EXODUS REFUGEE

The Life Ahead
How to Welcome New Immigrants:
Cultural Sensitivity Issues and Resources Available to the Housing Industry

James Budden, Housing Manager
Welcoming Refugees to the U.S.

- Refugees are welcomed by the Federal Government
- Intensive interviews by UN Refugee Agency overseas
- Thorough background checks by the State Department
- Complete medical screenings
- Given legal residency and right to work in the U.S.
- Refugees do not get Social Security cards right away → Exodus will assist in obtaining it within first few weeks
Exodus Orientation
Living in an apartment and U.S. amenities may be new concepts

Safety
- Smoke Alarms
- Doors & Locks
- Fire Extinguishers
- 911
- Repairs

Living Area
- Thermostat
- Windows/Sliding Doors

Bathrooms
- Sink
- Dental Care
- Toilet
- Bathtub/Shower
- Soap
- Hygiene
- Cleaning Supplies

Kitchen
- Refrigerator & Freezer
- Cabinets
- Stove/Oven
- Vent & Stove Light
- Sink
- Garbage Disposal
- Dishwasher
- Broom
- Trash

Bedrooms
- Lamps
- Closets/Dressers

Laundry
- Separating Clothes
- Detergent
Cultural Differences
Things to be aware of when renting to refugees

• Many cultures which our clients come from see it as a sign of respect to avoid eye contact, opposite of U.S.

• May leave shoes at door, items outside, or hang laundry to dry

• Not used to children not being able to run around on their own → make sure pool is locked up so kids cannot drown

• May need help writing checks

• No credit upon arrival, low if not been in U.S. long → take other forms such as travel loans, utility payments
Resources

Welcome to Your New Home!
English, Arabic, Amharic, Burmese, French, Hmong, Karen, Kishwahili, Nepali, Russian, Somali, Spanish

Please Repair
Amharic, Arabic, Burmese, French, Maay Maay, Russian, Somali, Spanish, Thai, Vietnamese

Find these and more at:
www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr/resource/publications
Cultural Sensitivity

• Speak more slowly, not louder

• Use nonverbal communication, hand gestures, picture dictionary

• Language is not the only barrier

• Loss of home and familiar, friends and family, status, family dynamics

• Using children as interpreters can be a cultural issue

• Learn about specific cultures
Learn more:

- Cultural Orientation Resource Center
  - Cultural Backgrounders
  www.culturalorientation.net/learning/backgrounders

- Contact local organizations
  Immigrant Welcome Center
  Burmese American Community Institute
  Burmese Community Center for Education
  African Community International Center
  Muslim Alliance of Indiana
  Indiana Asian Help Services
Benefits

• Exodus pays down payment and first few months of rent for our clients

• Exodus assists our clients with finding employment; most are self-sufficient within 180 days and are hard workers

• Refugees are grateful to have a safe place to live and are reliable tenants, paying rent on time

• Properties that Exodus works with reach 99% occupancy

• Renting to refugees reduces crime rates

• Refugees bring cultural diversity and strong family values to the community
Thank you!

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