



Welcome the stranger.
Protect the refugee.

HIAS Direct Service Volunteer Training

HIAS Legal & Asylum
Volunteer Program Team

Agenda

- The HIAS volunteer experience and the role of the volunteer
- COVID-19 and volunteering at HIAS
- Legal Background
- Volunteer Best Practices Discussion
- Scenarios
- Next Steps: Meeting your HIAS partner
- HIAS' Volunteer Resources
- Q&A

Important Aspects of the HIAS Silver Spring Volunteer Program

- **Training:** HIAS provides all volunteers with an initial overview training, as well as monthly training opportunities, resource lists and updates.
- **Supervision:** The volunteer program is managed by a full-time Volunteer Coordinator and an Immigrant Advocate. They are your primary HIAS contact for consultation, assistance and support.
- **Program Support:** Monthly trainings, book and film club, newsletter, team support, workshops, and other events!
- **Continuous Improvement:** Our Volunteer Program is still new and has undergone a recent transition. We welcome your ideas and input!

What is your role as a volunteer?

- Provide a safe, open and welcoming connection with your HIAS partner
- Provide information, resources, and support
- Set goals for your work with your partner, i.e. career goals, English, education, or cultural integration
- Communicate regularly with Volunteer Program staff
- Empower client to build self-sufficiency
- Maintain confidentiality
- Practice self-care and support healthy relationship-building

Volunteer Program Role

The Volunteer Program is part of the Social Services unit and is staffed by a full-time Volunteer Coordinator and an Immigrant Advocate

- Screen clients for the Volunteer Program
- Review Volunteer Program expectations with clients
- Provide additional resources for social, health, and mental health as needed
- Work with volunteers to best support clients
- Provide ongoing support to client-volunteer pairs
- Maintain confidentiality

Case Management Role

Volunteer Program clients may work with our case manager or Asylee Outreach Program (AOP), which provide the following services:

- Create and recommend case strategy
- Identify resources and assist with referrals
- Respond to needs or questions that exceed the capacity of the Volunteer Program
- Maintain confidentiality

Attorney Role

Volunteer Program clients work with our HIAS and Pro Bono attorneys who provide the following services:

- Create legal plan with client at case inception
- Recommend case strategy
- Keep client informed as case progresses
- Prepare all forms, evidence, and legal briefs for filing, or assist client in preparing and filing forms
- Represent client at hearing/interview, or prepare client for interview
- Maintain confidentiality

Safety Protocols for Volunteering During Covid-19

- Many meetings and activities can be scheduled virtually
- In-person support should be offered only when requested and initiated by the client
- **You must follow HIAS Covid-19 guidelines when attending any in-person meetings, events, or activities.**
- Many of our clients remain especially vulnerable to the health and economic effects of Covid-19. Please be sensitive to your partner's needs and preferences regarding Covid-19 safety measures.



HIAS Volunteer Program: COVID-19 policy

All volunteers offering in-person support:

- Must be fully vaccinated according to CDC guidelines
- Must wear a mask and follow social distancing guidelines when possible
- Must not engage in any in-person activities while experiencing symptoms of Covid-19
- Must report any Covid-19 exposure that occurs during a HIAS volunteer activity to the Volunteer Program staff

Virtual Volunteer Toolbox

Since the onset of COVID-19, volunteers and HIAS clients have used the following online tools to communicate:

- Zoom 
- WhatsApp – make an account tonight! 
- BETTER IMPACT – sign up for HIAS events, log hours



Legal Background: HIAS Clients and the Asylum Process

HIAS provides legal services to more than 1200 forcibly displaced persons in the Greater Washington DC & NYC metro areas, the majority of whom are asylum seekers. Our nationwide HIAS affiliates assist refugees with resettlement services.

Refugees

- Lawful refugee status determined BEFORE ARRIVAL to U.S.
- Resettled with U.S. gov't funds by way of HIAS affiliates and other resettlement agencies
- Access to public benefits

Asylum-Seekers

- Humanitarian status determined AFTER ARRIVAL
- No resettlement services provided
- Legal process may be adversarial
- Low grant rates
- No access to most public benefits and assistance (certain local exceptions)

Other Forms of Humanitarian Relief

(SIJS, Humanitarian Parole, VAWA, U-visa or T-visa)

Most HIAS clients are defensive asylum seekers.

Affirmative Process:

- Lawful entry, apply at USCIS/Asylum Office
- Unlawful entry, but no apprehension, apply at USCIS/Asylum Office

Defensive Process: *Most HIAS Silver Spring Clients*

- Apprehended at entry, expedited removal, credible fear interview
- Apprehended within the U.S. without current documents;
or
- Referred to the removal system after USCIS/Asylum Office fails to grant asylum

Possible outcomes of an asylum application:

- **Relief Granted**
 - Client granted approval to stay in the U.S. permanently; may apply for a green card and U.S. citizenship
 - Client remains vulnerable to deportation at ANY time until gaining US citizenship
- **Affirmative Case Referred**
 - Affirmative case not granted by USCIS/Asylum Office; may be referred for a hearing before an immigration judge and placed in deportation proceedings
- **Relief Denied**
 - Status reverts back to status prior to applying for relief
 - For those who are in removal proceedings, deportation will be enforced by ICE

Volunteer Roles: What Does Direct Service Look Like?

Accompaniment, Direct Service, & Indirect Service

Our direct service program is designed to allow flexibility for different kinds of direct services. These roles are fluid once you've been onboarded as a direct service volunteer! You can change, add, or drop roles as you desire.

Accompaniment

- In-person direct service to a client for an appointment or hearing
- May be one-off, recurring, or one element of a mentorship/ELP*
- May or may not involve interpreting for the client

Direct Service

- Working with a client in one-on-one meetings, either long-term (mentorship or ELP*), short-term (special project) , or one-off (special project)

Indirect Service

- Working with the Social Services team to create, edit, or improve resources for clients
- Varying in time commitment and experience

*Mentorship/ELP are long-term direct service roles with a 2 hour/week commitment

The Volunteer – Client Relationship

Best Practices for Successful Volunteer-Client Relationships

The following practices will assist you in shaping the best possible experience for you and your client.

1. Encourage Self-Sufficiency
2. Set Realistic Goals
3. Be Mindful of Privilege and Vulnerability
4. Understand the Impact of Trauma
5. Find Balance Between Cultural Environments
6. Maintain Confidentiality

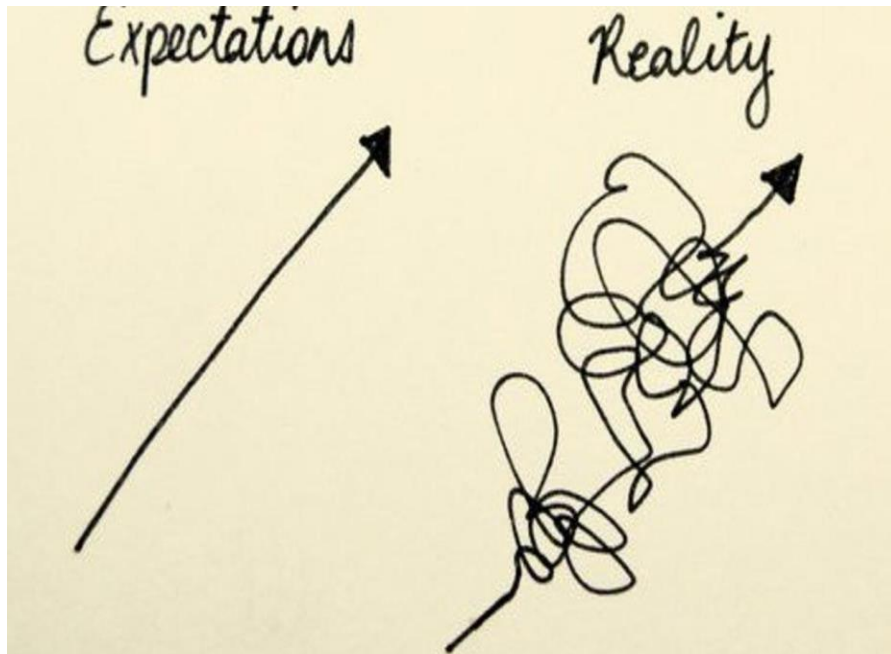


*These best practices are applicable for all direct service volunteers – social services volunteers included! You'll be working with sensitive client information, and at times clients as well.

Encourage Self-Sufficiency

- Learn about your partner's strengths and create tangible and realistic goals that build on these strengths
- Look for tools and resources that can help your partner increase their social and financial independence
- Engage in all tasks and activities in collaboration with your partner
- Allow for self-determination in decision-making
- Offer support, information, encouragement and resources; ***HIAS volunteers should never offer advice or recommendations***
- ***Do not purchase anything for your client partner***

Set Realistic Goals



- Understand and explain your role
- Assist your partner in framing and/or prioritizing their short and long-term goals.
- Identify areas of growth, achievement and progress that may not be visible to your partner
- Engage in creative problem-solving and be flexible in identifying steps toward reaching goals
- Practice patience, empathy and understanding toward your partner and toward yourself!

Be Mindful of Privilege and Vulnerability

- Consider your association as a HIAS volunteer and the impact on your relationship with your HIAS partner
- Consider the impact of racial, linguistic, educational, socioeconomic, and other factors that may impact your partner's perspectives about your role and capacity for social leverage
- Center activities around identified goals and your partner's needs and requests
- Follow your partner's lead
- Trust your instincts
- Reach out to your Volunteer Program liaison with any questions or concerns

Understand the Impact of Trauma

- Many HIAS clients have experienced trauma associated with threats, violence and persecution in their home countries
- Forced migration constitutes an added layer of trauma and loss
- Trauma affects an individual's physical, emotional, cognitive and spiritual well-being and outlook
- ***Behaviors associated with trauma may include:***
 - Excessive fear and worry
 - Avoidance and withdrawal
 - Sadness and hopelessness
 - Physical symptoms and impaired immunity
- ***Helpful responses to trauma:***
 - Be consistent and predictable
 - Listen and offer non-judgmental support
 - Follow your partner's pacing
 - Create a calm space
 - Practice self-care
- **Contact your Volunteer Program liaison with any concerns about your partner's well-being.**

Find Balance Between Cultural Environments

- HIAS clients come from a variety of cultures, traditions, legal systems, family structures, and living conditions that may be very different from those in their new environment in the U.S.
- Ask your partner about their culture and traditions and share information about US cultural, religious, language and social traditions
- Embracing new traditions while maintaining meaningful connections to ethnic and cultural heritage is part of the journey toward healing and integration

Maintaining Confidentiality

- As a HIAS volunteer, you are required to keep confidential all information provided by or about your HIAS partner. You are not permitted to share information about your partner or their story with friends, family, other HIAS volunteers, or on social media
- Confidentiality must be maintained while you are serving as a HIAS volunteer and at all other times, even when are no longer working with your HIAS partner
- HIAS attorneys have strict confidentiality privileges and requirements that impact their clients' legal cases and protection. No information may be shared without the client's **written, informed consent**.
- Ask your HIAS Volunteer Program liaison if you have questions or concerns about confidentiality or about your partner's legal case. **Please refrain from asking your partner about their legal case or contacting your partner's attorney, unless directed to do so by the Volunteer Program staff.**

Build Healthy Relationships

- Determine and clearly explain your role, availability, preferred method of contact, and anticipated response time
- Explore other resources for guidance and support
- Identify neutral meeting grounds and activities
- Engage in mutual problem-solving
- Reach out to the Volunteer Program team for resources and support

Practice Self-Care

- Be aware of signs of stress and trauma
 - Sadness, anxiety, anger, frustration, crying, hopelessness
 - Feeling overwhelmed, unworthy, or resentful
- Set aside time for yourself
- Identify tools for self-soothing, relaxation, and replenishment
 - Nature
 - Exercise, yoga, meditation
 - Journaling
 - Art, music, crafts, baking
- Identify sources of support
- Be gentle with yourself
- Take a step back if necessary

After Hours/Communicating in an Emergency

- If you become concerned about your HIAS partner's safety outside of HIAS business hours, you may refer your partner to the following resources. You may also contact one or more of these resources for guidance if you are unable to reach HIAS staff. ***Please note that all HIAS clients will be provided with these resources prior to being matched with a volunteer.***
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 988
- Maryland Crisis Hotline: 1-800-422-0009
- DC Access Helpline: 1-888-793-4357 (7WE-HELP)
- Virginia Mental Health Hotline: 1-866-903-3787

NEXT STEPS

How/when will I be matched with a client or be involved in social services?

- Volunteer Program staff will:
 - Meet with the client to determine their goals for working with a volunteer.
 - Identify a volunteer with the skills and experience to best serve the needs of client
 - Review the project with the identified volunteer
- Once you are matched with a HIAS partner, we will ask that you complete a background check and sign our Volunteer Commitment form
- Social service volunteers will be contacted by our team as we embark on projects. Feel free to get in touch if you have an idea or specific interest!
- Timelines vary and are unpredictable. Be sure to engage in our other volunteer opportunities while you are waiting to be matched with a partner!

When will I be given translation/interpretation assignments?

- HIAS staff send translation and interpretation requests to the Volunteer Coordinator
- Requests are sent via email to all identified translators/interpreters of the requested language.
- Assignments are made in the order of responses received from interpreters/translators.
- Be sure to check your email!

What will my first meeting with my HIAS partner be like?

- Program staff will create a WhatsApp group with volunteer and HIAS client to schedule first meeting
- Meeting will be facilitated by program staff over Zoom or WhatsApp video for approximately 1 hour
- During the meeting, we will:
 - Allow time to introduce yourself and meet your partner
 - Discuss your partner's goals and expectations
 - Help develop a plan for your work together
 - Schedule your next one or two meetings

How will future meetings work?

- After your first two or three meetings, you will schedule meetings and activities directly with your partner, using HIAS Best Practices as a guide.
- Mentors and English language partners should expect to meet with their partners regularly on a weekly basis, and may choose to schedule a recurring day and time
- Volunteer roles may require several hours over a short period of time, or a longer commitment of up to 2 or 3 hours per week
- Remember to log your direct and indirect volunteer hours!

More about Logging Hours

- Log into MyImpact
- One of the tabs at the top should say "Hours"
- From the drop down menu, select your role and log your hours
- Include meeting hours and any time you spend preparing for your meeting
- For accompaniment specifically, you will be able to select from the drop down menu
- Please log your hours! They're an important tool for us in recording and improving the program

Other ways to get involved:

Volunteer

- Pro bono legal volunteers
- Volunteer with HIAS at the border
- Letter Writing program

Advocate

- Take a look at our actions and advocate for a better asylum system at hias.org/take-action

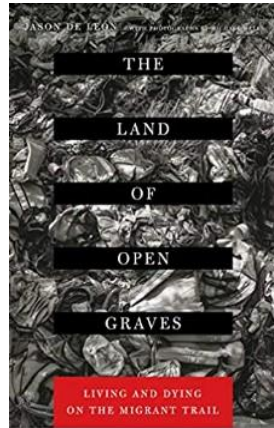
Learn

- HIAS Film & Book club
- More opportunities on the HIAS Website

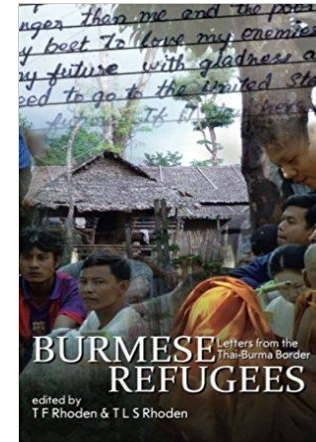
Recommended Readings + Movies



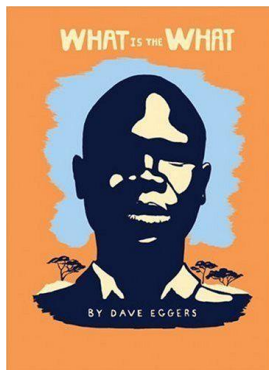
The Best We Could Do, Thi Bui



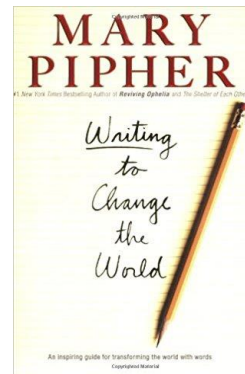
The Land of Open Graves, Jason De León



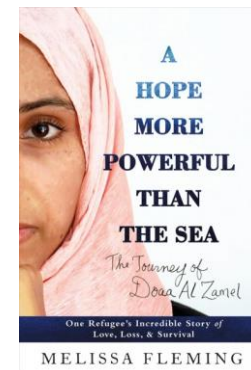
Letters from the Thai-Burma Border



What is the What, Dave Eggers



Writing to Change the World, Mary Pipher



A Hope More Powerful Than The Sea, Melissa Fleming