

U.S. Laws and Refugee Status

Your Rights and Your Responsibilities

Introduction for the Trainer

Key Content

During this session, participants will learn about their rights and responsibilities in the United States.

Main Messages

Refugees in the United States have many basic civil rights. These rights include the right to worship as one chooses and the right to free speech. All rights come with responsibilities as well. Trainers should stress the balance of rights and responsibilities.



45 minutes

Objectives

Participants will be able to do the following:

- ▶ Explain why people in the United States have both rights and responsibilities
- ▶ Identify some of the rights they have in the United States
- ▶ Identify some of the responsibilities they have in the United States

Key English Vocabulary

- ▶ *Green Card*
- ▶ *responsibility*
- ▶ *right*
- ▶ *I have refugee status now.*

Materials

- Your Rights and Your Responsibilities Cards (included), 1 set per group of 4 to 5
- Your Rights and Your Responsibilities Answer Key (included)
- “Rights” and “Responsibilities” labels (included), 1 set per group of 4 to 5
- Optional: Tape

Session Preparation

Review the Your Rights and Your Responsibilities Cards. Edit to reflect local reality. Note the state and local laws, such as minimum wage and the ages for school attendance.

Prepare sets of Your Rights and Your Responsibilities Cards for groups by printing and cutting them along the dotted lines, keeping sets together.

Prepare sets of Rights and Responsibilities Labels for groups by printing and cutting them in half along the dotted lines, keeping sets together.

Trainer’s Introduction of Session to Participants

As a refugee in the United States, you have many rights. You will have more rights after you become a Lawful Permanent Resident and then a U.S. citizen. A Lawful Permanent Resident is also known as an *LPR*. An LPR has a Green Card.

Responsibilities come with these rights.

This session will help you identify some important rights and responsibilities you have.

Introductory Exercise

Briefly review the key English vocabulary for this plan by saying the first word aloud in English. Participants say the word to a partner, and then all together as a full group. Continue in the same manner with the rest of the words and the sentence. Throughout the session, continue to highlight the words as they come up and use the sentence whenever there is an opportunity. If there is time (8 to 10 minutes), use the unit vocabulary found at the end of this unit to help participants better understand key English vocabulary words.

Divide participants into groups of up to four to five people. Distribute Your Rights and Your Responsibilities Cards and Right and Responsibilities Labels to each group.

Ask participants to put the “Rights” and “Responsibilities” labels on a table or the floor a foot or two apart. Groups then review the Your Rights and Your Responsibilities Cards and decide which ones are rights and which are responsibilities. If it is a right, it is placed under the “Rights” label. If it is a responsibility, the card is placed under the “Responsibilities” label.

Activity

Choose the group whose work is the most accurate, and ask participants to stand around the work. Ask groups to look at the placement of cards and see if anything should be moved around. Refer them to the Your Rights and Your Responsibilities Answer Key as they make their decisions.

Ask participants to sit down.

Debrief the session using the questions below.

Debriefing Questions

- ▶ What rights do you have now that you didn't have where you lived before?
- ▶ Are there any rights you had before that you don't have now?
- ▶ What new rights that you have now are you happiest about?
- ▶ What responsibilities do you have now that you didn't have where you lived before?
- ▶ Are there any responsibilities you had before that you don't have now?
- ▶ What will you do to be a responsible community member?

Working With Individuals or Very Small Groups

When working with an individual or a small group, tape the "Rights" and "Responsibilities" labels to the wall, keeping them about 3 feet apart. During the introductory exercise, participants tape Your Rights and Your Responsibilities Cards to the wall; have participants sort them by rights and responsibilities, with your help. During the activity, the trainer should review the placement of cards and move things as necessary, explaining the moves and answering any questions that come up. When finished, debrief the session using the questions provided.

Variations and Considerations

To conduct a shorter session, use fewer Your Rights and Your Responsibilities Cards.

If possible, group participants by language background for the introductory exercise so that they can communicate in a common language.

Your Rights and Your Responsibilities Cards



Citizens can vote in elections.



Everyone who lives in the United States has basic civil rights, such as freedom of speech, freedom of worship, and the right to legal assistance.



Families need to support themselves as soon as possible, especially because public assistance is limited for most refugees.



If you break the law, your immigration status could be affected.



If you move to a new home, you must fill out a change of address form.



In this state, minimum wage is \$___ an hour.



Job discrimination is illegal in the United States. No one can refuse to give you a job because of your race, country of origin, religion, age, gender, or sexual orientation.



Know the law: All children between the ages of _____ and _____ must attend school.



Know the law: Certain drugs are illegal to use.



Know the law: Hurting a child (yours or someone else's) is illegal.



Know the law: It is illegal to drink alcohol if you are under the age of 21.



Know the law: It is illegal to hit or hurt in any way anyone in your family.



Know the law: It is illegal to smoke tobacco if you are under the age of 18.



Know the law: Non-citizens cannot vote in any election.



Know the law: Sexual harassment is illegal.



Know the law: Young children must be supervised.



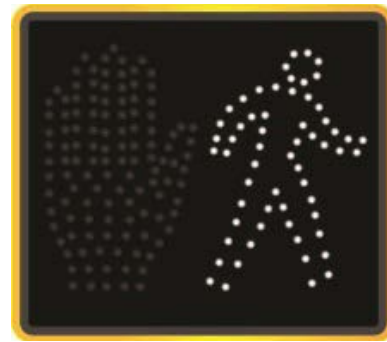
Men between 18 and 25 years of age must register for the Selective Service.



Parents must learn legal ways to discipline their children.



Public services and benefits are available to those who are eligible for them.



You can cross the road safely when you see the "walk" signal.



You can get help, such as advice and support, from your local resettlement agency.



You can move to a new community from your resettlement site.



You can work in the United States.



You must have a driver's license to operate a vehicle.



You must learn and know the laws.



You need to pay your own income taxes. You must fill out and send an income tax form to the government every year. You fill out the form yourself or find someone to help you.



Your resettlement agency will give you basic items for your first home, or will help you get the items.

Your Rights and Your Responsibilities Answer Key

Rights

- ▶ Citizens can vote in elections.
- ▶ Everyone who lives in the United States has basic civil rights, such as freedom of speech, freedom of worship, and the right to legal assistance.
- ▶ In this state, minimum wage is \$___ an hour.
- ▶ Job discrimination is illegal in the United States. No one can refuse to give you a job because of your race, country of origin, religion, age, gender, or sexual orientation.
- ▶ Public services and benefits are available to those who are eligible for them.
- ▶ You can get help, such as advice and support, from your local resettlement agency.
- ▶ You can move to a new community from your resettlement site.
- ▶ You can work in the United States.
- ▶ Your resettlement agency will give you basic items for your first home, or will help you get the items.

Responsibilities

- ▶ Families need to support themselves as soon as possible, especially because public assistance is limited for most refugees.
- ▶ If you break the law, your immigration status could be affected.
- ▶ If you move to a new home, you must fill out a change of address form.
- ▶ Know the law: All children between the ages of ___ and ___ must attend school.
- ▶ Know the law: Certain drugs are illegal to use.
- ▶ Know the law: Hurting a child (yours or someone else's) is illegal.
- ▶ Know the law: It is illegal to drink alcohol if you are under the age of 21.
- ▶ Know the law: It is illegal to hit or hurt in any way anyone in your family.
- ▶ Know the law: It is illegal to smoke tobacco if you are under the age of 18.
- ▶ Know the law: Non-citizens cannot vote in any election.
- ▶ Know the law: Sexual harassment is illegal.
- ▶ Know the law: Young children must be supervised.
- ▶ Men between 18 and 25 years of age must register for the Selective Service.
- ▶ Parents must learn legal ways to discipline their children.
- ▶ You can cross the road safely when you see the "Walk" signal.
- ▶ You need to pay your own income taxes. You must fill out and send an income tax form to the government every year. You fill out the form yourself or find someone to help you.
- ▶ You must have a driver's license to operate a vehicle.
- ▶ You must learn and know the laws.

Responsibilities

Rights