



Addressing Transportation Barriers for Refugee Employees



A common barrier preventing refugees from securing and maintaining employment is the lack of transportation to get to work. Given that refugees are new to a country, it can take them months, or even years, to secure a driver's license and have sufficient funds to rent/buy a car. Having a car is essential in many places to get to work, particularly in locations that do not have extensive public transportation systems.

Companies can implement a number of solutions to help their refugee employees travel to and from work, especially during their first few months in their new host country. This resource offers practical solutions to help companies address transportation barriers for their refugee employees.

Best Practices for Helping Refugees Get to Work

01 PILOT YOUR REFUGEE-HIRING EFFORTS AT SITES THAT ARE ACCESSIBLE VIA PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

- As your company is determining where to focus your refugee hiring efforts, consider including a number of locations that are accessible via public transportation. In doing so, think about whether your site is accessible to employees in practical terms, such as by verifying that the closest bus/subway stop is relatively nearby and safe to walk to at night. The number of non-refugee employees already using public transportation to get to work is a strong indicator of how accessible the location is.
- Make sure to share guidance with your refugee employees on how to navigate the public transportation system. Companies should offer detailed maps and directions to refugee employees on how to navigate public transportation to get to work.
- Educate your refugee employees on how to access any of your company's transportation benefits, such as using pre-tax dollars to buy public transit cards. Refugees with limited local language proficiency might find it difficult to navigate your company's transportation benefits. Consider translating key onboarding materials into a refugee's local language and offer them a buddy who can answer any questions they might have.
- Exercise extra patience and understanding around punctuality-related issues, especially in the first few weeks of a refugee starting in a new role as they adjust to their new commute.

02 HELP REFUGEE EMPLOYEES CARPOOL TO WORK

- Carpooling enables a refugee employee to receive rides to work from one of their colleagues. Ideally, carpoolers would be working the same shifts as refugee employees and be able to pick-up and drop-off refugee employees at their residences or a central location.
- Carpooling can also help refugee employees build stronger personal relationships with non-refugee employees, further facilitating a refugee's integration into their new community.

- Carpools can be arranged so that participants split relevant costs (e.g. gas, parking) and driving duties. Carpool scheduling can be coordinated through internal company websites, corporate rideshare apps, or informal meetings/sign-ups at work.
- Employers can encourage carpooling by giving parking preference to carpoolers, subsidizing gas and parking, or helping a group of employees lease or rent a car.

03 SPONSOR A SHUTTLE FOR EMPLOYEES

- Companies can contract an external provider to arrange a shuttle that picks-up and drops-off a group of refugee employees working the same shifts, either at their residences or at a central location (e.g. shopping center). Non-refugee employees could also benefit from a shuttle service.

04 CONTRACT RIDESHARE SERVICES

- Companies can contract ride-sharing companies to set up a customizable commuting program for refugee employees through either Uber for Business or Lyft for Business.
- Employers can decide how much of the cost will be covered by the company per ride, what days/times employees can use these rides, and which vehicle type riders can request.
- Tent can connect companies to our member companies - Uber and Lyft - to discuss this opportunity in further detail.

05 PROVIDE GUIDANCE TO REFUGEE EMPLOYEES ON HOW TO SECURE AN AUTO LOAN

- Companies can share practical information with refugee employees on how to apply for a loan to lease, rent, or buy a car through a financial institution or non-profit organization. For example, the International Rescue Committee, one of the US's nine refugee resettlement agencies, offers interest-free auto loans to Afghans in the U.S. through their SAFE initiative.
- When pointing refugees to various resources, be mindful of the fact that refugees will likely have limited knowledge of the financial system in their new host country and may require additional guidance.

Next Steps:

Developing transportation options to accommodate refugee employees will improve your company's ability to recruit, integrate, and retain refugee talent. The Tent Partnership for Refugees can work with companies on an individual basis to help them address transportation barriers for their specific workforce. To learn more about Tent and our services, reach out at info@tent.org

About the Tent Partnership for Refugees

With more and more refugees displaced for longer periods of time, businesses have a critical role to play in helping refugees integrate economically in their new host communities. The Tent Partnership for Refugees mobilizes the global business community to improve the lives and livelihoods of more than 30 million refugees who have been forcibly displaced from their home countries. Founded by Chobani's founder and CEO, Hamdi Ulukaya, in 2016, we are a network of over 220 major companies committed to including refugees. Tent believes that companies can most sustainably support refugees by leveraging their core business operations—by engaging refugees as potential employees, entrepreneurs, and consumers.