

## Resource list from Freeport Working Group to Welcome New Mainers

### INTRODUCTION

The Freeport Working Group to Welcome New Mainers was brought together by the Freeport Town Council to make it easier for Freeport residents who want to assist the hundreds of asylum seekers who recently arrived in Maine. The organizing statement of the group is:

*The Working Group will organize and distribute resources and information for Freeport residents to assist asylum seekers who have chosen to live in our community. These resources may include utilizing the in-kind supports from the Town of Freeport, including staff time, communication tools, and facilities, but not through allocating money from the approved budget. It was discussed that while we do have some excellent supports for all residents, both current and brand-new to Freeport, this particular group of new residents face language, cultural, and eligibility barriers that will require an extra bit of support established at the outset.*

For the purposes of this working group, we are utilizing the following definition of an asylee: A person who sought and obtained protection from persecution from inside the United States or at the border. An asylee is an individual who meets the international definition of refugee – a person with well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group, who has been forced to flee his or her country because of persecution, war or violence. In the U.S., asylum seekers apply for protection from inside the country or at a port of entry. In contrast, a refugee is a person who applies for protection from outside of the U.S. (National immigration Forum, 1/10/19).

This document is a beginning list of resources and suggestions of ways to help the asylum seekers currently residing in our community, whether it is here in Freeport or in southern Maine. Any person living in Freeport who is in need of support may be eligible for many of the services listed, so please review the information. If you are hosting a family who is seeking asylum this is a great place to start for resources, information, or connection with services. You may also call Johanna Hanselman at 865-4743, ext. 120 or email her at [jhanselman@freeportmaine.com](mailto:jhanselman@freeportmaine.com) with questions.

If you have updates to this information, or additional resources, please email Melanie Sachs, chair of the Working Group, at [msachsmssa@gmail.com](mailto:msachsmssa@gmail.com). Inclusion on this list is not an endorsement of any particular service or agency, but is a compilation of readily available public information.

## I. HOUSING SERVICES

### A. Long-term Housing- limited time

1. If you have a unit or home that you would like to rent to asylum seekers, please contact Aaron Geyer, Social Services Director, City of Portland, at [aeg@portlandmaine.gov](mailto:aeg@portlandmaine.gov) as soon as possible. He will need to know how big the unit is and when it will be available. Aaron and his team will identify a family, fill out the application, and connect with Maine State Housing. Maine State Housing may need to come and take a look at the housing to certify that it meets quality standards. Maine State Housing will then negotiate a lease and payment agreement directly with you for the terms, payment, and length of the lease.

This may be an option for you if you have space you normally rent out as an AirBnB, or a rental unit that you would like to fill with a guaranteed tenant for a year or more. **Maine State Housing has a pool of financial resources that is available only for families moving from the Portland EXPO or family shelter for a limited time basis, so please connect with them quickly.**

2. Any person may also apply for family, senior, or adult housing through Freeport Housing Trust. They manage many units here in Freeport that qualify as affordable housing. Property descriptions, applications, and property phone numbers may be found at <https://freeporthousingtrust.org/>; 207-865-1652.

### B. Short-term housing

The Greater Portland Council of Governments (GPCOG) is working to place families from the Portland EXPO and family shelters in short-term housing through the Host Homes program. They are working with CIEE (Council on international Educational Exchange) in Portland, who has experience screening host homes for international exchange students. For more information or to fill out an application, go to <https://www.host-homes.com/>. You will be contacted by GPCOG or CIEE to set up an interview.

## II. CONCRETE NEEDS

### A. Freeport Based Services

1. **Freeport Community Services**- located at 53 Depot Street in Freeport, currently provides food, fuel assistance, and emergency assistance for anyone living in Freeport and Pownal. They also coordinate transportation to medical appointments through volunteers. Please connect with Sarah Lundin, Community Services Coordinator at 865-3985, ext. 205 or [slundin@fcsmaine.org](mailto:slundin@fcsmaine.org) if you need assistance, Monday-Friday, 9 am-4pm. You can also drop by donations for their thrift shop on the loading dock; please see [www.fcsmaine.org](http://www.fcsmaine.org) for a list of items that can be donated.

2. **Freeport Friends** – This is an all volunteer group of Freeport residents which identifies urgent needs in the Freeport or RSU5 school communities and connects with a volunteer who can help. This include may looking for furniture/other household items for those with no resources, transportation for a wide variety of needs, and “filling the gaps” not covered by other agencies. Learn more at <https://www.freeportfriends.org/>; they also have a thriving Facebook group that you can ask to join where needs are often posted.

3. **General Assistance**- Johanna Hanselman, Town of Freeport, is the General Assistance Coordinator. She also oversees the fuel assistance, medication assistance, and rental assistance programs for the Town of Freeport. 207-865-4743, ext. 120 or [jhanselman@freeportmaine.com](mailto:jhanselman@freeportmaine.com). Town Hall is open Monday –Thursday, 7:30 am-6 pm.

B. Outside of Freeport- places where asylees can access basic needs, whom you also may consider donating to if you wish to support these families. This is not a comprehensive list, but these are organizations who have been active in this effort:

1. **St Elizabeth's Essentials Pantry**, St Luke's Cathedral, 143 State Street, Portland

- Takes donations Monday 9-11 am and Tuesdays 8-11 am; open for service Tuesday 9am -11:00 am
- The Pantry is a non-barrier program serving all those in need, and, on average we serve 250 individuals each week, many of whom are immigrants and refugees for whom English is not their primary language.
- The Pantry distributes those essential items not covered under the federal food stamp program. These items include such staples as diapers, bar soap, toilet paper, feminine hygiene products, shampoo, laundry detergent, and deodorant. Also available may include clothes, household items, kitchen essentials, towels, etc.

2. **Maine Baby**- 94 Washington Avenue, Portland

- Takes donations Tuesdays 9am-11 am; open for services Wednesdays 10 am-2 pm.
- Provides FREE items to mothers, babies and toddlers to 5T sizes. Items available include clothing, strollers, diapers, wipes, toys, potty chairs, etc.

3. **White Memorial Seventh Day Adventist Church**- 97 Allen Avenue, Portland

- Donate in blue bins anytime; Open for service Mondays 4-6 pm
- Provides free clothing and shoes

4. **Furniture Friends**- Westbrook, but serving Greater Portland

- They can be reached at 207-210-5797 or [info@furniturefriends.org](mailto:info@furniturefriends.org)
- A nonprofit, 501(c)(3) organization that provides donated furniture to people in need throughout Greater Portland. You may be a veteran, an immigrant/asylee/refugee, disabled due to physical or mental health issues, fleeing domestic violence, etc – they help everyone in need. Social service agencies make referrals, and their team does an in-home assessment. They then welcome the recipient to pick out furniture or have items delivered.
- If you have an item of furniture to donate, you can go online to see what they accept, fill out a form, and indicate whether you need it picked up or can drop off (The warehouse at 15 Saunders Way, Loading Dock 500D, Westbrook, ME 04098 is open Tues. & Thurs. 1-4 pm & Saturday 9:30-noon by appt.). <http://furniturefriends.org/>.

## 5. Facebook Communities

If you prefer filling immediate concrete needs for asylee and other low-income families, there are several very active Facebook communities that provide ways to do so. They often put out calls for specific items, which most of the time are small (i.e. clothes- size 4T, a dry erase board for an ESOL classroom, gas cards, etc.); just Google the name of the Facebook group and ask to join.

- Freeport Friends (just for and by Freeport residents and students in the RSU5 school community)
- Maine Needs- supporting families with young children- see description above
- The Emergency Action Network (TEAN) in Brunswick- supports asylum families and homeless teens in the Brunswick area

## III. ONGOING CASE MANAGEMENT/RESOURCE SUPPORT SERVICES

These groups provide one-to-one supports for families that help to meet long and short-term needs, including health, legal and employment services, as well as connection to services for ongoing concrete supports such as food. Most services are free to recipients.

1. **Maine Access Immigrant Network-** 237 Oxford St., Suite 25A, Portland; 207-552-1800; [info@main1.org](mailto:info@main1.org); <http://main1.org/>

Maine Access Immigrant Network (MAIN) bridges access to health and social services for immigrants and refugees in Portland Maine. The organization works to build a stronger multicultural community in Portland, and to address refugee health literacy, health care enrollment, and coordination of health care benefits and non-clinical care. MAIN provides resource and referral information that is culturally and linguistically appropriate in English, Arabic, Somali, and French to ensure equal access to programs and services for new Mainers from Africa and Middle East. Through their community health worker program, they link clients with health providers, housing, education, employment, food, and youth services.

2. **Catholic Charities Refugee and Immigrant Services (RIS):** 80 Sherman Street Portland, ME 04101; (207) 871-7437 [www.RefugeeImmigrationServicesCCM.org](http://www.RefugeeImmigrationServicesCCM.org)  
[RISinfo@ccmaine.org](mailto:RISinfo@ccmaine.org)

Provides resettlement, support and self-sufficiency services to refugees and asylees federally assigned or relocated to Maine within their first five years in the United States. RIS also advocates and helps victims of human trafficking. Services include case management, services to older refugees/asylees, employment, interpretation/translation, mentoring, and legal services.

3. **Hope Acts**- Hope House, 14 Sherman Street, 12-3pm on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. Contact the Program Manager, Carolyn Graney, at 207-274-6005, [carolyn@hopeacts.org](mailto:carolyn@hopeacts.org); <https://hopeacts.org/immigrant-support/asap/>

ASAP- Asylum seeker Assistance Program assists with:

- Job search and applications
- Housing search and applications
- Reading and understanding English mail & documents
- Making appointments, finding other services and resources, and managing your schedule.
- Completing work authorization forms.
- French and Portuguese translation available

4. **Immigrant Resource Center of Maine (IRCofMe)**: <http://www.ircofmaine.org/> ; 265 Lisbon Street Suite 2 Lewiston, ME 04243; (207) 753-0061

Support refugee and immigrant communities by offering culturally and linguistically sensitive services to promote a healthy and equitable Maine. Assists with gender based violence (both sexual assault and domestic violence- full spectrum of support services), post resettlement services, cultural brokers/translation services and more.

5. **The Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project (ILAP)**: 309 Cumberland Avenue Suite 201, Portland, ME 04101; (207) 780-1593 • 1 (800) 497-8505; [www.ilapmaine.org/](http://www.ilapmaine.org/) • [info@ilapmaine.org](mailto:info@ilapmaine.org)

Provides free and low-cost immigration information and legal assistance to low-income Maine residents. ILAP helps Maine's immigrants keep their families together, gain protection from persecution and domestic violence, attain residency and work authorization, and become proud U.S. citizens.

6. **United States Citizenship and Immigration Services – Portland Office**: 176 Gannett Drive South Portland, ME 04106; (207) 253-3000 • 1 (800) 375-5283 <https://www.uscis.gov/about-us/find-uscis-office/field-offices/maine-portland-field-office>

The federal agency (CIS) that oversees lawful immigration to the United States, and is a component of the Department of Homeland Security. It strives to provide accurate and useful information about the process, grants immigration and citizenship benefits, and promotes an awareness and understanding of citizenship.

#### IV. MEDICAL/DENTAL RESOURCES FOR ASYLEES

Our thanks to Melissa Fochesato, Director of Health Promotion at Mid Coast-Parkview Health for allowing us to share these resources. These resources may be accessed by asylum seekers who live in Freeport, even though they are Brunswick-based providers. Oasis Clinic can be accessed by ANYONE living in Freeport, including those who make too much money to qualify for MaineCare, or are underinsured.

Resource	Guidance	Helpful Contacts
Healthcare	<p>Any Mid Coast office can be used; all have instructions to provide free care, access to translation services, and ability to print of instructions in language of choice. Translators welcome.</p> <p>Preferred offices (but not required):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Emergency: 123 Medical Center Drive, or call 9-1-1</li><li>• Walk in Clinic: 22 Station Ave, Brunswick for immediate needs that are not emergencies:</li><li>• Primary Care: Mid Coast Medical Group<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Family Practice at Parkview: 329 Maine Street, Suite A200, Brunswick</li><li>○ Primary Care: 22 Station Avenue, Suite 101, Brunswick</li><li>○ Bath Internal Medicine: 108 Centre St. Bath</li><li>○ Topsham Internal Medicine: 1 Wellness Way, Topsham</li><li>○ Pediatrics: 121 Medical Center Dr, Brunswick (Dr. Loeffler has been seeing many of the children)</li></ul></li></ul>	<p>Melissa Fochesato -373-6957; 577-9908 (c), mfochesato@midcoasthealth.com</p> <p>No appointment needed</p> <p>No appointment needed</p> <p>Call Physician Referral Line and explain need and preferred location: (207) 373-6033</p> <p>MCMG Pediatrics: (207)- 721-8333</p>

	<p>Greater Portland Health - 180 Park Avenue, Portland</p> <p><b>Medical releases:</b> although not required, is helpful to have a medical release submitted before visits so all Mid Coast providers have access to screening results, immunization records, and any medical care received. This saves time and avoids duplication of services. Release attached.</p>	<p>Families can continue care at Greater Portland Health. Metro Breez bus can be taken from Brunswick to Portland. Greater Portland Health: 207-874-2141</p>
Public Health Nursing	<p>Public Health Nursing can provide an educational opportunity at Mid Coast Hospital for newly located families to review health issues that require visits with a PCP vs. a visit to an emergency room or urgent care.</p> <p>Public Health Nursing can also meet with providers and review what types of clients can be referred to either Public Health Nurses or Maine Families and how to make referrals.</p>	<p>Jemma Penberthy: questions, 207-441-9732</p> <p>Kellie Cameron: referrals: 207-287-9025</p>
Prescriptions	<p>Several Pharmacies are available. Prices vary per medicine.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kennebec Pharmacy, located in the Mid Coast Medical Building, has a loyalty program that offers discounts on several common medications</li> <li>• If Walmart gift cards are available, they can be used to pay for prescriptions. Unless the</li> </ul>	<p>Kennebec Pharmacy, 121 Medical Center Dr, <u>(207) 729-3642</u></p> <p>Walmart: 15 Tibbetts Dr, Brunswick, ME 04011 (207) 725-1176</p>

	<p>medication is a controlled substance, no ID is needed, just name, address and date of birth, and probably an interpreter to help decipher instructions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oasis Free Clinic can provide medications for chronic conditions such as blood pressure, call for availability</li> </ul>	<p>Oasis, 66 Baribeau Drive, Brunswick</p> <p>(207) 721-9277, Rebecca Brown or Anita Ruff</p>
Dental Care	<p>Adults: Oasis Clinic, 66 Baribeau Drive, Brunswick</p> <p>Medical Clearance needed Mid Coast Walk In Clinic can provide screening and refer: 22 Station Ave, Brunswick (no appointment needed)</p> <p>Youth: Jessie Albert, 171 Congress Ave, Bath</p> <p>Medical Clearances</p>	<p>(207) 721-9277, Rebecca Brown or Anita Ruff</p> <p>(207) 443-9721; translation services available, sliding scale.</p> <p>Walk In Clinic: Lisa Dionne. 373-6864 or <a href="mailto:ldionne@midcoasthealth.com">ldionne@midcoasthealth.com</a></p>
Trauma/mental health counseling	TBD	<p>Tom Kivler, Senior Director, Mid Coast Behavioral Health is assembling local resources.</p> <p><a href="mailto:tkivler@midcoasthealth.com">tkivler@midcoasthealth.com</a>, 207-373-6972</p>





For a copy of my copy

MID COAST HEALTH SERVICES

**AUTHORIZATION FOR RELEASE OF MEDICAL INFORMATION**

**FROM:** (Name & Address of Medical Facility)

**TO:** (Name & Address of Medical Facility/Person(s))

MCMG Central Medical Records  
81 Medical Center Drive, Suite 1200  
Brunswick, ME 04011

Tel: 207-406-7080  
Fax: 207-406-7085

PATIENT NAME used when treatment occurred: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE OF BIRTH: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ CURRENT ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

**SPECIFY INFORMATION TO BE DISCLOSED:**

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Entire Record          | <input type="checkbox"/> Operative Report | <input type="checkbox"/> Pathology Report(s) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hospitalization Record | <input type="checkbox"/> Radiology Report | <input type="checkbox"/> Photographic Images |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Physicians' Orders     | <input type="checkbox"/> Diagnostic Test  | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Laboratory Reports     | <input type="checkbox"/> Emergency Record |  |

**DATES OF TREATMENT:** \_\_\_\_\_

**MY HIGHLY CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION:**

- |                               |                                   |  |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I do | <input type="checkbox"/> I do not | : authorize the release of records pertaining to Mental Health                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I do | <input type="checkbox"/> I do not | : authorize the release of records pertaining to HIV/AIDS                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I do | <input type="checkbox"/> I do not | : authorize the release of records pertaining to Substance Abuse                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I do | <input type="checkbox"/> I do not | : authorize the release of records pertaining to Domestic Violence or Sexual Assault |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I do | <input type="checkbox"/> I do not | : authorize the release of records pertaining to Genetic Testing Results             |

I understand that authorization to release this highly confidential information requires my signature each time.

**THE PURPOSE OF THIS RELEASE IS TO:**

- |  |   |                                       |
|--|---|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> transfer my care                                | <input type="checkbox"/> process my claim | <input type="checkbox"/> other: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> allow you to discuss my health care with: _____ |   |                                       |

I understand that Mid Coast Health Services cannot guarantee that my protected health information will not be released to a third party.

I know that I may refuse to sign or may take back this authorization at any time, for any reason and that doing so will not affect the start, continuation or quality of my care at Mid Coast Health Services. I however, if my care at Mid Coast Health Services is for the sole purpose of creating health information for release to the receiver listed above, Mid Coast Health Services may refuse to treat me if I do not sign this authorization form. I know that refusing to sign or taking back this authorization may result in wrong diagnosis or treatment, denial of coverage or payment of claims by my insurance company or other poor outcomes. This authorization will remain in effect for one year unless I request in writing that it be removed before then. I may request a copy of this authorization form.

Transmit electronically (by alternate devices) ☐ YES ☐ NO

Signature of Patient \_\_\_\_\_ Date/Time \_\_\_\_\_

Patient Name Printed \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Legally Authorized Representative \_\_\_\_\_ State the relationship \_\_\_\_\_

FORM ID-C0314 (8/11)

**MID COAST HEALTHCARE AUTHORIZATION FORM**

# GREATER PORTLAND HEALTH AUTHORIZATION FORM (Common Provider to new families)



For a complete listing of services

MID COAST HEALTH SERVICES

## AUTHORIZATION FOR RELEASE OF MEDICAL INFORMATION

FROM: (Name & Address of Medical Facility)

TO: (Name & Address of Medical Facility/Person(s))

Greater Portland Health  
180 Park Avenue  
Portland, ME 04102-2957  
Phone: 207-874-2141  
Fax: 207-874-2164

MCMG Central Medical Records  
81 Medical Center Drive, Suite 1200  
Brunswick, ME 04011

Tel: 207-406-7080  
Fax: 207-406-7085

PATIENT NAME used when treatment occurred: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE OF BIRTH: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

CURRENT ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

### SPECIFY INFORMATION TO BE DISCLOSED:

- ☐ Entire Record  
☐ Hospitalization Record  
☐ Physicians' Orders  
☐ Laboratory Reports  
☐ Operative Report  
☐ Radiology Report  
☐ Diagnostic Test  
☐ Emergency Record

- ☐ Pathology Report(s)  
☐ Photographic Images  
☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

DATES OF TREATMENT: \_\_\_\_\_

### MY HIGHLY CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION:

- ☐ I do ☐ I do not : authorize the release of records pertaining to Mental Health  
☐ I do ☐ I do not : authorize the release of records pertaining to HIV/AIDS  
☐ I do ☐ I do not : authorize the release of records pertaining to Substance Abuse  
☐ I do ☐ I do not : authorize the release of records pertaining to Domestic Violence or Sexual Assault  
☐ I do ☐ I do not : authorize the release of records pertaining to Genetic Testing Results

I understand that authorization to release this highly confidential information requires my signature each time.

### THE PURPOSE OF THIS RELEASE IS TO:

- ☐ transfer my care ☐ process my claim ☐ other: \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ allow you to discuss my health care with: \_\_\_\_\_

I understand that Mid Coast Health Services cannot guarantee that my protected health information will not be released to a third party.

I know that I may refuse to sign or may take back this authorization at any time, for any reason and that doing so will not affect the start, continuation or quality of my care at Mid Coast Health Services. However, if my care at Mid Coast Health Services is for the sole purpose of creating health information for release to the receiver listed above, Mid Coast Health Services may refuse to treat me if I do not sign this authorization form. I know that refusing to sign or taking back this authorization may result in wrong diagnosis or treatment, denial of coverage or payment of claims by my insurance company or other poor outcomes. This authorization will remain in effect for one year unless I request in writing that it be removed before then. I may request a copy of this authorization form.

Transmit electronically (by alternate devices) ☐ YES ☐ NO

Signature of Patient \_\_\_\_\_

Date/Time \_\_\_\_\_

Patient Name Printed \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Legally Authorized Representative \_\_\_\_\_

State the relationship \_\_\_\_\_

FORM IS-C0314 (8/14)

## V. EDUCATION

While some of the case management agencies mentioned in Section III also help with employment services and English classes, here are some additional targeted resources.

1. ***RSU5 Community Programs- English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL):*** 17 West Street, Freeport, ME 04032; Kelli Park, Adult Education Coordinator; 207-865-6171, ext. 22; [parkk@rsu5.org](mailto:parkk@rsu5.org)

RSU5 Community programs offers free classes to any new mainers looking to improve English skills. Instruction is individualized, and students may work with tutors at their own pace. You do not have to be a resident of RSU5 to attend this program. Classes and tutoring are available.

2. ***New Mainers Resource Center- Employment Readiness:*** 14 Locust St. Portland, ME 04101 (207) 874-8155 [www.nmrmaine.org](http://www.nmrmaine.org)

This is a targeted employment readiness program through Portland Adult Education. Their offerings are designed to help New Mainers of all qualifications and professions successfully integrate and thrive in the US workforce. Area employers are actively involved in the programs, visiting the classroom to share information about their companies, providing mock interviews, as well as hiring graduates. Services include English classes related to specific professions and sectors, US workplace culture class, computer literacy classes, development of a job search portfolio, application and resume writing class, and job skills and interview preparation classes. They also have a program targeted for just for those with a university degree and above. They also offer a professional clothes closet, and field specific support groups such as a health professionals support group, and a financials service support group . Information for employers looking to hire skilled New Mainers can also find information here.

3. ***ProsperityME - Financial Literacy:*** 62 Elm Street Suite 2 Portland, ME; 207-797-7890; <https://www.prosperityme.org/>

ProsperityME is a nonprofit which offers financial literacy courses, Basic Money Management, Saving to Build wealth and Microfinance. They also have housing assistance (both financial and classes such as “How to be a good tenant”. All of ProsperityME’s services are available to all immigrants, refugees, asylees and low-income individuals living in the Greater Portland/Lewiston-Auburn area. They also provide one-to-one counseling for specific financial concerns or questions. Classes are ongoing, with on-line and in-person options.

## VI. MENTORING FAMILIES/YOUTH PROGRAMS

Several Freeport residents have expressed interest in mentoring and providing ongoing connection with newly arrived families. Here are several established programs to check out:

### 1. **Welcoming the Stranger (WTS)** – [www.wtsmaine.com](http://www.wtsmaine.com)

A grassroots project matching mentors with asylum-seekers to help them integrate into the Greater Portland (Maine) community. The following information was compiled from their website:

WTS was created in response to the rising number of immigrant families seeking political asylum in our community. Welcoming the Stranger aims to create formal friendships through mentoring relationships between local families and asylum seekers that we hope will enrich all those involved.

They are actively looking for volunteers willing to enter into a mentoring “friendship” with a new Mainer or new Mainer family. What does mentoring look like? That largely depends on the families or individuals involved: a mentor could help an asylum seeker practice English, find and/or furnish an apartment, write a resume, get a winter coat, use the bus system, sign up for classes, or any number of other basic activities to help newcomers navigate their surroundings.

Through Welcoming the Stranger, mentors have access to a large network of other individuals and groups already engaged with the immigrant community who can offer support and guidance if specific needs — housing, schooling, medical care, etc. — arise. As a mentor, your primary task is simply to be there for newly arrived folks who would otherwise feel alone in a strange world. You don’t have to be an expert; you just need to be a friend.

Those interested can complete an application and obtain more information at [wtsmaine.com](http://wtsmaine.com).

### 2. **Catholic Charities** <https://www.ccmaine.org/refugee-immigration-services/services>:

Catholic Charities has two programs for volunteering as a mentor for both asylees and refugees. The commitment is two hours per week for six months to a year. One focuses on families and adults, and the other is for young adults with a school/workforce focus. You can also contact them if you are a person who is a refugee/asylee and seeking a mentor. The information below is taken from their website:

#### A. American Friends Program

Imagine arriving in Portland, Maine from a refugee camp in Somalia or Iraq and not knowing the language or the customs of America. How do I mail a letter? What do traffic lights mean? What type of clothing do I need to survive a Maine winter? These simple tasks are often taken for granted but to a refugee, learning American customs and social etiquette can be an overwhelming experience. This is where an American Friend steps in to help.

Spend two hours a week for a minimum of six months to help a refugee family to:

- Learn to function independently in their new surroundings
- Cope with cultural shock
- Learn a new language
- Become acquainted with aspects of American life (home appliances, telephone, public transportation, street signs, traffic signals, public schools and libraries, the postal system, banking and currency, taxes, and social etiquette)
- Become familiar with Portland's various religious communities and support groups

**Interested?** Apply online for the American Friend program, <https://www.ccmaine.org/refugee-immigration-services/services>, call (207) 493-8935 or email [kbrewer@ccmaine.org](mailto:kbrewer@ccmaine.org).

#### B. Refugee and Immigration Services (RIS) Mentoring program for Young Adults

Imagine yourself as a young adult, arriving in Maine from a refugee camp in Somalia or war zone in Iraq, filled with aspirations for your future in a new country but unsure of how to enroll in college, navigate U.S. work culture or receive the credentials you need to turn your lifelong goals into reality. More than one hundred young refugees and asylees arrive in Maine each year and struggle to continue their academics in a foreign language, system, and culture. Young adults 18 and older who arrive in the U.S. with limited English are rarely able to complete high school in the short amount of time they are allowed to attend.

Spend two hours a week for six months to one year and:

- Help set tangible academic and professional goals and plan activities to accomplish them
- Support their mentee through an ongoing one-on-one relationship
- Serve as a positive role model and friend
- Build confidence, familiarity, and connections in a new country
- Help mentees understand the public school system and GED process
- Help mentees complete college applications
- Obtain evaluations and re-credential foreign transcripts and licenses
- Practice jobs skills
- Provide guidance in the pursuit of training
- Other areas of interest

**Interested?** Apply online for the RIS Mentoring program <https://www.ccmaine.org/refugee-immigration-services/services>, call (207) 493-8935 or email [kbrewer@ccmaine.org](mailto:kbrewer@ccmaine.org).