

ANOTHER OPPORTUNITY TO CONNECT WITH NEW MAINERS BY BECOMING A VOLUNTEER HOUSING COACH! The church has provided financial support to a new Community Financial Literacy (CFL) program to help immigrant tenants access rental housing. General Assistance provides rent vouchers for asylum seekers until they can get work authorization and become employed, but these newly arrived immigrants must come up with their own security deposits—often \$1,000 or more, resulting in many being stuck in shelters for 6 months or more. CFL partners with Infinity Federal Credit Union, which will make interest-free security deposit loans. CFL, in turn, will provide volunteer “housing coaches” to help the borrowers successfully navigate the U.S. rental housing system (thus increasing their chances of recovering their security deposits).

Housing coaches make no financial commitment, and the time commitment would be just a few hours per month once the tenant has been settled into his/her new apartment. The housing coach might, for example, help the tenant learn to use unfamiliar kitchen appliances or utilities such as heat, and help with occasional questions or issues between the tenant and landlord. The housing coach would have no role in finding the housing and, unless he/she desires, no role in furnishing or equipping the apartment.

A short training will be provided on January 6 (and regularly thereafter). If you might be interested, please contact Jane Makela at janemakela@earthlink.net.