

THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESES OF
Western New York &
Northwestern Pennsylvania

WELCOME BOXES

Partnership-wide outreach effort for Arriving Evacuees and Refugees

Imagine arriving in a new place, having left from faraway with only a few items you could carry and trying to start life over again. Individuals and families are arriving in both our dioceses, as evacuees from Afghanistan and refugees from several regions around the world. Primarily settling in Buffalo and Erie, they are our new neighbors and we can help them feel welcome, supported, and loved.

There are many ways churches can help and we have identified a project that can be scaled in size and scope. “Welcome Boxes” are designed to organize collections by room, simplifying distribution and helping to ensure that arriving evacuees and refugees get the items they need.

Your church or a group from your congregation can set your own goals for the number and type of “boxes” and your time-frame for collections. Organizing collections through the end of 2021 or early in 2022 will help ensure arriving families receive the support they need, when they need it, and give local agencies a ready inventory. Financial help is important, as well, including donations to offset rent, gift cards, and contributions for other needs. *Please do not take furniture, clothing, or other items to agencies without first checking to be sure they are taking items you would like to give.*

Welcome Boxes for household items, bedrooms, bathroom, kitchen, and dining support are described on the following page. Think of each of these as a gift basket and consider a family of 5-7 people for the quantity. For most of these Welcome Boxes, we are asking for new items. A few, such as dishes and cookware, may be clean, gently used items, in good condition; unless an item is marked acceptable as used, it should be new. Select a container from the suggestions, then fill with the items; the containers described are helpful to families who may have limited furniture for day to day storage. Attach the completed checklist to the top of your “box” to indicate the items included. You may add extra, related items (see “nice to add”), but please be sure to get all of the checklist items on a room list. Refugee resettlement agencies are required to provide certain items, so that’s why it’s important to not make substitutions on the checklist items.

Diocesan Partnership contact: Canon Twila Smith is available to meet with church groups by Zoom to plan a collection drive, recommend formation resources, and can provide details on other support for arriving evacuees and refugees, as a liaison with local resettlement agencies. For details, contact Canon Twila, tsmith@episcopalpartnership.org. Church contacts: Please let us know what you are planning and send photos and a description and/or a short video of your efforts. We want to hear from you and encourage others to support our newest neighbors. Also, we are organizing drop-off

points for collections and working with agencies in our regions to expedite connecting Welcome Boxes with families in need.

HOUSEHOLD CLOSET

Container: large laundry basket

- two lamps (table or floor lamps or one of each) and package of new light bulbs (lamps may be used as long as clean, in excellent working condition, and no loose parts)
- broom with dust pan
- mop and bucket
- powder laundry detergent
- hangers for closets
- cleaning sponges and no-scratch scouring pads
- powdered household cleanser, such as Comet
- liquid, all-purpose cleaner, such as Fabuloso or Lysol
- two 9-volt batteries (not rechargeable) for smoke alarms
- two boxes (or more) of facial tissue
- basic first aid kit
- hand sanitizer and facemasks
- disinfectant wipes for household cleaning
- large package of paper towels
- extension cord
- umbrella

Nice to add: (all new unless noted) 2022 wall calendar, flashlight (plug-in rechargeable), batteries and charger, Command hooks, suction-cup hooks, indoor laundry clip-hangers, extra cleaning supplies, small household tool set (may be good/used), wall clock (electric or battery operated with batteries; may be used), electric radio, English picture dictionary, city map, calculator, small package of file folders, small dry erase board and markers

KITCHEN

Container: kitchen trash can (include a box of liners)

- pots and pans – at least one sauce pan, frying pan, and large baking dish; items may be gently used unless non-stick (non-stick cookware should be new), though new sets are preferred and appreciated
- large pot with lid for making soup, stews, etc., for big family – made be used if good quality and not scratched
- mixing/serving bowls – used ok, if in good condition; items do not have to match
- tea kettle (electric or stove top) – may be gently used
- one set of kitchen/cooking utensils (new)
- one set of sharp knives (new)
- can opener (new; not electric)
- cutting board (new; at least one, preferably two)
- dish towels – at least six (new)
- pot holders – two
- dish soap and scrub brush/sponge

Nice to add: colander/strainer, dish drainer, holder for kitchen utensils (may be used), kitchen scissors, drawer organizer for flatware (new), roll(s) of shelf liner, bag clips, storage containers (such as glass jars with secure lids for rice, flour, tea, etc.), “leftover” food storage containers and food wrap (new, in packages), baking liner/foil (new), rice cooker (may be used, if clean and in good condition)

BEDROOM

Container: large storage bin, hamper, or basket

Note that more bedroom boxes are needed than other items; if you are trying to collect for a household, make a goal of one full/queen and four twin sets. For each box, decide if you are collecting a twin set for children or single adults, or a set for parents, which may be full or queen. Please make a large tag for your bin or basket to clearly mark the bed size.

- one set of comforter/sheets/pillowcase(s); “bed-in-a-bag” sets or individual items
- blankets for warmer and colder months (preferably one of each)
- electric alarm clock (no wind-up) or battery-operated with batteries
- pack of pens and/or pencils and composition notebook

Nice to add: smaller bed “throw,” decorative pillow, electric fan, nightlight, picture frame, stuffed animal

BATHROOM

Container: storage bin or reusable tote

- 5-7 bath towels
- 5-7 wash cloths
- shower curtain, liner, and hooks
- toilet cleaning brush
- bathroom cleaner(s)
- toilet paper – one or more large packages
- shampoo – one large bottle of shampoo (or more)
- 5-7 bathroom soaps (for bathroom sink), plus 5-7 bars for shower
- 5-7 toothbrushes, plus at least one large tube of toothpaste
- hand and body lotion – family size
- deodorant – 5 sticks
- disposable razors (package) and shaving cream
- small trash can
- box of sanitary napkins, for teens and young women (no tampons)

Nice to add: hand towels, additional toiletry items, bath/shower accessories, nail clippers/files, small mirror

DINING

Container: large storage bin or reusable tote

If larger sets of flatware, dishes, and glasses are provided, please note quantity so that they may go to bigger families

- flatware – minimum 6 place settings (fork, knife and spoon) – may be used

__ set of dishes with minimum of 6 items each – plate, bowl and coffee/tea cup or mug; new dish sets are appreciated, but used is permissible if not chipped/cracked; these do not have to match

__ drinking glasses – at least 6 (not plastic, not wine glasses or beer mugs; if used, be sure these are clean and not chipped; new glass sets are very appreciated!)

__ paper napkins (one or more packages)

Nice to add: serving pieces (large serving utensils, platter, tray, breadbasket), pitcher (new), set of cloth napkins, placemats, dining chair pads; grocery gift card to SaveALot or Tops