, housing should be free of, or permit the removal of, architectural barriers and otherwise accommodate known disabilities, to the extent possible.
  
- **Affordability:**
  - To the extent possible, the family should be able to assume payment of rent at the end of the R&P period, based upon projected family income from all sources. The family should be left with sufficient resources for other essential expenses (food, transportation, utilities, etc.) after rent payments are made.

## **FURNISHINGS<sup>1</sup>**

The following items should be provided:

- **Furniture:**
  - Bedding (described as bed frame and spring, or equivalent, and mattress) appropriate for age and gender composition of family. (Only married couples or small children of the same sex may be expected to share beds.)

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<sup>1</sup> Furniture, household items and clothing listed need not be new, but must be clean, in good condition, and functional.

- One set of drawers, shelves or other unit appropriate for storage of clothing (in addition to closet, unless closet has shelving to accommodate clothing) per family
- One kitchen table per family
- One kitchen chair per person
- One couch per family, or equivalent seating (in addition to kitchen chairs)
- One lamp per room, unless installed lighting is present
  
- **Kitchen items:**
  - One place setting of tableware (fork, knife, spoon) per person
  - One place setting of dishes (plate, bowl and cup) per person
  - Pots and pans: at least one sauce pan, one frying pan, one baking dish
  - Mixing/serving bowls
  - One set of kitchen utensils (such as spatula, wooden spoon, knife, serving utensils, etc.)
  - Can opener
  - Baby items as needed
  
- **Linens and Other Household Supplies:**
  - One towel per person
  - One set of sheets and blankets for each bed
  - One pillow and pillowcase for each person
  - Alarm clock
  - Paper, pens and/or pencils
  - Light bulbs
  
- **Cleaning supplies:**
  - Dish soap
  - Bathroom/kitchen cleanser
  - Sponges or cleaning rags and/or paper towels
  - Laundry detergent
  - Two waste baskets
  - Mop or broom
  - Trash bags
  
- **Toiletries:**
  - Toilet paper
  - Shampoo
  - Soap
  - One toothbrush per person
  - Toothpaste
  - Personal hygiene items as appropriate

## **FOOD**

The following items should be provided:

- Available on arrival: culturally appropriate, ready-to-eat food, plus one day's worth of additional food supplies and staples (including baby food as necessary).

- Within one day of arrival, food or food allowance at least equivalent to the food stamp allocation for that family unit and continued food assistance until receipt of food stamps or until individual or family is able to provide food for himself, herself or themselves.

## **OTHER NECESSITIES**

- Voluntary agencies should confirm that each adult refugee has an appropriate amount of pocket money during the first 30 days.

## **CLOTHING**

- Appropriate seasonal clothing required for work, school, and everyday use as required for all members of the family, including proper footwear for each member of the family, and diapers for children as necessary.

## **TRANSPORTATION TO SERVICES**

- Transportation provided by the agency must be in compliance with local motor safety law (seatbelts, child seats, number of occupants per vehicle, etc.)

## **RECEPTION SERVICES**

- Transportation provided by the agency must be in compliance with local motor safety law (seatbelts, child seats, number of occupants per vehicle, etc.)
- For free cases: A voluntary agency or other designated representative should visit the refugee within 24 hours of arrival to ensure that all immediate basic needs have been met.

## **INTAKE AND ORIENTATION**

For each adult refugee, resettlement agencies should:

- Conduct intake interview within 5 working days of arrival;
- Conduct housing and personal safety orientation within 5 working days; and
- Complete orientation on other topics within 30 days of arrival.

All orientation and intake interviews should be conducted in a language-appropriate manner.

## **REFERRAL TO SERVICES**

Resettlement agencies should ensure, to the extent possible, that each adult refugee:

- Applies for Social Security card within 7 working days of arrival;
- Applies for cash and medical assistance, as appropriate, within 7 working days of arrival;
- Applies for food stamps, if necessary, within 7 working days of arrival; and.
- Meets school enrollment requirements and registers children for school within 30 days of arrival.

## **HOME VISITS**

- Resettlement agencies should conduct at least one home visit to each family within 30 days of arrival.

## **RESETTLEMENT PLAN**

Resettlement agencies should:

- Refer to employment services and ESL, if appropriate, within 10 working days of arrival; and
- Refer non-employable refugees to other services, if appropriate, within 10 working days of arrival.

## **HEALTH**

Resettlement agencies should:

- Ensure that every refugee has a health assessment within 30 days of arrival. If factors beyond the control of the voluntary agency make this impossible, the agency shall inform PRM; and
- Ensure that refugees with acute health care requirements receive appropriate and timely medical attention.