



## TIPS FOR SECURING HOUSING

The United States has a rich tradition of welcoming newcomers. Drawing from this experience, this resource provides best practices to guide sponsors as they find and secure housing for newcomers. Newcomers may receive housing assistance from programs administered by resettlement agencies, but enrollment in these programs begins only upon arrival. Day One housing is especially important for a sponsor to provide; learning about the rental market for longer term housing can help you act as an advocate and supporter for the newcomer.

**The uncertain arrival date for the newcomer family may create a need for temporary Day One housing. Potential temporary or short-term housing options may include:**

- Hotels (with accessible kitchen)
- Airbnb (<https://www.airbnb.com>)
- Separate living space attached to private home
- In some instances, hosting within the sponsor's home. We recommend this only in situations where privacy for the newcomer(s) is possible.

### **General Guidelines:**

**Before arrival, talk with local resettlement agencies.**

Programs like Matching Grant Program (MGP) and others available to the newcomer based on immigration status may provide subsidized housing and/or assistance finding affordable, safe options. Consult these Twin Cities agencies before arrival:

- International Institute of Minnesota – St Paul, MN  
General Line: 651-647-0191
- Minnesota Council of Churches – Minneapolis, MN  
Refugee Services General Line: 612-874-8605
- Catholic Charities Winona Diocese – Rochester, MN  
General Line: 507-287-2047
- Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota – Minneapolis, MN  
General Line: 612-871-0221

**Get to know your local housing market!** It is important to find housing that a newcomer family can afford, even after you are no longer supporting them. Housing should be clean, safe, and affordable, preferably near shopping, employment, schools, and accessible to public transportation. Research affordable apartment buildings and ask about availability, unit sizes, and lease agreement details.

### **Identify Potential Housing:**

- Use Online Search tools:
  - Zillow (<https://www.zillow.com>)
  - Apartments.com (<https://www.apartments.com>)
  - Craigslist (<https://www.craigslist.org>)

- Use your Networks: Seek potential housing through your own contacts. Create a one-page overview of your search criteria and circulate to your networks, including on social media.
- Consult with a Real Estate Professional: Real Estate professionals know their local housing markets well. Typically, there is no fee for this service to the renter.

### **Tips for Securing Housing**

**Due to the national housing crisis, securing affordable housing can be competitive. Be prepared!**

- Educate the landlord on the opportunity to welcome a newcomer.
- Ensure that they understand your role as sponsor and support to the newcomer.
- Questions for landlords should include confirming:
  - Average monthly rent
  - Maximum occupancy of the housing
  - Cost of security deposit and associated utilities
  - Terms for return of security deposit
  - Co-signer requirements (if applicable)
  - When/if co-signer can be removed from lease
  - Process for early termination of lease, and associated penalties
  - Possibility of shorter-term lease or month-to-month option