



HIAS CHICAGO

Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society of *Chicago*

“When our relatives arrived in America, someone was there to help. That someone was, and still is, HIAS Chicago.”

HIAS CHICAGO
CONGREGATIONAL CO-SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM



ABOUT HIAS CHICAGO

HIAS Chicago has supported immigrants and refugees for over a century.

Founded to assist Eastern European Jewish immigrants in the early 1900s, the agency has expanded over time to address the needs of various immigrant groups from around the world, regardless of religion, race or national origin. HIAS Chicago was particularly instrumental in the resettlement of Jews from the Former Soviet Union (FSU) in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, and in the last 40 years, has assisted over 40,000 immigrants and refugees from the FSU, Eastern Europe, the Middle East, Southeast Asia and Latin America.

Today, as a program of Jewish Child & Family Services and affiliate of National HIAS, HIAS Chicago is proud to provide an array of comprehensive refugee resettlement, immigration and citizenship services to hundreds of individuals, helping them transition from strangers in a new land to contributors in their communities to proud American citizens. Our work is fueled by the Jewish values of *Tikkun Olam* (the repair of the world) and *Hachnasat Orchim* (welcoming others).

WHAT IS CONGREGATIONAL CO-SPONSORSHIP?

Each refugee resettled in the United States is sponsored by a resettlement agency – that’s us! Co-sponsorship is an opportunity for HIAS Chicago and Chicagoland congregations to work in partnership and ensure that each individual and family’s needs are met, that their integration into their new community goes smoothly, and that they are on their way to self-sufficiency.

When refugees first arrive in Chicago, often with nothing more than a single suitcase, they are overwhelmed by a new language, new culture and new environment. Together, we can help them understand and adjust to all that is around them and provide critical financial and social-emotional support.

In essence, congregational co-sponsorship changes the lives of the refugees – and hugely impacts yours in the process.

WHAT IS EXPECTED OF CONGREGATIONAL CO-SPONSORS?

We ask that each congregational co-sponsor commit to supporting their assigned family for 3-6 months post-arrival. This may include:

- Raising funds to help pay for the family’s first three months of rent and living expenses
- Welcoming the family at the airport upon arrival
- Helping to set up a family’s apartment with furniture and other household items before arrival
- Preparing a family’s first meal and stocking their pantry with foods that are familiar to them
- Accompanying the family to medical, benefit or other appointments
- Tutoring adults in English or assisting school-aged children with their schoolwork
- Helping adults prepare for employment
- Mentoring the family by accompanying them to the grocery store, helping them navigate public transport networks, and orienting them to the wonderful city of Chicago

WHAT CAN CONGREGATIONAL CO-SPONSORS EXPECT FROM HIAS CHICAGO?

HIAS Chicago is here to support your co-sponsorship efforts in a number of ways:

- Provide consultation and support every step of the way as you create your 'Welcoming Team' and design and assign tasks
- Provide training on the resettlement process, as well as on particular culture and circumstances of the refugee family assigned to your congregation.
- Be responsible for finding housing for the refugee family, connecting the family to English language programs and employment services, and for enrolling children in school.
- Provide you with sales tax-exempt letters and donation templates if you need to purchase items for your assigned refugee family.

Additionally we can:

- Offer programming to help foster your congregation's understanding of the global refugee crisis and the role that Jewish people and agencies can play in welcoming today's refugees.
- Connect you to other congregations who are also interested in or already committed to co-sponsorship of a refugee family.

WHY CO-SPONSOR A FAMILY WITH HIAS CHICAGO?

HIAS Chicago is the only Jewish refugee resettlement program in the Chicagoland area. We want to create a movement of Jewish welcoming inspired by Jewish values as well as the history and experiences of Jewish refugees who came before us. Mark Hetfield, President and CEO of National HIAS says: *We once helped refugees because they were Jewish. Now, we help refugees because we are Jewish.*

Join us!

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact Jessica Schaffer, HIAS Chicago Director, at JessicaSchaffer@jcfs.org or 312.673.3232.