



Welcome to THE UNITED STATES

**A Guidebook
for Refugees**
English Version

CAL

OR Cultural Orientation
Resource Center

Welcome to THE UNITED STATES

A Guidebook for Refugees

Fourth Edition

2012

Prepared by the Cultural Orientation Resource Center

Center for Applied Linguistics

Washington, DC

The contents of this book were developed with funding from the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, United States Department of State, but do not necessarily represent the policy of that agency, and users should not assume endorsement by the federal government.

The content of this edition of Welcome to the United States: A Guidebook for Refugees is based on information provided to the Center for Applied Linguistics by representatives from the following organizations:

Church World Service

Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families,
Office of Refugee Resettlement

Department of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration

Episcopal Migration Ministries

Ethiopian Community Development Council

Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society

International Catholic Migration Commission

International Organization for Migration

International Rescue Committee

Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service

U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

World Relief

Photo credits:

Center for Applied Linguistics

Jibril Mohamed Hirsi

Lutheran Social Services of Fargo, North Dakota

Mike Stanley, Mike Stanley Productions

Resettlement Support Center Africa (Church World Service)

Resettlement Support Center East Asia (International Rescue Committee)

Resettlement Support Center South Asia (International Organization for Migration)

Resettlement Support Center Turkey and the Middle East (International Catholic
Migration Commission)

Sichan Siv

Tri-Cities World Relief Office, Richland, WA

Youth Co-Op, Inc.

Zohra Daoud

We thank all of those who contributed to this publication. We especially thank the Resettlement Support Centers and the members of the Cultural Orientation Working Group.

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Cover art: Painting by Ahmad AlKarkhi

Cover and interior design & production: SW Creatives

The names used in the activity sections of this publication are fictitious. Any resemblance to real persons is purely coincidental.

WELCOME TO CULTURAL ORIENTATION!

This *Welcome to the United States* guidebook will help you prepare for your first few months in the United States. It tells you what to expect as you find a place to live, look for work, meet Americans, and adjust to American culture and society.

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Chapter One THE RESETTLEMENT JOURNEY

Like many other refugees, you have made the decision to resettle and start a new life in the United States of America. Resettlement is the first step to becoming a permanent resident and, for many, a citizen of the United States someday. Resettlement is a long process that will change your life, and it will bring many challenges and opportunities. The experience is different for every person. It is normal to feel both excited and nervous as you prepare for your journey.

This chapter will discuss

- » The role of resettlement staff as your first guide
- » Self-reliance as the key to your success

Resettlement is a long process with many challenges and opportunities along the way. During your first few months in the United States, resettlement staff will be your primary guides.



KEY ENGLISH VOCABULARY

The following English words are used when discussing resettlement in the United States. These words will be helpful for you to learn.

Say the word in English. Write the word in your native language. Then draw a picture of the word, write what it means, or use it in a sentence. The first one has been done for you.

In English	In your language	Draw a picture of the word, write its meaning, or use it in a sentence.
courage		<i>Courage means being brave and facing fears or dangers.</i>
determination		
goals		
independent		
journey		
resettlement		
self-reliance		

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THE RESETTLEMENT JOURNEY

Resettlement staff will be your main guides, so share your questions and concerns with them.



WISHES AND CONCERNS

In the boxes below, draw or write about your wishes and concerns for the future.

WISH

CONCERN

WISH

CONCERN



What have you heard about life in America? Draw or write about the things you have heard below. When you are finished with this book, come back to this page. Circle what is still true and cross off what is no longer true.

Life in America will not be easy, especially in the beginning, but there will be people to help you get started. During your first few months in the United States, resettlement staff will be your primary guides. They will work with you to connect you to services, such as employment services and English classes. They have the knowledge and experience to help you, so share your questions and concerns with them.



Life will be difficult at times, but try to stay positive and remember that things will get better!

YOU will play a big part in your own resettlement. More than three million refugees before you have rebuilt their lives and contributed to society in the United States, and so will you! Here are a few examples of some successful Americans who began their lives in the United States as refugees:



Madeleine Albright: U.S. Secretary of State, from the Czech Republic (the former Czechoslovakia)



Zohra Daoud: Co-founder of an association to help Afghan women in the United States, from Afghanistan

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THE RESETTLEMENT JOURNEY



Albert Einstein: Nobel Laureate, from Germany



Gloria Estefan: Famous singer, from Cuba



Jibril Mohamed Hirsi: Executive Director of a nonprofit organization helping new Americans, from Somalia



Wyclef Jean: Well known artist and singer, from Haiti



Sichan Siv: U.S. Ambassador, from Cambodia

Kumar asked for advice from his case manager and the employment specialist at his resettlement agency, and learned how to look for jobs on his own. Krishna sat at home or in the resettlement agency office and waited for staff to find a job for him. Who do you think probably got a job first? Who do you think was more successful over time?

You don't have to be well-known to be a success. Most refugees succeed every day just by working hard towards specific goals, such as keeping their family safe and healthy, finding work to become self-sufficient, learning English, and supporting their children and community. With your talents, knowledge, courage, and determination, you can succeed too.



When Naw Paw first arrived in the United States with her three children, her first job was cleaning offices, even though she had worked as a secretary in her own country. She did not like her job, but she did it because she had to support her family. Although she knew some English, she could not communicate very well in it. Today, 6 years later, she works as a receptionist at the office she cleaned for many years, and she is studying to be a secretary. Someday she hopes to be an officer manager. What did Naw Paw do to become a success?



YOUR GOALS

Now is a good time to think about your own goals. Think about where you have been and where you are going. Draw pictures in the strip below to explain your journey.

<p>Who are you?</p>	<p>What did you do as a child in your home country?</p>	<p>What did you do as an adult in your home country?</p>	<p>What did you do in your country of asylum?</p>
<p>What do you want to achieve in your first month of resettlement?</p>	<p>What do you want to achieve in your first year of resettlement?</p>	<p>What do you want to achieve 5 years after resettlement?</p>	<p>What do you want to achieve 10 years after resettlement?</p>



WRAP-UP*

*True or false? How much do you think you know about resettlement in the United States? Test your knowledge with the statements below. Read these statements and circle the word **True** if you think the statement is right and circle **False** if you think the statement is wrong.*

- | | | | |
|-----|---|-------------|--------------|
| 1. | You will play an important role in your successful resettlement. | True | False |
| 2. | There are people from all over the world living in the U.S. | True | False |
| 3. | All communities in the U.S. are very similar. | True | False |
| 4. | You will need to work with your resettlement agency to ease your adjustment to the U.S. | True | False |
| 5. | There will be public services and government assistance for you in your community. | True | False |
| 6. | You will need to buy a car the day after you arrive in the U.S. so you can get around your new community. | True | False |
| 7. | Most adult men and women have to work in the U.S. | True | False |
| 8. | You will not need to learn English. | True | False |
| 9. | Public school is free and required by law for all children ages 6-16. | True | False |
| 10. | Doctors cannot talk about your health to anyone but you without your permission. | True | False |

* Correct answers provided in Appendix A on page 220.

11. All people in the U.S., including refugees, have basic human rights. **True** **False**
12. You will need to give up some of your own culture and values and adapt to U.S. culture and values. **True** **False**

It is okay if you did not know all the correct answers. This book will review the important facts of resettlement and help prepare you for what to expect when living in the United States.

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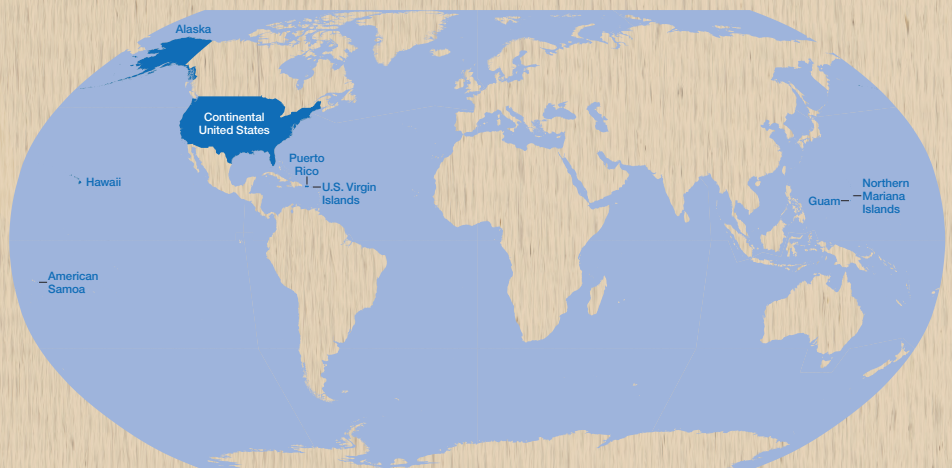


Chapter Two THE UNITED STATES AND AMERICAN CULTURE

The United States is the third largest country in the world in size and population. It is a land of different regions and climates, and it is made up of people with different ethnic, racial, religious, and language backgrounds. Yet it is one nation: a nation of Americans. Even though Americans come from all over the world, there are certain basic beliefs and ways of doing things that most Americans share. These beliefs and behaviors may be different from ones that you are used to.

This chapter will discuss

- » Differences among communities
- » American culture and values





KEY ENGLISH VOCABULARY

The following English words are used when discussing the United States and American culture. These words will be helpful for you to learn.

Say the word in English. Write the word in your native language. Then draw a picture of the word, write what it means, or use it in a sentence. The first one has been done for you.

In English	In your language	Draw a picture of the word, write its meaning, or use it in a sentence.
culture		<i>The Yahya family is proud of their Darfuri culture and eager to learn about American culture.</i>
community		
customs		
diversity		
identification		
language		
newcomers		
population		
tradition		

Each community in the United States is different. What you have heard about the United States from others may not be true for you.

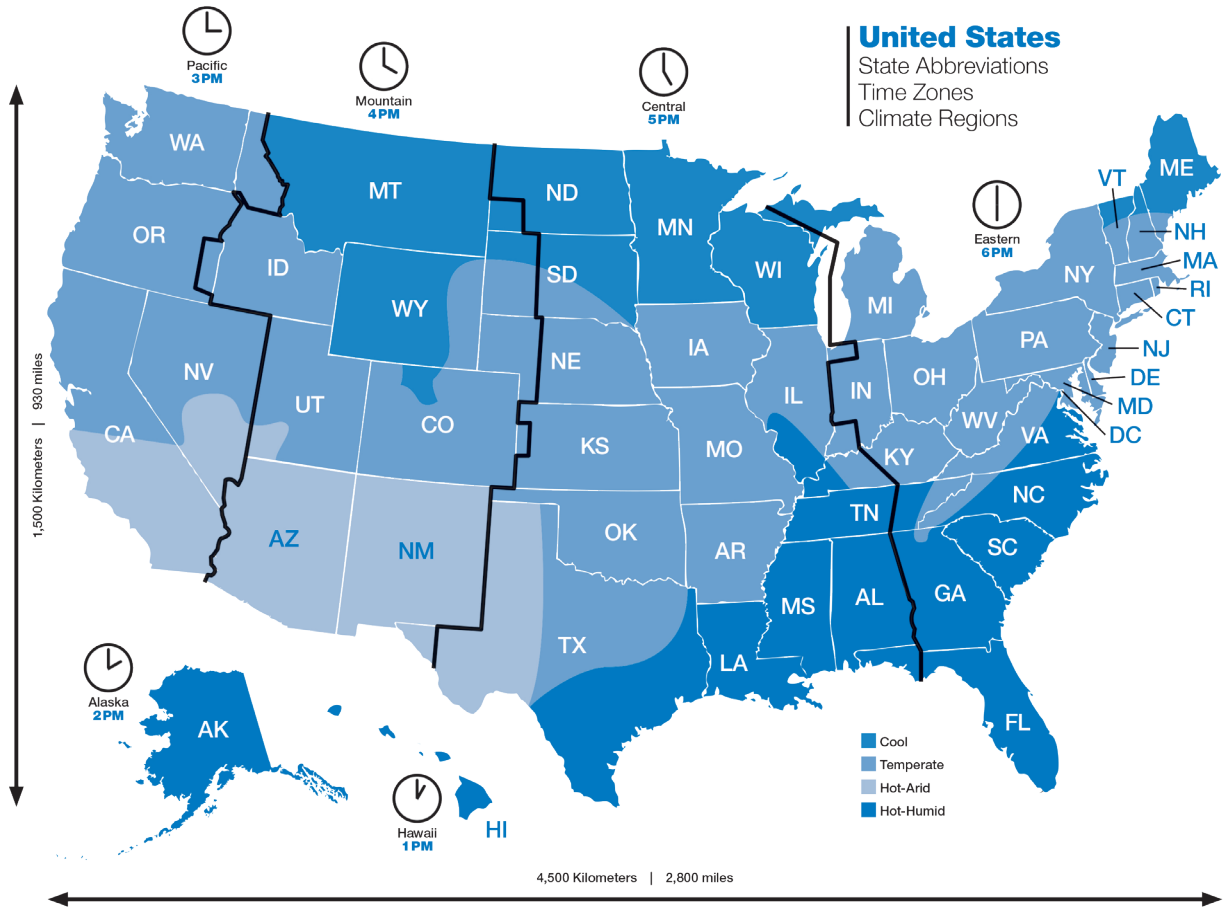


DIFFERENCES AMONG COMMUNITIES

In the United States, communities differ from each other in many ways. One way they differ is in the mix of racial and ethnic groups. Local laws also differ from community to community. And each community has its own ways of working with newcomers. Because of this, what you have heard about the United States, even from family and friends already in the United States, may not be true for you. Your resettlement agency will help you learn about your new community and understand what to expect.

When Dina's cousin and his family resettled in the United States 3 years ago, they lived in a large house. Dina was not happy when she was given a room in a 3-bedroom apartment with two other women her age. She thought she should live in a house like her cousin. Why was Dina's housing different from her cousin's housing? What should she have realized?

MAP OF THE UNITED STATES



OR CAL



Think about your own culture or background.

- What language(s) do you speak?
- What foods do you eat?
- What are your homes like?
- What are your most important customs or traditions?



Draw or write about your culture or background below, such as customs, traditions, or foods.

Americans value self-reliance and hard work and respect people who ask questions.



Some people you meet in the U.S. may be interested in learning more about your culture or background. Practice by telling a partner about what you have drawn or written on the previous page.

Americans smile when greeting both friends and strangers.

ABOUT AMERICANS AND AMERICAN CULTURE

There is no single American culture. The United States is a nation of people from other countries who have brought with them many different cultural traditions and practices. However, there are certain standards of behavior accepted and expected by most Americans. These may be different from those of your own culture and country. You will be more successful in the United States if you watch what is going on around you and are open to new ways of doing things, and if you are willing to ask questions about behavior that puzzles you.

Below are some things to know about American values, attitudes, and behavior:

SELF-RELIANCE. Most Americans value self-reliance and hard work. They expect newcomers to get jobs as soon as possible and to take care of themselves and their families. They also expect newcomers who do not speak English to learn it as quickly as they can.



ASKING QUESTIONS.

Americans respect people who ask questions. They believe that asking questions shows that you are trying to learn and understand. When you do not know how to do something, do not be afraid to ask. Most Americans will be happy to help you.



Bikash was a volunteer at a community museum. At the museum, he met another volunteer, an older American woman. She was very friendly and wanted to learn all about Bikash and his culture. But some of the questions the woman asked seemed very personal to Bikash. How do you think Bikash felt? If you were Bikash, what would you do?



With a partner, practice asking each other questions about each other.

Here are some questions you might ask:

- Where are you from?
- How long have you been living here?
- Who do you live with?
- Do you have children?

What else would you like to know about your partner? Come up with your own questions to ask!

Here are some other common American values, customs, and behaviors:

INFORMALITY. Americans are often more informal than people from other countries. In social situations, they usually use first names. In business situations, last names with titles (Mr., Ms., or Dr.) are used before a formal introduction has taken place, but many supervisors and most coworkers may prefer to use first names.



In his own country, Maung Thein was a leader in his community. In his new community in the United States, his case manager, a woman many years younger than Maung Thein, calls Maung Thein by his first name, looks him directly in the eye, and in other ways treats Maung Thein as an equal. If you were Maung Thein, how would you feel? What would you do?

GREETING. Americans smile a lot, and use a smile when greeting both friends and strangers. Also, both men and women shake hands when introducing themselves, or when they are introduced to other people.



Being on time is very important for Americans, and you could lose a job if you are constantly late.

Always carry some form of identification with you when you leave your home. If you do not speak English, carry your telephone number and address.

PUNCTUALITY. Americans believe that being on time is very important. Americans try to be on time and expect others to be on time, too.



Making and keeping appointments is necessary. If you do not make an appointment before visiting someone in an office, that person might not be able to meet with you. If you cannot keep an appointment or you expect to be more than 15 minutes late, you should call, explain that you will be late, and apologize. Also, being on time every day for your job is very important, and you could lose your job if you are often late.

PRIVACY. Americans place a high value on personal privacy. People do not often visit each other's homes without calling ahead or being invited.



Financial matters are considered private, and Americans think it is impolite to ask how much someone earns or even what he or she paid for a house or car. Americans also think it is impolite to ask someone they have just met or do not know well questions about money, age, or personal life.

Anna was happy to have made friends with her neighbors down the street. She rang their door bell one evening on her way home to visit with them, and was surprised and hurt when they told her this was not a good time to visit because they were eating dinner. Do Anna's neighbors not want to be friends with Anna anymore? If you were Anna, what would you do?

TIPPING. Americans usually give a tip of 15% to 20% of the bill to a server in a restaurant, a taxi driver, or a hairdresser. If someone assists you with your luggage, \$1 per bag is often expected. You should not give money or tips to a police officer or any government official because it could be considered a bribe.

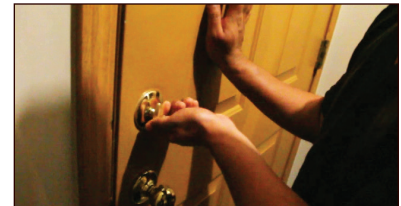


DRINKING ALCOHOL AND SMOKING. There are many laws about the use and sale of alcohol in the United States. The decision whether to drink alcohol is a personal choice, and it is never impolite to refuse a drink in the United States. It is illegal to drive if you are under the influence of alcohol. You cannot smoke in buildings and in some public places (such as restaurants), and in some cities and towns you cannot smoke close to a building. Many Americans do not smoke, and they may expect others to not smoke in their homes. (See Chapter 11 for more information on U.S. laws.)



Moe Aung was 19. He was invited to the Smith family's house for dinner. While there, Moe Aung was offered a glass of wine with dinner. Moe Aung did not know what to do. Would he be breaking the law if he took the drink? Should Moe Aung accept the wine?

STAYING SAFE. No matter where you live, you should take basic steps to stay safe, such as locking your home and car, never carrying large amounts of cash with you, and knowing which areas of your community to avoid at night.



CARRYING PERSONAL IDENTIFICATION. Americans use a set system of identification in their dealings with government and business. You should always carry a copy of your I-94 card and your EAD card, as well as the name, address, and phone number of your resettlement agency. If you do not speak English, carry your own telephone number and address, or the address and telephone number of anyone you are about to visit. Do not carry your original social security card. Keep it in a safe place in your home.



FOLLOWING THE RULES. Americans believe that it is important to follow rules. This includes waiting in lines and stopping at stop signs when driving.



Circle the values, attitudes, or behaviors listed on pages 18, 19, 20, and 21 that are different from your previous experiences.



Think about which of the values discussed on page 18 through page 21 might be more challenging for you to adjust to. Complete the chart below. There is an example for you.

What values, customs, and behaviors might be harder to adjust to in the United States?	How will you try to help yourself adjust to these changes?
<p><i>I will be expected to shake hands with both men and women when I meet them.</i></p>	<p><i>I will greet people with a smile, and will tell them my name and where I am from.</i></p>

Maryam was trying to adjust to the new customs and values in the United States. She was trying to become independent, arrive places on time or even early, and respect her neighbor's privacy. But every day, she felt sad and missed her home country a lot. Why do you think Maryam is unhappy? If you were Maryam, what would you do?



Talk with a partner about the ways to avoid feeling overwhelmed in the United States.

**WRAP-UP***

Choose the best answers to the questions below by marking the right choice.

Here is an example:

Which language is spoken by most people in the United States?

- a. Chinese.
- b. English.
- c. German.

Most people in the United States speak English, so the answer is b. English.

1. Are all communities in the United States the same?
 - a. Yes.
 - b. No.
2. Which of the following are common ways Americans greet strangers?
 - a. With a hug.
 - b. With a smile.
 - c. With a handshake.
 - d. With a kiss on the cheek.
 - e. Choices b and c.

* Correct answers provided in Appendix A on page 220.

3. Which of the following do Americans value highly?
 - a. Self-reliance.
 - b. Asking questions.
 - c. Speaking loudly.
 - d. Being on time.
 - e. Choices a, b, and d.
4. Which person in the following examples is NOT being self-reliant?
 - a. Someone who starts learning English right away.
 - b. Someone who asks her friends and family if they know of any jobs in the area.
 - c. Someone who is not interested in finding a job and feels that the resettlement agency should provide everything for him.
 - d. Someone who tries to learn about life in America by observing and asking questions.
5. Imagine that your American neighbors invite you to their home and offer you alcohol. This is a problem for you because you do not drink. Is it rude to refuse a drink in the United States?
 - a. Yes.
 - b. No.

3



Chapter Three TRAVEL TO THE UNITED STATES

After you have been accepted for admission to the United States, there are a few more steps to take before you travel. These steps include medical exams and security clearances. Use this waiting period to start learning English if possible.

This chapter will discuss

- » The medical examination and security clearance
- » Your assigned resettlement agency
- » Travel arrangements
- » Details of your travel to the United States

Before you travel to the United States, you will need a medical exam and security clearance.



KEY ENGLISH VOCABULARY

The following English words are used when discussing travel to the United States. These words will be helpful for you to learn.

Say the word in English. Write the word in your native language. Then draw a picture of the word, write what it means, or use it in a sentence. The first one has been done for you.

In English	In your language	Draw a picture of the word, write its meaning, or use it in a sentence.
bags		
departure		
identification		
luggage		
medical		
occupation		
passport		
travel		

The medical examination will give your resettlement agency information on any medical condition that may require care in the United States.

Before you arrive in the United States, your resettlement agency will know your name, age, ethnic group, and the languages you speak.

The resettlement agency will use information about you to choose your resettlement site.

MEDICAL EXAMINATION

Medical examinations are required for all members of your family. The examinations are free, and Resettlement Support Center staff will make your appointments. Your medical information will be shared only with individuals who help you in the resettlement process.



There are three reasons for the medical examination:

- To find out if you or a member of your family has medical problems that must be treated.
- To make sure that no one in your family has a disease that could be given to others and that may prevent you or a family member from entering the United States.
- To give your resettlement agency information about any medical conditions that may require care in the United States.

CULTURAL ORIENTATION (CO)

Before coming to the United States, most refugees attend Cultural Orientation (CO) given by Resettlement Support Center staff. CO provides information about U.S. life, building on the information found in this book. The purpose of CO is to help you develop realistic expectations about U.S. life and to gain an understanding of what you will experience in your first few months in the United States.



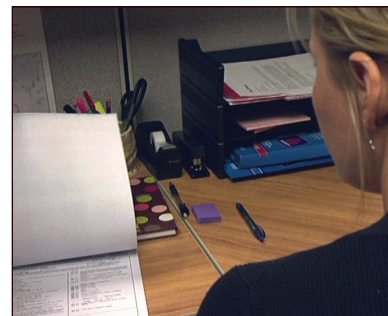
SECURITY CLEARANCE

All refugees must have a security clearance conducted by U.S. government authorities before they travel to the United States. Normally, the clearance is conducted before the Department of Homeland Security interview. Sometimes another security clearance is required before departure.

ASSIGNED RESETTLEMENT AGENCY

Every refugee who is accepted into the United States is assigned a resettlement agency before departure. The Resettlement Support Center will send the following information about you to the resettlement agency:

- Your name, age, education, and occupation.
- The names, ages, education, and occupations of family members who will be coming with you.
- Your ethnicity, country of origin, language, and religion.
- Any medical problems that will need attention when you arrive in the United States.
- Names, addresses, and telephone numbers of any of your relatives or friends who already live in the United States.



CHOOSING YOUR RESETTLEMENT SITE

The national resettlement agency will use information about you to choose your resettlement site. If your immediate family (spouse, child, parent, brother, or sister) is already in the United States, and you provide the Resettlement Support Center with his or her phone number and/or address, the agency will try to resettle you in the same town. If you ask to be resettled near a friend or a relative other than your immediate family, the resettlement agency will consider whether that area has the services you will need and whether you will be likely to find employment there. If relatives who are not your immediate family are being considered for U.S. resettlement, you may request resettlement in the same community, but there is no guarantee that this will happen.



It is important to provide current information about your family and friends in the United States if you want to be resettled near them.

Be sure to tell IOM or the Resettlement Support Center staff about any changes in your family while you are waiting to travel. If you don't, you may not leave on time.

The documents in your IOM bag are very important. Keep your bag with you at all times during your travel.

If the resettlement agency does not have up-to-date information about your family and friends who are already in the United States, you could be resettled in a city far away from them. Give the Resettlement Support Center staff as much information as you can, so that the resettlement agency will be able to choose the place that is right for you. Providing this information does not affect your immigration status or when you will depart. It only affects where in the United States you may be resettled. It is to your advantage to provide this information.

Once the resettlement agency chooses the town where you will live, the Resettlement Support Center will help you make travel arrangements. Before your departure, you will be told where in the United States you will be living.



Once you have found out, fill in the information below. You may not find out some of this information until after you have arrived in the United States.

My new town/city: _____

My new state: _____

My resettlement agency: _____

Contact information for my resettlement agency: _____

TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) will arrange your travel to the United States. If there are any changes in your family while you are waiting to travel, such as a marriage, death, or birth of a baby, you must notify IOM or the Resettlement Support Center staff. If you don't, you may not leave on time. Your departure may be delayed.

3

TRAVEL TO THE UNITED STATES

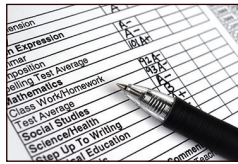
There are certain items that you may not take into the country. Be aware of these items before you pack your bags.



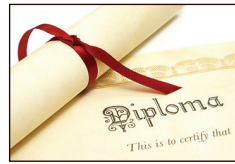
Below are samples of some documents you may want to take with you. Circle the documents your family will take with you in addition to the documents in your IOM bag.



Medical prescriptions



Educational transcripts



Degrees, diplomas, or certificates



Vaccination records or certificates



Birth certificates



Marriage certificates



English translations of any important documents



Medical records



Draw or write any other important documents you will need.

Remember to pack important documents in your carry-on bag!

BAGGAGE

Airlines limit the size, weight, and number of bags each person can bring. These limits vary depending on where you are going and which airline you are flying on. You will be told how many bags you can take with you before your departure. You usually are allowed one carry-on bag. A carry-on bag is a bag that you carry on the plane with you. You will also be allowed to have one checked bag. A checked bag is a bag that goes in the plane's storage area. Be sure your bags close securely so that you will not lose anything during your trip.



Pray Meh carefully packed her bags, but she did not know what to do when her three small children complained about being cold on the plane. What should Pray Meh have packed in the carry-on bags so her children would not be cold on the flight?

ITEMS YOU CANNOT BRING TO THE U.S.

U.S. laws do not allow some things to be carried into the United States. You may not bring in a weapon. You may not carry sharp objects such as knives or scissors in your carry-on bag, but you may pack them in your checked baggage. Other things that you cannot bring into the United States are plants, fruits, vegetables, fresh meat, and drugs. You may bring prescription medicine, but it must be in a container with a label. You should have a doctor's prescription for any prescription medication you bring with you.

Farah packed her small sewing needles in her carry-on bag, and she was very upset when the airport authorities told her she could not take the needles on the plane. What should Farah have done differently?

If you have questions about what you can take into the United States, ask the IOM staff.



*This page and the next page show pictures of three groups of items. Write the number 1 in the group of items that should be packed in your checked baggage. Write the number 2 in the group of items that should be packed in your carry-on bag. Write the number 3 in the group of items that you cannot take.**

1. These items should be packed in your checked baggage.
2. These items should be packed in your carry-on bag.
3. You cannot take these items.

a.

		
Food, bottles, and diapers for babies	Welcome guide	Quiet toys for children
		
Academic, health-related, and other important documents	Warm clothing	Small amount of tobacco
		
Books or magazines	Small amount of liquids in clear plastic bag	Money
		
Prescription medications with prescriptions	Watch	Snacks
		
Umbrella	Jewelry	

*Correct answers provided in Appendix A on page 220.

b.



Weapons or anything that could be used as a weapon



Plants and animals



Pirated software, music, movies, etc.



Fruit and vegetables



Illegal drugs



Lighters/matches



Unidentified pills



Water/beverages



Seeds and spices

c.



Musical instruments



A maximum of 2 sealed and labeled bottles of alcohol



Pictures/memories



Books



Clothing



Toiletries



Sharp objects



Radio



Winter jacket

You may not smoke on the airplane.

Remember to eat and drink when you are served food so that you stay strong and healthy during the flight.



Think about what you will pack for your move to the U.S. Answer the questions in the chart below by drawing a picture or writing, or both.

What are some things you will take with you?

What are some things you will leave behind?

YOUR JOURNEY

AIR TRAVEL

This may be your first time traveling on an airplane.



Think about any concerns you or other members of your family have about travel. You should raise these concerns during your cultural orientation classes, before you board the plane.

Here are some important things to remember:

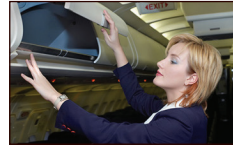
SEATBELTS. You must wear your seatbelt during take-off, landing, and when the seatbelt sign is on. It is a good idea to wear your seatbelt at all times.



SMOKING. Smoking is not allowed on any flights.



FLIGHT ATTENDANTS. Flight attendants make sure passengers are safe and comfortable. Listen to the instructions given by the flight attendants. If you need anything, like water or a blanket, ask a flight attendant.



Win Tun didn't eat the free food served on his flight to the United States because it was unfamiliar. He arrived in the U.S. feeling very hungry. How could you avoid this situation? If you are hungry or thirsty on the flight, who should you ask for help?

FOOD. Food and drinks on international flights are free. You will be served meals several times during a long flight. Be sure to eat the food you are served so that you stay strong and healthy during your long trip.



WATER. The air in an airplane is dry, so it is important for you to drink water. If you do not, you may feel sick or more tired.



ALCOHOL. You may buy a drink of alcohol on most flights, but it is not a good idea to drink alcohol in an airplane because it can cause your body to lose water and become dry.



EXERCISE. Because you will be sitting still for many hours, it is good to stand up, stretch, and walk inside the plane several times during the flight.



CHANGE IN AIR PRESSURE. Your ears may feel like they are popping. To relieve pressure, chew gum, yawn, or drink water.



CHANGING SEATS. Every person on the plane is assigned a seat and must remain in that seat for the entire flight. You can change seats with family or friends if they agree.



IOM representatives may escort refugees who are very ill or need help walking.

When you reach your final destination airport, a relative, friend, or resettlement agency worker will be there to greet you.

INFANTS. Children under the age of two fly for significantly reduced fares if they stay in their parent's lap during the entire flight. Remember to bring baby food and plenty of disposable diapers for the trip.



TOILETS. There are toilets on the plane. Only toilet paper should be thrown into the toilet. The water in the sink should be used for washing hands and not for drinking.



MOTION SICKNESS. If you get sick on the plane and need to vomit, there are bags in the pocket in the seatback in front of you. After using the bag, throw it away in the trash in the bathroom.



TRANSIT POINTS

Some refugees may have to go through one or more transit points before they arrive in the United States. A transit point is a stop, usually made to change to another plane. At the transit point, you may have to pass through an immigration checkpoint. A representative from IOM or the airlines will help you find your way to your next flight. In the United States, IOM representatives will meet you at the port of entry and help you with arrival procedures. They will also help you find a place to stay for the night, if you need one, or help you with travel to your resettlement site. If you have a health problem, IOM will make sure that you have someone to help you during your travel.

IMMIGRATION PROCEDURES

U.S. immigration officials will open your arrival package and inspect the documents. On rare occasions, mistakes are made on documents at the port of entry, such as an incorrect spelling of your name. If you notice any mistakes on these documents, the best thing to do is to tell the resettlement agency at your destination about the mistake so that someone at the agency can correct it.



I-94 and EAD cards

Your I-94 card will be stamped and returned to you. You will be photographed and fingerprinted for your Employment Authorization Document (EAD) card. Your EAD card will be processed and delivered to your resettlement agency. I-94 and EAD cards are very important documents because they prove that you have refugee status in the United States and are allowed to work.

CUSTOMS

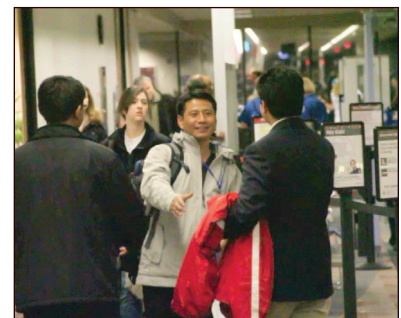
When you have finished with immigration procedures, you will pick up your baggage and proceed to Customs. Customs officials will examine your customs declaration form and may search your bags. Once the contents of your bags have passed Customs, you will be ready for the final part of your trip.

OVERNIGHT STOPS

You may have to spend the night at the port of entry if you cannot make your next flight. If this happens, IOM will arrange (and pay for) a hotel room and food until the flight to your final destination the next day.

FINAL DESTINATION

At the Port of Entry, you will receive an IOM card with information about you and an emergency telephone number to call in case you need help. The card will be on a cord that you can wear around your neck. When you reach your final destination airport, a relative, friend, or a representative from your resettlement agency will meet you in the baggage claim area. If for some reason there is no one there to meet you, please contact an airport official right away. That person will help you contact your resettlement agency, relative, or IOM using the emergency telephone number on the IOM card.

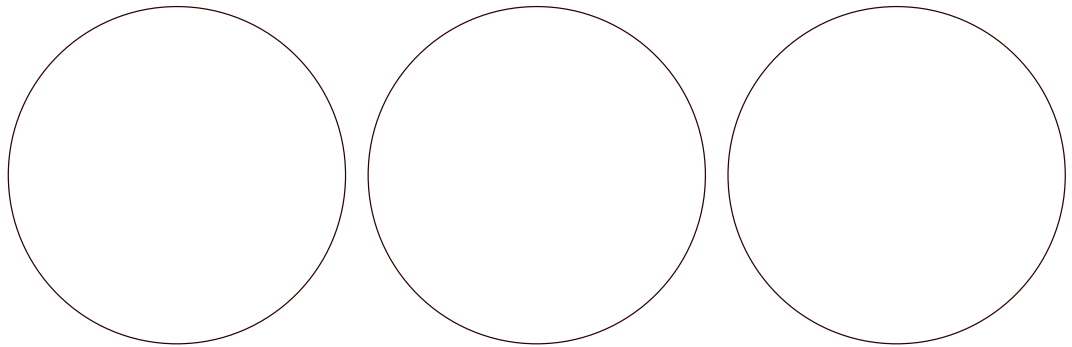


The Rai family arrived at the airport in their new city feeling tired but excited. But there was no one at the airport to meet them. What should the Rai family do?

If there is no one to meet you at the airport, don't worry! Stay calm and contact airport police for help.



Think about how you might feel when you reach your final destination. Go to Appendix C: Faces of Emotion on page 226 and think about what faces would express those feelings. Draw them in the circles below.



- Will you be tired? Hungry or thirsty?
- Will you feel happy? Anxious?
- Will you be excited? Concerned?
- How long do you think it will take for your body to get used to your new environment?

You may be tired after your long journey, but you'll start to feel better in a day or two!

**WRAP-UP***

Choose the best answers to the questions below by marking the right choice.

Here is an example:

Which language is spoken by most people in the United States?

- a. Chinese.
- b. English.
- c. German.

Most people in the United States speak English, so the answer is b. English.

1. Your friend has completed the medical examination and security clearance and he is ready to travel to the United States. Then his wife gives birth. He is worried about what he should do. Should he notify IOM or the Resettlement Support Center staff about this new addition to his family?
 - a. Yes, because if he does not notify them, his departure may be delayed.
 - b. No, because if he notifies them, his departure may be delayed.
2. Should you pack your IOM bag in your checked luggage?
 - a. Yes.
 - b. No.
 - c. It doesn't matter where you pack your IOM bag.

* Correct answers provided in Appendix A on page 220.

3. When packing your bags, which items should you NOT pack because they are not allowed to be carried into the United States?
 - a. Plants.
 - b. Matches.
 - c. Illegal drugs.
 - d. Prescription medications (with prescriptions).
 - e. Choices a, b, and c.
4. Do you have to pay for the food that is served to you on international flights?
 - a. Yes.
 - b. No.
5. When you arrive at your final destination airport, who will you probably see waiting there to greet you?
 - a. A friend.
 - b. A relative.
 - c. Resettlement agency staff.
 - d. All (or one) of the above.
6. By signing a promissory note, you agree to repay your travel loan within how many years after arrival into the United States?
 - a. 1 year.
 - b. 3 years.
 - c. 5 years.
 - d. 10 years.



Chapter Four

THE RESETTLEMENT AGENCY

Resettlement agency workers will be your principal guides to your new community. Listen closely to what they tell you, and provide them with as much information about yourself and your family as possible. They have experience guiding refugees through their first few weeks and months in the United States and can provide you with accurate information about life in your new community.

This chapter will discuss

- » The role of your resettlement agency
- » The services that your resettlement agency will provide or make sure that you get
- » Your rights and responsibilities when working with your resettlement agency

Listen closely to what resettlement agency workers tell you. They can provide you with accurate information about life in the United States.



KEY ENGLISH VOCABULARY

The following English words and phrases are used when discussing the role of the resettlement agency. These words and phrases will be helpful for you to learn.

Say the word or phrase in English. Write the word or phrase in your native language. Then draw a picture of the word or phrase, write what it means, or use it in a sentence. The first one has been done for you.

In English	In your language	Draw a picture of the word, write its meaning, or use it in a sentence.
agency		<i>An agency is a company or organization that helps other companies or people.</i>
assistance		
case manager/ caseworker		
help		
responsibilities		
rights		
services		
staff		

The government works with resettlement agencies to resettle refugees.

Your resettlement agency will help you with basic expenses and the things you need during your first 30 days in the United States.



What are some important things you should share with your resettlement agency about yourself and your family? For example, your names, your ages, etc.

ROLE OF THE RESETTLEMENT AGENCY

In the United States, the government works with resettlement agencies to resettle refugees. The government sets guidelines and provides funding for the basic services that refugees receive. The resettlement agencies and other organizations deliver the services and may offer other help as well. The resettlement agency will provide you with basic things and services you need during the first days and months of your life in the United States. The resettlement agency will also connect you to other services that you need to start your new life.



Janet, a young woman, has been in the United States for over 1 month. During this time, the resettlement agency staff have provided her with the services that they give all refugees. One day Janet calls her case manager and asks him to take her to the grocery store. The caseworker tells Janet that he is busy taking a new refugee family to the clinic and cannot come. He reminds Janet that he has gone with her to the grocery store a few times, and that she knows how to use her food stamps to buy food. He also tells her that the store is close enough to her home that she can walk to it. He tells Janet that she must now try to do these things by herself, and that she can ask her brother, who lives nearby, to help. Janet is angry and feels that the caseworker is ignoring her. Why does Janet want the caseworker to take her? Why is the caseworker not able to take Janet to the grocery store? What would you tell Janet if she complained to you about her caseworker?

FIRST 30 DAYS

Resettlement agencies will help you with basic expenses and living costs for the first 30 days in the United States. Some agencies will pay the expenses directly. Others will give the money to you, and you will pay the expenses yourself.

UP TO 90 DAYS

The 30-day period can be extended up to 90 days after arrival if the resettlement services you need cannot be completed in 30 days. But remember: Americans value self-reliance, so you will be expected to work and to take responsibility for your own life as soon as possible.



Circle pictures of the 5 most important things below that show what you would most like to learn about life in the U.S.



Rights and responsibilities



Transportation



English classes



Housing



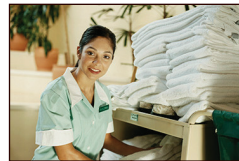
Money management



Role of the resettlement agency



Community services



Employment



Education



Health



Cultural adjustment in the U.S.

4

THE RESETTLEMENT AGENCY

You may see resettlement staff working with volunteers, relatives, and other community members to provide services to you.



With a partner, role-play talking to your case manager about what you want to learn more about. Complete the sentences:

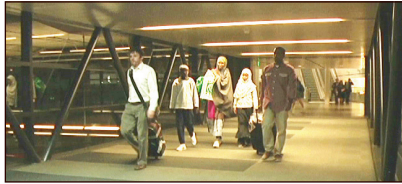
- Can you tell me more about ...
- I am confused about ...
- Can you help me to ...
- I want to learn more about ...
- I don't know what _____ means.

Then switch roles!

Before they arrived in the United States, Phurba and Sita Maya wrote down the topics that they wanted to know about: housing, education for their children, English classes, and finding jobs. After they had lived in the U.S. for a while, Phurba and Sita Maya realized their list had changed. Now they wanted to know more about moving up in the workforce, money management, community services, and how to deal with culture shock. Why do you think their lists changed? Do you think yours will change over time as well? If the things you wanted to learn changed, would this be a challenge for you?

REQUIRED SERVICES

This and the next page show pictures of services that all resettlement agencies must provide, or make sure that someone provides, to all refugees during their first 30 days in the United States. You may see resettlement staff working with volunteers, relatives, and other community members to provide these services for you:



Meet you at the airport and transport you to your housing.



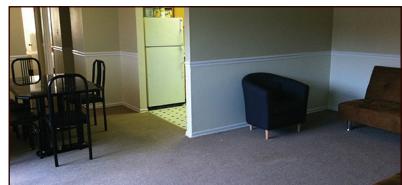
Provide necessary seasonal clothing. The clothing does not have to be new, but it must be clean and in good condition.



Provide safe, decent, and clean housing.



Provide you and every adult in your family with pocket money for personal spending.



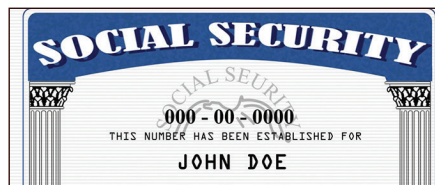
Provide basic furniture and household items. The items do not have to be new items, but they must be clean and in good condition.



Provide food or food allowance according to family size until you can receive food stamps or provide your own food.



Help you apply for cash and medical assistance.



Help you apply for a Social Security card.

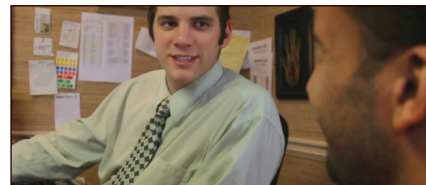
4

THE RESETTLEMENT AGENCY

Soon after you enter the United States, you will need to start looking for a job to pay for your own expenses.



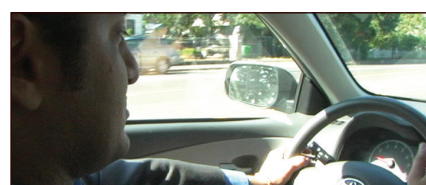
Help you enroll into an English language class, if appropriate.



Provide transportation to job interviews and job training.



Help you enroll in employment services, if appropriate.



Provide transportation and interpretation as needed for all required services.



Help you access health screenings and any health services you need.



Help you register with Selective Service if you are a male between the ages of 18 to 25.



Enroll and register your children in school.



Provide orientation to your new community and life in the United States.

Shada and her family arrived in their new home and were disappointed to find that the furniture was used. Shada was also surprised to learn that the resettlement agency did not have a job waiting for her. She would have to work with an employment specialist to find one. Why was Shada surprised? If you were Shada, what would you remember?

These services are meant to help you get started on the path to your new life. You will need to make good use of the services that the resettlement agency provides, because it will usually only provide them for the first 30 days after you arrive. These services may continue for up to 90 days, but only if they cannot be completed during the first 30 days.

When you enter into the United States, you become responsible for your family and yourself. You will need to start looking for a job as soon as possible. The resettlement agency is not required to find a job for you. The resettlement agency is also not required to provide you with a cell phone, television, car, or computer, or pay your travel loan and other bills. You will need to work to earn money to buy these things and pay your own expenses.

YOUR RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES WHEN WORKING WITH YOUR RESETTLEMENT AGENCY

You have rights and responsibilities when working with your resettlement agency. Here are the rights you have:

- To receive the required services during your first 30 days in the United States.
- To be treated in a respectful and fair manner by resettlement workers.
- To know the details of your case.
- To keep the information in your case private. Resettlement agency staff cannot share confidential information about you or your family without your permission, unless that information is needed to protect you or someone else.



4

THE RESETTLEMENT AGENCY

When working with resettlement agency workers, be on time for appointments and tell them any questions and concerns you have.

You also have responsibilities to the resettlement agency working with you. These responsibilities include:

- Being on time for appointments.
- Being patient when making requests for things that are not urgent.
- Treating resettlement staff with respect.
- Communicating with resettlement workers by notifying them of changes in your situation (for example, a new job or a serious illness), or by asking questions and sharing your concerns.



Though some resettlement agencies are religious-based, they are not allowed to encourage refugees to join any religious group.

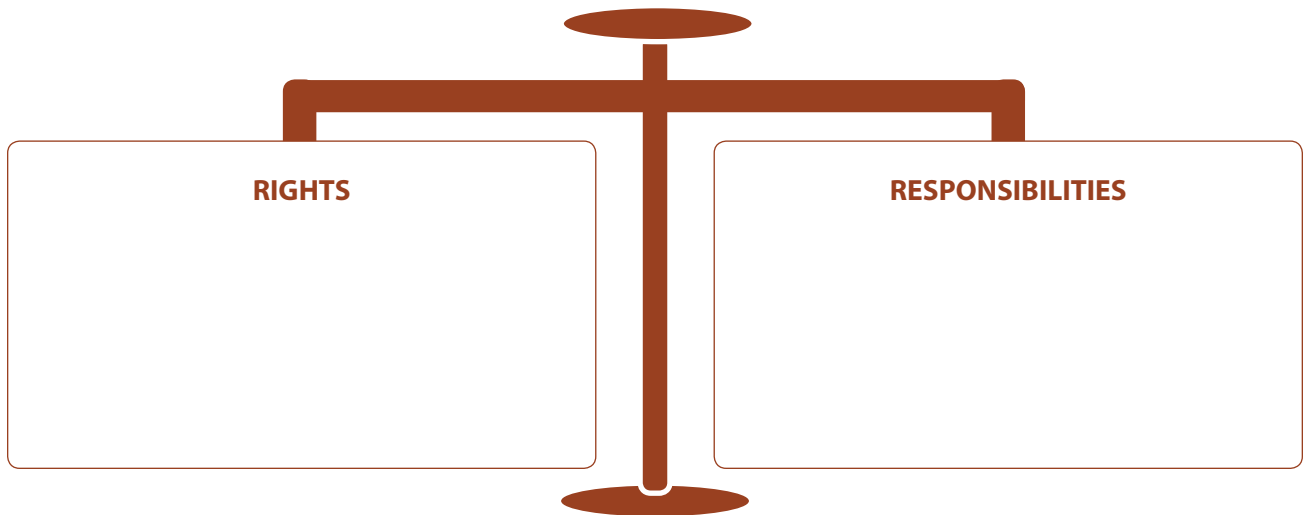


Circle the rights and responsibilities listed on page 51 and page 52 that will be new for you as a refugee in the United States.

Tell a partner about the rights and responsibilities you and your resettlement agency will have toward each other.



Your rights and responsibilities create a balanced, healthy relationship with your resettlement agency. On the scale on the next page, draw or write about the rights and responsibilities you will have with your resettlement agency in the United States.



TYPES OF RESETTLEMENT AGENCIES

A resettlement agency may be a religious-based organization, a private organization, or an ethnic organization. Although some resettlement agencies are religious-based, you do not have to participate in their religious activities. Resettlement agencies are not allowed to encourage refugees to join any religious group.



Below is a picture of a resettlement agency. What do you see?

What do you notice?



There are many good reasons to stay in your resettlement community.

If you consider moving to another community, notify your resettlement agency.

MOVING TO ANOTHER COMMUNITY

There are many good reasons for staying in your resettlement community for at least 6 months to 1 year. You and your family will be provided with all required services, and you will have the help and guidance



of your resettlement agency. This will give you the time you need to start learning about life in the United States. However, if you consider moving to another community, your resettlement agency is not responsible for moving you, and the resettlement agency in the area that you move to is not required to help you. Notify your resettlement agency if you are considering a move. If you decide to move, you will be responsible for your own move and for any support services you may need in your new community. You must notify the U.S. government of your new address within 10 days of moving.

After 1 month in the United States, Aung Chit could not find a job. His friend Tun Kyaw lived in a different state and said that Aung Chit could probably get a job where Tun Kyaw worked. Tun Kyaw also said that Aung Chit and his family could stay in his apartment. Aung Chit and his family packed their bags and moved in with Tun Kyaw. Tun Kyaw's small apartment was crowded, the local resettlement agency could not help Aung Chit, and there was no job available right away for Aung Chit at Tun Kyaw's workplace. Do you think Aung Chit made the right decisions? If you were Aung Chit, what would you have done?



Think about the support your resettlement agency will be providing.

- How will your resettlement agency be helpful?
- Why would it be challenging to move to another community without the support of your resettlement agency?



WRAP-UP*

*True or false? Test your knowledge with the statements below. Read these statements and circle the word **True** if you think the statement is right and circle **False** if you think the statement is wrong.*

- | | | |
|---|-------------|--------------|
| 1. Resettlement agencies are required to help you with necessary expenses and basic living costs for the first 30 days. | True | False |
| 2. The resettlement agency must provide you with new furniture. | True | False |
| 3. The resettlement agency must find a job for you. | True | False |
| 4. You have a right to know the details of your case. | True | False |
| 5. Resettlement agency workers are your guides to your new community and you should feel comfortable asking them any questions that you have. | True | False |
| 6. If you choose to move to a new community, your resettlement agency is required to help you move and to connect you with services in the new community. | True | False |

* Correct answers provided in Appendix A on page 220.

5



Chapter Five HOUSING

Housing in America is often expensive, and finding a suitable place to live can be difficult. In the beginning, you will have a limited income, so your first home may not be your ideal choice. Your resettlement agency will make sure that you have housing during your first month in the U.S. Your agency will look for housing that is clean, affordable, and in a safe neighborhood.

This chapter will discuss

- » A lease, or rental agreement
- » Home safety and maintenance

The resettlement agency will make sure that you have housing during your first month in the U.S.





KEY ENGLISH VOCABULARY

The following English words are used when discussing housing in the United States. These words will be helpful for you to learn.

Say the word in English. Write the word in your native language. Then draw a picture of the word, write what it means, or use it in a sentence. The first one has been done for you.

In English	In your language	Draw a picture of the word, write its meaning, or use it in a sentence.
apartment		
bathroom		
cost		
furniture		
home		
house		
landlord		
lease		
rent		
room		
safety		
utilities		

When you first arrive, you may stay with relatives who have already resettled in the United States. Or you may be placed in an apartment, in a hotel, or in an agency welcome center. If you are single, you may be placed with other single refugees.



Amal is getting ready to go to the United States. She knows two people there. One is her cousin, and the other is a friend. Her cousin tells Amal that she will live in a house when she first arrives in the U.S., but her friend says she will live in a small apartment. Why is Amal getting very different information from two people in the U.S.?



Think about your last home or homes.

- What did your home look like?
- What made your home important to you?
- Why did you call it your home?



Draw a picture of what made your home (or homes) important to you.



Tell a partner about what you have drawn. This will be good practice for when you tell people you meet in the U.S. about your previous home or homes.

TYPES OF HOUSING

Most American communities have several types of housing.



*Match the type of housing with the correct picture.**

1. Apartment

a.



2. Single family house

b.



3. Trailer home

c.



4. Room in a house or apartment

d.



* Correct answers provided in Appendix A on page 220.

Your resettlement agency is responsible for providing basic furniture and household items.

The cost of housing differs from community to community.

When you rent an apartment, you must sign a rental agreement, or lease.

When you sign a rental agreement, you agree to rent the property for a certain number of months and to pay rent on time.

In the United States it is common for people to rent a house or an apartment. A house or an apartment usually has a kitchen with a stove, sink, and refrigerator; a living and dining area; one or more bedrooms; a bathroom; and closets.

FURNISHINGS

Your resettlement agency is responsible for putting basic furniture and household items in the apartment or house they have selected for you and your family. The items will include furniture, linens, kitchen supplies, and personal care items. The agency is not required to provide you with new items. The items should be in good condition, but they do not have to be new.



Hadeel's family was surprised when they arrived in their new home to find the furniture did not match. They knew the furniture would not be new, but why was it not a set?

HOUSING COSTS

The cost of housing differs from state to state, from city to city, and even from one neighborhood to another. Wherever you live, however, housing costs will be the largest part of your monthly expenses.



Think about housing costs in your home country or country of asylum.

- Have you spent money on housing before?
- How much did you spend on housing?
- Did you pay for utilities such as water, heat, or electricity?
- What other housing costs did you have?

RENTAL AGREEMENT (LEASE)

When you rent an apartment or house in the United States, you must sign a piece of paper called a lease. A lease is a legal document that explains the rights and responsibilities of the tenant (you) and the landlord (the owner of the building).

The lease states the amount of the monthly rent for the apartment or house. The rent may include the cost of utilities (gas or oil for heat, electricity, water, and trash removal), or the utilities may be charged separately. Before you sign a lease, it is important to ask the landlord if utilities are included in the rent.



TENANT RESPONSIBILITIES

When you sign a lease, you agree to the following:

- The number of people who will live in the apartment or house.
- The amount of the monthly rent.
- The day of the month when the rent is due.
- The condition of the apartment (which should be kept clean and undamaged).
- The number of months you will stay (usually 12 months).
- The terms for breaking the lease.

Durga leaves for the United States in a few days and is nervous about something. He knows he is going to have to sign a lease when he rents an apartment, and he knows from his cultural orientation classes that whenever he signs a piece of paper he should understand all the information in the paper. But there is so much information in a lease. How will he understand everything? What can you tell Durga about a lease? And where can he find help understanding his lease?

Do not remove smoke alarms. They are there to protect you and other residents from a fire.

EVICTION

If you break an agreement in the lease, you can be evicted (required to leave your apartment). For example, if you fail to pay rent or seriously damage the property, you can be evicted.



LANDLORD RESPONSIBILITIES

Housing laws apply to both landlords and tenants. Landlords must see to it that their housing meets certain standards of safety and sanitation for rental property. The landlord must be sure that electrical, plumbing, and heating systems are in good condition. They must provide smoke detectors and get rid of any rodents and insects. Housing laws also state that landlords cannot refuse to rent to people because of their ethnicity, religion, or country of origin.

After a few months in his apartment, Kyaw Oo finds cockroaches living in and around his sink. His apartment has also become dirty. Who is responsible for keeping the apartment clean? Who is responsible for getting rid of the cockroaches? What should Kyaw Oo ask his landlord for help with?



Think about how the rights and responsibilities of landlords and tenants in the U.S. are similar to or different from your previous experiences.

- Have you ever rented housing before?
- What was your landlord responsible for?
- What were you as the tenant responsible for?
- What were your rights as the tenant?

HOUSING SAFETY

It is important to keep your home safe.



*Match the safety tip below with the correct image.**



1. Doors and windows



2. Strangers



3. Smoke alarm



4. Fire extinguisher



5. Oven

- a. Do not remove or turn off smoke alarms in your home. They sound an alarm when there is smoke to let you know that something in your home may be burning.
- b. Keep fabric and other things that can catch on fire away from the oven. Do not leave the stove or oven when cooking.
- c. Do not allow strangers into your home. If strangers come to your door, ask them who they are and what they want before you let them in. If you cannot communicate with them and they make you feel uncomfortable, do not let them in.
- d. Always lock your door, even when you are at home. When you leave your home, lock the doors and windows.
- e. Use a fire extinguisher to put out small fires in your home that may happen (for example, when cooking). Never use water to put out a grease fire. For bigger fires, leave the building immediately and call emergency services by dialing 9-1-1. (See Chapter 6 to learn more about dialing 9-1-1.)



Circle the recommended safety measures above that you have practiced in the past. Tell a partner how you have practiced these measures. Then indicate the ones that are new to you.

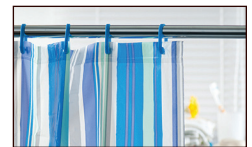
* Correct answers provided in Appendix A on page 220.

Keep food covered and in the refrigerator. If you leave food out, it may attract insects and mice.

HOUSING MAINTENANCE

It is important to keep your home clean and in good condition.

- Cover food and keep it in the refrigerator. Leaving food uncovered and on the counters may attract insects or mice.
- Put all trash in a trash can, lined with a plastic garbage bag. Empty your trash daily into a garbage can or dumpster outside if possible. Trash in your home may attract insects, cockroaches, or mice.
- In the kitchen, do not put egg shells, bones, or fruit or vegetable peels down the sink drain or disposal. Do not put things such as hair down the bathroom sink or bathtub drains or toilet. Put these things in a trash can.
- Do not put objects (such as sanitary pads or diapers) in the toilet other than toilet paper. Teach your children not to flush anything but toilet paper down the toilet.
- Close shower doors completely, put shower curtains inside the tub, and use bathmats on the floor outside the tub or shower after a bath or shower.
- When your smoke detector begins to beep when there is no smoke, that means that it needs a new battery. Change the battery right away. Remember to make sure that the smoke detector is always on and working.



When Taw Meh returns home from work, there is a bad smell coming from the kitchen. What are some things she should check to see where the smell is coming from? What are some things Taw Meh could do so that she does not have bad smells in her kitchen in the future?



How might your new home in the United States be similar to or different from your previous home? Write about or draw pictures of the similarities and differences in the boxes below—for example, the number and types of rooms, types of bathroom fixtures, running or hot water, and cleaning methods.

SIMILARITIES	DIFFERENCES

Do you think these similarities and/or differences will make adjustment easier or more difficult?



With a partner, role-play a tenant talking with a landlord to find out what you need to know about your new home. You might ask:

- How much is the rent?
- When is the rent due?
- Are utilities included?
- When there are problems, whom do I call?
- How long is the lease?

Come up with your own questions!

**WRAP-UP***

*Choose the best answers to the questions below by marking the right choice.
Here is an example:*

Which language is spoken by most people in the United States?

- a. Chinese.
- b. English.
- c. German.

Most people in the United States speak English, so the answer is b. English.

1. Which of the following actions could bring insects or mice into your home?
 - a. Leaving food uncovered and out on the counter.
 - b. Putting food in the refrigerator.
 - c. Leaving kitchen trash in the trash can for many days.
 - d. Choices a and c.

2. If you rent a house or apartment in the United States, do you have to sign a lease or rental agreement?
 - a. Yes.
 - b. No.

* Correct answers provided in Appendix A on page 220.

3. What should you do if strangers come to your door?
 - a. Open the door and let them in.
 - b. Ask them who they are and what they want, if you speak some English.
 - c. Do not let them in if they make you feel uncomfortable.
 - d. Choices b and c.

4. When you sign a lease, what are you agreeing to?
 - a. The amount of monthly rent.
 - b. The number of months you will stay.
 - c. The number of people who will live in the house or apartment.
 - d. All of the above.

5. Is your resettlement agency required to provide you with new furniture?
 - a. Yes.
 - b. No.

6



Chapter Six COMMUNITY SERVICES

In addition to your resettlement agency, there are other service agencies in your community. The services and their availability vary from place to place.

This chapter will discuss

- » Government services
- » Private assistance services
- » Public services





KEY ENGLISH VOCABULARY

The following English words and phrases are used when discussing community services available in the United States. These words and phrases will be helpful for you to learn.

Say the word or phrase in English. Write the word or phrase in your native language. Then draw a picture of the word or phrase, write what it means, or use it in a sentence. The first one has been done for you.

In English	In your language	Draw a picture of the word, write its meaning, or use it in a sentence.
child care		<i>Fatimah looks for child care so that she can go to ESL class.</i>
community		
emergency		
library		
parks		
public		
recreation		
translation		

Government social service agencies help people with special needs.

The government provides food assistance based on family size and income to low-income families.



Think about the types of assistance you could get in your home country or country of asylum.

GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE

Government social service agencies provide services to people in the community. They help people with special needs, such as low-income families, the homeless, and people with disabilities. Government programs have strict time limits and guidelines for participation. Communities vary in the type and amount of services they provide. Here are some government programs that help refugees.

CASH ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS.

For people who are having difficulty finding a job, two programs provide temporary financial assistance: Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) for parents with children, and Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA) for single and married refugees without children.



MATCHING GRANT PROGRAM.

Many resettlement agencies offer this program instead of cash assistance for refugees who want to work, but need some financial help first. Refugees enrolled in this program promise to get a job as quickly as possible. In exchange, they receive financial assistance, job counseling, and job placement services for their first 4 to 6 months in the United States.



SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE

PROGRAM (SNAP). This federal program provides financial assistance to low-income people in the United States to buy food. A person in this program is given a card that can be used to buy a certain amount of food each month. Refugees may apply for food assistance at a local government office. The amount of assistance is based on family size and income.



SUPPLEMENTAL SECURITY INCOME (SSI). This is a federal cash assistance program for people who are blind, disabled, or over the age of 65, and have little or no income.

CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS. Some communities provide free or low-cost child care for low-income people so they can work or look for work (see Chapter 12 to learn more about child care).



Abbas believes he will receive government assistance when he resettles in the United States. When he meets his case manager at the airport, he expects the case manager will give him cash or a check, but he does not receive either. Why does this not happen? In what forms might you receive government assistance?

PRIVATE ASSISTANCE

Private assistance organizations also provide services that help refugees. The amount and type of these services vary from place to place, but many communities offer the following:

- Counseling.
 - Immigration status assistance.
 - English classes.
 - Employment help (job counseling and vocational training).
 - Translation services.
-

Gopi knows she needs to start learning English. She finds out that her resettlement agency does not offer English, but the agency will help her find a class somewhere in the community. Where might Gopi be taking the classes?

Religious groups may offer assistance and support. Refugees do not have to participate in the group's religious activities to receive services.

There are three types of emergency services in the United States: fire department, police, and ambulance.

Two common types of private assistance organizations are community-based organizations and faith-based organizations.

COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS (CBOs)

These organizations operate in a local community and provide recreational, social, and educational services to community members. One type of CBO that you may find in your community is ethnic community-based organizations (ECBOs). These organizations are made up of former refugees and immigrants and help newcomers in their communities. Some provide adult education classes, organize women's groups, and hold cultural and recreational events.



FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATIONS



Churches, mosques, synagogues, and other religious groups may also offer various services. Some have ESL classes for adults and some give away used clothing and furniture. No one who uses these services has to participate in the group's religious activities. In the United States, you have the freedom to worship in the way you choose, or to not worship at all.

A Christian church offers to give Zaw Min and his family a free box of food every week. Zaw Min and his family need the food, but they are not Christian and do not want to be. Should Zaw Min accept the food? Why or why not?

PUBLIC COMMUNITY SERVICES

Every community has public services available to everyone in the community. You should know about these services so that you can benefit from them. Here are a few of the most common public services:

EMERGENCY SERVICES AND CALLING 9-1-1. All communities have fire departments and emergency medical services. To get help in an emergency, dial 911 on the telephone and tell the operator what you need (“Police,” “Fire,” or “Ambulance”) and your location. If you cannot explain the problem in English, just say, “Help” or “Emergency” and do not hang up the telephone. The open phone line will help the operator know where you are.

Gori Maya’s lit candle falls on the floor, lighting the carpet on fire. She does not speak English yet, but remembers to call 9-1-1. When the operator answers, Gori Maya says, “No English. Fire.” Why is it important for her to say “fire”? What else should Gori Maya remember to do?

There are three main types of emergency services in the United States.



*Draw a line from the name of the department to a picture of the vehicle that it uses.**

1.



a. Fire department

2.



b. Police

3.








c. Ambulance

* Correct answers provided in Appendix A on page 220.

Police officers protect and help people. You should do what they tell you to do and not be afraid of them.



*Decide if the situations below are emergencies. If they are, decide what emergency service should be requested.**

Is this situation an emergency?*	Yes, call 911			No, do not call 911
	Fire	Police	Ambulance	
1. You wake up in the middle of the night and see a fire in the house across the street. 				
2. The 8-year-old who lives down the street takes your son's ball home with her. 				
3. Your daughter fell out of a tree and is in a lot of pain. 				
4. Your fire alarm is beeping, but after checking your apartment, you see there is not a fire. 				
5. You see a stranger breaking into your neighbor's apartment one night when they are out of town. 				
6. You accidentally cut your finger while cutting vegetables and stop the bleeding by putting on a small bandage. 				

* Correct answers provided in Appendix A on page 220.

** The idea for this activity came from the *United States Cultural Orientation Student Handbook* developed by the Resettlement Support Center in East Asia (International Rescue Committee).

POLICE. Police officers are public servants who protect the public and help people. You should do what a police officer tells you to and not be afraid of them. If a police officer approaches you and asks you to stop, do so. Running away will be seen as a sign that you have done something wrong and may lead to problems for you. If you cannot communicate with the police, ask for an interpreter or contact your resettlement agency.



Tee Reh is walking to the store and crosses the street. Then he sees a crosswalk that he realizes he should have used. A police officer starts to walk toward Tee Reh, and he runs away. The officer chases after Tee Reh and catches him. She gives Tee Reh a ticket for jaywalking and a fine for running away. What are two things Tee Reh could have done to avoid these fines? What would you tell Tee Reh about police in the United States?

LIBRARIES. Public libraries have books and other materials, such as CDs and DVDs, that residents can borrow free of charge. You must apply for a library card to take materials out of the library. Libraries often offer classes such as English or typing, and may have computers available for public use.



PARKS AND RECREATION. Local parks provide picnic areas, playgrounds, and sports fields to the public. Many parks have regulations about what visitors can and cannot do. Some parks are free, but others charge an admission fee.



Amina lives in an apartment building with no yard for her children to play in. She knows she cannot let her children play in the street. Where could Amina's children play?



Compare the services available in the United States with those in your home country or country of asylum.

- What services are similar?
- What services are different?



Draw or write about these similarities and differences below.

**WRAP-UP***

Choose the best answers to the questions below by marking the right choice.

Here is an example:

Which language is spoken by most people in the United States?

- a. Chinese.
- b. English.
- c. German.

Most people in the United States speak English, so the answer is b. English.

1. Which group below do government social services not help?
 - a. Low-income individuals/families.
 - b. People with disabilities.
 - c. The homeless.
 - d. Wealthy individuals.

2. You arrived in the United States at the same time as your neighbor. You live in the same apartment building, but you notice that his family of 5 is getting more cash assistance from the government than your family of 3. Did the government make a mistake?
 - a. Yes.
 - b. No, because government social services vary according to family size and other factors.

* Correct answers provided in Appendix A on page 220.

3. If you attend English classes in a religious institution, you must join that religion to continue attending classes.
 - a. True.
 - b. False.
4. How do most Americans feel or respond when they see a police officer?
 - a. They feel safe and protected.
 - b. They become afraid.
 - c. They insult the police officer.
 - d. They run away.
5. Are public libraries places where you can borrow books, music CDs, and DVDs free of charge?
 - a. Yes.
 - b. No.



Chapter Seven TRANSPORTATION

When you first arrive in the United States, you will probably spend a lot of time walking to the places you need to go. Soon you will start taking public transportation. Public transportation varies a lot from place to place. In some places, it can take you almost everywhere you need to go. In other places, public transportation is not very available or may not exist. Your resettlement agency will give you information about public transportation in your new community soon after you arrive.

This chapter will discuss


- » Types of public transportation
- » Traffic signs and road safety
- » Owning and driving a car

Public transportation varies from community to community. It can be extensive in some places, and not very available in others.

KEY ENGLISH VOCABULARY

The following English words and phrases are used when discussing transportation in the United States. These words and phrases will be helpful for you to learn.

Say the word or phrase in English. Write the word or phrase in your native language. Then draw a picture of the word or phrase, write what it means, or use it in a sentence. The first one has been done for you.

In English	In your language	Draw a picture of the word, write its meaning, or use it in a sentence.
bicycle		
bus		
car		
driver's license		
road		
street		
traffic light		
transportation		

Most of the time you must buy a ticket to use public transportation.

TYPES OF PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Public transportation allows people in a city to travel throughout a city without a car. In the United States, there are three major types of public transportation: buses, subways, and commuter trains. They run on a schedule and usually stop at certain locations to allow riders to get off or on. Most of the time you will need to buy a ticket to use public transportation. Taxis may also be available, but they are usually expensive.



Think about how you got around in your home country or country of asylum.

- Did you walk, bike, or use other transportation?
- If you used other transportation, was it public or private?
- How did you find your way?



Draw or write about the ways you got around in your home country or country of asylum in the circles below.

**How
did you get to
the market?**

**How
did you visit a
friend?**

**How
did you visit
family?**

**How
did you get to
work?**

**How
did you travel
longer distances?**

Be aware of traffic signs and signals so that you are safe when walking in your community.

It may be difficult at first, but if you take the time, you will be able to figure out the transportation system. Also, you should know that in some areas you may have to travel for a long time or on more than one form of public transportation to get from one place to another.

Learning how to get around in a new area takes time, so don't feel bad. One day you will know your way around!



TRAFFIC SIGNS AND ROAD SAFETY

As you use public transportation and walk around your community, you will notice several traffic signs and signals. These and other rules of the road help keep people safe when walking and driving.



*Match the sign with the rule it describes.**

1.



a. This marks a safe place to cross the street.
Always cross the street at a crosswalk.

2.



b. This means "Stop." It is not safe to cross.

3.



c. This means "Walk." It is safe to cross.

4.



d. Many states require children to wear a bicycle helmet when riding a bike.

5.



e. When driving in a car, it is important to wear a seatbelt. All states require child safety seats for children.

* Correct answers provided in Appendix A on page 221.

It is expensive to own and drive a car. Try to use public transportation.

Driving while under the influence of alcohol is a serious offense. You may lose your driver's license, pay a large fine, or spend time in jail.



Think about the road safety you practiced in the past, and what adjustments you may have to make to be safe in the United States.

- How did you practice road safety in the past?
- How did you stay safe in traffic?
- What do you think will be different about American road safety? Why?



If you don't know where you are going, stop and ask for directions. Practice asking for directions with a partner. Here are some questions you might ask:

- How do I get to the market from here?
- Where is the closest bus stop?
- Does this bus go to the market?
- Is there a post office nearby?

Come up with your own questions!

OWNING AND DRIVING A CAR

You may want to start driving as soon as you arrive in the United States, but there are a lot of responsibilities and expenses to owning and driving a car.



Try to use the public transportation system until you have found a job and can afford car expenses.

Henri drove a car for many years before he arrived in the United States. A couple of months after he arrived, he bought a used car. One day another car hit his car from behind. The accident wasn't Henri's fault, but he had many problems since he was driving without a license or insurance. What should Henri have remembered about driving in the U.S.?

DRIVER'S LICENSE

When you are ready to start driving, the first thing you will need is a local driver's license. Before you get your license, you must pass a vision test, a written exam, and a driving test. If you are caught driving without a valid driver's license, you may have to pay a fine, and it may be hard for you to get a license in the future. After you get your license, you must follow the driving laws. If you break a law, you may lose your license. For example, if you are arrested for driving under the influence of alcohol, you may lose your driver's license. You may also pay a large fine, or even spend time in jail.



COST OF OWNING A CAR

There are many costs to owning a car. First of all, most states require that you buy car insurance. With car insurance, you make regular payments to an insurance company. If you have an accident and someone is hurt or property is damaged, the insurance company will pay the medical or repair costs. Insurance is usually more expensive for people with no driving record in the United States. The type of car you drive, your age, and the number of people who will be driving your car also affect the cost of insurance. There are other expenses when you own and operate a car—gasoline, parking, taxes, vehicle registration, and maintenance and repairs.



Think about the differences between using public transportation and owning a car in the U.S.

- What are the benefits to using public transportation rather than owning a car?
- How are the rights and responsibilities of owning and driving a car in the United States different from the rights and responsibilities in your home country or country of asylum?

Yin Nyo is tired of spending so much time taking the bus to and from work every day. She wants to buy a car. Is that a good idea? What would you tell Yin Nyo about the differences between using public transportation and owning a car in the United States?

**WRAP-UP***

*Choose the best answers to the questions below by marking the right choice.
Here is an example:*

Which language is spoken by most people in the United States?

- a. Chinese.
- b. English.
- c. German.

Most people in the United States speak English, so the answer is b. English.

1. Which of the following are forms of public transportation?
 - a. City buses.
 - b. Subways.
 - c. Your friend's car.
 - d. Commuter trains.
 - e. Choices a, b, and d.
2. In the United States, you need a driver's license to drive a car.
 - a. True.
 - b. False.

* Correct answers provided in Appendix A on page 221.

3. If you are caught driving under the influence of alcohol, which of the following could happen?
 - a. You lose your driver's license for some time.
 - b. You pay a large fine.
 - c. You spend time in jail.
 - d. Any or all of the above.
4. Most states require that a car be insured.
 - a. True.
 - b. False.
5. The cost of owning a car includes which of the following?
 - a. Car insurance.
 - b. Vehicle registration.
 - c. Gasoline.
 - d. Vehicle maintenance and repair.
 - e. All of the above.

8



Chapter Eight HEALTH CARE

The health care system in the United States is complex and often expensive. It may be hard at first to understand the U.S. health care system, but with patience and time you will begin to learn about it. Remember that resettlement staff can help answer your questions and provide you with more information as you need it.

This chapter will discuss

- » Your initial health screening
- » Health care providers
- » Paying for health care
- » American concepts of health

The health care system in the United States is complex and often expensive.



KEY ENGLISH VOCABULARY

The following English words and phrases are used when discussing health care in the United States. These words and phrases will be helpful for you to learn.

Say the word or phrase in English. Write the word or phrase in your native language. Then draw a picture of the word or phrase, write what it means, or use it in a sentence. The first one has been done for you.

In English	In your language	Draw a picture of the word, write its meaning, or use it in a sentence.
dentist		<i>A dentist is a doctor who treats problems of the teeth and mouth.</i>
doctor		
doctor's office		
health		
hospital		
immunization		
insurance		
interpreter		
medicine		
nurse		
sick		

Let the doctor know if you have any health problems so that you can be treated soon.

There are several different types of health care providers in the United States.

INITIAL HEALTH SCREENING

Your first contact with U.S. health care will probably be at your first health screening. Your resettlement agency will arrange for this free screening soon after you arrive. The screening will identify and treat any health problems that may affect your resettlement, such as your ability to work or your children's ability to go to school. Your children may receive immunizations during the screening because all children enrolling in public school must show proof that they have been immunized.



It is very important to let the doctor know if you have any health problems or ailments so that you can be treated soon. Extensive health care may not be available in the first few weeks of your arrival, unless you need care right away.



Think about any health issues that you might need to tell your doctor about.

After the initial health screening, you will need to figure out how you will get health care when you or a member of your family needs it. Resettlement staff can help you consider your options.



Think about how you have dealt with health concerns in the past.

- When you were feeling sick, what would you do?
- When you hurt yourself, what would you do?
- When would you see a doctor?

HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS

There are several different types of health care providers in the United States. Here are some common health care providers:

PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT. Public health departments provide immunizations against diseases and offer other preventive health services, including testing and treatment for tuberculosis. Preventive health services are services that prevent diseases before they happen. For refugees, these services are free or very inexpensive. An appointment is usually necessary. (Learn more about health insurance in this chapter, in the section titled “Health Insurance.”)



COMMUNITY CLINICS AND HEALTH CENTERS. These provide basic health services and health counseling. Some also provide dental care and eye examinations. Some clinics in cities treat specific types of patients, such as pregnant women or people with HIV/AIDS. You may or may not need an appointment at a community clinic or health center. Clinics accept private insurance and Medicaid (government insurance for low-income people), and many charge fees based on the patient’s ability to pay.



PRIVATE DOCTORS. There are two main kinds of doctors in the United States: general practitioners and specialists. General practitioners provide general health care, including annual checkups. Specialists work in one area of medicine. Some specialists treat certain groups, such as women or children. Others specialize in one part of the body, such as the heart, the eyes, or the feet. You need an appointment to see a private doctor. Before you see a private doctor, you usually have to show that you can pay for the service or that you have insurance.



Emergency rooms are for sudden, serious health problems.

HOSPITALS. Doctors and clinics refer patients with special problems to the hospital for tests and surgery. Hospital care is expensive, and you have to show that you can pay for the service or that you have insurance.

EMERGENCY ROOMS. These facilities in hospitals or elsewhere are for sudden and serious health problems. You do not need an appointment to go to the emergency room, but they are busy places and you may have to wait a long time if your problem is not serious. Emergency room care is very expensive. If your problem is not an emergency, you should make an appointment at a clinic or doctor's office.



Lubna cut her finger badly while chopping vegetables. Her husband Emaad called a taxi and they went to the closest hospital emergency room. Lubna and Emaad didn't speak or read English, and they couldn't fill out the paperwork. How would you feel if you were Lubna or Emaad? What should Lubna and Emaad do?

URGENT CARE CLINICS. In some communities, urgent care clinics are available. These clinics are for situations where you have an illness or injury that needs immediate care, but is not serious enough for a visit to the emergency room. You do not need an appointment.





Think about your past experiences with health care.

- How did you decide what to do?
- Did you have health care options?
- Were your experiences with health care providers positive or negative?



*Match the health concern on the left with what you should do on the right.**

1. You have a fever for 3 days.



2. You have a cold and a runny nose.

a. Care for it yourself.

3. You have been feeling anxious and sad for 2 months.



4. You are feeling tired.

b. Go to a doctor.

5. You think you have a broken bone.



6. You are having severe abdominal pain.

c. Go to a hospital emergency room.

* Correct answers provided in Appendix A on page 221.

Most Americans rely on health insurance programs since the cost of health care is very high.



*Think about whether the health situations on page 95 are minor (and will get better on their own or with basic home care), might require medical treatment, or are life-threatening. Match each of these situations with the correct picture below.**

If you have something that:

You should:

1. Is minor



a. Visit a hospital emergency room.

2. Might require medical attention



b. Treat it at home.

3. Is sudden and serious



c. See a doctor.

When in doubt, call a friend or your case manager for advice.

* Correct answers provided in Appendix A on page 221.



Below are some common signs in the United States that relate to health. Match the sign in the top row with the correct meaning on the bottom.*

1.



a. Hospital

2.



b. Pharmacy

3.



c. Poison

4.



d. Emergency Room

5.



e. First Aid

6.



f. Danger

PAYING FOR HEALTH CARE



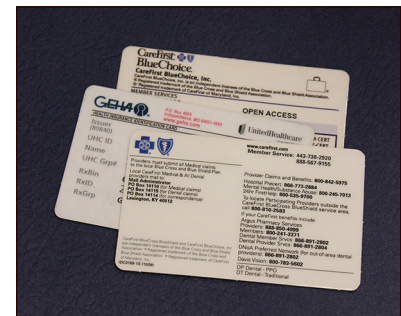
Consider the following questions about health care in your home country or country of asylum.

- How was health care paid for?
- Was it expensive?

Health care in the United States is expensive, and in most cases very few people can afford to pay all of their own health care costs. Government programs pay the health care costs of low-income people who qualify for the programs. Other people rely on health insurance to pay for their health costs.

HEALTH INSURANCE

People who have health insurance make regular payments to an insurance company, and in return, the insurance company pays their health care costs. Many employers offer insurance plans for their employees, and they often pay part of the monthly cost. The rest of the cost of insurance is taken out of the worker's paycheck along with taxes. New workers usually have to wait a while before they are eligible for health insurance. It is possible to buy your own health insurance, but it is usually very expensive.



* Correct answers provided in Appendix A on page 221.

For working-age people with low incomes, the government offers programs that pay for medical care for a limited time.

In the United States, you have the right to interpreter services and to confidentiality.

Maria works part time, at \$9 an hour, and receives health care benefits for the family. Her husband Luis works full-time, but does not receive benefits. Maria is offered a full time job that pays \$13 an hour, but she would not receive health care benefits. What would you do if you were Maria? Why are health care benefits important?

REFUGEE MEDICAL ASSISTANCE (RMA), MEDICAID, AND MEDICARE

Refugees are eligible to apply for RMA or Medicaid. Both programs pay the health care costs of working-age people with low incomes, but they are meant to be used only until those people can get insurance through an employer or on their own. Refugees over the age of 65 are eligible for Medicare, a federal program that helps people over the age of 65 with their medical expenses.

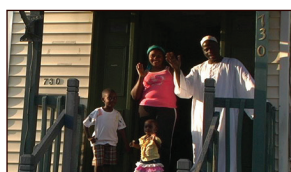


*Match the type of insurance with the people it is meant to help below. Hint: One of the answers applies to two types of insurance.**

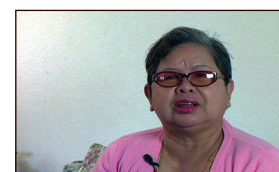
1. Medicare

2. Refugee Medical Assistance (RMA)

3. Medicaid



a. This type of insurance is for working-age people with low incomes who are unable to get insurance through their employer. Refugees are eligible for this.



b. This type of health insurance assists people over the age of 65 with their medical expenses. Refugees are eligible for this.

* Correct answers provided in Appendix A on page 221.

YOUR HEALTH CARE RIGHTS

In the United States, you have two important health care rights. You have the right to interpreter services and you have the right to confidentiality. The right to confidentiality means that your doctor or nurse cannot tell anyone anything about your health without your permission.



INTERPRETER SERVICES

You need to be able to understand and communicate with your doctor so you can receive the right treatment. If you feel you need language assistance to communicate with your doctor, you have the right to have an interpreter help you. Your resettlement agency can help you contact the hospital or clinic to arrange for an interpreter.

Paw Mu has a doctor's appointment next week. She speaks some English, but the last time she saw her doctor she didn't understand many things he said. How would you feel if you were Paw Mu? What should Paw Mu do?



Practice requesting an interpreter with a partner. Here are two ways you might make the request:

- I don't understand English. Can I please have an interpreter?
- I speak _____ [language]. I would like to talk to someone in that language.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Everything that takes place between you and your health care provider is confidential under the law. Your health care provider cannot tell your family, your friends, or your employer about your health situation without your permission.

Umma is having trouble getting pregnant. Her husband does not want Umma to talk with a doctor about it. What if the doctor tells someone else? How would you feel if you were in this situation? What is important for Umma and her husband to know about doctors in the United States?

Most Americans see a doctor once a year for a checkup so that they will know about any health problems before they become serious.



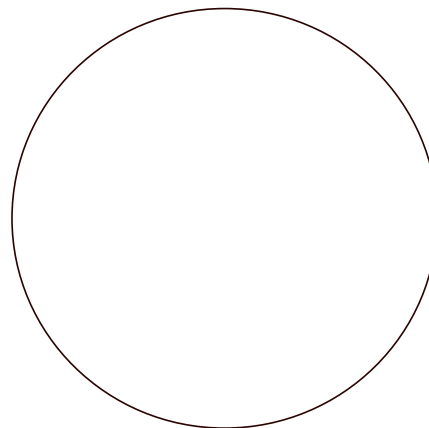
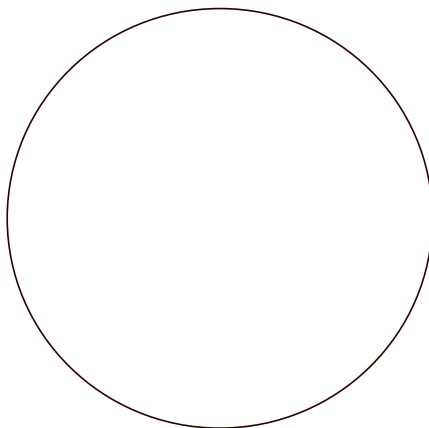
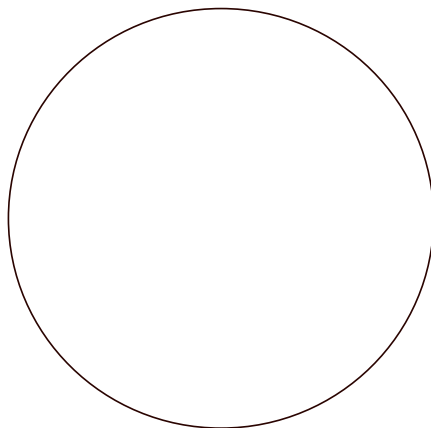
Talk with a partner about why confidentiality with your doctor is important.



Personal hygiene can be especially important for getting and keeping a job.



Draw pictures in the circles below to show what you think of as healthy behavior.



Americans believe that many illnesses can be prevented through cleanliness, proper nutrition, exercise, and adequate sleep. They wear clothing that keeps them warm in cold weather and clothing that helps them stay cool in hot weather. Many go to the doctor or clinic once a year for a checkup, so that they will know about any health problems before they become serious. They go to the dentist to have their teeth cleaned twice a year to prevent serious problems with their teeth.



Doctors in the United States may not be familiar with ways of treating illness in other countries. You may need to explain to your doctor the health treatments you and your children received in the past, and describe the practices and medicines from your country that you use. It is important for you to know that doctors and nurses in the United States may think that some medicines and practices from other countries are not safe. Some of these medicines and practices may even be illegal in the United States.

Soe Naing has a stomach ache, so he uses some herbs from his country. After a while, Soe Naing is still not feeling well and sees a doctor. The doctor is surprised when Soe Naing tells her about the herbs he has been using. She tells him he should stop taking the herbs. Why does the doctor tell him to stop using the herbs? If you were Soe Naing, would you take the doctor's advice and stop using the herbs? What should Soe Naing remember about traditional health care medicine in the United States?

CLEANLINESS AND PERSONAL HYGIENE

Most Americans bathe or shower every day, brush their teeth twice a day, shampoo their hair often, apply deodorant once a day, and wash their clothes frequently. Stores sell many kinds of products that help people avoid appearing dirty or having any odor of sweat. Personal hygiene can be especially important for getting and keeping a job.



Mathieu's new supervisor tells Mathieu that he needs to shower every day and wear deodorant. How would you feel if you were Mathieu? How could Mathieu have avoided this situation?

PROPER NUTRITION

Proper nutrition means eating the right kinds of foods to keep the body healthy. It also means limiting foods that can cause health problems and serious illnesses if they are eaten often and in large amounts. Such foods include those that are high in sugar, salt, or fat (e.g., fried foods, sweets, and sodas).



Circle the pictures below that show healthy foods. Cross off the pictures that show unhealthy foods.*



a. Candy



b. Chicken



c. Fruit



d. Fries



e. Milk



f. Oil



g. Rice



h. Salty foods



i. Soda



j. Vegetables



k. Water



Can you think of other foods that are healthy or unhealthy?
Draw some below.

Healthy foods

Unhealthy foods

Healthy foods	Unhealthy foods

* Correct answers provided in Appendix A on page 221.

The following food plate gives an idea of what foods to eat to stay healthy.



Remember that in addition to eating a healthy, balanced diet, regular exercise such as walking for 20 minutes every day is important for a healthy body and mind.

MENTAL HEALTH CARE

Mental health refers to how you feel, think, and behave as you cope with life. It also refers to how you handle stress.



Think about how mental health was addressed in your home country or country of asylum.

- Did people talk about mental health?
- With whom did people talk about mental health?
- How did people cope with stress?
- What were common ways to cope with stress?

Americans believe that mental health is as important as physical health.

Americans believe that mental health is as important as physical health, and that good health care includes treatment by a mental health professional when it is needed. Refugees and other newcomers need to pay special attention to their mental health because they often have experienced very difficult events in their past, and often experience great stress as they adjust to life in the United States. If you ever feel that life is too hard and you cannot cope with everyday activities, you should seek mental health services. Your resettlement agency can help you find these services, and will keep your information confidential.

After 6 months in the United States, Namina starts missing home. She knows this is normal, but over time she starts feeling sad a lot, and only leaves her house to go to work. What should Namina do? Why is it important for Namina to pay attention to how she is feeling?



Think about what you do when you are feeling anxious or stressed.

- How do you cope?
- What are some other things you could do?
- Who would you talk to?



Role-play with a partner one way to ask someone for help.

- Person 1: Hi! How are you today?
- Person 2: I haven't been feeling well lately.
- Person 1: What's wrong?
- Person 2: I haven't been feeling like myself.
- Person 1: What do you mean?
- Person 2: I haven't been very happy. And I don't know what to do about it.
Can you help me?

Think of some other ways to ask for help with your partner.

If you are having trouble expressing your feelings, look at Appendix C: Faces of Emotion on page 226 for some guidance.

**WRAP-UP***

Choose the best answers to the questions below by marking the right choice.

Here is an example:

Which language is spoken by most people in the United States?

a. Chinese.

b. English.

c. German.

Most people in the United States speak English, so the answer is b. English.

1. Will you have a health screening after you arrive in the United States?
 - a. Yes.
 - b. No.

2. What are some ways people in the United States pay for medical care?
 - a. Health insurance (often offered through their employer).
 - b. Government programs that pay for some medical care for people with low incomes, for a limited time only.
 - c. With their own earnings.
 - d. Government programs that pay all medical costs for all people.
 - e. Choices a, b, and c.

* Correct answers provided in Appendix A on page 221.

3. A person should go to the emergency room (ER) only when experiencing serious health problems.
 - a. True.
 - b. False.

4. Which of the following things do Americans believe can help prevent illnesses?
 - a. Exercising regularly.
 - b. Eating foods high in sugar and salt.
 - c. Getting enough sleep at night.
 - d. Staying clean.
 - e. Choices a, c, and d.

5. If you tell your doctor something, your doctor is required to tell your family, friends, and employer.
 - a. This is true.
 - b. This is false.

9



Chapter Nine MONEY MANAGEMENT

The cost of living in the United States is very high. This is why finding a job as soon as possible is very important for all adults who can work. You will need to be careful with your money, so that you do not spend more than you can afford. The staff at your resettlement agency will help you make a budget. A budget will help you know how much money you have, how much you can spend, and how much you can save.

This chapter will discuss

- » Planning for expenses
- » Where to shop
- » Taxes, banking, and credit history

Keeping a budget will help you know how much money you have, how much you can spend, and how much you can save.



KEY ENGLISH VOCABULARY

The following English words and phrases are used when discussing money management in the United States. These words and phrases will be helpful for you to learn.

Say the word or phrase in English. Write the word or phrase in your native language. Then draw a picture of the word or phrase, write what it means, or use it in a sentence. The first one has been done for you.

In English	In your language	Draw a picture of the word, write its meaning, or use it in a sentence.
afford		<i>Lilith and Abdul look at their bank account to see if they can afford to buy a car.</i>
budget		
change		
cheap		
coins		
dollar		
expensive		
money		
sales tax		
wallet		
How much does it cost?		

Every month you will need to pay for your basic living costs and other expenses.

If you have long-term goals such as education or buying a home, you may want to put a certain amount into a savings account every month.

PLANNING FOR EXPENSES

Every month you will need to pay for your basic living costs and other expenses.



What were your regular expenses in your home country or country of asylum?

In the United States, these will be your major living costs:

RENT. This will probably be your largest expense every month.

Hani knew that rent would be expensive in the United States, but he was surprised to receive his first utility bill for electricity. What other living costs might Hani have?



UTILITIES. This includes electricity, gas or oil, water, and trash collection. Some of these may be included in your rent, but you may have to pay for one or more separately. In most parts of the United States, your bills for electricity and gas or oil will be higher in the winter and summer months when you need more heat or more air conditioning.



FOOD. You can save money on food by looking for the stores and products with the lowest prices and buying products on sale.



CHILD CARE. (See Chapter 12 for more information on child care.)



TRANSPORTATION. This will include the cost of travel to and from work, stores, and appointments.



TELEPHONE. You will need to pay for your telephone every month. Remember that long distance calls to other countries can be expensive. Talk to people in your community to learn about the best ways to call outside the United States.



TRAVEL LOAN. About 6 months after you enter the United States, you will need to start making payments on your travel loan every month until you have repaid it all.



HEALTH CARE. Once you have a full-time job, you may be offered some form of health insurance. However, many entry-level jobs do not offer insurance for the first months of employment. You may need to purchase your own insurance.



SAVINGS AND SUPPORT FOR YOUR FAMILY OVERSEAS. If you have long-range goals such as education or buying a home, you may want to put an amount into a savings account in a bank every month. You may also want to send money to family members who are still in your home country. When you have a job and know how much your monthly expenses will be, you can decide how much you can save or send home each month.



Circle the major living expenses listed on page 110 and page 111 that you have paid in the past.



Here are examples of the costs you would probably consider when creating a budget in the U.S.

Type of expense	Description and notes	Cost in the U.S.	
		1 person	family of 5
Rent			
Utilities (gas, electric, etc.)	Average monthly costs		
Food	Meals prepared at home versus going out to eat		
Child care	Costs per child		
Transportation	Public transportation versus owning a car		
Telephone	Domestic, long distance, overseas		
Travel loan	Must be paid back within a 36-month period		
Health insurance	From job versus buying own policy versus not having health insurance		
Other expenses	Savings and support for family overseas, clothing, household supplies, toiletries, school supplies		

Other expenses to think about:

Type of expense	Description and notes	Cost in the U.S.	
		1 person	family of 5
Going out			
Hobbies			
Television/ internet/ cell phone			
Additional activities			

Saw Tun worked two jobs to support his three children and send money to his family overseas. He always felt very tired during the little time he had to spend with his children. If you were Saw Tun, what are some things you might consider doing? Who would you talk to about these challenges?

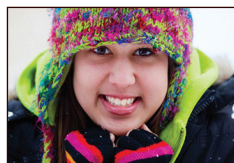
Supermarkets are the most common types of food stores.



*There may be things you or other members of your family want to buy in the United States. For budgeting purposes, it will be important to identify what your family wants versus what your family needs. Some of the wanted items may be expensive and unnecessary, and could take away from the needs of your family. Circle the items below that your family might need. Cross off the things your family does not need, but might want.**



a. A job



b. Appropriate clothing



c. Car



d. Grains



e. Hygiene items



f. Large house



g. Modest apartment or house



h. Regular exercise



i. Television



j. University degree



k. Vegetables



l. Water

*Correct answers provided in Appendix A on page 221.

WHERE TO SHOP

Stores and markets in the United States offer many different kinds of goods and services.



Think about where you did your shopping in your home country or country of asylum.

- Where did you buy food?
- Where did you get medicine?
- Where could you buy other household needs?
- Where did you find clothing or shoes?

Sumitra learned about the many different places to shop in her new community. She knew she had a budget, so she spent a lot of time going to different stores to find the best prices. But it took a lot of time, and after Sumitra started working, she didn't always have the time to visit so many different stores. What are some things Sumitra could do?

Here are some common types of places to shop in the United States:

SUPERMARKETS. These are the most common types of food store. Most also sell cleaning products, cosmetics, magazines, household items, and common medicines that you don't need a doctor's prescription for.



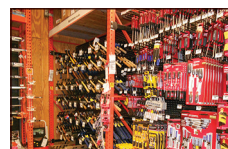
DRUG STORES. These stores usually have a pharmacy where prescription drugs can be purchased. Most also sell nonprescription drugs, cosmetics, magazines, and food items. The food items are often more expensive and limited in choice than similar items sold at a supermarket.



DEPARTMENT STORES. These stores sell clothing, shoes, furniture, appliances, housewares, hardware, and other nonfood items.



HOME IMPROVEMENT STORES. These stores sell products to repair or maintain a home, such as tools, appliances, lumber, and plants.



You may find familiar foods from your country in an ethnic food store.

Taxes in the United States pay for many of the services everyone uses.

DISCOUNT STORES. These stores sell products at lower prices than those found in traditional department stores. In addition to clothing and household items, many discount stores also sell electronic and food items.



THRIFT SHOPS. These sell used items, such as furniture, dishes, and clothing, at reduced prices. It is common for Americans to buy used items.

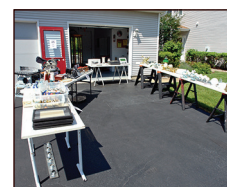


ETHNIC FOOD STORES. These are often owned and managed by immigrants or former refugees. You may find foods from your country in an ethnic food store.



Fariba was having trouble finding some foods that she enjoyed cooking with in her home country at the U.S. supermarkets. Where might she go to find some of these things? Who should Fariba ask for help?

YARD SALES AND GARAGE SALES. At these sales, people sell items from their homes, usually at very low prices. They are excellent places to buy household items, furniture, and clothing. Yard and garage sales are advertised in the newspaper or on signs in the neighborhood.



Before Basma lived in the United States, she had never owned any used furniture. She wants to replace the used furniture her resettlement agency gave her, but she does not have the money to buy anything new. If you were Basma, how would you feel? What can Basma do?

PAYING TAXES

Taxes in the United States pay for many of the services used by all residents, including refugees. Taxes pay for public education; maintenance of roads and highways; police, fire, and emergency services; and social service programs. People living in the United States pay three kinds of taxes:

Peter Htoo had never paid taxes before, and he did not understand what they were for. He was feeling upset at how much money was taken out of his paycheck every week. What can you tell Peter Htoo about taxes?

INCOME TAXES. Every working person pays federal income tax, and residents of some states also pay a state income tax. These taxes are taken out of your paycheck by your employer. If you make below a certain amount of money, the government will return to you some of the taxes you paid.



PERSONAL PROPERTY TAXES. Local governments collect property taxes on homes, land, and buildings that you own. Your landlord pays these taxes on the property you rent. Some places also collect property taxes on automobiles.



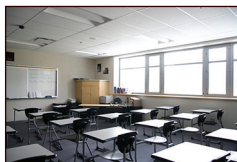
SALES TAXES. In most states people pay a sales tax on things that they buy. A sales tax is in addition to the cost of the item. In some states, there is no sales tax on some items, such as food or medicine. For some items, such as cigarettes and alcohol, the tax is greater.



Most Americans keep their money in a bank because it is insured by the U.S. government. This means that if the money is lost or stolen from the bank, the U.S. government will pay it back.



*Circle the things below that U.S. taxes may pay for.
Cross off the things taxes do not pay for in the U.S.**



a. Public education



b. Roads and highways



c. Home repairs



d. A person's own car



e. Emergency services



f. Alcohol or cigarettes



g. Laundry products



h. Social service programs



Where did you keep your money in your home country or country of asylum?

* Correct answers provided in Appendix A on page 221.

BANKING

Americans often keep their money at a bank or credit union, rather than at home. Money that you put in a bank is insured by the U.S. government. This means that if the money is lost or stolen from the bank, the U.S. government will pay it back to you. Banks have different kinds of accounts for different purposes. There are two main types of bank accounts:

SAVINGS ACCOUNTS. These are for saving money. Banks pay you interest on these accounts in exchange for keeping and using your money.

CHECKING ACCOUNTS. These are for paying expenses. The bank gives you checks that you can use to pay your rent and other bills. You must be careful not to write checks for more money than you have in your checking account. If you do, the bank will charge you a fee.

A sample check:

Your full name Your street address Your city, state, zip code	Check number
	Date
Pay to the order of _____	\$ _____
	Dollars
Name of bank	
For _____	
Bank and state routing numbers; your account number	



Consider the following questions:

- What are the benefits of saving your money in a bank?
- Why is keeping money in a bank account in the U.S. a common practice?
- Why is keeping money in a bank considered safe?

In her own country, Malyun always kept her money in a hiding place at home. Now that she is in the United States, she is not comfortable putting her money in a bank, even though she knows that most people in the U.S. use banks to save money. What can you tell Malyun? Why is a bank a safe place to put your money?

When you use a credit plan or credit card, you are borrowing money and will be charged interest on the amount you owe.

To have a good credit history, make your payments on time every month.

CREDIT CARD AND CREDIT HISTORY



Americans commonly use credit cards and credit plans for expensive purchases such as cars and furniture. The cards and plans allow them to make several smaller payments over time instead of paying the entire cost at the time of purchase.

When you use a credit plan or credit card, you are borrowing money. The bank or company that issues the credit card charges interest on the amount you owe, and you must make a payment every month. If you miss a payment, the credit card company can charge you a fee. If you miss several payments, the store may take back the item you bought.

If you decide to get a credit card, you should use it very carefully. It is very easy to get deeply into debt using credit cards. Before you purchase something on credit, be sure that you are going to be able to make the monthly payments in addition to your other expenses.

A credit card company offered free flights to U Myint if he signed up, so he did. He used his new credit card to buy some things he could not afford. A month later, he received his bill. U Myint did not know he was expected to pay off his charges so quickly or pay a lot of interest. How could U Myint have avoided these charges? What can you tell U Myint about the use of credit cards?



On the scale below, draw pictures to demonstrate or write about the pros and cons of having a credit card.

The diagram shows a balance scale with a central vertical post and a horizontal beam. Below the beam are two large, empty rectangular boxes. The left box is labeled 'PROS' and the right box is labeled 'CONS'. The scale is currently balanced.



Discuss the pros and cons with a partner.

CREDIT HISTORY

When you have loans or use credit, you establish your credit history. Private credit reporting agencies keep a credit report that shows your credit history, and banks look at this when you ask for a loan or a credit card.

GOOD CREDIT HISTORY. If you make your payments on time every month, your credit history will be good and banks will be willing to lend you money and give you credit cards.

BAD CREDIT HISTORY. If you miss your payments or charge more on your credit cards than you can afford to pay back, you will have a bad credit history. This means that it will be hard for you to get loans or credit in the future.



Making monthly payments on your travel loan is your first chance to build a good credit history in the United States.



If you did not pay your bills on time in your home country or country of asylum, what would happen?

TRAVEL LOAN

It is important to set aside money to repay your travel loan every month. It is your first chance to build a good credit history in the United States. Remember that missing a payment may cause you to have a bad credit history. If you are having a problem making a payment, tell your resettlement office immediately.

Your Monthly Refugee Travel Loan Statement	
Statement Date	September 1, 2007
Case Number	
Previous Balance	
Amount of Last Payment	
Date of Last Payment	September 20, 2007
New Balance	
Amount Past Due	

Jasmin received her first bill for her travel loan. She only had a part-time job, and she felt she did not have enough money to make a payment. Why is it important that Jasmin make a payment, even if it is a small amount?

PAYING BILLS

You also need to pay your rent and utility bills on time every month. If you fall behind in your payments, you are breaking the terms of your agreement and you may have legal problems. The problems may appear on your credit report.



Naw Gay and her husband can't read English. One day they receive an envelope in the mail. Inside is a piece of paper with words on it. The following month, they receive another envelope. A few weeks later, their electricity doesn't work. Naw Gay calls her case manager, who comes to the house and finds the mail. Naw Gay did not pay the electricity bill, so the electricity was turned off. What should Naw Gay and her husband have done? What advice would you give them?



Complete the following sentences about paying bills and other expenses in the U.S.:

- The expenses that I know about are...
- The bills that are new for me are...
- I feel most confident about...
- The things that make me nervous are...



Talk with a partner about expenses in the U.S.

**WRAP-UP***

*Choose the best answers to the questions below by marking the right choice.
Here is an example:*

Which language is spoken by most people in the United States?

- a. Chinese.
- b. English.
- c. German.

Most people in the United States speak English, so the answer is b. English.

1. Which of the following are considered utilities?
 - a. Electricity.
 - b. Gas.
 - c. Trash collection.
 - d. All of the above.
2. It is cheaper to buy food items at a drug store instead of at a supermarket.
 - a. True.
 - b. False.

* Correct answers provided in Appendix A on page 221.

3. Which of the following are taxes that people living in the United States pay?
 - a. Income taxes.
 - b. Personal property taxes.
 - c. Sales taxes.
 - d. People do not have to pay any taxes in the United States.
 - e. Choices a, b, and c.
4. Where do most Americans keep their money?
 - a. At home under the bed.
 - b. In a bank or credit union.
 - c. In a safe in their home.
 - d. With a trusted friend or relative.
5. Your friend just started his first job and a month later he got a credit card. He has started buying new furniture, clothes, and many other things with the credit card. He earns enough to pay his rent and food expenses, but he doesn't earn enough to pay for all the things he has charged on his credit card. Soon he cannot make the monthly payments to the credit card company. What type of credit history will he have?
 - a. Bad credit history.
 - b. Good credit history.

10



Chapter Ten CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT AND CHANGING ROLES

Like others who have left their homes and resettled in a foreign land, you will probably feel worried and frustrated as you try to adjust to your new country. These feelings are normal, and they usually go away over time. You may need from 2 to 5 years to adjust fully to life in your new community. Your adjustment will be easier if you cooperate with those who are helping you and if you are patient and open and honest with them. Also, learning English as quickly as possible will help you adjust. Learning to live in a new culture is not easy, but it can also be a good experience as you learn new things and gain new skills.

This chapter will discuss

- » Cultural adjustment
- » Coping with culture shock and stress
- » Changing roles within the family

Learning to live in a new country takes time. Your adjustment will be easier if you cooperate with those who are helping you and try to learn English as quickly as possible.



KEY ENGLISH VOCABULARY

The following English words and phrases are used when discussing the cultural adjustments and changing roles that take place when resettling in the United States. These words and phrases will be helpful for you to learn.

Say the word or phrase in English. Write the word or phrase in your native language. Then draw a picture of the word or phrase, write what it means, or use it in a sentence. The first one has been done for you.

In English	In your language	Draw a picture of the word, write its meaning, or use it in a sentence.
child care		<i>Child care is the care of other people's children by a daycare service, a nanny, or a babysitter.</i>
culture		
culture shock		
diversity		
retirement		
traditions		
values		

Many refugees manage to keep old traditions and values at the same time they learn new American ways.

CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT

As a newcomer, you will need to learn about American customs and values. But this does not mean that you must give up all of your own culture. In fact, many refugees manage to keep old traditions and values at the same time they learn new American ways. (See Chapter 2 for more information on American cultural values.) You may also find opportunities to share your culture with members of your local community.



Sabah feels she is two different people. At work, she often gives her opinion and works alongside men. At home, she is a traditional mother and housewife. She cooks and cleans, cares for the children, and agrees with her husband. If you were Sabah, how would you feel? Would you keep the two parts of yourself separate or would you try to find a balance between the two?



Think about some values that may be important to you. This might include your children getting an education, living in a safe community, being able to speak freely, or practicing your religion.

Write or draw some values that are very important to you in the circles below. For example, this may include your family, health, or financial stability.

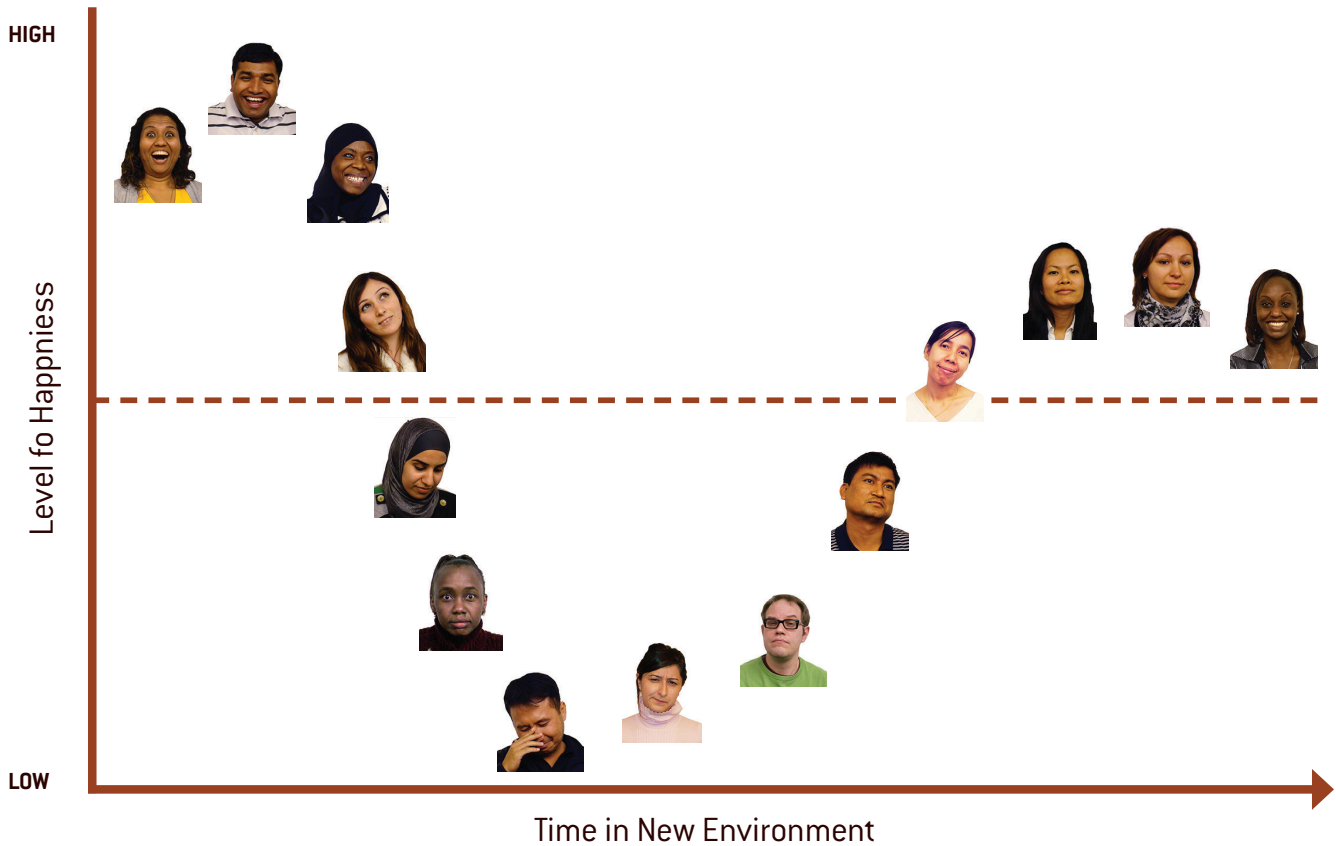
Some values in the United States may be different from the values you think are very important. It will be important for you to find a balance between the two sets of values.

Myo Myint and Yin Nwe are husband and wife. When they first came to the United States, they tried very hard to create a life for their family similar to the one they had in their home country. But Yin Nwe was able to get a job first, so Myo Myint ended up staying home and taking care of the children and the house. After a while, Myo Myint got a part-time job, but Yin Nwe's job paid a lot more. How would you feel if you were in this situation?

Culture shock and stress are normal. Anyone living in a new place can experience them.

THE U-CURVE OF CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT

The graph below shows the common stages of cultural adjustment that most people experience when moving to or visiting a new place.



HONEYMOON PHASE	CULTURE SHOCK PHASE	ADJUSTMENT PHASE	MASTERY PHASE
Feelings of excitement and happiness, when everything is new and exciting and good. This often occurs soon after arrival in a new place.	Feelings of worry and confusion as the newcomer tries to function in a place that is different and unfamiliar.	Feelings settle down as the newcomer comes out of culture shock and starts to feel more comfortable and confident in the new place.	A feeling of comfort with the new life and culture, although there are still difficult periods sometime.

Everything started out great for Tara. She found a job quickly, her children were happy in school, and her English improved as she spoke it with her new friends. But about 6 months after she arrived in the United States, Tara started missing her home country. Her son started having trouble in school, and she did not know how to help him. According to the U-curve of cultural adjustment, what will probably happen next? How long do you think it will be before Tara starts to feel better? What would you do if you were Tara? Who would you talk to?

COPING WITH CULTURE SHOCK AND STRESS

When you are in culture shock, you often feel helpless and frustrated living in a country you do not understand. Culture shock is normal. Anyone living in a new place can experience it.

If you are experiencing culture shock, here are some of the feelings you might have:

- Frustrated because you can't do simple things like shop or take public transportation.
- Tired during the day or unable to sleep at night.
- Angry or irritable.
- Not interested in anything or sad.
- Depressed without knowing why.
- Not interested in eating.



Mary Paw is usually happy and active. But after about 4 months in the United States, she has become quiet and sad. She has trouble getting up in the morning and doing daily tasks, such as paying bills, shopping, and working. Mary Paw starts talking about returning to her home country and loses interest in eating. What should Mary Paw do? Whom should she talk to? If you knew Mary Paw, how could you help her?

Ways to cope with culture shock may include getting together with friends, playing sports, or contacting religious or spiritual resources.



Think about these feelings.

- Which of these have you felt in the past?
- When you have felt this way, what has helped you to feel better?

Share some of these ideas with a partner. Ask your partner for other ideas.

These feelings are very common and normal, and in most cases, the feelings go away over time. Most newcomers to the United States have felt these feelings and have become stronger and more capable as they dealt with them.

Grace's happiness about her new life fades as things get difficult and stress sets in. She becomes frustrated, and she starts taking her anger out on her family. She talks with her caseworker about it, and he helps Grace find a counselor to talk to. She meets once a week with the counselor. Their meetings take time, but Grace starts to feel better. Soon she starts to feel more confident in her new surroundings. Things are looking up! What did Grace do when she was feeling frustrated? What are some other things Grace could have done to deal with her cultural adjustment? Why was it important for Grace to find help?

Sometimes the stress of culture shock can lead to family conflict and even violence at home. It is important for you to recognize the stress you are feeling, locate resources, and develop healthy coping skills.

Recognize your stress so you can develop healthy coping skills. And remember two things. First of all, culture shock is normal. Many others feel just the way you do. Second, things will get better!



What are some things you have done in your home country or country of asylum when you have felt sad?

Different cultures and different people cope with culture shock in different ways. You may already have developed your own coping skills, such as:

- Eating well, exercising, and getting enough sleep.
- Getting together with friends or attending a social or cultural event.
- Setting personal goals.
- Contacting religious or spiritual resources.
- Enjoying a favorite activity or listening to familiar music.
- Joining groups of people from your country or ethnic group.



Ahmed was surprised at how quickly he felt culture shock after arriving in the United States. He missed his family and friends, and everything seemed new and unfamiliar. He was not sleeping well, and he felt tired and unhappy all the time. After a few weeks, Ahmed talked to his caseworker, and the caseworker helped Ahmed find a counselor to talk to. Ahmed was nervous about talking about his feelings with someone he did not know, but after a while he felt more comfortable with the counselor and things started to get better. What was important about how Ahmed handled the situation? What are some other things Ahmed could have done to help himself?



Draw or write about some healthy ways you might deal with culture shock.



Discuss these with a partner.

The change in family roles is one of the most stressful parts of resettlement.

May Htoo's son Poe Kyaw enrolled in middle school when they first arrived. Poe Kyaw picked up English much faster than his mother. Poe Kyaw would go with May Htoo on her errands to help her with English, and he would translate notes from school for May Htoo. How do you think May Htoo feels about the situation? What about Poe Kyaw? Could this situation change their relationship? How? What would you do in this situation?

CHANGING ROLES WITHIN THE FAMILY

For many refugees, one of the biggest challenges in the United States is the change in family roles. Fathers, mothers, teenagers, young children, and the elderly all find that life in the United States can change their relationships with one another. This is a normal part of resettlement, but it can create difficulties at first.



Pradeep came to the United States with his adult daughter, her husband, and their three young children. Pradeep had trouble learning the language, so he did not leave the house much. Pradeep felt sad that his grandchildren did not want to speak their own language or spend time with him and listen to his stories about life back home. Sometimes they were even rude to their parents. What is Pradeep going through? How are the roles in their family changing? If you were Pradeep, what might you do?



In the chart below, draw pictures or write down the people who will be living together in your family (yourself included) in the United States. Then think about their past and current roles in the family. Consider how family roles might change again when you are living in the U.S.

Family member:	What was the person's role in your home country?	What was the role in your country of asylum?	How might the role change in the U.S.?
<i>e.g., parent, child, sibling</i>	<i>e.g., student, breadwinner, big sister or brother</i>	<i>e.g., cook, interpreter, big brother or sister</i>	<i>e.g., child has job, spouse attends ESL classes</i>
Me			

Americans believe in equality of the sexes, and they value independence in both men and women.

MEN AND WOMEN

Both men and women may have difficulty adjusting to the roles of men and women in the United



States. Americans believe in the equality of the sexes, and they value independence in both men and women. In many families, both the husband and the wife work, and they share child care responsibilities.

In some families, the wife earns more than the husband. In other families, the wife has found a job and the husband has not. In this case, the husband will be expected to care for the children when they are not in school. In situations like these, some refugee men may feel that they have lost their leadership role in the family. Some refugee women may feel stress as they take on new responsibilities, such as earning most of the money that the family needs. Showing support for one another, along with open and honest communication, can help create more understanding and ease stress between spouses.

Both Adam and his wife Fatima work. But Fatima's job pays more and provides the family with health insurance. When summer comes, Adam has to spend less time at work to take care of the children at home. If you were Adam, how would you feel? How would you handle this situation? If you were feeling frustrated, what would you do?

THOUGHTS FROM REFUGEES

“It was my goal to come to the U.S., so I was really happy arriving here.”

“I never say ‘here everything is perfect, everything is easy,’ no. Life is not that easy, but at least you can feel safe. You can go to your work and come back safe. It’s a big blessing.”

“When I imagined how life would be in America, I was anxious... But I’ve been living here for a while and I’ve started to adapt to the system.”

“Here, if we get a job and speak the language, life will be much easier.”

“[W]e thought that life would be better in America. We thought it would be better, not just for us, but for our kids, too. Everything has been okay so far.”

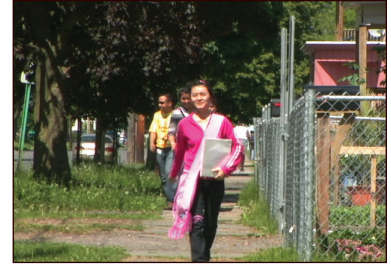
“Back home, we do things in group[s], you know. We eat in group[s], work... in group[s], and also we speak in our tribe language. Also I miss that. I miss my cousins, my friends. For me, it is not easy to live in America, but it is good for my family.”

Resettlement can be very difficult for teenagers as they adjust to life in a new culture and at the same time they are expected to act in the traditional way at home and in their communities.

Elderly refugees may feel isolated or lonely as they experience the difficulties of learning a new language and culture.

YOUNG PEOPLE

Resettlement can be very difficult for young people, especially teenagers. They must adjust to life in a new culture, and at the same time they are expected to act in the traditional way at home and in their communities. And they must do this at a time when they are facing changes as they grow from adolescence to young adulthood.



Because they often learn English faster than their parents, young people may be asked to act as interpreters for their parents and take on other new responsibilities. Often they must work and go to school at the same time. Their parents may feel unable to help them because of their own limited understanding of the U.S. school system.

Try to understand what your children are going through so you can help them!

Teens often feel they cannot talk to their parents about the stresses in their lives. When these stresses become too great, some young people get involved in activities that can harm them or others. They may start missing school, join a gang, or use drugs. Encourage your children to talk with you about what they are doing and feeling. Also, encourage them to join school activities, such as sports, or community activities where they can spend time with others their age. This can help them adjust better to their new surroundings.



Balaram's son Bhim was in high school. Bhim had friends and he was doing well in school. He seemed happy. But then one day, Balaram's American neighbor, Colleen, told Balaram that she had seen Bhim hanging out with kids who often caused trouble. Colleen advised Balaram to talk with Bhim before he started getting in trouble, too. If you were Balaram, what would you do?

***Encourage your children to talk to you.
You will understand them better!***



ELDERLY

Changing roles are also difficult for the elderly, who may feel a loss of their former status as sources of knowledge and experience in the family and community. The difficulties of learning a new language and a new culture, as well as physical challenges, can lead to feelings of isolation and loneliness. The elderly may find that they no longer hold a position of respect in their society.

The elderly can also face economic challenges. Some older refugees who expected to retire and receive a pension may find that they still have to work, especially if they are under age 65. Refugees over 65 may discover that U.S. retirement benefits are not what they expected, that disability benefits do not cover their medical expenses, and that their families cannot support them as they did in their home countries.

Alaso was 61 and had been retired for many years when she joined her adult children in the United States. Alaso knew her son's family did not have much money. They barely had enough money to pay for their expenses. Alaso was surprised that she could not receive government assistance. Didn't the government know that she was retired? How would you feel if you were Alaso? What would you do?

All of these challenges can lead to depression and other mental health issues in the elderly. Encouraging the elderly to participate in activities and interact with others, for example, by attending English language classes, will help them feel active and involved.

Many elderly refugees lead very happy lives in the United States by making friends and staying involved in family and community activities.

If you or a member of your family ever feel unable to cope with the stress of your new life in the United States, seek help right away.



Revisit the chart about family members on page 135. Based on the information discussed, can you identify any other or different role changes you or some of your family members might face in the U.S.? Revise the chart as needed.



How can your family support each other through the process of resettlement?

SEEKING HELP

If you or a member of your family ever feel unable to cope with the stress of your new life in the United States, seek help right away. Discuss issues about new family roles in Cultural Orientation classes or with your caseworker in the United States. Your resettlement agency can locate resources to help you develop coping skills and to improve stressful situations at home.



Think about how you would ask for help when you are feeling confused or frustrated. In a role play, express your feelings and ask for assistance with a partner.

- Person 1: Hi! How are you doing today?
- Person 2: I'm not doing well today.
- Person 1: What is wrong?
- Person 2: I feel sad.
- Person 1: I am sorry to hear that. What is making you sad?
- Person 2: I miss my family.

If you are have trouble expressing your feelings, look at Appendix C: Faces of Emotion on page 226 for some guidance.

**WRAP-UP***

Choose the best answers to the questions below by marking the right choice.

Here is an example:

Which language is spoken by most people in the United States?

- a. Chinese.
- b. English.
- c. German.

Most people in the United States speak English, so the answer is b. English.

1. Adjusting fully to your new community can take 2 to 5 years.
 - a. True.
 - b. False.
2. Which of the following are ways you may cope with stress and culture shock?
 - a. Sharing a meal with friends.
 - b. Attending a religious service.
 - c. Listening to music that you enjoy.
 - d. Shutting yourself in your bedroom for three days.
 - e. Choices a, b, and/or c could be healthy ways to cope with stress and culture shock.
3. Open and honest communication among family members will help make the adjustment process easier.
 - a. True.
 - b. False.

* Correct answers provided in Appendix A on page 221.

4. If you are experiencing culture shock, how might you feel?
 - a. Angry or irritable.
 - b. Sad.
 - c. Happy.
 - d. Uninterested in eating.
 - e. Choices a, b, and/or d.

5. Who may experience a change in family roles in the United States?
 - a. Men and women.
 - b. Teenagers.
 - c. Elderly individuals.
 - d. All of the above.

1



Chapter Eleven RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER U.S. LAW

Laws in the United States are intended to protect the rights of all people, and you should have a basic knowledge of your legal rights and responsibilities.

This chapter will discuss

- » Your rights and responsibilities
- » U.S. laws that you should be aware of
- » Your legal status and citizenship


U.S. laws are intended to protect the rights of people in the United States.



KEY ENGLISH VOCABULARY

The following English words and phrases are used when discussing rights and responsibilities under U.S. law. These words and phrases will be helpful for you to learn.

Say the word or phrase in English. Write the word or phrase in your native language. Then draw a picture of the word or phrase, write what it means, or use it in a sentence. The first one has been done for you.

In English	In your language	Draw a picture of the word, write its meaning, or use it in a sentence.
court		
judge		
jury		
law		
law office		
lawyer or attorney		
legal clinic		
responsibilities		
rights		
U.S. Constitution		

As a refugee, you have the same basic rights as everyone else living in the United States.



What rights did you have in your home country or country of asylum? What were your responsibilities? Talk with a partner about some of these rights and responsibilities.

In the United States, you can be punished if you break the law, even if you did not know about the law you broke.

YOUR RIGHTS



As a refugee, you have the same basic rights as everyone else living in the United States. These rights include freedom of speech, freedom of religion, and freedom of assembly. All legal residents of the United States, including refugees, have the same rights in the areas of employment, housing, education, and government services.

PROTECTION AGAINST DISCRIMINATION

U.S. law prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, religion, or ethnic background. If you are discriminated against or denied your rights because of your appearance or the language you speak, you have the right to seek legal action.

Patricia is ready to move to a larger apartment and talks to a landlord at a nearby building about renting an apartment there. The landlord tells Patricia that she cannot live in the apartment because he does not rent to refugees. Patricia asks why, and the landlord tells her that he had trouble with a refugee family a few years ago. Why is this discrimination? What can Patricia do?

INNOCENT UNTIL PROVEN GUILTY

If you are accused of a crime in the United States, you are considered innocent until you are proven guilty. You have the right to a lawyer, who will represent you in court. If you cannot afford a lawyer, the court will pay for one to represent you.



Think about rights and responsibilities in the U.S. versus in your home country or country of asylum.

- How are rights in the U.S. and your country similar?
- How are they different?
- How are responsibilities similar?
- How are they different?

Discuss these similarities and differences with a partner.

YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

In the United States, you can be punished if you break the law, even if you did not know about the law you broke. The penalty for some offenses may be deportation (return) to your home country. For this reason it is very important to learn and obey the laws.

There are three kinds of laws in the United States:

FEDERAL LAWS, such as the laws against drug trafficking, apply to every person living in the United States.

STATE LAWS vary by state. For example, in some states you can get a driver's license at age 16, but in others you must be 18.

LOCAL LAWS apply in a particular city or county.






People in the United States may not drink or buy alcohol until they reach the age of 21.

It is illegal to leave children without adult supervision.



You need to understand U.S. laws because many of them differ from the laws in your home country. Below are some important things you should know about some U.S. laws.

This law relates to:	Description of the law:	Was there a similar law in your home country or country of asylum?
 <p>Illegal drugs</p>	<p>It is illegal to purchase, sell, or use certain drugs, such as heroin and cocaine. If you break this law, you may be sentenced to deportation.</p>	
 <p>Smoking</p>	<p>In some places, it is illegal to smoke in public areas such as theaters or offices, and also in many restaurants. If you smoke, ask your resettlement agency about the laws in your area.</p>	
 <p>Alcohol</p>	<p>People in the United States may not drink or buy alcohol until they reach the age of 21. In most places, it is also illegal to drink alcoholic beverages on the street or outdoors, except in certain areas, such as bars or restaurants. Also, driving while under the influence of alcohol (DUI) can lead to the loss of your driver's license, and/or imprisonment.</p>	
 <p>Driving</p>	<p>It is illegal to drive a car if you do not have a U.S. driver's license or if you are under the influence of alcohol. Also, many states have laws regarding the use of seatbelts in vehicles. Parents are required to use seatbelts for children and special safety seats for infants. There are similar seatbelt laws for adults.</p>	

This law relates to:	Description of the law:	Was there a similar law in your home country or country of asylum?
 <p>Polygamy</p>	<p>Marriage to more than one spouse (polygamy) is illegal.</p>	
 <p>Physical abuse</p>	<p>It is illegal to physically abuse (hit or beat) your spouse or child. A child protection agency may remove from home a child who is being beaten.</p>	
 <p>Child care</p>	<p>It is illegal to leave children without adult supervision. Though very few states have set a legal age that a child can be left home alone, children around the age of 12 and under should not be left alone. In some countries, older children take care of younger children, but in the United States, young children must be supervised by an adult. Leaving a child unattended is considered neglect and can lead to the removal of the child by a child protection agency.</p>	
<p>Sex with minors & sexual abuse</p>	<p>Sex with minors (anyone under 18 years of age) in most states is illegal. Sexual abuse of a minor can lead to a sentence of imprisonment and deportation.</p>	

This law relates to:	Description of the law:	Was there a similar law in your home country or country of asylum?
 <p>Sexual harassment</p>	<p>Offensive comments or behaviors of a sexual nature in the workplace (sexual harassment) are illegal.</p>	
 <p>Firearms</p>	<p>There are laws that regulate the buying, selling, and use of firearms. These laws often vary by state.</p>	
 <p>Hunting and fishing</p>	<p>In most places, it is illegal to hunt game or fish without a license.</p>	
 <p>Environment and natural parks</p>	<p>There are laws that protect the environment and natural parks. For example, in some parks, it is illegal to build a fire or even smoke a cigarette. In all parks, campers must take all trash with them when they leave.</p>	
 <p>Cruelty to animals</p>	<p>Some states have laws protecting animals from harsh treatment. Ask your resettlement agency about the laws in your area.</p>	



Talk about the U.S. laws discussed on the previous pages with a partner.

- Which might be easier for you to follow?
- Which might be more difficult?

Consider the following incidents:

Othman packs *khat* in his bag before his flight to the United States. When he arrives at the port of entry, the *khat* is taken away and Othman is brought into a room for questioning. Othman knew that he could not bring illegal drugs into the U.S., but he didn't know that *khat* was illegal in the U.S. What should Othman have done before he left for the U.S.?

Nway Meh has three young children. There are often neighbors around, so Nway Meh leaves her children in the parking lot next to her apartment building to play while she goes to the grocery store. One day she comes home and a police officer is there. He asks Nway Meh why the children have been left alone. Nway Meh is confused. There are a lot of neighbors around. What is the problem here? What does Nway Meh need to do to follow U.S. laws about child care and neglect?

Ebaid buys a goat from a farmer, and brings it to his apartment building. He slaughters it in the yard and invites his neighbors for a picnic to share the goat meat. But the police arrive and tell Ebaid to remove the goat from the yard. What is the problem? What did Ebaid do wrong?

Naw Baw was fishing at a lake near her home. A police officer told her it was illegal to fish here. He threw the fish she had caught back in the water, and gave her a fine. Naw Baw said she wouldn't do it again, and she asked the officer to please not give her a fine because she didn't know that she couldn't fish at the lake. What do you think that the police officer said next?

For your first year in the United States, you will have refugee status.

While you have refugee status, you may not travel outside the United States without permission.

YOUR LEGAL STATUS AND CITIZENSHIP

REFUGEE STATUS

For your first year in the United States, you will have refugee status. During this time you should carry a copy of your I-94 and your EAD card with you at all times as proof of your legal status. Keep the original documents in a safe place. As a refugee, you can do the following:

- Travel anywhere within the United States. (Remember, if you move, you are required to notify U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services within 10 days of changing your address.)
- Buy property.
- Work.
- Attend school.
- Sponsor your spouse and unmarried children under 21 years of age. If you wish to have your spouse or children join you in the United States, your resettlement agency can explain what you have to do.



Think about these rights. How are they different from rights you had before you arrived in the United States? Circle the rights listed above that will be most important for you and your family.

THINGS YOU CANNOT DO WHILE YOU HAVE REFUGEE STATUS

You cannot obtain a U.S. passport, join the military, vote in elections, or work in a government job that requires U.S. citizenship. While you have refugee status, you may not travel outside the United States without permission from U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), the government agency in charge of immigration. If you must travel overseas, your resettlement agency can explain how to ask for permission. If you return to your country of origin while you are a refugee, you might not be permitted to reenter the United States.

At Saw Eh Do's first meeting with an employment counselor, the counselor asks Saw Eh Do what types of jobs he would like to apply for. Saw Eh Do says he wants to be a soldier like his father and uncles were in his home country. What does the employment counselor tell Saw Eh Do? Can Saw Eh Do join the U.S. military? Why or why not? Will he ever be able to join?

SELECTIVE SERVICE

All males in the United States between the ages of 18 and 25 must register with the Selective Service, a government agency that can call individuals for military service, usually in time of war. This applies to refugee males as well. At present, all members of the U.S. military are volunteers. Men who do not register might find it difficult to get permanent residency and/or citizenship.



When Thom's son Leonce turns 18, he is excited to finally be an adult. Leonce tells Thom about his rights as an adult in the United States. If you were Thom, what would you tell Leonce about his responsibilities?

After 1 year in the United States, you must apply to become a lawful permanent resident (LPR).

PERMANENT RESIDENCY

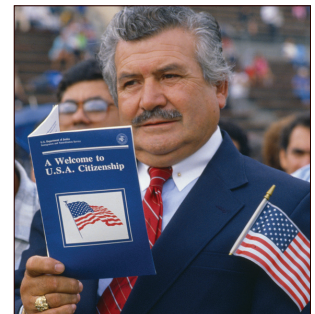
After 1 year in the United States, you must apply to become a lawful permanent resident (LPR), or Green Card holder. Permanent residents can travel overseas (although it is not a good idea to stay abroad for more than 1 year) and can be members of the U.S. military, but they cannot vote in U.S. elections or hold U.S. government jobs that require citizenship. Your resettlement agency will explain how to become a permanent resident.



Leyla has been in the United States for about 9 months, and knows she will have to apply for permanent residency soon. But she does not know how to do this. Who should Leyla talk to for more information on how to apply?

CITIZENSHIP

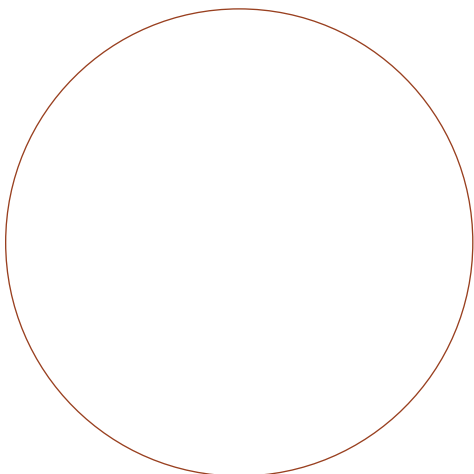
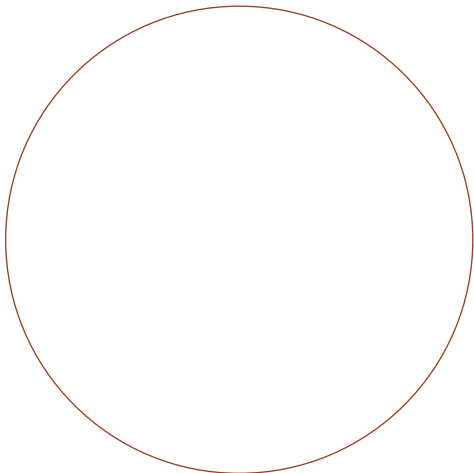
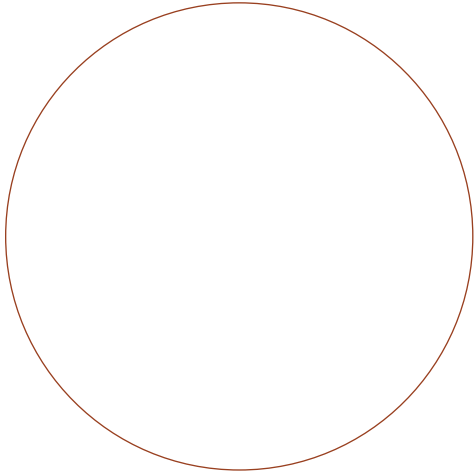
After 4 years and 9 months in the United States, you can apply for citizenship. USCIS or your resettlement agency can tell you what you need to do to become a citizen. Among other things, you must show good moral character and a basic knowledge of English and U.S. history and government. Immigrants or refugees who become citizens have the same rights and privileges as citizens born in the United States.



Write or draw in the circles on the next page to demonstrate some of the rights you will have in the United States as a refugee. Write or draw in the squares next to the circles to demonstrate some of the responsibilities you will have.

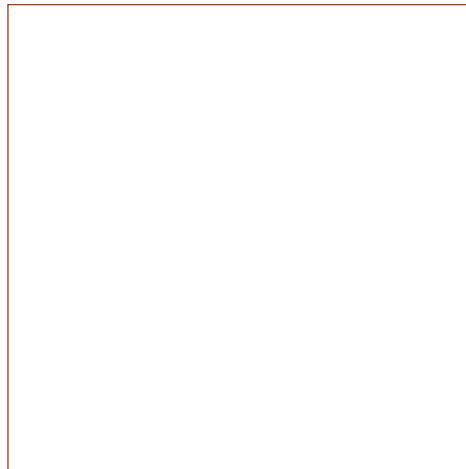
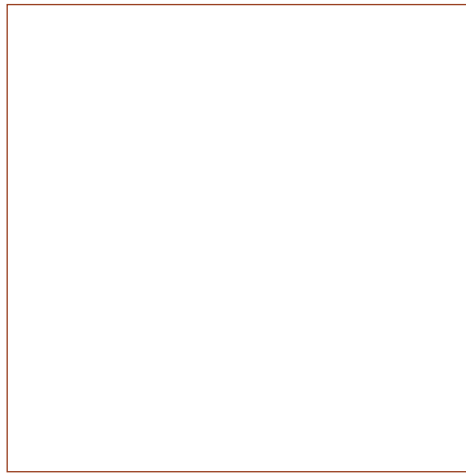
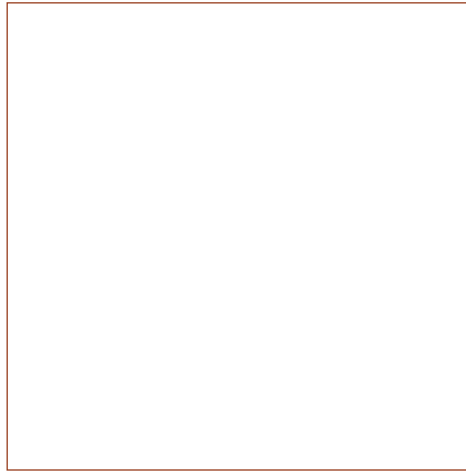
RIGHTS:

Such as protection from discrimination or traveling anywhere in the U.S.



RESPONSIBILITIES:

Such as learning and following the law or ensuring young children have supervision





RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES BASED ON IMMIGRATION STATUS*

In the chart below and on the next page, indicate the rights and responsibilities individuals with different immigration statuses in the United States have.

	Refugee	Lawful Permanent Resident (LPR)	Citizen
Eligibility	Upon arrival in the U.S.	Upon application, after 1 year	Upon application, after 4 years and 9 months
Documentation	I-94	I-551 or Green Card	U.S. passport
RIGHTS			
To apply for family reunification			
To apply for public assistance			
To attend school and to work			
To travel freely within the U.S.			
To travel outside the U.S. without permission			
To vote			

* Correct answers provided in Appendix A on page 222.

	Refugee	Lawful Permanent Resident (LPR)	Citizen
RESPONSIBILITIES			
To know and obey the law			
To pay taxes			
To register for the draft if a male citizen between 18 and 25 years of age			
To respect the rights of others			
To serve on a jury in a court			
To support and provide for your children			



WRAP-UP*

*True or false? How much do you think you know about resettlement in the United States? Test your knowledge with the statements below. Read these statements and circle the word **True** if you think the statement is right and circle **False** if you think the statement is wrong.*

- | | | |
|--|-------------|--------------|
| 1. As a refugee, you have the same basic rights as everyone else living in the United States. | True | False |
| 2. In the United States you can be punished for a law that you did not know about. | True | False |
| 3. Smoking is permitted in all public buildings. | True | False |
| 4. In most places, you need a license to hunt game or fish. | True | False |
| 5. Having more than one spouse at one time is allowed in the United States. | True | False |
| 6. After one year in the United States, refugees who choose to remain in the country must apply to become legal permanent residents. | True | False |
| 7. Men between the ages of 18 and 25 who do not register with the Selective Service might find it difficult to get permanent residency and/or citizenship. | True | False |
| 8. You can apply for citizenship after 2 years in the United States. | True | False |

* Correct answers provided in Appendix A on page 222.



1

Chapter Twelve EMPLOYMENT

Finding a job will be one of the most important things you do after you arrive in the United States. Americans believe that adults should work to support themselves and their families, and should not rely on cash assistance from the government. Because government assistance is limited in time and amount, finding a job as quickly as possible is very important.

This chapter will discuss

- » Finding a job
- » Pay
- » Success on the job

It is important to find a job as quickly as you can because government assistance is limited.

2



KEY ENGLISH VOCABULARY

The following English words and phrases are used when discussing employment in the United States. These words and phrases will be helpful for you to learn.

Say the word or phrase in English. Write the word or phrase in your native language. Then draw a picture of the word or phrase, write what it means, or use it in a sentence. The first one has been done for you.

In English	In your language	Draw a picture of the word, write its meaning, or use it in a sentence.
application		<i>Yi Yi completes an application to get a job at the bank.</i>
career		
employee		
employer		
employment		
full-time job		
job		
part-time job		
résumé		
salary		
volunteer		

Getting your first job may take weeks or months, so it is important to accept the first job that is offered to you.

Learning English can help you find a job.

Many refugees start work in entry-level jobs.

FINDING A JOB

Keep the following in mind when looking for a job:

- Getting your first job can take as little as a few days or as long as several months. Because of this, it is important that you start looking for a job right away.
- You will be expected to take the first job that is offered to you, even if the job is not highly paid or in the field you worked in your own country.
- There are often many people applying for the same job, so it is important to be willing to accept a job in a new field.
- Employment is not guaranteed by the government or your resettlement agency.
- Refugee employment services will help you in your job search, but you will not find a job if you do not look for one yourself.
- Refugees who turn down a job may lose government benefits.
- Learning English can help you to find a job. Many employers look for applicants who can speak, read, and write in English.



Gori Maya takes the first job she is offered. She does not love her work, but she learns English and makes good friends. When she applies for a new job 2 years later, Gori Maya is able to interview in English, and she now has references. How did taking the first job help Gori Maya?

TYPES OF JOBS



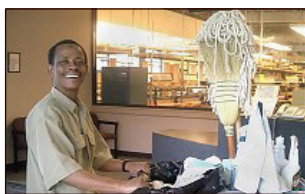
Think about the job or jobs you have held in the past.

- What kind of jobs were they?
- What skills did you need to be qualified for that position?

In the United States, there are three general types of employment: unskilled jobs, skilled jobs, and professional jobs.



Match the sample picture of the type of employment on the left with the most accurate description on the right.



1. Unskilled labor or entry-level jobs

- a. These usually require at least a college degree, advanced English, and a high level of skills in the field. These jobs often require a license or certification. Most of these jobs pay an annual or monthly amount, rather than an hourly wage.



2. Skilled labor jobs

- b. These require little training or experience. These positions usually pay an hourly wage and do not require much English. Many refugees work in these jobs while studying English or learning other skills.



3. Professional jobs

- c. These require training, more English, and a certain level of skills in the field. These jobs usually pay an hourly or weekly wage that is higher than the wage for most entry-level jobs, and even higher than some professional jobs.

Men and women work together in the U.S. workplace and women often supervise men.



Consider the following questions:

- How would you feel about working at the different types of jobs?
- Which type of job would be easier for you to find? Which would be more difficult?
- How do you feel about the fact that the first job for most refugees is an entry-level position?
- Who would you talk to if your job felt difficult? What would you do?

Soon after Mohammed arrives in the United States, he meets with Claire, an employment counselor. Claire suggests that Mohammed apply for a position as a janitor. Mohammed is not willing to do this kind of work and refuses to apply for the job. Three months later, Mohammed visits Claire because he still can't find a job. The position as janitor has been filled, but Claire says she will let Mohammed know if she hears of other openings. Why is taking the first position available important? Why is it a good idea to be open to any job?

WOMEN AND MEN AT WORK

Both women and men work in the United States. Women make up half the work force, do the same jobs as men at all levels, and often supervise male workers.



Khin Myint feels that his job interview went well, and is happy when he receives a call offering him the job. But he did not realize that his supervisor would be a woman. In the past, he only worked with men. If you were Khin Myint, how would you feel? What should Khin Myint do?



Think about the idea of men and women working side-by-side.

- In your home country or country of asylum, was it common for men and women to work together?
- How do you think you will feel about working in a place where men and women work side-by-side? Will it be a difficult adjustment for you?
- If it is a difficult adjustment, who will you talk to about it?

Aisha has never worked outside the home before. She takes a job bagging groceries at a market, and finds that she has to work with many different men every day. This makes Aisha feel very uncomfortable. If you were Aisha, what would you do? How would you feel about working with someone of the opposite sex?

CHILDREN AT WORK

In the United States, children around 14 years old and older may work at part-time jobs, but they may be limited in the number of hours they can work and the types of jobs they can do. Many young people in the United States work part time after school, on the weekends, and during vacations.



Think about what it would be like if the following people in your family were working in the United States.

Family member:	How might family roles change if this person were working?
You	
Your spouse	
Your children	
Your parents or in-laws	
Your siblings	

Child care facilities take care of small children when both parents, or a single parent, is working.

Dinesh's teacher thinks he should take summer classes to catch up in school, but Dinesh wants to get a summer job to help the family. How would you handle this situation? If you were Dinesh's parent, what would you say to him? Which is better for Dinesh to do—work or catch up in school? Why?



Think about what adjustments you might have to make.

- Who in your family might have difficulty with these changes?
- How might family duties need to change?
- Who might need to work on communicating more? How would your family accomplish this?

CHILD CARE

In many American families, both parents of small children go to work. These parents need someone to take



care of their children while they are working. Child care centers are facilities that do that. Usually child care services are not free. Individuals can also provide child care in their homes.

Ubah and her husband Abdullah have an infant and a 2-year-old. Ubah works nights at a full-time job that gives her health benefits for the family. Abdullah has a part-time job during the day. Abdullah could get a second part-time job in the evenings. If he takes the job, the family would have more money, but they would have to pay for child care. What do Ubah and Abdullah need to think about as they make their decision? What would you recommend?



Draw or write about who cares for children in your home country or country of asylum.



Think about how you would feel if your children or grandchildren were cared for by someone outside the family you live with, such as:

	What are the benefits of this option?	What might be the disadvantages?
A relative living nearby		
A daycare center		
A home daycare		
One-on-one care in your home		
A pre-school for children ages 3 and up		

- What would be your ideal child care option?
- Which child care option do you think would be least expensive?
- Which child care options do you think will be most realistic for you when you first start working in the United States?

Your resettlement agency will help you find employment services.

It is important to be on time for job interviews.

During a job interview, look the interviewer in the eye, smile, and shake hands.

HOW TO LOOK FOR A JOB



Think about how people find jobs in your home country or country of asylum.

- Where would you look?
- What steps would you take?

The best person to help you find a job is yourself. But there are others who may help you in your efforts:

- RESETTLEMENT AGENCIES AND REFUGEE EMPLOYMENT SERVICES.** Staff at these agencies have helped many refugees find their first jobs in the United States.

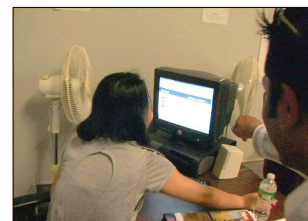


Listen to the suggestions of your resettlement agency staff. They are experienced in helping refugees find jobs.

- RELATIVES AND FRIENDS.** Ask your friends and relatives who have jobs to let you know of any job openings at the company they work for, or other companies around the area.



- NEWSPAPERS, THE INTERNET, AND PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT AGENCIES.** Many companies advertise job openings in newspapers and on the internet.



Some companies go through public employment agencies to hire people. Be careful of employment services that ask you to pay money and promise to find you a job.



Circle the strategies listed on page 168 that you have used in the past when looking for a job.

Consider the following questions:

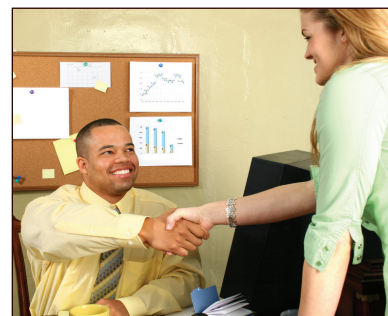
- If you have trouble finding a job in the U.S., who would you feel comfortable asking for help?
- Why would you feel comfortable asking this person?
- Who would you next ask for further help?

Alberto found an ad for a job in the newspaper that interested him. He brought the ad to his case manager, and the case manager helped Alberto fill out the application. During dinner a few nights later, Alberto mentioned the position to a friend. Alberto's friend said that he knew someone who worked there, and that person was able to put in a good word for Alberto. What are some things Alberto did to help himself find a job? What are the things you plan to do to help yourself find a job? Who would you feel comfortable asking for help in finding a job?

TIPS FOR SUCCESS IN JOB INTERVIEWS

At a job interview, a person from the company will tell you about the job. She or he will talk with you and ask you questions about your past work experience to find out whether you will be a good worker at their company. A job interview is very important. If you make a good impression, you have a good chance of getting the job. Below are things you can do to make a good impression:

- ARRIVE ON TIME.** Time is very important to Americans. If you are late for the interview, the supervisor will think that you may also be late for work every day.
- BE CLEAN AND WEAR THE RIGHT TYPE OF CLOTHING FOR THE JOB.** Your employment counselor can help you learn about what kind of clothing to wear.
- LOOK THE INTERVIEWER IN THE EYE, SMILE, AND SHAKE HANDS.** Americans believe that eye contact shows honesty, and a smile and handshake show confidence and a good attitude about work.



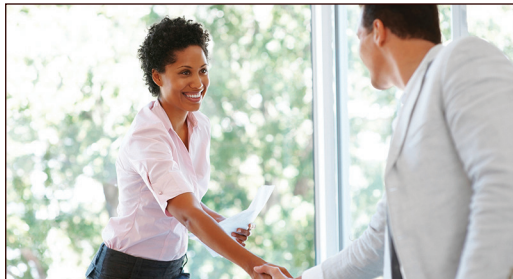
It is normal to go to several interviews before you are hired for a job.

- ASK QUESTIONS ABOUT WHAT YOU WILL DO ON THE JOB.** This shows the supervisor that you are interested.
- SPEAK SOME ENGLISH, IF YOU KNOW IT.** Even if you know only a little English, using it shows the supervisor that you are confident. It also shows that you are interested in learning English, which can increase your chances for a better job.
- TRY TO RELAX.** Everyone is nervous in job interviews. Know that you are not the only one.



With a partner, practice:

- Looking each other in the eye.
- Smiling.
- Shaking hands.
- Speaking some English (even if it is just saying, "Hello").
- Relaxing.





With your partner, role-play answering questions from an employer, such as:

- Can you tell me about yourself?
- Why are you interested in this position?
- What previous experiences will help you with this job?
- When would you be available to start working?



Now practice asking each other questions, such as:

- Is this a part-time or full-time position?
- What time does the work day begin?
- What type of work would I be doing?
- Who would my supervisor be?
- When will the person you hire begin?

You may have to go to several interviews before you are hired. This is normal for all job seekers in the United States. You may feel discouraged if you are not hired after your first interview, but try to be patient. Ask your family and your employment counselor for encouragement if you need it.

Stay positive! Seek encouragement from your family and employment counselor.

To prepare for her job interview, Ganga wore clean clothing and took a shower. She used the little English she knew, shook the supervisor's hand, and made eye contact. Ganga felt that the interview went well, but she did not get a call back. Why do you think this happened? How do you think Ganga feels? What would you do to stay positive while you look for a job?



YOUR POSITIVE QUALITIES

Many employers ask about positive qualities in interviews. Here is a list of employment-related words that could be used to describe positive qualities about a person. Check off the top three qualities that you have.



Quality	In your language	Draw a picture or write about what this means to you:
Honest		
Dependable		
Flexible		
Hard worker		
Good work ethic		
Cooperative		
Motivated		

Quality	In your language	Draw a picture or write about what this means to you:
Fast learner		
Reliable		
Positive attitude		
Good listener		
Punctual		



Practice for your future job interviews by telling a partner what your positive qualities are in English.

You should stay at your first job for at least 6 months.



If you are unable to find a job for a while, think about what you could do to stay positive as you keep looking for a job. Circle some of the things below that might help you feel better about yourself.



Attend community or cultural events



Exercise



Get involved at your children's school



Listen to familiar music



Practice your English



Take a skills training course



Talk to a religious or spiritual leader in your community



Talk to friends and family about how you are feeling



Volunteer in your community



What other things might you do to remain positive in your job search?

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY



Think about your current job or the jobs you have had in the past.

- Have you worked in the home, or outside?
- What jobs have you held?
- What skills did you need for the jobs you held? What skills did you need for your work at home?



Draw or write about some tasks you completed in your past work experience below.



Poe Hser was called for an interview after applying for a housekeeping job. She had never worked outside the home before, but she was able to talk about her experience cleaning and doing laundry for her family. A week later, Poe Hser was offered the job. How did Poe Hser's work experience in the past help her get a job? How might some of your skills help you?

Your first job will be an important step in starting a work history in the United States. You should try to stay at your first job for at least 6 months, even if the work is not what you really want to do. Future employers will look at your performance in that job when they consider hiring you.

Masood and Ali are applying for the same job. In the past year, Masood has had one job while Ali has had four different jobs. Who do you think the employer will hire? Why? What does staying in a job say about someone?

Improving your English is one way to move up to a better, higher paying job.

If you don't understand something, ask about it.

EMPLOYMENT GOALS



You should also set employment goals for yourself and identify what you will need to do to achieve them.

Think about your employment goals. Draw or write about your employment goals in the circles below. Try to be realistic!

**Your
employment
goal in 1 month:**

**Your
employment
goal in 6 months:**

**Your
employment
goal in 1 year:**

**Your
employment
goal in 5 years:**

To move up to a better, higher paying job, you will need to improve your English and you may need to learn new skills. If you worked in a profession in your country, you may be able to work in that field in the United States, but you may need to attend classes and obtain a certification. Achieving your goals may take time, and you will need to be patient. Above all, remember that the United States is known as a land of opportunity for those who work hard.

After 8 months in the United States, Arzu thought about her employment goals. She was disappointed that things were not going the way she had planned. If you were Arzu, how would you feel? What would you do? How can Arzu stay positive about her experiences in the U.S.?

PAY, HOURS, AND BENEFITS

When offering you a job, the employer will talk to you about the pay, hours, and benefits. Here are some of the things you will be told:

- How much the pay will be.
- Whether you will be paid an hourly wage or an annual salary.
- How often you will be paid.
- How many hours a week you will work.
- What the work schedule is.
- What benefits are available.



If you don't understand something, ask about it.



With a partner, practice asking each other about the specifications and requirements of a job, such as:

- How many hours of the week would the position be?
- What time does the work day begin?
- How often would I be paid?
- What benefits are available?

Come up with your own questions!

You will receive your pay on a regular schedule, which may be once a week, once every 2 weeks, or once a month. You will receive it as a paycheck with a pay stub or statement. The pay stub is for your records. Keep it when you cash or deposit the check.

It is important to pay your taxes in the United States.

Avoid personal conversations with family, friends, and coworkers and don't make personal phone calls while you are working.

Never quit a job before finding a new one.

JOBS THAT PAY IN CASH

Working for cash is against the law in the United States if you are not paying income tax to the government. If your employer pays you in cash and does not give you a pay stub showing gross pay, withholding for taxes, and net pay, both you and the employer are breaking the law. If you break the law, you may have to pay a fine or go to prison.



Claudia found a job cleaning houses. She was paid in cash for her work, and often received cash tips. What can you tell Claudia about paying taxes? What do Claudia's taxes pay for? Why should she be paying taxes?



Consider the following questions about taxes:

- Why is it important to pay your taxes in the United States?
- What could happen if you do not pay your taxes?

TIPS FOR SUCCESS ON THE JOB

- BE ON TIME FOR WORK.** Employers expect workers to be on time, and you will make a good impression if you are always on time. If you arrive late to work, your pay may be reduced. If you are often late, you may lose your job.
- TAKE TIME OFF FOR ILLNESS ONLY IF YOU ARE REALLY SICK.** Also, you may need to take time off if a close family member (spouse or child) is sick and you have to take that person to a doctor. If this happens, let your supervisor know ahead of time.

- CALL IF YOU ARE GOING TO MISS WORK.** Always call your supervisor if you are going to be late or absent for any reason. If you know you may miss work because of an appointment, talk with your supervisor ahead of time to get permission to be absent or late.
- BE FRIENDLY.** Lunch hour and break times can be good times to get to know your coworkers. Common topics of conversation in the workplace are the weather, weekend activities, food, and sports. You will also have many chances to share your culture with your coworkers, especially during traditional holiday periods.
- BE PRODUCTIVE AT WORK.** Avoid personal conversations with family, friends, and coworkers and don't make personal phone calls during work time.
- ASK QUESTIONS.** If you do not understand something, ask about it. You will do a better job and your employer will respect you for trying to learn and improve.
- LEARN NEW TASKS AND RESPONSIBILITIES WHENEVER YOU CAN.** You may be able to move up to a better job if you show you are willing to take on more responsibilities.
- GIVE NOTICE BEFORE YOU QUIT.** When you leave one job to take another one, give your old employer at least two weeks' notice. Never quit a job before finding a new one.



Circle the tips for employment success that are different from those in your previous experiences.



Consider the following questions:

- Which of these tips might be easier for you to follow?
- Which tips might be harder for you?
- What will you do to try to be successful at work?

Sanaa worked hard at her new job, but sometimes did not understand what she was supposed to do. Sanaa did not know a lot of English, so she did not tell her supervisor that she didn't understand some of the things she was supposed to do. How could Sanaa understand her job better? If you were Sanaa, how would you handle this situation?

You have the right to work in a safe and healthy environment.

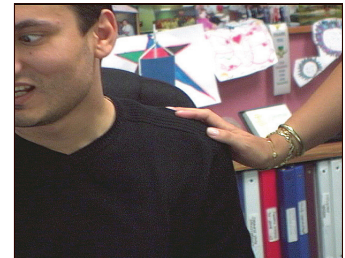
Boris started a job a few months after arriving in the United States. He didn't speak much English, but he was a good worker and friendly, and his supervisor and the other workers liked him. After 16 months, Boris applied for a new job somewhere else and quit his first job without telling anyone. He was surprised when he didn't get the new job. Later he found out that his first employer didn't give him a good reference for the new job. What did Boris do wrong? What should Boris have done instead?

WORKPLACE RIGHTS

As a refugee, you have the same workplace rights as an American citizen. An employer may not discriminate against you because of your refugee status or deny you a job or a promotion because of your age, handicap, marital status, ethnic or national origin, race, religion, sex, or sexual orientation. However, some jobs are only open to U.S. citizens.



Employment laws also protect workers from unsafe working conditions. Employers must be sure that the workplace is safe and healthy. Employment laws also protect workers from sexual harassment in the workplace. Sexual harassment is any behavior of a sexual nature that makes a person feel intimidated or uncomfortable.



Sangita has a male boss who is very kind, helpful, and friendly. But sometimes he touches her shoulder when he is talking to her. This makes Sangita very uncomfortable. What is the issue here? What should Sangita do?



Think about the U.S. rights in the workplace.

- How might these rights be similar to your experiences in the past?
- How might they be different?
- How will you get used to these differences?



WRAP-UP*

*True or false? How much do you think you know about resettlement in the United States? Test your knowledge with the statements below. Read these statements and circle the word **True** if you think the statement is right and circle **False** if you think the statement is wrong.*

- | | | |
|---|-------------|--------------|
| 1. Getting your first job can take as little as a few days to many months. | True | False |
| 2. The government or your resettlement agency must find a job for you. | True | False |
| 3. Learning English can help you find a job and increase your job opportunities. | True | False |
| 4. Many refugees start working at entry-level positions. | True | False |
| 5. Women often supervise men in the U.S. workplace. | True | False |
| 6. If you are late for an interview, the employer may not hire you because s/he may think that you may be late to work as well. | True | False |
| 7. The best person to help you find a job is yourself. | True | False |
| 8. Refugees do not have to pay income tax to the U.S. government. | True | False |

* Correct answers provided in Appendix A on page 222.

13



Chapter Thirteen LEARNING ENGLISH

Learning a new language takes time and work.

Americans believe that a person is never too old or too young to learn new things. Learning English will help you get a job, be successful on the job, communicate with other Americans, and adjust more quickly to your new life in the United States.

This chapter will discuss

- » The importance of learning English
- » Ways to learn English
- » How learning a new language takes time and hard work

Learning English will help you get a job and adjust more quickly to your new life in the United States.



KEY ENGLISH VOCABULARY

The following English expressions are used when discussing learning English in the United States. These phrases will be helpful for you to learn.

Say the expression in English. Write the expression in your native language. Then draw a picture of the expression, write what it means, or use it in a sentence. The first one has been done for you.

In English	In your language	Draw a picture of the word, write its meaning, or use it in a sentence.
Please say that again.		<i>Please say that again. I did not understand it the first time.</i>
Can you repeat that?		
What does _____ mean?		
Can you speak more slowly?		
I don't speak English.		
I don't understand...		
Can you understand me?		

ASSESSMENT OF ENGLISH

Do not worry if you do not speak any English before taking English language classes. Before classes start, you will be given an assessment. An assessment is a kind of test. English classes have different levels, from beginning to advanced, and an assessment will show what your level is. The assessment may be a conversation or a written test.

English classes differ in the kind of English they teach. Some classes teach simple, practical English that a newcomer needs to learn to get around—to buy things in a store, to read a bus schedule, or to look for a job. Others teach the English needed in certain jobs—for example, working in a hotel or working in the medical field. There are also English classes that prepare students for college study. These classes spend more time on reading and writing.

THE IMPORTANCE OF LEARNING ENGLISH

When Nadia first arrived in the United States, she always needed an interpreter when she went to see her doctor. This was difficult because the only day of the week the female interpreter was available was on Tuesdays. Now, 3 years later, Nadia makes her appointments by herself and no longer needs an interpreter. This means she can go to the doctor any day. How has learning English helped Nadia? What are some ways you might practice your English?

You will learn English much faster if you have a strong desire to learn the language. Here are some reasons why learning English is important:

- To get a job.
- To be successful on the job.
- To know what your children and grandchildren are saying.
- To communicate with your children's teachers.
- To be independent: to take public transportation and shop for yourself and your family.
- To talk to your neighbors.
- To find out what is going on in the world through television, newspapers, and the internet.
- To pass the U.S. citizenship test so that you can become a citizen of the United States.



Practice speaking English with others who are learning the language or already speak it.

Naw Ku learned English through her job, but her husband, Soe Thu, only knew a little English. When they attended their children's parent-teacher conferences together, Naw Ku had to interpret the conversations for Soe Thu. This was frustrating for Naw Ku and Soe Thu. Now, 2 years later, Soe Thu's English is much better, and he and Naw Ku are both able to speak at the parent-teacher conferences. How has learning English helped Soe Thu? What are some ways Soe Thu might have learned English?



Why will learning English be useful to you in the United States? Draw or write about some reasons below.

Bhampa is an elderly man who has been having trouble learning English. His son and daughter-in-law both work, and his grandchildren go to school, so he spends a lot of time alone. What can Bhampa do to improve his English?

WAYS TO LEARN ENGLISH

There are many ways you can learn English. Below are some examples:

ATTEND ENGLISH LANGUAGE CLASSES (often referred to as ESL, or English as a Second Language). In ESL classes, men and women of different ages, education, and ethnic backgrounds sit together. In beginning-level ESL classes, students usually study the English they need to function in the community and at the workplace. In higher level classes, students pay more attention to English grammar, reading, and writing.



Faadumo has started learning English, but still has trouble communicating with people at work. What are some ways Faadumo can communicate with others while she continues to learn English?

STUDY WITH A VOLUNTEER TUTOR. This can also be a good way to learn about American culture and customs. Ask your resettlement agency to connect you to a volunteer.



WATCH ENGLISH MOVIES, television shows, or listen to English programs on the radio.

PRACTICE SPEAKING ENGLISH WITH OTHERS who are learning the language or already speak English.



READ ENGLISH PRINT. English is all around you: on food boxes, signs, advertisements, buses, brochures, and newspapers.

LEARN ENGLISH AT WORK. When you get a job, you will learn the English vocabulary and expressions that are useful for that job. You will have co-workers and possibly clients or customers who speak English. Speaking with them will help to improve your English.



People from all over the world take English classes together in the United States.

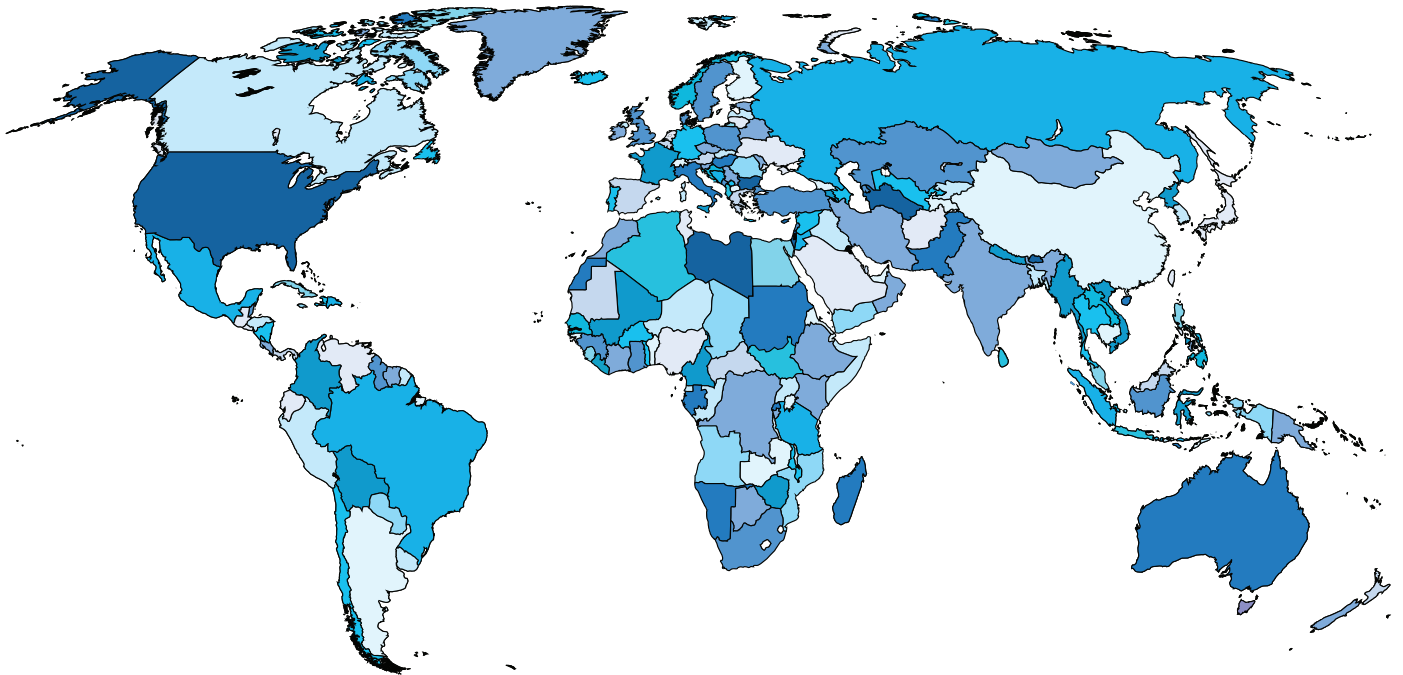
Students in English class may have very different backgrounds, but they all want the same thing: to learn English.

DIVERSITY IN THE ESL CLASSROOM

In your ESL classroom, you may notice men and women from all over the world who are learning English with you. It can be exciting to meet new people who speak different languages and have different cultural backgrounds from your own.

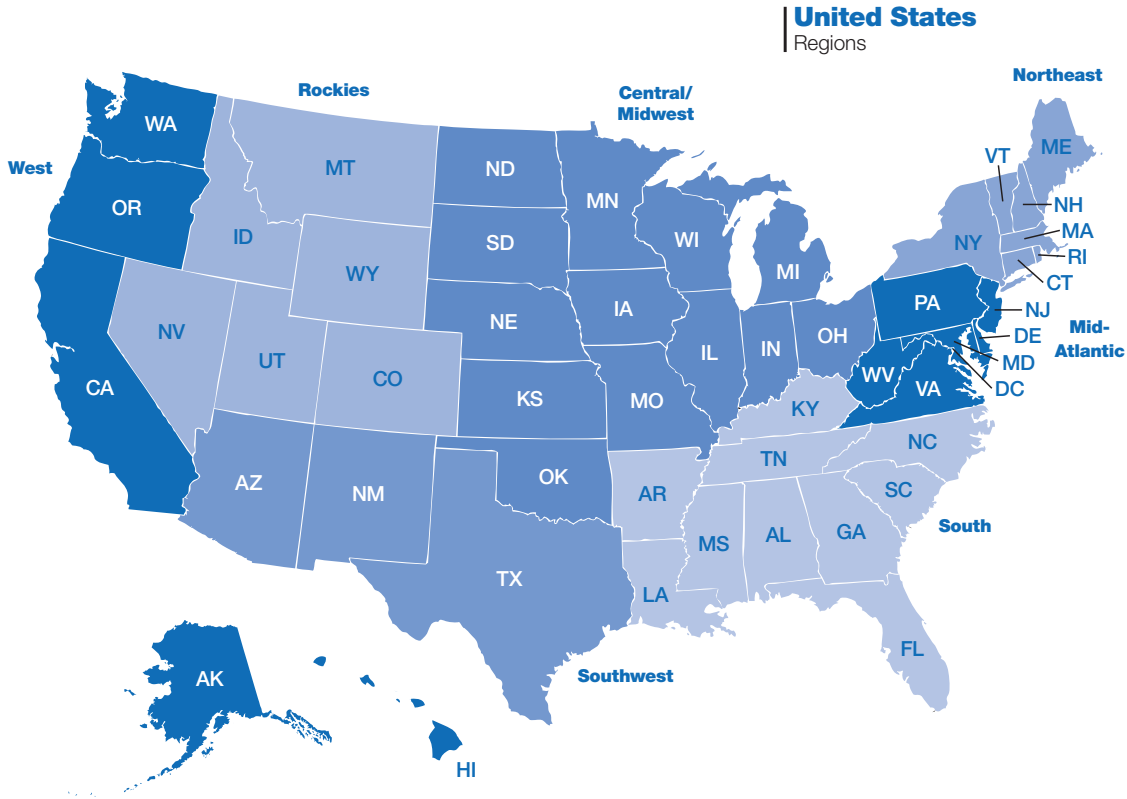


Look at the world map below. Circle your country of origin.





Now circle where you will be resettled in the U.S.



Consider the following questions:

- Where do you think the immigrants in your new community will be from?
- What are some things you might want to learn about others in your class?

This diversity can be a challenge for teachers and other students. Different students may have different educational backgrounds and goals for learning English. Some students may be young people who are hoping to learn enough English to go to college, and others might be elderly who are learning English so they can go to the store or to the doctor by themselves. Some students may be adults who work full time and attend classes to improve their English at work or to speak with their child's teacher. But whatever their backgrounds, students all want the same thing: to learn English.



When Priscilla arrived for the first day of her English class, she was surprised to see people from so many different backgrounds. She had never been around so many different kinds of people. If you were Priscilla, how would you feel? What other differences in her classmates do you think Priscilla might find as the class goes on? If you were in Priscilla's class, what would you do to make yourself comfortable?



Think about your first day of English classes. How will you introduce yourself to such a diverse group? You might say:

I come from _____.

SUDAN

I speak _____.

ARABIC

My family has _____ members.

8

I have been in the United States since _____.

JUNE

I would like to learn about

BUYING FOOD IN THE UNITED STATES AND TAKING THE BUS

_____.

USING ENGLISH



Keep a chart of when you use English, where you use English, what you said, and how it worked. Was it successful? Did you have difficulties? The first two are filled in as examples.

Date; time	Place/situation	What I said	Results
<i>Monday, March 19, 2012, 4:30 p.m.</i>	<i>Spoke with my son's math teacher</i>	<i>Yes, I can be at the school for the meeting on Tuesday, March 20th, at 4:15 p.m.</i>	<i>Teacher thought I said 4:50 p.m. I had to wait. It was not a problem.</i>
<i>Tuesday, March 20, 3:30 p.m.</i>	<i>Read the bus schedule</i>	<i>Saw there was a bus to school leaving at 3:05 p.m., arriving at 3:59 p.m.</i>	<i>Took the bus and got to school on time.</i>

Learning a new language takes time, and each person learns at a different pace.

Practice speaking or listening to English for a certain amount of time each day.

LEARNING A NEW LANGUAGE TAKES TIME

In the beginning, you may find it hard to learn English and feel frustrated. It is normal to feel this way. Each person learns things at a different pace and in a different way. Some people learn more quickly than others. Some people learn by doing. Other people learn by listening or reading. Some people might like to wait a little before they speak. Others like to try out new words and phrases right away. But for everyone, learning a new language takes time and effort.



Learning English will be a challenge and take time, but keep practicing!



Think about some ways you will try to learn English. Share these with a partner.

The key to learning a new language is to practice it every day. Even if you listen to the radio or watch television in English for only ten minutes a day, this will help. With time and practice you will become more comfortable speaking English.

Soon after he arrived in the United States, Reza enrolled in English class. The class met on Tuesday and Thursday evenings. The class was going well and he was learning a lot. Then Reza was offered a job. He would work Mondays through Saturdays from 4 p.m. until midnight. What is the problem here? What do you think Reza should do?



If you are feeling frustrated about learning English, what are some positive things you can do to learn the language? Circle some things you might do below.

- Practice speaking English with other English language speakers.
- Watch television or listen to the radio in English.
- Attend English classes.
- Practice with people in your community.
- Practice with an English speaker who wants to learn your language.
- Set realistic goals for yourself each week.
- Keep a list of new words you learn.
- Try to read the English that you see around you, on street signs, on buses, and in the windows of stores.



What other things might help you gain confidence in learning English?

**WRAP-UP***

*Choose the best answers to the questions below by marking the right choice.
Here is an example:*

Which language is spoken by most people in the United States?

- a. Chinese.
- b. English.
- c. German.

Most people in the United States speak English, so the answer is b. English.

1. Learning English is a quick and easy process.
 - a. True.
 - b. False.
2. Why is learning English so important?
 - a. To get a good job.
 - b. To pass the U.S. citizenship test.
 - c. To be independent and self-reliant.
 - d. To know what your children and grandchildren are saying when they speak English.
 - e. All of the above.

* Correct answers provided in Appendix A on page 222.

3. The key to learning English is to practice it two or three times a week.
 - a. True.
 - b. False.
4. Which of the following are some ways to learn English?
 - a. Attend English language class.
 - b. Watch English movies and television shows.
 - c. Practice speaking English with other refugees who are learning English as well.
 - d. All of the above.
5. With time and practice you will become more comfortable communicating in English.
 - a. Yes, I will.
 - b. No, I won't.



Chapter Fourteen

EDUCATION

In the United States, education is available to everyone, regardless of ability, sex, age, race, religion, sexual orientation, or social class. Most Americans view education as a way to get better jobs and improve their standard of living.

This chapter will discuss

- » Education for children
- » Education for adults





KEY ENGLISH VOCABULARY

The following English words are used when discussing education in the United States. These words will be helpful for you to learn.

Say the word in English. Write the word in your native language. Then draw a picture of the word, write what it means, or use it in a sentence. The first one has been done for you.

In English	In your language	Draw a picture of the word, write its meaning, or use it in a sentence.
attendance		<i>Attendance means to be present at a place for some reason, like at school or a meeting.</i>
book		
certificate		
class		
degree		
diploma		
education		
math		
reading		
school		
science		
teacher		

Public school education is free. All children from 6 to 16 must go to school.

Enroll your children in school as soon as you can. Your resettlement agency will help you do this.



Think about what public education was like in your home country or country of asylum.

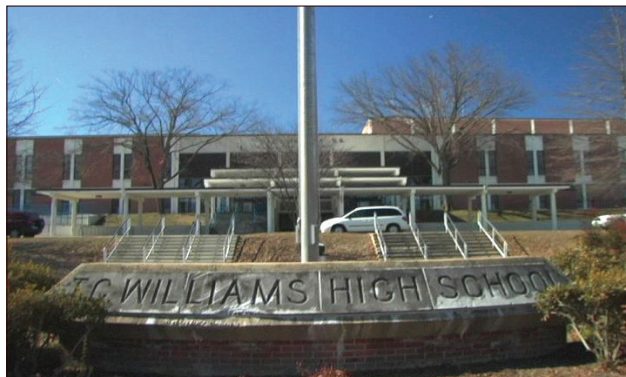
- Were there fees?
- How far was the school from where you lived? How did your children get there?
- What did students bring with them to school?
- What subjects were taught?
- How long was the school day?
- Did adults go to school?



Draw or write about school in your home country or country of asylum.



Talk to a partner about what you have written or drawn. This is good practice, and you might want to tell someone in the U.S. about school in your home country or country of asylum!



EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN

Public education is free. All children from about ages 6 to 16 must go to school. Public education is usually available for children ages 5 to 18. Parents may also enroll children in private schools, but tuition at these schools can be expensive.



Consider the following questions:

- When did the school year start and end in your home country or country of asylum?
- Did children have to go to school?
- Was there free education for all children?

In American schools, children of different racial, ethnic, and language backgrounds study and play together. In most schools, boys and girls study together. Children with physical or mental disabilities have the same rights to an education that other children have.



Arale had two daughters and a son. The son was in a wheelchair and was mentally handicapped. In Arale's home country, handicapped children did not go school, and most girls didn't go to school either. Arale was surprised to learn that in the United States all children had to go to school. If you were Arale, how would you feel? Who would you talk to about your feelings?

It is important to enroll your children in school as soon as possible. Children usually go to a school close to where they live. Most schools will want to see your child's immunization and medical records. Your resettlement agency will assist you with this process. If your child has any medical or school records, bring them with you to the United States.

When students miss school, parents must write a note explaining why.

There are four levels of education for children in the United States:

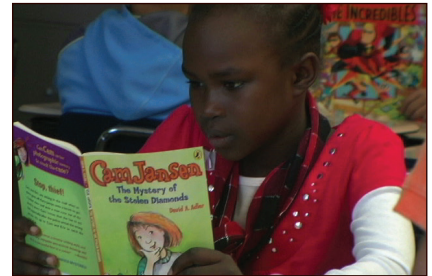
PRESCHOOL

This level is for children 3-5 years of age. It is not required by law, and it is usually not free.



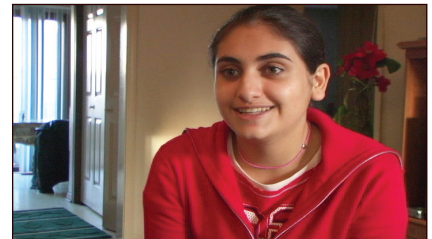
ELEMENTARY OR PRIMARY SCHOOL

This level begins with kindergarten (age 5) and continues through Grade 5 or 6 (age 12).



MIDDLE SCHOOL OR JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

This level usually includes Grades 6 to 8 (ages 12 to 14).



HIGH SCHOOL

This level usually includes Grades 9 to 12 (ages 14 to 18). Students who finish this level receive a high school diploma.



SCHOOL YEAR

The school year begins in August or September and ends in May or June. Most children attend classes about 6 hours a day, Monday through Friday. Students who need to catch up in their classes may attend summer school in June and July.

ATTENDANCE

School attendance is very important. When students miss school, parents must write a note that explains why, and students have to make up the school work they missed.

Isabel's daughter was having trouble at school. One day Isabel kept her home from school to let her rest. Later that morning, the school called to tell Isabel that her daughter had not come to school that day. Isabel was confused. She told the school that she had kept her daughter home for the day. Why did the school call? Why was it a problem for Isabel to keep her daughter at home? What should Isabel have done to avoid this situation?

SCHOOL-RELATED EXPENSES

Although public education is free, parents pay some expenses, such as the cost of school supplies and fees for special activities. Children can take lunch to school or buy low-cost, nutritious lunches in the school cafeteria.

Arjun's 10-year-old daughter Sonam did not like the lunches Arjun packed for her to take to school because the food was very different from what Sonam's friends brought for lunch. Some of the other children made fun of Sonam's food. Sonam wanted to buy lunch at the school cafeteria. If you were Arjun, how would you feel? What would you do about this issue?



What expenses did families have for public school in your home country or country of asylum?

Some children live close enough to their school to walk.

TRANSPORTATION

Some children live close enough to the school to walk. If the school is too far from your home for your child to walk, school buses may provide free transportation to school. The school system will decide the distance from school for free transportation.



Many schools have special English language classes for children who do not know much English.

CURRICULUM

There is no national curriculum in the United States. Each state, local school district, or school itself decides what is taught. Most students study English, mathematics, social studies, and science. Additional subjects such as art, music, physical education, and foreign languages may be offered as well.

AMERICAN STYLE OF TEACHING

In the United States teachers encourage children to learn by thinking and analyzing, asking questions, and joining in discussions and activities.



When Hanan listened to her daughter and son talk about their new school, she was confused. What kind of an education were her children getting? The teacher didn't talk very much, and the children were expected to ask a lot of questions and give their own ideas. They could even disagree with the teacher and the textbook! And instead of listening to the teacher, they spent a lot of time working with their friends. How does this teaching style differ from the way teachers teach in your home country or country of asylum? How is it similar? Why do you think American teachers use this style? What could Hanan do to better understand what is happening in her children's classrooms?

LEARNING ENGLISH

Many schools have special English language classes for new arrivals. Other schools offer assistance through a special teacher or a tutor.



One day the school called Victoria to tell her that her son Joseph was in trouble for being late to class too many times. When Joseph got home from school, Victoria asked Joseph how the school had punished him. Joseph said he had to go talk to the principal and explain why he had been late. Victoria was confused. She felt that her son had not been punished at all. How would a student be punished in your home country or country of asylum? If you were Victoria, how would you feel about this situation? How would you handle it?

ADJUSTMENT

Most newcomer students take time to adjust, especially in their first year of school. Children may feel lonely at first, but as their English gets better, they make friends and feel more comfortable at school.



Consider the following questions with regard to your children:

- What challenges do you think your children might have in adjusting to the school environment in the U.S.?
- How could you help your children meet these challenges?

INFORMAL BEHAVIOR OF AMERICAN STUDENTS

Many newcomer students and their parents are surprised by the informal behavior and dress of American students. American public schools give students freedom to make choices, but they are also expected to obey school rules. If they break the rules, students may have to stay after school or be suspended from school for a few days. Physical punishment is not permitted in U.S. schools.



Think about the behavior of children at school in your home country or country of asylum.

- Did they wear uniforms?
- Did they ask questions, work in groups, or listen to the teacher for most of the day?
- Would students move around often, or remain seated at their desks most of the day?

Teachers in the United States believe that parents should be involved in their children's education.

SCHOOL CHALLENGES

Some schools, particularly large ones in big cities, have problems with youth gangs and fighting between different racial or ethnic groups. In some areas, there have also been problems with students using drugs and bringing weapons to school. A child who feels threatened by someone should stay away from that person and talk to a teacher or school counselor right away.

If you think your children may need help for a problem at school, talk to someone at the school about it!



Discuss the picture above of a common U.S. elementary school classroom with a partner.

- What similarities do you see between this U.S. classroom and a classroom in your home country or country of asylum?
- What differences do you see?
- What do you think these similarities and differences say about how your children will adjust in the U.S.?

PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN CHILDREN'S EDUCATION

Educators in the United States believe that parents should be involved in their children's education because this helps children succeed in school. Schools try to help parents understand their children's education, and many offer information for parents who do not speak English.



Think about the role of parents in your home country or country of asylum.

- In what ways were parents involved?
- Did parents visit the school? Help with homework?
- Was it common to talk to teachers or administrators? Attend meetings with the teacher?

PARENT-TEACHER MEETINGS

The school will arrange for you to discuss your children's progress with teachers at parent-teacher meetings. However, you can always ask to meet with your children's teachers anytime you have questions or concerns.



Most Americans view education as a lifelong process.



Circle the pictures below that show ways you might get involved with your children's education.



Walk children to bus or school



Work with your children on their homework



Chaperone a field trip for your child



Attend parent-teacher conferences or parent night at school



Listen to your children talk about school and ask questions



Volunteer to help in your children's classrooms or at lunch or recess



Talk to a teacher or school administration



Help with an extracurricular activity or school sports team



Give a talk on your home country to your children's class



Join the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) or attend school board meetings



Participate in special events, activities, or fundraisers

All of the above are good ways to get involved in your children's education.

Talk with your children's teachers about how you can be a part of your children's schooling!



Consider what you have learned about school in the United States. Draw or write about the differences between school in your home country or country of asylum and the United States.

EDUCATION FOR ADULTS

Most Americans view education as something people can enjoy all their lives, and many adults enroll in courses at some time. They continue working full time and attend courses in the evening or on the weekend.

Refugees, too, can continue their education while working. Your resettlement agency can help you find educational opportunities in your community, from English classes and high school diploma study to vocational and professional training. It is good to have some training past high school, such as a certificate or diploma.

Farah has saved money to take classes at the local community college. But the classes she wants to take are in the evenings, when she is at work. What should Farah do?

Higher education can be very expensive.

Here are a few educational opportunities for adults that you may find in your community:

ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERACY CLASSES. These classes help you learn English. (See Chapter 13 to learn more about English language classes.)



OTHER ADULT EDUCATION CLASSES.

Adult education programs also offer many different classes for the general public. Subjects include bookkeeping and accounting, secretarial skills, computer skills, and foreign languages.

GENERAL EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (GED) DIPLOMA PREPARATORY CLASSES. These classes allow adults who never finished high school to earn a high school diploma. Refugee adults who have not had secondary education in their countries, or who do not have a high school diploma, can study for a GED diploma.

VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL SCHOOLS. These schools train people for skilled occupations, such as auto mechanics, computer programming, and medical and dental assisting. Instead of diplomas, these schools give certificates to their graduates.

Moe Win was a mechanic in his home country. In the United States, he took the first job he could find, stocking shelves at a store. Moe Win found out about a training program for mechanics, but he would have to work part time while studying. If you were Moe Win, what are some things you would have to think about to make a decision?

COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES. There are two major types of higher education in the United States: community colleges (offering 2-year programs) and 4-year colleges and universities. The admission process can be complicated, be costly, and take time. Community colleges do not cost a lot, but 4-year colleges can be very expensive. Most colleges and universities have special offices with information about financial help for students who need it. Most university students must pay their own living expenses.





Circle the adult educational opportunities listed on the previous page that you or someone in your family might be interested in.



How might some educational opportunities in the United States be beneficial for you or another family member?

**WRAP-UP***

**Choose the best answers to the questions below by marking the right choice.
Here is an example:**

Which language is spoken by most people in the United States?

- a. Chinese.
- b. English.
- c. German.

Most people in the United States speak English, so the answer is b. English.

1. Is public school education for children free in the United States?
 - a. Yes.
 - b. No.
2. The American style of teaching generally includes which of the following?
 - a. Asking questions.
 - b. Discussions.
 - c. Long lectures.
 - d. Choices a and b.

* Correct answers provided in Appendix A on page 222.

3. All public schools in America require students to wear a uniform.
 - a. True.
 - b. False.
4. Your friend feels shy about going to her child's school for parent-teacher meetings because she doesn't speak English. Should she go to the meeting anyway?
 - a. No, she should learn English before meeting her child's teachers.
 - b. Yes, she does not have to know how to speak much English for the meeting because many schools offer information for parents who do not speak English.
5. Americans believe that you can only learn when you are young.
 - a. True.
 - b. False. Americans believe that you are never too old to learn new things.

15



Chapter Fifteen THE ONGOING JOURNEY

For many refugees, resettlement is often a long and challenging process, but with patience and a positive attitude, you can have a good and comfortable life in your new community. There are many refugees who left everything behind to start again in the United States. They now speak English, own their own homes, and operate businesses. Remember that though there will be many challenges ahead, there will be many opportunities for you as well.





In Chapter 1, you identified some things you had heard about life in America. What was true? What was untrue? What can you say now about life in America?



Go back to page 8 and complete the activity.

As you now see, there are a lot of things to think about and consider: working with your resettlement agency and using other community services, learning English, finding a job that can support you and your family, coping with a new culture, continuing your education, understanding and using the health care system, getting around on your own, living in a safe and comfortable home and community, learning about the United States and practicing your rights and responsibilities ... the list goes on.

There will be many new and exciting opportunities for you!

15 THE ONGOING JOURNEY



In the chart below, fill in the middle column by drawing or writing your thoughts and answers to the questions.

	What is today's date? <hr/>	6-12 months after you first wrote in this chart, what is today's date? <hr/>
1. What are your goals and priorities for your first month in the U.S.?		
2. What are your goals and priorities for your first 6 months in the U.S.?		
3. What are your goals and priorities for your first year in the U.S.?		
4. What are your goals and priorities for your first 2 years in the U.S.?		
5. What are your longer term goals?		



In 6 months or a year from now, revisit this chart. See where you are, and fill in the right-hand column. Then think about the following:

- How have your goals changed?
- How were you feeling about resettlement when you first filled out this chart?
- How are you feeling now?
- What feelings about resettlement have changed?

Keeping the following messages in mind will help you have a better resettlement experience:

- BE SELF-RELIANT.** Taking an active role in your own resettlement will help you adjust better.
- LEARN ENGLISH.** Speaking English will help you talk directly with people around you and will allow you to ask for the services you need.
- ACCEPT THE FIRST JOB THAT IS OFFERED TO YOU.** Having a job, even if it is not in your field, will help you earn and save money so that you can support yourself and your family as soon as possible.
- COOPERATE WITH YOUR RESETTLEMENT AGENCY.** Resettlement agency workers have helped many refugees before you to succeed in their new communities. They have the knowledge and experience of working with refugees, so listen closely to what they tell you and share your concerns and hopes with them.



There are many people around you who want to see you succeed. These people include your family, your community, and your resettlement agency.

You have lots of support from many people. They want you to succeed!



Draw pictures of your resettlement journey in the strip below.

<p>As a child in my home country...</p>	<p>As an adult in my home country...</p>
<p>In my country of asylum...</p>	<p>My first month in the U.S. ...</p>
<p>My first year in the U.S. ...</p>	<p>My first five years in the U.S. ...</p>

**WRAP-UP***

Choose the best answers to the questions below by marking the right choice.

Here is an example:

Which language is spoken by most people in the United States?

- a. Chinese.
- b. English.
- c. German.

Most people in the United States speak English, so the answer is b. English.

1. How can you become self-reliant?
 - a. Find a job.
 - b. Ask questions when you do not understand something.
 - c. Explore your surroundings, like the local supermarket or library.
 - d. Any or all of the above.

2. Below are some ways you can practice your English. Which do you feel would be the easiest to do?
 - a. Attend English language classes.
 - b. Study with a volunteer.
 - c. Watch English television shows or films.
 - d. Practice speaking, reading, or listening to English for 10 minutes each day.

* Correct answers provided in Appendix A on page 222.

3. Why is it important to accept the first job offered to you?
 - a. Another job offer may not be made to you for some time.
 - b. To support your family.
 - c. To help you pay for your expenses.
 - d. Any or all of the above.

4. Below are some ways you can work well with your resettlement agency. Which do you feel is the most important?
 - a. Show up on time for appointments.
 - b. Ask questions.
 - c. Listen closely to what resettlement agency workers tell you.
 - d. Share your concerns, fears, and hopes with resettlement agency workers.

APPENDIX A

ANSWER KEY

CHAPTER 1

- » WRAP-UP on page 12: 1. True 2. True 3. False 4. True 5. True
6. False 7. True 8. False 9. True 10. True 11. True 12. True

CHAPTER 2

- » WRAP-UP on page 23: 1. b 2. e 3. e 4. c 5. b

CHAPTER 3

- » MATCHING ACTIVITY on page 34: 1. a 2. c 3. b
- » WRAP-UP on page 41: 1. a 2. b 3. e 4. b 5. d 6. b

CHAPTER 4

- » WRAP-UP on page 55: 1. True 2. False 3. False 4. True 5. True 6. False

CHAPTER 5

- » TYPES OF HOUSING ACTIVITY on page 59: 1. b 2. d 3. a 4. c
- » HOUSING SAFETY ACTIVITY on page 63: 1. d 2. c 3. a 4. e 5. b
- » WRAP-UP on page 66: 1. d 2. a 3. d 4. d 5. b

CHAPTER 6

- » EMERGENCY SERVICES MATCHING ACTIVITY on page 73: 1. c 2. a 3. b
- » EMERGENCY SITUATION ACTIVITY on page 74: 1. Yes, request fire.
2. No. It would be most appropriate to call the girl's parents or walk to their house to discuss the matter with them. 3. Yes, request ambulance. 4. No. If you do not see a fire after checking thoroughly, you may need a new battery for your fire alarm.
5. Yes, request police. 6. No. If you can care for yourself safely at home such as in this example, there is no need to call 911.
- » WRAP-UP on page 77: 1. d 2. b 3. b 4. a 5. a

APPENDIX A

CHAPTER 7

- » TRAFFIC SIGNS MATCHING ACTIVITY on page 85: 1.c 2.e 3.b 4.a 5.d
- » WRAP-UP on page 88: 1.e 2.a 3.d 4.a 5.e

CHAPTER 8

- » MATCHING HEALTH CONCERNS ACTIVITY 1 on page 95:
1.b 2.a 3.b 4.a 5.c 6.c
- » MATCHING HEALTH CONCERNS ACTIVITY 2 on page 96: 1.b 2.c 3.a
- » MATCHING HEALTH SIGNS ACTIVITY on page 97:
1.f 2.a 3.d 4.b 5.c 6.e
- » INSURANCE MATCHING ACTIVITY on page 98: 1.b 2.a 3.a
- » HEALTHY FOODS ACTIVITY on page 102:
Healthy foods (circle): b c e g j k
Unhealthy foods (cross out): a d f h i
- » WRAP-UP on page 106: 1.a 2.e 3.a 4.e 5.b

CHAPTER 9

- » NEEDS AND WANTS ACTIVITY on page 114:
Items your family might need (circle): a b d e g h k l
Items your family does not need, but may want (cross off): c f i j
- » TAXES ACTIVITY on page 118:
Taxes may pay for (circle): a b e h
Taxes do not pay for: c d f g
- » WRAP-UP on page 124: 1.d 2.b 3.e 4.b 5.a

CHAPTER 10

- » WRAP-UP on page 141: 1.a 2.e 3.a 4.e 5.d

APPENDIX A

CHAPTER 11

» RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES IMMIGRATION STATUS ACTIVITY on page 156:

- **RIGHTS:**

Apply for family reunification: All (refugee, LPR, citizen)

Apply for public assistance: All

Attend school and work: All

Travel freely within the U.S.: All

Travel outside the U.S. without permission: LPR & citizen

Vote: Citizen

- **RESPONSIBILITIES:**

Know and obey the law: All

Pay taxes: All

Register for the draft if a male citizen between 18 and 25 years of age: All

Respect the rights of others: All

Serve on a jury in court: Citizen

Support and provide for your children: All

» WRAP-UP on page 158:

1. True 2. True 3. False 4. True 5. False 6. True 7. True 8. False

CHAPTER 12

» TYPES OF JOBS MATCHING ACTIVITY on page 163: 1. b 2. c 3. a

» WRAP-UP on page 181:

1. True 2. False 3. True 4. True 5. True 6. True 7. True 8. False

CHAPTER 13

» WRAP-UP on page 194: 1. b 2. e 3. a 4. d 5. a

CHAPTER 14

» WRAP-UP on page 210: 1. a 2. d 3. b 4. b 5. b

CHAPTER 15

» WRAP-UP on page 217: 1. d 2. Any or all choices 3. d 4. Any or all choices

APPENDIX B

GLOSSARY OF COMMON RESETTLEMENT TERMS

The following terms are related to refugee resettlement in the United States:

CAR INSURANCE: A financial contract between a driver and an insurance company. In the contract, the driver agrees to pay the insurance company a certain amount of money each month, and the insurance company agrees to pay any costs that result from an accident the driver is involved in. In most states, drivers must buy car insurance.

CASE MANAGER (OR CASEWORKER): An individual at a social service agency who helps refugees get the services they need.

CULTURAL ORIENTATION (CO): The process of learning about life in the United States. The process begins overseas and continues in the United States.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES (HHS): A government agency that funds health and human services, especially for those who cannot help themselves.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE: A government agency that manages the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program, including the Reception and Placement (R&P) program.

DRIVING UNDER THE INFLUENCE (DUI)/DRIVING WHILE INTOXICATED (DWI): The act of driving a car, or other motor vehicle, while under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs.

EMERGENCY SERVICES: Services that help people during emergencies, such as fires, crimes, and serious and sudden health problems. Three common types of emergency services are the police, fire department, and ambulance service.

EMPLOYMENT AUTHORIZATION DOCUMENT (EAD) CARD: A card issued by the government that allows the holder to work in the United States for a certain time while having a specific immigration status. The EAD card is sometimes called a work permit.

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (ESL) CLASSES: English classes for adults and children whose first language is not English.

ETHNIC COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS (ECBOs): Community-based organizations founded by former refugees and immigrants, to provide services that help newcomers in their communities.

FOOD STAMP PROGRAM: A government program that helps low-income families pay for food. Its official name is the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

GENERAL EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (GED) DIPLOMA: A diploma for adults that is generally accepted as the equivalent of a high school diploma.

APPENDIX B

GREEN CARD: Also known as a Permanent Resident card, this card is issued by USCIS (see definition for USCIS on page 225) to non-citizens as proof that an individual has lawful permanent resident status in the United States. A holder of this card is referred to as a Lawful Permanent Resident (LPR).

HEALTH INSURANCE: A contract that pays health care costs due to illness or injury. Payments for the cost of health insurance are made by an employer, the individual, or both.

IMMIGRANT: A person who moves to a country to live there permanently.

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION (IOM): An international organization that promotes the humane and orderly movement of people across borders.

MEDICAID: A government program that provides health insurance coverage to low-income people who qualify.

MEDICARE: A government program that provides health insurance coverage to people over the age of 65, and people under 65 with certain disabilities.

OFFICE OF REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT (ORR): A government office, under the Department of Health and Human Services, that provides refugees and other specific groups with assistance through its programs and grants.

POLYGAMY: Marriage to more than one spouse at the same time. Polygamy is illegal in the United States.

PORT OF ENTRY: A place where a person legally enters a country.

PROMISSORY NOTE: A document in which one party promises to pay a set amount of money to the other. Usually a promissory note is for the repayment of a loan.

RECEPTION AND PLACEMENT

PROGRAM: The program of the Department of State that provides newly arrived refugees with the essential services and support needed to begin resettlement in a new community.

REFUGEE: A person who has been forced to leave his or her country to escape persecution. The full definition of a refugee by The UN Refugee Agency is a person who "owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country."

REFUGEE CASH ASSISTANCE (RCA): A government program that provides temporary financial assistance for single and married refugees without dependent children.

APPENDIX B

RESETTLEMENT: The process of settling permanently in a country.

RESETTLEMENT AGENCY: An agency that delivers the basic Reception and Placement services that refugees receive. The agency may offer additional services.

RESETTLEMENT SUPPORT CENTER (RSC): A center that helps refugees apply for resettlement to the United States. RSCs also manage pre-departure activities, such as Cultural Orientation.

SELECTIVE SERVICE: A government agency that can call individuals for military service, usually in time of war. Men between the ages of 18 and 25 must register with the Selective Service.

SERVICE PROVIDER: An agency or organization that provides a service, or many services, to people.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT: Any unwelcome behavior of a sexual nature that makes a person feel intimidated or uncomfortable.

SOCIAL SECURITY CARD: A government-issued card with an individual's Social Security number printed on it. A Social Security number is important because it is needed to get a job, and to receive some government benefits and services.

TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE TO NEEDY FAMILIES (TANF): A government program that provides temporary financial assistance for parents with dependent children.

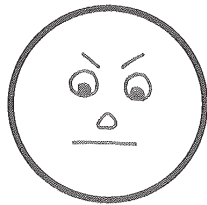
THE UN REFUGEE AGENCY (UNHCR): An international agency that oversees the protection of refugees and works to find solutions to problems affecting refugees worldwide.

U.S. CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION SERVICES (USCIS): A government agency that oversees lawful immigration to the United States. USCIS also provides newcomers with the information and tools they need to become Lawful Permanent Residents (LPRs) and citizens.

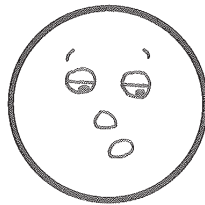
APPENDIX C

FACES OF EMOTION

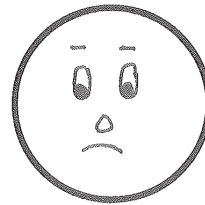
You may have trouble expressing yourself sometimes. The faces below may help you identify some of the feelings you are experiencing during the process of resettlement.



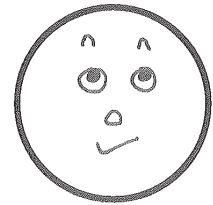
Angry



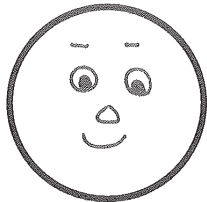
Bored



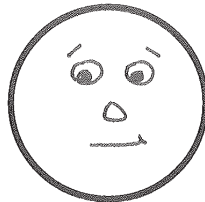
Confused



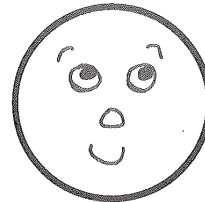
Curious



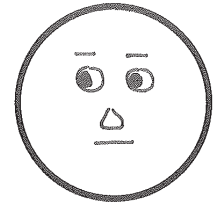
Excited



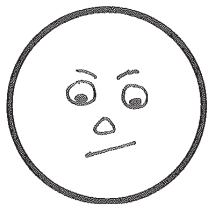
Fine



Happy



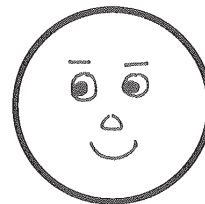
Impatient



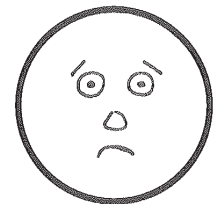
Insulted



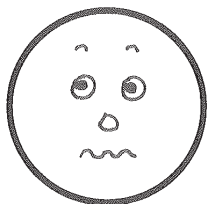
Nervous



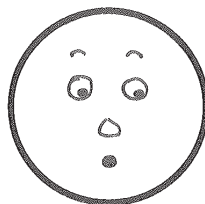
Proud



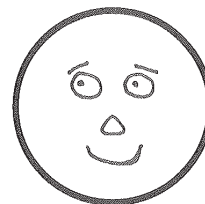
Sad



Scared



Surprised



Thankful



Worried



Welcome to THE UNITED STATES

Welcome to the United States: A Guidebook for Refugees contains valuable information to help refugees prepare for their first few months in the United States. It discusses what to expect as refugees settle into their new homes, look for work, meet people in the United States, and adjust to American culture and society. Topics addressed include:

The Resettlement Journey	Money Management
The United States and American Culture	Cultural Adjustment and Changing Roles
Travel to the United States	Rights and Responsibilities Under U.S. Law
The Resettlement Agency	Employment
Housing	Learning English
Community Services	Education
Transportation	The Ongoing Journey
Health Care	

This guidebook also includes activities, self-guided assessments, and commonly used English words and phrases.

