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**Sample Housing Onboarding Guide**

# This Housing Onboarding Guide is a framework for onboarding new staff members who will provide housing services. It is meant to be customized to include organization-specific training, allowing you to incorporate your own materials using the “Link to Agency Guidance” fields located at the end of the guide. This guide shares reading materials, recorded webinars, and other resources to complement your agency’s specific onboarding activities. The onboarding process and included activities can be modified based on each staff member’s prior experience.

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| Learn More About Who You Serve | |
| This first section provides you with an introduction to some of the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR)-eligible populations you may serve through your program.  Note:This is not a comprehensive list of ORR-eligible populations that may be enrolled in your agency’s program. For a full list of eligibility documents for all eligible client populations, please refer to the [ORR website](https://www.acf.hhs.gov/orr/policy-guidance/status-and-documentation-requirements-orr-refugee-resettlement-program). | |
| Due Date:  Completion Date: | |
| Immigration Statuses and ORR Eligibility | Watch: [Understanding Newcomer Immigration Statuses](https://www.switchboardta.org/resource/understanding-newcomer-immigration-statuses/)  Watch: [How Resettlement Agencies Work with the U.S. Government](https://www.switchboardta.org/resource/how-resettlement-agencies-work-with-the-u-s-government/)  Read: [Getting Started in Navigating ORR Eligibility](https://www.switchboardta.org/blog/resource-collection-getting-started-in-navigating-orr-eligibility/)  Read: [ACF Policy Web Address](https://www.acf.hhs.gov/orr/policy)  Read: [Status and Documentation Requirements](https://www.acf.hhs.gov/orr/policy-guidance/status-and-documentation-requirements-orr-refugee-resettlement-program) |
| Refugees | Watch: [Who are refugees and how do they arrive in the U.S.?](https://switchboardta.org/resource/who-are-refugees-and-how-do-they-arrive-in-the-united-states/)  Read: [Resettlement in the United States](https://www.unhcr.org/us/what-we-do/resettlement-united-states)  Watch: [What is refugee resettlement and what is UNHCR’s role?](https://youtu.be/mPu12hOoAu8) |
| Asylees | Review: [Who is a Refugee, Afghan Evacuee, and Asylum Seeker?](https://www.switchboardta.org/resource/who-is-a-refugee-afghan-evacuee-and-asylum-seeker-2/)  Review: [Steps of the U.S. Asylum Process](https://rcusa.org/resettlement/asylum-process/)  Read: [I Was No Longer Safe in My Country: Yomardy’s Story of Seeking Asylum](https://worldrelief.org/chblog-yomardys-story/) |
| Cuban & Haitian Entrants | Read: [ORR Fact Sheet for Cuban/Haitian Entrants](https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/orr/orr_fact_sheet_cuban_haitian_entrant.pdf) |
| Certain Amerasians | Read: [ORR Fact Sheet for Amerasians](https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/orr/orr_fact_sheet_amerasian.pdf) |
| Victims of Trafficking | Read: [ORR Fact Sheet for Victims of Trafficking](https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/orr/orr_fact_sheet_victim_of_trafficking.pdf)  Watch: [Faces of Human Trafficking Series](https://ovc.ojp.gov/library/multimedia/list?series_filter=Faces%20of%20Human%20Trafficking)  Read:[An Introduction to Human Trafficking in the United States](https://ovc.ojp.gov/sites/g/files/xyckuh226/files/media/document/HT_Intro_to_HT_fact_sheet-508.pdf) |
| Afghan and Ukrainian Humanitarian Parolees | Read:[Resource List: Serving Ukrainian Newcomers](https://www.switchboardta.org/blog/resource-list-serving-ukrainian-newcomers/)  Read:[Useful Resources to Support Afghan Newcomers in the U.S.](https://www.switchboardta.org/blog/two-years-since-the-fall-of-afghanistan-useful-resources-to-support-afghan-newcomers-in-the-u-s/)  Read:[Getting to Know Afghan Newcomers: Recognizing Diversity, Ethnic Tensions, and Social Values](https://www.switchboardta.org/blog/getting-to-know-afghan-newcomers-recognizing-diversity-ethnic-tensions-and-social-values/)  Watch:[Cultural and Practical Considerations for Working with Ukrainian Clients](https://www.switchboardta.org/resource/cultural-and-practical-considerations-for-working-with-ukrainian-clients/)  Read:[Answering FAQs on Benefits for Ukrainian and Afghan Humanitarian Parolees Arriving On or After October 1 2023](https://www.switchboardta.org/blog/answering-faqs-on-benefits-for-ukrainian-and-afghan-humanitarian-parolees-arriving-on-or-after-october-1-2023/) |
| Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) Recipients | Read:[Special Immigrant Visa (SIV): Application Vetting Approval](https://www.switchboardta.org/resource/special-immigrant-visa-siv-application-vetting-approval/)  Read:[Special Immigrant Visas for Afghans](https://www.switchboardta.org/resource/special-immigrant-visas-for-afghans/) |

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| Creating and Growing Housing Collaborations | | |
| This section provides housing staff with information they need to diversify funding resources and strengthen relationships with landlords and property managers. | | |
| Due Date:  Completion Date: | | |
| Diversifying Funding Resources for Housing | Read**:** [Newcomer Housing Funding Strategies Toolkit](https://www.switchboardta.org/resource/newcomer-housing-funding-strategies-toolkit/)  Read**:** [Rent Pre-Payment Loan Toolkit](https://www.switchboardta.org/resource/rent-pre-payment-loan-toolkit/)  Review**:** [Housing Needs Assessment Guide](https://www.switchboardta.org/resource/housing-needs-assessment-guide-for-refugee-resettlement-agencies-in-the-u-s/) | *Identify the types of funding your team is currently using for housing.*  *Activity: Review the templates provided in the Newcomer Housing Funding Strategies Toolkit and consult with your supervisor to confirm funding practices currently in place.*  *Discuss with your supervisor: Are there areas in which funding sources for housing can be strengthened or diversified?* |
| Cultivating Relationships  with Landlords | Review**:** [Fact Sheet on Renting to Refugees and Other Eligible Newcomers](https://www.switchboardta.org/resource/fact-sheet-on-renting-to-refugees-and-other-eligible-newcomers-2/)  Read**:** [Cultivating Landlord Relationships for Long-Term Housing](https://www.switchboardta.org/resource/newcomer-housing-tips-cultivating-landlord-relationships-for-long-term-housing/)  Read**:** [Landlord Toolkit](https://www.switchboardta.org/resource/landlord-toolkit/)  Read**:** [How to Make Your Rental Operations Culturally and Refugee-Friendly](https://www.switchboardta.org/resource/how-to-make-your-rental-operations-culturally-and-refugee-friendly/) | *Discuss with your supervisor: What landlord relationships does your team currently have?*  *Discuss with your supervisor: Are there opportunities to gain new landlord relationships and/or strengthen existing ones?* |
| Expanding Your Network of Housing Providers | Read: [Leveraging College and University Housing for Newcomer Welcoming](https://www.switchboardta.org/resource/leveraging-college-and-university-housing-for-newcomer-welcoming/)  Review: [How to Recruit and Retain Housing Providers Toolkit](https://www.switchboardta.org/resource/how-to-recruit-and-retain-housing-providers-toolkit/)  Review: [Creating Your Welcoming Landlord Network](https://www.switchboardta.org/resource/creating-your-welcoming-landlord-network/) | *Activity: Reflect upon current housing relationships with landlords and community partners. Are there any other housing providers you may consider reaching out to and partnering with?* |

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| Managing Client Expectations | | |
| This section is intended to support housing staff in managing newcomer expectations surrounding housing in the U.S. | | |
| Due Date:  Completion Date: | | |
| Housing Landscape  in the U.S. | Read: [Managing Newcomers' Housing Expectations](https://www.switchboardta.org/blog/managing-newcomers-housing-expectations/)  Review: [Housing in the United States](https://www.switchboardta.org/resource/housing-in-the-united-states/)  Read:[What is the Fair Housing Act?](https://www.switchboardta.org/resource/what-is-the-fair-housing-act/) | *Activity: Observe a housing-related conversation with a client.*  *Within your local context, consider any barriers that clients may face when securing permanent housing.* |

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| Exploring Housing Options | | |
| This section introduces materials that can help housing staff work with clients to secure stable housing. It also provides tools for navigating the housing selection process and additional resources on affordable housing options. | | |
| Due Date:  Completion Date: | | |
| Securing Stable Housing | Read: [Newcomer Housing Stability Planning Toolkit](https://www.switchboardta.org/resource/newcomer-housing-stability-planning-toolkit/)  Review: [Navigating Housing Screening Criteria](https://www.switchboardta.org/resource/navigating-housing-screening-criteria/)  Watch: [Helping Newcomer Clients Find Housing: Live Q&A](https://www.switchboardta.org/resource/helping-newcomer-clients-find-housing-live-qa-with-refugee-housing-solutions/)  Review: [Tenant Toolkit](https://www.switchboardta.org/resource/tenant-toolkit/)  Read: [Newcomer Housing Tips: Four Steps for Outreach to Landlords](https://www.switchboardta.org/blog/newcomer-housing-tips-four-steps-for-outreach-to-landlords/)  Review: [Tips for Securing Housing](https://www.switchboardta.org/resource/tips-for-securing-housing/) | *Discuss with your supervisor or team: What are some tips or best practices when it comes to securing housing for newcomers?* |
| Housing Selection | Read: [Housing Selection 101](https://www.switchboardta.org/blog/housing-selection-101/)  Read: [Helping Newcomers with the Housing Search](https://www.switchboardta.org/blog/helping-newcomers-with-the-housing-search/)  Review: [Navigating Online Housing Resources & Housing Search](https://www.switchboardta.org/resource/housing-toolkit-navigating-online-housing-resources-housing-search/)  Review: [In-Home Health and Safety Checklist](https://www.switchboardta.org/resource/in-home-health-and-safety-checklist/)  Review: [Rental Responsibilities and Housing Necessities Checklist](https://www.switchboardta.org/resource/rental-responsibilities-and-housing-necessities-checklist/)  Review: [Sample Housing Walk-Through Checklist](https://www.switchboardta.org/resource/sample-housing-walk-through-checklist/) | *Discuss with your supervisor: In what ways are important housing selection criteria communicated to clients? How are clients involved in the housing selection process? How can we empower clients to have an active role in the housing selection process?* |
| Affordable Housing Options | Complete: [Introduction to HUD Affordable Housing for Newcomers](https://www.switchboardta.org/resource/introduction-to-hud-affordable-housing-for-newcomers/) E-Learning Course  Complete E-Learning Course: [Accessing HUD Affordable Housing for Newcomers](https://www.switchboardta.org/resource/accessing-hud-affordable-housing-for-newcomers/) E-Learning Course  Watch: [Demystifying the US Department of Housing and Urban Development](https://www.switchboardta.org/resource/demystifying-the-united-states-department-of-housing-and-urban-development-hud-with-refugee-housing-solutions-rhs/)  Read: [Demystifying the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for Newcomers](https://www.switchboardta.org/blog/demystifying-the-u-s-department-of-housing-and-urban-development-hud-for-newcomers/)  Review: [HUD’s Website for Refugees and Other Newcomer Populations](https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/field_policy_mgt/refugees) and additional resources ([Fact Sheet](https://www.hud.gov/sites/dfiles/FPM/documents/HUD_fact_sheet_revised.pdf) & [FAQ](https://www.hud.gov/sites/dfiles/FPM/documents/PIH_New_Americans_Website.pdf))  Discover Local Resources through: [HUD Resource Locator](https://resources.hud.gov/), [Housing Counseling](https://www.hud.gov/counseling), or the [Housing Directory](https://refugeehousing.org/housing-hub/)  Review: [USDA Rural Housing Service Program](https://www.switchboardta.org/resource/usda-rural-housing-service-program-an-available-option-for-the-afghan-resettlement-program-2/) | *Activity: Identify the types of affordable housing options your clients have access to.*  *Activity: Review two examples of client documentation related to affordable housing applications and eligibility.* |

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| Thriving in Your New Home | | |
| This section includes tools for service providers and clients as newcomers prepare to move and integrate into their new homes. They cover processes for navigating maintenance, repairs, landlord-client communication, and access to amenities, reinforcing newcomer agency and paving the way for them to thrive in their new home. | | |
| Due Date:  Completion Date: | | |
| Home Preparations | Review:[Understanding Your Lease Agreement](https://www.switchboardta.org/resource/understanding-your-lease-agreement/)  Review: [Home Set-up Guide](https://www.switchboardta.org/resource/home-set-up-guide/)  Review: [Sample Home Supply Checklist](https://www.switchboardta.org/resource/sample-home-supply-checklist/)  Review: [Sample Pantry Checklist](https://www.switchboardta.org/resource/sample-pantry-checklist/) | *Activity: Participate in home set-up activities for a client.*  *Activity: Review agency policies, processes, and safeguards as they relate to new permanent housing for clients.* |
| Housing Maintenance | Read: [Housing Maintenance for Newcomers](https://www.switchboardta.org/resource/housing-maintenance-for-newcomers/)  Review: [Service Request Form for Tenants](https://www.switchboardta.org/resource/service-request-form-for-tenants/) | *Discuss with your supervisor: How does the agency support clients in receiving maintenance support for their homes?* |

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| Safety Planning & Temporary Housing | | |
| This section sheds light on different components of safety planning, including options for temporary and emergency housing situations. Establishing partnerships with providers who offer temporary housing or disaster relief services can be critical in emergency situations. | | |
| Due Date:  Completion Date: | | |
| Safety Planning | Read:[Safety Planning & Emergency Preparedness for Refugee Housing](https://www.switchboardta.org/resource/safety-planning-and-emergency-preparedness-for-refugee-housing/) | *Discuss with your supervisor: What safety planning measures does your agency have in place?* |
| Temporary & Emergency Housing Options | Review:[Using Temporary Housing for Refugee Resettlement](https://www.switchboardta.org/resource/using-temporary-housing-for-refugee-resettlement/)  Read:[Emergency Housing: Three Ways to Connect with Local Shelter Systems](https://www.switchboardta.org/blog/emergency-housing-three-ways-to-connect-with-local-shelter-systems/)  Read:[Best Practices for Hotel Partnerships to House Refugees and Other Newcomers](https://www.switchboardta.org/resource/best-practices-for-hotel-partnerships-to-house-refugees-and-other-newcomers/)  Watch:[Access to Housing, Disaster Relief, and Homelessness Assistance Programs for Immigrants](https://www.switchboardta.org/resource/access-to-housing-disaster-relief-and-homelessness-assistance-programs-for-immigrants/)  Read:[Emergency Rental Assistance Programs: Opportunities for Refugees and Other ORR-Eligible Clients](https://www.switchboardta.org/blog/emergency-rental-assistance-programs-opportunities-for-refugees-and-other-orr-eligible-clients/)  Review: [HUD Exchange, Continuum of Care Program](https://www.hudexchange.info/grantees/contacts/?params=%7B%22limit%22%3A20%2C%22sort%22%3A%22%22%2C%22order%22%3A%22%22%2C%22years%22%3A%5B%5D%2C%22searchTerm%22%3A%22%22%2C%22grantees%22%3A%5B%5D%2C%22state%22%3A%22%22%2C%22programs%22%3A%5B3%5D%2C%22coc%22%3Atrue%7D) | *Activity: Identify the temporary and emergency housing options available to clients within your community.*  *Discuss with your supervisor: Does your agency participate in the local Continuum of Care Program (CoC)?*  *Discuss with your supervisor: Does your agency use temporary or emergency housing solutions? If yes, what have those experiences looked like?* |

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| Spotlight on Creative Housing Solutions |
| This final section highlights other innovative approaches to newcomer housing, showing how creativity, flexibility, preparation, and partnership with community stakeholders can strengthen your agency’s housing solutions. |
| Due Date:  Completion Date: |
| Watch:[John's Story - Creative Housing Support Solutions](https://www.switchboardta.org/resource/creative-housing-support/)  Watch: [Models of Welcome](https://www.switchboardta.org/resource/models-of-welcome/)  Read:[Innovative Housing Solutions Spotlights](https://www.switchboardta.org/blog/innovative-housing-solutions-spotlights/)  Review: [Rent Pre-Payment Loan Toolkit](https://www.switchboardta.org/resource/rent-pre-payment-loan-toolkit/)  Read:[It Takes a Village: Learning from Statewide Housing Partnerships in Idaho](https://www.switchboardta.org/blog/it-takes-a-village-learning-from-statewide-housing-partnerships-in-idaho/)  Read: [Innovative Housing Spotlight: Partnership with a College Campus to Welcome Afghan Families](https://www.switchboardta.org/blog/innovative-housing-spotlight-partnership-with-a-college-campus-to-welcome-afghan-families/)  Watch:[New Homes for New Refugees: A Template for Creating a Welcoming Landlord Network in your Community](https://www.switchboardta.org/resource/new-homes-for-new-refugees-a-template-for-creating-a-welcoming-landlord-network-in-your-community/) |

We encourage you to continue learning as you progress in your role within housing. Social learning opportunities, such as communities of practice or working groups, can be a great way to exchange knowledge and learn from others! Please consult your supervisor or training officer about additional opportunities to grow within your role.

*The IRC received competitive funding through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Grant #90RB0053. The project is 100% financed by federal funds. The contents of this document are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families.*