

Welcome to Lincoln, Nebraska!

A Guide for New Residents



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Welcome to Nebraska! This guidebook and the resource guide were made to assist you as you adjust to life in the United States. The guidebook provides information on our community, helpful resources, and organizations that may assist you. However, we have not covered everything you need to know, and the information we provide serves only as suggestions. Reputable professionals in each subject area provide the best, most current information possible. Please see them!

Chapter 1

Shopping and Housing



• SHOPPING FOR CLOTHING

A good place to buy clothing is a thrift store. People donate clothes they do not wear anymore to these stores, and you can buy these clothes for a cheap price. Some organizations give away free clothing, household items, diapers, and other goods. All of these items are in good condition and washed before being given away or sold.

• SHOPPING FOR FOOD

If you are of low income or do not have a job you may be able to receive financial assistance from the government to be used toward food. This is called the SNAP program, and it can reduce the cost of food items but can be used toward food items only. The program does not apply toward alcohol, pet food, tobacco, paper products, etc.

• HOUSING

→ SAFETY

Although Lincoln is a small community it is good to use precaution when securing your home and car. **Always lock your doors!** Installing additional locks on your doors and windows can help prevent a break-in. If you rent, ask your landlord first before installing anything. In case of a break-in, call 9-1-1.

→ SHELTERS AND SUBSIDIZED HOUSING

Emergency housing or a shelter is available if you need a temporary place to stay. Subsidized housing is affordable government-owned housing for people of low income. You can apply for subsidized housing at the Lincoln Housing Authority at 5700 R St.

→ LOOKING FOR HOUSING

If you are looking for a place to rent or buy, you can check the newspaper or look online. When using an online site to search for a place to rent, you should beware of anything that sounds too good to be true — it probably is. There are many people who will take advantage of others online. When buying a house or apartment, it is best to go through a realtor. This is a licensed professional who will help you buy or sell a house or apartment.



→ **RENT or LEASE**

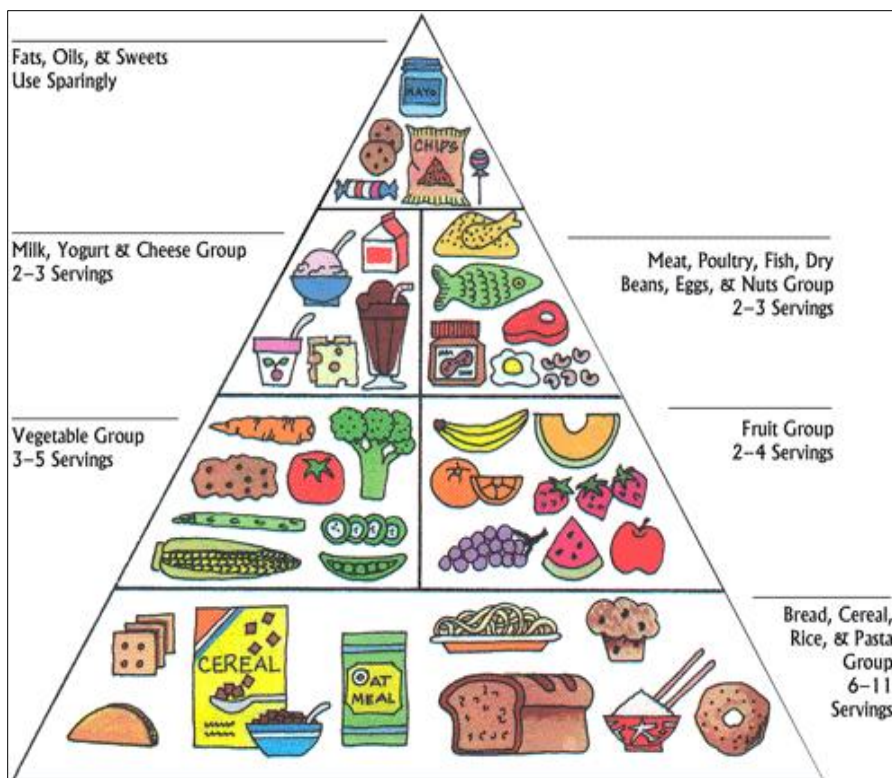
If you do not own your house, you must pay rent once a month. You pay the landlord, the person who owns the building or house you live in. Sometimes if the landlord does not live in your building, he appoints a building manager. This is the person you talk to if you have any problems. Before you sign a lease (this is the contract that states that you must pay rent) make sure you read the conditions and know how much you have to pay for rent and when, how much you have to pay for the deposit, and how much utilities cost. A deposit is the amount you pay before you move in. It is usually the cost of one month of rent and will be given back to you when you move out providing that your living quarters are in the same condition as when you moved in. Whether you rent or not, you usually have to pay for utilities. Utilities are electricity, water, trash, and heating. Some organizations offer assistance with rent and utility expenses.

→ **LANDLORD-TENANT RELATIONS**

Your landlord must make repairs needed to keep the apartment clean and safe. If you caused damage to your apartment, your landlord may make you pay for the repairs. When you move in, it is a good idea to take pictures of the apartment so you can document what condition the place is in. Keep a record of when you contact the landlord about fixing something in your home. If you have a disagreement or trouble with your landlord, call Community Action's Landlord / Tenant Mediation Program (402) 471-4515 or contact City Codes at (402) 441-7785.

Chapter 2

Health and Nutrition



• **NUTRITION**

Nutrition means to eat healthy so that you feel good and do not become sick. Some people have dietary restrictions and health issues that limit what they can eat, but here are some general guidelines for eating healthily:

- ***Eating from all the food groups of the food pyramid to the left.***
- ***Drink at least 6 to 8 cups of water a day.***
- ***Eat breakfast every day.***

• FOOD SAFETY

Food safety helps to keep you and your family from getting sick from bad food. Remember to:

* ***Wash your hands.***

Each time before you are going to touch food, make sure to wash your hands.

* ***Wash counters and utensils before and after making food.***

Use a warm cloth or sponge soaked with antibacterial soap or cleanser to clean the surfaces.

* ***Wash your fruits and vegetables.***

Rinse them with cold water to get off dirt or other chemicals that could be on them. Do not use soap.

* ***Know the expiration date on your food and drinks.***

All food and drinks will be marked by a date by which you need to eat or drink it before it goes bad.

* ***Be careful with raw meat.***

Raw meat has bacteria that need to be killed before a person should eat it. Keep meat refrigerated, cook it thoroughly, and make sure other food or utensils don't touch it before it is cooked.

* ***Keep food that will go bad in the refrigerator or freezer.***

Food like meat and dairy products should be kept in the refrigerator.

Put food items in the freezer and they will last even longer.

• PERSONAL HEALTH

Hand washing helps prevent you and other people from getting sick. Try not to touch your eyes, mouth, or nose because the germs from your hands will get in those areas and make you sick.

Wash your hands:

- * After using the restroom
- * Before making or eating food
- * After touching animals
- * If you have been near someone who was sick



→ **PERSONAL HYGIENE**

Most people in America bathe themselves at least every other day. Washing yourself and your clothing regularly is expected in order to prevent body odor and the spread of sickness.

→ **BIRTH CONTROL**

Birth control can prevent unwanted pregnancies. If you are comfortable using a method of birth control, talk to your doctor or another health care professional about what type is best for you. There are options available for men and women. There are locations in Lincoln that provide birth control at a low cost.

→ **SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES (STD)**

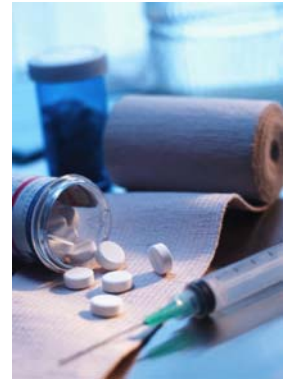
STDs are infections that are passed from person to person during sexual activity. You can reduce the risk of getting or spreading an STD by using condoms and other barriers, by getting tested for STDs with your sexual partner, or by reducing your number of sexual partners. Many of these diseases can be treated by medicine if detected, but some have long-lasting effects and others, such as HIV, do not have a cure.

• MEDICINE

Medicine is used to help you to feel better when you are sick. You should only take medicine that is prescribed specifically for you and you should only take the amount that is prescribed.

It is never a good idea to:

- 1.) take more or less medication than prescribed
- 2.) take medication if you don't know what it is for
- 3.) take someone else's medicine
- 4.) take medicine past its expiration date
- 5.) mix medicines unless directed by your doctor or pharmacist



Doing these things could make you feel more sick. When picking medicine from the store, read the labels to find out how much you should take and how often. You may also suffer side effects from taking medicine; these are listed on the label. Remember there are different medicines for kids and others that are just for adults. When you get medicine from the doctor, take the medicine the way the doctor says and do not share it with someone else. A pharmacist is a person who gives you the medicine your doctor prescribes for you. If you go to a drugstore, you can ask a pharmacist about what over-the-counter medicine is best for your sickness. A pharmacist can provide information on most medicines you must take or choose to take.

→ HOSPITALS, CLINICS, AND MEDICAL CARE

The hospital is the place you go when you have a life-threatening illness. There are doctors, nurses, and other employees who will help you get better. You can be referred to hospital care by a doctor or by going to the Emergency Room. If you have a medical emergency, you can go to the ER, or Emergency Room. This part of the hospital treats severe injuries. **You have to pay for these services and they can be very expensive so go to the Emergency Room only if it is an emergency.** An emergency is when you are very sick or severely injured and cannot wait to get an appointment at a medical office to be treated. You can also visit an urgent-care clinic. These clinics treat minor illnesses and injuries and do not require an appointment. If you have insurance, you are expected to pay a co-pay at the time of the visit. This is your share of the cost.

The clinic is a place you can go if you are sick, need an annual check-up, or have a recurring health issue but do not think your life is in danger. You have to make an appointment. There are doctors, nurses, and other employees who will help you get better. Small children and babies should be seen regularly by a doctor. An interpreter will often be provided for you or you can request one. If you don't have insurance or Medicaid, these visits can be very expensive! If you don't have insurance, there are also clinics that will charge you on a sliding fee. That means that the less money you make, the less you have to pay for these medical services.

→ HEALTH INSURANCE

People in the United States are expected to pay for their health care. Going to the doctor can be very costly! Many people have health insurance to make going to the doctor less expensive. Sometimes your job will provide benefits. This means your employer may pay for your health insurance. Otherwise, you have to pay for it every month.

If you are of low income, you can apply for a government health insurance program like Medicaid. You must provide proof of income, identification, and documentation. You can apply at the Department of Health and Human Services at 1050 'N' St, Suite 250 or call (402) 471-7000.

Chapter 3

Communication and Transportation



• POST OFFICE

To mail a letter, you need a stamp, which costs 44 cents and goes in the top right corner of an envelope. You need to write your address in the top left corner of the envelope and the address of the person you're sending it to in the middle of the envelope. If you are sending a letter internationally or your envelope is bigger than a regular envelope, you should go to the post office. It will cost more than one stamp. Make sure to read your mail closely before you throw away because it might be an important document or bill. Here are some important logos to look for on the mail you receive:



If you see these logos, it might be a bill you must pay. DO NOT throw them away!

There are many other important logos and mail you need to watch out for, so it might be a good idea to have someone help you understand the mail you receive. If you do not pay your bills on time or show up for an appointment, it may mean you will not receive the services and assistance you may need.

• TELEPHONE

A landline is a telephone that stays in the home. You usually pay for this plan with your internet and cable. **You pay for these monthly and they are expensive**, but using a landline can be cheaper than most cell phone plans. Most people use cell phones; these are portable phones. You can get a fixed rate plan or a pay-as-you-go plan. A fixed rate plan means you have to pay a monthly bill. For a pay-as-you-go plan, you buy minutes as you need them. This is usually the cheapest option.

If you dial a number out of state, you need to know the area code. The area code for Lincoln, Nebraska is **402**. A long-distance or international call costs more than a local call. Check your cell phone or landline to see how much long-distance calls cost. You may also use phone cards for long-distance and international calls, but make sure you understand how many minutes of call time you receive with each card. Some cards cost a lot of money but give you very few minutes.

• BUS, TAXI, CAR

The bus is a good way to get to where you need to go. **You can buy a 31-day pass for \$7.50 at the front desk of Community Action and other locations in the city.** You must bring proof of income. You can also take a taxi, which is a car that will take you where you need to go, but it is expensive and there are very few available taxis in Lincoln. To buy a car, you can look in the newspaper's classified ads section to find a used car or you can go to a dealership to buy a new or used car. It is a good idea to buy an affordable car in one payment instead of monthly payments. These monthly payments gain interest as the value of your car decreases before you own it. You need to change your oil every 3,000 miles or every 3 months. If you need an oil change or if you have any problems with your car you can take it to a mechanic. A mechanic is someone who can fix your car. **Owning a car is very expensive.** You need to pay for a license plate, registration, and car insurance. You also need to be prepared for unexpected repairs. It's a good idea to have someone who has lived here for a while and has a car help you find a car and a reputable mechanic.

Chapter 4

Childcare and Education



• **CHILDCARE**

In Nebraska, there are many places for a parent to take their children to be looked after by another individual while you are at work or school. You should not leave little children alone at home or an older child alone with too many other children to watch over. You can hire babysitters as long as you trust them and you believe they are able to take care of your children, especially in emergency situations.

You may also send your kids to day care. Day care is a place where parents can leave their children for part of or the whole day. You have to pay a price for each child. You might be able to get help from the government to pay for day care if you request it and qualify for it. Make sure the day care is licensed, which means that they are inspected and meet safety requirements. Community Action's Head Start and Early Head Start programs offer high quality care and education services to eligible families.

• **SCHOOL**

When a child gets to a certain age, around age 5 or 6, they are required by law to go to school. You can go to the Lincoln Public Schools office and apply for your children. Preschool, from age 3 to 5, is also important. Programs like Head Start and Early Head Start are designed to prepare your children for school. Contact Community Action if you are interested in Head Start or Early Head Start for your child(ren).

Your school may provide lunches and even breakfast at the school. These meals cost money, but depending on your income, your child may qualify for free or reduced-price lunches. Make sure to check your child's backpack for important information from their teachers.

Each child is required to come to school every day unless the school has said otherwise, such as on holidays or in case of bad weather. If your child cannot come to school because he or she is sick, you should call the school and let them know. The child should not miss too many days of school or he or she will not pass their grade. All together, there are 13 grades that they must pass to graduate. There are programs available if your child needs additional assistance learning English, if they have a special learning need, or if they have challenging behaviors.

After school, some teachers send homework home with their students. This is usually to be finished for the next day. It is to help them to review the subjects they have learned during the day. Schools also have many extra programs, including music and sports, that your children may participate in before, during, and after the school day. Participating in these additional activities may cost money, but they are great opportunities for children.

• **LIBRARY**



Every community and school has a library. A library is a place to learn about certain topics through computers, books, magazines, videos, and CDs. Here you can borrow these and then bring them back to get another one. When you go to the library, you have to sign up for a library card. Be sure to return the items you check out by the time they are due; if not, you will have to pay a fine before checking out other items. If you lose an item, you will have to pay for it. There are public libraries located in each part of Lincoln.

• CHILD ABUSE

Children in Nebraska are protected by the state under laws. If someone harms a child on purpose, they are breaking the law and will be held responsible for this crime. They could have their children taken away. Sometimes they are moved to foster homes. At these homes, another family will take care of them. If a teacher, doctor, or other person thinks that a child may have been hurt at home, or they see a child they think is being hurt they must contact the police. The police may come to the child's house or apartment to make sure that everything is ok and that the child is safe. Parents are subject to the law also and will be held responsible for harming their child(ren).

All children should:

- * Have enough nutritious food to eat, clean clothing, and clean diapers
- * Be kept clean
- * Receive regular/needed medical care
- * Have a trusted adult take care of them when their parents or family is not at home
- * Be given love and attention
- * Be kept appropriately warm or cool
- * Not be sexually or physically hurt
- * Not be emotionally abused: like yelling and calling them names



These laws are in place and enforced to keep the children safe and healthy!

Chapter 5

Employment

• JOBS

In the United States it is important for most people to get a job. You should keep a job that you don't like while looking for a better one. It is important that you have some quality work experience. **The more experience you have, the more likely you are to get a better job.** You should give your employer at least two weeks' notice before you quit your job. New employers will want to contact your old employers, and bad behavior on one job may make it harder to get your next job.

If you receive assistance from the government, getting a job may affect how much assistance you receive. However, getting a job will usually give you more money with which you can support your family. Depending on your income, you may work and still receive some benefits, like Medicaid and food help from the SNAP program (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program).

→ FINDING A JOB

The best way to look for a job is to ask all **the people that you know**. Tell them that you are looking for a job and they might be able to help you find something.

- * Stop by the **places you go** such as the stores, churches, and other agencies that you use and ask if they are hiring anyone.
- * Each week in the **newspaper** there is a section in the classified ads section titled “Help Wanted” that tells about some jobs that are open.
- * There are many **Internet sites** on which employers post jobs for people looking for employment. You can apply for a job online or go to the employer’s office.
- * There are many **employment agencies** around Lincoln that will help you to look for jobs. Be careful though, some of these places may want you to pay them money to help you. There are also private agencies such as Community Action that can assist people in looking for a job.
- * You can look in the **phonebook** for all the companies that you would like to work for such as cleaning companies. Then you can call all the companies that do cleaning and ask if they have any job openings.

→ APPLYING FOR A JOB

When applying for a job you should have a resume. A resume is a piece of paper with your name, address, and phone number at the top. It lists all the jobs you have had and your related work experience. You can list what languages you speak and what skills you have, like sewing, fixing cars, cleaning, or using computer programs. You should also list your education and two or three references. References are the names, numbers, and addresses of people, who are not family, that will say you are a good worker. For example, you can use a boss, co-worker, or landlord. You should always ask a person before naming them as a reference. To apply for a job, you may also need to fill out an application. This is a form that usually asks for the same information that your resume has. After you give the company your application, it may take a few weeks for them to call you back. When they do, you may be asked to go for an interview. An interview is a meeting with you and the person who may hire you, the boss. When you go to the interview, be on time and dress nicely. You will be asked questions about your work experience, why you want the job, and what kind of a worker you are. Visit Community Action’s Center for Refugees and Immigrants if you need help with finding and getting a job.



Example of a resume:

Martha Smith 1234 Smithson Lane Lincoln, NE 68502 402-555-6789			
Objective	To find employment where my production skills, willingness to work, and punctuality will benefit my employer.		
Experience	Wal-Mart , 5303 23 rd St. San Francisco, CA 47859 Dates Employed: 5/6/09-8/22/09 Employer Phone: 452-894-4856 Position: Shelf Stocker <i>Responsibilities: Putting products on shelves</i> Cook's Foods , 200 S. 2 nd St. Lincoln, NE 68508 Dates Employed: 10/5/04-5/21/08 Employer Phone: 402-475-8700 Position: Smoke House Worker <i>Responsibilities: Transporting meat to different locations</i>		
Education	High School Diploma (Finished in Egypt)		
References	<table><tr><td>John Doe (Relationship) (Address) (City, State, Zip Code) (Phone Number)</td><td>Jane Johnson (Relationship) (Address) (City, State, Zip Code) (Phone Number)</td></tr></table>	John Doe (Relationship) (Address) (City, State, Zip Code) (Phone Number)	Jane Johnson (Relationship) (Address) (City, State, Zip Code) (Phone Number)
John Doe (Relationship) (Address) (City, State, Zip Code) (Phone Number)	Jane Johnson (Relationship) (Address) (City, State, Zip Code) (Phone Number)		

Above is only a sample!
Remember to use your own information and references when completing your resume.

Chapter 6

Finances



• BANKING

When you want to keep your money safe, you can put it in a bank. When your money is in a bank, no one will steal your money, and you can take it out at any time. The bank will give you a card and a password to take money out of an ATM (automated teller machine). At this machine you can take out a limited amount of money, but only if you have enough in your account. If the ATM is owned by a bank other than the one you use, there may be a fee of \$2 to take money out of that machine. You can also use this card to pay for things at stores. But remember, there has to be money in your account that you put there.

***** If you spend money that is not in your account you are breaking a law and the bank will charge you money.*****

You can also use checks to get money out of the bank when you go shopping or want to pay your bills. **Never** let anyone else know your password or borrow your checks or card. Keep them in a safe place.

You can borrow money from a bank for big things like house or car purchases. In order to do this, you must have a good credit score. Paying your bills on time gives you a good credit score. There are many banks in Lincoln. You can find these listed in the yellow pages of your phonebook under the word "Bank." **Beware of places called "paycheck advance" or "cash advance." These places will give you money, but you must give something significant (like the title to your car) to get the money, and they will charge you even more money if you do not pay back the money you borrow on time.**

→ BUDGETING

This is a way to spend money wisely. When you have a home there are certain things you have to pay for such as food, rent, clothing, and electricity. When you are working, you should divide your money so there is enough to pay the bills and then what is left over is for other things. This will help you to pay for the things you need before the things you want. You can also save money for things you want or emergencies that might happen in the future. It is always a good idea to have money saved for emergencies.



Chapter 7

Laws and Legal Services



• LAWS

In the United States we have many freedoms, but we also have many laws. Regardless of your refugee or immigrant status, you must obey U.S. laws, and you have the right to be treated fairly.

When you disobey a law, you are doing something illegal and you will be punished for it. If you feel you did not do anything wrong, you must go to court to explain what happened.

You can hire a lawyer, a person who will help you argue your case. If you cannot pay for a lawyer, the court will give you one free of charge. A judge will decide if you are guilty or not. The judge also decides what your punishment will be.

Here are some important laws to remember. Many refugees and immigrants have problems with laws because they are not aware of them, or because laws are different in their home country. If you disobey any of these laws, you could be sent back to your home country or be sent to jail:

- 1.) Do not buy or sell drugs.
- 2.) Do not hit or beat your child or spouse. If your neighbor or anybody sees you doing this they can call the police. This is called abuse and can result in your children being taken away from you, or you may go to jail.
- 3.) If you are 18 years or older you cannot have sex with or marry someone who is younger than 18. You cannot marry more than one person at a time. You may not marry a close relative, like a first cousin or sibling.
- 4.) You cannot force someone to have sex with you. You cannot pay someone for sex or ask for money in exchange for sex. This is called prostitution and is illegal.
- 5.) You cannot drink or buy alcohol until you are 21 years old. You cannot drink in public places like streets, parks, etc., and you cannot buy alcohol for someone younger than 21.
- 6.) If you divorce your spouse and that spouse keeps the children, you must pay child support, which is money for the child's expenses.
- 7.) In the workplace, making sexual comments to your co-workers is illegal. This is called sexual harassment.
- 8.) If you own a gun you must have a license. If you hunt animals, you must also have a license to do so. Make sure you are able to hunt somewhere before you go. There may be laws against hunting in that area. You **CANNOT** take a gun or other weapon in any public place. Guns should always be kept in a locked place away from children and should never be left loaded.
- 9.) To drive a car, you must have a driver's license. You must take a test in order to get a driver's license. The Department of Motor Vehicles will give you a booklet you can use to study. When you are ready you can take the test at the nearest agency. You cannot drink alcohol and drive. If you are caught you will get a ticket and you may lose your license. You may even be deported or put in prison. In the car, always wear a seatbelt and make sure your children sit in the backseat if they are under the age of 8. The Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department (33rd and O St.) will help you install your child's car seat correctly.
- 10.) Small children need to have a car seat with a seatbelt. Also, you cannot leave your child in your car alone. If anyone sees this they will call the police and the police may take away your children, or you may be found guilty of child abuse or neglect.

- 11.) In Lincoln, you cannot smoke in public places or any enclosed space with children. If you are caught you will be fined \$100.
- 13.) You cannot beat or hit animals.
- 14.) If you co-sign a loan, you must pay off the loan if the other person cannot.
- 15.) If a police officer pulls you over when driving, move your car to a safe area, turn off your car, and roll down your window and keep both hands on the steering wheel until the police officer asks for your driver's license, car insurance, and registration. If you do not have these documents when you are pulled over, you may be ticketed. This means you will have to pay a fine.
- 16.) Carry proof of identity (I.D.) or drivers license at all times. You must have your driver's license with you while you are driving.
- 17.) In order to drive and register your car, you must purchase car insurance. Only persons who are insured may drive the vehicle. So if a household contains a husband, wife and children eligible to drive they all need to be on the car insurance. You can purchase car insurance at an insurance agency. Ask someone who has lived here for some time to refer you to a reputable agency.
- 18.) When you start working, you must pay your federal taxes. At the beginning of every year you must file your taxes. The last day to file for your taxes is April 15th every year. Your employer (work place) will give you a W-2 form that has all of your earnings from that year. You need to take all those papers to a tax preparer. A Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) will prepare taxes for free.



→ REFUGEE STATUS

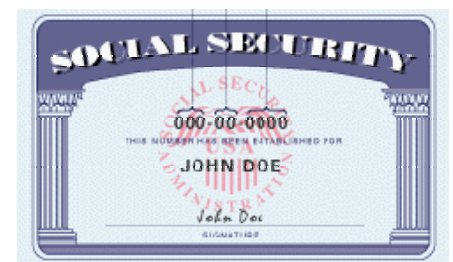
As a refugee, you can travel freely in the United States but not outside the U.S. When leaving the country, you must get permission from the USCIS or you may not be able to come back to the U.S. You can buy property, get a job, and go to school. **You must apply for a Green Card after 1 year of living in the U.S.** After receiving your Green Card, put it in a safe place so you don't lose it. The fees to get a new Green Card are very expensive.

→ U.S. CITIZENSHIP

Applying for U.S. Citizenship is a long process. Once you get U.S. Citizenship you can get a U.S. Passport. This allows you to travel freely in and out of the United States. You can also vote, join the armed services, or get a government job. If you are a male between the ages of 18 and 25 you **MUST** register for the Selective Service. This is not the actual army, but you may be drafted, or called to join the army in times of war. You can register for the Selective Service at school or any community-based agency.

→ SOCIAL SECURITY

All permanent residents receive a social security number from the government. Banks, schools, government agencies, and other social agencies use this number to identify you. Be careful with your social security card. Memorize your number and put the card in a safe place and do not carry it with you. **Make sure you trust the people you give your social security number to.** Shred any papers that have important personal information on them before throwing them in the trash. If someone steals your personal information, it is called identity theft. They can take money from your bank account or have a credit card in your name. If this happens to you, call the Federal Trade Commission ID Theft Hotline at 1-877-438-4338.



Chapter 8

Community and Social Services



• **DHHS / HEALTH DEPARTMENT**

The Department of Health and Human Services or the Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department is here to keep people safe and healthy. You can go to DHHS to apply for food stamps, unemployment and other related government programs.

• **POLICE and FIRE STATIONS**

The police are here to help and protect the people in their community. You should not be afraid of the police. The Lincoln Police Department does their best to help everyone, keep everyone safe, and treat everyone equally.

Call the police if you:

- * Feel you are in danger
- * Are a victim of an attack, rape, domestic violence, child abuse, burglary, or other crimes
- * See a crime take place

The fire station is where firemen are on duty. They wait for a call of an emergency, like a fire, and then leave immediately to put the fire out. Fire stations are also safe places to go if you think you are in danger for any reason.

Call 911 if you have an emergency, if you fear for your life, or are in immediate danger, but otherwise you can contact the police and fire department non-emergency numbers.

• **ADULT EDUCATION**

Many adults who come to the United States from different countries have trouble making their education transfer to the United States. There are many options for adults to continue their education.

→ **GED (General Education Development)**

If you never earned a high school diploma, or your education does not transfer to the United States, you can get your GED. This is a group of five tests. If you pass, you have the equivalent of a high school diploma. Many agencies offer classes to help you prepare for the GED tests. Most jobs require that you have a high school diploma or GED.

→ **ESL (English as a Second Language)**

Learning English is extremely valuable for getting a job or continuing your education. Many agencies offer free ESL classes or you can pay to take classes at a college.

→ **COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

A community college is a two-year learning institution that you can attend after high school. These schools are less costly than four-year universities because they are publicly funded.

→ **SCHOLARSHIPS and FINANCIAL AID**

There are ways to pay for school other than taking out a loan, which is borrowing money from a bank. You can apply for a scholarship or financial aid.

→ **JOB PREPARATION TRAINING**

There are many agencies in Lincoln that provide training that will help you get a job, including computer training, interview training, and training in specific work skills.

COMMUNITY ACTION SERVICES



EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING

◆ **Career Advancement Training**

Our Career Advancement Training program includes classes in soft-skills, such as conflict resolution, resume writing, and interviewing skills.

◆ **Computer Learning Lab**

We offer classes including Keyboarding, Microsoft Windows and Office applications, and resume building. We also have ESL computer programs to help you learn English for FREE!

◆ **Employment Services for New Americans**

We provide services that are aimed at helping refugees and immigrants build the skills that will enable them to reach their employment potential and ultimately achieve self-reliance. General services include ESL/naturalization classes, immigrant support, and interpretation/translation assistance.

◆ **Employment Assistance**

Our Employment Specialist provides one-on-one guidance for accessing local job openings, updating your resume, and preparing you for an interview. Services include: job search techniques, resume writing, cover letter writing, interview skills, and dealing with barriers to employment.

◆ **GED Training**

We provide GED preparation classes and are able to subsidize the cost of the GED exam through September 30, 2010.

HOUSING SERVICES

◆ **Affordable Housing**

Through our affiliated non-profit, Lincoln Action Program Housing Development Corporation, we provide safe, decent, affordable housing through income-restricted rental developments.

◆ **Weatherization**

Our Weatherization program provides free weatherization services, including furnace tune-ups, insulation, and glass replacement to eligible renters and owners living in mobile, single, and multi-family homes.

COMMUNITY SERVICES

◆ **Landlord/Tenant Mediation**

Our Landlord/Tenant program provides short-term case management, education, mediation, and advocacy for both landlords and tenants with the aim of eviction prevention.

◆ **Tax Preparation Services**

Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) is a program sponsored by the IRS that offers free tax preparation to low-to moderate-income individuals.

MONEY & SAVINGS

◆ Matched Savings Accounts

Our Free to Save program is an Individual Savings Account (IDA) program in which participants save for a specific asset (home or small business), or the cost of education. Savings are matched \$1 for every \$1 saved.

◆ Money Management Education

Using a curriculum created by the FDIC, our financial literacy program seeks to help clients develop financial skills including budgeting, saving, and credit management.

EMERGENCY SERVICES

◆ Rent and Utility Assistance

We provide assistance with past due rent and utility bills, and deposits. Households must complete an application over the phone or in person to be eligible.

◆ Free Evening Meals

The Gathering Place Kitchen located at 1448 'E' Street in Lincoln provides hot meals Monday through Friday from 5:00 - 6:00 p.m.

CHILD & FAMILY DEVELOPMENT

◆ Head Start & Early Head Start

Head Start/ Early Head Start are comprehensive child development programs that serve low-income women who are pregnant and children birth to age 5, including those with special needs, and their families.

◆ Head Start Child Development Center

The Head Start Child Development Center serves 75 Head Start and Early Head Start children with educational child care at no cost to eligible families.

HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION

◆ Supportive Housing Program

Our Supportive Housing Program provides intensive case-management, assistance with rent payments, and referrals to services that will support clients' efforts to remain housed.

◆ Payee Program

Our Payee program provides financial case management for individuals receiving Social Security Income, Social Security Disability Income, or other Social Security payments. The Payee program is open to all Social Security recipients who are required to have a payee because they are not able to manage their own money.

If you have any questions, feel free to call the Center for Refugees and Immigrants at Community Action.



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