

# Preparing for Hosting

## Considerations for the Host

As you begin to prepare yourself, your family and your home for your guest, it's important to be as aware as possible of your own expectations for what it will be like. Any time an additional person joins a household, it changes our patterns and rhythms. We each come with our own preferences, habits, and customs, and as we blend our lives, we will come up against our differences. We will need to figure out together how to adapt.

Sometimes it can be startling how reactive we feel about small changes in our living space, even when we know that such changes are inevitable when we invite an asylum seeker to share that space. The following section, "Things to Consider: Household Norms", is intended to help guide your thinking as you plan for your hosting situation *before your guest arrives*. Thinking carefully about *preferences* (such as relative neatness) versus *requirements* (such as no tobacco smoking in the house) will help you come up with guidelines while encouraging your own capacity to be flexible and resilient.

Once the host has thought through and written out what they are offering their guest, and what they might expect in return, please share it with your core team. Ask for feedback on what you've outlined in case something needs clarification, seems a bit rigid, or raises additional questions for you to consider. We encourage you to be both as honest and as flexible as you can be, and to incorporate the preferences of your guest once they have arrived, as well.

The Host-Guest contract has been created by CHAN to help clearly define what is offered and what is expected by both parties. It is included below. The host will fill out the contract and include it with an introduction letter to the potential guest. Your guest will then be able to decide in advance whether living with you will be a good situation for them and if they can adapt to what you have to offer.

Be aware that your guest may come with cultural expectations about how to interact with you, how you will interact with them, what you will give them, what is personal and what is communal, how to ask for something, how to respond to requests, how to resolve problems, and how men and women relate to each other. The organization Intercambio is an excellent resource for understanding cultural differences and how to negotiate them. Contact Denise at [DChang@HostingAsylum.org](mailto:DChang@HostingAsylum.org) for a referral if you need advice.

After a settling-in period, ask a third party to check in with your guest privately to make sure things are going smoothly for them. This will give them the opportunity to express any questions or concerns that they might be uncomfortable sharing with their host. This can be the Coordinator or anyone else they feel comfortable talking with. Telling the guest it is "part of the program" can ease any discomfort they might have. If you need help with this, contact Ali at [AGlover@HostingAsylum.org](mailto:AGlover@HostingAsylum.org).

## Household Norms: Identifying the Specifics

### Privacy and personal space

Consider the usual rhythm of your weekdays and weekends: when you and others in the house usually come and go, how you're used to coming together for social or meal time and when you prefer to be interactive, quiet or alone.

- Are there elements of this rhythm that you'd like your guest to know about?
- Are there disruptions to this rhythm that would particularly bother you, such as music playing early or late in the day, or phone conversations happening in common space?

### Household chores

Consider the basic tasks that help your house run smoothly: taking out the garbage and recycling, sweeping the kitchen floor, cleaning the common use spaces, and so on.

- Are there chores that will need to increase in frequency with another person living in the home?
- Are there weekly chores that would be particularly helpful if your guest were able and willing to take them on?
- If there are chores that may be unfamiliar to your guest (such as separating out recyclables), and are you able to be patient and flexible as they learn?

### Neatness and cleaning up

Think about the ways that you and others in your household use the common spaces (kitchen, living room, entryway or foyer, dining room or other eating space, shared bathrooms). We all have different needs for neatness.

- How important is it that the common areas be kept free of personal items, or do you leave some of your things there? If you do, would you be comfortable having your guest do the same?
- Are you comfortable letting others know when a space feels too chaotic and needs to be neaten up again?
- Are you able and willing to leave the neatness or messiness of your guest's bedroom up to your guest?
- Are there rules you would like to have followed even in their private bedroom, such as not accumulating dirty dishes there?
- If you or others will be sharing a bathroom with your guest, is it okay for personal items to be stored there, such as makeup and toothbrushes?

### Meals and food

Mealtimes mean different things to different people. Some people eat quickly or on-the-go. Some use this time for relaxing, unwinding, or catching up with each other's day. For some, this is the main meal of the day and may be a large meal. For some it is a light snack before bed time.

- What are your habits and practices around common meals? How often do you and your partner, family, or roommates have dinner together?
- Is it important to you that your guest joins you for these meals?
- Is it important to you that you have meals at times that are just with your family? If so, are you comfortable letting your guest know this?
- Will you be most comfortable having all food be used communally, or setting aside some foods just for your guest or just for you and your family?
- What is your system for noting when you're running low on something (e.g. a grocery list)? Is this system easy for your guest to use, or will it need to be adapted?

### Friends of your guest

You may find that the asylum-seeker you're hosting already knows one or more people in your city. Over time, it's very likely (and desirable!) that they will make new friends and contacts, and they may want to bring these friends home to visit.

- How do you feel about your guest bringing a friend home to hang out in their room? In the common space? Cooking together and sharing a meal?
- How do you feel about your guest having a friend stay overnight with them?

### Substance use

How do you feel about cigarette smoking in the house? On an outside porch or in the yard?

How do you feel about alcohol use?

How do you feel about marijuana use in the home? On an outside porch or in the yard?

*It is important to know that even in states that have legalized marijuana, as long as it is illegal on the federal level, it could cause legal problems for your guest if they should be caught in possession of it. Nevertheless, since your guest is an adult (even if a young one), they may make different decisions about using marijuana than what you might decide. Whatever your decision, it is imperative that your guest understand the law:*

#### **INA Title 8, Chapter 12, Subchapter II, Part IV, §1227 (a) (2) (B)**

##### **(i) Conviction**

Any alien who at any time after admission has been convicted of a violation of (or a conspiracy or attempt to violate) any law or regulation of a State, the United States, or a foreign country relating to a controlled substance (as defined in [section 802 of title 21](#)), other than a single offense involving possession for one's own use of 30 grams or less of marijuana, is deportable.

### Safety Considerations

Give your neighborhood some careful, honest thought. Will they notice if someone they don't know is walking around the neighborhood? Will they be welcoming or fearful of someone who is obviously different? Are people social or do they keep to themselves? Make sure you introduce your guest to your neighbors so they know he or she belongs there. This also helps your guest know who they can ask for help if there is an emergency.

- Do you have preferences or concerns about when your guest goes out or comes home (e.g. very late at night)? Do they know how to get in the house if it is locked?
- Are there safety factors in your neighborhood or city that are especially important to convey to your guest in order to keep them safe?

**Are there other household norms or guidelines that are important to you?**

**As you try to consider your guest's perspective, what kinds of guidelines do you think will make them feel most welcome and supported in your home?**

# CHAN, Host Team and Guest Agreement

## Welcome to the United States!

We want to know that you are welcome in our country, our community, and our home. We want you to be successful in your legal process, and confident in your ability to make a new life for yourself here in the United States.

**Objective:** Our Host Team is here to support you as an Asylum Seeker (our “Guest”) until you are granted your Employment Authorization Document (“work permit”) or can find sufficient employment to transition into independent living.

This agreement is not legally binding. It is only intended to identify expectations clearly to encourage a good relationship between the host and guest.

## HOST TEAM COMMITMENT

As our Guest you can expect to be surrounded by a dedicated community that supports and encourages you as you navigate your legal process, as well as serve as mentors as you learn to live and thrive in a new country. You can expect to be treated respectfully, live in safety, and experience acceptance from our team and our community. Through it all, it is our privilege to share this journey with you, our Guest.

Our support will be for a time period of \_\_\_\_\_ months. This period is based on the anticipated time necessary to receive your work permit, find sufficient employment, or prepare to transition to independent living. It can be flexible or extended if needed, by agreement between the Guest and Host Team.

## Team members will provide the following to the best of our ability:

- Dignified, safe and comfortable housing
- Ample food
- Initial clothing needs, including winter outerwear and school uniforms. They may be new or donated.
- Toiletries and personal hygiene products. Make-up, hairstyling, or other personal grooming items will be arranged and paid for by the guest.
- Connection to legal services to support your asylum process while you are CHAN’s client.
- Connection to healthcare professionals for immediate and pressing medical and dental needs, including necessary medications. Medical bills may be paid for by the support team or CHAN or the client will set up a payment plan with the medical provider, depending on the situation. Necessary medications will be paid for by the support team or CHAN for the duration of the hosting situation.
- Connection to a mental health care professional if requested.
- Transportation to legal and medical appointments and other scheduled activities as needed and bus passes to travel independently.
- A phone (if you don’t already have one) and a phone plan.

Other financial support and services MAY be available based on the need and at the discretion of the team.

CHAN volunteers are not licensed, trained, or insured for childcare. The parent is responsible for the care and supervision of their child at all times.

**Your host will provide safe housing with minimal privacy. Below are specifics for your housing:**

A private bedroom with a door, bed, and space to store personal possessions.

Bathroom, shared or private? \_\_\_\_\_

Food may be in the form of shared family meals, stipend to purchase your own food, groceries purchased on your behalf, donated food, or food bank options, as the team is able to provide.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Kitchen access and food storage (including personal and shared items and space):

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Laundry access may be in-home or at a nearby laundromat:

\_\_\_\_\_

Use of television, computers, tools and other equipment:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Other shared or private spaces:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Alcohol use, limits and spaces: \_\_\_\_\_

Smoking, limits and spaces: \_\_\_\_\_

**Marijuana use:**

It is the policy of the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) that violation of federal controlled substance law, including for marijuana, remains a conditional bar to establishing good moral character (GMC) for naturalization even where that conduct would not be an offense under state law.

Simply, it is legal in Colorado to use marijuana. However, as a non-citizen, you must obey federal law, which states that marijuana use is illegal. Using it may influence your asylum decision. Please discuss with your lawyer any use of marijuana or other controlled substances.

**Household norms:**

Participation in household duties and cleanliness expectations:

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Participation in mealtimes or other family events:

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Quiet hours and curfews:

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Inviting guests to visit you:

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Other:

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What should we know about your needs?

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## RESOLVING CONFLICT

**Please feel free to ask any questions you need to!** We don't expect you to always know what to do, or where to find things, or how to understand so many new situations you are facing. We want you to feel safe in our home, and confident that you are welcome in our family and community.

As in any shared living situation, mistakes, misunderstanding and conflict will happen. We will make mistakes, and you will too. **Open, respectful communication** is very important to finding solutions that are good for all. Please do not be afraid to talk with your host personally and directly about anything that you do not understand or find difficult to live with.

### **If you and your host family cannot find a solution to the problem together:**

1. Contact your team coordinator to help you find a solution.

Your team coordinator is: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Contact Denise Chang, Executive Director of the Colorado Hosting Asylum

Network Phone number: 303-408-5418

Email: [DChang@hostingasylum.org](mailto:DChang@hostingasylum.org)

3. We respect your privacy and right to discuss any problems you may have with your social worker, lawyer, mental health professional, doctor, case manager, referring organization, religious leader, or law enforcement, all of whom can assist you to solve problems.

## GUEST COMMITMENT

Your Host Team’s purpose and commitment is to support and mentor you through the Asylum process until you are able to live independently. As a guest in their home, there are expectations of you during this process also. Good communication with your Host Team is key to a successful outcome for you and the Host Team.

You are expected to file all required paperwork on time, including your application for your Employment Authorization Document (EAD or “work permit”).

You are expected to work with your legal representative and attend all appointments. Please give as much notice as possible to your team regarding needs such as transportation to appointments so they can make the arrangements to get you to where you need to be.

You are expected to be respectful to all members of the team and comply with the living arrangement agreed on between you and the Host.

You are expected to actively seek formal employment once you receive your work permit, with the goal of finding independent living arrangements and build a life for yourself that you choose.

**Termination of agreement:** If it is determined that either the Guest or Host Team are not fulfilling the terms of this agreement, the agreement can be terminated by either party, for any reason, at any time. This agreement will also be terminated if the host family or team members feel threatened or unsafe because of your personal behavior or involvement in activities that are illegal or expose your host family to danger. If this occurs, CHAN will be move you to a hotel room for up to 7 days to allow time for you to make other arrangements.

Guest Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Host Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Coordinator Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



# The Asylum Process

**CHAN is not authorized to give legal advice, and the information below is intended only to provide a general understanding of the asylum process. Your guest must contact a qualified lawyer or an Accredited Representative for legal advice regarding their personal situation.**

**The Defensive Asylum process begins when a person goes to any border of the United States and asks a Border Patrol officer for Asylum or Humanitarian Protection from persecution in their home country.** It does not matter whether the person crosses the border illegally or goes to a regular Port of Entry – by both US and International law, anyone has the right to at least ask for asylum. When they do so, they begin a process designed to confirm that the person does, in fact, meet the requirements established by law to receive protection in the US. Beginning with their original request, and throughout their subsequent legal process, we refer to them as Asylum Seekers.

**An Asylum Seeker is not the same as a Refugee.** A “Refugee” has been designated as such by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). A refugee is someone who is outside of their own country and cannot return due to persecution, conflict, violence, or other circumstances that make return intolerable. Therefore, they are seeking protection from another country. UNHCR evaluates their case, and may refer them for resettlement in another country. Each year, the United States sets a specific number of refugees that we are willing to receive in that year. Those who are accepted are then resettled in the US through the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR), and receive a variety of benefits, including cash, services, job placement and employment readiness. An Asylum Seeker has not gone through this process and must prove to an Immigration Judge that they qualify for “Refugee” status under US law. Until they receive the Judge’s final decision to grant asylum, they do not qualify for any refugee resettlement benefits. This is why CHAN works with Asylum Seekers, but not Refugees.

You can learn more about Refugees at: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/56e81c0d4.html>

**The first step in the process of applying for asylum might include Detention.** When a person asks a Border Patrol (CBP) Officer for Asylum, they will be taken into custody and held in a CBP Holding Facility. It may take a few days, weeks or longer before they are assigned an appointment with an Asylum Officer for their Credible Fear Interview. Until then, they may be transferred to longer-term custody with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), who will send them to any of the dozens of Detention Facilities across the US to wait. The Aurora Contract Detention Facility is one of these.

**An Asylum Officer from US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) will conduct the Credible Fear Interview,** where he or she will decide whether there is a significant possibility that the person will be able to prove in Immigration Court (EOIR) that **they have been persecuted or have a well-founded fear of being persecuted based on their race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion if they return.** The Interview includes dozens of very personal questions and may take a few hours to complete. Currently, they cannot request asylum based on poverty, war, natural disasters, hunger, or any other reasons. Under the Trump administration, domestic violence and cartel violence were not considered grounds for asylum. The Biden administration is reconsidering them for inclusion. If the Asylum Seeker is able to establish Credible Fear, the Asylum Officer will refer their case to an Immigration Judge for a full hearing. **They will be placed in “Formal Removal Proceedings”, given a Notice to Appear (NTA), and their first Court date will be**

**assigned. Their case will be considered a “defensive” asylum application.** If they do not pass their Credible Fear Interview, they may be removed from the US at that time.

You can learn more about the Credible Fear Interview at:

<https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/refugees-and-asylum/asylum/questions-and-answers-credible-fear-screening>

For Asylum Seekers who entered the US after May 31, 2022, a new process has been put into place. **If they pass the Credible Fear Interview, the Asylum Officer may choose to use the results of the interview to schedule them for an Asylum Merits Interview directly,** rather than require them to file a Form I-589 and begin the Immigration Court process as described below. At the next interview, the Asylum Officer may make the decision themselves whether the person has demonstrated eligibility for asylum or other forms of relief. The Asylum Seeker may never be required to appear in Immigration Court.

You can learn more about this policy at:

<https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/refugees-and-asylum/asylum/asylum-merits-interview-with-uscis-processing-after-a-positive-credible-fear-determination>

If they pass the Credible Fear Interview and receive their NTA, **the Asylum Seeker may be held in ICE Detention throughout their legal process, or they may be released** “on their own recognizance”, if ICE believes there is sufficient motivation for them to appear in court when they are required to. They may also be released for “humanitarian” reasons, such as pregnancy, age, medical needs, or COVID. Few Asylum Seekers are released without a “Sponsor” on record, which can be a family member or friend. CHAN hosts can request to sponsor an asylum seeker out of detention as a “friend”.

The Asylum Seeker begins their legal process on the date of their NTA, when they appear for their **Master Calendar Hearing**. Currently, as a result of a backlog of more than 2 million cases in Immigration Court, **Master Calendar Hearings may be scheduled three or more years into the future.** At this hearing, they will be read their charges, which will usually be “entry without inspection” or “entry at other than a port of entry”, and notified of their rights. Then, they will be allowed to plead guilty or not guilty of the charges presented, and then allowed to file their asylum application. The application they will use is Form I-589, “Application for Asylum and for Withholding of Removal”. They will be asked if they have a lawyer. If they don’t have one and want one, they will be given a list of free (*pro bono*) or low-cost lawyers. If they want more time to try to hire a lawyer, their Master Calendar Hearing will be rescheduled for a few weeks later.

From the date of their Master Calendar Hearing, an Asylum Seeker may be required to appear one or more times in court as they progress toward their Merits Hearing. **At the Merits Hearing, the Asylum Seeker will present their entire case as to why the Judge should grant them asylum.** They will tell their story and present as much evidence as they can that they fear persecution based on their race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion. An ICE prosecutor will also be present to argue that the Judge should deny them asylum and deport them. The Judge will probably make a decision within the next few weeks. They may grant Asylum. They may also deny Asylum but give another form of relief, such as Withholding of Removal. They may deny asylum and order the person to be deported. **A grant of Asylum qualifies the person to receive similar benefits as a Refugee, and allows them to apply for Legal Permanent Resident status (aka a “green card”) one year later. Five years after that, they may apply for citizenship.** Withholding of Removal does not.

You can learn more about Formal Removal Proceedings at:

<https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/IF/IF11536>

And: <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/IG/IG10022>

The Judge's decision may be appealed to the Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA) by either the Asylum Seeker or ICE prosecutors.

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