



Migration and Refugee Services
Office of Resettlement Services
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Cultural Orientation Best Practice: *One-Day Cultural Orientation Program*

Catholic Charities Diocese of Charlotte

With fewer arrivals at irregular intervals, Catholic Charities Diocese of Charlotte (CCDOC) has adapted their traditional classroom-based Cultural Orientation class to be a personally tailored, one-day session. Each session is individualized to meet the needs of the specific client or clients participating in the session. The Cultural Orientation Program Facilitator works with the Case Management team, the client, and, where applicable, the client's U.S. Tie to identify the needs of the client before designing the CO schedule.

Several factors are considered when creating a client's CO including, but not limited to:

- Availability of bus service in their residential area
- Physical limitations or disabilities
- Expressed interest or disinterest in community resources and services
- Schedule and availability of interpreter
- Client's schedule
- Accessibility of community resources and services
- Number and age of children accompanying parent(s)

Bus Orientation

If a client has access to the Charlotte bus system, they will start the day by completing bus training as a component of their Cultural Orientation. Either a Case Aide or the CO Program Facilitator will meet the client at their home to show them the closest bus stop(s) and route(s). The client will be accompanied throughout the day on the bus and will learn the process of using a bus ticket, requesting a bus stop, safely crossing the road, identifying bus routes, using smart phone transportation apps, and other public transportation skills. They will also visit the Charlotte Transportation Center and use the light rail system.

Resettlement Office

All clients who complete bus training learn how to take the bus from their home to the Catholic Charities office so that moving forward they know how to get themselves to meetings with the Case Management Team or Employment Office, or to access the Food Pantry. While at the office, the client completes Employment Orientation and CO session units addressing the role of the resettlement agency, transportation, healthcare and hygiene, housing, money and banking, US laws and safety, and cultural adjustment.

Public Library

Using the bus, the CO Program Facilitator takes clients to the public library. In partnership with the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Library's #WelcomeCLT campaign, CCDOC brings new clients to their local library branch to register all adults and children under five for a library card and to learn about services offered through the library. If space is available, CCDOC holds their CO session units in a study room at the library. Library staff members provide clients with a tour and explain services offered in the library and online.

Social Service Offices

If the client can feasibly use public transportation to attend appointments at the Department of Social Services and the Health Department, they will be shown how to ride the bus to and/or from their home to these offices.

Community Center

The Galilee Center is a community center offering several services for refugees. Because Central Piedmont Community College uses the Galilee Center as one of its locations for English classes CCDOC always practices riding the bus there for clients enrolled in those classes. The Galilee Center also has a food pantry, and Refugee Support Services hosts a weekly help desk for people to receive post-resettlement support. There is a free health clinic located across the street from the center. If possible, CCDOC schedules the Cultural Orientation to coincide with the once weekly free community lunches offered there.