

Confidentiality and Privacy⁸

Refugees and newcomers have the right to confidentiality and privacy. Consider how you would like people to treat you and your family and strive to do the same.

Guidelines

- Do not forward the person's names, address, or telephone number to any person or organization outside of the sponsoring group without their specific permission.
- Do not publish photos, names, or identifying information anywhere (social media, church/town newsletter, etc.) without their specific permission.
- Continuously reflect on the power differentials that exist between the sponsoring group and the newcomers. Ensure they understand they can say 'no' to your requests or invitations without repercussions.
- Avoid sharing unnecessary private information about the refugees/newcomers within the sponsoring group. Only discuss matters with people directly involved with that aspect of settlement support.
- If people wish to contact the refugees, ask the person for their contact information and pass it on to the newcomer(s).
- Do not expect settlement agencies and other organizations to keep you completely informed on their work with newcomer(s). Workers are bound by privacy legislation.
- Do not discuss refugees' private issues with anyone unless you have their permission. This includes discussions with other members of the sponsoring group as well as settlement organizations.
- With the heightened media attention on refugee settlement, it is important to act as a mediator and support the best interests of refugees when responding to media interest.

Visits with Sponsored Newcomers

- As a best practice, please apply your church's guidelines to working with vulnerable persons (i.e. Safe Church Policy) to any visits with sponsored refugee(s).

⁸ Adapted from http://auraforrefugees.org/docs/aurainfosheet_privacy.pdf

- Be especially mindful of respecting the refugees' home. Even if they are staying temporarily in a group member's house, or the sponsors are paying the rent, remember it is their space/home, not yours.
- Be mindful of not excluding refugees and newcomers from conversations when they are present, especially conversations about them.
- Call ahead of time to make an appointment before visiting their home. This shows them that it is common practice to call before a visit as well as respecting their privacy.
- When visiting single women, special precautions must be taken. Many women who are refugees have experienced abuse or sexual exploitation and may not trust men. Male volunteers should not visit women alone, especially in their own home.