

The Refugee Resettlement Partnership of Gettysburg

Request for Program Status within the Gettysburg Area Ministerium

The Refugee Resettlement Partnership of Gettysburg is seeking status as a program initiative of the Gettysburg Ministerium in order to pursue our mission more efficiently and effectively. The following points summarize the Partnership's current situation:

The Refugee Resettlement Partnership of Gettysburg was established this past November in response to the extraordinary resettlement program underway for Afghan refugees nation-wide. The Partnership now includes eight area churches as well as other community members in an ecumenical and interfaith effort.

Our church partners currently include Trinity United Church of Christ, St. James Lutheran, Christ Lutheran, Gettysburg United Methodist, Prince of Peace Episcopal, Gettysburg Presbyterian, Unitarian Universalists of Gettysburg and the Gettysburg Friends Meeting. Trinity UCC is the founding congregation in this endeavor, led by the Rev. Dr. Fred Young, who serves as chair of the Partnership's governing board. Prince of Peace Episcopal has committed to serving as fiscal agent for the Partnership. Bethany Christian Services in Lancaster is our resettlement agency partner.

We have formed a Board and created a Covenant agreement defining our mission, a committee structure, and other documents supporting organizational activities. There are currently more than 50 volunteers committed to this work.

The immediate focus is on creating new homes in the Gettysburg area for one to three Afghan refugee families. There is also interest in exploring assisting other refugee groups in the future.

Our first Afghan family of two adults and eight children arrived on February 12, 2022. Housing for this family is secured under a one-year lease.

To date, funding has been found from within the participating faith communities, from affiliated individuals, and from sources administered by Bethany Christian Services. We have also submitted two proposals to appropriate grant-making organizations. The Partnership itself has no fixed overhead and anticipates no employees.

The Refugee Resettlement Partnership presently is not incorporated nor does it have tax-exempt status. We have two needs that we wish to explore with the Ministerium through this request for program status. The first is that, as we seek funding from institutional sources, the ability to show the long-term financial history of the ministerium is far preferable to our current presentation as a start-up group with no financial track record.

The second would be a more transparent tax-exempt status that we could access once the Ministerium attains its own 501(c)(3) incorporation (a process that is now underway). Because the longevity of the Partnership's programmatic work is unknowable, incorporation of the Partnership may be inadvisable at this time. In addition to requiring substantial lead times, if the Partnership does not continue long-term, "unraveling" a non-profit corporation is a complicated legal process, whereas discontinuation of a ministerium program is a simple, internal matter.

While we would always welcome funding from the Ministerium for this effort, that is not the intent of this request. Rather, we seek an organizational “umbrella” under which we may operate until such time as the work of the Partnership is deemed finished, or the group chooses to pursue incorporation. We believe this response to our shared call to welcome the stranger and serve the most vulnerable is completely compatible with the Ministerium’s own mission.

Thank you for entering into conversation with the Partnership about this request.