



**Intercultural Mutual Assistance Association**  
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*IMAA is building bridges between cultures.*

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## **IMAA Match Program Guidelines**

Intercultural Mutual Assistance Association (IMAA) welcomes you! To effectively collaborate, it is important to understand and follow our guidelines and procedures. Please read each section and sign the attached agreement. We thank you for your interest and concern for refugees and immigrants and appreciate your willingness to volunteer as a mentor.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Volunteer mentors are vital to the fulfillment of IMAA's mission of building bridges between cultures by empowering individuals toward a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive community. We welcome passionate, understanding, and dedicated individuals, families, and friends to join us in working toward our mission.

The Match Program strives to match individuals/families with newly-arrived refugees in a partnership of cultural exchange and support. By providing friendship and practical help, volunteers mentor newcomers to help them become welcomed and feel more socially connected in our community. Some of the activities you may engage in with the family include understanding public transportation, food shopping, financial literacy, daycare assistance, reading/writing/speaking English, and utilizing the library. The Match program requires a commitment of at least three months. Volunteer times for this commitment are flexible and can include weekends and evenings. Scheduling will be up to the discretion of you and the mentee.

### **OUR VOLUNTEER PROCESS**

In order to provide consistency in the services we provide, we require all mentors to go through the same process. Once you have contacted Susan Haskamp, Project Coordinator, with your interest, you will set up a date and time to meet and get more oriented with the program. Our organization works with vulnerable populations from various backgrounds and experiences. Therefore, we want you to be prepared to handle the situations that come your way as a volunteer. One way to do this is to understand who our clients are, the kinds of situations you may find yourself in, and how you can best assist by working with our staff and mentees on your own. During the orientation meeting, we will explain the services we provide and the typical challenges you may encounter.

If you decide to move forward, you will need to sign the attached "IMAA Volunteer Agreement" and "Receipt and Knowledge of IMAA Match Program Volunteer Guidelines." A background check is required before we can match you with a mentee.

Once you have signed the agreements and the background check is complete, we will schedule a time for you to meet with the mentee and the mentees case worker. The meeting may take place at IMAA or the mentee's home.

## **EXPECTATIONS**

To be an effective mentor, trust and rapport must be established between you and the mentee with whom you work. To help foster this relationship, IMAA has established the following expectations of volunteer mentors:

- Meet regularly and consult with the mentee with whom you are working as to when you meet and how you will spend your time together.
- Make a commitment to be consistent and dependable – to maintain a steady presence in the mentee's life the period you are with them.
- Recognize that the relationship may seem fairly one-sided for some time. Allow time for trust to grow. The mentees have experienced traumatic events that brought them to the U.S. as refugees. Some are comfortable talking about their experiences and some are not. Avoid asking questions about personal experiences that might be difficult for them to discuss at first. Instead, ask them questions relating to their culture and home country, allowing them to open up about personal experiences when they are ready.
- Pay attention to the needs of mentee – even their need for fun and relaxation.
- Respect the culture of the mentee.
- Maintain confidentiality with information you may learn about the mentee. This includes any medical, psychological, financial or personal disclosures by the mentee, his/her caseworker or other IMAA staff as well as any documents you come across.
- Maintain appropriate boundaries between you and the mentee for the protection of everyone involved.
- Seek and utilize the help and advice of IMAA program staff.

## **USE OF PERSONAL VEHICLES**

Being in a new country is scary. Having mentors to show mentees around their new community to acquaint them with American culture is important to the resettlement process. If you are comfortable taking clients out in the community, it is encouraged. However, please note that IMAA cannot be responsible for any accidents should you decide to transport the mentee in your own vehicle.

## **REPORTING**

As a mentor, you will see and hear a lot about the mentees with whom you work. If you observe anything that makes you uncomfortable or concerned for the mentee's safety and well-being,

please contact their case worker or project coordinator immediately. Do not try to mediate or resolve the issue.

Some examples of suspected or observed problems mentors should report include:

- domestic violence
- child abuse and neglect
- victimization of a crime
- perpetration of illegal activity
- loss of housing
- inability to meet basic needs (food, clothing, etc.)
- safety issues in the home such as chemicals, medication, sharp objects, etc.

All of these are examples of problems that should be reported. If you have any questions about reporting, please do not hesitate to ask.

## **DOCUMENTING YOUR HOURS**

It is important to report your activities monthly. The next page includes the form you will use to track your activities. Activities can be done in person or over the phone. **Please complete the Volunteer Activities Tracking document by the 10<sup>th</sup> of each month.** You will be asked to complete the following information: the date and number of hours you worked and activities you completed with the mentee. Please send the completed form to Deborah Seelinger, Match Program Coordinator, [deborah.seelinger@imaa.net](mailto:deborah.seelinger@imaa.net).



## **IMAA VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT**

1. In accordance with Federal Law and IMAA policy, this institution is prohibited from discrimination on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, ancestry, disability, age, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, status with regard to public assistance, citizenship status, national origin, or any other protected class status. I understand this non-discrimination policy and agree to abide by it.
2. I also agree to be nonjudgmental and respectful of IMAA clients. I understand that IMAA's mission is to empower people of all languages and cultures to become self-reliant. I will do my best to further that mission.
3. All information about clients, volunteers, donors, and employees of IMAA is confidential and may not be discussed outside the building, or with any unauthorized person. This includes the identity of people utilizing IMAA's services and programs, as well as any information about those people.
4. I understand this and understand that the Minnesota Data Practices Act and the Federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) provides for the protection of private and confidential data and that any violation of those laws, including improper disclosure of private or confidential data to which I may have access, may result in civil or criminal penalties.
5. I will abide by all other policies and procedures of IMAA.

Volunteer name: \_\_\_\_\_

Volunteer signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **RECEIPT AND KNOWLEDGE OF IMAA MATCH PROGRAM VOLUNTEER GUIDELINES**

I have received and read a copy of the IMAA Match Program Volunteer Guidelines.

I understand that a background check will be conducted, and I give permission to IMAA to review my personal history as recorded by the State Bureau of Criminal Apprehension and any other sources available.

I further understand that, by signing this statement, I am indicating that I have read the Volunteer Guidelines and understand the contents, and have discussed questions I have with the Volunteer Coordinator. I also realize that this statement will become a permanent part of my volunteer personnel file.

Volunteer Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Volunteer Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Volunteer Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_