



# Dine for Refugees Toolkit



*The Department of State funds a consortium of non-profit organizations with expertise in refugee resettlement, protection, and welcome to implement the Welcome Corps. The Welcome Corps is implemented through the collective efforts of these organizations under a cooperative agreement with the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration at the U.S. Department of State.*

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# Introduction

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Thank you for expressing interest in the Dine for Refugees campaign. This initiative, organized by the Welcome Corps consortium, represents an innovative and community-driven approach to engaging in refugee sponsorship. As we embark on this journey, we invite you to explore this toolkit and discover the tools and resources that will empower you to be a vital part of this meaningful cause.

## Campaign Overview:

Our “Dine for Refugees” campaign aims to unite American citizens and permanent residents in a collective effort to support and sponsor refugees. We hope to foster understanding and empathy for displaced people globally, and dialogue surrounding the Welcome Corps, while inspiring individuals to pledge their commitment to welcoming and sponsoring a refugee.

Throughout this toolkit, you will find a comprehensive guide on how to plan and host these dinners, engage your guests, and lead conversations that can make a profound impact. Our ultimate goal is to create a sense of community and empower individuals to become Welcomers, guiding refugee newcomers to a better and brighter future.

As you navigate through the contents of this toolkit, you’ll discover invaluable resources, including sample materials, conversation guides, and tools to help you organize successful dinners. Additionally, we’ve provided a platform for reporting back on your dinner experiences, allowing us to learn and grow together.

The Dine for Refugees campaign is more than just a series of dinners; it’s a chance to make a difference in the lives of refugees and strengthen the bonds of our communities. We thank you for joining us on this journey and hope this toolkit serves as a guiding light as you embark on hosting your own dinner event.

Your commitment to this cause is greatly appreciated, and together, we can create a more inclusive and welcoming world for all.

Warm regards,

Welcome Corps Consortium

# Objectives

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The Dine for Refugees campaign has a clear and compelling objective: to mobilize communities across the United States to actively engage in refugee sponsorship through dialogue, empathy, and action. Our campaign aims to achieve the following key objectives:

**1. Host Community Dinners Nationwide:**

- These dinners in cities and towns across the country will serve as platforms for open and inclusive discussions about refugee sponsorship and Welcome Corps.

**2. Engage People in Dialogue:**

- Through these dinners, we seek to engage hundreds of individuals in meaningful dialogues about the experiences of refugees and the benefits of sponsorship.

**3. Foster a Sense of Empathy, Understanding, and Community Involvement:**

- By bringing together diverse groups of people in warm and welcoming atmospheres, we aim to foster a sense of empathy, understanding, and community involvement. We believe that through shared experiences, we can build stronger, more inclusive communities.

**4. Raise Awareness about Welcome Corps:**

- The campaign intends to raise awareness about the Welcome Corps program, highlighting its importance and the positive impact it has on refugees and their communities.

**5. Inspire Commitment to Refugee Sponsorship:**

- Our ultimate goal is to inspire attendees to commit to the cause by pledging their support to welcome and sponsor a refugee through the Welcome Corps. We will provide them with information, resources, and guidance on the steps required to fulfill this commitment.

**6. Leverage Social Media and Local Partnerships:**

- To achieve these objectives and further expand our reach, we will leverage the power of social media, forge partnerships with local organizations, and tap into existing community networks. Regular updates and success stories will be shared to inspire others to get involved and replicate these efforts in their own communities.

The Dine for Refugees campaign is more than just a series of events; it's a collective effort to make a positive impact in the lives of refugees and build a more compassionate and welcoming society. Together, we can achieve these objectives and create lasting change.

# Planning Your Dinner

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## 1. Find a location and choose a date

If your home can accommodate about 5-15 guests – the ideal number for your dinner – we encourage you to host there. If not, reach out to a community center, a place of worship, or another local gathering space that may have space for your dinner.

To choose a date, consider the potential availability of your invitees, taking into account work, travel, and childcare needs. Pro tip: If your guests work in the evening, turn your event into a Weekend brunch.

## 2. Inviting your guests

Depending on how much space you have, 5-15 guests is the ideal size for your dinner. The goal of the event, beyond creating a successful gathering, is to share your sponsorship journey with your guests and, ideally, garner interest or support from new potential sponsors. When creating your invite list, think about including neighbors, friends, and community members who:

- Have expressed interest in helping refugees
- Are involved in other volunteer or civic service activities
- Are members of faith, civic, or community organizations
- Are leaders in the community

**TOOLS NEEDED:** [Sample invitation and thank you emails](#)

## 3. Setting an agenda

The ideal event, beyond being festive and welcoming, feels both casual and structured. Creating an agenda can help you incorporate time for informal mingling, along with some guided activities to facilitate conversation, build connections, and give guests an inside look at the sponsorship journey. Plan for your dinner to last around 2 hours, using this agenda as a Template.

### Guests Arrive + Appetizers (6:00-6:15)

Pro tip: create notecards with prompts from our conversation guide. As each guest arrives, hand them a card with a different prompt, and encourage them to start a conversation with someone they don't know.

## **Welcome + Introductions (6:15-6:30)**

Thank guests for coming and lay out the agenda for the evening. Explain the purpose of the event: to host a dinner gathering, to build community among your guests and, importantly, to share and learn more about private sponsorship – what it's like, why it's rewarding, and that there is such an urgent need for sponsors right now. Ask your guests to introduce themselves: their name, why they decided to attend, and a personal fact. Need inspiration for prompts? Check the conversation guide.

## **Dinner Is Served (6:30-6:45)**

Pro tip, especially for a potluck: go buffet style, and invite your guests to serve themselves. Give folks a chance to eat and to mingle informally. If you and your guests are comfortable, this may be a good time to take some photos. We'd love to see and share your stories on Instagram, so tag @welcomecorps and use #BeAWelcomer.

## **Guided Conversation (6:45-7:30)**

Use our conversation guide to begin a full-table discussion with your guests. Allow the conversation with flow organically, and look for seamless opportunities to elaborate on how sponsorship works and answer any questions from your guests.

## **Dessert + Mingling (7:30-7:45)**

Invite your guests to serve themselves dessert, along with coffee or tea. Consider taking some more photos...just not mid-bite! Allow guests to mingle informally.

## **Thanks + Goodbyes (7:45-8:00)**

Thank your guests, along with everyone who brought dishes and co-hosted with you. Share your contact information with anyone who doesn't have it and inform folks that you'll be following up by email to share resources on how to learn more about sponsoring through the Welcome Corps.

# Defining Roles

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Recruit a team of folks to ensure everyone – including you! – can have a great time. These can be friends, family or anyone who is supportive of your efforts and passionate about helping. Here are some key roles to fill:

## Host(s)

That's you! You're responsible for finding the location, setting a date and time, inviting guests, and facilitating the event.

## Home/Venue Coordinator + Set-Up Crew

Whether you're hosting at your home or somewhere else, these folks should be responsible for preparing the space and gathering any furniture, dining ware, or supplies.

## Potluck Chef(s)

Making your dinner a potluck is a perfect way to get more folks involved; to share dishes from a variety of cultures and regions; and to share the responsibility of feeding an entire party.

## Photographer + Social Media

This person should distribute and have guests sign the release forms included in this guide, if they're comfortable and if you plan to send us any photos directly. They can take photos and video during the event, then post on Instagram, tagging @welcomecorps and using #BeAWelcomer.

## Clean-Up Crew

These generous and tidy folks will volunteer to clear place settings throughout the event and help clean up after the guests have departed.

# Sample Materials

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**TOOLS NEEDED:** **Sample invitation and thank you emails**

## 1. Sample invitation email

**Subject: Join Us for a Meaningful Evening - “Dine for Refugees”**

Dear **[GUEST'S NAME]**,

I hope this message finds you well. I'm excited to share some news about an upcoming dinner that I am hosting and would be honored if you could join me. It's called “Dine for Refugees,” and it's an initiative that's very close to my heart.

### Event Details:

**What:** A meal with great food, community, and conversation

**When:** **[DATE AND TIME]**

**Where:** **[LOCATION]**

**What You Can Bring:** It's a potluck! Please prepare one dish.

The Dine for Refugees campaign is a nationwide effort to bring communities together for a special evening of food, friendship, and meaningful conversation. It's an opportunity to learn more about refugee sponsorship and the Welcome Corps program while enjoying a delicious meal and connecting with your fellow community members.

### The evening will include:

- A warm and welcoming atmosphere
- A potluck-style dinner (feel free to bring a dish if you'd like, but it's not required!)
- Engaging discussions about refugee experiences, the importance of sponsorship, and how we can make a difference
- The chance to commit to supporting a refugee or volunteering with Welcome Corps (if you feel inspired)

This event is open to everyone who wants to make a positive impact in our community and the lives of newcomers. Whether you're already involved in volunteer work or simply curious about how you can help, this dinner is a great opportunity to connect and learn together.

Please let me know if you can make it, as I'd love to have you as my guest. You can RSVP by replying to this email or giving me a call at **[YOUR PHONE NUMBER]**.



If you have any questions or need more information about the event, feel free to reach out. I'm here to help.

Let's come together to create a more compassionate and welcoming world. I hope to see you there!

Warm regards,

**[YOUR NAME]**

**[YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS]**

**[YOUR PHONE NUMBER]**

## 2. Sample thank you email

**Subject: Thank You for Joining Us at “Dine for Refugees” - Resources Inside!**

Dear **[GUEST'S NAME]**,

I hope this email finds you well, and I want to take a moment to express my heartfelt gratitude for being part of our Dine for Refugees event. Your presence and engagement made the evening truly special.

We believe that small actions can lead to big changes, and your participation in this campaign is a testament to that belief. Together, we shared meaningful conversations, fostered empathy, and took steps towards creating a more welcoming world for refugees.

As promised, here are some valuable resources related to the Dine for Refugees campaign and the Welcome Corps:

1. Sign-up to stay up to date on the [Welcome Corps](#)
2. Learn more about [Forming a Private Sponsor Group - Welcome Corps](#)
3. We encourage you to share your own stories. Please read [Stories of Welcome - Welcome Corps](#)

**[BRIEF DESCRIPTION OR NOTE]**

**[INCLUDE ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AS NEEDED.]**

Photo and Video Release Form:

As part of our campaign, we captured some moments from our dinner event. If you are comfortable and would like to share any photos or videos from the evening, please review and complete our release form. You can find the form here: [\[Link to Release Form\]](#).

Your contributions and stories are incredibly valuable, and sharing them can inspire others to join our cause.

Once again, thank you for your support, commitment, and warm participation in the Dine for Refugees campaign.

If you have any questions or would like to get more involved, please don't hesitate to reach out. We'd love to hear from you.

Warm regards,

**[YOUR NAME]**

**[YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS]**

**[YOUR PHONE NUMBER]**

# Conversation Guide

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With good food piled high on plates and great company around the table, the only missing ingredient is conversation! As a host, you can help lead a discussion that provides an opportunity for your guests to not only build community and share stories, but also to learn more about the power of sponsorship and opportunities to get involved.

Your goal is to set the scene for a dialogue about how communities like yours can truly make a difference for newcomers seeking refuge – and that everyone has a role to play. We know from our work with sponsors across the country that sponsorship is most successful when the responsibility is shared amongst a group.

Along the way, try to get everyone involved and contribute to the conversation. And don't be afraid to go deep! All conversation, as long as it is respectful and sincere, provides an opportunity for connection – and everyone is welcome to share whatever they feel comfortable with to the group.

Need some help to start things off? Below is a sample guide for the conversation – with some prompts that can get the entire table talking.

## Whole-Table Discussion Prompts

As dinner unfolds, the conversation can flow freely! Many of these prompts will naturally invite further discussion, so here are a few to help along the way.

- *If guests have brought food as part of the potluck, ask them to share a little bit about what they brought and the significance of the dish to their family, culture, or community.*
- *When you're in a new space, what makes you feel most welcome?*
- *What is your favorite meal that your family makes together?*
- *What is one fun thing that you are looking forward to in the new year?*
- *What is something new that you learned this year?*
- *What are some of the places around town that you enjoy visiting most?*

## What's Next?

As the meal winds down and everyone has gotten to know one another, you can guide your guests on how they can get involved in the Welcome Corps – and how they can potentially become a sponsor.

## Form, Join, or Support a New Sponsor Group:

Experience with sponsorship has shown that sponsorship is most successful when the responsibility is shared. Interested individuals could consider pulling together a group of at least five people in a Private Sponsor Group. See a sample sponsor group start up toolkit [at this link](#).

# List of Resources

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Explore stories from sponsors who are welcoming newcomers across the nation!

For guests who may be curious about learning more about what it means to be a sponsor or how it feels to get involved, these videos offer a great starting point.

## The Sponsor Journey

[Hartsville, SC](#) | The Lakeview Baptist Church community in Hartsville, SC are opening up their hearts and homes to Ukrainian newcomers.

With a population of just 8,000 residents, this small but generous town is welcoming four Ukrainian families seeking safety in the United States.

[Jacksonville, FL](#) | Elizabeth and Jerry Langland connected with a Ukrainian family seeking a sponsor through Welcome.US, they knew it was the right match.

“Here were two women and two children whose husbands remained in Ukraine fighting for the territorial army. They struck me as the perfect people to try to help,” says Elizabeth.

As sponsors, Elizabeth and Jerry’s main goal is to give Inna, Liudmyla, Max, and Margo a sense of safety, security, and optimism about their futures. And their community wanted to help too. “Everybody wanted us to succeed,” says Elizabeth.

## Other resources on the Welcome Corps:

[Secretary Blinken Announces Launch of the Welcome Corps](#)

[Fact Sheet - Launch of Welcome Corps- Private Sponsorship of Refugees - United States Department of State](#)

[Application Support Session - Welcome Corps](#)

[Sponsorship is the ultimate act of welcome, and anyone can do it—including you. - Welcome Corps](#)

[Forming a Private Sponsor Group - Welcome Corps](#)

[Stories of Welcome - Welcome Corps](#)

# Report back

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## Dine for Refugees Report Back Form

We sincerely appreciate your support in welcoming refugee newcomers through your participation in the Dine for Refugees campaign. Please use this form and send to [daniela@welcome.us](mailto:daniela@welcome.us) to let us know how your dinner went. You can also fill out this same form online using [this link](#).

### Host Information:

- Name: **[YOUR NAME]**
- Email Address: **[YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS]**
- Phone Number: **[YOUR PHONE NUMBER]**
- City: **[YOUR CITY]**
- State: **[YOUR STATE]**

### Dinner Event Details:

- Date of Your Dinner: **[DATE]**
- Number of Guests: **[NUMBER OF GUESTS]**
- Name of Leader (if different from host): **[LEADER'S NAME]**

Share Your Dinner Story: We would love to hear about your “Dine for Refugees” dinner experience. Please share your thoughts, highlights, and any meaningful moments from the event. Additionally, if any commitments to support refugees were made during the dinner, please let us know.

Your Dinner Story: **[TEXT BOX FOR YOUR STORY]**

### Commitments Made:

- I/We committed to sponsor a refugee through the Welcome Corps.

- I/We committed to promote the Welcome Corps.
- I/We committed to attending future Welcome Corps events.
- Other Commitments: **[SPECIFY]**

Attach Photos (if available): Please attach any photos from your dinner event that you would like to share with us. These photos may be used to inspire and promote the campaign.

Release Information: Please fill out this release form [\[Link to release form\]](#) and submit it with your photos.

Signature:

- Host's Signature: **[YOUR NAME]**
- Date: **[DATE]**

Thank you for sharing your Dine for Refugees experience with us. Your contribution helps us track the impact of this campaign and inspire others to get involved.

# Practicing Biblical Hospitality

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We hope that this toolkit equips your community to work together to create mutual flourishing alongside our refugee neighbors. If you would like to include faith-motivated reasons for choosing to welcome into your “Dine for Refugees” community dinner, here are some ideas!

## Ground your call-to-action in the welcoming love of Jesus

**Prepare your heart.** Prior to your community dinner, spend some time considering how creating a sponsorship group is [a way to partner in the welcoming work of Christ](#), and how it offers an opportunity for members of the body of Christ to [use their unique giftings to make a difference](#). Consider incorporating some of this language as you craft invites and share your vision with your guests.

**Invite others into thoughtful discussion.** As you prepare prompts for whole-table discussions, include prompts that encourage consideration of the biblical call to “welcome the stranger.” Some examples:

- How should the radical welcome of Jesus—extended to enemies, strangers, and outcasts—inform our discussion of welcome today?
- What are some of the spiritual gifts that you see in yourself? What gifts do you recognize in others at the table?
- Where have you seen themes of migration or displacement [in Scripture](#)? What do you think that means for us in modern times?

## Include a time of prayer for refugees and for your group as you thoughtfully consider ways to get involved

Acknowledge the heaviness of the refugee crisis, and allow attendees to lift up questions and concerns in prayer as they process the information that you’ve shared in the meeting. As you plan your event schedule based on the guide on page 6, consider trimming the time on Dessert + Mingling and/or Thanks + Goodbyes to have 5 - 10 minutes of corporate prayer. Remember to consider the need for a designated person to lead this time as you plan your key roles for the event.

## Get your church involved

The private sponsorship group model is a great on-ramp for churches to get involved in refugee resettlement. Check with your pastor or small group leaders to share this opportunity and gauge interest. Perhaps what starts as one community dinner can grow into multiple community dinners where each small group walks through this discussion together and prayerfully considers their next steps!



# Questions, Suggestions, or Need Support?

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If you have any questions, suggestions, or require support for your Dine for Refugees event, we are here to help. Please don't hesitate to reach out to:

Basma Alawee: [balawee@communitysponsorship.org](mailto:balawee@communitysponsorship.org)

Daniela Westphal Huber: [daniela@welcome.us](mailto:daniela@welcome.us)

We want to ensure that your event is a success, and we're ready to assist you in any way we can. Your efforts and support are greatly appreciated.

**Thank you for being a part of the Dine for Refugees campaign!**