



Overview: Welcoming Committee Tasks

When a family first arrives from overseas, they are not immediately capable of doing things by themselves. It is often easier to do things for them rather than with them. That is why the tasks of the welcoming committee as outlined by LSS are specific and time-sensitive. *Welcoming* a family can quickly turn into *adopting* a family if it is not understood from the very beginning that the briefer a family's inevitable state of dependence the better; better for the family and better for the volunteers on the welcoming committee. The individuals who arrive to Madison as refugees have already sustained and overcome a great deal of hardship; the challenges of resettling in a new country are very manageable if they are given the opportunity to face them. Rescuing someone from every potential failure will often eliminate these essential learning opportunities. As such, the following tasks of the Welcoming Committee are meant to be minimal and adhere to resettlement's ultimate goal of self-sufficiency.

20 Core Tasks of the Welcoming Committee

- 1) Before the arrival, furnish an apartment with items listed on a basic supply list
- 2) Before the arrival, buy groceries to last approximately one week
- 3) Greet the family at the airport and help transport them to the apartment
- 4) Help the family call home once upon arrival and show them where they can buy additional phone cards if they choose
- 5) Demonstrate how to use appliances such as the stove, oven, washing machine, etc.
- 6) Arrange for people to stop by several times during the first week to welcome the family
- 7) Attend the initial orientation with the family and case manager
- 8) Take the family to apply for social security cards
- 9) Take the family to an appointment (arranged by the case manager) at the W-2 office to enroll in W-2/Foodshare/Medical Assistance
- 10) Ride the bus with the family to the W2 office at least once
- 11) Ride the bus with the family to the grocery store at least once and show them how to use their Foodshare card
- 12) Take families with infants and toddlers to apply for WIC benefits
- 13) Enroll children in school
- 14) Take the family to health screening appointments (arranged by the case manager)
- 15) Take the family to open a checking account
- 16) Enroll adult family members in English classes
- 17) Ride the bus with the family to English class at least once
- 18) Orient the family to appropriate religious institutions as desired
- 19) Teach the family how to pay rent and pay bills each month throughout the first 3 or 4 months
- 20) Whenever it may be possible, refer the family to employment opportunities