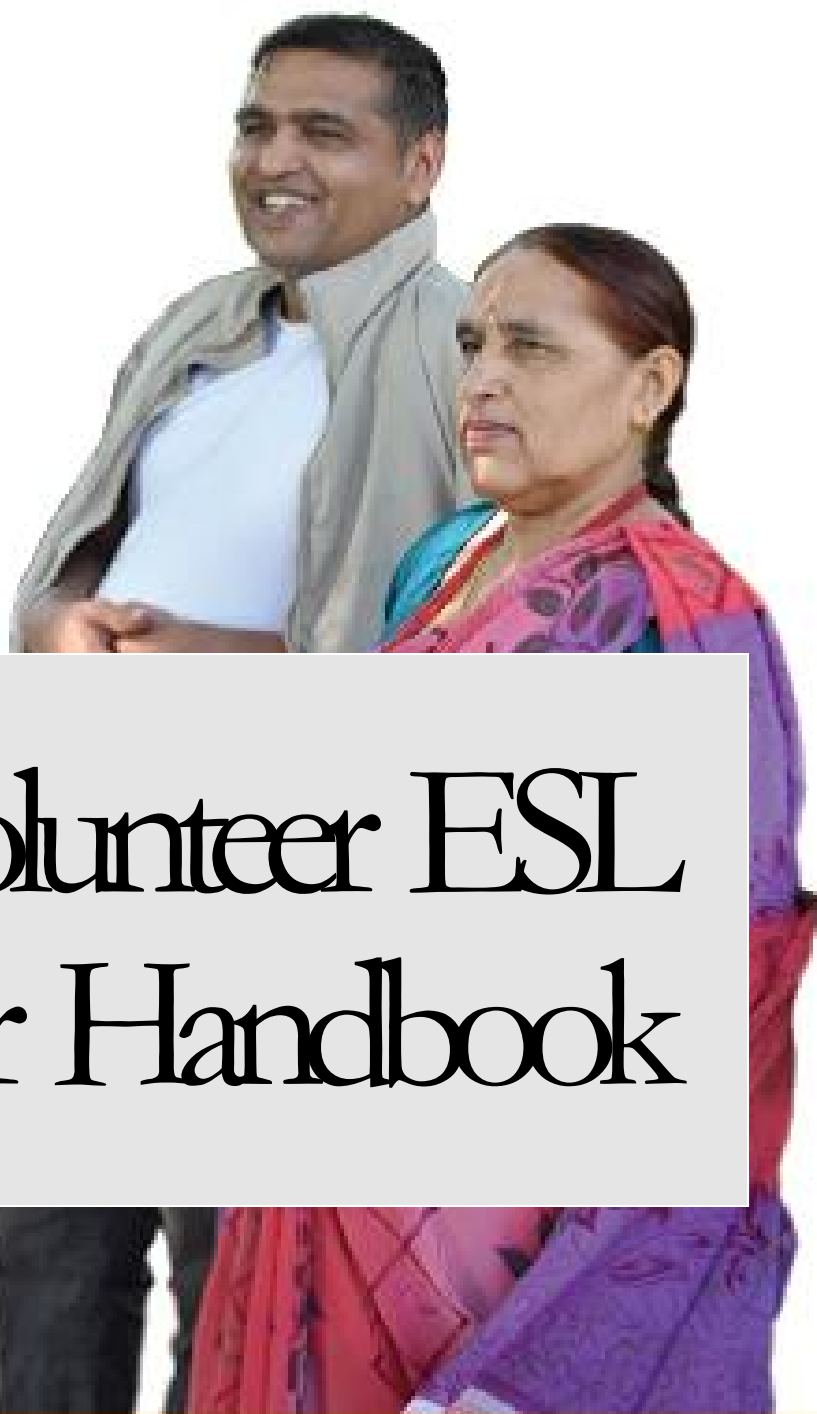


NASHVILLE INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR EMPOWERMENT

---

A Guide to Teaching English as a Second Language to Adult Refugee and Immigrant Students



# Volunteer ESL Teacher Handbook

NASHVILLE INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR EMPOWERMENT

# Volunteer ESL Teacher Handbook

---

N.I.C.E.  
417 Welshwood Drive • Suite 100  
Nashville, Tennessee 37211  
Phone 615.315.9681 • Fax 615.315.9682



# Table of Contents

Organizational Overview .....	2
Programs .....	3
The Education Department .....	4
Who to Contact .....	7
The Volunteer Commitment .....	9
Continuing Education .....	11
Adult Education Program .....	13
ESL Level Descriptions .....	14
Adult Education Policies and Procedures .....	17
Refugees and Immigrants .....	22
Refugees and Asylees .....	23
Other Immigrants .....	24

# Organizational Overview



Students at a local apartment complex participate in NICE's summer program where they are provided with educational programming aimed at increasing students' reading levels and English skills.

The Nashville International Center for Empowerment is a non-profit, community-based organization dedicated to empowering refugees and immigrants of Middle Tennessee through direct social services and educational programs

Originally established in 2005, the Nashville International Center for Empowerment began as a community and women's service provider for the Sudanese community. Since our founding, we have grown to serve people from more than 72 different nations currently living in Middle Tennessee, with most of our clients being of Asian, African and Middle Eastern descent. We aim to facilitate long-term independence and stability for our clients through English language skills, sustainable employment, and self-sufficiency for adults and academic achievement for children. Our programs work to empower clients by addressing the underlying issues contributing to poverty in our community. Our programs are offered to all members of Nashville's refugee and immigrant community, regardless of background or identity.

Fundamental to the mission of NICE is the elimination of the root causes of poverty within greater Nashville’s refugee and immigrant community, the creation of opportunities for upward socioeconomic mobility, and the social integration of those it serves. Clients are encouraged and even challenged to think beyond their current circumstances and discuss long-term goals. NICE makes every effort to establish the foundation necessary to achieve these goals by placing clients in educational and employment environments that are conducive to ultimate success.

How we began: In 2005, our organization was founded by a group of Sudanese refugee men and women, including current director Gatluak Ter Thach, who desired to help other refugees and immigrants living in Middle Tennessee. Many of the center’s founders came to the United States in the 1990s after having experienced life in severely war-torn Sudan with the goal of finding a safe place to live, work, and raise families with dignity. However, because of the war, most of the Sudanese refugee population that came to the U.S. had little educational experience which made their resettlement extremely difficult. The experiences of these founders prompted the creation of NICE in an attempt to provide others with skills that would facilitate independence and self-sufficiency in their new home.

## Programs

*N.I.C.E. has 5 core programs: Education, Employment, Health, Immigration, and Resettlement*

**EDUCATION** We believe education is key to helping our clients build a life in the United States. NICE currently offers programming for adults and children of all English competency levels. We offer English Language as a Second Language (literacy – level 5), citizenship training, and computer skills courses for adults. Classes are offered during morning and evening hours. The curriculum, Ventures Series by Cambridge University Press, addresses a wide variety of skillsets including reading, writing, speaking, and life skills.

Our Afterschool programming and Summer programming offer elementary, middle and high school students an avenue for extra help with coursework, college prep, and social adjustment. We provide a safe space for immigrant and refugee youth and strive to develop confidence in young people who may feel caught between two worlds.

**EMPLOYMENT** The NICE Workforce Preparation Program focuses on assisting local refugees who have been in the United States for less than five years. Services include skills

inventories, job search, online/paper application assistance, resume building, interview preparation, and weekly job training classes.

**HEALTH** The Nashville Refugee Health Initiative program was developed in 2013 to help with several arising issues within populations new to America. With issues of health education, diabetes, and hypertension present, NICE developed a health program to provide education to the refugee and immigrant communities in Middle Tennessee.

The Nashville Refugee Health Initiative consists of four components: the Wellness Partner Program to provide one on one health lessons to families on a weekly basis, monthly nutrition classes that are accomplished through cooking lessons about dishes native to different immigrant communities, weekly fitness classes, and monthly health screenings.

**IMMIGRATION** The Immigration program aims to enable our clients to effectively and efficiently transition into life in Middle Tennessee. Refugees and immigrants come to America with little or no knowledge of the resources available to them, and it is our goal to empower refugees to integrate into the community through services such as having a Board of Immigration Appeals accredited staff member, completing and filing immigration forms, providing interpretation, consultation services, and immigration case follow-up.

**RESETTLEMENT** When refugees first arrive, they generally know very little about everyday life in the United States. Our team meets clients at the airport, ensures them a home cooked meal and orients them to their new life. We help meet their immediate needs - finding and furnishing a new home, scheduling initial medical screenings, enrolling children in school. Through our Match Grant, Refugee Cash Assistance, Refugee Medical Assistance and Refugee Social Services programs we work to break down barriers between life as a refugee and self-sufficiency.

Check our website for the most up-to-date contact information for education department staff members.

[empowernashville.org](http://empowernashville.org)

## The Education Department

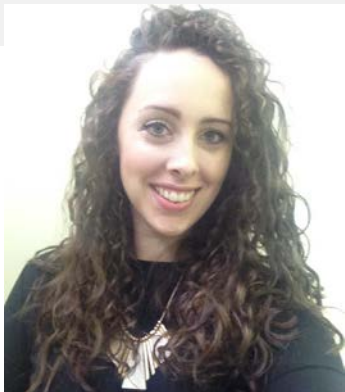
As a volunteer ESL teacher you will be working closely with the education department. Specifically, you will be working with Adult Education staff members, our volunteer coordinator, and a site coordinator. Our team works very collaboratively, so it can be confusing to delineate who does what, and who you should contact about specific issues. A brief run-down explaining these roles follows:

*Ashley Coleman, Adult Education  
Coordinator*



As a program coordinator, Ashley is in charge of all of our adult education programming. Ashley is the dreamer and schemer who moves us towards bigger and better things while also dealing with the nitty-gritty day to day issues that arise. Ashley taught English in Brazil for two years and is currently pursuing a masters degree in TESOL, and is a great resource for questions about pedagogy, teaching methods, and the mechanics of learning a foreign language. You will see Ashley on-site at our classes, serving as a site coordinator at New Song on Wednesdays and as a substitute teacher/facilitator at other sites.

*Erin Bean, Adult Education  
Specialist*



As the Adult Education Specialist, Erin serves to support the mission and goals of NICE and the Adult Education Program. Erin was born and raised in Indianapolis, Indiana. In 2015, she received her M.S. Ed. in Literacy, Culture, and Language Education and an endorsement to teach ESL/EFL. Erin served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in The Kyrgyz Republic where she taught English language classes to adults and university students. Upon returning to the United States, Erin became an instructor for adult English language learners in Murfreesboro, Tennessee. You will see Erin onsite at our classes serving as site coordinator at New Song Church on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

*Ali Rezai, Adult Education  
Administrator*



Primarily Ali is doing a site coordinating at New Song Church on Mondays and at Glenclyff high school, as well as providing administrative support to our Adult Education department. Ali also operates the Teacher Resource Center website and does community outreach for our classes. Before Ali started working for Adult Education he worked at resettlement department. Ali also worked as an interpreter for US Armed forces in Afghanistan also thought Dari/Farsi for US forces.

*Kathy Edson, Director of Outreach  
and Community Engagement*



If you have questions about volunteer opportunities with NICE, Kathy is the one to consult! Kathy handles the front-end of the volunteer program, including outreach and recruiting. You will see her on-site occasionally and at all of our special events! Kathy is also our community engagement facilitator and oversees the Refugee Integration Support and Empowerment program.

*Laurel Dameron, John Overton  
High School Site Coordinator*



Laurel is from Chattanooga, Tennessee and has been working in adult literacy for over five years. She followed her passion for social justice through education to Lipscomb University where she received her Masters in ELL Education. Laurel also teaches High School Equivalency and English Composition at other programs that cater to the underserved communities in the Nashville area. You can find Laurel at John Overton High School on Mondays and Wednesdays where she is responsible for managing the site, supporting its teachers and students, and facilitating monthly new student registrations.



## Who to Contact

Who do you contact if you are having a specific issue?

Adult Education  
Department

(615) 315-9681  
Ext: 3001

<b>Ashley</b>	<b><a href="mailto:ashley@empowernashville.org">ashley@empowernashville.org</a></b>	<b>615.315.9681 Ext: 3001 678.451.8863</b>
<b>Ali</b>	<b><a href="mailto:ali@empowernashville.org">ali@empowernashville.org</a></b>	<b>615.315.9681</b>
<b>Erin</b>	<b><a href="mailto:erinb@empowernashville.org">erinb@empowernashville.org</a></b>	<b>615.315.9681 Ext: 3008 317.833.6160</b>

If you are unable to come to class...

Please let your site coordinator know ASAP if you are unable to teach your class for any reason, or if you will be late. If you cannot reach your site coordinator, please contact Ashley.

If you are looking for extra curriculum support/resources or have questions about Ventures...

Please first refer to the “Resources” section on our Teacher Resource Center website and/or the Ventures Teacher Resource Center Page. Additionally, below are some links to websites that feature quick, go-to ideas and printouts to supplement your lessons.

1. <http://niceclasses.jimdo.com/resources/>
2. <http://www.cambridge.org/ventures/>
3. <http://www.eslcafe.com/ideas/>
4. <http://www.esl-galaxy.com/adults.html>
5. <https://www.eslpartyland.com/esl-lesson-plans-online>

If you have more specific questions or if these resources do not meet you or your students’ needs, Ashley and Monica are both happy to provide you with extra classroom and curriculum support and guide you.

If you have questions about specific students...

Please reach out to your site coordinator or Ali if you have a question or concern about a specific student.

If you have issues with attendance sheets and/or student enrollment...

If you are on-site, please discuss these issues with the site coordinator. Otherwise, please contact Ali.

If you experience problems with lesson reporting or the teacher website...

In the case of technical difficulties with the forms and reports on the teacher website, please contact Ali.

If you would like information about registrations for new students...  
Ask your site coordinator for an up-to-date registration flier, or contact our front office at (615) 315-9681.

If you know someone interested in volunteering with us...  
Please direct any potential volunteers to Ashley.

## The Volunteer Commitment



A student in our ESL program practices conjugating verbs in English during our evening English classes at Glenclyff High School.

**V**olunteers are the backbone of NICE's ESL program. Without our wonderful volunteer teachers, the program could not exist. We are so appreciative of you considering making a commitment to join our team of dedicated volunteers. In order to meet the needs of the community, we have as many classes as we are able to accommodate. As a non-profit, we do not have the funding to place paid teachers in every classroom, so this is where volunteer teachers become essential! If we did not have volunteer teachers, we would only be able to offer a fraction of the classes we currently hold, and we would not be able to serve nearly as many individuals seeking English language instruction.

Serving as a volunteer teacher is a significant obligation. All volunteers are asked to commit to serving for at least 4 months, with at least 2 hours of classroom instruction per week. What follows is a full explanation of what, exactly, this commitment entails.

## Volunteer ESL Teacher Expectations

The Commitment:

We expect all volunteers to sign-on for a minimum of **four months**. Consistency is very important in the classroom, and students' learning is disrupted when there is a constant flow of new teachers through their classroom. A high rate of turn over in the classroom also prevents volunteers and students from being able to build meaningful and rewarding personal relationships.

Teachers are expected to commit to teaching a class at least one day a week. Classes meet for two hours at a time. You can expect to spend an extra hour planning your lesson and preparing for class. This means you can expect to spend **three hours a week** volunteering per class session that you teach. If you chose to teach a class two days a week, you would be volunteering approximately six hours a week.

Volunteer teachers are expected to fill out a lesson report after every class that they teach. This takes roughly **ten minutes** and is completed electronically, through the NICE teacher website. More information about this process can be found in Chapter 4, under Adult Education Policies and Procedures.

Periodically, teachers administer tests in class. Volunteer teachers are expected to grade these tests themselves (directions and answer keys are provided), and report the scores through the teacher website. This may amount to an **extra hour** of work about once a month. More information about testing can be found in Chapter 4, under Adult Education Policies and Procedures.

We ask that teachers keep absences to an absolute minimum – no more than 20% of the four month commitment. For a volunteer teaching a class one day a week, this amounts to **three absences** out of the 16 class meetings he or she has committed to teaching within a four month period. For a volunteer teaching a class two days a week, this amounts to **six absences** out of the 32 class meetings he or she has committed to teaching within a four month period. If you are unable to attend class, **please let us know as soon as possible**. See “Who to Contact” in Chapter 1 for more information. If you know about your absence in advance and teach one day a week, please consult your co-teacher and see if he or she is able to substitute for you or if you can switch teaching days for the week.

We understand that emergencies happen and you may need to miss more classes than anticipated. However, we ask that you consider NICE students and staff when planning trips and vacations and make your best effort to be able to fulfill your commitment. When a teacher is unable to show up, there are two possible outcomes. One, a staff member may be available to step in and substitute, providing a lesson that is prepared at the last minute. If a staff member is not available, students may find themselves sitting in a classroom with no teacher until they are sent home.

*NICE is proud to serve individuals from many cultural, linguistic, ethnic, and religious backgrounds. It is imperative for all teachers to exhibit behavior that reflects a sense of cultural sensitivity and respect for the various backgrounds from which their students come. Teachers need to be mindful of the variety of experiences and backgrounds their students bring to the classroom and demonstrate dedication to creating a welcoming and accepting classroom space.*

## Continuing Education

If you are reading this manual then you have already positioned yourself as an advocate of Nashville's refugee and immigrant communities! You have demonstrated an interest in building relationships with individuals of diverse backgrounds who are striving to learn English in an effort to improve the overall quality of their life in an unfamiliar terrain. Your compassion and ideologies are the foundational core components of becoming an excellent teacher. However, teaching ESL to adult refugees and immigrants is unlike other fields of teaching and brings a unique set of challenges. In an effort to guide you through these challenges and give you the tools you need to best support your students reach their goals, NICE Adult Ed hosts four in-service training workshops per calendar year. These workshops will be focused and intentional in content, highlighting a particular instructional strategy, skill area, language point, or other theme designed to better navigate your classroom and subsequently, enhance your students' learning experience.

Research indicates that the key to professionalizing community-based ESL programs lies in increased professional development opportunities for staff and volunteer instructors. As such, **attending three out of four quarterly workshops per calendar year is a mandatory component of the volunteer commitment.** As we have a continuous process of onboarding volunteers, a calendar year is constituted as 365 days following your first day as a volunteer instructor. Therefore, we recommend you do your best to make an effort to your first two or three depending on the overall length of the time you choose to donate to our program. In an effort to best accommodate your schedules, these workshops will be offered on three separate dates at varying days and times. Each quarter for 2016 is broken down as:

1. January 11<sup>th</sup>-March 25<sup>th</sup>: Quarter 1
2. March 28<sup>th</sup>-June 2<sup>nd</sup>: Quarter 2
3. June 6<sup>th</sup>- September 16<sup>th</sup>: Quarter 3
4. September 19<sup>th</sup>- December 16<sup>th</sup>: Quarter 4

Refer to the timeline below for an overview of the timeline of events coinciding with the quarterly in-service trainings:

1. **Quarterly NICE Adult Education Newsletter is sent out marking the beginning of the new quarter.**
2. **Within the first month of the new quarter, NICE Adult Education Staff will host a professional development workshop focused on the theme pertaining to that particular quarter's focus of improvement.**

3. **Following participation in one of the three offered workshops, the instructor will spend the next few weeks implementing the respective instructional strategy in his or her classroom.**
4. **Between two weeks and a month following attendance of the workshop and after opportunities to incorporate the strategy in focus in the classroom, a NICE Adult Education team member will spend 20-30 minutes observing the instructor in the classroom. In addition to evaluating the degree to which the instructor effectively incorporated the quarter's respective strategy in focus in the classroom, this will also serve as a time in which NICE staff can make general observations in other areas so as to provide a holistic set of feedback. Instructors can expect to stay for at least fifteen minutes following the end of the class period in which they were observed to de-brief with a NICE Adult Ed staff member. Instructors will not be notified in advance of the date in which they are to be observed, but will have a chance to re-schedule their debriefing in the event of conflicts.**
5. **Prior to the end of the current quarter, instructors should expect one last check-in by a NICE Adult Education staff member to follow up on the recommendations made from the previous observation as well as to provide ongoing general support. De-briefing will be conducted via email following the second and final observation of the quarter.**

As you undergo your series of observations and evaluations, please keep in mind that we are not there to critique your performance nor are we coming from a position of ultimate authority and wisdom. Teachers of all backgrounds and experience levels benefit from having another pair of eyes in their classroom as to provide insight to student responses to instruction that is often difficult to perceive in the heat of the moment. We also recognize that you all come with varying degrees of previous teaching experience, experience with individuals of diverse backgrounds, and/or knowledge acquisition knowledge. You do, however, by virtue of working with the same group of students every week, have an acute understanding of your students' backgrounds, needs, and goals. Our objective is to, through ongoing presentation to new information, classroom observations and feedback, provide you with knowledge of ESL teaching best practices that you can use to help guide you toward helping your students meet these needs and goals with which you are familiar so as to create the possible experience for both you and your students.

## Adult Education Program



Students of diverse backgrounds celebrate their educational achievements and bring home-cooked foods from all over the world for a potluck at our bi-annual student celebration.

**O**ur Adult Education Program provides free community-based English Language classes of all levels. Classes meet twice a week for 2 hours at a time and are offered during the day and at night year-round. We maintain small class sizes, with no more than twenty students in any class.

We offer classes at seven different levels: Literacy, Intro, Level 1, Level 2, Level 3, Level 4, and Level 5. These classes serve the full range of English Language Learners, from pre-literate skill levels through students who are ready to transition out of English as a Second Language instruction.

On the following pages you will find individual descriptions of each level of English as a Second Language instruction as defined nationally, including the skill sets of a student in the level and which NICE classes correlate to the given level.

## ESL Level Descriptions

Beginning Literacy/Pre-Beginning ESL  NICE's Literacy and Intro Classes	<p><b>Basic skills:</b> Functions minimally, if at all, in English. Communicates only through gestures and a few isolated words and extremely simple learned phrases (What's your name?). No control of grammar.</p> <p><b>Listening/Speaking:</b> May know isolated words. Learners at this level cannot produce original language by applying learned rules. Communication at this level is minimal to non-existent.</p> <p><b>Reading/Writing:</b> May not be literate in any language. May also be semi-literate (low literacy in first language) or literate in a non-Roman alphabet or other writing system (Arabic, Chinese).</p>
Low Beginning ESL  NICE's Level 1 Class	<p><b>Basic Skills:</b> Basic personal info, immediate physical setting, Highly contextualized short info only.</p> <p><b>Listening/Speaking:</b> Understands isolated words and short learned utterances. Understands simple questions, high frequency commands, and courtesy formulae. Communicates with learned material. Can use vocab only for basic needs and courtesies</p> <p><b>Reading/Writing:</b> Recognizes and writes letters and numbers and reads and understand common sight words. Where vocab has been learned, can read standardized messages, phrases, and expressions. Can write own name and address. No practical communicative writing skills.</p>
High Beginning ESL  NICE's Level 2 Class	<p><b>Basic Skills:</b> Highly predictable common daily settings. Content areas strongly supported by situational context. Vocab centers on basic objects, places, kinship, etc. Routine tasks such as getting meals and receiving simple instructions. Topics grounded in personal experience</p> <p><b>Listening/Speaking:</b> Understands full sentences which consist of recombination of learned elements. Primarily face-to-face discourse. Some routine phone conversations and simple announcements and media. Can recombine learned material and systems to apply to new situations. Can ask and answer questions and make statements. Can have and sustain minimal conversation based on known topics.</p> <p><b>Reading/Writing:</b> Can understand main idea and extract facts from simple text where vocab is known. Beginnings of ability to read simple text on connected topics. Can write simple learned expression and some recombination. Can write short messages and simple notes (usually with spelling errors). Beginnings of ability to recombine known language in order to create simple questions and statements.</p>



<p>Low Intermediate ESL</p>	<p><b>Basic Skills:</b> Basic personal background and needs. Tasks such as introducing self, ordering a meal, asking directions, making purchases, relating personal history, describing leisure activities, lodging, transportation, shopping, personal interests, ect. Is aware of some social conventions and familiar with routine tasks.</p>
<p>NICE's Level 3 Class</p>	<p><b>Listening/Speaking:</b> Greater understanding of routine telephone conversations and deliberate speech such as simple announcements and media reports. Understands longer stretches of connected discourse on a limited number of topics. Beginning to understand topic pertaining to different times and places. Can participate in conversations on a range of topics. Emerging evidence of connected discourse for simple narration and description. Able to use circumlocution.</p> <p><b>Reading/Writing:</b> Able to read simple connected text or basic personal and social needs (given interest or knowledge of topic). Can get some facts from higher level texts featuring description or narration. Some difficulty with cohesive factors in discourse (e.g. pronouns and their referents, temporal references).</p>
<p>High Intermediate ESL</p>	<p><b>Basic Skills:</b> Beginnings of ability to understand description and narration in various timeframes and aspects. Topics of current public and personal interest. Elaborating, apologizing, complaining.</p>
<p>NICE's Level 4 Class</p>	<p><b>Speaking/Listening:</b> Understands description and narration in different timeframes and aspects with some need for repetition. Able to distinguish main ideas and details in connected discourse. Shows emerging awareness of sociocultural nuances beyond surface meaning. Can initiate, sustain, and close a range communicative tasks. Can satisfy requirements of work and school situations. Can narrate and describe at greater length.</p> <p><b>Reading/Writing:</b> Beginnings of ability to understand prose on topics outside of personal knowledge base. Able to comprehend linguistically or conceptually complex texts in areas of interested or pre-learned vocabulary. Able to write at length on a variety of topics with detail (although grammatical mistakes in complex systems may still be common). Good control of frequently uses syntactic structures. Generally strong in either vocab or grammar but not both. Style may still be 'obviously foreign'.</p>
<p>Advanced ESL</p>	<p><b>Basic Skills:</b> Describe and narrate in various time frames. Academic and professional competency. Topics of currents public and personal interest, elaborating, complaining, apologizing, interviews, news items, short lectures on familiar topics, bibliographical info, personal correspondences, routinized business letters an simple technical material.</p>
<p>NICE's Level 5 Class</p>	<p><b>Listening/Speaking:</b> Understands description and narration in different time frames and aspects with little need for repetition. Can easily distinguish main ideas and details in connected discourse. Knows (and easily learns new) sociocultural nuances beyond surface meaning. Can narrate and describe with paragraph-length connected discourse and details. Con convey meaning with diverse strategies when faced with complications. Has strong command of many communicative tasks</p> <p><b>Reading/Writing:</b> Able to understand prose on topics outside personal knowledge base. Comprehends linguistically or conceptually complex texts. Able</p>

to handle wider range of discourse styles including some literary texts. Able to write at length about a variety of topics with significant precision and detail. Good control of frequently used syntactic structures. Accurate use of a limited number of cohesive devices. Shows strength in both vocab and grammar. More comprehensive understanding of idioms and their use and cultural meaning.

## Adult Education Policies and Procedures

**Schedule:** NICE is closed for all federal holidays. Classes are also cancelled on these days. Otherwise, our classes adhere to the same schedule as Metro Nashville Public Schools (with the exception of summer break). If MNPS students do not have school, we do not have classes. This applies to holidays, breaks, in-service days, etc. If MNPS cancels school due to inclement weather, we do the same. We will notify you in advance of scheduled holidays and closures. In the case of a last-minute school closure, we will email volunteers as soon as possible.

**Curriculum:** Students can buy Our program uses the Ventures book series, a publication of books from the Cambridge University Press. There is a unique set of books tailored for each level, from literacy through level 5. It is a comprehensive curriculum that covers reading, writing, speaking, reading, and life skills. Students have a *student book* for use in class, as well as a *workbook* for homework or extra practice. Teachers have a *teacher's edition book* that has step-by-step explanations and instructions of how to present the material in the student book. There are also *audio CD's* for listening exercises in class, for the audio sections of unit tests, and for students to listen to at home. There is further supplementary material for students and teachers online.

Teachers are **provided with a teacher's book**, for a refundable deposit of \$35.

Copies of the **student book, workbook, and teacher's book** are also kept on-site at all class locations, should you leave yours at home or need to make copies.

**Registration:** You will have new students entering you class continually. NICE uses an open enrollment system for registering and enrolling new students. That means we hold registrations for new students every 2 weeks, rather than only at the beginning of each semester. This system dovetails with our curriculum, which is crafted so that students can enter in the middle of the book and not be at a disadvantage. Students are tested at registration to help determine the appropriate class level placement. New students' names will be added to your attendance sheet. New students may need you to make copies of the materials used in class for the first week or two until they purchase books.

**Attendance:** **Attendance should be taken at every class session.** You will be provided with an attendance sheet (class roster) to use in class. Only students listed on the class roster should be in class. If there are students in your class who are not on the roster, please let your site coordinator know, and he or she will take care of it. If you have to write in a name on the attendance sheet please include **first and last name** making sure that **the spelling is correct**. Never write in a name without

telling the site coordinator. See the following pages for further explanation in our official attendance policy.

Assessment: Students are tested at registration using the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) testing series. These tests are correlated with the *Ventures* curriculum, as well as with the National Reporting System, the official set of standards defined by the US Department of Labor and Workforce Development used to measure student and program performance in the Adult Education sector. While CASAS offers many different series of tests centered on topics such as Vocational English, citizenship preparation, and mathematics, our program uses the reading comprehension exam from the Life and Work series as the content it is measuring related to English for life and work readiness best reflects the needs of our particular student population.

To monitor and measure student growth, we re-test all of our students with the CASAS line of tests 4 times a year. This allows us to collect the data we need for grant reporting purposes, and gives us information about student performance that is used to help determine when a student is ready to move up to the next class level. Given that reading and writing comprehension are the skill areas with which our students struggle with the most and the ones they similarly need the most in order to maximize success in the professional and academic arena, it is these skills that you should and NICE staff will ultimately place at the forefront of the decision-making process for moving students up. However, speaking and listening comprehension as well as other affective factors are likewise critical for determining student placement and as such, we depend on your holistic feedback prior to moving students up to a higher class level. See the following pages for further explanation in our official testing policy.

The *Ventures* curriculum provides unit tests to be administered at the end of each unit. We expect that teachers **will administer unit tests**. These tests provide useful feedback to you, the teacher, about your students' mastery of the material and also provide students with feedback about their own learning. Unit tests, administration instructions, grading guidelines, and answer keys are all located in the back of your teacher's book. Unit tests take approximately one hour. When you come to the end of a unit, please administer the unit test in class and then report the scores to the Adult Education team through the "Test Score Report" page on our teacher website:

[www.niceclasses.jimdo.com](http://www.niceclasses.jimdo.com)

Lesson Reporting: We ask that all volunteer teachers **submit a lesson report within 24 hours after every class** session that they teach. This is completed through an online form. The lesson report form asks teachers about materials covered in class, skills students learned, vocabulary introduced, and how the lesson went. Filling out a lesson report encourages you, the teacher, to take a few minutes to reflect on your

lesson – what worked well and what didn't, what concepts students grasped, what activities were particularly effective, etc.

For volunteers who only teach the class one day a week it is **imperative** that the lesson report be filled out so the volunteer who teaches the class on the other day knows where to begin his or her lesson. *The lesson report is the platform through which volunteers teaching the same class can communicate with one another.* Through our teacher website, you can write lesson reports for your class and read old lesson reports. Reading old lesson reports allows volunteers who teach the same class to coordinate with one another, and can be a good source of ideas and activities to use in class for all teachers! Lesson reports also allow the Adult Education team to check that the class is progressing at an appropriate pace. To access the lesson reporting forms please visit the “Lesson Reports” page at:

[www.niceclasses.jimdo.com](http://www.niceclasses.jimdo.com)

Lesson reports are also very important in the case that you need a substitute. Substitutes consult lesson reports to know what the class covered last so that a new lesson, picking up in the right place, can be planned.

---

ATTENDANCE  
POLICY

---

This Attendance Policy has been created in an effort to enable the Education Department to accurately maintain records for the purposes of reporting to funders, tracking client progress, and providing effective services to all those who are seeking assistance. Due to the high demand for ESL classes, it is essential that students consistently attend class and follow these guidelines to ensure that all those who seek services will be provided with services within a reasonable time frame.

- 1.) All students are required to register prior to attending their first class.
- 2.) Only registered students whose names appear on the attendance sheet will be permitted to attend class.
- 3.) Any student who has a conflict and cannot attend class on a regular basis should speak with the Adult Education Department. The Adult Education Department will explore other schedule and teaching options with the student.
- 4.) Students are required to contact the Adult Education Department in advance if they will be absent for one week or more regardless of the reason. A return date should be determined before the student takes a leave. If a student is absent for three or more weeks the student may be dropped from the class and asked to re-register. When dropped, the student will be removed from the class roster.
- 5.) All current students that are registered and in good standing are tracked on the attendance sheets provided to the teachers. Attendance should be logged on these sheets for each class on a daily basis.
- 6.) Any student whose name does not appear on the class attendance sheet must speak with a site coordinator or Adult Education staff member to verify the student's current status and determine if the student is enrolled in the class.
- 7.) Any student that is not on the attendance sheet will not be allowed to attend classes until their status has been verified by the Adult Education Department. If a student who was formally enrolled returns and writing a name on the attendance sheet is necessary, make sure to include **first and last** name spelled correctly, and **let the site coordinator know that day.**
- 8.) The Adult Education Department will update attendance sheets every week and new attendance sheets will be printed to reflect the current class enrollment.
- 9.) Students are required to attend the class in which they have been enrolled only and are not permitted to attend more than one NICE English class at any time.
- 10.) If a student has a problem with the above policies for any reason, they are to contact the Adult Education Department.

---

TESTING  
POLICY

---

This Testing Policy has been created in an effort to enable the Education Department to accurately maintain records of student progress for the purposes of reporting to funders and providing effective educational services to our clients. It is essential that students be tested quarterly in order to gather the data that our donors require, to ensure the quality of our instruction, and to move students up to a higher level when they show the appropriate amount of growth.

- 1.) All students and classes are tested quarterly with the CASAS line of exams.
- 2.) Students who have registered immediately prior to the beginning of testing will not be required to re-test during quarterly testing.
- 3.) Teachers are expected to proctor exams for their classes, with support from the site coordinator. Teachers will be provided with instructions on how to proctor the exam, and the site coordinator will be available to clarify and assist as needed.
- 4.) Teachers should consult the site coordinator with any questions, such as if there is a student in class who do not have a prepared test.
- 5.) Once testing data has been processed, teachers will be consulted in regards to the students from their class who are eligible to move up to the next level. Teacher feedback is an essential part of the process, and teachers are expected to provide feedback in a prompt manner.
- 6.) Students are moved up based on testing, teacher feedback, prior education history, and other assessments such as unit tests.
- 7.) Student will inquire about their tests results. Please counsel students *prior to the administration of the test* that testing is one way in which we check to make sure that they are in the correct class. When they show notable growth on their tests, we will come speak to them. Assure students that answering questions incorrectly on the test does not mean they performed poorly (explanation follows). Due to the great number of students we have, it is *not possible* to return tests to all students or counsel all students on their scores.

If a student misses few to no questions on their test, then their current class may be too easy. A score in the middle range indicates that a student's current class is an appropriate placement for their skill level. If a student misses most of the questions, then their current class may be too challenging.

When a student has exhibited growth through test scores that crosses the score threshold for movement from one level to another, a site coordinator will speak to them. Otherwise, their test result indicates that their current class is the perfect place for them!

If students continue to inquire about their scores, or seem especially anxious about their scores, please refer them to the site coordinator for further explanation.

- 8.) Specific test questions and answers should not be discussed with students, because of the standardized nature of the test. Test outcomes can be affected by students having increased familiarity with the test prior to taking it. Assure students that our curriculum is designed to cover the material on the test.

## Refugees and Immigrants



A group of Bhutanese women and children.

**I**n your classroom, you will find students from all over the world. The reasons why and process through which people come to the United States vary greatly.

Because schools are educational institutes defined by culture, there are aspects of your students' behavior in the classroom that will reflect their previous (and, at times, very different) home environments, educational backgrounds, or attitudes toward schooling. These behaviors may differ from the classroom conduct we are accustomed to in the United States. As an instructor, you can navigate these differences in culture and identity in a way that positively serves both you and your students. We can create welcoming and understanding classroom environments that are conducive to empowering our students through education.



## Refugees and Asylees

*In order for teachers to make the greatest possible impact on their students and have a highly rewarding volunteer experience, they must invest in getting to know their students. This means getting to know your students individually, but also becoming familiar with the cultures, ethnicities, and nationalities of students. Refugees and immigrants, like all people, bring their own cultural customs and identities with them to the United States. They also bring a past that is often characterized by hardship, violent conflict, and economic strife. Students leave their home countries to escape these difficulties and come to the United States through a number of pathways.*

The term “refugee” is a word with a very specific internationally recognized definition. The legal concept of a “refugee” was first laid out post-World War II in the 1951 Geneva Convention. The 1951 convention defines a refugee as a person who **"owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country."** This definition is still used as the internationally recognized standard of who is and is not a refugee, as determined by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

To summarize; a refugee is a person who flees his or her home country due to a well-founded fear of persecution. After fleeing his or her country, there are three possible “durable solutions,” or final destinations for refugees.

1. **VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION** – Refugees are able to return to their home country because their lives and liberty are no longer threatened.
2. **LOCAL INTEGRATION** – Host country governments allow refugees to integrate into the country of first asylum (their first place of refuge).
3. **RESETTLEMENT** – If repatriation is unsafe and the asylum country refuses to locally integrate the refugee population, refugees may be resettled to a third country.

While most of the world’s refugees are at least granted temporary asylum in a neighboring country, they are often unable to obtain permanent resident status or legally integrate into the country where they have sought asylum. Refugees are frequently relegated to living in camps where they sleep in tents, huts, or shacks and lack safe and durable infrastructure. Access to basic necessities such as food, water, health services, and education are greatly limited. These conditions naturally lend themselves to the absence of formal institutions such as schools, and as a result, individuals who grow up in camps may receive little to no schooling.

After refugees are identified by the UNHCR, a small percentage is approved by the US Department of Homeland Security (USDHS) to proceed with the resettlement process. Individuals seeking refugee status apply to resettle to the United States through a referral from the UNHCR, the US Embassy, or a family member of theirs already residing in the United States. If the application is

**What is the difference between refugees and asylum seekers?**

A refugee receives legal refugee status *before* arriving in the country of resettlement. An asylum seeker applies for the right to be recognized as a refugee *after* arriving in the country where they seek sanctuary. An asylum seeker has applied for protection and is awaiting a determination on his or her status as a refugee. An asylum seeker may be forced to return to their home country if not granted refugee status.

approved by USDHS, the individual(s) seeking refugee status will have an interview in their home country with a representative of the US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) to determine if admittance to the US Refugee Program will be granted. If admittance is granted, their case will then be reallocated to a refugee resettlement agency, such as NICE. A case worker from the refugee resettlement agency will meet the new arrival upon landing in the United States, and provide case management. Case workers assist with providing newly resettled refugee with social services such as housing, employment, and English language classes. Similar systems are in place in other countries that resettle refugees such as Australia, Canada, many countries in Europe, and others.

ASYLUM SEEKERS

People who are facing persecution in their home countries may also flee to another country to seek sanctuary and then apply for asylum – their right to be recognized as a refugee and receive legal protection and material assistance. An asylum seeker (as with a refugee) must be able to prove that his or her fear of persecution in his or her home country is legitimate. A series of legal procedures is then undertaken by the government of the country of refuge to evaluate the claim of the individual and grant or deny asylum. While international law permits individuals to seek asylum, every sovereign nation has to right to admit or deny asylum seekers as legal residents.

Other Immigrants

**Economic migration** is driven by push and pull factors. *Push factors* include poor infrastructure, inadequate job offerings, meager educational opportunities, poor health care, and natural disasters. These factors drive people out of their homes. Individuals are also drawn to new places by *pull factors* such as a better standard of living, quality health care, employment options, higher wages, and opportunities for education.

There are many other ways through which individuals come to live in the United States. The four main pathways through people obtain lawful permanent residency in the United States are through a close family member who is a U.S. citizen or lawful permanent resident, an employer or special skill, a special lottery of extra visas (known as diversity visas), and a special category for various groups of protected people (such as refugees, victims of crime, etc.).

People may also enter the United States through means outside of the legal parameters of the State Department. These individuals are often economic migrants – people who leave their country voluntarily to seek a better life and improve their standard of living. Though economic migrants leave their home countries voluntarily, this should not suggest that the situations from which they have fled are not dire. It is important to note that not all economic migrants are “illegal” or “undocumented.” The use of such terms is considered pejorative and reflects a lack of understanding of the global structures of power that necessitate migration in hopes of a sustainable future.

**REFER TO THE FOLLOWING PAGES FOR DIAGRAMS THAT PROVIDE MORE INFORMATION ABOUT MIGRATION PROCESSES.**

## REFUGEE FLEES

Due to a well-founded fear of persecution, a refugee flees his or her country of origin.

## REPATRIATION

Refugee is sent back to his or her home country.

## NATIONALIZATION

Refugee stays in the country to which they fled.

## THIRD COUNTRY FOR ASYLUM OR RESETTLEMENT

Refugee is sent to a third country to be resettled. Less than 1% of refugees are given this option.

## US DEPARTMENT OF STATE MIGRATION PROCESSING

Refugee is interviewed by US State Department/Immigration & Nationalization Services officials to determine if he or she is eligible for resettlement.

## ALLOCATED TO VOLAG

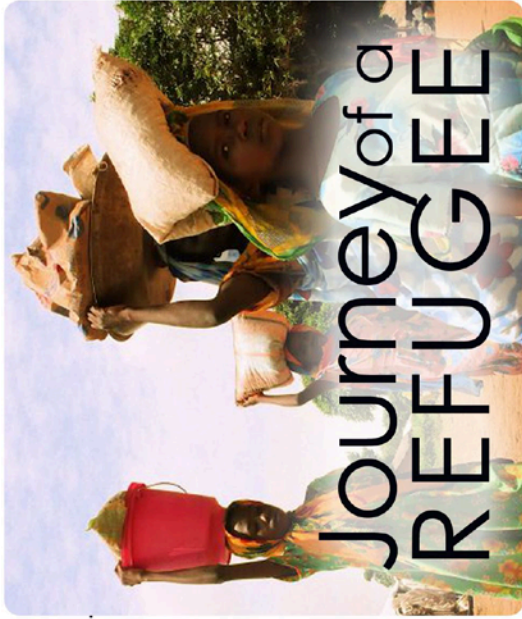
Refugee is assigned to one of the 10 voluntary agencies (VOLAGs) for resettlement.

## ALLOCATED TO RESETTLEMENT SITE

Refugee is assigned to a specific agency in a chosen US city.

## REFUGEE NOTIFIED OF U.S. RESETTLEMENT SITE

Refugee prepares to enter last stage of processing before arrival in US: medical examination, processing, other clearance checks. If there are medical complications, they are put on medical hold.



## PROCESSING COMPLETE

Flight Booked. Resettlement agency notified of the date of arrival, usually 1-2 weeks in advance.

## RESETTLEMENT AGENCY PREPARES FOR ARRIVAL

Caseworker and volunteers assigned to the case; arrangements made for housing, furniture, and food.

## REFUGEE ARRIVES IN U.S. RESETTLEMENT CITY

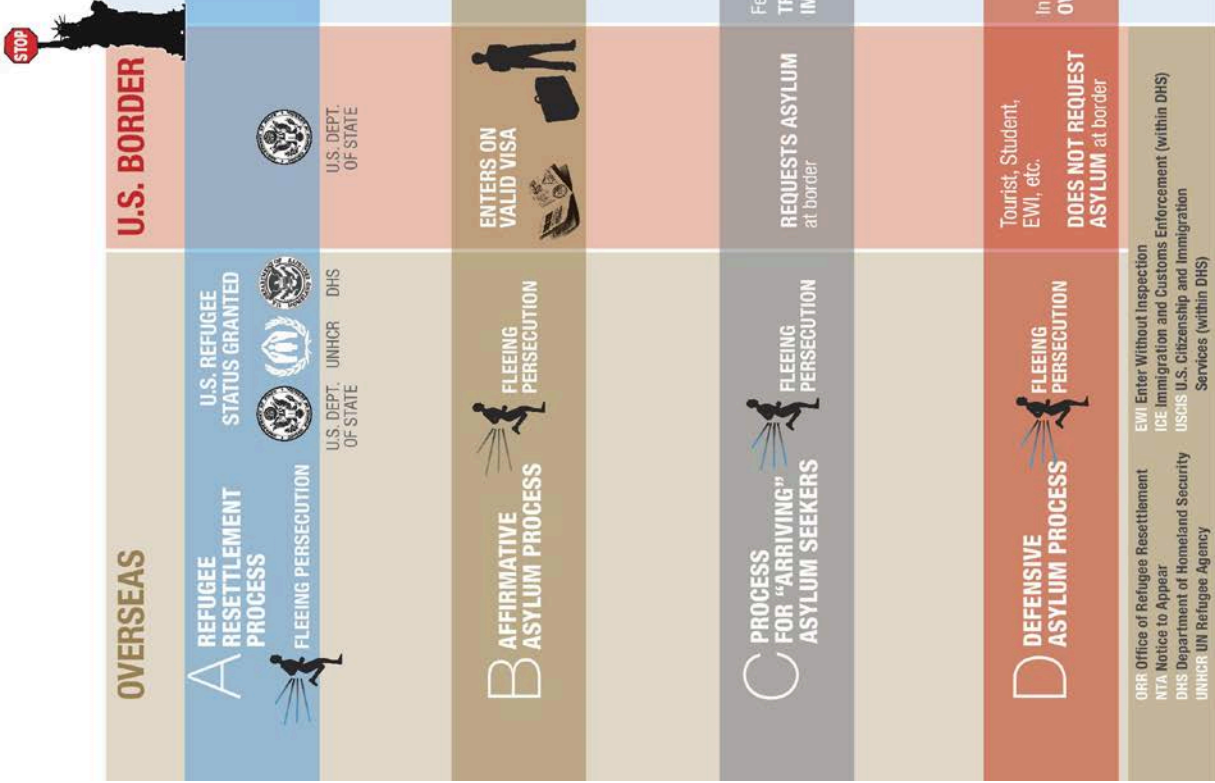
Caseworkers and/or sponsor family meet the refugee or family at the airport and take them to their new home.

# UNITED STATES REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT PROCESS

## SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA



# How Refugees Get to the U.S.



Designed by Ryan Dansmaier and Human Rights First. Based on an original design by Will Coley and Jesuit Refugee Service / USA (February 2010).

## Adult Education Abbreviations

**ABE** Adult basic education (HSE and HSE preparation)

**CASAS** Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems

**ELL** English language learners

**ESL** English as a second language

**HSE** High school equivalency (previously referred to as GED)

**MNPS** Metro Nashville Public Schools

**Ss** Student/Students

**TEFL** Teaching English as a foreign language

**TESL** Teaching English as a second language

**TESOL** Teaching English to speakers of other languages