

Practical Partnerships: A How-To Guide for Advancing Housing Stability for ORR-Eligible Populations

For housing providers, property managers, newcomers, and the resettlement providers who support them.

What is Housing Stability, Really?

For a tenant, housing stability starts with one simple thing: being able to pay rent and utility bills, month after month. And that depends on something bigger: secure, well-paying work. But work itself depends on a web of everyday supports, including good health, reliable childcare, transportation, language understanding, and enough rest and social connection to sustain it all. Supporting a tenant's stability means looking to create practical partnerships that address everyday challenges.

A Practical Partnerships Model

Four simple partnership types can close the gaps that put a tenant's stability at risk, and they don't require much — just the right local connections and a commitment to practical partnerships.

GET THERE

Transportation Partnerships

- Connect tenants with local transit programs, ride-share vouchers, or volunteer driver networks.
- Consider current bus routes. Are there any simple changes that could help tenants? What would it take to make those changes?

CARE FOR FAMILY

Childcare Partnerships

- Connect tenants with subsidized or sliding-scale childcare providers nearby.
- Partner with local family resource centers or volunteer networks for occasional respite or drop-in care.
- Share information on childcare vouchers or assistance programs tenants may qualify for.

STAY WELL

Health & Wellness Partnerships

- Partner with local health and wellness organizations or community volunteers to offer free weekly yoga, tai chi, or chair yoga.
- Consider your space. What could be repurposed to host health and wellness programming?
- Partner with local health clinics for coordinated visits or onsite information sharing.

CONNECT & GROW

Social & Language Partnerships

- Facilitate social hours to build community and reduce isolation.
- Arrange transportation to places like a local city hall or library for language/adult education classes.
- Partner with local organizations and community groups to build language skills and social ties.

How to Build a Practical Partnership in 4 Steps

1 Identify the Gap

Ask or observe which everyday challenge or gap (transport, health, language, isolation) shows up most often for your tenants.

2 Reach Out Locally

Contact one nearby organization already doing this work: a transit authority, a wellness studio, a city hall or library adult-ed program, or a local resettlement agency.

3 Formalize the Partnership

A short agreement or standing referral process between your organization and the partner is enough. This doesn't need to be a complicated agreement.

4 Sustain the Connection

Check in regularly, share feedback, and keep the relationship active so it keeps delivering value for both organizations. Dedication time to this step is key.

Housing, resettlement, and community providers do not have to solve stability alone. By partnering with each other and with local organizations, everyone can help tenants get to work, stay well, and connect with the support they need — one connection at a time.

Approaches in Action

Two models already helping newcomers build stability. One led by community members; one led by an institutional partner. Both provide examples to learn from and adapt.

APPROACH

Partner with an organization offering community sponsorship and/or volunteer-supported models.

Community sponsorship pairs a newcomer or ORR-eligible person with a small group of local volunteers who provide hands-on support across many parts of daily life — all of which contribute to stable housing. Watch a short video about how community sponsorship has historically worked [here](#).

Housing organizations and companies can partner with organizations that recruit and organize these sponsor groups, or other trained volunteers through various volunteer models, giving tenants holistic support across language, transport, childcare, and well-being.

What sponsor groups and other trained volunteers typically help with:

- Learning the local transportation system and providing rides to jobs, appointments, or errands outside public transit reach.
- Practicing language skills in everyday, informal settings.
- Making introductions to local community groups, activities, and social opportunities.
- Additional support can expand over time, from help navigating school enrollment to job-search coaching.

Why it matters for housing stability: Sponsor groups, and other trained volunteers, often make the small connections that have a big impact for newcomers and other ORR-eligible populations, helping meet critical gaps. They also provide social connection and valuable opportunities for English-language practice.

APPROACH

Partner with local organizations to offer “co-located” services.

A “co-located service” gives newcomers and other ORR-eligible populations a single location where housing and support services are co-located, making key connections for stability from the start.

Example: ECDC and School for International Training (Brattleboro, VT)

The Ethiopian Community Development Council (ECDC) partnered with World Learning and its School for International Training (SIT) to house newly arrived Afghan evacuees on SIT’s Brattleboro campus, which had vacant dormitory space. Newcomers stayed on campus for up to 90 days while ECDC case managers worked to secure permanent housing in the community. Watch an overview [here](#).

While on campus, residents had access to:

- On-site case managers and ECDC staff coordinating basic needs, employment placement, school enrollment, and legal/immigration support.
- Community volunteers providing everyday support alongside staff.
- English-language and cultural orientation classes taught by SIT faculty, staff, and alumni.
- Organized activities such as sewing groups, giving residents structure and community while they waited for permanent housing.

Why it matters for housing stability: Co-locating services means newcomers do not have to navigate a new country, a new language, and a scattered service system all at once. Instead, every core support needed for stability is in one place from day one, making it easy for clients to connect with the services and supports most helpful, while providing social connection and language learning practice.



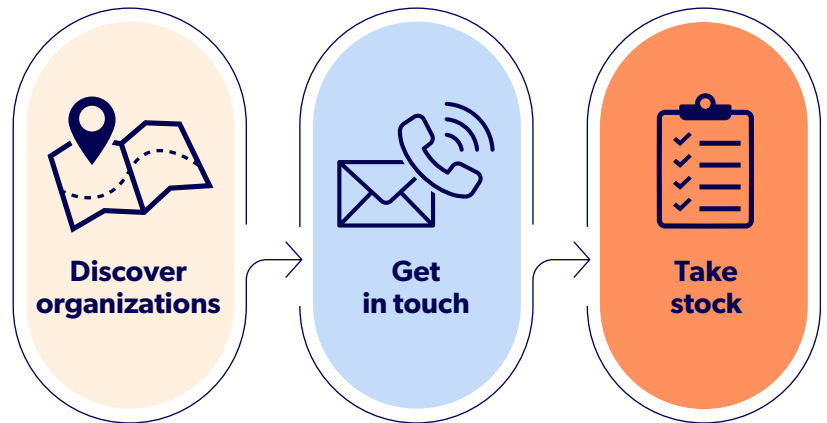
Ready to Get Started?

A **simple first step** is to think about the organizations you already know in your city or neighborhood. Ask your colleagues what they know, too. From there, check out this [State-by-State Resource Map](#) to see what resources others have identified in your community, and if something is missing, please add it!

As a **second step**, reach out to one of the organizations you've identified. Ask to meet, learn more about what they are doing, and explore ways you might work together. We bet there are plenty of opportunities!

Third, conduct a simple internal audit of your space and resources. What space do you have that could be used for a morning "coffee and conversation" meet-up? Do you have a budget that could cover coffee? How often could you host it, weekly or biweekly? Do you have an exercise space that is underused at certain times? Could you create an activity there as a way for tenants to connect and unwind?

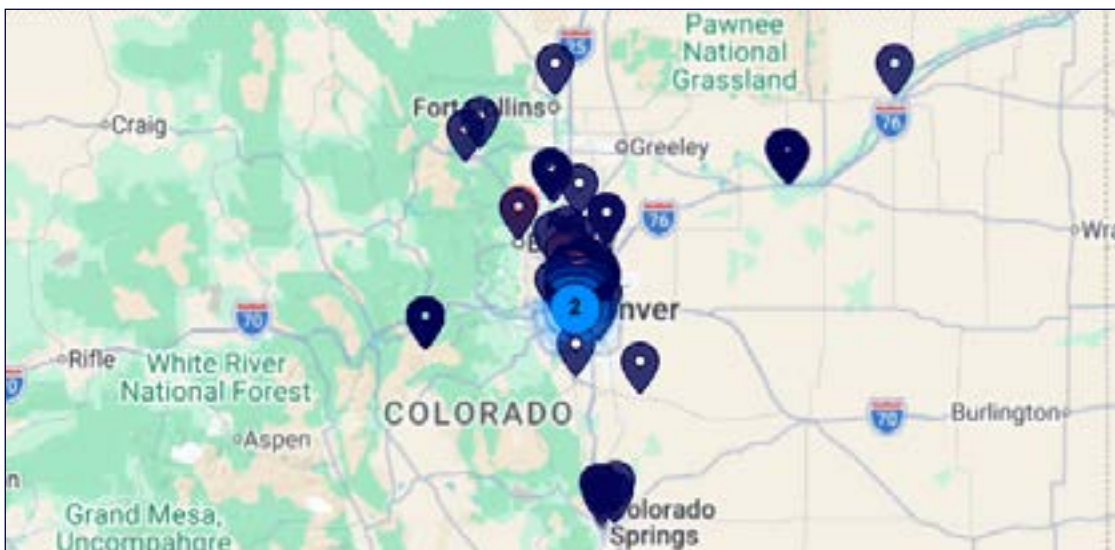
You get the picture! We're hopeful your team will appreciate your creative thinking and initiative.



State-by-State Resource Map

An interactive resource that allows you to click on your state, enter your zip code, and be guided to information about cash and food assistance, health care, programs for English language learners, job search assistance, and other valuable resources specific to your location.

If you see something is missing, then you can suggest it to be added!



State Resource Map of Colorado

Source: Refugee Welcome Collective

Are you a newcomer with a practical partnership idea?

You know your own daily challenges better than anyone. Your ideas about what would help, whether it's a ride to the grocery store, a weekly conversation group, or a quiet space to connect and have tea with others, are exactly the kind of input that makes these partnerships work.

You might already have an idea like:

- *"I'd like a way to get to my English class without depending on someone else."*
- *"It would help to have other parents nearby I could trade childcare with."*
- *"I'd like to know about a doctor who speaks my language."*
- *"I'd love a regular time to sit and talk with other people in my building."*

Who to bring it to:

- Your resettlement case manager.
- Your property manager or leasing office.
- A volunteer that is working with you.

You don't need to have the idea fully formed. You could start with something like:

"I have an idea that might help other people here too, can I share it?"

This is a great way to start the conversation.

You should also look at the State-by-State Resource map. And if you know of a helpful organization that isn't listed on the, you can add it.

Partnerships often start with one person raising a small, specific need. **That could be you!**

Additional Recommended Resources

[Refugee Housing Solutions](#) (RHS) and [Refugee Welcome Collective](#) (RWC), both projects of Church World Service, offer comprehensive resource libraries with extensive databases of resources covering a wide range of related topics. You can find the RHS Resource Library [here](#) and the RWC Resource Library [here](#). Below are a few examples we recommend as you get started thinking about practical partnerships.

- [**Cultural Considerations**](#)
A helpful reference for when you're considering potential activities or approaches to pursue with your partners.
- [**Breaking Bread, Building Bridges: The Power of Food in Fostering Cultural Integration**](#)
Considering an activity around food? This may offer some inspiration.
- [**Housing: The Continuum of Care**](#)
In this session, participants learn what the Continuum of Care is and how the Coordinated Entry System works to ensure that the community's highest-need and most vulnerable households are prioritized for housing and services.
- [**Yoga with Refugee and Immigrant Women**](#)
Learn how one organization is hosting a collaborative series to foster well-being with group yoga classes for refugee and immigrant women.
- [**Upwardly Global: Assisting Refugee and Immigrant Professionals Pursuing Careers in the U.S.**](#)
Upwardly Global supports refugees and immigrants in restarting their careers in their new community. Learn how you or a new neighbor can connect to Upwardly Global programs and resources.
- [**Community Sponsors Assisting with Newcomer Housing**](#)
This document outlines successful strategies for community sponsors assisting with identifying and securing housing for newcomers.
- [**How to Collaborate with Local Organizations for Housing Assistance**](#)
An article from Iconic Property Management.

Practical Partnerships Worksheet

IDENTIFYING & BUILDING PRACTICAL PARTNERSHIPS

Use this worksheet to reflect on the challenges ORR-eligible and other newcomer populations face, take stock of your current partnerships, and map out concrete next steps to build new ones. Work through each section in order and your answers will build on each other.

Section 1. Understanding the Challenges

1. What challenges have you noticed individuals eligible for ORR services and/or other newcomer populations encountering related to transportation, health, language, or isolation?
2. How have you seen these challenges managed as they come up?

Section 2. Assessing Current Partnerships

3. What local partnerships does your organization/group/company currently work with? Are any of them related to transportation, health, language, or isolation?
4. What are 3 ideas you'd be excited to try to build new partnerships in these areas?

Section 3. Getting Buy-in

5. Within your organization/group/company, who will you need to talk with to get the go-ahead to pursue one or more of your ideas?
6. Based on your experience, what questions is that person likely to ask? What information will they want to see?

7. Where can you find those answers or that information?

Section 3. Using the State-by-State Resource Map

8. Looking at the State-by-State Resource Map, which organizations are you thinking of reaching out to?

9. Are there organizations missing from the map? Have you added them?

Section 4. Setting Your Goals

10. Based on your ideas about these partnerships, what do you hope to have achieved in each timeframe below?

3 MONTHS	6 MONTHS	1 YEAR

FEEDBACK

Refugee Housing Solutions wants to hear from you about the quality, relevancy, and helpfulness of our resources and tools.

Help us improve our offerings by completing this [short form](#).

You may also scan the QR code to access the form on another device.



www.refugeehousing.org

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