



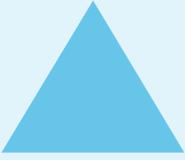
TENT

# How Companies in the U.S. Can Mentor Refugee Women

A Step-by-Step Guide



TENT.ORG



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## 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 to integrate economically in their new communities. Tent was launched in 2016 by Hamdi Ulukaya, the CEO and founder of Chobani – a multibillion dollar food company in the U.S. – to mobilize global businesses to fill this gap by helping connect refugees to work. Today, Tent is a **network of over 300 major companies**<sup>1</sup> committed to hiring, training, and mentoring refugees. Find out more at [www.tent.org](http://www.tent.org).<sup>2</sup>

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## In collaboration with:



### **About Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service**

Founded in 1939, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS) is the largest faith-based national non-profit dedicated exclusively to serving refugees, asylum-seekers, and other immigrant communities in the U.S. Through more than 80 years of service and advocacy, LIRS has helped more than 500,000 migrants and refugees rebuild their lives in the U.S. Find out more at [www.lirs.org](http://www.lirs.org).<sup>3</sup>

## Mentorship program co-host:



### **About Catalyst**

Catalyst is a global non-profit supported by many of the world's most powerful CEOs and leading companies to help build workplaces that work for women. Founded in 1962, Catalyst drives change with preeminent thought leadership, actionable solutions, and a galvanized community of multinational corporations to accelerate and advance women into leadership – because progress for women is progress for everyone. Find out more at [www.catalyst.org](http://www.catalyst.org).<sup>4</sup>

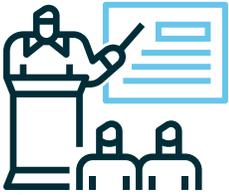


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# How to use this guide

This guide advises companies on how their women's employee resource group (ERG) can partner with the Tent Partnership for Refugees (Tent) to establish and implement a professional mentorship program\* for refugee women in the U.S.

\* The mentorship program referenced by this guide is a particular initiative designed and supported by Tent, and co-hosted by Catalyst.<sup>5</sup> To find out more about the program and how Tent can work with your company to set up and manage it, get in touch – email [mentorship@tent.org](mailto:mentorship@tent.org).

Since 1980, the U.S. has welcomed more than 3 million refugees who have fled violence and persecution worldwide. Approximately half of refugees in the U.S. are women of working age, and many come to the country with strong educational backgrounds, English language skills, and professional work experiences. After arriving in the U.S. and receiving work authorization from the government, refugee women are typically excited to begin a new professional chapter in the U.S. to be able to integrate into their new communities, and provide for themselves and their families.

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Mentorship can be incredibly beneficial in helping refugee women to find work and advance their careers – notably for mid- to high-skilled refugee women who have struggled to find jobs that match their skill sets. A mentorship program can help refugee women to strengthen their professional skills, navigate the U.S. job market, learn about workplace norms, and work towards career goals in the U.S. Mentors offer refugee mentees career guidance, provide feedback on resumes and cover letters, and help mentees to develop a professional network, which can drastically improve their professional career.

This guide includes a background section to provide context on refugee women in the U.S, guidance for mentorship coordinators and mentors, and suggested content/topics for mentor-mentee meetings.

### **Appointing a mentorship coordinator**

A mentorship coordinator will manage the mentorship program and be the official point of contact for mentors. Some mentorship coordinators may be a leader in a women’s ERG, or work within a company’s human resources (HR), corporate social responsibility (CSR), or diversity and inclusion (D&I) team, but they could hold any role.

### **Recruiting mentors**

The mentorship coordinator will be responsible for recruiting employees to volunteer as mentors.

Mentorship can be an enriching professional and personal experience for both mentors and mentees. Refugee mentees bring new perspectives, talent, and skills from which mentors can learn. In addition, mentors have the opportunity to develop their leadership skills, communication abilities, and cross-cultural competencies.

This mentorship program was designed by Tent as an initiative that empowers refugee women. However, this program should not be limited to female mentors – in fact, people of any gender can and should be allies to refugee women, and all employees are invited to participate as mentors.



# Background on refugee women in the U.S.





Before partnering with Tent to develop a mentorship program for refugee women, it is important to understand the context for refugee women in the U.S., including the challenges they face when trying to find, secure, and maintain work.

Companies should understand that refugee women who take part in the mentorship program will have different backgrounds, skills, personalities, and motivations. They will each face unique obstacles in their efforts to realize their personal and professional goals. This guide will share an overview of the U.S. refugee women population and highlight some of the largest refugee communities.

Tent recommends that mentors familiarize themselves with basic information about their mentee's country of origin by conducting some brief research prior to meeting with them for the first time. This will provide mentors with context for what their mentee may have experienced.

Though refugee women have varying backgrounds and reasons for coming to the U.S., they often encounter steep barriers when finding jobs and advancing in their careers in the country on account of their "double disadvantage" as both refugees and women. First, as refugees in the U.S, they face obstacles such as limited access to social and professional networks to help them navigate the country's job market, as well as a lack of recognition for their educational and professional credentials. Second, as women, they often face a host of systemic challenges, such as disproportionate childcare and domestic responsibilities, lower wages, and negative gender stereotypes.

Refugee women's experiences will vary based on the conditions of their home country, as well as their socioeconomic background, level of education, and work experiences.

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## What are the legal statuses of refugee women in the U.S.?

**Please note that this guide will use the term “refugee” as a catch-all for all forcibly displaced people in the U.S.** Forcibly displaced people in the U.S. have several immigration statuses, including asylees, asylum-seekers, humanitarian parolees, refugees, special immigrant visa (SIV) holders, temporary protected status (TPS) holders, and victims of human trafficking:

- **Asylees:** individuals who meet the same definition of a refugee as listed below but are already present in the U.S. or seeking admission at a port of entry. It is important to note that “asylees” have been legally adjudicated to merit asylum and are different from “asylum-seekers”, who have a pending asylum case. Asylees can obtain legal permanent resident status one year after their grant of asylum.
- **Asylum-seekers:** individuals whose request for asylum has been filed but is not yet through processing. Asylum-seekers need to apply for an Employment Authorization Document to work legally.
- **Humanitarian parolees:** individuals who are granted temporary admission to the U.S. based on urgent humanitarian need, such as needing to receive critical medical treatment in the U.S., caring for a sick relative in the U.S., or needing protection from targeted or individualized harm.<sup>6</sup> Afghan and Ukrainian parolees are eligible to work legally upon receiving their parole status and do not need to wait for an Employment Authorization Document to start working. Venezuelan, Nicaraguan, Haitian, and Cuban parolees need to apply for an Employment Authorization Document to work legally.
- **Refugees:** individuals who are unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion. Refugees can obtain legal permanent resident status after one year in the U.S. Refugees are authorized to work upon their admission to the U.S.

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- **SIV-holders:** individuals who worked for the U.S. government, U.S. military, or government contractors in Iraq or Afghanistan for at least one year. Individuals with this status are legal permanent residents of the U.S. and are authorized to work upon their admission to the U.S.
  - **TPS-holders:** individuals living in the U.S. are eligible to apply for TPS status when the U.S. government adds their home country to the TPS list due to unsafe conditions such as civil war, an environmental disaster, or an epidemic.<sup>7</sup> Individuals need to apply for an Employment Authorization Document to work legally. TPS is a temporary status.
  - **Victims of human trafficking:** individuals who were coerced to participate in sex or were exploited for their labor. Adult victims of sex or labor trafficking who are not U.S. citizens or lawful permanent residents can apply for a T visa, which allows them to stay legally in the U.S. for four years and obtain an Employment Authorization Document.<sup>8</sup>

*To learn more about these legal statuses, see Tent's ["U.S. Employers' Guide to Hiring Refugees"](#) resource.<sup>9</sup>*

Having different statuses means that women have arrived in the U.S. by different means. Some women (including those who enter as refugees and SIV-holders) immediately have a pathway to permanent legal status, while others (including humanitarian parolees and TPS-holders) need to pursue a permanent legal status through the legal system to stay in the country.

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### **Which countries are refugee women fleeing from?**

Refugee women are fleeing violence and persecution worldwide. In the past few years, the largest populations of forcibly displaced people in the U.S. came from **Venezuela, Ukraine, and Afghanistan.**

Since Russia's invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022, millions of **Ukrainians** have fled their home country. Women and children represent around 90% of the overall Ukrainian refugee population, and most Ukrainians entering the U.S. are women.<sup>10</sup> While the vast majority of Ukrainian refugees are in Europe, as of April 2023, more than 120,000 Ukrainians have arrived through the Uniting for Ukraine program, which allows Ukrainians to reside in the U.S. with humanitarian parole for up to two years. Many Ukrainians are living in New York, Illinois, California, Washington, and Florida.<sup>11</sup> It is likely that many Ukrainians coming to the U.S. will speak English and have professional work backgrounds. Although English is not an official language in Ukraine, it is fairly widely spoken. Many Ukrainians are also likely to have post-secondary education and professional work experiences. According to UNHCR, seven in 10 Ukrainian refugees have a bachelor's degree or higher, and most (63%) were employed or self-employed in Ukraine, with "diverse professional and occupational backgrounds".<sup>12</sup> In addition to the Uniting for Ukraine program, Ukrainians are also coming to the U.S. through the refugee resettlement program, with approximately 1,600 arriving in 2022 to 29 different states. Other Ukrainians are living in the U.S. under TPS.

Since the August 2021 U.S. military withdrawal and Taliban takeover of Afghanistan, more than 95,000 **Afghans** have resettled in the U.S. through Operation Allies Welcome. Through the operation, many Afghans were airlifted to the U.S., including those who worked on behalf of the U.S. military or government as interpreters, drivers, or embassy staff; those vulnerable due to their profession, including journalists, human rights activists, and humanitarian workers; and women and families. It is estimated that more than 18,000 are women of working age.<sup>13</sup> Forty-nine U.S. states, as well as the District of Columbia, have welcomed Afghans, with Texas, California, and Virginia hosting the largest number of recently arrived Afghans.<sup>14</sup> Levels of education, English language ability, and work experiences vary across the Afghan refugee

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population. Based on informal data from refugee-focused non-profits in the U.S., around 20% of recent Afghan arrivals are high-skilled with English proficiency, 20% are mid-skilled with some English proficiency, and 60% have limited English language proficiency and are likely best suited for vocational roles. An August 2022 report from the International Rescue Committee notes a gap in employment rates and pay between Afghan male and female refugees in the U.S.: Afghan men earned \$1.36 more per hour than Afghan women, and just 16% of all job placements for Afghans were for female Afghan clients. The top sectors for employment for all Afghans included accommodation and food services (21%), retail trade (14%), manufacturing (12%), transportation and warehousing (11%), and food manufacturing (10%). Data from a 2022 Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) survey of recently arrived Afghans notes that many Afghans feel overqualified for their current jobs, with more than one in three reporting that their skills exceed what is needed.<sup>15</sup> Most Afghans (approximately 75,000) have come to the U.S. through humanitarian parole, which is a temporary status. Others have come through the refugee resettlement program (approximately 3,000) or as SIV-holders (approximately 18,000).<sup>16</sup> It is estimated that around 70,000 Afghans living in the U.S. are eligible for TPS.<sup>17</sup>

Since 2015, more than 7 million **Venezuelans** have fled their home country due to deepening poverty, human rights abuses, a collapse in basic services, food and medicine shortages, crime and violence, and corruption. While the vast majority of Venezuelan refugees have fled to nearby countries in Latin America, the U.S. has welcomed hundreds of thousands of Venezuelans in recent years under different programs. Most forcibly displaced Venezuelans in the U.S. are asylum-seekers, humanitarian parolees, and TPS-holders. In 2023, the U.S. government established a new program to welcome 360,000 Cubans, Haitians, Nicaraguans, and Venezuelans per year via humanitarian parole, and has welcomed over 35,000 Venezuelan parolees as of April 2023. In September 2022, there were more than 110,000 beneficiaries under Venezuela's TPS designation. While there is limited data on Venezuelan parolees and TPS-holders in the U.S., forcibly displaced Venezuelans will likely follow the geographical and professional trends of the broader Venezuelan community in the U.S. More than half (51%) of Venezuelans in the U.S. live in Florida, followed by Texas

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(14%) and New York (4%). Venezuelans typically have high levels of education, with 62% of those who arrived in the U.S. between 2017 and 2021 reporting having a bachelor's degree.<sup>18</sup> Venezuelans also participate in the labor market at higher rates than U.S.-born and other immigrant adults: 74% of those aged 16 and older were in the labor force in 2021. Venezuelans were found in all types of occupations, and were more likely to be employed in sales and office occupations than other workers.

In addition to Venezuelans, Ukrainians, and Afghans, there are large refugee populations in the U.S. from El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Haiti, Cameroon, China, Turkey, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Syria, Burma, and Sudan.

### **Are refugee women authorized to work in the U.S.?**

Yes! All refugee women holding the statuses listed in this guide can receive an Employment Authorization Document or permanent resident card from the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), which authorizes them to work without requiring sponsorship from an employer.

The process of receiving documents that prove work authorization, however, will be different based on status. Individuals with some statuses (e.g., asylum-seekers, TPS-holders) will need to apply and wait for work authorization documents, while others (e.g., refugees, SIV-holders) receive them quickly through an expedited process.

Humanitarian parolees, TPS-holders, asylum-seekers, and victims of human trafficking receive temporary residence and work authorization, while refugees, asylees, and SIV-holders receive permanent residence and work authorization. Individuals with these temporary statuses will have more concerns about their legal situation and will likely need to apply to adjust their status to remain legally authorized to work. Individuals with refugee, asylee, or SIV status are able to apply for a Permanent Resident Card, or Green Card, after one year, and SIV-holders receive a Green Card soon after arrival.<sup>19</sup>

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*For answers to common questions about how to hire refugees, including critical information for HR teams, see Tent's ["U.S. Employers' Guide to Hiring Refugees"](#)<sup>20</sup> and ["U.S. Employers' Guide to Hiring Afghan Refugees"](#)<sup>21</sup> resources.*

### **How are current refugee women faring in terms of employment?**

Refugee women are not faring as well as their male counterparts in terms of finding employment and face steep barriers to advancing their careers in the U.S.

A 2019 report from the Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security, and the International Rescue Committee analyzed the economic outlook of refugee women in the U.S. The report found significant disparities in pay and employment rates for refugee women compared to other groups. Pay for refugee women averaged \$10.80 per hour, in contrast to \$12.20 for refugee men, \$13.56 for non-refugee women, and \$15.20 for non-refugee men.<sup>22</sup> Employment rates also showed a stark difference between refugee women and men, with a 40% employment rate for refugee women compared to a 74% employment rate for refugee men.<sup>23</sup>

Results from ORR's 2019 Annual Survey of Refugees found similar employment rate gaps for refugee women compared to refugee men, with 53% of refugee women in the labor force compared to 77% of refugee men.<sup>24</sup> When refugees not in the labor force and not seeking employment were asked to share why, they cited attending school or training, poor health, disability, and childcare/family responsibilities as top reasons. Four in 10 (42%) refugee women cited family responsibilities as the reason why they were not in the labor force.<sup>25</sup>

Causes of pay and employment gaps vary, but they can include refugee women being clustered in lower-skilled, lower-paying jobs such as cleaning or cooking; a lack of U.S.-based professional networks; and the concentration of women in the informal economy working "under the table" jobs. Structural gender inequalities,

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discrimination, and cultural norms about women and working are also critical pieces to understand.<sup>26</sup> Refugee women face a “double disadvantage” as both refugees and women. Gender-based discrimination in the job market persists in the U.S., as it does globally, and can limit a refugee woman’s opportunities to find, secure, and maintain work. For refugee women, there is also the added potential of discrimination based on additional factors such as race, ethnicity, religion, disability, and sexual orientation.

In addition to structural gender inequalities in the U.S., refugee women are often less equipped to enter the U.S. job market than their male counterparts. Due to societal norms in their home countries, many refugee women often have had less access to education and/or vocational training than men.<sup>27</sup> They may also lack time or resources to seek employment if they are tasked with taking care of the household, children, or other family members. Refugee women may also have had less access to financial services in their country of origin compared to men, hindering their ability to achieve financial stability.

Regardless of their professional experience in their home country, refugee women face many barriers to securing employment in the U.S. These can include a lack of familiarity with U.S. culture and how to search for jobs without a social or professional network. Other challenges include difficulty finding and/or affording childcare, and low levels of English proficiency. Refugee women with high levels of education may struggle with the processes and costs associated with validating education credentials needed to access certain industries for employment. In addition, their credentials or experience may not be familiar to HR teams reviewing their resumes, which can make it challenging to progress in the interview process.

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## Resources

For more information about refugee women in the U.S., see:

- The [USA for UNHCR website](#)<sup>28</sup> provides basic information about refugees in the U.S.
- The [Cultural Orientation Resource Exchange website](#)<sup>29</sup> contains resources about refugee populations in the U.S., including backgrounds on Ukrainians, Afghans, and Congolese.
- [This Congressional Research Service report](#)<sup>30</sup> details all TPS populations, including information about why each country has been designated for TPS.
- The [U.S. Department of State](#)<sup>31</sup> website and [this video by refugee non-profit Switchboard](#)<sup>32</sup> share information about how refugees arrive in the U.S.

For more information about hiring refugees, see:

- Tent's ["U.S. Employers' Guide to Hiring Refugees" resource](#).<sup>33</sup>
- Tent's ["U.S. Employers' Guide to Hiring Afghan Refugees" resource](#).<sup>34</sup>
- The E-Verify [website](#)<sup>35</sup> for more information about the web-based system through which employers electronically confirm the employment eligibility of employees.
- The USCIS [website](#)<sup>36</sup> for more information about immigrant work authorization and documentation, including helpful videos explaining [how to complete the Form I-9](#).<sup>37</sup>

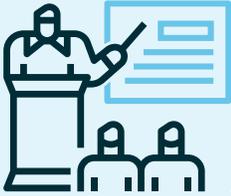
- The United States Department of Justice’s Immigrant and Employee Rights (IER) Section of the Civil Rights Division, which helps employers and workers to understand the anti-discrimination provision of the Immigration and Nationality Act. The Immigrant and Employee Rights Section, in particular, helps employers and workers to understand the documentation needed to fulfill Form I-9 requirements when applying for a job. Some helpful links include:
  - The IER [website](#),<sup>38</sup> which contains resources for companies.
  - [This fact sheet](#)<sup>39</sup> about refugee and asylee work authorization and documentation.
- The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission [website](#),<sup>40</sup> which offers guidance for employers to prevent national origin discrimination in the workplace. Companies hiring refugee women, like any other employee, should be aware of anti-discrimination provisions relating to national origin discrimination.

For resources for refugee women about adjusting to life in the U.S., see:

- [Settle In](#),<sup>41</sup> which offers multilingual information for refugees about resettling in the U.S. A phone application called “Settle In” is also available for download.
- [Switchboard](#),<sup>42</sup> which provides e-learning resources on a variety of topics, including employment and adult education.
- [Upwardly Global](#),<sup>43</sup> which offers free, virtual services for immigrants and refugees seeking to return to their professional careers.
- The U.S. Department of Labor’s [Worker.gov website](#)<sup>44</sup> provides information about American workplace laws.

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- **World Education Services**,<sup>45</sup> which provides international credential evaluation for individuals with degrees from other countries.
  - Refugee women seeking assistance with learning English can often find free courses at local community colleges – an online search for “ESL classes” in your location should show some options.

# Guide for mentorship coordinators



This guide will equip you with the information your women’s ERG needs to establish a mentorship program for refugee women in partnership with Tent. Participating in this program is an opportunity for you and your colleagues who volunteer as mentors to develop inclusive leadership skills, communication abilities, and cross-cultural competencies.

As mentorship coordinator, you will be responsible for recruiting your colleagues to become mentors, serving as a point of contact for mentors and Tent, organizing administrative aspects of the program, and more.

Tent has also produced a separate **implementation guide**<sup>46</sup> that outlines the logistical components of this particular mentorship program, including a timeline and FAQs. Please email [mentorship@tent.org](mailto:mentorship@tent.org) if you have not received this or are having issues accessing the document.

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### **The benefits of mentorship for your colleagues and company**

Serving as a mentor is an opportunity for employees to share their knowledge and expertise with refugee women who can benefit greatly from this guidance. This individualized support will help refugee women to settle on career goals and strategy, build professional networks, navigate the U.S. job market, and find and secure more advanced jobs.

Participating in this mentorship program will also help your colleagues to strengthen their communication abilities and develop cross-cultural competencies. Furthermore, your company will be demonstrating its commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion by supporting a marginalized group. Your colleagues will be proud to see their company supporting one of the most vulnerable populations in the U.S.

Most importantly, working with a mentor can have a hugely positive impact on the professional success of a refugee woman. By serving as role models, providing resources on how to succeed in the workplace, and helping mentees to build their professional networks, mentors have an opportunity to change the course of a refugee woman's life.

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### **Suggested components of a mentorship program for refugee women**

- Mentors and mentees meet at least six times during a six-month period, either online, through meetings at your company's office, or informal gatherings outside of the office. Meetings can happen more frequently if a mentor, mentee, or your company would prefer (see the [Guide for mentors](#) chapter for meeting resources, including mentor-mentee exercises).
- Mentors and mentees discuss the local job search process, including tips on resumes, cover letters, and LinkedIn.
- Mentors and mentees reflect on cultural norms in the workplace in the U.S.
- Mentors support mentees to access a professional network in their field(s) of interest.
- Mentors and mentees learn from each other's professional experiences.
- Mentors and mentees practice English as much as possible.
- Mentors and mentees develop leadership and communication skills by providing feedback to each other.

## Overview of steps to implement a mentorship program for refugee women

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**01** Recruit mentors at your company

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**02** The mentor-mentee matching process

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**03** Prepare mentors for their role

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**04** Support mentors and mentees over the course of the program

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**05** Measure success with a post-program survey

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# 01

## Step one: Recruit mentors at your company

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One of your primary responsibilities as mentorship coordinator is to recruit employees at your company to serve as mentors. Tent recommends recruiting mentors from a variety of professional and personal backgrounds.

*This mentorship program was designed by Tent as an initiative that empowers refugee women. However, this program should not be limited to female mentors – in fact, people of any gender can and should be allies to refugee women, and all employees are invited to participate as mentors. Tent also recognizes that some female mentees may prefer to work with a female mentor, particularly if they were a victim of gender-based violence, and will try to match these mentee women accordingly.*

*Since you will be exchanging information about mentors and mentees with Tent, please ensure that you are adhering to your company's internal privacy and data safeguarding policies.*

### Steps for recruiting mentors at your company:

1. Develop and implement a strategy for recruiting mentors. Examples include:
  - Emailing employees at your company with the support of HR or internal communications colleagues (see the [Appendix](#) for a sample email).
  - Highlighting the initiative at company events.
  - Promoting the initiative through your women's ERG.
  - Posting about the initiative in internal company channels, such as Slack or Microsoft Teams.
2. Share a link to a registration form provided by Tent to sign up mentors to the program (see the [implementation guide](#)<sup>47</sup> for more information).

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3. Check your company's safeguarding policies, including whether mentors participating in this program will be required to undergo a criminal background check. Decide which background checks mentors will be required to undergo.
  4. Share this resource with mentors, so they have full visibility of all content related to the mentorship program.



**Refer to the [implementation guide](#)<sup>48</sup> for further details and feel free to reach out to Tent if you need additional guidance – email**

**[mentorship@tent.org](mailto:mentorship@tent.org)**

# 02

## Step two:

### The mentor-mentee matching process

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Tent partners with a network of NGOs, community organizations, and other groups that service refugees to recruit mentees for this program.

Employees and refugees will be able to sign up as mentors and mentees at any time through an online tool created by Tent. The process is as follows:

1. Once a mentee signs-up, Tent will match them to a suitable mentor.
2. Once a mentor is identified, the mentee will receive an automated email from Tent asking them to confirm their participation in the mentorship program.
3. After their mentee confirms their participation, the mentor will receive an automated email asking them to attend online training provided by Tent (throughout the program, mentors and mentees will have access to additional online resources).
4. Mentors will be asked to arrange the first session with their mentee after they complete their training.

See the [implementation guide](#)<sup>49</sup> for the latest information about how mentor-mentee matching works, including a step-by-step process flow and details about who is responsible for doing what.



**Feel free to reach out to Tent if you need additional guidance – email [mentorship@tent.org](mailto:mentorship@tent.org)**

# 03

## Step three: Prepare mentors for their role

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All mentors who take part in the mentorship program are required to participate in a Tent training webinar to learn best practices for supporting their refugee mentee. But you should also provide mentors at your company with guidance on how best to prepare for their mentorship experience by sharing the [Background on refugee women in the U.S.](#) chapter of this guide with them in advance of their first mentee meeting. This will provide mentors with a chance to learn more about the challenges refugee women face, as well as best practices for stepping into a mentoring role. Mentors are also encouraged to learn more about their mentee's country of origin in advance of their first meeting. Additionally, you should direct mentors to review the meeting resources included in the [Guide for mentors](#) chapter in advance, so they can anticipate what to expect as they take on the role.

You may also want to plan an informational meeting with all mentors, either in person at your company or online, to prepare them for the program. Be sure to reserve time for them to share their questions or concerns.

The agenda for this informational mentor session could include:

- Objectives of the mentorship program.
- A summary of the steps involved.
- Background information on mentees: where they come from, challenges they face, etc.
- A discussion about this mentorship program's code of conduct (see the [Annex](#)).

At this meeting, it may also be useful to provide best practices for building relationships across cultures. Mentors who may have mentored before or have experience of working with refugees can give advice to the rest of the group.



**Refer to the implementation guide<sup>50</sup> for further details and feel free to reach out to Tent if you need additional guidance – email**

[mentorship@tent.org](mailto:mentorship@tent.org)

# 04

## Step four:

### Support mentors and mentees over the course of the program

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#### **Support for mentors**

For the duration of the mentorship program, you are the mentors' point of contact if questions or concerns arise. Mentees may wish to discuss issues that go beyond the knowledge and experience of their mentor – for example, reuniting with family, legal issues, etc. It is important to note that neither you nor your colleagues are professionally trained on refugees' mental health challenges, legal statuses, or other such issues. In the initial meeting between a mentor and mentee, they can agree on the boundaries of their relationship, logistics (e.g., the best way to contact each other and at what hours), and come to an agreement on confidentiality.

Mentors and mentees should agree that they can maintain confidentiality unless they feel someone is at risk of harm, or others around them are at risk of harm. Should a mentor report a conversation with their mentee they feel is outside the scope of the mentorship program, or which is inappropriate or concerning, do not keep this information to yourself or attempt to manage a situation on your own. If a mentor raises such a concern, please raise it with Tent or the NGO that referred the mentee (if you know this information) as soon as possible. **Do not share sensitive information with anyone other than Tent or the NGO.**

#### **Checking-in**

Tent recommends that mentorship coordinators send a check-in email to mentors and mentees at the midpoint of their six months together, offering to meet if anyone has questions. During these check-ins, mentors and mentees can share and discuss their concerns and progress.

#### **Your company's sexual harassment and conduct policies should apply to mentor-mentee relationships**

The mentoring experience is professional in nature, and this should be reflected in the conduct of both mentors and mentees. For the duration of the mentorship program, sexual and romantic relationships between mentors and mentees is prohibited, as are lewd and sexually suggestive comments. A mentor who abuses their status as a trusted figure to engage in a romantic or sexual relationship with their mentee constitutes sexual misconduct. No participant in the mentorship program should ever be made to feel intimidated, coerced,

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unsafe, or undignified based on interactions in person or online. A violation of these principles constitutes harassment.

If a mentor feels uncomfortable with their mentee's behavior, mentors should raise the issue with you, the mentorship coordinator. Support them as they reflect on the mentee's behavior and why it feels challenging to them. At the same time, if a mentee feels uncomfortable with their mentor's behavior, they should contact the NGO that referred them to the mentorship program.

### **Rematching**

The aim of the program is for mentors and mentees to work together throughout its duration, allowing them to develop a strong relationship. However, if a mentee is uncontactable, or if there is a concern about them, please raise this with Tent, which will do its best to assign another mentee.



**For information about what to do if a mentee is uncontactable, or if you would like to request a new mentee, see the [implementation guide](#).<sup>51</sup>**

**Feel free to reach out to Tent if you need additional guidance – email [mentorship@tent.org](mailto:mentorship@tent.org)**

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## Step five:

### Measure success with a post-program survey

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At the end of the mentorship program, Tent will distribute program evaluation surveys to both mentors and mentees so they can report back on their experience. Mentors will be asked to complete this survey as a way to indicate completion of their match. These surveys are a great way to measure impact, and unearth best practices and lessons learned, so that Tent can strengthen the mentorship program year after year. Tent will share the results of these surveys with companies.

*Tent will also provide certificates to mentors and mentees at the end of the program to recognize their efforts. Mentors must complete the post-program survey to receive their certificate.*



**Refer to the [implementation guide](#)<sup>52</sup> for further details and feel free to reach out to Tent if you need additional guidance – email**

**[mentorship@tent.org](mailto:mentorship@tent.org)**

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### Ensuring the long-term success of the mentorship program

This mentorship program was designed by Tent to continue on a continuous basis (see the [implementation guide](#)<sup>53</sup> for more information).

If you are leaving the company or need to step back from your mentorship coordinator responsibilities after the first iteration of the program, it is your responsibility to find a new mentorship coordinator within your women's ERG to continue running the program. Make sure to hand over all essential relationships and resources to the new mentorship coordinator. Mentors should be encouraged to renew their participation in the program if they have had a positive experience.

Additionally, some mentors and mentees may choose to stay in touch after the conclusion of the program. In some cases, they may even form long-term mentoring relationships or friendships. Though the parameters of this program are six months, the connections forged may last far beyond the program and continue to positively impact both participants. However, you are no longer responsible as mentorship coordinator for their relationship after the end of the program. Make sure that both mentors and mentees understand that if they wish to continue their contact after the program's end, it will be without any official support.



# Recap: program checklist for mentorship coordinators

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- Develop and implement a strategy for recruiting mentors.

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- Share a link to a registration form provided by Tent to sign up mentors to the program.

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- The mentor-mentee matching process:
  - Once a mentee signs-up, Tent will begin the process of matching them to a suitable mentor.
  - Once a mentor is identified, the mentee will receive an automated email from Tent asking them to confirm their participation in the mentorship program.
  - After their mentee confirms their participation, the mentor will receive an automated email asking them to attend online training provided by Tent (throughout the program, mentors and mentees will have access to additional online resources).
  - Mentors will be asked to arrange the first session with their mentee after they complete their training.

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- Prepare mentors for their role by sharing the relevant content and resources, and by planning an informational meeting.

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- Offer at least one mid-program check-in meeting for mentors and mentees in case they need to raise any concerns.

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- Tent distributes post-program surveys to mentors and mentees.

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- Tent provides certificates to mentors and mentees.

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- If you do not plan to reprise your role as mentorship coordinator, find a new mentorship coordinator from within your women's ERG and hand over any key relationships and resources.



**Refer to the implementation guide<sup>54</sup> for further details and feel free to reach out to Tent if you need additional guidance – email**

[mentorship@tent.org](mailto:mentorship@tent.org)

# Guide for mentors

This guide contains information and advice that will equip you to serve as a mentor in your company's mentorship program for refugee women. Participating in this program is an opportunity for you to strengthen your inclusive leadership skills, cross-cultural competencies, and communication abilities, and make a difference in a refugee woman's life. You can also learn from the experiences of professionals from another country.

For your mentee, this mentorship program is an opportunity to broaden their own social and professional networks, exchange experiences, and receive guidance from you as a trusted resource as they navigate their career path and the U.S. job market.



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- 2. How to be an effective mentor**
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# The mentorship program

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## Program overview

You will be matched with a refugee woman who will be your mentee for the duration of the mentorship program. As a mentor, you will be expected to:

- Meet with your mentee at least six times within a six-month period, either in person or online, to work together on professional development topics including:
  - **Career goals and self-assessment**
  - **How to find a job in the U.S.**
  - **Resumes, cover letters, and LinkedIn**
  - **The interview process**
  - **Networking**
  - **Key learnings and next steps in your mentee's job search**
- Discuss and reflect on differences in workplace cultural norms with your mentee.
- Exchange professional experiences with your mentee and expand their professional network by making introductions between them and your contacts.
- Provide feedback via the end-of-program survey.

## The role of the mentorship coordinator

The mentorship program at your company will be managed by one of your colleagues who is designated to serve as mentorship coordinator. This person is responsible for managing all administrative aspects of the program.

In addition, the mentorship coordinator will be your primary point of contact should any questions or challenges arise over the course of the program.

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### **The matching process**

To begin your role as a mentor, you will need to fill out a registration form about your professional and personal background. You can also share in the form your expectations as a mentor (e.g., what you expect from the program, how often you would like to be in touch with your mentee, etc.). Tent will match you with a mentee and confirm the details of this via email. Before you can connect with your mentee, you must complete online training provided by Tent (information about this will be included in Tent's email to you).

### **Mentor-mentee meetings**

You will be expected to meet with your mentee at least six times over a six-month period. You should send a personal note to your mentee in advance of each of these meetings via email and/or text message to express your enthusiasm about working together and to confirm their attendance. If you or your mentee cannot make it to one of the meetings, suggest an alternative time to meet. Mentors are expected to take the lead on scheduling.

As this mentorship program is focused on professional development, you will be expected to cover a range of relevant topics with your mentee. The final section of this chapter includes suggested topics/content for mentor-mentee meetings, as well as suggested exercises to work through together during them.

You should also consider reaching out to your mentee at other times of the year that are relevant to them. This can help to build rapport and develop your relationship. Some occasions where this may be appropriate include a special occasion such as your mentee's birthday or major religious holidays they celebrate.

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### **Advocating for your mentee**

When appropriate, your efforts to advocate for your mentee can go a long way. Your support can make a big difference if they are looking to make a professional connection, attend a workplace networking event, or have their resume sent to the right people. In your capacity as a mentor, you can greatly assist your mentee by making introductions between them and your professional contacts.

### **Post-program feedback**

At the end of the program, you will be asked by Tent to complete a survey about your experience. In these feedback forms, consider the value of the mentorship program, comparing it to the goals set at the beginning. What were your goals as a mentor, and to what extent have you been able to achieve these? What went well, and what could be improved in the future? You will also be asked to reflect on interactions with and learnings from working with your mentee. Your mentee will also be asked to complete a similar post-program survey.



# How to be an effective mentor

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## **Understanding your role as a mentor: a two-way relationship**

As a mentor, you have a unique opportunity to help your mentee set their career goals and develop a plan to achieve these. You will also have the chance to help them build confidence in their professional abilities while adapting to a new country.

However, this experience is not solely about advising your mentee. You will also learn from them and develop cross-cultural competencies, and learn about their journey and aspirations as new Americans. Individuals who mentor others can foster a greater sense of self-confidence and self-awareness as they develop their leadership skills.

As you step into your role as a mentor, Tent recommends focusing on providing your mentee with guidance rather than solutions. Remember that you are not a case manager or decision-maker, and that your mentee is an adult who has endured difficult circumstances. Refugee women are known for being resilient and adaptable, and working tirelessly to create a better future for their children. Your role is to provide ideas, tools, and skills that can bolster your mentee's long-term success. You can also point your mentee in the direction of specific resources or people who might be able to help them build skills outside of your area of expertise.

It is also important to foster trust between you and your mentee. Refugee mentees, especially those who have recently arrived in the U.S., may experience feelings of intimidation and/or unfamiliarity when interacting with you as a mentor for the first time. Showing that you have a genuine interest in getting to know your mentee as a person, while being careful not to ask probing questions about their past that may trigger trauma, can help them to feel comfortable and create a bond between you. It can also be helpful to share some of your own personal and/or professional story, as you feel comfortable, to foster a two-way relationship and build a strong foundation for the mentorship journey.

## **Being aware of potential cultural sensitivities**

Working with refugees requires paying attention to sensitive issues. Your role is not to act as a social worker or psychologist. You must respect important

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boundaries. Do not ask probing questions about your mentee's life in their country of origin and/or how and why they fled, as this may require them to relive traumas. It is appropriate to ask about your mentee's professional experiences before and after arriving in the U.S., but it is not appropriate to ask questions about family, conflict, or any specifics that led your mentee to leave their country of origin. Your mentee may voluntarily share this kind of personal information. If this happens, you are welcome to engage in the conversation if you both feel comfortable doing so.

Refugee women may have different norms and understanding about gender norms and cultural expectations. Do not make assumptions about your mentee based on their appearance, dress, or country of origin. Recognize that all individuals are individuals and also belong to various cultural groups, so while it is important to understand the culture of their country of origin, it is also just as important to recognize that all mentees are unique individuals and will bring their own opinions and lived experiences.

With this caveat, there are some important considerations for working with a refugee woman. In many cultures, women are encouraged to be "humble", which Americans may interpret as quiet or subservient. Many refugee women may need support in understanding how Americans typically "sell" themselves in job interviews. For many refugee women, knowing how to talk about transferable skills, particularly if they have not worked in a professional setting and/or have gaps in their resume due to fleeing conflict or other conditions, will be important.

It may also be important to learn about your mentee's preferences when it comes to work environments. Some mentees may not feel comfortable working in a job where they are working in close quarters with men, or they may prefer to work jobs with certain hours so they can care for children or manage other family responsibilities. Mentees' family members may also have opinions about the work your mentee might want to do. It can be important to have open conversations with your mentee about their needs and preferences, as well as any preferences from family members, to help you tailor your support.

Refugee women will also practice various religions. Refugee women who identify as Muslim may choose to wear head coverings (i.e., a hijab), observe the tenet

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of prayer five times a day, and will avoid consuming alcohol, pork, and meat that is not “halal”, which is a way of preparing food according to Islamic dietary guidelines. You can ask your mentee if they have any religious practices and dietary restrictions.

In addition, gender norms in your mentee’s country of origin may be very different compared to the U.S. In the U.S., it is common for people of all genders to shake hands, hug, or kiss cheeks upon greeting. Your mentee may be from a culture where people of the opposite gender do not touch unless they are very close family or friends. If you are a man mentoring a woman, it can be polite to wait until a woman extends her hand before extending your own. While this may feel strange, it is respectful in many cultures. Instead, you can place your hand over your heart during the greeting.

In the U.S., it is also common and respectful to maintain eye contact with people with whom you are speaking. In many other cultures, eye contact is often kept to a minimum out of respect. If your mentee is not making much eye contact, know that they are not trying to act disrespectfully. The meeting during which you and your mentee discuss the interview process (see [Meeting four](#) below) can be a good time to explore this topic and explain how Americans view maintaining eye contact as respectful.

At the start of your time with your mentee, ask how they would like to be addressed and if there are any particular considerations you should know about.

It is important to honor your mentee’s identity as an individual and professional. Keep in mind that there may be considerable cultural, political, and philosophical differences between the two of you. Tent advises that mentors refrain from engaging with mentees on politics and other sensitive topics.

It is also important to respect and appreciate your mentee’s unique career goals. Be conscious of the fact that refugees often need immediate opportunities to make a living when they are resettled. If they are not fluent in English, or if their credentials are not recognized locally, your mentee may need to work in lower-paying or lower-skilled jobs before they prepare themselves to find work in their field(s) of interest or expertise. Some refugee women may be content with

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remaining in lower-paying or lower-skilled roles longer-term, while for others, these kinds of roles may be necessary to make a living, as well as providing a stepping stone to jobs in their field(s) of interest. It is important to share that it is common in the U.S. for individuals to change jobs, as this may not be common in your mentee's country of origin.

Finally, note that many refugees leave successful, stable careers in their countries of origin and have to readjust their career expectations upon resettling. If this is the case with your mentee, be sensitive to their desire to continue in their field(s) of expertise, even if they are working a lower-skilled job in the interim. Consider how you can support your mentee as they work towards re-establishing themselves in their chosen field(s).

### **Managing expectations**

Be clear with your mentee about what they can expect from your relationship and ask them about their expectations from the program. Your role is to work with your mentee to make them a stronger candidate for employment, but you cannot guarantee that your support will result in them landing a job by the end of the program. Emphasize this to your mentee upfront to avoid disappointment or misunderstanding down the line. It may also be important to manage expectations about the types of job your mentee may secure. Remind your mentee that they may not find their dream job right away, but add that each job is a stepping stone towards their career goals.

### **Things your mentee can expect of you include:**

- Discussing their career goals (or helping to build career goals based on experience, education, interests, and transferable skills), current work situation, and any obstacles they face in finding, securing, and maintaining work in the U.S.
- Working together to sharpen their job acquisition skills and advance their understanding of how to find skilled jobs in the U.S.
- Explaining resume, cover letter, and LinkedIn fundamentals, and offering your feedback on their resume, cover letter, and LinkedIn profile.

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- Discussing networking and potentially connecting your mentee with relevant contacts in your professional network.
  - Unpacking the social and cultural norms of workplaces in the U.S.
  - Advocating for your mentee when you come across opportunities for them to keep building their professional network.
  - Helping your mentee to seek out job opportunities.

You should be honest about what you can bring to the mentorship experience from the start. Consider how much time you are willing to commit to proofreading resumes, cover letters, and job applications or doing other activities to support your mentee outside of your scheduled meetings. If you are not sure, or if you and your mentee find it difficult to discuss these issues alone, contact the mentorship coordinator for advice.

For the duration of the mentorship program, you are your mentee's point of contact if questions or concerns arise. Mentees may wish to discuss issues that go beyond your knowledge and experience. Examples might include legal issues and reuniting with family members. It is important to note that neither you nor your colleagues are professionally trained on refugees' mental health challenges, legal statuses, or other such issues. Be honest with your mentee about your areas of expertise. Should you have a conversation with your mentee that you feel is outside the scope of the mentorship program, or which is inappropriate or concerning, do not keep the information to yourself or attempt to manage a situation on your own. Report it to the mentorship coordinator immediately. **Do not share sensitive information with anyone other than the mentorship coordinator.**

### **Model appropriate behavior and conduct**

An important aspect of this mentoring relationship is maintaining trustworthiness and respecting your mentee's confidentiality. It is imperative that you honor their trust to the greatest extent possible.

Your company's sexual harassment conduct and policies should apply to

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mentor-mentee relationships. This mentoring experience is professional in nature and should reflect that in the conduct of both parties. Tent expects that, for the duration of the mentoring relationship, sexual and romantic relationships between mentors and mentees are prohibited, as are lewd and sexually suggestive comments. If you abuse your status as a trusted figure to engage in a romantic or sexual relationship with your mentee, this constitutes sexual misconduct. No participant in the mentorship program should ever be made to feel intimidated, coerced, unsafe, or undignified based on interactions in person or online. A violation of these principles constitutes harassment.

If you feel uncomfortable with your mentee's behavior, you should raise the issue with the mentorship coordinator. At the same time, if a mentee feels uncomfortable with their mentor's behavior, they should contact the mentorship coordinator. Sexual harassment is only one aspect of this mentorship program's code of conduct (see the [Annex](#)).

### **Supporting your mentee post-program**

At the end of the mentorship program, you will no longer have a formal commitment to your mentee as a mentor. Additionally, once the program is complete, the mentorship coordinator is no longer responsible for supporting your relationship with your mentee.

However, you and your mentee may wish to stay in touch after the conclusion of the program. Keep in mind that sensitivities around inappropriate topics are still crucial even if you are not part of a formal mentoring program.

Your mentee may ask you to continue to make connections with people in your network, or to continue meeting with them to brainstorm ideas and get your advice. Just as setting clear expectations is important at the start of a mentoring relationship, it is also important to set expectations after the mentorship program ends. Tent encourages you to clarify how involved and available you want to be for your mentee moving forward.

Your mentee will also be encouraged to establish clear expectations with you about how involved they would like to be after the mentorship program ends.

# Mentor–mentee meeting resources

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As a mentor, your primary objective throughout this mentorship program is to support your mentee in their career and professional development. With this goal in mind, Tent has identified a series of relevant topics for you to discuss with your mentee at each of your meetings:

- 01** Career goals and self-assessment\*
- 02** How to find a job in the U.S.
- 03** Resumes, cover letters, and LinkedIn
- 04** The interview process
- 05** Networking
- 06** Recap and next steps

Below you will find meeting pre-reads, along with suggested exercises for you to work through with your mentee at each meeting.

*\* Resources for this first meeting also include tips for setting expectations with your mentee regarding the mentorship program and your relationship. Even if you choose to cover a topic other than career goals during your first meeting, you should still plan to set expectations with your mentee to lay the groundwork for a successful time together.*

# 01

## Meeting one: **Career goals and self-assessment**

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### **Purpose of meeting**

- ▲ Get to know each other.
- ▲ Establish goals and expectations for mentorship.
- ▲ Develop concrete steps for building a career in the U.S.
- ▲ Agree on next steps.

### **Exercises**

#### **1. Get to know each other**

- Use the following conversation starters to share some of your own experiences and background. Tell your mentee:
  - About your own professional and educational history, and future career goals.
  - The reason you joined this program as a mentor.
  - What you hope to gain by serving as a mentor.
- Your mentee may be hesitant to open up immediately, so asking surface-level questions is a good place to start as an icebreaker. It is important for your mentee to feel like you care about getting to know them as a person. You can show a genuine interest in your mentee while also being careful not to ask probing questions about their past that may trigger trauma.

#### **2. Establish goals and expectations for mentorship**

- Does your mentee currently have a job? If so, where does your mentee currently work? If not, ask about any obstacles they face in finding, securing, and maintaining work in the U.S. (see the [Background on Afghans in the U.S.](#) chapter for more information about the employment barriers refugee women face).

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- Does your mentee have prior professional experience – for example, previous jobs, internships, and/or work experience? If not, what specific skills does your mentee have that could be transferable in an employment setting?
  - Does your mentee have specific career aspirations – for example, an interest in a certain industry or professional skill set?\*

*\* If your mentee does not have a specific professional goal in mind, you can guide them by asking questions such as:*

- *What does work mean to you?*
  - *What do you value the most from work?*
  - *What motivates you to work?*
  - *What jobs have you seen that look interesting?*
- What is your mentee's motivation to enter a specific field(s)?
  - Ask about their long-term career aspirations: what steps do they think they need to take to find a job that matches this vision? What support will they need to realize these aspirations?
  - Discuss educational opportunities: is your mentee interested in going to university or securing a high school equivalency degree, taking a language course, or attending vocational training?
  - Agree on goals for the mentorship program and come up with a "wishlist" of things you both want to accomplish (share this during the next meeting).
  - Confirm that your mentee understands that you will be supporting their professional development over the coming months, but also that you cannot guarantee being able to help them find and secure a job within the time frame.

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- Share this mentorship program’s **code of conduct** (see the [Annex](#)) with your mentee and discuss it. In particular, chat about the best method of communication for both of you, the best time of day to meet, and whether in-person or online meetings are best. Be mindful of how much extra these options may cost your mentee. If possible, call your mentee to save their mobile data or ask your company to pay for their transport costs if you meet in person.

## NEXT STEPS

1. Discuss ways that you can be supportive in the coming weeks and consider setting deadlines for any next steps.
2. Establish expectations for following-up and any other communication between meetings. Be clear on boundaries around when and how you will communicate with your mentee.
3. Briefly go over the meeting plans recommended in this guide. Although there are only six meeting plans, tell your mentee that you can break up the content as needed depending on their desired pace. If you go through all of the recommended meeting plans before the six required sessions have been completed, ask your mentee what they would like to work on for the remaining sessions.
4. Let your mentee know that the next meeting will cover how to prepare for and find a job in the U.S.

# 02

## Meeting two: **How to find a job in the U.S.**

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### **Purpose of meeting**

This meeting focuses on the process of finding a job in the U.S., which may be very different to that in your mentee's country of origin. This meeting is an opportunity to discuss the job search process and answer any questions that arise.

Here are some suggested agenda items for this meeting:

- ▲ Discuss the job search process and timeline in the U.S.
- ▲ Discuss how to search for jobs online.
- ▲ Practice searching for jobs.

### **Exercises**

#### **1. Discuss the job search process and timeline in the U.S**

- Explain to your mentee that many jobs in the U.S. are posted online on job boards or networking websites. Discuss and perhaps even show examples of some common websites – for example, Indeed, LinkedIn, Google For Jobs, CareerBuilder, ZipRecruiter, Glassdoor, and Monster.
- Have an open discussion about the job search process in your mentee's country of origin versus the U.S.: what are the similarities and differences? Explain that online applications are the way most people find employment.
- Go over what is involved when applying for a job online. Many websites post job descriptions and then invite individuals to submit an online application. Some job applications will ask for an uploaded resume and cover letter, while others will ask applicants to manually enter demographic, employment, and education experience. Many job applications will ask for the following information:
  - Submitting demographic information about the applicant (e.g., name, home address, phone number, email address).

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- Listing information about work experiences and education. It is important to have on hand information such as a start and end date for each of the mentee's employment and education experiences, a supervisor name, as well as a few brief sentences about what was done at each job.
  - Questions about the applicant, including their race/ethnicity, disability status, and if they are authorized to work in the U.S.
  - Submitting references, which includes the names, titles, email addresses, and phone numbers of individuals whom the applicant has worked with previously, and who can share more detail about the applicant's experiences and skills. Note that it is important to list individuals whom an employer can easily reach (ideally in the U.S.) and not family members. It is also important to note that your mentee may ask for you to act as a reference for them.
  - Explain that when applying for jobs, it is important to customize a resume and cover letter to the job description. Many companies use screening tools to filter out resumes due to large numbers of applicants, so it is important that materials speak closely to the job posting. This could mean editing certain words on a resume or making sure that a cover letter names the hiring company.
  - Discuss what happens after someone applies for a job. Many job postings will ask applicants not to contact the company. It is better for applicants to keep a close eye on their email and voicemail, as they will be contacted only if the company wants to schedule an interview.
  - Explain that while many people find jobs online, others may find jobs through networking (an upcoming meeting will cover this in more detail).

## **2. Discuss how to search for jobs online**

- Go over best practices for searching for a job online – for example, using search terms effectively, trying different keywords, and updating location preferences. Some job search websites allow users to select additional

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filters, such as required education level or income preferences. This can also help to filter jobs.

- Explain that many websites allow users to set up email alerts for specific job searches, keywords, and sometimes specific employers.
- Share examples of websites that list job opportunities at companies and explain how to find open jobs on a company's website.
- Take a look at a few sample job posts together. Point out where salary and benefits information can be found. Discuss benefits that might be of interest, such as healthcare options, paid time off, paid parental leave, dependent care flexible spending accounts, and professional development.

### 3. Practice searching for jobs

- Now that you and your mentee have discussed the basics of how to search for a job in the U.S., it is time to practice using job search websites. Work together to search for some jobs that your mentee is interested in based on your prior conversation about career goals.

#### NEXT STEPS

1. Ask your mentee to spend some more time practicing searching for a job using common job search websites – you can troubleshoot any issues they have at your next meeting.
2. Let your mentee know that the next meeting will cover resumes, cover letters, and LinkedIn. Ask your mentee to send you their resume and a sample cover letter for you to review together during the next meeting. You can also ask your mentee to create a LinkedIn account and begin building their profile. If your mentee does not have a resume, cover letter, or LinkedIn account, let them know that you can begin drafting these together during the meeting.



# 03

## Meeting three: **Resumes, cover letters, and LinkedIn**

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### **Purpose of meeting**

This meeting focuses on resumes, cover letters, and LinkedIn. If your mentee is familiar with these and already has them prepared for review, it may take only one meeting to review the documents and discuss. If your mentee has not drafted these documents, Tent recommends splitting this topic into two different meetings to make sure that there is enough time to discuss drafting and reviewing them together.

Here are some suggested agenda items for this meeting:

- ▲ Discuss the purpose and function of resumes, cover letters, and LinkedIn.
- ▲ Review and edit your mentee's resume, cover letter, and LinkedIn profile, and explain how to tailor these materials for the U.S. job market.

Consider bringing printed copies of your own resume and a cover letter to share with your mentee as an example of how these documents are prepared in the context of your work. Have an open discussion about resumes and cover letters in the U.S. and your mentee's country of origin. Aim to understand: are resumes and cover letters used in your mentee's country of origin? What information should be included and why?

*If your meeting will be held online instead of in person, make sure that you exchange all of the above documents with your mentee in advance. You can also share the screen with your mentee to look at the same documents together during the meeting.*

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## Exercises

### 1. Discuss the purpose and function of resumes, cover letters, and LinkedIn

- Share how resumes factor into the job search process and the specific nuances of resumes in the U.S. job market, including what elements of a resume are most important (e.g., content, design, etc.).
- Review how resumes can be uploaded to recruitment websites.
- Discuss the purpose of cover letters. Share with your mentee how to properly format cover letters in the U.S.
- If they are not already familiar with it, introduce your mentee to LinkedIn. Explain the similarities and differences between a resume and LinkedIn. You can also show them your LinkedIn profile and explain how it works. Discuss which elements of a LinkedIn profile will make a strong impression with recruiters and industry contacts, and why. Consider sharing your personal experiences, positive and negative.

*Note that your mentee might not be comfortable setting-up a public LinkedIn profile or using a headshot photo due to safety and security or cultural concerns. Approach this topic sensitively and explain the different privacy options available to them. Respect your mentee if they choose not to create a LinkedIn profile.*

- Discuss what elements of a resume, cover letter, and LinkedIn profile will make a strong impression with recruiters and why. Consider sharing your personal experiences, positive and negative, and ask for theirs.
- Explain that while having a strong resume and cover letter is essential, interviewing, communication, and networking skills (which you will cover in upcoming meetings) are also critical to landing a job.
- If you have time, touch on email and LinkedIn message etiquette as it pertains to the job application and business networking processes.

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## 2. Edit your mentee's resume together

- Review your mentee's resume together and discuss potential edits as you go. Talk through the changes you are suggesting so that your mentee can understand why you are making them, but try not to take over the entire process; your mentee is in charge of their own resume.
- Talk through resume format and length. Discuss the importance of being concise while still accurately reflecting previous experiences and skills.
- Be sure to explain which resume components are critical in the U.S. and your field(s) of expertise, especially with regards to education and work experience
- If your mentee's refugee status is currently certain (e.g., if it is not pending or expiring), and they are comfortable with it, it may be helpful to find somewhere on the resume to explicitly note that they are authorized to work in the U.S. – for example, adding "Authorized to work in the U.S." at the end of the summary section.
- If your mentee is comfortable with it, discuss how you can reflect any breaks in their resume, whether it was for breaks between contract work or other reasons, such as their refugee journey.
- Before you finish this exercise, make sure that your mentee is comfortable implementing the suggested changes while giving them space not to implement the suggested changes with which they disagree.

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### 3. Review your mentee's cover letter together

- Discuss with your mentee how cover letters are used in the U.S. Ask them if they have written a cover letter before and if/how they are used in their country of origin. Share your experiences of how you have used cover letters in the past. Discuss how cover letters could highlight your mentee's skills and experiences to make them a stronger candidate for a job.
- Discuss best practices for cover letter writing in the U.S. and, if you have the relevant expertise, in your mentee's field(s) of interest. Without taking over the process, ask your mentee if they would like to draft a sample cover letter and offer to review it with them. It may be helpful to think of this cover letter as a template, which your mentee can customize for different job applications.
- Review your mentee's cover letter together. Provide feedback and explain why you are recommending each change. Listen carefully to your mentee's thoughts and ideas. Ask them why they think it is good, why they wrote it this way, etc. Focus only on feedback that would be transferable to future cover letters.
- Before you finish this exercise, make sure that your mentee is comfortable implementing your feedback independentl

### 4. Create and/or improve your mentee's LinkedIn page

- Explain how your mentee can create a LinkedIn profile or improve their existing one. Here are some recommendations you can share with your mentee:
  - Choose an appropriate profile picture (if desired).
  - Add a background photo.
  - Use the headline to describe their career objectives.

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- Write a concise and compelling summary of what they used to do and would like to do.
  - Add their previous work and volunteering experience, as well as educational background, with a description for each.
  - List relevant skills (including language skills).
  - Follow the LinkedIn pages of some companies and organizations that are of interest to your mentee.

#### NEXT STEPS

1. You may want to ask your mentee to revise their resume, cover letter, and LinkedIn profile based on the feedback you shared during the meeting. Taking into account what their priorities are, you may agree on a timeline for these revisions and ask them to send these updated versions to you so that you can share any additional feedback.
2. If you covered email etiquette in this session, consider sending practice emails that exemplify the expected communication style.
3. If you are willing, offer to proofread application materials for jobs or educational programs for which the mentee is applying (this offer can be extended at any point throughout the program).

# 04

## Meeting four: **The interview process**

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### **Purpose of meeting**

- ▲ Discuss the fundamentals of job interviews.
- ▲ Conduct a mock interview.
- ▲ Discuss following-up on an interview.

### **Exercises**

#### **1. Discuss the fundamentals of job interviews**

- Discuss the importance of interviews to the job search process. Interviews are a way for a company to judge if candidates are a good fit for the company and position. It is important to practice for interviews, as the ability to interview well is crucial to finding a job. Discuss the American cultural expectation that job candidates should be enthusiastic during interviews and share ways your mentee can show their excitement to be considered for the job.
- Have a conversation about how to talk about one's experience and strengths during an interview. This might be a new cultural experience for your mentee, especially if previous cultural experiences in their home country promoted a more quiet and humble attitude. It can be helpful to share your own response to a common interview question such as "tell me about yourself" to demonstrate how to share your experience, education, and expertise effectively to a potential employer. Explain that confidently stating your positive attributes and experience is an important way to show potential employers why you are the right person for the job and not seen as bragging or disrespectful, which is how it may be seen in other cultures.
- Suggest helpful best practices for interviews. Share insights about how to answer questions in ways that highlight your mentee's strengths, skills, and experiences, and how to avoid common interview faux pas. Discuss

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strategies for performing well in interviews in the U.S., which may be different from your mentee's country of origin. This exercise can also be an opportunity to learn about working across cultures.

- Exchange basic expectations around concepts such as greetings, punctuality, personal appearance, reliability, and good communication. Understanding the norms and expectations of the U.S. can dramatically improve your mentee's preparedness for an interview. For example: should you or should you not ask questions during an interview? If yes, what kind of questions?
- Discuss the role of "small talk". Interviewers often start an interview with small talk to build a connection with interviewees before the interview, or to see how the applicant engages with new people. This can differ from country to country.
- Discuss the importance of researching the company prior to the interview. It is important to know basic information about the company. It can also be smart to prepare a few questions about the company that can be asked during the interview.
- Create a list of standard questions interviewees can ask at the end of the interview. Explain that it is common for interviews to end with asking the applicant what questions they have for the company, and that it is important to ask questions as it demonstrates interest in the company and position.
- Have an open dialogue about proper dress code for interviews in your mentee's field(s) of interest. Every sector has different expectations for dress code based on social norms and rules. For example, jeans and trainers may not be appropriate for a job interview in some fields. Discuss with your mentee what the proper dress code is for a business setting while leaving room for personal interpretation from their side. You can suggest local charity shops or other shops in the area that sell affordable business wear if cost is a concern. You should not discourage any religious garments.

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- Discuss common challenges women can face in an interview setting. For example, share that it is not appropriate for employers to ask female candidates personal questions about family responsibilities, such as if they have children, plan to have children, or if they will be able to do the job while being a parent. Discuss how they may have answered these questions in the past and share your experiences of answering similarly challenging questions during an interview. Depending on your mentee's situation, you can discuss how they might inquire about benefits that are available to employees at the company, such as parental leave.
  - Identify best practices for approaching a virtual interview, whether on the phone or via online meeting platforms such as Zoom or Microsoft Teams.
  - Discuss how to evaluate potential employers, including their commitment to women-inclusive policies and workplaces. Asking other refugees and women about their employment experiences and/or specific companies as part of the networking process (which you will cover in your next meeting) is a good place to start. In addition, you can share resources such as Bloomberg's Gender-Equality Index<sup>55</sup> and Catalyst's resources,<sup>56</sup> which help companies to create more inclusive workplaces.
  - If applicable, identify ways your mentee can talk about any breaks in their career. Responses should be fairly simple and straightforward, depending on what your mentee is comfortable sharing, with the understanding that an interview is not the best time to get into the details. You can support your mentee in crafting a tailored response upon learning the basic details of any career breaks, as responses will differ depending on whether it was due to their refugee journey, family responsibilities, and/or something else.
  - If applicable to your mentee's situation, discuss how to navigate interviewing with a man. This could include talking through how to approach greetings if your mentee is uncomfortable with a handshake, as well as reiterating the importance of eye contact and confidently sharing how their experiences, education, and skills make them a good fit for the job.

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## 2. Conduct a mock interview

- Spend most of your meeting together practicing interview skills. Tell your mentee that this is a safe way for them to practice what it is like to interview for a job and let them know that you will offer feedback on how to improve their interviewing skills.

*For a list of questions to use in your practice interview, Tent recommends using CareerOneStop's **list of common interview questions**.<sup>57</sup>*

- Make sure that you tailor your questions and feedback to your mentee's field(s) of interest.
- Recommend that your mentee prepares for both in-person and online interviews. For online interviews, it is important to check technology prior to the interview to ensure that everything is working properly.
- Suggest that your mentee engages in informational interviews with individuals working in their field(s) of interest. Informational interviews can help your mentee to learn more about what it is like to work in a specific industry or role, and can also help them to expand their professional network.

## 3. Discuss following-up on an interview

- Talk about etiquette in the U.S. when following-up after speculative interviews and job interviews, including writing a thank you email.
- Discuss cultural norms regarding hearing back from a potential employer after an interview. Share that most companies only send an email to confirm receipt of an application and do not make further contact unless it is to schedule an interview. How long should your mentee expect to wait before hearing back from a company after an interview? What should they do if they have not heard back after a few weeks?

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## NEXT STEPS

1. Your mentee may be interested in beginning to set up and conduct informational interviews. If so, arrange one (online, in person, or by phone) between your mentee and one of your contacts working in their field(s) of interest.
2. If relevant, offer to help your mentee prepare for upcoming interviews (this offer can be extended at any point throughout the program).

# 05

## Meeting five: **Networking**

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### **Purpose of meeting**

- ▲ Create a networking strategy with your mentee.
- ▲ Conduct a mock networking session.
- ▲ Discuss the experience of networking as a refugee woman.

### **Exercises**

#### **1. Create a networking strategy with your mentee**

- Get a sense of your mentee's professional and personal networks and discuss how they can best be utilized to advance their job search.
- Talk about the types of networking that is common in the U.S. (e.g., LinkedIn, email, events, etc.).
- Highlight different ways of networking and help your mentee to explore them:
  - Find someone working in your mentee's field(s) of interest through your network. Coach your mentee on asking for a 30-minute informational call, during which they will ask about the person's job and express an interest in being kept in mind for future job opportunities.
  - Visit a company's website in which your mentee is interested, find an email address for a contact person at the company, and do the same as above.
  - Find job fairs or networking events organized by gender, affinity groups, companies, or organizations. Many women-focused networking groups may be national/international, such as the American Business Women's Association<sup>58</sup> and Women's Business League,<sup>59</sup> with chapters in local cities.

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- Discuss cultural norms around networking, including reviewing the type of questions that would be helpful to ask, as well as the role of small talk. Networking is hard for many people, and it can be even more challenging for refugee women who are still learning about and adjusting to a new culture. Share some ideas about how your mentee can grow more comfortable, such as engaging in small talk when possible and creating an “elevator pitch” about themselves.

## **2. Conduct a mock networking session**

- Pretend that you are having a casual conversation at a networking event or via video call. Have your mentee practice asking questions to learn about your work and find opportunities to share more about their professional background and interests.
- Debrief on the mock networking session. Share feedback with your mentee and give them an opportunity to voice what felt comfortable or uncomfortable.

## **3. Discuss the experience of networking as a refugee woman**

- If applicable, share best practices for networking as an immigrant and/or woman, as well as your own experiences.
- Identify networking approaches that can be helpful for your refugee mentee based on their career interests.
- Discuss how your mentee should approach responding to questions or comments people may have about their country of origin. Remind your mentee that many Americans do not have a thorough understanding of geography or cultures outside of the U.S.
- Discuss how to utilize affinity groups – those based on gender, race, religion, ethnicity, etc. – for networking purposes. These groups are often local

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and can be found by searching for professional networking groups, such as a local women’s networking group, or industry-specific groups, such as the Association for Women in Science.<sup>60</sup> Joining certain professional associations can be a great way to build both social and professional connections.

### NEXT STEPS

1. Ask your mentee to think about whom they might want to connect with for a networking session. Start with a short list of people in sectors and roles in which they are interested. In the next session, you can help your mentee to practice their networking skills with this specific framing in mind.
2. Let your mentee know that the next session will be your final formal meeting together. Ask if they would like to revisit any particular exercises from previous meetings. If they do, plan to cover these during the meeting.

# 06

## Meeting six: **Recap and next steps**

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### **Purpose of meeting**

After you and your mentee have covered the fundamentals, you can use this last session to prepare your mentee for any upcoming networking sessions. This meeting is a good opportunity to revisit any specific exercises from previous sessions to which your mentee would like to come back. It can also be used to deliver a meeting (or several) that you were unable to finish due to time constraints.

Tent also recommends using this meeting to provide a top-line summary of what you and your mentee have discussed during your time together, as well as any key learnings.

*At the end of the mentorship program, you will no longer have a formal commitment to your mentee as a mentor. However, you and your mentee may wish to stay in touch after the conclusion of the program. Just as setting clear expectations is important at the start of a mentoring relationship, it is also important to set expectations after the mentorship program ends. Tent encourages you to clarify how involved and available you want to be for your mentee moving forward.*

### **Exercises**

#### **1. Prepare your mentee for any upcoming networking sessions**

- If you have professional contacts you would like to introduce to your mentee, first ask your contact if they would be interested and comfortable with you making an introduction. Explain that your mentee is finishing a mentorship program and what their goals are. If the professional contact is comfortable with this connection, proceed by making the introduction.

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- Have a chat with your mentee about the professional contact and manage expectations. Explain that this introduction may not guarantee a job but that the connection may be able to offer industry, company, or job insights, and/or provide additional introductions so that your mentee can expand their own network.
  - Help set up a meeting between your professional contact and your mentee. You can help your mentee to prepare some questions and talking points for their meeting.

## **2. Discuss expectations about your relationship after the mentorship program ends**

- Discuss the nature of your relationship moving forward. Consider what you may or may not be able to offer (and obtain) in this relationship in the future:
  - Can your mentee contact you to give them a reference?
  - Are you available to proofread resumes or cover letters?
  - Would you like to have a coffee with them in a few months' time?
  - Are there people with whom you might be able to connect your mentee?
  - Do you know of any upcoming networking events where they can practice their networking skills?

## **3. Recap and conclude your time together**

- Do a recap of everything you and your mentee have covered.
- Ask your mentee what their greatest accomplishment has been during the mentorship program, what they found challenging, and what they would like to continue working on after the program ends.
- Share with your mentee what you learned from the mentorship experience and what you found challenging.

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- Provide overall feedback to your mentee and ask for theirs.

### **NEXT STEPS**

- 1.** Let your mentee know that they will receive a post-program survey from Tent and encourage them to fill it out.
- 2.** Send your mentee a thank you note for working with you during the mentorship program (a card is appropriate). Consider focusing on your mentee's professional growth during the program, highlighting some specific achievements, and offering words of encouragement for the future.

# Appendix

## Sample email to be sent to prospective mentors

To be sent by the mentorship coordinator (see the [implementation guide](#)<sup>61</sup> for more information):

Dear all,

[Company name] recently committed to mentoring 50 refugee women over the next three years in the U.S. through a new program organized by the Tent Partnership for Refugees and Catalyst. Through this initiative, major companies in the U.S. have committed to provide mentorship to more than 1,000 refugee women in the years ahead. As coordinator for this mentorship program at [Company name], I am recruiting female-identifying employees and allies to serve as mentors for the program's first mentor-mentee cohort starting in **July 2023**. I would love for you to be involved!

**Why volunteer to mentor refugee women?** Refugee women encounter steep barriers to finding jobs and advancing their careers in the U.S. on account of their "double disadvantage" as both refugees and women. In 2019, only 40% of refugee women were employed, compared to 74% of refugee men. This program will be an opportunity for our employees to showcase their support for refugee women by providing one-to-one professional mentorship to mentees. Mentors can help refugee women to identify more advanced jobs in the U.S. by helping them to navigate the U.S. job market and championing their overall professional growth.

**What are volunteers required to do?** To prepare you for your role as mentor, Tent will train you via a mandatory training webinar on best practices for supporting a refugee woman. Tent will provide you with a curriculum to follow in your sessions with your mentee, such as reviewing their resume and cover letter, and practicing their interviewing skills. Mentors are expected to meet with their mentee at least six times over the course of six months, and will be responsible for arranging the logistics of these virtual or in-person meetings.

**How do you sign up?** If you are interested in signing-up as a mentor, please fill out the registration form here [insert link] **before the deadline on June 23**. You will hear back from Tent about whether you have been matched a few weeks after this date. Please feel free to reach out with any questions.

I know that this will be a wonderful learning experience for [Company name] employees, and I hope that many of you will step up to support refugee women!

Best,

[Your name]

# Annex

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### **Code of conduct**

When working closely with someone in a one-to-one capacity, it is a good idea to have an agreement to ensure that you are both comfortable with how, when, and why you are communicating and working together. Tent recommends that mentors discuss and/or agree on the following with their mentee:

- That you have read and understood the full code of conduct below.
- The most appropriate timing and mode of contact (e.g., WhatsApp, email), as well as the best time of the day for you to hold meetings.
- Which pronouns to use for your mentee and yourself.
- Your boundaries around connecting on social media. Tent strongly suggests that you communicate through phone, text, email, and LinkedIn, rather than other social media.
- Your responsibilities as a mentor – for example, that you cannot guarantee that your support will result in your mentee landing a job by the end of the program.
- That you cannot promise confidentiality if you are ever worried about your safety, or that of your mentee.

You must	You must not
<p>Respect and celebrate differences (e.g., do not discourage religious dress or concealment of any aspect of your mentee’s identity).</p>	<p>Discriminate against anyone on the grounds of gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, race, country of origin, age, or ability. This also includes making assumptions and applying stereotypes</p>
<p>Treat mentees with warmth and empathy, and listen to their wishes and feelings even if they do not resonate with your own.</p>	<p>Engage in any form of sexual or romantic relationship with your mentee. This includes engaging with or allowing sexualized, suggestive, or provocative language, as well as behavior.</p>
<p>Behave in a calm, positive, supportive, and encouraging way at all times.</p>	<p>Ask intrusive questions about your mentee’s past experiences, their journey to becoming a refugee in the U.S., or any other situation that may elicit traumatic feelings or memories.</p>
<p>Report any safeguarding suspicions, concerns, allegations, or disclosures made by a mentee.</p>	<p>Maintain confidentiality about information indicating that the mentee, or those in close proximity to them, are at risk of serious harm.</p>
<p>Ensure that your relationship with your mentee remains professional at all times. The aim should never be to develop an intimate relationship.</p>	<p>Meet or engage with your mentee while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.</p>

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Respect an adult at risk's right to personal privacy, but never agree to keep any information relating to their potential harm confidential.

Share your home address or encourage your mentee to share theirs. Where possible, Tent recommends using your work phone and email address to contact your mentee.

Be aware that mentees can develop infatuations (crushes) towards mentors. If this happens, inform the mentorship coordinator, then respond to the situation in a way that maintains the dignity of all concerned.

Arrange a meeting where the purpose is not focused on supporting your mentee to access work or professional opportunities.

Discourage physical contact (if the meeting in person). If your mentee is upset and needs comforting, ensure this is done in a way that is respectful of their personal space (such as a sideways hug) and recognizes the diversity of cultural norms with respect to touch (to avoid misinterpretation of your actions), with their full permission and where there are others present.

Photograph or film your mentee, or share photos and films of your mentee, without prior consent.

Agree on appropriate channels and times to contact your mentee (e.g., email or phone), and at what time of day/day of the week.

Investigate any safeguarding concerns or allegations yourself.

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<p>Be mindful to limit the personal information you share with your mentee.</p>	<p>Borrow/lend money, sell things to or buy things from, and/or accept gifts from your mentee. If, at the end of your mentorship relationship, either of you would like to say “thank you”, a card is appropriate.</p>
	<p>Accept, either for yourself or your family, free services your mentee where such services should normally be paid for.</p>
	<p>Serve as a witness for your mentee’s will or be named as one of their executors.</p>
	<p>Rely on your position at the company to protect you if you do not follow the code of conduct.</p>



# Endnotes

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