

## Mentor Family Support Checklist

This by no means has to be completed during the first visit, but rather is a list of things to keep in mind over time.

*An important note on privacy:* While many things on the list are things you might become aware of through any visit, other items involve private family details. Please remember that each refugee family can decide how much information they'd like to share with their Volunteer Mentor. They are not required to share anything with you, especially about health status. Please focus on helping refugees build skills so that they can help themselves in the long term, not forcing them to share sensitive information. This will be more difficult with limited English, but as a rule:

- DON'T ASK: Who is your doctor? I need to tell the office.
- DO ASK: In the United States it is important that everyone chooses one doctor
  - who they can visit when they are sick. Did you choose a doctor for your family?
  - Do you want me to help you choose a doctor? You can also ask for help from a friend or neighbor, as choosing a doctor is a private matter.

### HEALTH

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- Are there any obvious signs of illness? *Give advice about proper homecare and assist in making doctor's appointments as needed.*
- Do they know how to take prescription drugs if they need to? *Show on a clock or calendar when pills need to be taken.*
- Do they have a primary care doctor? *If they want help with this, go to the website of their managed care plan (CDPHP or Fidelis for instructions on finding a PCP)*
- Is there food in the house?
- Any signs of domestic violence in the home?

*\*Please immediately call the USCRI Albany Resource Manager (Jen) if food stamps aren't working or you have any concerns about domestic violence, child abuse, or elder abuse. We will help any victims/ possible victims learn their rights and options.*

### HOME SAFETY & HOUSEHOLD NEEDS

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- Is housing safe, sanitary and in good repair? *The landlord should be contacted with any concerns. Practice calling the landlord.*
- The landlord is responsible for and should be contacted if there is:
  - Any visible bare wiring
  - Any peeling or flaking interior paint or plaster
  - Any visible mold
  - Any broken windows
  - Any gas odor from stove or other appliances
  - Any evidence of household pests-i.e.-cockroaches, mice, bedbugs
 And ensuring that:
  - All Smoke detectors work and have batteries
  - All appliances in good working order in kitchen and bathroom
  - Locks work
  - The heat works
- The client should know:
  - How to operate the stove.
  - How to operate the thermostat and other ways to regulate the temperature (opening/closing windows, wearing sweaters, hanging blankets over doorways, etc.)-- They should keep the thermostat at a reasonable level (in winter, 68 is recommended during the day, lower at night)

- To keep doors locked even when home (Note: some clients have been robbed while at home).
- To use shower curtain in the bathroom (Note: we have had landlord complaints of floor flooding because curtain was on outside of tub while taking showers)
- To not put grease or oil down the sink drain; should be stored and thrown away
- How/where to dispose of garbage
- How to approach their landlord with home safety issues
- Furnishings:
  - USCRI furnishes the apartment for each new arrival based on a list of goods required by the U.S. Refugee Resettlement Programs. Furnishings are not elaborate, but should be adequate for basic needs.*
  - If you are concerned that there are not adequate basic furnishings (beds, chairs, table, sofa, dishes), please contact the Resource Manager.
  - Winter: do they have adequate bedding?

## COMMUNITY KNOWLEDGE

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- Go over the "Capital Region Newcomer Resource List" with them.
- Knowledge of bus routes and usage. (Check [www.CDTA.org](http://www.CDTA.org) for more resources.) Remind them that they are entitled to a free bus pass obtained at the USCRI office; 1 is provided per family for the 1st four to six months. The adult collecting bus card must turn in their monthly ESOL attendance sheet.
- Knowledge of locations : grocery stores, Laundromats, food pantries, hospitals, clinics, libraries, DSS, USCRI, etc., and how to get there by bus. *Ride the bus together to important locations. In case of emergency it is important that they are able to get to key locations. If their healthcare provider is Fidelis, Fidelis can provide a taxi to pick up clients for medical appointments if they know ahead of time.*
- When to dial 911.
- ESOL locations and times. Schedule is available via handouts at USCRI office and online at: <http://sites.google.com/site/albanyesol/>
- Are they getting out into their neighborhood at all? Walk around the neighborhood to parks or free community events.

## EDUCATION

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- Find out where adults are attending ESOL classes. Encourage them to attend as many classes per week as they can.
  - When did they start and how many times a week do they attend?
  - What are the barriers for them not attending? - lack of childcare, transportation, etc.
- Are the children enrolled in school? Where? What grade?
- Any problems with the schools, teachers, forms, homework?
- Are any adults interested in pursuing college? Would they like to attend a GED class and take the exam? *Check the mentor website or contact BRIA services for more information on GED programs for adults.*

## EMPLOYMENT

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- Support the job search process
  - Help practice English, create resume fill out job applications, search for jobs
  - Do the adults in the family attend Job Club? The weekly job preparedness class is held on Thursdays, 11-12:30, at the USCRI office.
  - If they are past 6 months/ MG program, they can still get job assistance ( and help with any other "barriers to self sufficiency") through BRIA programs at USCRI Albany – need to schedule intake appt
    - BRIA Program Managers have a large case load, and are most able to help those clients who take the initiative and maintain contact with them*
  - Talk with the family to help them identify their major obstacles to employment, and how they can overcome these barriers.
- Changes in Employment
  - Should be reported to USCRI – if get job, change job, change hours

- If they get any DSS benefits, they must report all changes in income status to DSS as soon as possible (and then BRIA).
- Employed Refugees
  - Who in the family is working? Where and how many days and hours per week?
  - Are you aware of any challenges in the workplace? You can contact USCRI for assistance with any complications. If they are no longer in the Match Grant program, BRIA programs can help with any barriers to self sufficiency.
  - Practice workplace vocabulary.

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## **PUBLIC ASSISTANCE**

- Are all of the family's public assistance programs working? (May include cash assistance, food stamps, Medicaid)
- If there are children 5 and under or the mother is pregnant, they are eligible for the WIC program (women, infants and children, p. 10 in the Mentor Manual). Are they accessing the program and do they know how to use the supplemental food coupons? (Note: this is a good field trip to do with the mother at the grocery store)

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## **RESOURCES FOR MENTORS**

Here are some items that might be helpful to bring, when visiting the mentee's home:

- Telephone book
- Map of Albany/the city in which they reside
- CDTA bus maps
- 'Capital Region Newcomer Resource List' – provided by USCRI Albany
- Sticky notes for labeling items in apartment with their English names
- Newspapers for job list and basic English literacy skills

Another great resource guide is found at [www.thefoodpantries.org/](http://www.thefoodpantries.org/) Use the 'resource' link on the left column, then click Albany Resource Guide and it gives many places in the capital district or Rensselaer that can be helpful to you and the mentees.

For more resources, see the USCRI Albany Mentor Resources google site at:

<https://sites.google.com/site/uscrialbanymentorresources/>

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