# Table of Contents

New American Pathways Vision ......................................................................................................................... 3  
Welcome ............................................................................................................................................................. 3  
Introduction to the English at Home Program .................................................................................................. 4  
English at Home Goals for the Client and for the Volunteer .......................................................................... 6  
The Matching Process ....................................................................................................................................... 6  
Expectations of a Volunteer ............................................................................................................................... 8  
Teaching ESL ...................................................................................................................................................... 9  
Frequently Asked Questions ............................................................................................................................. 10  
Resources on Refugees: ..................................................................................................................................... 12
New American Pathways Vision:

“...to promote safety, stability, success, and service for individual refugees and refugee families in Georgia. We offer five distinct program areas that focus on jobs, education, cultural integration, individual and female empowerment, and building strong families. All of these programs are enhanced through the service of a 15-member AmeriCorps team and dozens of volunteers.

“Our unique continuum of services results in better outcomes for refugees of all ages and at all stages of self-sufficiency, and ensures that these new Americans develop and contribute their special skills and talents to strengthening the American workforce and helping Georgia thrive.”

(https://newamericanpathways.org/what-we-do/pathways-success/)

Welcome

Welcome to the English at Home Program! We are delighted that you are interested in volunteering with us. Because of English at Home volunteers, New American Pathways is able to provide needed educational and relational support to our clients. Thank you for your interest and for investing your time, energy, and talents. The English at Home team is here to support you! Let us know how we can help you in your time volunteering with us!

Sincerely,
the English at Home team
Introduction to the English at Home Program

New American Pathways is new in name. However, the staff of New American Pathways has been serving the refugee population of Georgia in the Metro Atlanta area for some time. New American Pathways is the result of a merger that took place between Refugee Family Services (RFS) (circa 2005) and Refugee Resettlement and Immigration Services of Atlanta (RRISA). This merger was finalized on October 2, 2014, but each agency served refugee clients before the merger, during the merger and now as one organization, providing many years of support to our clients.

As a result of this union, two different literacy programs were combined in order to formulate one unique and effective literacy program. The English at Home Program specifically addresses the needs of refugee clients who are unable to attend traditional English as a Second Language (ESL) classes. Many of these clients are mothers of young children who either do not have access to childcare to enable them to attend classes outside of the home, or who are culturally expected and obligated to remain in the home. Others include the elderly, those with physical infirmities, and those whose job schedules are incompatible with available classes. The English at Home Program is able to serve these clients because of the volunteers who dedicate their time and teaching skills and who desire to aid our clients in attaining self-sufficiency.
The English at Home Program offers a variety of different options for volunteering:

- **One-to-One Tutoring:** A volunteer is matched with a refugee individual to work with that individual in learning and practicing English in real-world contexts.

- **Family-to-Family Tutoring:** A volunteer family (spouses, children) is matched to a refugee family (spouses, children). Adults typically work with each other for language learning and activities, while children play together and/or older children provide homework help and tutoring for school-aged children.

- **Group Tutoring:** A volunteer/two volunteers are matched with a small group of refugee language learners; typically a group who all live in the same neighborhood or who have some prior connection.

- **Citizenship Exam Preparation:** A volunteer helps a client prepare for an upcoming citizenship exam. This option is not always available, but is dependent on the current needs of clients.
English at Home Goals for the Client and the Volunteer

The overall goal of the English at Home Program for our clients is to assist them in their journey to competent and self-sufficient communication in the English language in their new American context. In addition, each individual client may have goals of his or her own, such as studying for the driver’s license exam, the GED, or the citizenship exam; learning how to read his or her child’s report card and how to talk with his or her child’s teacher; practicing business English and better pronunciation in order to get a better job and advance in his or her career goals; and many more.

The program is a minimum of 2 hours of tutoring a week for 3 consecutive months, or 24 total hours of tutoring, so we certainly do not expect a client to achieve fluency in such a short time, nor is the scope of the program limited only to English language study. We recognize and value the benefit of the friendships formed between our clients and their volunteer tutors, knowing that such connections provide significant personal, emotional, mental, and educational encouragement and support to our clients, and enrich the lives of our volunteers, as well.

Our goal for our volunteers is to provide them the opportunity to use their time and talents to assist our clients in English language acquisition and to provide meaningful and enlightening connections to the refugee population in Georgia, enabling volunteers to better understand who refugees are and what life is like for them here in America. The service our volunteers provide to individual refugees and families is also a service to the overall community by increasing educational opportunities for those who typically have limited access to such services. We also hope that our volunteers will be inspired to continue serving throughout the community and, hopefully, with New American Pathways.

The Matching Process

When a volunteer completes the English at Home orientation (after completing the necessary paperwork and New American Pathways Volunteer Orientation), he or she is ready to be matched with a client. The English at Home AmeriCorps Member will send the volunteer a list of available clients (no names or personal information are provided, only basic information, estimated English ability, general location, and availability), and the volunteer will respond with his or her top three choices. Then the English at Home team will contact the client to set up the first meeting and assessment with the client, the volunteer, and the English at Home AmeriCorps Member in the client’s home.

While we try to make the matching process as quick and efficient as possible, it can take some time due to several factors beyond our control:

- Volunteers with very strict preferences and/or very limited availability
- Difficulty in connecting with a client to confirm the first appointment
- Finding a time for the first meeting that works for three different individual schedules – the client’s, the volunteer’s, and the AmeriCorps Member’s
NOTE: The English at Home AmeriCorps Members are available for initial meetings on **Weekdays Only**. After the initial meeting, the tutor and client are free to meet on days most convenient for their own schedules.

The English at Home team will stay in communication with you throughout this process to keep you informed of progress. We can also provide additional reading materials and resources so that you can use this time to prepare for tutoring.

The first meeting of a client and a volunteer is also when an English assessment test is administered to the client in order to identify the client’s level of English. The English at Home AmeriCorps Member will administer the Tacoma Test and the Reading A-Z test, which can take anywhere from 20 minutes to over an hour, depending on the client’s level. During testing time, we encourage the volunteer take notes concerning the client’s performance, so that you can have a better awareness of your client’s abilities and communication preferences. After 24 total hours of tutoring, the test will be administered again to assess the client’s progress. At that point, the volunteer’s commitment has technically concluded, and the volunteer is free to exit the program. The client can choose to be re-matched with another volunteer to continue studying, or to also exit the program. If the client and volunteer wish to continue studying together, the English at Home team will continue to provide materials and support, and the test will be administered again at the conclusion of the tutoring period.

After the assessment, the English at Home AmeriCorps Member will inform the client and volunteer of the client’s score and level, and provide a curriculum appropriate to that level to the volunteer. The curriculums provide lessons and activities for a minimum of three months of lessons, but also extra materials for continued study. The volunteer is not required to strictly follow the curriculum, but can adapt it to his/her plans and needs, or use a different curriculum as preferred.

Matches are ‘potential’ and based on the information provided by the client, the volunteer, and the in-home visit. The volunteer has the right to decide whether or not the client is a good fit for them. If the volunteer does not desire to proceed with the match, then it is the volunteer’s responsibility to inform the English at Home AmeriCorps Member. The AmeriCorps Member will then find an alternative situation for both the volunteer and the client. If the volunteer is comfortable with the match and wishes to proceed with tutoring the client, the AmeriCorps Member will assist the volunteer and client in arranging a first lesson and a weekly meeting schedule.

If the volunteer decides that s/he needs additional help with lesson planning and conducting tutoring sessions, then the volunteer may contact the English at Home team with questions. We will also host workshops and pass along information about workshops in the area to provide further information and training on teaching ESL.
Expectations of Our Volunteers

As a volunteer with New American Pathways, you are required to maintain communication with the English at Home team by email or phone. The English at Home team will send out regular communication regarding available resources, materials, and updates to the program. You are always welcome to contact us with questions, concerns, ideas, and requests. Unless otherwise specified, the English at Home team is available on weekdays during regular office hours. Please note that we are typically not available during the weekend unless we have specifically arranged to meet with you.

**All volunteers are required to submit a monthly progress report and a monthly volunteer log.** Both documents were given to you during orientation, and the English at Home team will send them out to you with reminders on a monthly basis. The progress report should be completed with information about your tutoring sessions – what was covered, the client’s progress, any concerns or needed materials – as well as recording the time you spend planning and preparing for lessons (estimated to be about 1-2 hours each week in addition to tutoring). The English at Home team reads each progress report and responds to all queries for assistance or feedback.

The volunteer logs should be completed with the number of hours and the mileage of your time volunteering each month. **Please be sure to take time to complete these documents and to turn them in.** You should accumulate an estimated 8 hours per month with a total of 24 hours after 3 months.

Volunteer logs and progress reports are crucial to the continuance of the English at Home Program. They provide New American Pathways’ sponsors with proof that the English at Home Program is a worthwhile endeavor and is being supported by dedicated volunteers. Therefore, it is critical that volunteer logs and progress reports are completed and returned in a timely manner.

Additionally, please be aware that this is a significant commitment. You are expected to tutor your student for 3 months, and you must meet your student at least once a week for at least 2 hours. Additionally, although we provide as many materials to you as we can, you will still need to spend time planning and preparing for lessons each week. Since this is a one-to-one tutoring program, we provide you with a general curriculum that you can then tailor to your student’s specific needs and goals. Making those adaptations does take time (we estimate about an hour a week for lesson planning). We ask you to record those planning hours on your timesheet.

As a volunteer in the English at Home program, you play a very meaningful role in the life of your student. If your student is newly arrived to the U.S., you might be his or her first friend. You are also your student’s teacher, which in many cultures carries a great deal of respect and admiration. You are there to assist your student with his/her language goals, to help your student learn and experience the culture of his/her new home, and to build a friendship with your student.
You are NOT your student’s case worker or chauffer. What we mean by that is there may be times when your student asks you to resolve a problem which is beyond your responsibility or jurisdiction, such as figuring out bills and calling with inquiries, attending parent-teacher conferences, handling issues with housing or landlords, taking the student on errands or to appointments, etc. You are neither required nor expected to fulfill those requests. You can simply tell your student that you are just an English teacher and you cannot assist with such things. We do not want you to feel obligated or pressured to take on more elements of your student’s daily life than you are comfortable with, and there are some situations where you just aren’t qualified to help, because you are not a social worker or case worker or an employee of an aid agency, and attempting to help might actually hinder the process. If the need is not specialized and you would like to help, that is your choice and we appreciate it on our client’s behalf, but you are never obligated to do so. If such situations arise and you feel uncomfortable or unsure of how to handle them, please contact us and let us know so that we can help.

It’s also good to know that not every client served through the English at Home Program was resettled by New American Pathways. Clients are referred to our programs in a number of ways, not just internally. As much as possible we always try to find out who the client’s resettlement agency is and to guide the client back to their agency with those specific questions and requests.

General guidelines to follow include:

- Prepare your lessons and any needed materials ahead of time. Practice if this helps you feel more comfortable or prepared.
- Call or text before you arrive to remind the client that you are coming and to verify that the client is at home.
- Be on time, be responsible, and behave in an appropriate manner.
- Be respectful and sensitive to cultural differences.
- Maintain confidentiality – do not share your client’s address, phone number, or personal information with other people.
- Let the English at Home team know, as soon as possible, if you are unable to complete the full three months for any reason.
- If you ever feel unsafe in a certain area or situation, you should exit the area or situation as quickly and calmly as you can. Notify the English at Home team right away explaining what happened.

**Teaching ESL**

*Please see the separate packet regarding ESL training and instruction.*

In addition to the curriculum you will receive, we also maintain a resource library at the New American Pathways office. You are welcome to schedule a time to come and
borrow books and resources, and to consult with the English at Home team about additional resources, ideas, and activities.

Remember, many clients make huge strides, while some only make baby step advances. Please be patient. 3 months of tutoring may or may not show significant improvements. Many of our tutors ask how they can know if they’re being effective. This is where lesson planning is also helpful – if you look back at your beginning lesson plans and compare them with your current ones, it will help you identify the words and concepts that your student didn’t know/wasn’t comfortable with before but which s/he now can use with confidence. Your progress reports also help with this – look back at what your student was doing a month ago and what they’re doing now, and identify the differences.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Do I work for New American Pathways?
No. You are a volunteer with New American Pathways through the English at Home Program.

2. Can I get reimbursed for traveling to the client’s home?
No. However, you may document your mileage and file it as a deductible on your taxes. Please see a tax accountant for specifics.

3. I don’t know my client’s language. Will this be a problem?
No, we do not expect you to know your client’s language. You can learn to effectively communicate without knowing each other’s languages, a process that can be very rewarding. It’s also fun to try to learn some of your client’s language if you are so inclined.

4. I came for a tutoring session and my client isn’t home. What should I do?
Unfortunately, communication issues do happen from time to time. Try calling the client to find out if s/he will be home soon, and to reschedule if need be. If the absences persist, please notify the English at Home team and we will assist with getting communication and scheduling straightened out.

5. I don’t have a car. Will this be a problem?
No. Many of our volunteers ride MARTA, take bikes, Zip-cars, etc. Most of our clients are on the MARTA line.

6. Can I volunteer for less than three months?
You are expected to complete the 3 month time commitment. During this time you are expected to visit your client at least once a week for at least 2 hours. If you are unable to meet this minimum requirement, please discuss the situation with the English at Home team so that we can help you find a solution.

7. May I volunteer longer than three months?
Absolutely! Many of our clients and volunteers continue tutoring together for longer than 3 months. Stay in communication with the English at Home team and continue sending us your monthly progress reports and volunteer timesheets.
8. I’d like to bring someone with me to the tutoring session. Is this okay? Please inform the English at Home team and the student first. Adults will need a background check prior to going to a client’s home.

9. Why do I need a background check?
Background checks for volunteers are a standard practice at New American Pathways. Client safety is a top priority.

10. My client’s home isn’t clean, the lights are not on, the water is not on, etc. What do I do?
Please notify the English at Home team. More than likely, the caseworker already knows about the situation, but just in case, we’ll try to inform the right person.

11. May I drive my client somewhere? Can we go on field trips?
New American Pathways does not encourage nor condone volunteers using their personal vehicle to interact with clients. NEW AMERICAN PATHWAYS WAIVES ALL LIABILITIES ASSOCIATED WITH YOU (the volunteer) TRANSPORTING THE CLIENT (the refugee(s) or the learner(s) or the client(s) or your student(s) or any other reference to the client of New American Pathways that the volunteer now refers to them (the client) as) IN YOUR PERSONAL VEHICLE. Remember, the goal of the English at Home Program is to promote self-sufficiency through education. Encourage them to take MARTA if there is an outing planned; you can also ride MARTA together as a learning opportunity. Use your discretion if you decide to use your personal vehicle. You will be personally responsible and LIABLE for any accidents, mishaps, or traffic offenses incurred by either you or the client. PLEASE USE YOUR DISCRETION!

12. How will I build a curriculum?
You will receive a curriculum compiled by the English at Home team. During the in-home visit, and as you begin teaching, you’ll find out more about what the client wants to learn, as well as what they need to learn. Some clients may be able to speak English but do not know how to count money. Some clients do not know words for grandmother, niece, etc. Please contact the English at Home team for additional materials and resources.

13. My schedule is really busy. Can I tutor my client around my schedule?
Yes! If you need to change your lesson times then make sure the new time also works for the client. Also, be sure to clearly communicate the change to the client and to the English at Home team. It’s best to keep your weekly meetings as consistently on the same day and time as possible to avoid confusion and missed sessions.

14. Why do I have to turn in the monthly progress report and volunteer timesheet?
Progress Reports: The progress reports are documentation of your student’s progress, detailing the strides or setbacks that your client faced within the 3 month time period. The reports also provide evidence that you are in fact working with your client, and allow New American Pathways to gather data on the success of the program. Additionally, without the progress reports, the English at Home team has no way of verifying whether or not you are still meeting with your client and whether or not you need further support.
Volunteer Logs: The volunteer logs are important because New American Pathways receives grants for funding that require a certain amount of volunteer hours. The logs
you turn in are proof to those funders that we, indeed, do have volunteers who are serving with us. In return, those funders continue to support us financially.

15. How do I need to dress in order to visit my client?
You can dress modestly casual for the first visit. This means wearing comfortable clothing, but be sure it is not offensive to more conservative cultures and religions. We encourage you to wear nice, comfortable, ankle-length jeans, pants, dresses, or skirts without holes, tears, or rips. Also, wear comfortable shoes that you can easily take on and off–some clients require for visitors to remove their shoes. After you build a relationship with your client and based upon their cultural traditions, religious practices, and preferences, then you can conclude on how you should continue to dress for the tutorial sessions. It is STRONGLY ENCOURAGED that you dress modestly even once the relationship has been established.

16. My client’s house smells funny. What should I do?
Some clients’ homes will smell different from what you are used to – they use different spices in cooking, different products in cleaning, etc. If you notice a smell that indicates concern about a sanitation issue, notify the English at Home team.

17. My client’s religion is different from mine. / I don’t agree with my client’s religion. What should I do?
Your client may practice a religion different from yours. One of the wonderful benefits of volunteering with New American Pathways is that you have an opportunity to meet and learn more about people from a wide variety of cultural and religious backgrounds. If you find that you are uncomfortable in this environment, please contact us so we can discuss the situation and provide guidance.

18. May I take photos of/with my client?
You may take photos with your client’s permission; however, please exercise discretion if you share these on social media. New American Pathways does not condone or condemn the sharing of photos by volunteers on social media, but we do ask that you do NOT post the photos with personal information, such as names, locations, age, personal circumstances, etc. You are always welcome (and often requested) to send photos and stories of you and your client to the EaH team for us to share with our supporters and donors.

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns please contact the English at Home team:

Email: k.smith@newamericanpathways.org
Phone: 404-299-6099 extension 269
Resources on Refugees:

If you are interested in learning more about refugees, please see the following websites:

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees: [www.unhcr.org](http://www.unhcr.org)
The U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants: [www.refugees.org](http://www.refugees.org)
New American Network: [www.newamericannetwork.org](http://www.newamericannetwork.org)
New American Pathways: [www.newamericanpathways.org](http://www.newamericanpathways.org)
American Refugee Committee: [www.arcrelief.org](http://www.arcrelief.org)
Women’s Refugee Commission: [www.womensrefugeecommission.org](http://www.womensrefugeecommission.org)
Refugee Council: [www.rcusa.org](http://www.rcusa.org)
Cultural Orientation Resource Center: [www.culturalorientation.net](http://www.culturalorientation.net)