



WELCOMING
through
SPONSORSHIP

AN INTRODUCTION
TO WELCOMING



COMMUNITY
SPONSORSHIP
HUB

Hello Hello!

We're so glad you're interested in sponsorship. This document provides a brief introduction to the model and process. More resources are available to those who move forward with sponsorship. This document is meant to serve as a general introduction to supplement trainings you'll attend held by Alight.

This effort will take a community—if you know others who may be interested in sponsorship, please have them contact us. We'd love to share more! If sponsorship seems right for you, if you have questions about anything in this document, or you want to discuss sponsorship in general, please reach out to

Ready to dive in?

Alight's Sponsor Program Lead, Steph Koehne

Steph@wearealight.org

Table of Contents

All About Sponsorship with Alight - 3
Sponsorship Process Map - 4
Tips and Resource Overview - 5

Why is Sponsorship Necessary

For a refugee family to come to the United States, they must first have a sponsor in the United States who agrees to support them and help them get on their feet during their stay. Private sponsorship provides a meaningful way for Americans to help a family who's had to leave behind their lives and adjust to life in a new place. Expanding the United States' capacity to welcome a higher number of refugees displaced by conflict, climate change or social and economic exclusion is critically important.

There are a few options for sponsoring an individual or family based on the nationality and legal status of the person being sponsored—however, the process is largely the same. If sponsorship is right for you Alight will explain those details thoroughly. Private sponsorship for refugees of all nationalities was made possible via the Welcome Corps (Jan 2022), a new U.S. government program that allows everyday Americans to privately sponsor refugees from around the world.

Alight's Response

Alight has a depth of experience working to pair volunteers and sponsor groups in the U.S. with refugee families displaced by conflict. Most recently, Alight has recruited and mobilized sponsors for refugees displaced by the war in Ukraine and has also developed programs to support nearly all 1300 afghans that resettled in MN. We are excited that the State Department is now making it possible to sponsor refugees from all over the world and has asked Alight to step forward as one of the inaugural private sponsor organizations supporting the launch of Welcome Corps.

Alight is recruiting sponsor groups willing to welcome and help displaced individuals and families settle in the U.S. While becoming a sponsor is a commitment of time and attention, it's also one of the most meaningful ways you can help a family who's had to leave their lives behind by no fault of their own.

In partnership with a variety of amazing organizations Alight is providing sponsor groups with orientations and trainings prior-to and after their sponsored individual or family's arrival – to prepare them for their welcoming role. Alight staff will be available to answer questions and guide sponsors, and we'll provide a hub of materials to help.

What Does It Mean To Be A Sponsor Group?

Being a sponsor group means paving the pathway for a family by filing an I-134 form with the US Government. It includes preparing for a family's arrival by fundraising and organizing day-one details before they travel to Minnesota. And when the family arrives, it's about being there at the airport to welcome your family and helping them get settled in a new home. It means guiding them through government services and appointments, getting kids enrolled in school, and adults enrolled in language courses.

The sponsorship process:

1

Attend an information session.

If you're reading this document, you likely already have! Gain information on what it means to sponsor, including connecting with a family, fundraising, and a preparing for a family's arrival.

3

Connect with a family and complete your I-134a Document(s).

We'll help you set up a connection profile, which is how you'll find a family to sponsor. When you do this, be sure to mark down that you're working with Alight so we can help along the way. While you wait to connect with a family, get all your I-134a documents prepared (tax return, employment letter, etc). You will submit the I-134a after matching with a family.

5

Prepare for Arrival!

Make a day-one plan; decide who will meet the family at the airport, where they'll stay, and what will be ready for them.
Keep in touch with the family throughout this stage.
Make them feel welcome!

2

Decided Sponsorship is for you?

Great! Gather your group and identify a sponsor group lead. Then, fill out your interest form and submit to Alight. We'll give you all you need to get started, including a link to a simple background check.

4

Fundraise and strategize with your group!

Make a plan, budget, and connect with community organizations that will help support the individual or family upon arrival. There are many resources available to newcomers; identify them before arrival to ensure no opportunities are missed. Remember Alight can help along the way.

Guidance on Supporting Newcomers

Establish a Group: Sponsorship is most successful when responsibility is shared. We recommend pulling together a group of at least five people, with one person serving as sponsor group lead.

Create a Budget: The newcomer will be eligible to apply for employment authorization. However, it may take time for them to gain that authorization and find work. As a sponsor, you will offer support in the first months after arrival. You will assist them in initial housing and ensure they have essential furnishings, household goods, and food. Create a budget to estimate the resources you will need to provide this support.

Fundraise to Meet that Budget: Fundraising can help you generate the financial and in-kind resources needed to support newcomers. Members of your community are likely eager to give!

Make a List of Early Tasks: In addition to providing the newcomer with critical financial support, you will also need to connect them with relevant services (such as health care and education), and support their integration, by assisting them as they learn English and secure employment.

Keep Going! Supporting someone who is adjusting to a new environment can take time and rarely unfolds as expected. Newcomers have unique journeys and may seek to achieve different goals on different timelines. Sponsorship is hard work. But it's worth it!

Resources Available to You

You will have access to a growing collection of tools, including the following resources:

Initial Sponsor Service Checklist - Supports preparation for the newcomer's arrival by having an easy reference for what critical services are typically needed within the first 90 days of arrival.

Sample Sponsor Group Structure - There are many ways to structure a sponsor group. This resource offers a template structure, with typical roles and responsibilities outlined.

Sample Budget Template - Helps capture initial and ongoing estimated living costs and supports a newcomer in establishing a balanced budget.

Sponsor Fundraising Tips and Tools - Provides guidance for groups in raising necessary resources for the newcomer.

Tips for Securing Housing - Provides guidance on how to secure temporary housing for the newcomers.

Sample Pantry Checklist - Lists items recommended to be included in the newcomer's pantry upon arrival.