

Volunteer Position Description

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Position Title: English Language Conversation Partner

Background Information: When refugees arrive in the Twin Cities, they face many challenges, including finding employment with limited English skills. One of their most pressing needs is help learning the English language so that they can more easily navigate American society and find employment.

Refugee Services recently designed a conversation partners program to help refugees practice conversational English, specifically in regards to finding a job and learning to access community resources. Volunteer conversational partners will have the opportunity to build a relationship with a newly-arrived refugee and to learn about our clients' culture and background while providing meaningful English practice.

Position Description: We encourage conversation partners to meet with their refugee partners for one hour each week for six weeks. The meetings will occur in public places that are convenient for both partners, and that introduce the refugee to public resources such as libraries, grocery stores, or ELL classes. During their time together, conversation partners can discuss subjects that are agreeable to both individuals. Volunteers will be given materials with suggested conversation topics and outlines, as well as ideas of places to visit with their partners.

Training: Conversation partners will receive a general volunteer orientation with the Volunteer Coordinator. They will also meet with the refugee's case manager, if necessary, to discuss any special needs, wishes, or potential issues that may come up during the process.

Supervision: Conversation partners will be supervised by the Volunteer Coordinator.

Location: Refugee Services is located in the Minnesota Church Center, located in 122 W. Franklin Avenue in South Minneapolis.

Qualifications:

- Flexibility, promptness, and dependability
- Excellent English abilities
- Ability to communicate clearly and respectfully with people who may have limited English language ability
- Ability to respond to refugee's needs in a realistic, non-judgmental way
- Cultural sensitivity
- Openness and willingness to get to know a refugee in a meaningful way

PLEASE NOTE: This is a pilot program. Changes may be made to the structure of this program as necessary.

To apply, please contact the Volunteer Coordinator at rsvolunteers@mnchurches.org.