Sample Intensive Case Management Onboarding Guide

The Preferred Communities (PC) program provides intensive case management services to refugees and ORR-eligible populations with special needs within five years of arrival to the U.S. Intensive case management (ICM) staff support recipients in the areas of long-term case management, health and medical interventions, mental health interventions, and social adjustment services, among others.

This **Intensive Case Management Onboarding Guide** is a framework for onboarding new staff members who will provide intensive case management services. It is meant to be customized to include organization-specific training. This guide shares reading materials, recorded webinars, and other resources to complement your other onboarding activities, which may include shadowing colleagues, discussing specific scenarios, reviewing materials and organization policies, and receiving training from supervisors.

Note: This onboarding guide includes external resources that may be unavailable. If you need access or updates, contact the original author.

Learn More About Who You Serve	
This first section provides you with an introduction to some of the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR)-eligible populations you may serve through your program. Note: This is not a comprehensive list of ORR-eligible populations that may be enrolled in your agency's program. For a full list of eligibility documents for all eligible client populations, please refer to the ORR website.	
Due Date: Completion Date:	
Immigration Statuses and ORR Eligibility	☐ **Watch:** Understanding Newcomer Immigration Statuses ☐ **Watch**: How Resettlement Agencies Work with the U.S. Government ☐ **Watch**: An Overview of the Office of Refugee Resettlement ☐ **Review:** ORR Resettlement Programs for Refugees ☐ **Read:** Getting Started in Navigating ORR Eligibility

	☐ **Read:** ACF Policy Web Address ☐ **Read:** Status and Documentation Requirements
Refugees	☐ **Watch:** Who are refugees and how do they arrive in the U.S.? ☐ **Read:** Resettlement in the United States ☐ **Watch:** What is refugee resettlement and what is UNHCR's role?
Cuban & Haitian Entrants	☐ **Read:** ORR Fact Sheet for Cuban/Haitian Entrants ☐ **Read:** Understanding Immigration Context and Eligibility for Cuban and Haitian Entrants
Certain Amerasians	☐ **Read:** ORR Fact Sheet for Amerasians
Victims of Trafficking	☐ **Read:** ORR Fact Sheet for Victims of Trafficking ☐ **Watch:** Faces of Human Trafficking Series ☐ **Read:** On World Day against Trafficking, a Resource List of Anti-Trafficking Resources
Afghan and Ukrainian Humanitarian Parolees	☐ **Read:** Resource List: Serving Ukrainian Newcomers ☐ **Read:** Useful Resources to Support Afghan Newcomers in the U.S. ☐ **Read:** Answering FAQs on Benefits for Ukrainian and Afghan Humanitarian Parolees Arriving On or After October 1 2023
Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) Recipients	☐ **Read:** Special Immigrant Visa (SIV): Application Vetting & Approval ☐ **Read:** Special Immigrant Visas for Afghans
Unaccompanied Refugee Minors (URMs)	☐ **Read:** Unaccompanied Refugee Minors Program ☐ **Watch:** Show Up for URMs with Resources, Responsiveness, and Readiness

General Case Management

The following section provides an introduction to case management and establishes standards and expectations for staff working within case management. These values draw heavily from the field of social work. Although not all ICM staff may be social workers, the services we provide are aligned with the standards found in the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics.

Due Date:
Completion Date:

Ethics of Service Provision	☐ **Read:** National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics	☐ *Activity: Choose two principles that stood out to you and explain why.*
Case Management Foundations	☐ **Watch:** Case Management Foundations ☐ **Read:** Boosting Engagement: 10 Ways to Increase Newcomer Youth and Family Participation in Programs and Services	☐ *Reflect: What are some contextual and cultural factors you should consider as a case manager? What are some practical ways you can support clients' well-being?*
Strengths-Based Approach	☐ **Watch:** Demystifying Strengths-Based Services to Foster Refugees' Resilience ☐ **Read:** What is a Strength-Based Approach?	☐ *Activity: Review a sample client intake and note the client's strengths.* ☐ *Activity: Review this Strengths-Based Approach poster and hang it publicly, if appropriate, in your office.*
Defining Professional Case Management Boundaries	☐ **Watch:** Client Boundaries ☐ **Watch:** Boundaries in the Electronic Age ☐ **Watch:** Creating Balance in Case Management	☐ *Discuss with your supervisor: What are some challenges you anticipate with setting client boundaries? How can your supervisor assist with these challenges?*
Cultural Background Information	☐ **Read:** Cultural Backgrounders for commonly served populations at your location (Afghan, Afrikaner, Bhutanese, Burmese (Myanmar), Cuban, Haitian, Congolese, Iraqi, Rohingya, and Ukrainian)	☐ *Reflect: Which cultural populations do you work with most closely? What do you need to know to best serve them?*

Intensive Case Management
This section provides ICM staff with information needed to provide services to ICM clients and manage a caseload within the Preferred Communities program.
Due Date: Completion Date:

ICM Overview	☐ **Review:** Preferred Communities Overview
	☐ **Receive:** Orientation to the ICM program from your supervisor or organization's training officer
	☐ **Discuss:**
	    ○ Required tools & assessments
	    ○ Service period
	    ○ Required services
		☐ *Discuss with your supervisor: any questions that may have come up for you while reviewing the Preferred Communities Program Guidelines.*
		☐ *Activity: Become familiar with the forms and tools and when you should use each form.*
		☐ *Activity: ICM staff must have at least one meaningful interaction per month with each client. Discuss caseload and interaction expectations with your supervisor.*

Intake & Assessment	☐ **Review:** Intake processes and required ICM assessments with your supervisor or organization's training officer ☐ **Observe:** Two assessments with ICM clients	☐ *Activity: List the forms that are required to be completed during intake and assessment.* ☐ *Discuss with your supervisor: When should ICM assessments be conducted, and how is client self-sufficiency evaluated?* ☐ *Reflect: Which ICM standards and expectations were implemented? What is one best practice that you took away from the observation?*
Setting Goals with Clients	☐ **Watch:** How to Write a SMART Goal ☐ **Discuss with your supervisor:** What is the purpose of self-sufficiency plans in the ICM program?	☐ *Activity: Make a sign or poster to remind yourself to use SMART goals. Keep this at your desk.* ☐ *Activity: Review three client self-sufficiency plans. Are they SMART?*
Trauma-Informed Approach and Sensitive Case Management	☐ **Watch:** Navigating Difficult Conversations with Clients ☐ **Watch:** Trauma-Informed Care in Case Management or **Read:** Trauma-Informed Care: A Primer for Refugee Service Providers ☐ **Watch:** De-escalation in Practice: Strategies for Supporting Newcomers	☐ *Activity: Identify the types of direct and indirect services that are provided to clients by ICM staff.* ☐ *Reflect: What are the basics of trauma-informed care? Why is understanding trauma-informed care important to serving refugee clients? What are some examples of how you can implement trauma-informed care in your work?*

	Experiencing Crises or **Read:** Preventing Crises and De-Escalating Difficult Situations with Newcomer Clients **For Expanded Skill Building:** ☐ **Read:** A Screening Guide for Resettlement Providers	
Case Consultations and Client Referrals	☐ **Read:** Effective Case Consultations and Case Conferences ☐ **Review:** Referral Letter Template ☐ **Watch:** Overcoming Barriers and Strengthening Enabling Factors ☐ **Read:** Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Service Mapping	☐ *Discuss with your supervisor: What types of referrals are made for different client needs?*
Client Termination	☐ **Read:** Ethics: Terminating Services* ☐ **Read:** Supporting Newcomer Clients and Staff Through Service Disruptions *Note that these articles are meant for social workers and MSW students, but the ethics and practices are applicable to anyone who works with clients.*	☐ *Reflect: Why is appropriate client termination essential to case management? What are the steps of appropriate client termination?* ☐ *Activity: Observe a client close-out. What information was covered during the close out? What is one best practice that you took away from the observation? Is there anything you would do differently?*
Interpretation	☐ **eLearning:** Introduction to Working with Interpreters ☐ **eLearning:** Overcoming Challenges in Interpretation ☐ **Read:** Advocate for Clients' Right to Interpretation Services ☐ **Review:** Scripts for Working with Interpreters ☐ **Read:** Language Access in Times of Crisis: Getting Started with Video Remote Interpreting	☐ *Discuss with your supervisor: Why is interpretation important? What are some considerations you should make when seeking interpretation for a client?*

	☐ **Review:** [Making Sense of Mobile Apps: A Collection of Interpretation, Translation, and Integration Apps for Newcomers](#)	

Exception Requests	☐ **Discuss** with your supervisor or organization's training officer:
	   o Purpose of exception requests
	   o When exception requests are needed
	   o Information needed to write an exception request
	   o Best practices for exception requests
		☐ *Activity: Review three approved exception requests from your office.*

ICM Data & Documentation		
The following section is meant to familiarize ICM staff with the different components of ICM data and documentation. Keeping timely and accurate documentation of services is a critical part of case management and may vary in different organizations.		
Due Date: Completion Date:		
ICM Documentation	☐ **Discuss:** with your supervisor or training officer how your organization stores ICM client information and documentation	☐ *Activity: Review case notes for three cases.* ☐ *Activity: Review agency privacy policies and safeguards.*
Case Note Documentation	☐ **Review:** [Case Note Template](#) ☐ **Watch:** [Creating High-Quality Case Management Documentation](#) or **Read:** [Creating High-Quality Case Management Documentation Guide](#) ☐ **Read:** [Writing Health Case Notes: Recommendations for Service Providers](#) ☐ **Read:** [Making the Paperwork Work for You](#) ☐ **Watch:** [Writing Case Notes](#)	☐ *Discuss with your supervisor: How are case notes documented within your agency?* ☐ *Activity: Observe an ICM activity and draft case notes based on the training you received. Make sure it contains all the information covered in the training.*

Reporting	☐ **Review:** the processes needed for ICM reporting with your supervisor or training officer ☐ **Review:** report templates and examples of previously submitted reports ☐ **Read:** 4 Practical Tips for Improving Data Quality in Case Management Programs, with Case Study	☐ *Activity: Run and export a list of all active clients that have been served in the last month.* ☐ *Activity: Run and export the percentage of clients who have received a monthly service.* ☐ *Activity: Identify what data and documentation is required when submitting reports.*
Case Files	☐ **Review:** your agency's ICM case file checklist ☐ **Review:** your agency's case file quality assurance procedure ☐ **Read:** Data Quality Assurance and Compliance Checklist	☐ *Activity: Using your agency's case file review checklist, review three case files (two open and one closed case).*

Additional Resources and Tools for ICM Staff		
This section contains additional resources that pertain to different issues and situations that may arise for ICM clients. We have also included some important frameworks that you can utilize on a regular basis when working with clients.		
Due Date: Completion Date:		
Interpersonal and Family Violence and Safety Planning	☐ **Read:** Introduction to Safety Planning ☐ **Review:** Low-Risk Safety Plan Template ☐ **Read:** Safety Planning for Family Violence: Guidance for Service Providers ☐ **Watch:** Family Violence Core Concepts for Newcomer Serving Organizations or **Read:** Family Violence: Core Concepts for Newcomer Serving Organizations ☐ **eLearning:** Responding to Intimate Partner Violence in Resettlement, Asylum, & Integration Settings ☐ **Complete:** Domestic Violence Training	☐ *Activity: Discuss violence and safety protocols with your supervisor and review safety plans. What is required of you? What is required of your supervisor?*

	☐ **Watch:** Refugee Children Exposed to Intimate Partner Violence	
Refugee Families & Children/ Child Abuse and Neglect	☐ **Read:** Fundamentals of Mandatory Reporting: A Guide for Refugee Service Providers in the U.S. **or Watch:** Foundations of Mandatory Reporting for Refugee Service Providers ☐ **Review for your state:** Who Is a Mandated Reporter? ☐ **Read:** An Introduction to Child Protection: Guide for Newcomer Youth Caregivers and Service Providers ☐ **Watch:** Child Protection Roundtable Session 1: Abuse and Neglect in the Newcomer Youth Context ☐ **Watch:** Family Engagement with Refugee Populations ☐ **Review:** Guardianship Fact Sheet ☐ **Read:** Growing Up in a New Country: A Positive Youth Development Toolkit for Working with Refugees and Immigrants ☐ **Read:** Child Care Resources for Refugee Service Providers: Ensuring Working Families Thrive ☐ **Watch:** Traumatic Stress Among Refugee Children: Responding to Abuse, Exploitation, and Trafficking	☐ *Discuss with your supervisor: What are the local child abuse and neglect reporting protocols?* ☐ *Activity: List all resources and programming available for refugee children and youth at your office. Discuss referral processes with your supervisor.*
Motivational Interviewing	☐ **Listen:** What is Motivational Interviewing?	☐ *Reflect: What are three ways you will use Motivational Interviewing in your work with ICM clients?*

Self-Care and Staff Care	☐ **Watch:** [Balancing the Demanding Needs of Case Management](#) ☐ **Watch:** [Enhancing Refugee Care: The Link Between Provider Well-Being and Service Quality](#) ☐ **Watch:** [Optimizing Your Self-Care Based on Your Coping Style](#) ☐ **Read:** [Preventing Occupational Hazards by Promoting Organizational Resilience](#) ☐ **Complete:** [Self-Care and Lifestyle Balance Inventory](#)	☐ *Discuss with your supervisor: What are some ways your office prioritizes self-care and staff care? What are some ways you can incorporate self-care into your work routine?* ☐ *Activity: Review your Self-Care and Lifestyle Balance Inventory. What are one or two practices you will commit to in the next month to improve your self-care? Who will keep you accountable?*
Mental Health and Wellness	☐ **Read:** [Mental Health and Psychosocial Support for Newcomers: Guidance for Service Providers](#) or **Watch:** [Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS): Foundations for Resettlement Caseworkers](#) ☐ **Read:** [Opening Doors to Mental Health Support: A Screening Guide for Resettlement Providers](#) ☐ **Watch:** [Effective Practices for Mental Health Screening Across Cultures](#) ☐ **Listen:** [A Discussion on Refugee Mental Health](#) ☐ **Review:** [Mental Health First Aid Training Glossary of Key Terms](#) ☐ **Watch:** [Access to Mental Health Services for Refugees](#)	☐ *Discuss with your supervisor: What are barriers to accessing mental health services for refugees at your office? What solutions have been implemented? If your office uses a standard mental health screening tool, how is it implemented?*
Immigration Legal Assistance	☐ **Watch:** [Integrating Legal Services Within Social Services Organizations](#) ☐ **Watch:** [Overview of the U.S. Naturalization Process and Citizenship Benefits](#) ☐ **Watch:** [Helping Clients with Disabilities Naturalize](#)	☐ *Discuss with your supervisor: Why is it essential to educate clients about the path to U.S. citizenship?*

Physical Health and Medical Needs	☐ **Review:** Improving Well-Being for Refugees in Primary Care ☐ **Read:** Addressing Child and Family Health Care Needs ☐ **Read:** Navigating Sensitive Health Conversations with Clients ☐ **Read:** Assisting Newcomers with Navigating the U.S. Health Care System ☐ **Read:** Helping Clients Prepare for Initial Medical Appointments	☐ *Discuss with your supervisor: What are the primary physical health needs of ICM clients in your location? Who are clients' primary health care providers in the area?*
Indicators of Suicidality and Self-Harm	☐ **Read:** Safety Planning for Suicidal Ideation or **Watch:** Suicide Prevention and Safety Planning ☐ **Read:** Suicidality Among Refugees ☐ **Read:** Suicide and Refugee Children and Adolescents	☐ *Activity: With your supervisor, review the protocol for escalation if a client discloses suicidal ideation. What is your responsibility? What is your supervisor's responsibility?* ☐ *Activity: Complete a mock safety plan with your supervisor.*

Community Outreach

Community outreach and capacity building is an important part of ICM services to make sure clients are connected to the appropriate resources and referrals in the community.

Due Date:
Completion Date:

	☐ **Watch:** Strengthening Refugee Integration through Community Resource Mapping ☐ **Read:** Leveraging Client Feedback in Community Engagement ☐ **Read:** Community Needs Assessments with Newcomers ☐ **Review:** Trauma-Informed Survey Checklist	☐ *Activity: Review case notes for three cases. Discuss with your supervisor: What local resources are available for those clients? What community partners are you trying to establish relationships with this year?*

		☐ *Activity: Complete [Community Resource Mapping template](#) after viewing the webinar. Discuss with your team as necessary.*

We encourage you to continue learning as you progress in your role within intensive case management. Please consult your supervisor or training officer with respect to additional opportunities to continue to grow within your role. Social learning opportunities, such as communities of practice or working groups, can also be a great way to exchange knowledge and learn from others! Lastly, ask your supervisor to connect you with the **PC Learning Circle**, which is a monthly training hosted by the national resettlement agencies' Preferred Communities headquarters staff.