



Toolkit for Congregations to Faithfully Accompany People Seeking Asylum

This toolkit is designed as a resource to congregations in the United States to accompany individuals and families seeking asylum in their journey to find safety and wholeness. It was developed as part of an ecumenical task force with Church World Service.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Theological Grounding for Accompaniment Work and Framing of the Toolkit
2. Overview of the Asylum Process and Recent Changes that Put Asylum Seekers in Danger
3. Doing the Work of Accompaniment
4. Glossary of Important Terms
5. Infographics
6. Accompaniment & Sponsoring Asylum Seekers Resources
7. Additional Resources and Learning
8. Contacts

1. Theological Grounding for Accompaniment Work and Framing of the Toolkit

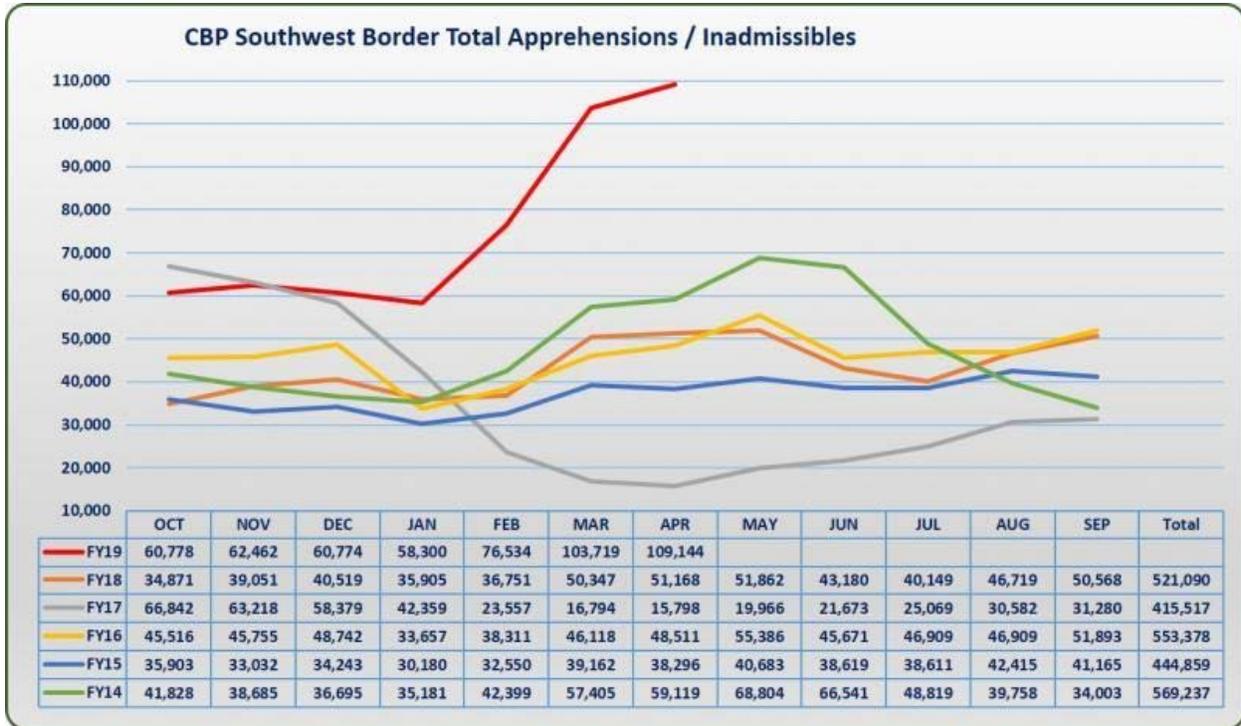
Faith communities in the U.S. have a long history of standing with asylum seekers and advocating for the rights of refugees, including the Presbyterian Church (USA). Many of the national faith-based organizations such as Church World Service, Episcopal Migration Ministries, Lutheran Immigration & Refugee Service and HIAS, were born out of a deeply rooted faith teaching to welcome the stranger, the foreigner. Indeed, Presbyterians were deeply involved in the founding of Church World Service as an ecumenical response to the refugee crisis from World War II. The models for how we support and accompany refugees and asylum seekers have evolved over the decades, but the commitment remains the same—to welcome our neighbors and love them as ourselves, especially those who are made vulnerable or marginalized by the laws of their home country or internal conflict.

U.S. and international refugee law are built upon these same values. Asylum seekers have the legal right to seek protection from persecution and violence under U.S. and international law and should not be detained for seeking refuge. And it is the government's duty to ensure that there is meaningful access to the asylum process. As the number of asylum seekers has grown at the U.S./Mexico border, however, instead of developing pro-active mechanisms to ensure an orderly asylum process, the U.S. government has instead implemented policies that seek to inhibit or deter people from seeking asylum:

- Separation of families, including young children from their parents
- Closing of the border ports of entry to asylum seekers or limiting processing to 12 or 20 per day, referred to as metering
- Criminal charges for entry or smuggling of their children – forcing them to go to Federal Court in addition to immigration court
- Sub-standard detention conditions at border stations
- Dumping people on the streets
- Remain in Mexico Policy which deports people to Mexico while they wait for their asylum case to be heard in immigration court

Many faith communities mobilized with immigrants' rights coalitions such as Families Belong Together to end the "zero tolerance" prosecution policies that were ripping families apart. As a result, thousands of asylum-seeking families were released causing a rapid influx with many social agencies and faith communities supporting at the border without enough infrastructure to house, clothe, feed and assist with transportation for those reuniting with family members.

Despite these measures, the number of asylum seekers continues to grow. While US policies focus on the border itself, little is being done to address the root causes that push people to leave their home countries in the first place.



Source: <https://www.cbp.gov/newsroom/stats/sw-border-migration>

Unfortunately, there are [reports](#) that families are still being separated at the border as CBP is deeming some parents “unfit or a danger to their child” simply because they may have a conviction, likely related to an immigration violation. This is why continued advocacy and public action on this issue is still of the utmost importance. (Advocacy Resources are included in the appendix.)

Both faith-based and other humanitarian groups all along the Southwest border region are providing immediate humanitarian assistance. They receive asylum seekers from border patrol stations, immigration detention centers or simply left in the streets to fend for themselves. They offer them a warm welcome and provide them with food, clothing, showers, telephone communication with family or friends, travel assistance and other practical guidance.

Many asylum-seeking families are traveling throughout the United States to reunify with family members or friends, but there is often not enough support in their destination locations to help them find legal support and meet their basic needs. In some cases, there may not be a family member with whom to reunite, which means they have no place to go once released from detention. This is why the accompaniment and solidarity work is so important in this moment.

The situation is extremely dynamic due to both changes to U.S. policies about how to treat the asylum seekers and the ups and downs in migration patterns. Please refer to the Resource section in the back to know where to find reliable information on the current situation.

2. Overview of the Asylum Process and Recent Changes that Put Asylum Seekers in Danger

There has been an increase of migrants traveling from Central America in since 2014, particularly from Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador. Some of the root causes forcing people to leave their homes include violence (gang, gender-based, kidnapping), corruption, and poverty – in rural areas in part due to climate change. Most asylum seekers traveling from Central America are families that include young children.

There have been reports that what should happen at the border is not always what does happen. What should happen is that individuals are screened, admitted, and offered protection. Their cases should be pursued fairly and humanely. They should be given their legal rights to protection and safety.

Reports of what is happening includes multiple attempts to block people from seeking safety through asylum. Policies are changing frequently, but some of these have included detaining people indefinitely and forcing families to stay in Mexico. There have been reports that especially certain areas of Mexico are not safe for families to stay while seeking asylum, and that certain minority groups are especially are at risk. People often travel in larger groups or “caravans” to increase their own safety as they travel.

Anyone physically in the United States can ask for asylum and will be granted if he/she demonstrates past persecution or fear of future persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group or political opinion as long as they are not subject to any legal bars. When asylum seekers present themselves at a port of entry or to border patrol without legal documentation, they are detained and the process for removal begins. While detained, they must be asked if they are afraid of returning to their country of origin. If they express fear about returning, they go through what’s called a Credible Fear Interview to assess the level of danger they report.

While asylum seekers flee for safety for the same reasons refugees do, the process in which they seek refuge is different. Individuals seeking asylum do so by already being present at the border or inside the U.S., while resettled refugees have already gone through a lengthy application process prior to arriving in the U.S.¹.

Below is a graphic showing the basic process for a person seeing asylum at a land border. Please note that the information that follows is provided for basic informational purposes and is subject to changes in policy directives and procedural protocol by the U.S. Government.

¹ A diagram describing the different procedures for refugees and asylum is included at the end of the document.



Upon presenting themselves at a port of entry or to a CBP officer, asylum seekers are viewed as inadmissible and will be taken to temporary holding facilities. While detained, they go through a Credible Fear Interview (CFI). These interviews were formerly completed by USCIS officers specially trained in asylum law, but in April 2019 this process was changed to CBP.

Generally speaking, once a person seeking asylum has passed a credible fear interview, they may be released from the holding facility to travel to live with their sponsor (usually a family member or friend) or sent to an immigration detention center. They are given “Notice to Appear” documentation that requires them to go to an immigration court. If they are being released, their immigration case is scheduled at the court nearest to their destination city. They are allowed to travel freely in the US as long as they continue through the asylum process. They are required to attend all their immigration court hearings and typically are also required to attend regularly scheduled check-ins with the nearest ICE office. They are required to notify the immigration court and the ICE office of any change of address during the court process. (Many are also released with an electronic ankle monitor which can only be taken off by an ICE officer.)

The Migrant Protection Protocols policy, also known as the “Remain in Mexico Plan,” forces certain migrants to stay in Mexico throughout the duration of their US asylum application process. Although an injunction stopped the policy briefly, it resumed on 4/15/19 in San Diego and El Paso with plans to cross the southern border. According to the UNCHR, prior to the court’s injunction, 1,200 individuals had been returned to Mexico while awaiting their asylum claim decision, and this number was rapidly increasing. CBP is selecting certain populations to wait in Mexico, and have determined that they will not include people with especially vulnerable profiles including pregnant women. However, there have already been reports that pregnant and other vulnerable groups are some of the individuals being returned to Mexico.

People seeking asylum, especially those facing deportation, have many legal needs. Some may be able to be met by members of a congregation or other organization, as not all tasks must be completed by an attorney. However, all persons seeking asylum should find low-cost or free immigration legal services providers in the area. Legal needs may include:

- Preparing for Credible/Reasonable Fear Interview: Migrants learn how to tell their persecution story in a way that best shows that they meet the requirement for asylum.
- File Requests for Change of Venue: Request for a case to be transferred to the city of final destination. Can be filed pro se (i.e. the (im)migrant files on his/her own behalf).
- File I-589 Asylum Application Pro-Se: Can be filed pro se (i.e. the migrant files on his/her own behalf). It is recommended to first seek legal guidance and assistance with filing (must be less than 1 year after entering the U.S.)²
- Employment authorization: In most cases asylum seekers cannot work when they first arrive and it could take a long time for them to get a work permit. There is the possibility of day labor or temporary work, but that would be on a case-by-case basis. More information on day labor rights can be found in the resource section of this document. Full time work or continuous temporary work with the same employer would require a work permit. People who have been released on parole are immediately eligible to apply for their Employment Authorization Document (EAD), also referred to as a work permit. Other people seeking asylum are able to apply for their EAD 150 days after their asylum application date. Although eligible to apply for EAD, there is no guarantee of approval. If approved, it can take 3-6 months to receive the EAD.
- Represent in merits hearing: This can only be done by an attorney or fully accredited representative.

In general, asylum seekers are not eligible for federally funded benefits until they receive asylum. Eligibility for state funded programs varies by state. Once a person is granted asylum, however, they are eligible for the following:

- Work authorization (if not already issued)
- Social security card
- Apply for spouse and children to join them in the US
- Permanent Residency (after one year)
- Citizenship (after five years)

² A person seeking asylum may include their spouse and children who are in the United States on their application at the time they file or at any time until a final decision is made on their case. To include their child on your application, the child must be under 21 and unmarried.



If eligible according to income guidelines, they will also be eligible for public assistance benefits including:

- Refugee Cash assistance or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits
- Medicaid (eight months) if eligible according to income guidelines.

It's important to connect asylees to local refugee resettlement agencies once granted asylum to ensure they have the opportunity to enroll in additional services, such as applying for public assistance benefits and employment services. Persons granted asylum are also eligible for additional Office of Refugee Resettlement or privately-funded programs through local refugee resettlement agencies.

Services at local resettlement offices may include:

- Legal (for status adjustment and family reunification applications)
- Matching Grant (cash alternative to public assistance program)
- Employment readiness and post-employment support
- English language classes
- Youth programs
- Intensive case management programs for additional barriers to integration
- Cultural orientation
- Mental health

Please keep in mind that some programs' eligibility requirements are time sensitive, so it is important to enroll as quickly as possible once granted asylum. To find a local resettlement agency near you, see the State Department list of resettlement agency contacts [here](#). Even if you do not find a local office in your community, limited services may be available if a person lives within 100 miles of a local office. People who have been granted asylum have the freedom to move anywhere in the US. If they do move to a new location, it is imperative that they update their address with the US Postal Service and with the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) by filing an AR-11 form.

3. Doing the Work of Accompaniment

Accompaniment work can take many forms. As you, your group, or congregation discern whether and how you will engage in the ministry of accompaniment, we offer the following information as an overview to help guide and inform your work. To go deeper on any topic and find additional resources, please refer to the links and appendices.

What is accompaniment?

When we say "accompaniment," we mean the work of walking alongside an asylum seeker or family as they go through the legal process of seeking asylum. The work of accompaniment can include:

- Legal Services
- Housing, Clothing, Food
- Language/ Interpretation
- Medical and Mental Health

- Education³
- Social/Spiritual Needs
- Community Activity
- Job Placement

Purpose

The goal of the accompaniment work will be to ensure that asylum seekers can win their cases, adjust status, find work and begin to have a stable life wherein they can support themselves, their families, and participate in the life of their community. All the work that you/your group do in the ministry of accompaniment should be focused on achieving this goal of self-sufficiency and independence.

Accompaniment Versus Hosting

The host/guest narrative which undergirds the way mainstream culture thinks about immigration is one of the challenges to achieving just and humane immigration policy. Faith traditions hold a long history of welcoming hospitality that goes back thousands of years that is helpful to tap into for this work. However, we must also recognize the history we inherit is one where Indigenous land of North America was taken through a system of exploitation and genocide. It is also important to recognize the history of colonization from religions such as Christianity and the problematic nature that many missionary models of proselytizing created. Understanding the historical context it is extremely important to focus on solidarity and walking alongside asylum seekers understanding the power dynamics within the relationship of welcoming people who have experienced trauma and marginalization.

Some Examples of Individual Volunteer Roles Include:

- **Court Accompaniment:** Going with the asylum-seeker or person facing deportation to their court appointments. Helping migrants arrange transportation from city to city if the court is far from where they live. There are no legal requirements or repercussions to welcoming and accompanying asylum seekers. There is no legal responsibility to ensure that anyone show up in court, however, accompanying to find ample legal service means that assisting with transportation to court dates would be very important.
- **Ice check ins:** The asylum seeker may have to report to the local ICE office on a regular basis. It can be helpful to have a U.S. Citizen accompany the asylum seeker to these appointments.
- **Medical:** Assist with gaining access to medical services as needed, including access to mental health providers, scheduling appointments and taking them.
- **Education access:** Enrolling children in schools; finding free English classes.
- **Transportation:** Provide transportation as needed (i.e. grocery store, medical appointments, etc.)
- **Financial:** Bail or bond funds; gift cards and/or cash for groceries and personal needs.
 - There are no legal financial responsibilities, but allies should understand there will be financial or donation collection requirement to meet basic needs of clothing, food, housing, legal services, medical expenses and any other need that may arise. If you are working to get someone released from detention, you may

³ Education includes both school enrollment for children and English language and other classes for adults. Children have the right to receive a public education regardless of their status. It is the family's responsibility to ensure that their child enrolls in school. The government-issued Notice to Appear documentation is sufficient identification.



- have to organize your community around raising money or signing off on a bond (this toolkit is focused on family released from detention without bond, there is another toolkit for helping people get released with a bond hearing).
- **Housing:** Provide short-term housing for an individual or a family and assist with locating longer-term housing options.
- **Bus Station Support:** Bring food, diaper bags, and other necessities to asylum-seeking families passing through a major transit point during a long trip to their destination. Some are offering first aid along the way. Meet asylum-seekers at the bus station upon arrival.

Best Practices and Important Considerations

BUILD PARTNERSHIPS

If your group/congregation hasn't accompanied members of the immigrant community in the past, it will first be important to educate your faith community and develop a leadership team or working group who can engage with other immigrants' rights groups or networks in your region before receiving an asylum seeker.

CREATING A SAFE SPACE

Although it is natural to share what is important to you with others, we firmly request that faith communities not engage in proselytism to asylum seekers. Proselytizing is defined as inducing someone to convert to one's own religion." In all that you do, make sure the asylum seekers understand that your accompaniment is not contingent on their participation in your religion; we don't want them to feel they have to become like us in order to receive our assistance.

SUSTAINABILITY

Asylum seekers arrive with so many needs you may think it's impossible to help with all of them. It is important in your accompaniment that you always remember you are not ultimately responsible for their well-being. The key to serving in a way that is sustainable is maintaining healthy boundaries, which includes having a clear understanding of your responsibilities, identifying whose responsibility it is to help solve a particular problem, and recognizing your limits. At times, it means taking a step back to make sure that the asylum seekers and the volunteers agree about what the problem is and how it should be addressed before even taking any actions.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Respect the privacy of the asylum-seekers you accompany. Let them determine if and what they are willing to share about their past, especially traumatic experiences. They may not want the stories they share with you to be shared with others. Ask them what you may tell others and what they consider to be private information. Safeguard the confidentiality of refugees by not making their names, stories, and personal circumstances public in any fashion without their consent. This includes the use of photographs and information in news stories for church bulletins, corporate newsletters, and local newspapers, as well as all forms of online social media, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Vine, etc.

Never share medical information with anyone (except the health care provider) without the client's explicit consent. The client is the only one who can make a decision about what information they share about their own health. You may be privy to medical information because someone has confided in you or because you were present at a medical appointment, but that does not mean that volunteers on your team have a right to that same information. Keep in mind that information that seems "sensitive" to one person may not be the same for another, so do not assume that because you see it as an innocuous condition, that the person

in question may feel the same way. Take great care in exchanging information about the asylum seekers you accompany—including information about where they are residing. In this time of growing anti-immigrant sentiment, this is a safety and security concern.

KNOW AND BE CLEAR ABOUT YOUR CAPACITY

If and when you engage in the work of accompaniment, it is important to be clear on what you/your group can and cannot do. There have been cases where a congregation wants to host an asylum seeker, but is not prepared for the commitment, and has left people in need in limbo.

We encourage you to use the outlines and checklists provided in this toolkit to learn what all could be involved in your own work of accompaniment, and then to clearly define what you do and do not have the capacity to do.

DEVELOPING A HEALTHY AND JUST APPROACH

There are natural power imbalances in the work of accompaniment. For example, the asylum seeker may not speak English, may not be literate, and may not understand US systems. Even still, your role is to walk alongside, not to “do for.” This is easier said than done, and requires ongoing discernment, learning, self-analysis, and building a relationship with the asylum-seeker that uplifts their own sense of agency and encourages their independence and self-determination.

Furthermore, while the work and the relationship will be between individuals, it is important to understand and acknowledge the larger cultural matrix in which you are engaging this work. This means learning, deepening self-awareness, and ongoing self-analysis on topics including, but not limited to, the dynamics of US racism, the ever-changing US political and policy landscape, the history and present of US and other countries’ foreign and domestic policies that contribute to forced displacement, and critical thinking about older, paternalistic, “charity” models of service provision and how to engage a more asset and strengths-based approach to accompaniment and other work. For people of faith, this process will undoubtedly connect to the teachings of your faith traditions and your own life of faith, and inspire you to question, reflect, pray, and go deeper in your own spiritual walk.

We recommend the following resources for critical engagement on these issues and questions:

Stand Up for Racial Justice (SURJ): [How Whiteness, the Savior Complex, and Power Dynamics Affect the Sponsorship Experience](#)

Description of Volunteer/Committee Roles and Tasks

LEGAL SERVICES AND SUPPORT

People seeking asylum or facing deportation have many legal needs. Some may be met by the asylum seeker and accompaniment team, as not all tasks must be completed by an attorney. However, all persons seeking asylum should find low-cost or free immigration legal services providers in the area. This volunteer committee supports the asylum-seeker as he/she works with an attorney and goes through the legal process. This may include accompanying the asylum seeker to court appointments, ICE check-ins, preparation for the Credible Fear Interview, filing requests for change of venue, assisting in filing the Employment Authorization Document, filing the asylum application, etc.⁴

HOUSING

Asylum-seekers will need housing while they go through the legal process. The housing volunteer committee would secure long-term transitional housing (housing for a few weeks to more than six months).

⁴ Visit www.immigrationadvocates.org/ for a list of pro-bono legal services



The committee should be mindful of the group's/congregation's capacity (e.g. how long can you afford to pay rent? Or, how long can someone host the asylum-seeker in their home?), be aware of logistical considerations (proximity to public transportation, services/appointments, etc) and access to social support. Housing models are discussed in more detail at the end of this section.

CLOTHING, FOOD, MATERIAL NEEDS

Until asylum-seekers receive their work authorization and are able to partially or fully financially support themselves, they will need assistance to meet their material needs. A clothing, food, and material needs committee would focus on securing the needed items for the asylum-seeker at the start of the accompaniment relationship, and set up a process of checking-in to identify and meet ongoing or emerging material needs.

MEDICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH

Asylum-seekers will have medical and mental health needs, just like any of us, but also may have heightened medical/mental health needs due to their long journey and past trauma. The medical and mental health team would identify local healthcare providers to provide the needed care for the asylum-seekers.

EDUCATION

Asylum-seekers, be they children or adults, will have educational needs. Children are eligible to be enrolled in public school, regardless of status. Adults will require English language instruction, and also would benefit from cultural orientation education. The education committee would focus its energies on the educational and cultural orientation needs of the asylum-seekers.

SOCIAL AND SPIRITUAL NEEDS

Asylum-seekers have gone through a harrowing journey, and are in the midst of a challenging and uncertain time as they go through the legal process. Opportunities to socialize, build relationship, and receive social and spiritual support are vital. The social and spiritual needs committee would discern with the asylum-seekers how to meet emotional and spiritual support needs. This can include connecting with community events or opportunities, regular visits from accompaniment team members they trust, and/or connecting with a religious or spiritual community of their own choosing. A particular challenge for asylum seekers is the amount of idle time once the person is settled in their new home/environment. Finding meaningful outlets for asylum seekers to share their gifts and skills can be helpful in overcoming a sense of helplessness, even depression, with too much idle time and can even help with recovery. This often means creative approaches to volunteering or other ways for the asylum seekers to contribute to their own future and/or be able to give to others.

COMMUNITY ACTIVITY

This volunteer committee would offer an invitation to the asylum-seeker to get to know the wider community through activities. This could include visiting the local public library or swimming pool, enjoying a walk or sports in a local park, etc.

How do we identify an asylum seeker who needs support?

Once your congregation has decided to support a family in this way, you can be connected with a family who needs support, such as CWS at resourcecenter@cwsglobal.org. CWS is connected with a network of grassroots shelters along the southwest border and is in regular communication with shelters who have identified families in need of support once released from detention. Getting matched with a family requires some flexibility-you may be waiting some time for a family to be matched, or there could be a family ready to travel within a few days. We will do our best to work with you on timing, though, if you need a week or two to get things in place once a family is ready for travel. It is also important to inform us of the family size

you are able to host. If you have members in your congregation that speak a particular language, that is also helpful to know, although not a requirement. There is often limited information available that can be provided to congregations ahead of time, however, we can always provide family size, ages, first names, country of origin, languages spoken, and any known medical needs. We are not able to provide specific information about a family's story and reason for fleeing their country of origin.

Housing Arrangements

There are a variety of housing models which have been used to provide long-term transitional housing (ranging from a few weeks to more than six months). Each has its advantages and disadvantages. Critical in selecting a housing property is considering its location within the city/community and how to ensure access to transportation for the asylum seeker to attend necessary appointments, go to school or work, and receive the appropriate social support.

Existing asylum housing programs use the following types of physical settings: a repurposed Convent building, a repurposed floor in a shared Seminary dormitory building, a repurposed manse or parsonage, a standalone residential property, a rental apartment, and rooms with a private residence of a local family.

Church-owned Property

One model for asylum housing is the use of a manse/parsonage or repurposing part of the church building to provide temporary housing. This is one way that churches can see an under used part of their property as a blessing (allowing them to do a new ministry) instead of a drain (something to maintain). One of the advantages of this type of arrangement is that it both creates a sense of congregational responsibility (as opposed to one individual host) and at the same time offers a certain degree of independence. In determining if this is an appropriate arrangement its impact on building use for other church functions and privacy for the asylum seekers. The General Liability Insurance should cover any mishaps that could occur while someone is living in the church building. You may wish to talk with your insurance company to verify your coverage. You may also need to verify zoning or other local ordinances on building use and building codes prior to occupancy.

Living with a Family In a Private Home

In many instances a family agrees to open up their home. Placing someone in a private home can be one way to provide both housing and social support is often the best first placement option. There are a number of considerations, however, that should be discussed prior to making such a commitment. In some cases, living with a family might be part of a longer-term housing strategy (for a few weeks or months while other housing is secured). The home owner becomes the de facto point person for most of the accompaniment questions that arise. Having the host person/family fully on board and trained is critical to the success of the arrangement.

In addition to a bedroom, what other space might be available for the asylum seeker to use as their own personal space? Is there somewhere they can be alone other than in the bedroom?

HOUSE COVENANT

What are expectations of each other in living under one roof? It is helpful to sit down early on to share with each other your needs and expectations. (*can the asylum seeker come & go at any hour, how will you handle meals, time together vs. time apart, etc.*)



DEPARTURE/ENDING

Sometimes it is difficult to agree on when it is time for the asylum seeker to move out. It may be taking longer than expected for the asylum seeker to be able to work or find a job, circumstances may have changed for the host family. It is helpful to have this part of the overall conversation about commitment from early on and their needs to be agreements among the accompaniment team about how to handle these situations.

When private housing is offered as a first phase it can provide time for the asylum seekers to get to know the new community and be involved in the longer term housing decisions. And it can avoid some of the host/dependency pitfalls that can undermine a healthy partnership relationship.

Within a congregate/community living situation

Another model that has been common among the Roman Catholic community but also possible in other settings is the housing of asylum seekers within an existing congregate living situation, such as a convent or dormitory. The advantages of this type of arrangement are many as it is both affordable and creates easy access to social support and informal consultations. It is also highly adaptable as to the level of independence over time.

Stand Alone House or Apartment

Placing a family in their own home or apartment is often preferred for long term transitional housing (6 months or more). It can present significant challenges in the initial weeks given the need for significant support and mentoring. In some cases faith communities have found someone willing to donate a home or provide an apartment at sub-market rental rates. If such arrangement is not available, it can be expensive for the sponsoring group to sustain a rental property given the need for supportive housing for at least one year or longer until the person seeking asylum is able to obtain work authorization and find steady employment.

4. Glossary of Important Terms

A

Alien

Any person not a citizen or national of the United States.

Alien Registration Number or Alien Number (A Number or A#)

A unique seven-, eight- or nine-digit number assigned to a noncitizen by the Department of Homeland Security. Also see "USCIS Number."

Asylee

Someone in the United States or at a port of entry who is found to be unable or unwilling to return to his or her country of nationality, or to seek the protection of that country because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution. Persecution or the fear thereof must be based on the alien's race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion.

C

CBP

An abbreviation for U.S. Customs and Border Protection, an agency of the Department of Homeland Security.

Child

Generally, an unmarried person under 21 years of age who is: a child born in wedlock; a child born through Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART) to a non-genetic gestational mother who is also the legal mother under the law of the relevant jurisdiction at the time of birth; a stepchild, provided that the child was under 18 years of age at the time that the marriage creating the stepchild relationship occurred; a legitimated child, provided that the child was legitimated while in the legal custody of the legitimating parent; a child born out of wedlock, when a benefit is sought on the basis of its relationship with its mother, or to its father if the father has or had a bona fide relationship with the child; a child adopted while under 16 years of age who has resided with the adopting parent for at least 2 years and has been in the legal custody of the adopting parent for at least 2 years ; or an orphan, under 16 years of age, who has been adopted abroad by a U.S. citizen or has an immediate-relative visa petition submitted in his/her behalf and is coming to the United States for adoption by a U.S. citizen.

Conditional resident

Any alien granted permanent resident status on a conditional basis (for example, a spouse of a U.S. citizen or an immigrant investor) who must petition to remove the conditions of his or her status before the second anniversary of the approval date of his or her conditional status.

(U.S.) Customs and Border Protection (CBP)

An agency of the Department of Homeland Security that is responsible for securing the homeland by preventing the illegal entry of people and goods while facilitating legitimate travel and trade.

D

DACA

Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, a program launched in 2012. For more information, go to the [Consideration of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals \(DACA\)](#) page.

DAPA

Deferred Action for Parents of Americans and Lawful Permanent Residents, a program launched in 2014. For more information, go to the [Executive Actions on Immigration](#) page.

Deferred action

A use of prosecutorial discretion to not remove an individual from the country for a set period of time, unless the deferred action is terminated for some reason. Deferred action is determined on a case-by-case basis and only establishes lawful presence but does not provide immigration status or benefits of any kind. DACA is one type of deferred action.

DHS

An abbreviation for the Department of Homeland Security

DOJ

An abbreviation for the U.S. Department of Justice

DOL

An abbreviation for the U.S. Department of Labor

Department of Homeland Security

Department of the Executive Branch of the U.S. government charged with homeland security: preventing terrorism and managing risks to critical infrastructure; securing and managing the border; enforcing and administering immigration laws; safeguarding and securing cyberspace; and ensuring resilience to disasters.

Department of Justice

Department of the Executive Branch of the U.S. government with the primary responsibilities to enforce the law and defend the interests of the United States according to the law; to ensure public safety against threats foreign and domestic; to provide federal leadership in preventing and controlling crime; to seek just punishment for those guilty of unlawful behavior; and to ensure fair and impartial administration of justice for all Americans.

Department of Labor

Department of the Executive Branch of the U.S. government that fosters and promotes the welfare of the job seekers, wage earners, and retirees of the United States by improving their working conditions, advancing their opportunities for profitable employment, protecting their retirement and health care benefits, helping employers find workers, strengthening free collective bargaining, and tracking changes in employment, prices, and other national economic measurements. In carrying out this mission, the Department administers a variety of Federal labor laws including those that guarantee workers' rights to safe and healthful working conditions; a minimum hourly wage and overtime pay; freedom from employment discrimination; unemployment insurance; and other income support.

E

Employer sanctions

Series of civil fines or criminal penalties for violation of regulations that prohibit employers from hiring, recruiting or referring for a fee aliens known to be unauthorized to work in the United States, or continuing to employ aliens knowing them to be unauthorized, or hiring an individual without completing Form I-9.

Employment Authorization Document (Form I-766/EAD)

A general term used to describe a card issued by USCIS on Form I-766 with the title "Employment Authorization Card" to aliens who are authorized to work in the United States in order to evidence their employment authorization. The card contains a photograph of the individual and sometimes his or her fingerprint. An alien who has been issued this card usually has open-market employment authorization, but there are exceptions.

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)

Agency that enforces federal laws that prohibit discrimination against a job applicant or employee because of race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy), national origin, age (40 or older), disability or genetic information

E-Verify

An Internet-based system that compares information from an employee's Form I-9 to data from Department of Homeland Security and Social Security Administration records to confirm employment authorization.

I

ICE

An abbreviation for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, an agency of the Department of Homeland Security

(U.S.) Immigration and Customs Enforcement

The principal investigative arm of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, ICE's primary mission is to promote homeland security and public safety through the criminal and civil enforcement of federal laws governing border control, customs, trade, and immigration.

Immigration and Nationality Act (INA)

An Act of Congress that, along with other immigration laws, treaties, and conventions of the United States, relates to the immigration, temporary admission, naturalization and removal of aliens

INA

An abbreviation for the Immigration and Nationality Act

INS

An abbreviation of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, which was abolished in 2003. Its functions are now performed by three agencies of the Department of Homeland Security— U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), ICE and CBP.

L

LPR

An abbreviation for lawful permanent resident

Labor certification

Department of Labor certification required for U.S. employers seeking to employ individuals whose immigration to the United States is based on job skills or nonimmigrant temporary workers coming to perform services for which qualified authorized workers are unavailable in the United States. Labor certification is issued by the Secretary of Labor and contains attestations by U.S. employers of the numbers of U.S. workers available to undertake the employment sought by an applicant, and the effect of the alien's employment on the wages and working conditions of U.S. workers similarly employed. Determination of labor availability in the United States is made at the time of a visa application and at the location where the applicant wishes to work.

Lawful permanent resident

Any person not a citizen of the United States who is residing in the U.S. under legally recognized and lawfully recorded permanent residence as an immigrant. Also known as "Permanent Resident Alien," "Resident Alien Permit Holder," and "Green Card Holder."

N

National of the United States

A national of the United States or a person who, though not a citizen of the United States, owes permanent allegiance to the United States (e.g., persons born in American Samoa or Swains Island).

Nonimmigrant

An alien who is admitted to the United States for a specific temporary period of time. There are clear conditions on their stay. There are a large variety of nonimmigrant categories, each exists for a specific purpose and has specific terms and conditions. Nonimmigrant classifications include: foreign government officials, visitors for business and for pleasure, aliens in transit through the United States, treaty traders and investors, students, international representatives, temporary workers and trainees, representatives of foreign information media, exchange visitors, fiancé(e)s of U.S. citizens, intracompany transferees, NATO officials, religious workers and some others. Most nonimmigrants can be accompanied or joined by spouses and unmarried minor (or dependent) children.

O

OSC

An abbreviation for the Office of Special Counsel for Immigration-Related Unfair Employment Practices, Department of Justice

Office of Special Counsel for Immigration-Related Unfair Employment Practices

A section within the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice that enforces the anti-discrimination provisions of the Immigration and Nationality Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1324b, which protects U.S. citizens and employment-authorized individuals from employment discrimination based on citizenship or immigration status, or based on national origin with respect to hiring, firing and recruitment or referral for a fee, and discrimination during the employment verification process.

P

Parole in place

Immigration and Nationality Act section 212(d)(5)(A) gives the Secretary the discretion, on a case-by-case basis, to “parole” for “urgent humanitarian reasons or significant public benefit” an alien applying for admission to the United States. Although it is most frequently used to permit an alien who is outside the United States to come into U.S. territory, parole may also be granted to aliens who are already physically present in the U.S. without inspection or admission. This latter use of parole is sometimes called “parole in place.”

Permanent Resident Card (Form I-551)

Also known as the green card or alien registration card, this card is issued by USCIS to aliens as evidence of their lawful permanent resident status in the United States. For Form I-9, it is acceptable as proof of both identity and employment authorization. Although some Permanent Resident Cards contain no expiration date, most are valid for 10 years. Cards held by individuals with conditional permanent resident status are valid for two years.

Port of entry

Any location in the United States or its territories that is designated as a point of entry for aliens and U.S. citizens. All district offices and service centers are also considered ports, because they become locations of entry for aliens adjusting to immigrant status.

Provisional waiver

Waiver for individuals who are otherwise inadmissible due to more than 180 days of unlawful presence in the United States, based on a showing of extreme hardship to certain U.S. citizen or lawful permanent resident family members, which allows the individual to return after departure for an immigrant visa

interview at a U.S. embassy or consulate. For more information, go to the [Provisional Unlawful Presence Waivers](#) page.

R

Refugee

Generally, any person outside his or her country of nationality who is unable or unwilling to return to that country because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution. Persecution or the fear must be based on the person's race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group or political opinion. For a legal definition of refugee, see section 101(a)(42) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA).

T

Temporary protected status (TPS)

The Secretary of Homeland Security may designate a foreign country for TPS due to conditions in the country that temporarily prevent the country's nationals from returning safely, or in certain circumstances, where the country is unable to handle the return of its nationals adequately. USCIS may grant TPS to eligible nationals of certain countries (or parts of countries), who are already in the United States. Eligible individuals without nationality who last resided in the designated country may also be granted TPS. The Secretary may designate a country for TPS due to the following temporary conditions in the country: ongoing armed conflict (such as civil war); an environmental disaster (such as earthquake or hurricane); or other extraordinary and temporary conditions. Grants of TPS are initially made for periods of six to 18 months and may be extended.

U

USCIS

An abbreviation for U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, an agency of the Department of Homeland Security.

USCIS Number

A unique, 9-digit number assigned to a noncitizen by the Department of Homeland Security that is listed on the front of Permanent Resident Cards (Form I-551) issued after May 10, 2010. See also Alien Registration Number or Alien Number.

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

A federal agency that oversees lawful immigration to the United States. Its functions include, but are not limited to, granting employment authorization to eligible aliens, issuing documentation of alien employment authorization, maintaining Form I-9, and administering the E-Verify employment eligibility verification program

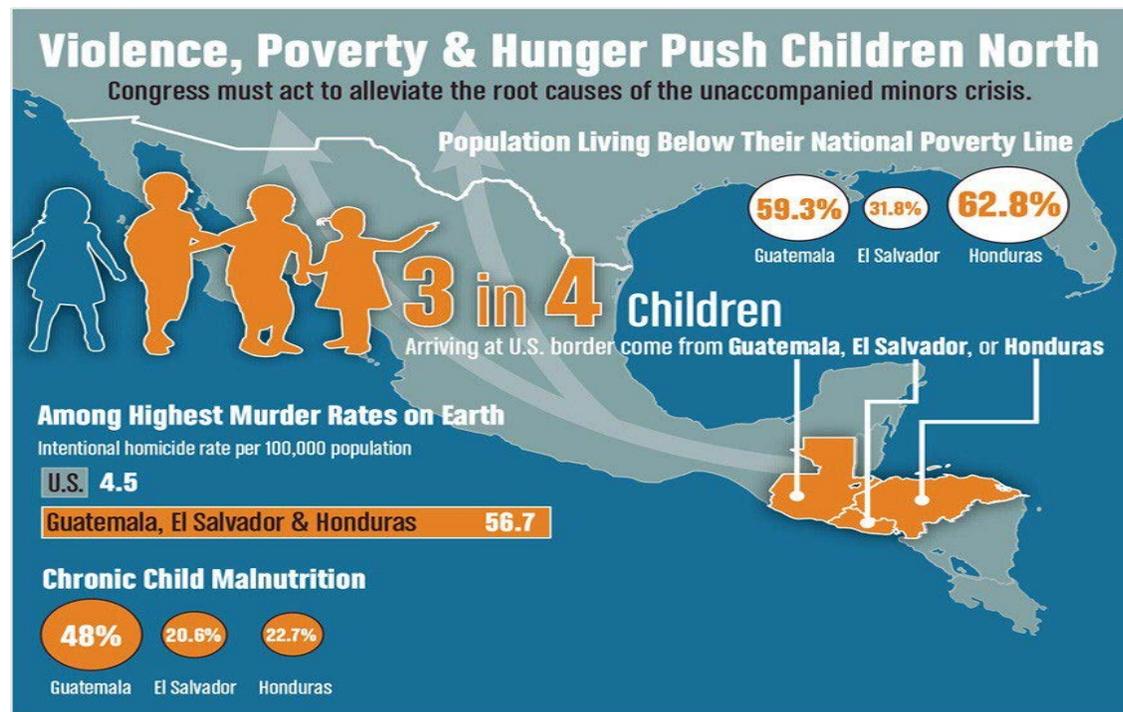
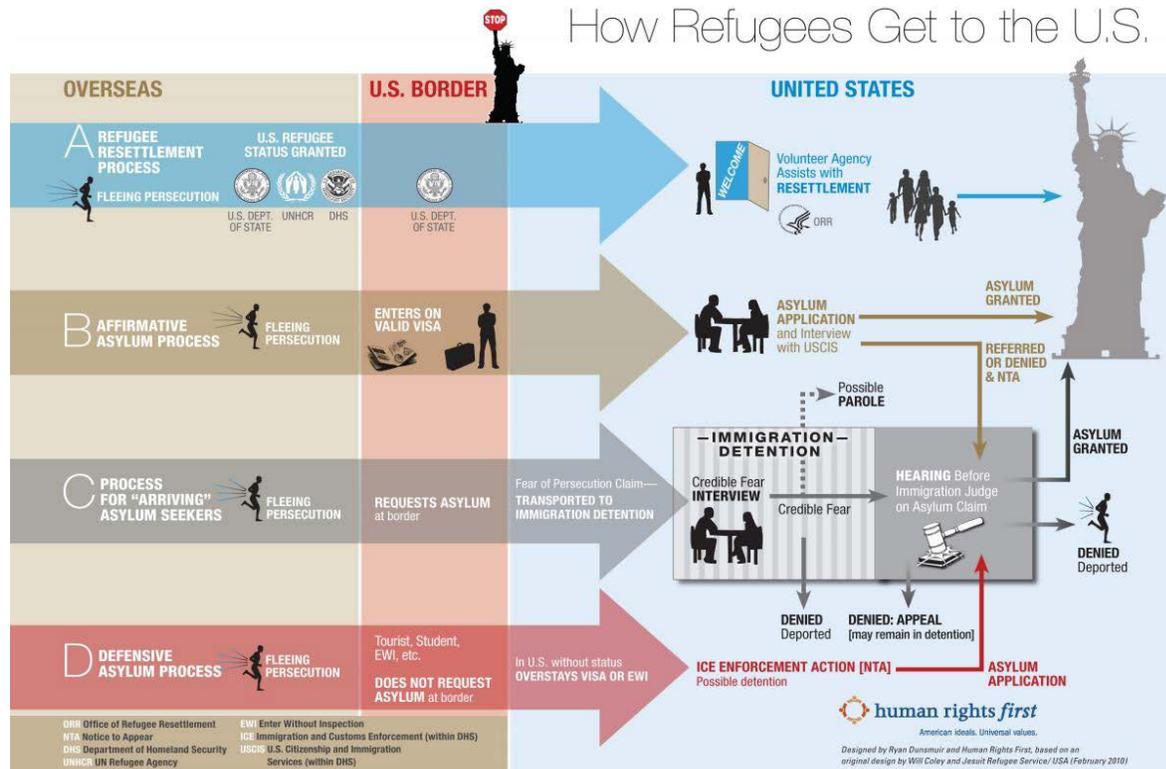
V

Visa

A U.S. visa allows the bearer to apply for entry to the U.S. in a certain classification (e.g. student (F), visitor (B), temporary worker (H)). A visa does not grant the bearer the right to enter the United States. The Department of State (DOS) is responsible for visa adjudication at U.S. Embassies and Consulates outside of the U.S. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS), U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) immigration inspectors determine admission into, length of stay and conditions of stay in, the U.S. at a port of entry. The information on a nonimmigrant visa only relates to when an individual may apply for entry

into the U.S. DHS immigration inspectors will record the terms of your admission on your Arrival/Departure Record (I-94 white or I-94W green) and in your passport.

5. INFOGRAPHICS



6. Accompaniment and Sponsoring Asylum Seekers

- [DRAFT Accompaniment Timeline/Checklist](#)
- Sample Support Letters from Freedom for Immigrants
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1DhynWhnC0eFc9Pw1z-0J0jyqg_RDPXgcMfVVdEc6Hew/edit?usp=sharing
- [Immigrant Welcoming Congregation](#) Guide by the UCC
- United Church of Christ Supporting Central American Families -
<https://www.uccfiles.com/pdf/communities-supporting-central-american-families-seeking-asylum-may2018.pdf>
- PCUSA Training on Asylum -
http://ogatraining.org/OII/Getting_in_Line_English/content/index.html#/?k=o87s2
- [Sanctuary Movement](#) Resources
- Showing Up for Racial Justice
- Sponsory roles and sample budget ([link](#))
- Sponsor orientation packet ([link](#))
- Google Slides presentation ([link](#)) -- this was drafted primarily for use with new "screening" calls we're going to start doing for large groups before we vet them
- Whiteness, savior complex, and power dynamics doc ([link](#))
- Congregational sponsorship FAQ ([link](#)) and congregational vetting questions ([link](#)) developed by Unitarian Universalist groupo
- Unitarian Universalist Association Webinar on Accompaniment along with resources etc.
<https://www.uua.org/lovesresists/blog/we-love-concrete-ways-webinar-accompaniment-expanded-sanctuary>
- FAQ for Congregational/Group Sponsorship of Asylum Seekers
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1acn7KiWGrZJbed0sv7itSrxJUg2-jamY/view>
- Guide on how to prepare host homes
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1jH62mvmDdW16w-1SD2UKx6_xc2SuQYkR3r4QBAOHo5U/edit?ts=5c366757
- Online e-course - "Changing Systems, Changing Ourselves: Anti-Racist Practice for Sanctuary, Accompaniment, and Resistance" – the first program is recorded, and the second version of the live e-course should be offered fall 2019. <https://www.afsc.org/CSCO-mainpage>

7. Additional Resources and Learning

- PCUSA We Choose Welcome Action Guide
<https://www.presbyterianmission.org/resources/topics/refugees/>
- Church World Service, [Interfaith Talking Points](#), Meredith Owen (mowen@cwsglobal.org)
- Bread for the World, "Border Policy: Addressing the Root Causes of Migration"
<http://www.bread.org/sites/default/files/downloads/border-policy-fact-sheet-2018.pdf> (jadams@bread.org)
- Bread for the World, "Hunger and Migration in Honduras,"
<http://www.bread.org/blog/migration-hunger-issue-honduras> (jadams@bread.org)



- Migrant Caravan talking points by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, American Friends Service Committee, Alianza Americas, Kids in Need of Defense, Latin America Working Group
- HIAS, [How to Talk about Refugees with Family and Friends](#), [Jews for Refugees](#) Facebook page
- Presbyterian Church (USA) [Video Clip: The Threat to Women](#) and [Video Clip: Honduran Mother Speaks](#)
- SALDEF [FAQ for Asylum Seeker Sponsorship](#)
- Jewish Family and Community Services [Information Guides](#)
- National Employment Law Project [Day Labor Rights](#).

8. Contacts

If you have questions or concerns about the accompaniment process, please reach out to one of the following contacts:

- Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, Presbyterian Church USA
- Susan Krehbiel: Susan.krehbiel@pcusa.org or tel: 502-565-6148
- <https://pda.pcusa.org/situation/refugee-ministry/>
- Church World Service: Bethany Showalter bshowalter@cwsglobal.org, Noel Andersen nandersen@cwsglobal.org