

# Telephonic Refugee Resettlement Cultural Orientation (CO) Guidance and Curricula

## Overview

The Cultural Orientation Resource Exchange (CORE) has developed guidance and curricula for conducting telephonic refugee resettlement CO as a form of remote CO, when in-person CO is not possible. For telephonic CO, as with any form of CO, the topics covered should be consistent and align with the [CO Objectives and Indicators](#).

CO providers should work in coordination with their respective Resettlement Support Center (RSC) or Resettlement Agency (RA) to: adapt the following guidance as appropriate to the refugee populations being served; and to ensure proper documentation of telephonic CO in alignment with U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) or Reception and Placement (R&P) requirements.

The following guidance assumes that the CO provider delivering telephonic CO is familiar with the [CO Objectives and Indicators](#) and associated content and has completed [CORE's online courses](#) on adult learning principles, student-centered learning, and managing cognitive load. The telephonic CO curricula was developed by utilizing CORE resources, along with the experiences and documentation of telephonic CO from RSC Asia, RSC Eurasia, and RSC MENA.

## Structure and Delivery of Telephonic CO

The following are general considerations about the structure and delivery of telephonic CO:

- Provide one-on-one or to multiple adults within the same household.
- Deliver in one session or across multiple sessions with interpretation provided as needed. If possible and to reduce cognitive overload, keep sessions short and spread out over time.
- As appropriate and in alignment with case needs, adjust the order and duration of sessions.
- When possible, pair with additional communications in the refugees' primary languages both before and after the session, such as email, text message, or in-person visits.
- As appropriate and possible, include use of [the Settle In website](#) and [Settle In app](#).

## Before Delivery of Telephonic CO

Assess the participants' needs; as appropriate learn about their background, language abilities, or other details that will impact CO delivery. If possible, conduct a preliminary phone call with them to customize the CO session and set expectations.

Schedule an appropriate time to conduct the telephonic CO session(s). Participants should be fully available (i.e. not completing other tasks in the house or caring for children).

Identify and schedule necessary interpretation.

Ensure participants and interpreters have the appropriate materials and resources. For example, email links to resources or provide a CO packet. Any materials or resources shared should take into consideration language and literacy needs.

□ Review the following guidance on delivering telephonic CO by topic and supplement with additional resources specific to your RSC or RA.

## Delivery of Telephonic CO

### Starting the Session

The CO provider should establish appropriate familiarity between themselves and the participants, by facilitating introductions, explaining the purpose and expectations for the telephonic CO, and encouraging questions. To facilitate this, the CO provider can ask the following questions or a relevant variation. The purpose is to establish what the participants already know and what information they would like to learn.

#### Pre-departure:

- What do you already know about life in the U.S.? Any specific information your friends or family has shared with you? If appropriate, CO provider may ask about specific topics.
- What would you like to know about the U.S. before you go?

#### Post-arrival:

- How long have you been in the U.S.? Tell me about what you have done and seen so far.
- What would you like to know more about as you resettle in the U.S.?

As relevant, the CO provider should use this opportunity to also assess what, if any, relevant materials the refugees have reviewed in advance of the session, such as the [Welcome Guide](#), [the Settle In website](#) or [Settle In app](#). The CO provider should record responses, set appropriate expectations, and refer back to the responses throughout the session(s).

### CO Topics

Following introductions, CO providers should proceed through the CO topics, following a similar pattern, as outlined below. The goal is to facilitate discussions, communicate key CO messages from the objectives and indicators, and assess understanding.

1. Briefly explain the topic to be covered.
2. Ask participants about their existing knowledge or experience with that topic.
3. Conduct discussion or appropriate activity about the topic with the participants.
4. Ask refugees follow-up questions to assess their new knowledge of that topic.

To facilitate this process, the following guidance provides further detail for each CO topic. CO providers are encouraged to modify and update these approaches based on refugees' needs and abilities, as well as available resources from the Settle In website and Settle In app. Note that, when listed, resources on the Settle In website and Settle In app are available in Arabic, Burmese, Dari, English, Kinyarwanda, Russian, and Swahili.

## Travel (Overseas only)

### Instructions:

1. Explain to participants that they will learn about traveling to the U.S. Provide a summary of [objectives](#) for this topic.
2. As appropriate, ask participants if they have traveled by plane previously and, if so, to share their experience, including how long the travel was, what they brought, and what they remember about the process.
3. Ask participants the following questions or a relevant variation. After each question, provide the correct information.
  - What do you expect the process to be when you go to the airport? For transfers?
  - What is the baggage limit for travel on the airplane?
  - What can you bring to the U.S.?
  - What can you not bring to the U.S.?
  - Who will pick you up at your final destination in the US?
  - Who will book your tickets, share details with you regarding your travel to the U.S., and meet you at the airport?
  - Do you need to pay back the ticket booked by IOM?
  - What is an IOM bag?
4. Discuss the following scenarios to about travel to the U.S. and discuss the appropriate actions and/or results.
  - You wait with the IOM group to check in, and your daughter needs to use the bathroom.
  - You fell asleep as soon as the plane took off. Later, you woke up hungry, and you learned that all the passengers have already eaten their meals.
  - You have to travel alone for your 4th flight to your final destination, and you feel very tired, stressful, and scared.
  - If you don't listen to flight attendants and you break air safety rules, what will happen?
  - You have arrived at your destination in the U.S., but there is nobody at the airport to pick you up.

### Additional Resources:

- The Settle In website podcast on [Travel to the U.S.](#)
- [Boarding and Take Off YouTube video](#) or similar video

## Housing

### Instructions:

1. Explain to participants that they will learn about Housing in the U.S. Provide a summary of [objectives](#) for this topic.
2. As appropriate, ask the participants to describe the types of homes they have lived in or seen in their country/ies of origin and/or protection.
  - If pre-departure, ask participants how housing in the U.S. may be different or similar to homes they have seen or experienced?
  - If post-arrival, ask the participants how the housing in the U.S. is different or similar to the homes they have seen or experienced prior to arrival?
3. Ask participants the following questions or relevant variations. After each question, provide the correct information.
  - What type of housing can you expect in the U.S.?
  - What is a lease?
  - Which household items do you think will be provided in the U.S.?
  - Does housing cost the same everywhere in the U.S.?
  - What are your responsibilities as a tenant in the U.S.?
  - What are the responsibilities for the landlord in the U.S.?
4. Assess participants' knowledge. Read each statement and ask participants if they agree or disagree. Correct and provide additional information as necessary.
  - You will be provided with a bed, linens, dishes, and toilet paper. (Agree)
  - Your landlord must give you notice before asking you to move out of your home. (Agree)
  - You are responsible for paying your rent and utilities on time. (Agree)
  - You are responsible for keeping your home clean. (Agree)
  - You must sign a lease to rent a house or apartment. (Agree)

### Additional Resources:

- The Settle In website video, podcast, or fact sheet on [Housing](#)
- Images of Housing from *Making Your Way* [Housing unit](#)
- Settle In app chapter on "Housing"

## Safety

### Instructions:

1. Explain to participants that they will learn about Safety, both personal and in the home. Provide summary of [objectives](#) for this topic.
2. Ask the participants what the phrase “personal safety” means to them?
3. Ask the participants the following questions or relevant variations. After each question, provide the correct information.
  - What steps can you take to ensure your safety in the U.S.?
  - What number do you call in case of a life-threatening emergency?
  - What other information should you know to ensure your safety in the U.S.?
4. Describe the following scenarios and discuss what actions the participants would take.
  - You are at home and you receive a visit from someone you do not know. The person is dressed in a work uniform and is wearing an official-looking name badge, but it is not a police officer.
  - A man ran by you and stole your bag.
  - It is snowing heavily outside and you have a scheduled meeting with your case worker.
  - The smoke alarm in your home is making a beeping noise.
  - There is a small fire inside the oven in your home.
  - You are pulled over by a police officer while you and a friend are driving.
  - You left your wallet on the bus.

### Additional Resources:

- *Making Your Way Curriculum* [U.S. Laws and Refugee Status unit](#); Using Emergency Services; Practicing Safety Procedures, Common Safety Practices

## Role of the Resettlement Agency

### Instructions:

1. Explain to participants that they will learn about the Role of the Resettlement Agency. Provide a summary of [objectives](#) for this topic.
2. Ask the participants if they have heard the term “Resettlement Agency.” If so, ask them what they know about the resettlement agency and their role.
3. Ask participants the following questions or relevant variations. After each question, provide the correct information.
  - What is the role of the Resettlement Agency?
  - What services does the Resettlement Agency provide?
  - How long will you receive initial resettlement services?
  - What can you do to work successfully with your Resettlement Agency?
2. Assess participants’ knowledge. Read each statement and ask participants if they agree or disagree. Correct and provide additional information as necessary.
  - All refugees receive the same services. (Disagree)
  - The Resettlement Agency must provide you with new furniture. (Disagree)
  - The Resettlement Agency must find a job for you. (Disagree)
  - If you choose to move to a new community, your Resettlement Agency is not required to help you move. (Agree)
  - Your Resettlement Agency will be your most accurate source of information in the first several months in the U.S. (Agree)

### Additional Resources:

- The Settle In website videos, podcasts, or fact sheets on [Resettlement Agency](#)
- [Resettlement Agency unit](#); images of Resettlement Agency services from *Making Your Way*
- Settle In app chapter on “Your Resettlement Agency”

## Transportation

### Instructions:

1. Explain to participants that they will be reviewing Transportation in the U.S. Provide summary of [objectives](#) for this topic.
2. Ask the participants what their experience has been with transportation.
  - If still abroad, ask what their experience has been either in their country/ies of origin and/or of protection?
  - If in the U.S., ask what transportation have they used? If appropriate, ask how transportation is similar or different in the U.S. compared to their past experiences.
3. Ask participants the following questions or relevant variations. After each question, provide the correct information.
  - What types of transportation exist in the U.S.?
  - Who will be responsible for paying for your transportation in the U.S.?
  - How will you go to your place of work? Stores? Banks?
  - How can you ensure you are safe while using transportation in the U.S.?
  - Will you own a car right away? What do you think are the legal requirements to own a car in the U.S.?
4. Describe the following scenarios and ask participants what they will do in terms of transportation. Add additional scenarios as necessary.
  - You have a doctor's appointment tomorrow.
  - You have a new job located \_\_\_\_\_.
  - It is your child's first day of school.
  - You need to go to the grocery store.
  - The mother and father of three children have been working for six months. They would like to purchase a car. What would you advise them to do?

### Additional Resources:

- The Settle In website video, podcast, or fact sheet on [Transportation](#)
- [Transportation unit](#) from *Making Your Way* has images and list of processes for using transportation safely
- Settle In app chapter on "Transportation"

## Public Assistance

### Instructions:

1. Explain to participants that they will learn about Public Assistance in the U.S. Provide a summary of [objectives](#) for this topic.
2. Ask the participants what they think the term “public assistance” means in the U.S. Ask how long they think they will receive public assistance in the U.S.?
3. Ask participants the following questions or relevant variations. After each question, provide the correct information.
  - What kinds of public assistance do you think exist?
  - Who will help you access public assistance?
  - Do all refugees receive the same types of public assistance?
  - What will be your responsibility when receiving public assistance?
3. Assess participants’ knowledge. Read each statement and ask participants if they agree or disagree. Correct and provide information. Add additional statements as necessary.
  - All refugees receive the same kinds of public assistance. (Disagree)
  - You will receive public assistance for a long time. (Disagree)
  - SNAP is the program that offers assistance in buying food. (Agree)
  - If you choose to move to a new community, you will be able to receive the same public assistance again. (Disagree)

### Additional Resources:

- The Settle In website podcast or fact sheet on [Community Services](#)
- Settle In app chapter on “Community Services”



## Health

### Instructions:

1. Explain to participants that they will learn about Health in the U.S. Provide summary of [objectives](#) for this topic.
2. Ask participants to explain what healthcare was like in their in their country/ies of origin and/or protection. For example, what would they do if they had a cold? A medical emergency?
3. Ask participants the following questions or relevant variations. After each question, provide the correct information.
  - What will be your first contact with the U.S. healthcare system?
  - Can you bring an initial supply of medications and relevant prescriptions to the U.S.?
  - Where can you go for your healthcare needs in the U.S.? For example, for immunizations? For a check-up? For a cold?
  - How do you set up an appointment with the doctor?
  - What would be a medical emergency that may require going to the hospital?
  - Who will be responsible for paying for your medical costs?
  - How can you stay healthy in the U.S.?
  - What is health insurance?
4. Describe the following scenarios and ask what actions the participants would take. Add additional scenarios as necessary.
  - Your chest or heart hurts.
  - You cut your finger with a knife.
  - You have a fever.
  - You have a small rash on your arm.
  - You have a runny nose.
  - You have a very bad headache that has not gone away.
  - You have been feeling sad for two months.
  - You think you have broken your arm.

### Additional Resources:

- The Settle In website videos, podcasts, or fact sheets on [Healthcare in the U.S.](#)
- *Making Your Way* images in "Health and Hygiene unit"
- Settle In app chapter on "Health and Hygiene"

## Hygiene

### Instructions:

1. Explain to participants that they will learn about Hygiene in the U.S. Provide a summary of [objectives](#) for this topic.
2. Ask participants to define the term “hygiene” and ask them to consider hygiene practices in their country/ies of origin and/or protection. Additionally, you may ask participants:
  - What did it mean to be clean in these places?
  - How did people keep their homes clean?
  - What about public spaces?
  - Why was it important to have proper hygiene?
3. Ask participants the following questions or relevant variations. After each question, provide the correct information.
  - How can you practice proper personal hygiene in the U.S.?
  - What should you do to keep your home clean?
  - How does having proper hygiene help you in the U.S.?
4. Describe the following scenarios to further discuss the topic of Hygiene.
  - Alice is a newly arrived refugee. She has three children and lives in an apartment building. What advice would you give her to keep her home clean?
  - Fahed is new to the U.S. Today is his first day at his job. What should he do to prepare for work?
  - Joseph and Sabina are celebrating their first month in the U.S. They are having a picnic in a local park. How can they ensure they are respecting the public space of the park?
5. Assess participants' knowledge. Read each statement and ask participants if they agree or disagree. Correct and provide additional information as necessary.
  - Proper hygiene can prevent the spread of disease. (Agree)
  - Bad hygiene has no impact on your ability to get and keep a job. (Disagree)
  - You can be evicted for not maintaining a clean home. (Agree)
  - Having a clean home prevents pest infestations. (Agree)

### Additional Resources:

- The Settle In website videos, podcasts, or fact sheets on [Hygiene in the U.S.](#)
- *Making Your Way* images in [Health and Hygiene unit](#)
- [Supplemental lesson plan on Hygiene](#) available on the CORE website
- Settle In app chapter on “Health and Hygiene”

## Employment

### Instructions:

1. Explain to participants that they will learn about Employment in the U.S. Provide a summary of [objectives](#) for this topic.
2. Ask participants what does the term “self-sufficient” mean to them. What are actions they can take to become self-sufficient? Asking the following questions as relevant:
  - Why should you prioritize getting a job? What are the benefits?
  - Who is responsible for helping you find a job?
  - What kind of jobs are available in the U.S.?
  - What might be your first job in the U.S.?
  - What experience do you have working?
  - What skills do you have that would make you employable?
  - What rights do workers in the U.S. have?
3. Describe the following scenarios to further discuss the topic of Employment.
  - Soon after Mohammed arrives in the U.S., he meets with Claire, an employment counselor. Claire suggests that Mohammed apply for a position as a janitor. What should Mohammed do?
  - Honorine has applied for different jobs every day for almost three months. After many interviews, she has two job offers. The first one is as a cleaner at a school near where she lives, and it pays \$7.50 an hour. The second job is picking produce, and it pays \$12.00 an hour. The second job is only for 4 months. Which job should Honorine choose?
  - Marie and Ali are applying for the same job. In the past year, Marie has had one job while Ali has had four different jobs. Who do you think the employer will hire?
4. Assess participants' knowledge. Read each statement and ask participants if they agree or disagree. Correct and provide additional information as necessary.
  - The government or your Resettlement Agency must find a job for you. (Disagree)
  - Learning English can help you find a job and increase your job opportunities. (Agree)
  - You will have little trouble finding a job in the same career you had at home. (Disagree)
  - You will likely need to work in an entry-level job at first but with time be able to find more opportunities. (Agree)

### Additional Resources:

- The Settle In website videos, podcasts, or fact sheets on [Employment in the U.S.](#)
- *Making Your Way* [Employment unit](#)
- [Supplemental lesson plan on Employment for Refugee Women](#) available on the CORE website
- Settle In app chapter on “Employment”

## Budgeting and Personal Finance

### Instructions:

1. Explain to participants that they will learn about Budgeting and Personal Finance. Provide a summary of [objectives](#) for this topic.
2. Ask participants if they are familiar with the U.S. financial system. Ask them to share what they know and compare their country/ies of origin and/or protection with the U.S.
3. Conduct a quick needs assessment. Select from the phrases below and ask participants if they agree or disagree. Follow-up with additional discussion as relevant. This is taken from the [supplemental lesson plan on Money Management](#), which a CO provider can reference for additional follow-up questions.
  - I can make a monthly budget.
  - I have had a loan.
  - I have used a bank.
  - I know the difference between a checking and savings account.
  - I am good at saving money.
  - I am good at identifying essential needs.
  - A television is essential in the U.S.
  - I have managed my living expenses well in the past.
  - I regularly use a budget to manage my expenses.
  - Using a bank is safe and secure.
4. Ask participants additional questions to further develop their understanding.
  - What will be your monthly expenses?
  - What can you do to secure a financial future in the U.S.?
  - What would put your financial future at risk in the U.S.?

### Additional Resources:

- The Settle In website podcast or fact sheet on [Money Management](#)
- [Supplemental lesson plan on Money Management](#) available on the CORE website
- Settle In app chapter on "Money Management"

## English

### Instructions:

1. Explain to participants that they will learn about the role English will play in their resettlement in the U.S. Provide a summary of [objectives](#) for this topic.
2. Ask the participants if they know any English and, if so, ask them to assess their level of proficiency.
3. Ask participants the following questions or relevant variations. After each question, provide the correct information.
  - What are the benefits of learning English?
  - What will you need English for in the U.S.?
  - How can you learn English?
  - Can you access services without English?
4. Describe the following scenarios to further discuss the role of English in the U.S.
  - Your friend feels shy about going to her child's school for parent-teacher meetings because she doesn't speak English. Should she go to the meeting anyway?
  - You have a friend that does not speak any English. He is worried that he cannot find a job in the U.S. What advice would you give him?
  - Your friend finds a job and tells you that she no longer needs to attend English class. What advice would you give her?
5. Be sure to make note of sharing any additional English resources with the participants following the CO session.

### Additional Resources:

- The Settle In website podcasts or fact sheets on [Learning English](#)
- Images of [Learning English](#) from *Making Your Way*
- Settle In app chapter on "Learning English"

## Education

### Instructions:

1. Explain to participants that they will learn about Education in the U.S. Provide a summary of [objectives](#) for this topic.
2. If CO provider is not aware already, ask the participants if they have any children and their ages. Also ask about the participants' experiences with education in their country/ies of origin and/or protection.
3. Ask participants the following questions or relevant variations. After each question, provide the correct information.
  - Who can attend school in the U.S.? What ages? Boys? Girls?
  - What are parents expected to do for their children in school?
  - How many levels of education in the U.S. are there?
  - What kind of education is available for adults in the U.S.?
  - What should be your priority in the U.S.? Education or a job?
  - What is the value of going to school versus working for you? What about for children?
4. Assess participants' knowledge. Read each statement and ask participants if they agree or disagree. Correct and provide additional information as necessary.
  - In the U.S., girls are not expected to attend school after the age of 12. (Disagree)
  - When family income is low, working is more important than school for adults. (Agree)
  - Most people in the U.S. consider education to be a lifelong experience. (Agree)
  - Education after high school is free for everyone. (Disagree)
  - Your child may participate in additional after-school activities that help them to get along with people and gain other life skills. (Agree)

### Additional Resources:

- The Settle In website videos, podcasts or fact sheets on [Education](#) available
- *Making Your Way* [Education unit](#)
- [Supplemental lesson plan on Supporting Your Child in School](#) available on the CORE website
- Settle In app chapter on "Education"

## U.S. Laws

### Instructions:

1. Explain to participants that they will learn about the topic of U.S. Laws. Provide a summary of [objectives](#) for this topic.
2. Ask participants what they know about U.S. laws. Ask them to tell you about any specific U.S. laws (you may prompt them). How are they similar or different from laws in their county/ies of origin and/or protection? If necessary, specifically ask the following questions:
  - What are your rights in the U.S.? For example, do you have the right to work?
  - What are some of your responsibilities? For example, how do you protect your children?
  - What are the consequences of not following the law in the U.S.?
  - Are the laws the same across the U.S.? How might they be different?
4. Assess participants' knowledge. Read each statement and ask participants if they agree or disagree. Correct and provide additional information as necessary.
  - You are not protected by the laws in the U.S. (Disagree)
  - You are responsible for knowing and following the laws. (Agree)
  - There are laws about child supervision, neglect, and abuse. (Agree)
  - Breaking laws could affect your legal status. (Agree)
  - You can trust police and other law enforcement to help you. (Agree)

### Additional Resources:

- The Settle In website podcasts or fact sheets on [Rights and Responsibilities](#)
- *Making Your Way* [U.S. Laws and Refugee Status unit](#) has images and more notes on discussing U.S. laws
- [Supplemental lesson plan on Rule of Law](#) available on the CORE website
- [Supplemental lesson plan on First Amendment](#) available on the CORE website

## Your New Community

### Instructions:

1. Explain to participants that they will learn about their new community. Provide a summary of [objectives](#) for this topic.
2. Ask the participants what they expect to find in their new communities in the U.S. If they are already in the U.S., ask what have they seen in their community so far? If appropriate, ask how their new community is similar or different in the U.S. to their own experiences in their country/ies of origin and/or protection.
3. If providing CO in the U.S. ensure the participants know their address and phone number.
4. Ask participants the following questions or relevant variations. After each question, provide the correct information.
  - What are the benefits of learning about your new community in the U.S.?
  - How can you learn more about your community?
  - What emergency services are available in the U.S.?
  - Where can you buy groceries?
  - Where can you buy household products?
  - Where can you find free books?
  - Where can you mail a letter or package, or buy stamps?
  - Where are some places you might be able to gather with other people in your community?
5. If necessary, provide participants with additional localized content about their new community. This topic may also be an opportunity to revisit questions about public assistance and the role of the Resettlement Agency.

### Additional Resources:

- The Settle In website podcast or fact sheet on [Community Services](#)
- Settle In app chapter on "Community Services"



## Cultural Adjustment

### Instructions:

1. Explain to participants that they will explore cultural adjustment in the U.S. Provide a summary of [objectives](#) for this topic.
2. Ask participants the following questions. Through discussion explain the phases of cultural adjustment and also highlight diversity in the U.S.
  - What are your hopes about the U.S.? What are your fears?
  - What do you think are some key cultural differences?
  - What do Americans value? What are some cultural norms?
  - What do you think will be difficult about life in the U.S.? How can you address these challenges?
  - Have you heard the term culture shock? What does this mean to you? What can you do to cope with culture shock?
  - How long do you think it will take for you to adjust to life in the U.S.? Will it be the same for everyone?
  - How might your family dynamics change as a result of life in the U.S.?
3. Based on the participants' responses make notes if further follow-up discussions are needed.

### Additional Resources:

- The Settle In website has information on [Cultural Adjustment](#)
- *Making Your Way* [Cultural Adjustment unit](#)

## After Delivery of Telephonic CO

- Document the delivery of telephonic CO in alignment with policies at your Resettlement Support Center or Resettlement Agency.
- Provide participants with any appropriate materials and resources after the session to reinforce learning. For example, email links to resources or instructions on accessing Settle In app.