



DEAR PARISH PASTOR AND STAFF,

Thank you for your yes to Welcome Circles and your support of this ministry in your parish!

The Catholic Church is honored and called to serve those in need, to welcome the stranger, and to mercifully care for the corporal and spiritual needs of our brothers and sisters, and Welcome Circles is one of the ways we can do this. This work is one of the delights of our Catholic heritage!

This Toolkit and the resources found on our website have been created to assist your parish and Welcome Circle to live out this ministry with wisdom, compassion, peace, and joy.

Our team in the Immigration and Refugee Ministry is prepared to walk with your parish and your Welcome Circle, giving the encouragement and support needed, pointing to helpful resources, and praying for your Welcome Circle daily.

As your Welcome Circle continues their journey, please always feel free to reach out to us at any time with any questions, concerns, or suggestions you may have. We look forward to hearing from you and walking with you!

In Christ,

The Welcome Circles Team

**IF YOU CANNOT FIND CHRIST
IN THE BEGGAR AT THE CHURCH DOOR,
YOU WILL NOT FIND HIM IN THE CHALICE.
- ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM**

Then the King will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.' Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see thee hungry and feed thee, or thirsty and give thee drink? And when did we see thee a stranger and welcome thee, or naked and clothe thee? And when did we see thee sick or in prison and visit thee?' And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren,

You did it for me.



WELCOME CIRCLES

Seattle Archdiocese
Immigrant and Refugee
Ministry

For help with your journey as a Welcome Circle, you can reach out to:

Amy Nash, Welcome Circle Coordinator
amy.nash@seattlearch.org

Rebecca Burdullis, Welcome Circle Associate
rebecca.burdullis@seattlearch.org

Also, make sure to join our email list at www.archseattle.com/welcomecircles.



PARISH COMMITMENTS

www.archseattle.org/welcomecircles



THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING WELCOME CIRCLES!

While your Welcome Circle will assist the sponsored family with day-to-day activities and needs, the parish can provide crucial support to make their ministry possible. Here is an overview of the many ways parishes can help.

Parish Contact

Designating a staff member as the point of contact to keep in touch with Welcome Circle leaders is essential to ensuring timely and effective communication.

Finances

In order to accept tax-deductible donations, Welcome Circles need your support in the following ways. In the event the parish is unable to provide this support, the Welcome Circle would need to find a fiscal sponsor.

- Maintain funds in a designated separate account. Many parishes refer to these as their "Refugee Fund".
- Accept donations and disperse funds. This may mean issuing checks to landlords, utilities, or other payments supported by your refugee fund.
- Provide tax receipt letters to donors.
- Provide monthly financial updates to the welcome circle leaders on donations received and funds dispersed. This is important for the welcome circle to know what they can help with, the cost of various expenses, budgeting, and thanking donors.

Outreach

Your Welcome Circle will benefit from the opportunity to engage other parishioners as volunteers, to provide in-kind donations of materials and goods, to be prayer partners, attend welcome events, etc. Please consider inviting Welcome Circles to do any of the following: Mass announcements, bulletin announcements, staffing a coffee hour table, social media posts, and others ways to keep parishioners engaged and updated.

Blessings and Commissioning

Offering the newly arrived sponsored family a blessing helps to show welcome and support from the parish community. When Welcome Circles receive a commissioning at Mass, it helps the entire parish community to feel a part of this vital ministry work.

Parish Life

Visits to children's religious education classes, RCIA, school classrooms, and other ministries from Welcome Circle members and/or sponsored families is a wonderful way to bring the faith alive for other parishioners.

Remember! The Archdiocese Welcome Circle team is here to support and help parishes and Welcome Circles. Our Welcome Circle manual has a wide variety of resources and guides to help you and your Welcome Circle. Our staff is available to answer any questions you have. Check our website for new materials and funding opportunities, and don't hesitate to contact us. Also, make sure to join our email list at www.archseattle.com/welcomecircles.

Amy Nash, Welcome Circles Coordinator: amy.nash@seattlearch.org, 206-550-1204

Rebecca Burdullis, Welcome Circles Associate: rebecca.burdullis@seattlearch.org, 206-390-0842

Chris Koehler, Director of Missions and Immigrant Affairs: chris.koehler@seattarch.org, 206-274-3194

WELCOME CIRCLES





HOW PARISHES CAN WALK SPIRITUALLY WITH WELCOME CIRCLES

www.archseattle.org/welcomecircles



SPIRITUAL WELCOME AND ACCOMPANIMENT

It is the honor and joy of the Catholic Church to walk with and minister to those in need. We have the call and privilege of accompanying others in a way that no one else can!

A parish can assist and encourage their Welcome Circles ministry in many ways.

Prayer

First, parishes can begin praying for their Welcome Circle; both for those who are volunteering and for those who are being served.

Consider offering a special Mass for the family being served and regularly holding the Welcome Circle up in the Prayers of the Faithful. Consider hosting an adoration night to pray as a community for the family, or praying a novena to St. Cabrini together leading up to her feast day of November 13th.

Sacraments

Also, if the Welcome Circle is serving a family or individual who is Catholic, the parish can work with them to make sure that the sacraments are available to them.

Hospitality

The parish can be informed about the family being served and ask people to pray for them, to help welcome them, perhaps to bring meals, and/or to donate gift cards or needed items. Parishes can also reach out to make sure that the family is invited to community events.

Language

If the family or individual attends Mass and is not fluent in English, parishes can offer language resources to help them participate and enter into Mass.



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WELCOME CIRCLES

Seattle Archdiocese
Immigrant and Refugee
Ministry

If we can help you in any way as you offer spiritual accompaniment to your Welcome Circle and those they serve, please reach out to:

Welcome Circle Coordinator, Amy Nash, at amy.nash@seattlearch.org

Welcome Circle Associate, Rebecca Burdullis, at rebecca.burdullis@seattlearch.org.

Also, make sure to join our email list at www.archseattle.com/welcomecircles.

WELCOME CIRCLE RESOURCE

BEST PRACTICES FOR CASH DISBURSEMENTS, DONATIONS, & FUNDRAISING

Welcome Circles fall under the umbrella of the parish or non-profit's 501(c)3. Here are some dos and don'ts to be aware of when making purchases or expenditures for sponsored families as a 501(c)3).

1. **It's best not to distribute cash to the newcomer family**, but still possible if handled correctly. One issue with cash is that we can't say for sure how the funds were used by the recipient. St. Vincent de Paul and similar places only use vouchers because that's best accounting procedures and they can definitively prove what the funds were spent on. Also, since they help a lot of people no donations are received for support of specific individuals – i.e. SVdP decides what the funds are used for, not the donor.
2. **Solicit cash donations to support your welcome circle ministry in general, not for specific costs or for a specific family.** Ask for donations “to support our refugee ministry” (or similar phrasing) that the parish (not the donor) decides how to use. Then, the parish can purchase the items needed like groceries. A staff member could purchase things like groceries on behalf/as an agent of the parish and then get reimbursed from the parish. The parish could also purchase gift cards to Fred Meyer that can be used for food, clothing, household items, and distribute those to the family, even though these cards are cash equivalent. *You should avoid as much as possible volunteers purchasing anything for the sponsored family and then reimbursing the volunteer. Instead, issue a gift card to the sponsored family so they can purchase items directly. Reimbursing welcome circle members is generally good to avoid, but can be done if the expenditure is approved by the parish beforehand and you get receipts.*
3. **If someone wants to cover the cost of a specific item, it would be better not to involve the parish at all. This would not be reimbursed and is not tax-deductible.** A donor cannot stipulate who benefits from their donation. For example, “I am making a \$700 donation to buy Olga a new phone” is not allowable. They could buy the phone themselves and gift it to Olga, consider that a gift to her, and not request reimbursement. When an individual purchases items for a specific person, it's generally not tax-deductible. Individuals could also just make a cash gift directly to the family and not involve the parish. Again, it would not be a tax-deductible gift. Importantly, cash and in-kind gifts can be a culturally sensitive area, so check first with your interpreter/cultural guide.
4. **It is best to have the parish pay vendors directly if the welcome circle is covering that cost.** For rent, the parish would directly pay the landlord. For car insurance, the parish would directly pay the insurance company.
5. **It is okay to solicit in-kind donations** of things like furniture, food, groceries, etc. These are tax-deductible, although most people don't ask for the receipt. Anyone who asks for a tax receipt can be given a form where they describe the goods donated and note the value (the donor decides this). The form should have the tax ID number, the date, and states that the donor received no substantial goods or services in exchange for their contribution.

Each parish may have its own policies around these issues. A parish may generally allow financial distributions under certain circumstances; however, they may reasonably decide not to in others.

Please feel free to reach out to me if you have any questions or concerns regarding these issues.

Chris Koehler, Director of Missions and Immigrant Affairs
206-274-3194 Chris.Koehler@seattlearch.org