



Professional Connections for International Newcomer - Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is the Professional Connections for International Newcomer program?

A: Global Cleveland wants to welcome and connect international newcomers, to professionals in Northeast Ohio. The goal of the program is to promote professional and personal growth of international newcomers in the early stages of their career through personalized attention, feedback, and encouragement. As future success often comes through the connections and networks we build, the Professional Connections program will connect international newcomers with experienced volunteer professionals based on shared academic or professional background.

Q: How can I become involved in the Professional Connections for International Newcomer program?

A: You can either apply to serve as a volunteer Professional Connection or apply as a program participant to be matched to volunteer Professional Connection through Global Cleveland's [online form](http://globalcleveland.org/About/ContactUs.aspx) (<http://globalcleveland.org/About/ContactUs.aspx>).

Q: Who can participate in the program?

A: This opportunity is open to international newcomers that want to get connected to a professional who can share first hand experiences and provide insight into careers in your field. International newcomers include immigrants and international students.

Q: Is there a cost to participate in the program?

A: No. Program requirements include completing an [online form](#) and a *Program Agreement Form*.

Q: Who can serve as a volunteer for the program?

A: Established professionals with at least 3 years of working experience in their career are ideal for the program. Qualities we value in volunteers include: strong communication and listening skills, patience, enthusiasm for meeting new people, passion for Cleveland, a willingness to share their professional experiences, and ability to provide constructive guidance and feedback. To volunteer, complete an [online form](#).

Q: What are the benefits for an international newcomer participating in the program?

A: Benefits for participating in the program include:

- Opportunity to share career goals with an experienced professional
- Learn about career paths and get insider view on what it is like to work as a professional in your area of interest
- Better ability to make informed decisions related to academic and career goals
- Grow confidence in language skills and interacting with professionals
- Learn about industry specific standards
- Gain realistic perspective of professional world
- Exposure to diverse perspectives and experiences
- Gain a better understanding of Cleveland's professional environment
- Grow your professional network

Q: What are the benefits of volunteering for the program?

A: Serving as a professional connection to an international newcomer not only benefits the newcomer, but the volunteer as well. Benefits for volunteers include:

- Have a meaningful, positive impact on a person's life
- Share your first hand experiences and provide insight into careers in your field
- Help with academic, professional, social transition for international newcomers
- Provide cross cultural experiences and communication
- Exposure to diverse perspectives and experiences
- Develop new relationships and expand your network
- Give back and demonstrate pride in your community

Q: What is expected from the volunteer Professional Connection?

A: Professional Connection volunteers are expected to share their professional and career experience, as well as provide feedback and encouragement to international newcomers in the early stages of their career. Volunteers are required to first attend a volunteer orientation. The volunteer and program participant are expected to interact with each other at least 3 times (including one in-person meeting) over a period of 3 to 6 months. Meeting times and locations are decided mutually between the program participant and volunteer. Both the volunteer and program participant are expected to complete a *Program Agreement Form* together.

Q: What is expected from the program participant?

A: The volunteer and program participant are expected to interact with each other at least 3 times (including one in-person meeting) over a period of 3 to 6 months. Meeting times and locations are decided mutually between the program participant and volunteer. Both the volunteer and program participant are expected to complete a *Program Agreement Form* together.



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Q: How are international newcomer program participants and volunteer Professional Connections matched?

A: Matches are made based on similar academic or professional backgrounds. Once a mutual match is found, and email introduction is sent to both individuals. This message will include information on next steps and an attached *Program Agreement Form* to complete.

Q: I am part of a local community/professional organization. Is it okay for me to invite the international newcomer program participant to attend a meeting or event with me?

A: Yes. The extent of the relationship that you and the program participant develop is defined by you both. At a minimum, you should have at least one in-person meeting and two additional interactions with each other via phone or email.

Q: Do I need to have international experience to be a Professional Connection volunteer?

A: No, but it is required that volunteers respect the diversity and cultural differences of program participants.