

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES AT DARA



THANK YOU FOR YOUR INTEREST IN VOLUNTEERING WITH DARA!

Danbury Area Refugee Assistance (DARA) is a nonprofit organization that resettles refugee families, providing advocacy and support as they work toward self-sufficiency to become productive members of our community. DARA has come a long way since its inception in October of 2015. Originally a collection of neighbors — strangers to one another before our first meeting — hoping to help those in need, we've grown into an official nonprofit organization and we are 100% volunteer-run. DARA has successfully resettled two refugee family in our community, and we remain committed to welcoming more families in the future.

REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT COORDINATION

Volunteers aid the Refugee Resettlement Coordinator with administrative duties. Tasks include:

- ❖ Ensuring that the required IRIS documents are completed by family members and team members in a timely manner
- ❖ Supporting the Refugee Resettlement Coordinator by completing assigned administrative tasks*

**This task can be accomplished behind the scenes.*

ACCULTURATION TEAM

Volunteers help prepare for a refugee family's arrival, coordinate clothing drives, and teach a family about budget-smart shopping, town services, and cultural practices. Tasks include:

- ❖ Buying initial groceries and providing a culturally appropriate first meal
- ❖ Organizing clothing donations and purchases*
- ❖ Assisting families in shopping for clothing and household goods
- ❖ Researching and keeping records of food banks and other food resources*
- ❖ Teaching families about food banks, coupons, EBT cards, and budgeting
- ❖ Teaching families about home gardening if they desire
- ❖ Researching and documenting town and community activities*
- ❖ Teaching families about American rules, regulations, cultural norms, and acting as Cultural Companions
- ❖ Assisting families in getting library cards

**This task can be accomplished behind the scenes.*

CHILDCARE TEAM

Volunteers aid refugee families by assisting with childcare.

Tasks include:

- ❖ Babysitting young children and arranging playdates and outings
- ❖ Ensuring that all Childcare volunteers complete SAFE training*
- ❖ Liaising with the Home Coordination Team for donations*
- ❖ Liaising with other teams to coordinate childcare*
- ❖ Liaising with the Donations Team to get car safety seats, arranging for correct installation, and ensuring that parents are trained to install seats

**This task can be accomplished behind the scenes.*

EDUCATION TEAM

Volunteers aid refugee families in registering for school and childcare/preschool, act as liaisons between schools and families, and assist in tutoring. Tasks include:

- ❖ Assisting with registering children in school and in childcare/preschool
- ❖ Accompanying family members to registration appointments
- ❖ Researching extracurricular programs, liaising with organizers or coaches, and educating families in all of these areas
- ❖ Facilitating communications between families and school personnel, and teaching parents about school procedures and the expectations of parental involvement with academic assistance at home
- ❖ Seeking advice of outside experts on available school services and attending meetings with parents
- ❖ Tutoring children and adult family members
- ❖ Coordinating tutors to work with families*
- ❖ Researching and registering adult family members for ESL programs*
- ❖ Arranging level testing of families and volunteer training with Literacy Volunteers*
- ❖ Continually researching local literacy organizations to keep abreast of new programs being offered*
- ❖ Coordinating donations/loans of educational materials*

**This task can be accomplished behind the scenes.*

EMPLOYMENT TEAM

Volunteers assist refugee families in all aspects of gaining successful employment.

Tasks include:

- ❖ Visiting Jobs First Employment Services with employable family members
- ❖ Liaising with employers and family during the orientation period of a new job
- ❖ Maintaining a contact list of employment agencies and sympathetic employers*
- ❖ Speaking to employers about hiring refugees (ongoing)
- ❖ Helping employable family members create résumés, use job search sites, complete job applications, and practice interview skills
- ❖ Collaborating with the Education team for tutoring in job-related vocabulary
- ❖ Scheduling job interviews and accompanying family members as needed
- ❖ Helping to complete paperwork once hired

**This task can be accomplished behind the scenes.*

FAMILY FINANCES AND SOCIAL SERVICES TEAM

Volunteers assist refugee families in all aspects of household finances and registering for and using Social Services. Tasks include:

- ❖ Assisting a newly arrived family in getting Social Security cards
- ❖ Assisting a newly arrived family in getting state ID cards
- ❖ Assisting a newly arrived family in applying for cash assistance (TANF), food stamps (SNAP), and health insurance (HUSKY)
- ❖ Assisting family members in setting up financial accounts
- ❖ Teaching family members how to pay bills
- ❖ Assisting a family with their household budget, including their travel loan
- ❖ Explaining the importance of a credit score and what affects it
- ❖ Assisting families in signing up for winter heating assistance
- ❖ Monitoring and making copies of communications from SS/DSS/HUSKY*
- ❖ Assisting families with recertification and renewals of DSS/HUSKY
- ❖ Maintaining a record of benefits being received*
- ❖ Assisting with health insurance applications once HUSKY expires or health insurance becomes available via employment
- ❖ Investigating other social service resources as needed*

**This task can be accomplished behind the scenes.*

HEALTHCARE TEAM

Volunteers assist refugee families in all aspects of managing their healthcare. Tasks include:

- ❖ Identifying primary care health providers who accept HUSKY insurance*
- ❖ Setting up initial Refugee Health Assessment appointments in New Haven*
- ❖ Ensuring that a family understands and signs all healthcare-related forms
- ❖ Establishing refugees as patients and managing appointments and prescriptions*
- ❖ Communicating with family members about their specific healthcare and mental health needs, their appointments, and how HUSKY works
- ❖ Liaising with the Education Team regarding health forms for school registration*
- ❖ Maintaining a family's healthcare Teamup calendar medical documents*
- ❖ Scheduling translators and drivers for appointments*
- ❖ Advocating for a family with healthcare providers and HUSKY*
- ❖ Teaching a family the healthcare-related skills they will need for independence

**This task can be accomplished behind the scenes.*

HOME COORDINATION TEAM

Volunteers set up an apartment before a refugee family's arrival, and aid a family in settling into their new home. Tasks include:

- ❖ Managing donations/purchases, storage, and transportation of household goods*
- ❖ Ensuring that everything on the IRIS home supply list is present; showing families how everything works; getting IRIS documents signed
- ❖ Making the apartment welcoming (decor, flowers, making beds, etc.)
- ❖ Managing basic home maintenance that is not a landlord's responsibility

**This task can be accomplished behind the scenes.*

HOUSING COORDINATION TEAM

Volunteers work with real estate agents and landlords to secure housing, and maintain good relations between landlords and refugee families. Tasks include:

- ❖ Searching for housing and maintaining a spreadsheet of available apartments*
- ❖ Coordinating with real estate agents and landlords to view apartments
- ❖ Facilitating getting a lease signed and deposit paid
- ❖ Liaising with a landlord during a family's dependency period*
- ❖ Educating a family on landlord and community relations

**This task can be accomplished behind the scenes.*

TRANSLATION TEAM

Volunteers work with other teams to schedule translators, and translators work directly with refugee families. Tasks include:

- ❖ Managing translation requests from other teams and scheduling translators*
- ❖ Maintaining a database of translators*
- ❖ Liaising with the Volunteer Administrator re completion of translators' confidentiality agreements*
- ❖ Providing translation for a family according to IRIS guidelines

**This task can be accomplished behind the scenes.*

TRANSPORTATION TEAM

Volunteers provide all transportation initially for a refugee family, assist with mass transit, and provide driver's ed and DMV assistance. Tasks include:

- ❖ Driving family members to appointments, grocery shopping, work, etc.
- ❖ Maintaining a database of volunteer drivers and scheduling transportation*
- ❖ Implementing a plan for families to become independent of DARA transportation*
- ❖ Ensuring that parents and volunteers are trained in car seat safety
- ❖ Managing volunteer drivers and training them in their responsibilities*
- ❖ Teaching families about the bus system both online and in person
- ❖ Determining when the bus is better than a ride from a volunteer*
- ❖ Reviewing the current DMV manual and the Permit Test app with family members
- ❖ Coordinating with ESL tutors on English vocabulary for the permit and road tests*
- ❖ Making DMV appointments and arranging for transportation
- ❖ Researching driver's ed programs and arranging transportation to classes*
- ❖ Coordinating driver's ed volunteers*

**This task can be accomplished behind the scenes.*

ADMINISTRATION AND ONLINE TEAM

Volunteers understand the special requirements of nonprofit security and sensitivity issues and are qualified to aid in their implementation. Tasks include:

- ❖ Assisting with online fundraisers, ticket sales sites, and donation campaigns*
- ❖ Assisting with the DARA website, Facebook page, Twitter, Instagram, etc.*
- ❖ Assisting with the design, promotion, and sale of DARA-branded merchandise*

**This task can be accomplished behind the scenes.*

BENEFIT EVENT PLANNING TEAM

Volunteers plan, organize, and implement benefit events. Tasks include:

- ❖ Securing venues and entertainment, and planning menus and decor
- ❖ Acquiring and organizing silent auction items
- ❖ Scheduling volunteers to help set up and break down events*
- ❖ Managing event websites and promoting events in coordination with other teams*
- ❖ Seeking out event opportunities to acquire donations and raise awareness*

**This task can be accomplished behind the scenes.*

DONOR AND FUND DEVELOPMENT TEAM

Volunteers research and manage donor and grant opportunities. Tasks include:

- ❖ Seeking out financial donations, grants, and corporate donors*
- ❖ Managing ongoing donation campaigns*
- ❖ Maintaining a database for current and future fundraising opportunities*

**This task can be accomplished behind the scenes.*

OUTREACH TEAM

Volunteers work in a PR capacity and with community groups, approaching all public interactions as donor development/volunteer recruitment opportunities.

Tasks include:

- ❖ Understanding and promoting DARA's mission in the media and the community
- ❖ Investigating and seeking out opportunities to promote DARA*
- ❖ Planning and/or attending speaking engagements, panel discussions, etc.
- ❖ Promoting DARA's work with all cultures and religious and political affiliations and meeting with community leaders
- ❖ Communicating and coordinating with other organizations to foster mutual goals
- ❖ Maintaining and updating communication records with community groups*

**This task can be accomplished behind the scenes.*

VOLUNTEER COORDINATION TEAM

Volunteers assist in managing current volunteers and recruiting new volunteers.

Tasks include:

- ❖ Maintaining volunteer recruitment listings*
- ❖ Collecting electronic copies of approved volunteers' documents*
- ❖ Contacting pending volunteer references and interviewing pending volunteers*
- ❖ Coordinating with Team Leaders to assign approved volunteers accordingly*
- ❖ Encouraging volunteer participation by developing and planning volunteer engagement, retention, and training activities
- ❖ Securing venues, inviting volunteers to activities, and tracking participation
- ❖ Understanding and keeping abreast of Team Leaders' and volunteers' needs, and managing Team Leader–volunteer relations in a positive and productive way
- ❖ Keeping all Team Leaders abreast of changes in volunteers' statuses

**This task can be accomplished behind the scenes.*

Thank you for your interest in volunteering with DARA!

The first step for prospective volunteers is to complete DARA's Volunteer Application, which you can find at <https://www.daract.org/get-involved>.

Afterwards, if you are available to consider a volunteer leadership role at DARA, please visit [Join Our Team](#), where you can view our open volunteer leadership opportunities and upload your résumé.

