

# Housing

## The Basics: Housing

### Introduction for the Trainer

#### Key Content

During this session, participants will learn about the rights and responsibilities that come with renting an apartment or house, and about the proper use of household products and appliances.

#### Main Messages

In the United States, both tenants and landlords/landladies have rights and responsibilities. When refugees rent an apartment or a house, they must sign an agreement called a *lease*. In the lease, tenants agree to rent the property for a certain amount of time, pay rent and utilities on time, and maintain the property. Trainers should warn participants that breaking the lease could result in a fine. Refugees are also responsible for managing their own mail and recognizing important letters. If refugees cannot read the mail, they should find someone, such as their case worker/manager, a volunteer, a neighbor, or a friend, to read and explain it to them.



35 minutes

#### Objectives

Participants will be able to do the following:

- ▶ Describe the importance of paying rent and utilities on time
- ▶ State that tenants and landlords/landladies have rights and responsibilities
- ▶ Discuss the use of basic household products
- ▶ Describe the use of basic household appliances
- ▶ Identify important mail
- ▶ State their address and phone number
- ▶ Describe basic household safety measures and emergency services

#### Materials

- Housing Posters (included)
- Tape

#### Key English Vocabulary

- ▶ *housing*
- ▶ *landlord/landlady*
- ▶ *utilities*
- ▶ *Is this mail important?*

## Session Preparation

The trainer should gather, from case workers/managers, the address and phone number of each participant attending the session. As such, if participants do not have this information on hand during the session, it can easily be given to them during the *Introductory Exercise*.

Hang Housing Posters around the training space.

## Trainer's Introduction of Session to Participants

During this session, we will talk about housing in the United States.

## Introductory Exercise

*Briefly review the key English vocabulary for this plan by saying the first word aloud in English. Participants say the word to a partner, and then all together as a group. Continue in the same way with the rest of the words and the phrase. Throughout the session, emphasize the words as they come up and use the phrase whenever there is an opportunity. If there is time (8 to 10 minutes), use the unit vocabulary found at the end of this unit to help participants better understand key English vocabulary words.*

Divide participants into pairs or groups of three. Tell participants that, under normal circumstances, this information should only be shared with people they trust. Ask them to say their addresses and phone numbers to their partner or other group members.

When finished with the activity, remind participants that personal information such as addresses and phone numbers should only be shared with people they trust.

## Activity

Pairs or groups visit each Housing Poster and discuss the information being shared on each poster.

When all pairs or groups have visited each Housing Poster, have participants visit the posters as a full group. Ask participants to share what is being described in each picture and clarify any misinformation. Make sure that the key messages are provided. Encourage participants to ask questions as needed.

As a full group, debrief the session using the questions below.

## Debriefing Questions

- ▶ What are two of your most important bills regarding housing that you have to pay? *[This could include utility bills or rent.]* Why is it important to pay them?
- ▶ In the United States, who has rights and responsibilities regarding housing and utilities? *[Response: Tenants and landlords/landladies.]*

- ▶ What are some basic household products? How should you use them? How would you throw them away when you are finished with them?
- ▶ What is something you should do to clean your home? What should you do about trash?
- ▶ What are some appliances in your home? How should you use them?
- ▶ How can you identify important mail? If you do not understand the mail, what should you do? [*Response: Ask your case worker/manager for help.*]

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## Working With Individuals or Very Small Groups

When working with one or two participants, conduct the introductory exercise by asking each participant to tell you her/his address and phone number. During the activity, the trainer should visit the posters with participants and ask them what they see in the posters, clarifying any false information. When finished, debrief the session using the questions provided.

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## Variations and Considerations

If possible, group participants by language background during the introductory exercise so they can communicate in a common language during the activity discussions.

If needed, use translated versions of the Housing Posters.

When working with a larger group, divide participants into five to seven groups for the activity. Distribute a Housing Poster to each group. (If working with five or six small groups, pair the “Cleaning Products and How to Use Them” poster with the “Cleaning the Bathroom and Kitchen” poster and/or the “Proper Food Storage and Care” poster with the “Common Household Appliances” poster.) Small groups review their assigned Housing Poster and determine the key messages for the poster. Bring the full group together. A spokesperson from each small group introduces their Housing Poster and describes the key messages on the poster.

## Bathroom Facilities

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*Use bathroom facilities.*

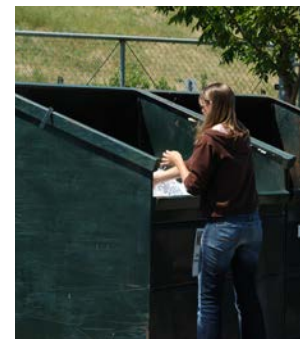
# Cleaning Products and How to Use Them

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*You should be familiar with basic household products.  
It is important to use and throw them away safely.*



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*It is important to clean your  
home properly.*

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*It is important to throw away  
trash properly.*

# Cleaning the Bathroom and Kitchen

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*The bathroom and kitchen have appliances that need to be cleaned with special products.*



*It is important to clean your bathroom properly.*



*It is important to clean your kitchen properly.*

# Common Household Appliances

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*Use appliances safely.*

# Home Safety

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*Preventing fires is very important.*



*Make sure the stove and oven are turned off when you are not using them.*



*Keep water away from electrical outlets and plugs.*



*Know where the candles, matches, and lighters are, and be very careful when you use them.*



*If a smoke detector goes off, check for a fire.*

*If there is a fire:*



*Use your fire extinguisher to put out a very small fire.*



*Call 9-1-1 immediately if the fire is bigger than a small stove fire.*



# Mail, Rent, and Utilities



*Paying your rent and utilities in full and on time is very important.*

*If you do not make these payments, you could be evicted from your home or have your utilities turned off.*



*You will receive important mail.*

*If you do not understand the mail, ask your case worker/manager for help.*

# Proper Food Storage and Care

## Keep food in the right places:

Items that go bad quickly, such as these:



should be kept in the refrigerator.

Items that do not go bad quickly, such as these:



should be kept in cupboards or a pantry.

## Avoid bugs by:

Keeping food in sealed containers like these:



Cleaning spilled food like this:



If you do not practice proper storage and care of food, you may have bugs. They can be very expensive to get rid of.



# Tenants and Landlords/Landladies

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*Tenants and landlords/landladies have rights and responsibilities.*



## *Housing responsibilities*



## *Utility responsibilities*