

Community Services and Public Assistance

Unit Overview for the Trainer

This unit provides participants with an overview of the services and assistance available to refugees in their new communities.

By *community services*, we mean the services, assistance, goods, and resources available to people in their communities. These services may be provided free of charge or at a very low cost by the government (also called the *public sector*), by religious organizations, or by community-based organizations (CBOs). Goods and services are also provided at a cost by businesses (also called the *private sector*).

Some community services, such as libraries and parks, are available to everyone in the community. Others, such as public assistance, are available only to certain residents. Some services are available only to refugees. Communities vary greatly in the type and amount of the services they provide to their residents.

The unit focuses on the following key points:

- ▶ Many different services (including assistance to eligible low-income families) are available to residents. Local resettlement agencies help refugees access some of these services. But refugees will also need to learn about community services and public assistance programs on their own.
- ▶ Getting involved in the local community, whether one's ethnic or religious community or the community at large, is a good way to meet other people, learn more about the community and what it has to offer, and ease the stress of adjusting to a new country and culture.

This unit includes three activity plans. The first plan provides an overview of the topic and contains the most important information. It is recommended that this activity be provided to all newly arrived refugees in reception and placement (R&P) orientation sessions. The second and third activity plans may be covered if there is a need for them and enough time.

At the beginning of each activity plan in this unit is an introduction for the trainer which highlights the plan's key concepts and main messages.

The three plans are as follows:

- ▶ *The Basics: Community Services and Public Assistance.* In this session, participants will learn about different community services, including government public assistance programs for eligible low-income families.
- ▶ *Types of Services.* In this session, participants will learn more about the services available in their community. They will learn that although the resettlement agency will help them access the services, they will need to explore their community on their own as well.

- ▶ *Social Involvement in Your Community*. This session concerns the importance of getting involved in the local community to make friends, learn more about the community, and ease the adjustment process. Participants will explore some of the ways they can get involved.

The following chart shows which *R&P Orientation Objectives and Indicators* are included in each of the activity plans in this unit.

	Content Objective	Learning Indicator	Activity Plan
Public Assistance	There are a variety of types of government assistance	Participants know that there is assistance available for low-income families (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families [TANF], Electronic Benefit Transfer [EBT, formerly food stamps], Medicaid, public housing assistance, unemployment)	The Basics: Community Services and Public Assistance
	The local refugee agency will provide help in accessing public assistance services	Participants understand how to apply for or access assistance	The Basics: Community Services and Public Assistance
		Participants understand how to fill out forms or to get help in filling out forms	The Basics: Community Services and Public Assistance
Your New Community	There are community and public services that are available to support residents	Participants can identify community services relevant to their specific needs, such as senior services or child care/day care	The Basics: Community Services and Public Assistance
		Participants can identify community services that refugees may need to access, such as food banks, family support services, and the local government	The Basics: Community Services and Public Assistance Types of Services
	The local resettlement agency will assist refugees in becoming acquainted with their new community	Participants know where to find and how to use critical services such as stores and laundromats	The Basics: Community Services and Public Assistance Types of Services
		Participants know where to find and how to access other community services such as the library, houses of worship, area attractions, community recreation, banks, and the post office	The Basics: Community Services and Public Assistance Types of Services

	Content Objective	Learning Indicator	Activity Plan
Your New Community	Members of the refugee's ethnic or religious group who live in the area may be a good source of support	Participants are aware of Ethnic Community-Based Organizations or other organizations that serve members of their community	Social Involvement in Your Community
		Participants can identify where to find neighborhoods, associations, or business establishments where they would be likely to find members of their home community	Social Involvement in Your Community
Health	A variety of health care services are available in the U.S.	Participants can identify types of places where they might seek health services, including clinics, offices, and hospitals	The Basics: Community Services and Public Assistance
Budgeting and Personal Finance	In the U.S., financial transactions are mostly conducted through the banking system	Participants understand that banking in the U.S. is safe and should be used	Types of Services
Cultural Adjustment	There are some basic coping mechanisms to deal with the stressors of adjustment	Participants can identify the types of religious and/or cultural resources that may exist in the communities where they settle	Social Involvement in Your Community

Community Services and Public Assistance

The Basics: Community Services and Public Assistance

Introduction for the Trainer

Key Content

In this session, participants will learn about the different services, resources, goods, and forms of assistance available to them in their new communities. They will also learn that some assistance is available for low-income families.

Main Messages

Different places in a community offer different services. Some places, such as laundromats and grocery stores, are businesses that sell their goods and services. Other places, such as libraries and recreation centers, are run by the local government and provide their services to anyone in the community free of charge or at a small cost. In addition, most communities have government agencies that provide food, financial, and medical assistance to eligible individuals with special needs, such as low-income families. Although this government support is limited, it is usually very important to newly arrived refugees. Participants should discuss their eligibility for government assistance with their case worker/manager or someone else who knows about these programs.



25 minutes

Objectives

Participants will be able to do the following:

- ▶ Describe a variety of community services
- ▶ State that assistance is available in the United States for eligible low-income families

Key English Vocabulary

- ▶ *hospital*
- ▶ *pharmacy (drugstore)*
- ▶ *store*
- ▶ *Where is the _____ [hospital; laundromat]?*

Materials

- Meeting Regular Needs Cards (included)
- Tape

Session Preparation

Review the Meeting Regular Needs Cards to ensure that they reflect the local community services available. Add, remove, or edit cards as necessary. The trainer should become familiar with the local community services. S/he will need to know what services are available, what they offer, whether there is a charge for a service, and how much such a charge will cost.

Print the necessary Meeting Regular Needs Cards. When working with a larger group, make duplicate cards.

Find out about the following:

- ▶ The person participants should talk to about their eligibility for government benefits (such as a case worker/ manager or Department of Social Services staff member). Be prepared to provide this information. Fill in this information in Trainer's Introduction of Session to Participants below.
- ▶ The name of the place participants should go to get a learner's permit or driver's license, or to register a car. In many communities, this is called the Department of Motor Vehicles (or DMV), but it may be known by another name, such as the Department of Transportation or the Motor Vehicle Administration. Fill in this information where it is needed in the Meeting Regular Needs Cards.

Trainer's Introduction of Session to Participants

Your new community has many different services available. Many will be helpful to you.

During this session, we will talk about the community services, resources, and assistance available to you in your new community.

In addition to the services and resources available to all residents of your new community, there is also government assistance (sometimes called *public assistance*) for low-income families who are eligible for the assistance. You should discuss your eligibility for public assistance with _____. [Complete this information based on what you found during the session preparation.]

Introductory Exercise

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

Activity

Divide participants into groups of three to four. Ask the groups to each choose a spokesperson who will share the highlights of their discussion. Divide the Meeting Regular Needs Cards evenly among groups.

Small groups spend 5 to 10 minutes reviewing their Meeting Regular Needs Cards and determine what services are provided at the places shown on the cards.

Bring the full group together. Spokespeople from the small groups tape their Meeting Regular Needs Cards to the wall and describe what services are offered and how the services could meet their needs. The trainer should answer any questions and be sure that participants understand how their needs can be met by the different community services.

Debrief the session using the questions below.

Debriefing Questions

- ▶ What does your family need on a regular basis? Which of the services discussed during this session would help meet these needs?
- ▶ If your family needs extra financial assistance to afford basic living expenses, who should you talk to about your family's eligibility?
- ▶ What are some of the community services you learned about during this session? How do you anticipate making use of these services?

Working With Individuals or Very Small Groups

When working with a group of one to three participants, choose fewer Meeting Regular Needs Cards, selecting those that show the community services that participants need the most or are most interested in. The participants and the trainer should discuss the cards one by one, taping them to the wall after participants show that they understand the services.

Variations and Considerations

If possible, group participants by language background during the activity so that they can communicate in a common language.

If needed, use translated versions of the Meeting Regular Needs Cards.

If time and resources allow, replace the pictures shown on the Meeting Regular Needs Cards with pictures of actual places in your local community.

Meeting Regular Needs Cards



Bank



Big box store



Community center



Convenience store



[Complete this information based on what you found out during the session preparation]



Emergency services and 9-1-1



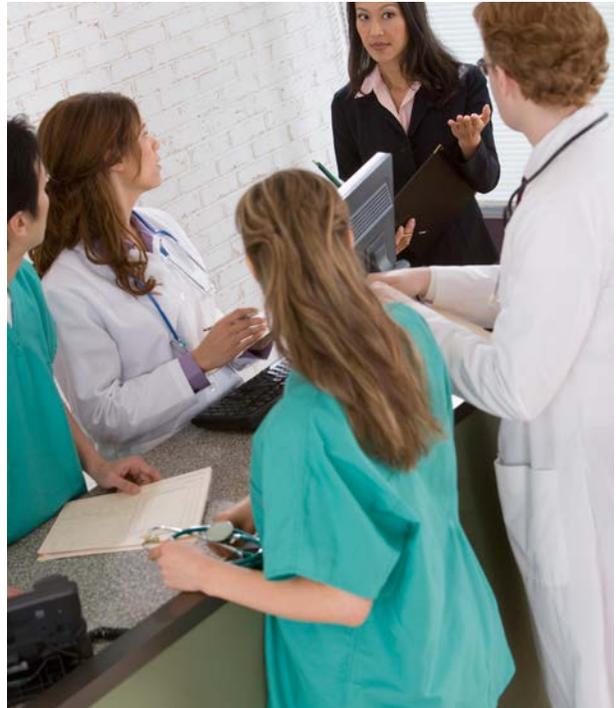
Government assistance office



Grocery store



Health clinic or doctor's office



Hospital



Laundromat



Library



Park



Pharmacy (drugstore)



Police



Post office



School

Community Services and Public Assistance

Types of Services

Introduction for the Trainer

Key Content

In this session, participants will learn and talk about what is offered by the services in their community and consider how they plan to use these services.

Main Messages

As refugees become familiar with their new community, they will learn what and where important services are offered. Resettlement staff will help refugees learn about their new community, but participants will need to explore their community on their own as well.



30 minutes

Objectives

Participants will be able to do the following:

- ▶ Identify available community services
- ▶ Discuss what is offered by the services
- ▶ Determine what services will be most useful to them

Key English Vocabulary

- ▶ *bank*
- ▶ *grocery store*
- ▶ *post office*
- ▶ *I need to find a _____ [bank; library].*

Materials

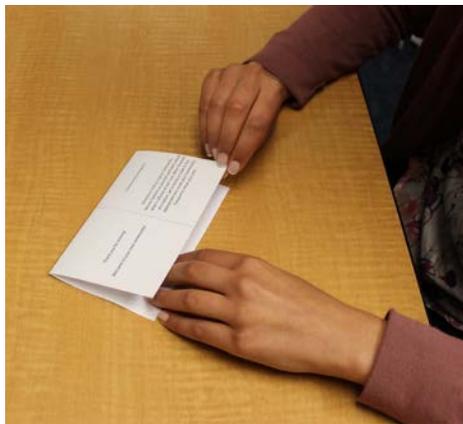
- Community Service Markers (stickers, stamps and pads, and/or colored markers), 1 per community service station
- Community Passports, 1 per participant
- Community Services Signs, 1 per community service station (samples included)
- Optional: Realia to place at various community service stations

Session Preparation

Review the sample Community Service Signs. Be sure that the signs are accurate for your community. Add or remove any to reflect services and the way they are provided in your area. You should become familiar with the local community services. You should know what services are available that may be of interest to participants, what those services offer, whether they cost money, and, if so, how much they cost.

Prepare community service stations. Placement should be around the training space. Hang the appropriate sign and place Community Service Markers at each station.

Prepare Community Passports. First, review the services to be sure those included are reflected in your community service stations. Then print one per participant and cut each out along the dotted lines. Fold the Community Passports widthwise so the text is facing out as shown here:



Then fold along the central line so the “Community Passport” title with directions is facing out. Community Passports will look like this when finished:



Trainer’s Introduction of Session to Participants

There are many different community services in our community. Each offers something different. Your resettlement agency will help you learn how to access these services, but you will need to explore your community on your own as well. In this session, you will learn more about the services in our community and what they offer.

Introductory Exercise

Briefly review the key English vocabulary for this plan by saying the first word aloud in English. Participants say the word to a partner, and then all together as a group. Continue in the same way with the rest of the words and the sentence. If food store or market is more commonly used in your area than grocery store, then substitute the word commonly used. Throughout the session, emphasize the words as they come up and use the sentence whenever there is an opportunity. If there is time (8 to 10 minutes), use the unit vocabulary found at the end of this unit to help participants better understand key English vocabulary words.

Conduct a “think-pair-share” exercise by asking participants to think about useful services in their home country or country of asylum. Ask participants to share their thoughts about this with a partner. Bring the full group together and ask for highlights from the partner discussions.

Activity

Divide participants into pairs or groups of three. Distribute Community Passports to each participant.

Each small group visits community service stations, one group at a time. At the stations, groups explore and discuss what each service offers. When finished, each participant in the group finds the square in the Community Passport that represents the station s/he has just learned about, and uses the Community Service Marker at that station to mark the visit in the Community Passport. Then the small group moves on to a different community service station.

When most groups have visited most stations, bring the full group together and debrief the session using the questions below.

Debriefing Questions

- ▶ What community services did you visit during this session?
- ▶ Were you surprised by any of the services? Which ones?
- ▶ Are there any services in your home country that don’t exist in your new American community?
- ▶ What services will you use in the future? Why?

Working With Individuals

When working with an individual, the trainer should print the Community Services Signs and prepare a Community Services Passport for the participant. The trainer and participant should sit together. The trainer shows a Community Service Sign to the participant and asks what is offered at that service. The trainer might also ask whether that service was available in the participant's home country or country of asylum. The trainer should then give more details about the service and answer any questions the participant has. The trainer then marks the participant's Community Services Passport, showing that the participant has visited that service. The trainer continues in the same way with the rest of the signs.

Variations and Considerations

If possible, group participants by language background in the activity so small groups can communicate in a common language.

If needed, use translated versions of the Community Passports and/or the Community Service Station Signs.

To conduct the session in less time, limit the stations visited: Assign partners or groups to visit specific stations so that groups do not overlap on the stations they visit. Small groups can present to the larger group on what they learned at each station.

Incorporate a pedestrian safety exercise in the activity by setting up the training space as a street, as demonstrated in the COR Center's "Community Services/Transportation: Exploring the Community/Pedestrian Safety" activity plan, available for automatic download here: <http://goo.gl/daH3nT>.

If there is time, use a map of the local community.

Instead of setting up the simulation, set up a community scavenger hunt, with participants visiting actual services in your community over a period of time, and staff at the services marking their Community Passports. Be realistic about how long it will take participants to travel to the various services.

Community Passport

Community Passport

Directions: Visit as many Community Service Stations as possible and learn about what is offered at each one. When finished at a station, get a stamp or mark in the appropriate box inside your Community Passport to show your visit.

Thank you for visiting!
Welcome to your new community!



Bank



Community center



Grocery store



Library



Park



Pharmacy
(drugstore)



Police



Post office

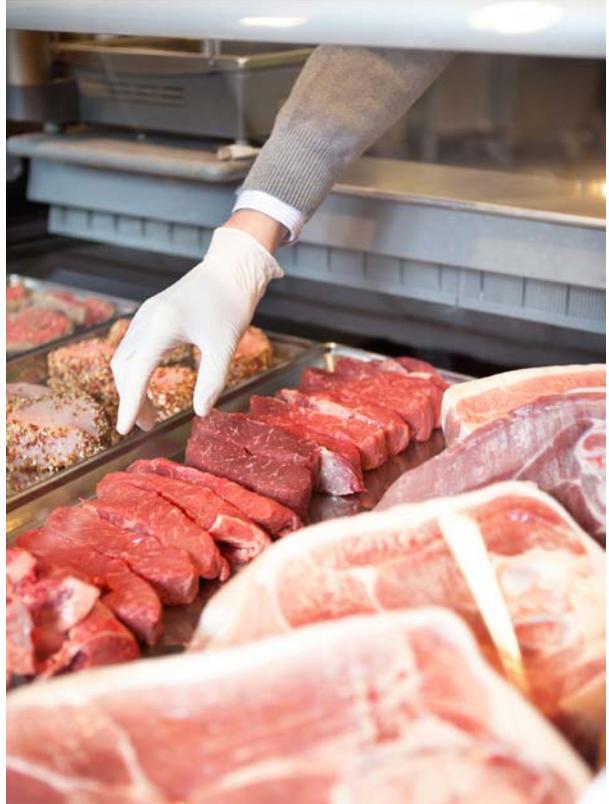
Community Service Station Signs



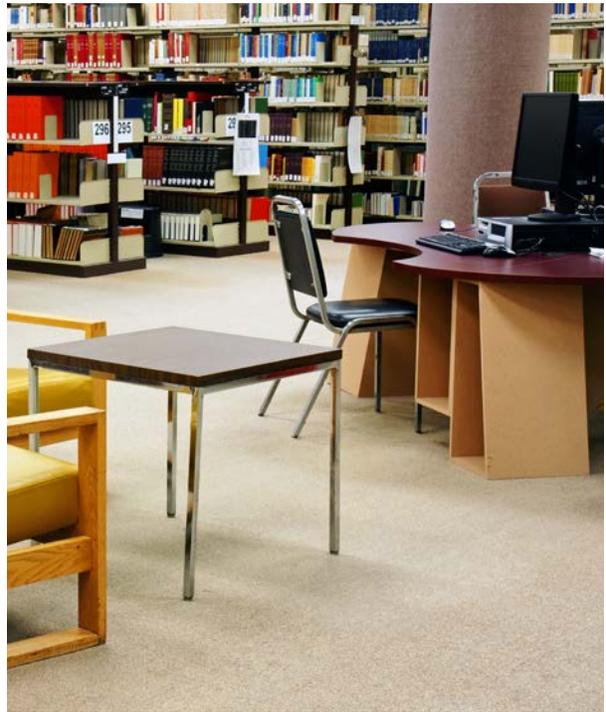
Bank



Community center



Grocery store



Library



Park



Pharmacy (drugstore)



Police



Post office

Community Services and Public Assistance

Social Involvement in Your Community

Introduction for the Trainer

Key Content

During this session, participants will learn about the benefits of community involvement and the different ways they can get involved.

Main Messages

Getting involved in the local community by attending cultural events or volunteering may help ease a refugee's adjustment to life in the United States. Community involvement is a way for newcomers to meet not only other members of their ethnic or religious group, but also to meet Americans and practice their English. Volunteering can also lead to a job. Meeting and being with other people can ease the stresses of adjustment.



45 minutes

Objectives

Participants will be able to do the following:

- ▶ Describe ways to get involved in the community
- ▶ Identify ways they would like to get involved in the community
- ▶ Discuss the steps they would take to get involved

Key English Vocabulary

- ▶ *community*
- ▶ *library*
- ▶ *volunteer*
- ▶ *I would like to volunteer here.*

Materials

- Flipchart paper, markers, and tape
- Blank paper, 1 piece per participant
- Optional: Additional art supplies (glue, colored paper, etc.)

Session Preparation

Ask those you expect to participate to think about ways they were involved in their previous community and ways they would like to get involved in their new community.

Think about ways participants could get involved in the community, such as joining an ethnic or religious group, volunteering at a food bank, attending an upcoming community event, assisting with trash clean-up, helping at a local school's lunch or recess, or reading to children at a public library. Find out about places such as ethnic community-based organizations, neighborhood associations, or business establishments where participants might find members of their home country community.

Trainer's Introduction of Session to Participants

Getting involved in the community helps you in many ways. When you get involved in your community, you may meet other people like you, make friends, learn more about your community, and feel more comfortable in your new home. Meeting people can also help you find a job. Some of you may have been involved in your communities before your resettlement, and you may have already started thinking about how you can get involved in your new community. This session will help identify some ways to get involved, and help you think about how you would like to do so.

Introductory Exercise

Conduct a "think-pair-share" exercise by asking participants to think about a way they could get involved in the community.

Ask participants to share their thoughts about this with a partner. Bring the full group together and ask for highlights from the partner discussions. List these on a flipchart. Share ideas considered during the session preparation specifically those related to local places where participants may find members of their home country community. Help participants identify activities which might not be realistic.

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

Activity

Divide participants into groups of six to eight. Explain that each group will make a quilt that shows how the group members would like to get involved in their community.

Distribute a piece of flipchart paper, markers, tape, and scissors to each group, and a piece of printer paper to each member in the group. (Distribute additional art supplies if desired.) On the printer

paper, each participant writes or draws something that shows how he or she would like to get involved in the local community. This drawing or text becomes a quilt block.

While participants are creating their quilt boxes, hang a piece of blank flipchart paper on the wall near each group. This becomes the back of each group's quilt.

When participants have completed their quilt blocks, they tape them to the back of their group's quilt. Participants should try not to overlap individual pieces.

Each group now has a quilt showing how its members will get involved in their community. Participants discuss their quilt blocks with group members, and come up with a plan of action to achieve what is shown on the quilt blocks.

Ask each group to identify a spokesperson to discuss the quilt. Bring the full group together. The spokesperson from each small group tapes the group's quilt on the wall in the front of the training space and explains the quilt blocks and the action each participant is going to take to get involved in the community.

When all groups have presented, debrief the session using the questions below.

Debriefing Questions

- ▶ How can community involvement help you?
- ▶ What are some ways volunteering in the community can help you? *[If no one mentions that volunteering can lead to a job, be sure to point out this benefit.]*
- ▶ What is one way you would like to get involved in the community?
- ▶ How will you take action to get involved?
- ▶ What is another way you would like to get involved? How could you do that?

Working With Individuals or Very Small Groups

As part of the session preparation make a list of community involvement ideas to share with the participant(s), making sure the list reflects local reality. During the introductory exercise, brainstorm ideas for community involvement. During the activity, participants and the trainer should make at least four squares to create a quilt. The quilt squares can be made up of words, drawings, or magazine/newspaper pictures depicting the ideas that came up in the introductory exercise.

Variations and Considerations

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

As an alternative activity, ask participants to identify one way they would like to get involved in their community. Participants brainstorm what they would need to do to accomplish this.

When finished with the activity but before debriefing the session, share the following case study as an example of how participants might take action to become involved in their community.

Ahande wanted to meet people in his community and get some experience for his résumé. He asked his English teacher for advice and told her that he hoped someday to work in social services. She told Ahande about her volunteer work at a local food bank. With help from his English teacher, Ahande spoke to the program coordinator and found out that volunteers often prepared bags of food for families. The work did not seem like fun, but Ahande felt he would meet people and get some experience that might lead to a job.

Community Services and Public Assistance

Unit Vocabulary

The following lists key English vocabulary words related to this unit. The words are in alphabetical order.

[The following paragraph consists of instructions for the trainer. If you choose to share the unit vocabulary with participants, we recommend removing the following paragraph.]

Introduce words by using the definition and contextual sentence. Omit words that participants already know. A partner talk is meant to be a 2-minute exchange between participants and should include two to three terms that the participants easily understand. Encourage conversation and interaction, and focus on what participants already know about the words, from its use during the session. Following the list of vocabulary words, there are two unit vocabulary worksheets for participants who would like to practice the words more.

Vocabulary Word	Definition	Context	Partner Talk
<i>access</i>	To get or be able to use something.	Your case worker/ manager can help you <i>access</i> health care, employment, or other services you need. If you have a computer, you can usually <i>access</i> information about these services online.	What kinds of community services do you need to <i>access</i> as soon as possible?
<i>bank</i>	A business for holding, borrowing, or exchanging money.	Most people in the United States keep their money in the <i>bank</i> .	Why do you think it's a good idea to put your money in the <i>bank</i> ?
<i>community</i>	An area where a group of people live; also, a group of people living close together who have similar backgrounds, needs, or interests.	A new health clinic opened in Sita's <i>community</i> .	What are important services to have in your <i>community</i> ?

Vocabulary Word	Definition	Context	Partner Talk
<i>grocery store</i>	A store where you can buy food and other supplies for the household. A <i>grocery store</i> can be a small neighborhood shop or a large supermarket.	Samuel buys vegetables, rice, and dishwashing soap at the <i>grocery store</i> .	What do you buy at the <i>grocery store</i> ?
<i>help</i>	To do part of the work for someone; to give assistance or support.	Abbas <i>helped</i> his friends move to a new apartment. When Saba fell, her son ran to <i>help</i> her.	When do you need <i>help</i> ? What can you do to <i>help</i> someone in your family?
<i>hospital</i>	A place or building where sick or injured people go to get medical help.	Paw Mu went to the <i>hospital</i> to have her tonsils taken out.	When do people go to the <i>hospital</i> in other countries and places you know about?
<i>library</i>	A place in a town or school where you can borrow books, DVDs, and other materials. Some <i>libraries</i> also have computers that people can use.	In many <i>libraries</i> you can use computers to look up information on the Internet or to send an email to someone.	Is there a <i>library</i> in this town? Where is it?
<i>park</i>	An area of public land that anyone can use for rest and enjoyment.	The town <i>park</i> has a playground, a swimming pool, and a picnic area.	What do you like to do at the <i>park</i> ?
<i>pharmacy</i> (<i>drugstore</i>)	A store or section of a store (often a <i>drugstore</i>) where you can buy medicines. A <i>drugstore</i> has other everyday items (such as toothpaste, shampoo, and snack food) besides medicines.	Abdullah buys his medicines at the <i>pharmacy</i> in his grocery store.	Is there a <i>pharmacy</i> near you? Is it in a <i>drugstore</i> ? What can you buy there?

Vocabulary Word	Definition	Context	Partner Talk
<i>post office</i>	A building or office where mail is received, sorted, and sent out and where stamps are sold.	Most small cities or towns have at least one <i>post office</i> .	Where is there a <i>post office</i> near you? Have you been there?
<i>store</i>	A place or building where you can buy food, clothes, medicine, furniture, or other things.	I buy milk and bread at the <i>store</i> .	Are there <i>stores</i> near the resettlement agency? What do they sell?
<i>trash</i>	Anything that is thrown away because it is not wanted.	The garbage truck picks up the <i>trash</i> on Wednesdays in Rohan's neighborhood.	When does the garbage truck pick up <i>trash</i> in your neighborhood? If you don't know, how can you find out?
<i>volunteer</i>	To offer help, work, or services to someone or to an organization without receiving any payment in return.	Isabel <i>volunteers</i> at her daughter's school on Thursdays. She watches the children during recess.	Is there any place in your neighborhood where you would like to <i>volunteer</i> ? What would you do?
<i>where</i>	A question word, used when asking about location or place.	<i>Where</i> is the resettlement agency?	I am from _____. <i>Where</i> are you from?

Community Services and Public Assistance Unit Vocabulary Worksheets

There are two unit vocabulary worksheets. Worksheet 1 is for beginning-level English language learners, and Worksheet 2 is for learners with more advanced English language skills.

The worksheets can be incorporated into an orientation session, or they can be given to participants to work on at home.

Community Services and Public Assistance Unit Vocabulary Worksheet 1

Directions: Match the community places to something you might find at that place. One is done for you.

Community Places



park



hospital



library



bank



post office

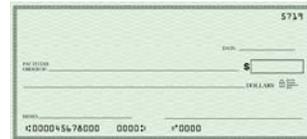


*pharmacy
(drugstore)*

Things You Find at Each Community Place



mail



check



medicine



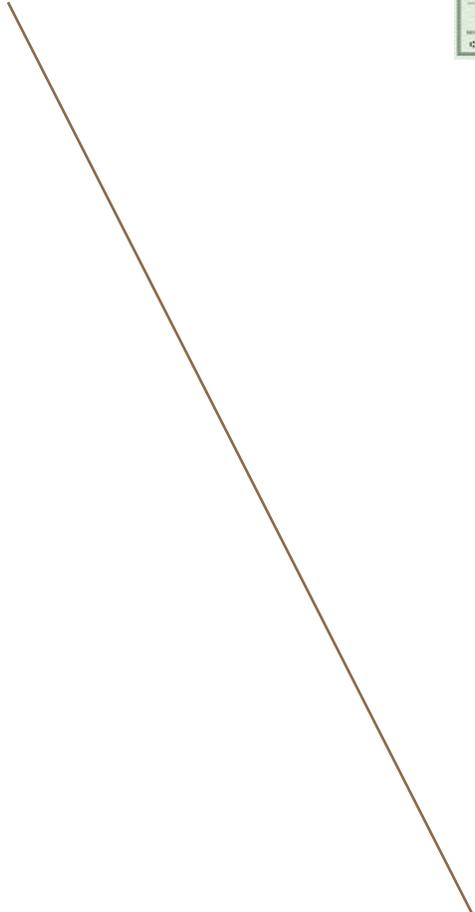
books



swings



doctor



Community Services and Public Assistance Unit Vocabulary Worksheet 2

Directions: Read the paragraph below. Use the word bank to complete the sentences.

Word Bank			
community	help	trash	volunteers

Ofelia loves where she lives. It is a good _____ . If there is a problem, a lot of people try to _____ their neighbors. Ofelia also wants to help her community. On Saturdays she _____ with her family. They go to the park and pick up _____ to make the park clean.



