



Tips and Guidance for being a Strengths-Based Volunteer

This document serves as a roundup of information following the August 3, 2020 [Lunch and Learn Webinar: Welcoming Refugees- Strengths-Based Volunteering](#)

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Thoughtful engagement in volunteering is a difficult and continual process. However, it is essential in being a healthy volunteer and promoting integration of newly arrived refugees. Remember, to be a Strength-Based volunteer, you focus your work through the lens of what the other can do—what they know.

Remember:

- Three ways to empower refugees are:
 - Refugees are individuals who deserve respect and autonomy. Their lives, decisions and personal information are theirs alone.
 - All actions should be tied to self-sufficiency; they are deliberate and progressive.
 - All actions should follow the least intrusive path to service delivery.
- Ask yourself these three questions when assisting with a task.
 - *How does my action help this person become more self-sufficient?*
 - *How can I change this from a favor into a lesson?*
 - *How can I take steps so that next time this person will have the skills to do this task on their own or without any assistance?*
- Part of being intentional and thoughtful in this work is being willing to grow. Be open to new trainings and approaches to volunteering.
- View your role as teacher instead of a helper. ‘teach-to’ instead of ‘do-for’
- Make ‘You can do it,’ ‘let’s try this together,’ and other encouraging messages your most overused phrases.
- You are not alone in your welcome of newcomers. You cannot be/do everything and must know when to refer questions to local professionals in your community and when to communicate items to the local resettlement agency.