



# Let's Talk About Sponsoring Asylum-Seeking Families and Individuals!

*An online discussion for anyone considering embarking on this sacred journey*



**Southwestern Texas Synod**  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
God's work. Our hands.

# Housekeeping

**Mute:** Please ensure your microphone is on “mute” when not speaking to avoid sound distortion.

**Mutual Respect:** Avoid distractions, be patient, and provide support and encouragement to one another. We are all in different stages of our support journey. There is no such thing as a silly question.

**Questions:** Please keep a list of questions and notes throughout the meeting. There will be a ‘Q&A’ session toward the end of today’s gathering.

**Recording:** A recording of this meeting will be available upon request

# Meeting Agenda

Welcome

Legal Sponsorship Requirements

Community Sponsorship Overview

Roles

Budgeting for Sponsorship

Questions / Discussion

Next Steps

# Welcome

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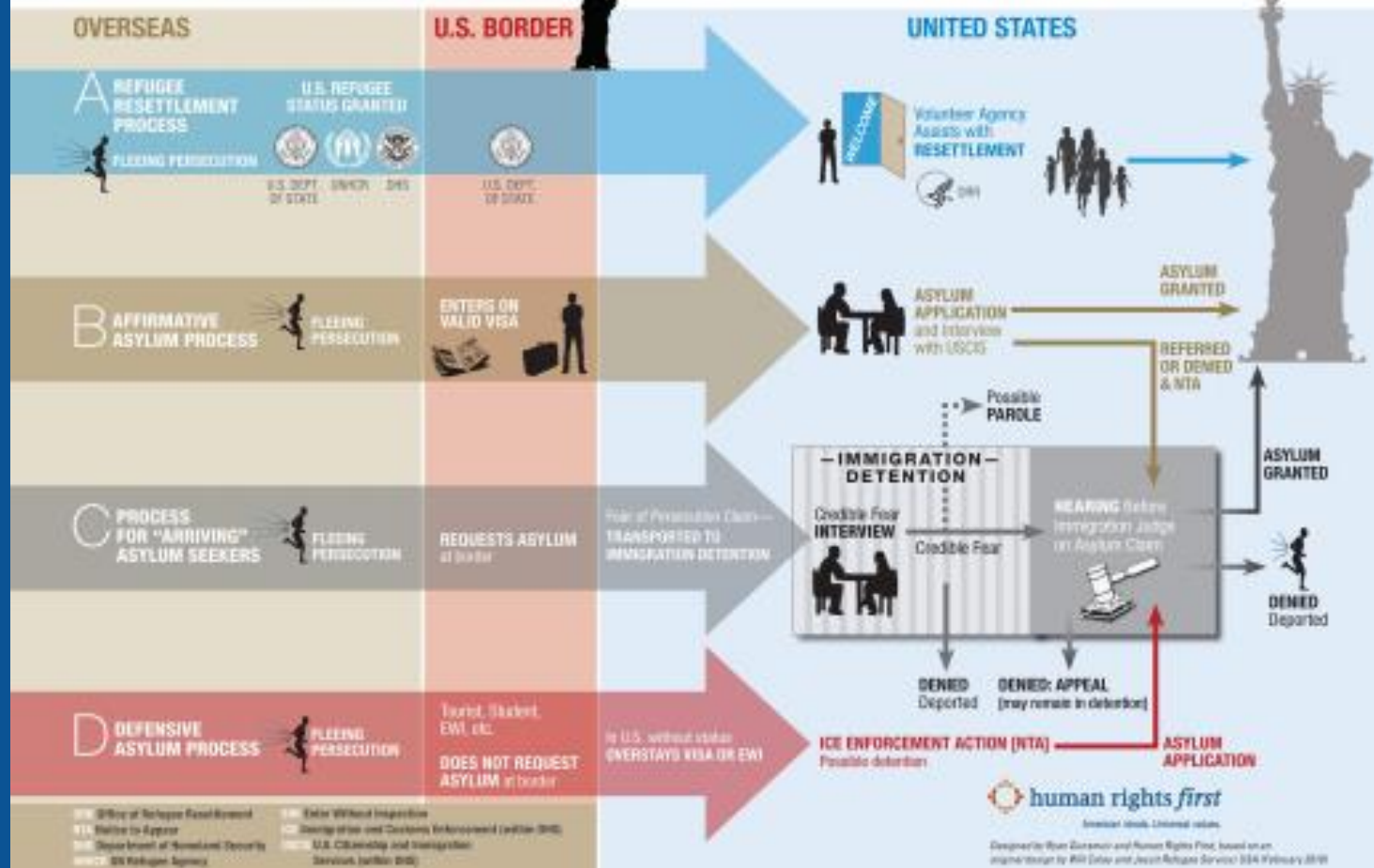
Border Response

Southwestern Texas  
Synod of the ELCA



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# How Refugees Get to the U.S.



# Asylum versus Refugee Status

Asylum Seekers must demonstrate credible fear of persecution based on:

- **race**
- **religion**
- **nationality**
- **political opinion**
- **membership in a particular social group.**

Asylum applicants must already be in the United States to apply for asylum.

People come from all over the world to cross the Mexican American border.

Refugee status is granted through the US embassy in a person's country of origin.

# Community Sponsorship

We are stronger together. A community can come together to support an asylum-seeker. It takes committed individuals to join forces, brainstorm, and fundraise towards the end goal.

# Expectations of Sponsors

Sponsors should:

- ❖ Offer a safe, stable home
- ❖ Provide all meals and necessities for daily living (clothes, toiletries, etc...)
- ❖ Transport and accompany on ICE check-ins and Immigration court
- ❖ Assist with navigating legal and social support bureaucracy



# Expectations of Sponsors

Sponsors should:

- ✓ Do their best to secure legal support for their asylum case.
- ✓ Assist in obtaining mental and physical health care services
- ✓ Help access desired community resources: libraries, churches, community centers, school, etc.
- ✓ Coordinate transportation (introduce to the local public transit if available)

# Sponsorship Requirements

- ✓ Signed sponsor must provide ICE/CBP with: a letter declaring willingness to support the asylum seeker for at least six months
- ✓ Proof of Citizenship (copy of passport or birth certificate)
- ✓ Proof of Permanent Legal Residency (copy of Green Card)
- ✓ Copy of Driver's License (to prove you can take person to the scheduled ICE appointments)

# Sponsorship Requirements

- ✓ Copy of a Utility Bill (to prove you are the owner or renter of the residence address you give)
- ✓ Proof of adequate income / financial resources (minimum threshold is
- ✓ \$25,000 for a single person)

# Most Important Requirement!

- ✓ Create an engaged community of support!
- ✓ It truly does take a village to welcome someone and provide adequate support



# Community Sponsorship Roles

Regardless of the model, it is important to have a strong circle of support. It may be family, friends, faith based group, social justice organization or neighborhood. Having support with organized roles for both the sponsor and the guest(s) ensures a more sustainable relationship and better experience for all.

# Recommended Community Roles

## **Lead Facilitator / Main Point of Contact:**

Recruits and coordinates volunteers who assist guests to navigate new life (public transportation, library access, ESL classes, healthcare...)  
Keeps everyone informed of the team's progress!

## **Team Organizer**

Coordinates information and needs between the teams

## **Fundraiser**

Recruiter and point of contact for donors

# Recommended Teams

There is sanity in numbers! It takes committed individuals to join forces, brainstorm and achieve the end goal: healthy sponsoring relationship

- a) **Legal / Paper Sponsor:** name appears on documents and accepts communications from ICE and other officials
- b) **Housing Team:** provides a stable, safe place for the asylum-seeker to live
- c) **Financial Team:** manages funds dedicated to material needs of guest(s)
- d) **Emotional Support Team:** one or more people with background in pastoral care or counseling that can form a trusting relationship and identify needs for non-material support

# Example

This type of sponsorship is very successful and takes many different shapes.

Example:

One group leased a larger home with their faith community because they had excellent fundraising abilities.

Another group joined with them to support the sponsor and asylum seeker on a daily basis with trips to the grocery store, doctor's appointments and other transportation as needed.

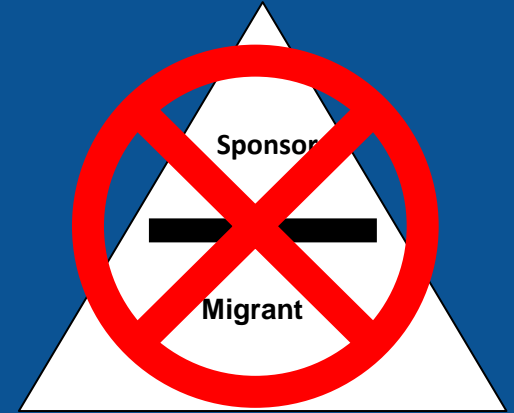


# Additional Considerations

- Asylum-seekers are resilient and resourceful. We may help by providing basic guidance and support but must accept and acknowledging their independence and self-determination.
- Knowing the language is not the same as knowing the person...watch for false assumptions
- Race and ethnic categories are a US construct. In Latin America, people are just Honduran, Salvadoran, Guatemalan or whichever country or indigenous population they belong to regardless of hair or skin color.

# Agency and Finances

- Sponsors provide the necessary support: shelter, food, and other needs without judgments or conditions
- "Power" of Sponsor
  - Not a parent/child relationship
  - Neither teacher nor principal
  - Partners in a journey of respect and dignity
- What the guest(s) needs most is space to heal from their trauma in their own way, and that way must be respected.



# Agency and Finances

## Making Space for Healing

- Some guests may want to buy everything they because of the scarcity they've experienced and the freedom to choose something for themselves
- Sponsors must not expect the asylees to be overcome with joy and gratitude at our service and generosity... unconditional support
- The impacts of poverty and travel will appear differently for different people
- Some people may hold tightly onto everything seeing sentimental value in what others may see as worthless

# Compassionate Budgeting



# Compassionate Budgeting

- This is where good intentions meet humane choices.
- Empowerment is central to the task.
- Preparing for the ups and downs with financial scenarios creates flexibility.
- A budget is simply a story told in numbers.
- Even if you are number fearful, you can make a budget.

# The Most Basic Budget

Funds Available

- Expenses

Keeping these in balance is the art of budgeting...and how we do that reveals much about who we are and how we view relationships.

# Actual Budget - Funding

	Year One Budget			
<b>Funds Available</b>				
Fundraising	Monthly	Annual		Year One
Monthly Donors (10@ \$60)	\$ 600.00	\$ 7,200.00		
One Time		\$ 10,000.00		
Events or Activities		\$ 4,000.00		
<b>Total Fundraising</b>		<b>\$ 21,200.00</b>		
Grants				
ACME Foundation		\$ 10,000.00		
<b>Total Grants</b>		<b>\$ 10,000.00</b>		
<b>Funds Total</b>		<b>\$ 31,200.00</b>		<b>\$ 31,200.00</b>

# Tips for Raising Funds

- Be specific about how the funds will be used using a budget.
- Avoid the toxic charity pitfall of condescension and disrespect. Our siblings seeking refuge are a gift to our communities not a burden.
- Use language of opportunity, not obligation:

“ We would like to invite you to be a part of this amazing work welcoming new residents to our community.”

Instead of...

“These poor people really need your help. They have nothing and will not make it without your contribution.”



# Tips for Raising Funds

- Thank the donor as they prefer (written, emailed, phone call...).  
Ask if you don't know!
- Engage the donors with updates about the project not the people.  
Any communication about the guests must preserve their privacy and agency and only done with their approval.
- Resist the temptation to reward donors with a relationship or information about guests. Sponsorship is about radical hospitality, justice and care for humanity to be made without expectation or conditions.
- More about fundraising in the future...

# Actual Budget - Basic Expenses

Expenses	For One	Monthly	Number in Family	Year One for Number
Baseline			3	
Rent	\$ 745.00			
Electric	\$ 120.00			
Water	\$ 30.00			
Phone	\$ 70.00			
	\$			

# Actual Budget - Variable Expenses

Expenses	For One	Monthly	Number in Family	Year One for Number
<b>Variable</b>				
Groceries	\$ 200.00		\$ 600.00	
Entertainment	\$ 50.00		\$ 150.00	
Clothing and Shoes	\$ 25.00		\$ 75.00	
Misc. / Pocket Money	\$ 75.00		\$ 225.00	
Transportation (Bus Pass)	\$ 40.00		\$ 120.00	
<b>Total Variable</b>		\$ 390.00	\$ 1,170.00	\$ 14,040.00

# Actual Budget - One-Time Initial Costs

One-Time Initial Cost				
Housing Deposit	\$ 45.00	7	\$ 745.00	
Transport from Border (air)	\$ 00.00	4	\$ 1,200.00	
Clothing and Shoes	\$ 50.00	2	\$ 750.00	
<b>Total Initial</b>	<b>\$ 1,395.00</b>		<b>\$ 2,695.00</b>	<b>\$ 2,695.00</b>

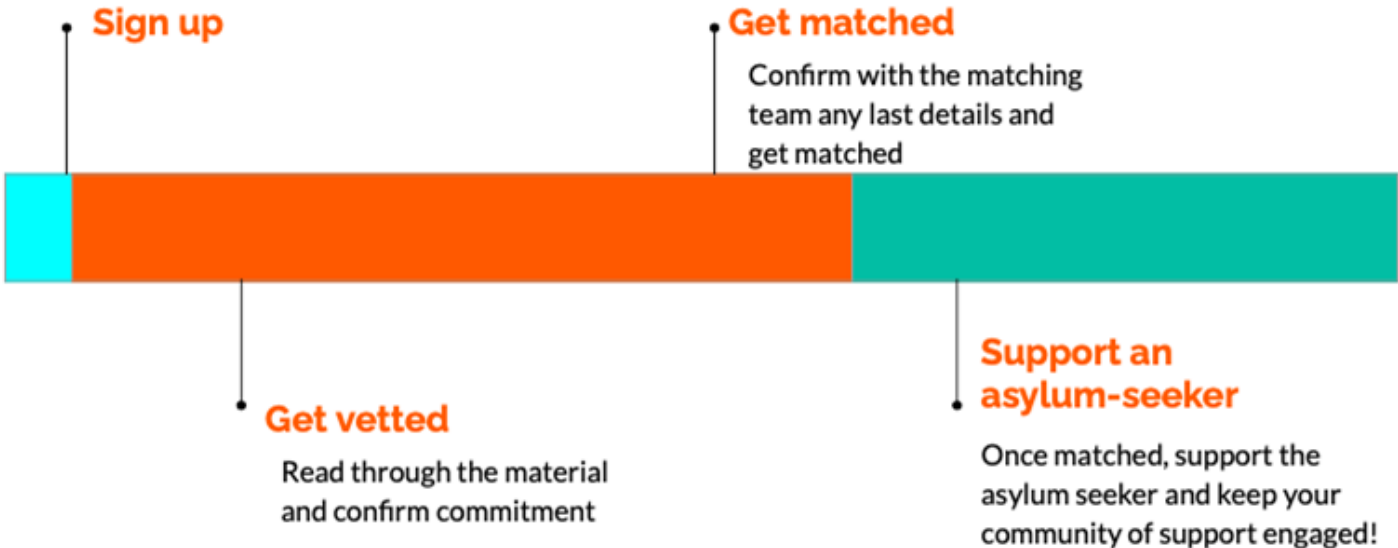
# Actual Budget - The Big Picture

<b>Funds Available</b>				
<b>Funds Total</b>		<b>\$ 31,200.00</b>		<b>\$ 31,200.00</b>
<b>Expenses</b>	<b>For One</b>	<b>Monthly</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Year One for Number</b>
<b>Expenses Total</b>				<b>\$ 29,635.00</b>
<b>Projected Deficit / Surplus</b>				<b>\$ 1,565.00</b>

Questions?

# Sponsorship Timeline

## Sponsorship process overview



# Q&A and General Discussion