



Final Report of Peer Technical Assistance Activity # 173

Welfare Peer Technical Assistance Network
Improving Engagement in Work Activities and Creating Pathways to Self-Sufficiency for TANF and Immigrant Populations
Baltimore, Maryland
November 3-4, 2009

Prepared for:
The Administration for Children and Families
Office of Family Assistance



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Introduction

The Welfare Peer Technical Assistance Network (Welfare Peer TA) is a technical assistance initiative sponsored by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families (ACF), Office of Family Assistance (OFA) that facilitates the sharing of information between and among States, counties, localities, Tribal organizations, and community-based organizations working with Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) participants and families (see <http://peerta.acf.hhs.gov>).

Background

Between 2000 and 2008, Maryland's foreign-born population has grown by 34.6 percent while its native-born population has increased by 3.3 percent and according to U.S. Census Data and Maryland estimates for 2010, there will be nearly 750,000 foreign-born persons in the State.¹ Many within this diverse group of immigrants lack proficient English speaking skills and are moving out of urban areas into all parts of the State. As a result of this disbursement and the resettling throughout the state, many local Maryland departments of social services are having difficulty in responding to the needs of these individuals, in general, and TANF agencies, in particular, are finding it challenging to identify appropriate work activities for this population.

This growing group continues to face ever-changing challenges to self-sufficiency due to language and cultural barriers and limits on assistance. Nonetheless, the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program provides states with significant leverage to help immigrant and refugee families obtain and maintain employment and to improve self-sufficiency.

In Fall 2009, the Maryland Department of Human Resources (DHR), Family Investment Administration (FIA), submitted a Technical Assistance (TA) Request to Welfare Peer TA to learn how to better serve its refugee and immigrant populations, especially those who are Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) participants with limited/no English proficiency, in meeting core work activities and gaining self-sufficiency.

In addition to the federally funded Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA) program (same as TANF), Maryland has a State funded program for immigrants who meet all TANF requirements except that they are within the five-year bar. Immigrants receiving State funded assistance still have to meet Federal work requirements similar to the federally funded TANF program. Maryland also has two One-Stop refugee resettlement centers (in Baltimore City and Montgomery County) who work with the refugee and asylee population and with the local department vendors for work activities for the first eight months that the refugees are in the United States. Once refugees exceed their eight months they are moved to the local departments of social services for continued services. Immigrants who are not refugees or asylees participate in all work activities at the local departments of social services.

¹ See <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/24000.html>; <http://www.usimmigrationsupport.org/maryland.html> (accessed December 2009).
Improving Engagement in Work Activities and Creating Pathways to Self-Sufficiency for TANF and Immigrant Populations Final Report

On November 3-4, 2009, the Welfare Peer TA network facilitated a roundtable at the Tremont Plaza Hotel in Baltimore, Maryland that included participants from all over the State of Maryland. This diverse group of participants included direct care service providers from municipalities and counties, including Anne Arundel, Frederick, Montgomery, Prince Georges, and St. Mary's Counties, among others. Others involved in the discussion were policy analysts and representatives from the State Department of Human Resources. See *Appendix B: Participants List* for the entire list of attendees.

The two-day event was broken into sessions beginning with a facilitated peer-to-peer dialog. The opening dialogue was followed by presentations from several promising practice programs. At the conclusion of the event, an expert panel discussion, other promising practice presentations, and State action planning were incorporated in order to develop a strategic response to the programmatic challenges that this group represents. See *Appendix A: Agenda* for the structure of the event and sessions.

Day One

Welcome and Opening Remarks

The opening session began with Mr. David Camporeale, Family Assistance Program Specialist, Office of Family Assistance. Mr. Camporeale welcomed everyone to the meeting. He expressed gratitude to the requestors, Ms. Marilyn Lorenzo of the Maryland Department of Human Resources, Family Investment Administration and Ms. Patricia Hatch of the Maryland Office of Refugee and Asylees, and those who helped fulfill the request, including Mr. James "Jim" Perlmutter of the Federal Office of Refugee Resettlement, and Mr. Kevin McGuire of the Maryland Department of Human Resources. Mr. Camporeale also thanked those from the departments who were in attendance.

Mr. Jim Perlmutter extended greetings to roundtable participants and encouraged them to continue to responding to the needs of refugees and immigrants in their efforts to become self-sufficient. He said, "We see the need for many other areas to be changed. First, the definition of job readiness needs to change. The inability to speak English is primary, and English as a Second Language (ESL) should be a work requirement. I understand that you will be having a presentation on the Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Pathway program in Washington State. This model is worthy of replication." Lastly, Mr. Jim Perlmutter wished the group success over the next couple of days through their bold and innovative agenda.

Mr. Kevin McGuire remarked that this is not the first Welfare Peer TA conference the State of Maryland has requested. He recalled that the last Welfare Peer TA event was held several years ago and was focused on the issue of limitations. According to Mr. McGuire, Welfare Peer TA has facilitated planning of programs that have helped Maryland achieve a work participation rate that is the envy of the country. Moreover, the State of Maryland currently has more than a half of a million people receiving benefits from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) [food stamps] and that number has more than doubled in the last five to six years.

Although Maryland has made significant gains across the State in caseload reduction, the need to improve the services available to low-income residents remains high, especially among the most vulnerable.

Although limited English proficiency remains a significant challenge to many Marylanders, even those with limited English proficiency are eligible for services that can help them become self-sufficient and those in attendance should take this opportunity to determine the best way to deliver services to this group.

Mr. McGuire continued on to say that Baltimore and the rest of the U.S. are seeing a change in migration patterns. Maryland has never had a large Hispanic population. Spanish speakers in Maryland come from 20 different countries. Recently, Maryland has seen an increase in other immigrant groups, and today has a sizeable African (West), Caribbean, and Eastern European population (at 18 percent). Maryland has 6.5 million residents, 750,000 of which are foreign-born. Despite the challenges they face, a high number of Maryland immigrants have advanced degrees, which means that potentially unlike the rest of the country, Maryland is not experiencing a “brain drain.” In fact, 43 percent of immigrants have college degrees, compared to 34 percent of those who are native born. The Maryland Office of Refugee and Asylees has targeted services to this growing group and has effectively immersed newcomers in English because one of the biggest challenges to self-sufficiency is limited English proficiency.

Finally, Ms. Patricia Hatch from the Maryland Office of Refugee and Asylees (MORA) wanted to be sure that the Roundtable would focus on issues surrounding the limited English proficiency population in general and not focus solely on the refugee population. MORA has a special partnership that allows it to fund two One-Stop resettlement centers in Baltimore and Montgomery Counties. Refugees are eligible to receive services for eight months; services are discontinued thereafter and the resettlement agency does not provide follow-up services after that period. After the eight months, refugees can turn to the State system for additional services. Ms. Hatch challenged the participants to think about, “What are guidelines to meet and exceed TANF work requirements?”

Review of Peer-to-Peer Dialog

During this session, local Maryland agencies, organizations, and content specialists shared information about the strategies they are using to engage their TANF and immigrant populations and the challenges in ensuring that participants’ needs are met while fulfilling work activity requirements under the Deficit Reduction (DRA) Act of 2005. Promising practices were shared and themes were examined that link the efforts of governmental, non-governmental, and business sectors related to immigrants’ integration into the Maryland economy and local community. As a group, the participants at the roundtable explored new and proven, comprehensive, development-based approaches to managing the challenges of immigrant integration and the benefits to local structures to improve individual outcomes. The discussion focused on two primary areas: 1) current strategies, partnerships, and programs that local agencies are using to engage their TANF/immigrant populations; and 2) challenges facing agencies in engaging TANF/immigrant populations in work activities and work experiences.

Strategies, Partnerships, and Programs that Are Engaging TANF/Immigrant Populations

Developing strategic partnerships and integrated strategies is an important activity given limited resources and the growing challenges faced by the state and by immigrants. Over the last few years, many local stakeholders have established and continue to establish strong, working partnerships that are specifically tailored to the challenges faced by immigrant populations and those who serve them. Some of the participants discussed the strategies, partnerships, and programs that they have utilized in order to engage their immigrant populations. These include partnering with TANF/WIA One-Stop centers, Refugee Centers, and local community colleges and community-based organizations to provide case management, employment services, and work supports. Some counties have a large population of immigrants from one or two primary geographic areas or countries and many TANF offices have hired immigrants from those areas to serve as translators for other immigrants and refugees. One local agency highlighted their creation of a vocation emergent program which partners with a community college and community based organizations to provide case management. This program has a computer lab, and works with employers to find out what qualifications they are looking for and to gain feedback on what they see as some of the needs of immigrant employees.

Another county provides additional support and vocational training by linking employers and community-based organizations together to create work activities and work experience opportunities for immigrants. Baltimore City College offers ESL classes to refugees and asylees using the WorkStyles program to not only teach English skills, but teach workplace skills and cultural differences in the American workplace. Participants receive a certificate at the completion of their program to provide to employers.

Other agency representatives discussed that they contract with vendors to provide services around employment placement, supports, and language interpretation. If a language is not spoken by local agency staff, then agencies contract with private vendors. The importance of partnering with local colleges was discussed as essential to the resettlement center in Silver Spring where the local agency partners with Montgomery College to find work experiences and develop ESL classes. Many of the agencies shared that they have found that immigrants and refugees are very motivated to leave welfare and social assistance and achieve self-sufficiency. The Montgomery County resettlement center offers instructional services including ESL training. Two programs are currently in progress: 1) a 4-hour morning of classroom instruction; and 2) an afternoon portion centered on workplace English language, food service, office and basic computer skills, different work activities, listening and reading work preparation, selling, boutique, inventory handling and money, and team work.

Strategies, Partnerships, and Programs Currently Being Used by Maryland Agencies to Engage TANF/Immigrant Populations

- Focus on English skills
- Provide Certificates at completion of training programs and language classes for students to show employers
- Partner with other state agencies, Refugee Centers, community colleges and technical schools, nonprofits, and community-based organizations
- Ensure that computers are available to participants, and that they have access to technology skills classes

Additional supports provided by local Maryland agencies include transportation vouchers, and working directly with employers who are led by immigrants to maximize the hiring of specific populations of refugees and asylees.

Challenges to Engaging TANF/Immigrant Populations in Work Activities

- Challenges**
- Limited English proficiency
 - Low-literacy in Native language
 - Post-traumatic stress
 - Lack of High School Diploma or GED
 - Lack of computer and other technology skills
 - Finding translators for diverse dialects within languages (such as Burmese)
 - Finding enough classes, programs, and work experience options for immigrants
 - Staff trained in legal status, documentation, and needs of different immigrant populations

TANF work activity requirements have become more stringent over time and despite changes to take into account specific challenges faced by those with multiple barriers to employment, immigrants still face significant challenges to fully realizing self-sufficiency and achieving considerable progress with regard to work activities. Many immigrants have significant barriers to work, including lower levels of education obtainment and less work history and they are more likely to be working in positions that increase self-sufficiency. Additionally, roundtable participants outlined challenges among their immigrant clients. Many have limited English proficiency; lack of GEDs and high school diplomas; post-traumatic stress from conflict situations; lack of child care options and availability; and few options in medical and mental health care. Finding adequate and affordable housing and transportation options in the expensive Washington, D.C. metropolitan area is a major challenge to local Maryland department of human resource agencies. The amount of time it takes to take public transportation also reduces access to work activities, education, child care, and other places participants may need to go in order to provide for their families.

Another key challenge highlighted by event participants included that many of the immigrants they work with show up without refugee status, especially Somalian refugees. Many refugees from war torn countries are not literate in their native language so programs have to find additional resources to teach them, and ensure that they network with other immigrants who have successfully made the transition into the American workplace and culture.

Finding enough qualified translators, especially for the Burmese population which has several dialects has been difficult for agencies. Some counties voiced that while their immigrant populations were not as large as others, they had very limited resources, education, and training, in order to understand how to best meet their participants' needs. This includes training workers, administrative staff, and even managers to understand what the differences are between different legal statuses and understanding different forms of identification that participants may bring to offices to receive services.

Local agencies voiced that it is hard to engage immigrants in work activities and ensure that they gain work experience in relevant work activities and job placements. Agencies have to be aware that many refugees and immigrants have limited exposure to technologies (e.g., computers, etc.). They also have little to no work experience outside of the home. Many of them are used to working in agricultural or subsistence farming, gathering, and similar service jobs, and shifting to a technological service culture can be very overwhelming.

Not having enough classes for non-refugees or having classes with no seats has also created situations where TANF participants may be unable to meet their work activity requirements. Many agencies mentioned that many immigrants are faced with TANF sanctions because of their limited English proficiency. Also as one participant voiced, “We are learning that place matters – where we deliver services can be a problem.” Agencies are learning that they may need to partner with other agencies in order to provide bilingual services.

Promising Practice Presentations

As Maryland moves to improve the available services for immigrants, it is paying increasing attention to the specific needs of refugees and tailoring service delivery to language barriers, work habits, family structures, and other barriers to work among this group. Learning “what works” from other programs is an important addition to the roundtable and during the event, four speakers from across the nation spoke on their promising practices/models involving serving immigrants and refugees. The programs represented are renown across the country and have achieved positive outcomes. Speakers included:

- *Ms. Barbara Sample* from the Spring Institute for Intercultural Learning in Colorado who spoke on its Workstyles Program.
- *Ms. Lynn Levey* from the Vocational English as a Second Language (ESL) Intensive Program in California.
- *Ms. Susan Craver* from the Training Futures Program in Virginia
- *Mr. Tom Medina* from the Washington Limited English Proficiency Pathway (LEP) program in Washington State.

Ms. Barbara Sample, Spring Institute for Intercultural Learning, WorkStyles Program, Denver, Colorado

Ms. Barbara Sample, Vice President and Director of Educational Services, at the Spring Institute for Intercultural Learning in Denver, Colorado provided an overview of the Work Styles pre-employability skills training manual and the WorkStyles Training of Trainers. Workstyes serves newly arrived refugees to the Denver metropolitan area, and those who have studied English in the Colorado Refugee ESL program and are referred to WorkStyles to focus on job placement. The 60 hour, two-week WorkStyles program is funded with TANF and RSS (ORR) monies in the State of Colorado and typically costs about \$400 a week. It is a partnership with the State, local agencies, and the Refugee ESL program in Colorado.

The WorkStyles program is an intensive program designed for limited English speakers specifically to address the barriers to learning created by a lack of confidence and self-esteem. Utilizing a competency-based approach, the program focuses on pre-employability and personal effectiveness skills. Classes are held weekdays for six hours a day. Since its inception, the program has reached 3,000 clients representing over 50 countries; and completed 260 two-week cycle programs. Typically, 300 to 400 participants are enrolled every year in the program. The WorkStyles program focuses on using a variety of strategies to reinforce self-confidence by encouraging participants to share their knowledge and experience through videotaped role plays, skits, small-group problem solving, and brainstorming activities. A video was shown to highlight the program and provide a visual overview to event participants about the WorkStyles program, the diverse curriculum components, and provide a short overview of the WorkStyles training.

According to Ms. Sample, one of the things that students lose in their move to the United States is a feeling of control over their lives, so the program works on strengthening the confidence that many refugees and immigrants lack. The program arose out of a need because Colorado State offices did not have systems in place to deal with some of the issues the program addresses. Many refugees, immigrants, and asylees are experiencing cultural shock so WorkStyles focuses on providing support to them during their transition to life in a new country.

Caseworkers and job developers from Lutheran Refugee Services, Ecumenical Refugees Services, and African Community Services tend to send immigrants to the WorkStyles program who have special workforce development and job readiness needs (such as job hoppers and sanctioned participants) in order to ease their transition into the United States workforce. Most participants are defensive when they first begin because they are afraid and do not know how to be successful. Refugees and immigrants are very motivated and want to achieve self-sufficiency, but lack the specific knowledge and skills that will make them successful in the American workplace.

The program has a spiral curriculum that allows instructors to revisit topics every couple of days to ensure retention of knowledge and lessons learned. This spiraling coursework allows instructors to revisit topics to make sure participants have completely learned the content and can apply it in a workplace setting or interview. The WorkStyles curriculum covers multiple topics ranging from jobs skills, resume writing, effective communication skills, work culture, interviews, and dealing with loss of control. The program focuses on their “Steps to the Future,” which are accomplished through short- and long-term goal setting, understanding jobs and careers, and the career decision-making and planning process. WorkStyles covers a myriad of additional topics including:

- Active listening skills in communication interviews on video
- Application language and completing forms
- Resumes and cover letters
- Identifying skills and talents
- Setting realistic goals and planning a career
- Solving problems at work
- Recognizing and managing stress and taking steps to reduce it

- Following directions accurately
- Body language
- Applications
- Conflict management techniques
- Understanding a paycheck
- Benefits, deductions, taxes
- Where and how to look for a job

Ms. Sample shared several essential strategies including the need for practice interviews and utilizing video cameras to record interviews in order to assist participants in understanding how they present themselves to potential employers and interviewers. Once each WorkStyles participant reviews their video recording, they partake in a second interview which is also recorded in order to show their progression and differences in using correct body language, hand shaking, eye contact, and articulating answering questions with articulate and on-target answers. Additionally, she explained that the WorkStyles program and curriculum works to help immigrants learn to solve problems since many misunderstandings in the workplace are due to cross-cultural differences. Students have the opportunity in the program to practice things they need to say to coworkers and employers.

Additionally, the WorkStyles curriculum focuses on active listening, since it is an important strategy for understanding future employer needs and directions. It is also an essential tool in aiding limited English speakers in gaining confidence in their ability. As Ms. Sample described, active listening is a strategy of repeating what has been understood, or giving feedback to validate understanding. It gives participants a way to be responsible for understanding what has been said to them by giving the speaker a chance to clarify anything that was misunderstood. Ms. Sample then led the event participants in a game of ‘Simon Says’ to illustrate the difficulty of active listening techniques. An additional game that is used to illustrate active listening techniques is ‘Blind Man’s Bluff’ that practices “Listen, Repeat, Do,” which is needed to surmount difficulties. At the completion of each WorkStyles cycle, students are issued a Certificate of Completion.

WorkStyles encourages participants to take part in or take charge of their job search by equipping them with sample applications, having them practice on-line applications, and introducing them to the concept of networking as an effective job search strategy. Another key goal of WorkStyles is to mirror the workplace situation and expectations so that participants understand their duties, calling in if they are sick or are going to be late, and how to participate in a performance evaluation.

Ms. Lynn Levey, Vocational English as a Second Language (VESL) Immersion Program, San Francisco, California

Ms. Lynn Levey has spent more than 20 years teaching adults English-as-a-Second Language (ESL), job search skills, life skills, and career education, helping people achieve their goals at work, home, and throughout society. Ms. Levey has been working as the VESL Immersion Program (VIP) Coordinator at the San Francisco Human Services Agency since the program began in April 2000. VIP was chosen as one of the top 100 programs at the 16th annual

Innovations in American Government Awards competition in September 2002, and was a recipient of the Student Success Award from the California Community Colleges in June 2001.

VIP started as a partnership between City College of San Francisco (CCSF) and San Francisco Human Services Agency (HSA) because of new TANF legislation. Arriba Juntos and Catholic Charities are community-based organizations that are also heavily involved in the program providing additional wrap-around support and services. Recipients of the Welfare program, CalWORKS, expressed discontent with class sizes, open entry/exit enrollment formats, lack of employment-related content covered, and the many years required to substantially progress, so VIP was created to address these issues and serve as an intensive program for limited English proficient (LEP) CalWORKS and Personal Assisted Employment Services (PAES) participants. The program assisted participants in learning and improving vocational English language skills through intensive employment-focused ESL and workplace culture immersion to obtain and retain employment.

According to the City College of San Francisco (CCSF) Web site, the VIP program consists of:

- 18-week, intensive, ESL, VESL, and CALL (Computer Assisted Language Learning) for 20 or 30 hours per week for levels 1, 2, 3, and 4.
- 18-week VESL, including some computer skills necessary for job searches, 10 hours per week, combined with subsidized work experience through the Community Jobs Program (CJP) for level 5/6.
- Maximum class size of 20 students, in mixed-language cohorts (not open entry/exit), prescreened for compatible ESL level.
- Emphasis on speaking and listening.
- The Vocational ESL component focuses on the language, functions, and cultural understanding necessary to be successful in the job search, at work, and on customer service skills. VESL classes are not job specific. Students who continue in vocational training programs learn job specific language, etc. in these classes.²

Ms. Levey discussed that they work with students from beginning ESL levels 1 to 4 in their intensive Vocational ESL program, and ESL levels 5/6 (intermediate) in their VESL/subsidized work experience program, VIP/CJP. After completing VIP level 4, most students go on to VIP/CJP or vocational training. Levels 1-3 are taught in English and include subjects such as employer expectations and soft skills. Successful participants are assigned to a worksite for additional, on-the-job training and development. Level 4 students are given Targeted Vocational Assessments (TVAs) and career counseling.

Successful students receive skills to: 1) understand oral communication in a variety of contexts; 2) speak on a variety of topics in social and work-related situations; 3) use increasingly complex grammatical patterns; 4) use word analysis, vocabulary development strategies, and reading strategies to read and comprehend authentic texts on familiar topics; and 5) write a variety of correspondence and produce coherent short pieces of writing. Upon completion of the

²City College of San Francisco. *Vocation Immersion Program (VIP) Overview*. Retrieved December 3, 2009 from http://www.ccsf.edu/Resources/Teacher_Resource_Center/vip/vipla.doc.

noncredit ESL program, non-native English speakers gain the language skills necessary to participate as responsible citizens and competitive workers.

One of the last components of the program is the Community Jobs Program (CJP), which allows participants to get work experience. The program is through a nonprofit food bank. Students spend six hours at the food bank to get adjusted to going to a place of work and learning how to learn at work. Ms. Levey mentioned that employers have told them that students were not good at small talk, so they now have students engage in conversation to develop these skills. Also, they used American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds to create 700 new jobs.

According to Ms. Levey, 92 percent of those enrolled have completed the program, 81 percent have increased their ESL levels at least one level per semester, and 98 percent of participants said they were satisfied with the program at a three or above on a five point scale.

Question from participant: “If you are limited to 20 people in a cohort, do you have a long waiting list?”

- *Answer:* Ms. Levey said that they have added more cohorts. They have also started a transitional course for those who are waiting for a new cohort to begin.

Question from participant: “Are VIP programs just for VIP participants?”

- *Answer:* “They are solely providing the program for VIP participants.”

Question from participant: “What are the costs per person of the program?”

- *Answer:* “VIP costs \$8,000 per person per year.”

Ms. Susan Craver, Training Futures Program, McLean, Virginia

Due to scheduling conflicts, Ms. Craver spoke to participants on a conference call about the Training Futures program she runs in McLean, Virginia. Ms. Craver opened Training Futures in 1996 with Marla Burton in Springfield, Virginia as a program of Northern Virginia Family Service. Training Futures is based on the original program Ms. Craver worked at called Founded Training. Founded Training was based in the Central Business District of Washington, D.C. Its location in the Central Business District gave clients a chance to learn work skills by assimilation.

Training Futures is a pioneering 25-week training program in a simulated office setting. Ms. Craver said that their trainees come from an average of 15 countries. The program currently contains 45 people, 32 (about 65 percent) of which are foreign-born. The program has two main goals:

- To meet the needs of urban area businesses and employers who want trained entry-level workers; and
- To assist under-employed or unemployed people in gaining rewarding careers, prospective for advancement, and stable employment.

They have a state-of-the-art office for trainees to train and learn in. The program's curriculum teaches trainees computer skills, business English, business math, keyboarding, bookkeeping, filing, basic accounting, medical terminology, and business communication skills in a partial day model. During the program, trainees receive performance reviews and are expected to dress professionally, be punctual, complete assignments, and interact professionally with staff and colleagues. Trainees are also provided one-on-one support during their job search in resume writing, interviewing, and business protocol. Lastly, Training Futures has formed a partnership with Northern Virginia Community College to offer trainees a chance to earn 17 college credits through Training Futures' office technology training and healthcare office training.

Since it started, Training Futures has had a 90 percent success rate. Additionally, more than 90 percent of these graduates find high-quality jobs with benefits. Moreover, trainees gain valuable work experience through their internship program. The internship provides interns to local businesses and hospitals in the community that can provide a situation that supports additional experience. Ms. Craver mentioned that the program also does a lot of work shifting negative thought patterns into positive ones by improving self-confidence.

Out of the 25 week curriculum that trainees participate in, weeks 1-8 focus on skill building, weeks 9-17 focus on skill intensification, weeks 18-20 focus on skill expansion in a business setting, and weeks 21-25 focus on skill marketing. Additional skills building includes learning English, learning customer service skills, learning about stress and time management, learning about employer expectations, and learning how to use the Internet and e-mail. Skill intensification focuses on fine-tuning the concepts learned in skills building. The skills expansion component matches participants with available internships in order to provide on the job, real-time access to work. The final component is skills marketing which focuses on resume writing and interviewing techniques, and job search techniques. Once they complete the program, credentials from their previous country are now applicable.

Ms. Craver concluded that they are trying to keep people going in this slow economic cycle so Training Futures has added a graduate outreach program. This program component brings in five volunteers that give one-on-one interviews and update resumes in order to keep clients active and engaged during this slow economy.

Question from participant: "What are the entry criteria? Are participants required to meet the educational criteria?"

Answer: "They are asked to write three English essays. We expect at least 6th grade level abilities."

Question from participant: "What are the salaries that graduates receive?"

Answer: "Before the economy began its downturn, the average salary was \$14/hr., with some graduates earning up to \$18/ hour. Now, the average is about \$12.50/hr."

Mr. Tom Medina, Washington Limited English Proficiency Pathway Program

Mr. Tom Medina, Chief of the Office of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance at the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services presented on the Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Pathway Program and WorkFirst programs. The Washington State Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) is the agency that conducts and monitors TANF work participation requirements. The Office of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance is part of DSHS and administers the LEP Pathway program.

Washington's WorkFirst program is designed to help low-income families prepare for and go to work. The WorkFirst program contracts with local community-based organizations and nonprofits to provide specialized services to help families with limited English skills learn English while they develop employment skills. This program which began in the late 1990s is called the Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Pathway program and is available State-wide. LEP parents who receive assistance through the WorkFirst program meet their work participation requirements under the Deficit Reduction Act (DRA) of 2005 through the LEP Pathway program.

The LEP program provides a variety of specialized services to refugees and immigrants to help them learn English while learning skills to help them go to work. Services in the LEP Pathway include labor market orientation, job search preparation, job search assistance, job retention services, job skills training, Work Experience (WEX) and Community Service placements, and English as Second Language (ESL) training. Mr. Medina reinforced that all services are provided in a parent's primary language using culturally sensitive appropriate methods.

In Fiscal Year 2009, the LEP Pathway program served 5,685 clients who are typically low-income legal immigrants. More than 100 languages are represented by these clients, and approximately 80-85 percent of these participants are also TANF participants. Approximately 55 percent of LEP Pathway program participants are at the lowest level of proficiency on the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems (CASAS) assessment.

All TANF participants must complete a comprehensive evaluation which consists of a set of formalized questions intended to garner information about a participant's skills and abilities as they relate to work activities and placement. The staff at the local Departments of Social and Health Services (DSHS) works jointly with LEP Pathway service providers to engage participants in appropriate work activities. DSHS staff additionally monitors participation through the State's eJAS system, an interactive database which contains data on scheduled and actual participants, and number of unexcused absences in their caseload. At the State and local levels, DSHS works with other State agencies such as the Employment Security Department and the State Board of Community and Technical Colleges to provide employment services, job readiness, and ESL classes at local community and technical colleges. Local community-based organizations, mutual assistance associations and Voluntary Refugee Resettlement Agencies (VOLAGS) provide additional LEP Pathway program services.

Mr. Medina explained that the LEP Pathway program uses five funding sources to award contracts to community-based organizations and nonprofits. These include:

- Social Services;
- Targeted Assistance;
- State;
- TANF; and
- Work Experience/Community Service.

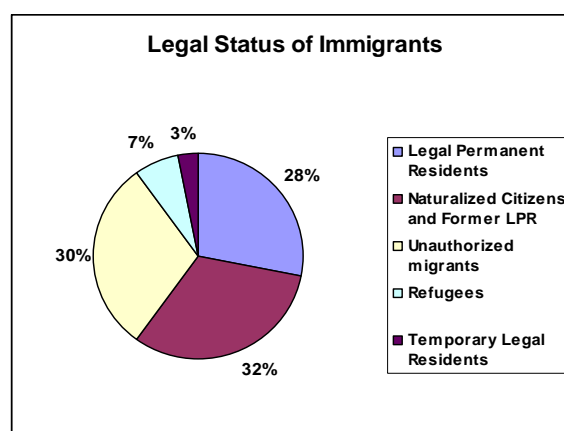
Mr. Medina concluded that of the 34 contracts for LEP services and 21 of those are targeted to English as a Second Language (ESL) training. Thirteen of the 21 contracts for ESL services are with local community colleges, and the remaining eight contracts are with local community-based organizations. Most employment providers have close ties to cultural or ethnic communities and many employ staffs who are immigrants or former refugees. Interpreters are provided for all services and materials are printed in the clients' language.

Working Lunch Session

Ms. Patricia Hatch, Maryland Office for Refugees and Asylees (MORA)

Ms. Patricia Hatch from the Maryland Office for Refugees and Asylees (MORA) provided an overview of the support and available services for refugees and asylees that MORA offers to ease their transition into American society. Additionally, MORA serves as a resource to the Governor and General Assembly on refugee and immigrant policy. Over 35,000 refugees have been assisted by MORA in making Maryland their home, aiding their transition from “displaced persons” to independent living, and becoming contributing members of the national economy and local community. Typically refugees and asylees receive a one-time \$900 stipend which is typically used to cover security deposits and furnishings for apartments. MORA also provides cultural awareness by teaching life skills, familiarizing refugees and asylees with daily routines (e.g. how to shop at the supermarket, manage a budget, take public transportation, open a savings account, register for the draft, or call 911 for emergencies).

Ms. Hatch provided an overview of the 2008 legal status of immigrants in the United States. In 2008, 15.6 percent of the U.S. labor force, ages 16 and over, were foreign-born. Twenty-eight percent or 11 million people are Legal Permanent Residents (LPR) and 32 percent or 12.8 million people are Naturalized Citizens and former LPR. Thirty percent or 11.9 million (an increase over 2007 rates) are unauthorized immigrants; seven percent are Refugees or Asylees; and three percent are Temporary Legal Residents.



Lastly, Ms. Hatch reviewed the differences between a refugee and an asylee. A *refugee* is a person who has had to flee their homeland because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution because of race, religion, nationality, or membership in a particular group. The decision is made

before they are allowed to come to the United States. Refugees do not have sponsors; instead they have agencies that provide support and resources. *Asylees* are persons seeking asylum, and are not U.S. citizens, and cannot return to his/her country of origin or last residence, due to discrimination or risk of danger because of their race, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinions. The decision to grant asylum is made inside the United States, and is based on whether the asylee meets the U.S. humanitarian status, based on persecution, religion, or nationality.

Mr. Mamadou Sy, Lutheran Social Services of National Capitol Area
Mr. Kevin Meadowcroft, Baltimore City Community College

Mr. Mamadou Sy, who works in employment services at Lutheran Social Services of National Capitol Area (LSS/NCA), and Mr. Kevin Meadowcroft, who works in the English as a second language (ESL) department at Baltimore City Community College (BCCC), presented on facilitating refugee employment through the partnering of employment services with education. LSS/NCA and BCCC are both located in the Baltimore Resettlement Center where they coordinate refugee services with other service providers. LSS/NCA provides three core services including: refugee resettlement, refugee employment services, and special social programming. The two organizations have been successfully partnering ESL and employment placement services for refugees in the area since 1999. They have worked together under a Refugee Employment and Training Program (RETP)/Targeted Assistance Program (TAP) grant in combination with Baltimore City Mayor's Office since 2006. Although the backbone of the program is language, RETP/TAP combines employment services and workforce-focused educational programs to link refugees with meaningful and continued employment.

LSS/NCA and BCCC serve refugees who come from all across the county including Bhutan, Burma, Congo DRC, Eritrea, and Iraq. The profile of their average job seeker is either very low skilled or very high skilled. Currently, their low skilled job seekers are competing with high skilled job seekers. This competition is giving employers the upper hand because there is a large pool they can draw from. Some of the employers LSS/NCA and BCC outreach to for placement include employers in the manufacturing, healthcare, hospitality, retail, education, banking, and technology sectors, depending on refugees' skill levels.

In terms of pre-employment training and ESL, one advantage is that they are able to have ample time with refugees (up to three or four months). Pre-employment training is given in the refugee's native language or it is translated (staff at LSS/NCA and BCCC collectively speak over 20 languages). They focus on workplace culture and on the refugee's responsibilities for finding a job. All clients are referred to ESL classes that focus on English immersion. Living in the U.S. can be its own employment barrier so some of the things they focus on in the ESL classes include learning to read a paycheck stub, finding a primary care doctor, and knowing workplace precautions. In some cases, clients have not been to school in any language, so additional focus is placed on literacy skills and client-centered educational goals.

The program focuses on Vocational Training meant to improve specific targeted skills in occupational areas like Nursing and Construction. LSS/NCA and BCCC has borrowed heavily

from the Workstyles model and Professional Pathways, which is a series of workshops that helps participants improve resume writing and enhance career exploration.

LSS/NCA and BCCC have witnessed a positive increase in employment placement and ESL programs that have over an 80 percent retention rate. Since the inception of Workstyles, over 350 participants have successfully completed the program and BCCC has trained more than four dozen Geriatric Nursing Assistants.

Expert Panel Discussion

The next session included four expert panelists: Ms. Karina Fortuny, Dr. Demetra Nightingale, Dr. Jo Ann Schneider, and Dr. Donna Kinerney, who discussed their areas of expertise in relation to how Maryland can help their immigrant and refugee populations, particularly those on TANF, become self-sufficient.

Ms. Karina Fortuny, Urban Institute, Washington, D.C.

Ms. Fortuny, the first expert panelist to speak during this session, set the stage by presenting a profile of immigrants in Maryland and the implications for TANF. Ms. Fortuny is a Research Associate in the Urban Institute's Center on Labor, Human Services, and Population Studies who analyzes national, State, and local policies, evaluates programs, and makes policy recommendations on social and economic issues, including immigration and welfare.

First, she discussed the rapid growth of immigrants in Maryland who are in need of family and work supports. The number of immigrants in Maryland has grown steadily since 1990 and there are currently 164,000 low-income immigrants, 217,000 immigrants with limited English proficiency, and 697,000 immigrants in general. She also discussed the large diversity among immigrant workers in Maryland. For example, 49 percent of immigrant workers in the United States are Hispanic but in Maryland, it is around 29 percent. She also mentioned that no one single county represents more than 10 percent of immigrant workers in Maryland, reinforcing the diversity of this population.

In Maryland, about 17 percent of immigrant workers do not have a high school diploma and they are overrepresented in low-skilled jobs, even though they tend to have a very high work ethic, Ms. Fortuny explained. As immigrants receive more education, their earnings tend to increase from about \$21,000 for those without a high school diploma to about \$50,000 to those with a four year college degree or higher. Even with this earnings increase there is still a considerable income gap between foreign-born and native-born Marylanders (the average is about \$10,000 less in salary for immigrants with a college degree). Further, an analysis of the population as a whole and controlling for immigrant populations shows that there is a gap between those who are English proficient and those who are not at about \$15,000 less in yearly salary for immigrants who are not English proficient but have a four-year college degree.

Ms. Fortuny also touched on some statistics on children of immigrant families but the crux of her presentation was the portion on policy implications and recommendations. She mentioned that the need for increased services for low-income and unemployed immigrants is going to continue to grow in Maryland. Lower-skilled immigrants will need additional support and targeted assistance, specifically services pertaining to adult education and ESL because language is such an important barrier to self-sufficiency for this population. Combining ESL with education and employment is an effective strategy, and also training post-employment. Lastly, she mentioned that the reauthorization of TANF and Workforce Investment Act (WIA) might want to think about expanding education and training opportunities for this population.

Dr. Demetra Nightingale, Ph.D., Johns Hopkins Institute for Policy Studies, Immigration Studies, Migration Policy Institute, Washington, D.C.

Dr. Demetra Nightingale spoke next during the panel. She is a Principal Research Scientist and member of the faculty at the Institute for Policy Studies at Johns Hopkins University and she teaches graduate courses on Social Policy and Program Evaluation. Her research concentrates on employment, skills training, social assistance, women and family issues, immigration, youth development, and welfare reform. She has also conducted numerous welfare, TANF, and food stamp studies nationally and for various States, including most recently Colorado, New York, South Carolina, Washington, and Wisconsin.

Dr. Nightingale discussed Maryland's goal to balance the challenges of participation in core activities with improving employability and self-sufficiency through engaging and supporting, integrating and blending, and contextualizing for employment. Some of the most effective programs include skills plus employment, integrating education and training, transitional/subsidized jobs (with skills and support), and ongoing supports and benefits for working families. According to Dr. Nightingale, immigrants, especially, face multiple barriers and challenges related to the TANF work participation rate requirements and given the current economic crisis, the history of lack of program coordination, and an inadequate supply of appropriate services and providers makes it even more difficult to meet the needs of immigrant populations.

Effective programs, according to Dr. Nightingale are divided into three phases including 1) pre-employment; 2) employment; and 3) post-employment. During pre-employment, some of the key ideas and strategies she mentioned include outreach, motivation and assessment, integration of education with occupational training, and engagement and supports. During the employment phase, there are several ways to serve participants through subsidized employment, work experience, career pathways, work study, and self-employment. During this phase, it is important to combine work with education /training. Lastly, during the post-employment phase, it is important for participants to upgrade skills, to focus on earning certificates that are demand-driven not just degrees, and for programs to continue to provide support for working families and provide them ongoing access to services and benefits (Earnbenefits and Navigators).

*Dr. Jo Anne Schneider, The George Washington University- George Washington
Institute of Public Policy, Washington, DC*

Dr. Schneider is currently an Associate Research Professor in Anthropology at The George Washington University and the University of Maryland, College Park. She is an urban anthropologist focusing on the role of government, nonprofits, and communities in inter-group relations, opportunity structures for marginalized populations (immigrants, refugees, people of color, people with disabilities, low-income families), and social welfare and health policy creation and implementation.

Dr. Schneider briefly talked to participants about the different types of TANF participants. About 50 percent of TANF participants are low skilled workers, about 15-25 percent have limited work experience, about 3-9 percent are made up of migrants, immigrants, and refugees, and the rest are made up of both displaced workers/stable working class and the rising educated middle class.

Next, Dr. Schneider spoke on the needed attributes for a successful transition to self-sufficiency for immigrant TANF participants including:

- Connections to appropriate jobs.
- Mentoring (identify successful immigrants/refugees from this country who can act as mentors/advisors).
- Gradual training combined with On-the-Job Training (OJT).
- Guidance away from poor advice/peer pressure to take paths that do not work.

She also talked about some key program concepts she felt would work for the immigrant and refugee populations as well as program concepts that would not work. Successful programs could include workplace English combined with targeted training and OJT and mentoring for professionals. Unsuccessful programs are general job search/job readiness programs, job clubs, and basic English as a Second Language (ESL) that does not incorporate any work experience. Dr. Schneider also mentioned that programs need to focus holistically on the family and community networks and not just the individual to prevent employment barriers from continuing to surface. Dr. Schneider believes that should ask clients at the beginning what their key networks are (sources of support such as churches, nonprofits, travel agencies, businesses, social groups) in order to better understand what the available supports are to address any gaps or potential issues and outline specific resource needs.

Dr. Schneider concluded her presentation by talking about working with employers. She suggested that programs identify employers that have a long career trajectory and are interested in working with immigrants and refugees. She thought programs should really tailor training for those employees and TANF participants through OJT and through internships. When participants are placed into employment, they need mentors. Case management is essential for these new employees to combat any mitigating factors that might impede their ability to stay employed. In fact, after employment starts, participants should continue learning workplace English for about six months.

Dr. Donna Kinerney, Adult ESOL & Literacy – GED Programs, Montgomery College, Montgomery, MD

Dr. Kinerney is currently the Instructional Dean in Adult ESOL and Literacy – GED Programs at Montgomery College in Maryland. She is also a part-time instructor at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County in the Education Department. Dr. Kinerney has taught ESL at a range of levels, from K-12, to adult, to community college. She specializes in working with the special needs of refugees. Previously, Dr. Kinerney coordinated the Montgomery County Refugee Training Program, with the goal of offering language and skills training to refugees to help them avoid the use of public assistance as much as possible.

The Montgomery College Adult ESOL and Literacy – GED Program caters to students with varied interests and abilities. Sub-departments include:

- **Adult Basic Education (ABE)** for those students who need basic skills in reading and math.
- **Pre-GED** for students who have stronger skills, but need more work in all of the content areas.
- **GED** for students who are ready to focus on the academic areas covered by the official State test.
- **ESOL** helps students learn English for life, work, and community.
- **ESOL for Healthcare** will help students to improve English skills and learn medical vocabulary for noncredit courses in this area.
- **ESOL for Building Trades** will help students to improve English skills and learn construction vocabulary for noncredit classes in this area.
- **Citizenship Preparation Classes** will help students with the civics skills and language skills needed to pass the citizenship interview and exam.

Dr. Kinerney discussed the ways in which TANF, social services, and ESL can work together to move clients towards self-sufficiency. She asked participants to think about language learning by reading a narrative about a social services worker who wanted her clients to learn more English. The social services worker enrolled her clients in an English class that met two hours per week for ten weeks. The clients were also provided with grammar books to work their way through the class. When the session ended, the clients still could not speak English and the social services worker was disappointed. Dr. Kinerney revealed to the participants the four underlying assumptions about language learning demonstrated by this story:

- Language learning takes a long time.
- Student needs buy-in.
- Grammar is not the only thing.
- Language learning happens everywhere with everyone.

Dr. Kinerney discussed the Montgomery College ABE Career Connections (ABECC) Project Model which lays out the structure of the targeted noncredit vocational courses offered regularly and offered as pilot courses at Montgomery College. Existing courses include: Advanced, Intermediate, and Beginning ESOL. Pilot courses include: Advanced, Intermediate,

and Beginning ESOL for Building Trades (BT) and Advanced, Intermediate, and Beginning ESOL for Health Care Jobs (HC). All courses help develop common language skills. Completion of ESOL for Building Trades courses can prepare students for other courses such as: Electrical I, HVAC I, and Carpentry I. Completion of ESOL for Health Care Jobs courses can help prepare students for other courses and careers such as: Nursing Assistant, Pharmacy Tech, and Phlebotomy.

Dr. Kinerney encouraged participants to get to know their local adult education services providers. She explained that these providers may be housed under entities such as community colleges, public school systems, or local nonprofits. The providers typically offer ESOL, Adult Basic Education, GED, and Work Skills Preparation with an emphasis on transitions to employment and postsecondary training. They may be funded with a variety of grants—the largest of these is under the Title II of the Federal Workforce Investment Act of 1998. Adult education providers are charged with working with the learners who are most in need. They can be very useful partners in improving the lives of families because they may already have employment outcomes and postsecondary training outcomes that they need to meet. Additionally, the providers could already be working with the local One-Stop employment system as part of their funding requirements and have close connections to employers via institutional partnerships and departmental networks. Many can work with social services agencies on contract training, customized coursework, career pathways development, grant applications, partnerships, training social services staff on working with immigrants, and leveraging resources such as stimulus funding.

Dr. Kinerney concluded her presentation by explaining what social service agencies can provide in return to adult education providers. She listed the following:

- Students
- Connections to student interests and needs for program development
- Social service network
- Guidance and career counseling support
- Leverage to cut services for noncompliance
- Access to alternate funding streams
- Employer connections
- Employment placement
- Language practice, coaching, mentoring
- Space for classes
- Willingness to partner and leverage resources

Dr. Kinerney's discussion centered around educating participants on the time and energy involved in English language-learning as well as ways to make use of community college and other adult education providers in improving the livelihood of Maryland families. Through partnerships with such providers, agencies will gain strong resources for assisting them with finding meaningful work activities and career pathways for their refugee and immigrant populations who apply for TANF.

Day Two

Maryland Council for New Americans Presentation

Ms. Angela Lagdemeo, Policy Coordinator for the Governor's Office of Community Initiatives/Maryland Council for New Americans, presented during the morning of the second day on the Council. She highlighted key pieces of a report that was submitted to Governor Martin O'Malley in August 2009 entitled *A Fresh Start: Renewing Immigrant Integration for a Stronger Maryland*. The full report is located here:

<http://www.newamericans.maryland.gov/documentsNA/2009Report.pdf>

Ms. Lagdemeo discussed that since 2000, the growth in the workforce in Maryland has primarily been from immigrants, but many areas of the workforce are not meeting their full potential because this population tends to have limited English proficiency, lack of training, and difficulty in transferring credentials from their countries of origin. The Maryland Council for New Americans was established by an Executive Order in 2008 to help combat this problem and provide immigrants with citizenship assistance, job training, and English speaking skills. The Council is meant to maximize immigrant integration into Maryland. The Council focuses on four aspects of immigration, provides recommendations on each, and then discusses some of the current activities that are going on to implement these recommendations. The four areas are:

1. Workforce development;
2. Citizenship promotion;
3. Financial services; and
4. Governmental access.

Some of the recommendations that the Council made in workforce development include improving licensing and credentialing for professionals who are foreign-trained, standardizing training Statewide, and increasing coordination among different sectors to be more efficient. Ms. Lagdemeo said that there needs to be a holistic approach among State, nonprofit, private, public, and faith-based sectors to improve workforce development for immigrants. Three current activities that address these recommendations include Foreign-Trained Health Professionals, the Washington I-BEST program, and the Marriott's English Language Initiative, which are all discussed in more detail in the report.

For citizenship promotion, some of the recommendations that the Council made through their report included establishing a citizenship initiative in Maryland, reducing the financial burden of LPRs trying to become citizens, holding regular meetings with the local, State, and Federal government, and supporting immigration reform at the Federal level. Current activities Ms. Lagdemeo mentioned include the Americorps Citizenship Program and Welcome Back Centers.

Next, she discussed the recommendations for financial services which include creating some instruments throughout the State that reduce scams and fraud that happens with immigrant communities, providing education outreach tools to immigrants to help with understanding, trust, and interpretation of government and law, and providing connections to a wide variety of

financial service providers. There are several programs in place to address these recommendations including Foreclosure Workshops and Educational Campaigns which are described in the report.

Lastly, Ms. Lagdemeo discussed recommendations for improving governmental access. They include establishing a cabinet-level office for new Americans, tracking data about new Americans accessing government services, making sure that agencies are culturally and linguistically competent, making critical information available through Welcome Centers, and supporting county and municipal “New American Initiatives.” The two current activities that are beginning to address these recommendations include Montgomery County’s Office of Neighborhoods and the Joint Commission Assembly.

Next, Ms. Lagdemeo discussed some of the challenges that are foreseen and questions that are raised when trying to implement some of these recommendations. Some of these include:

- **Economic Downturn:**
 - How can the State make changes and improvements to the licensing, credentialing, and support systems for foreign-trained professionals?
 - Can individuals be targeted to specific professions that are currently experiencing shortages?
- **Leveraging Partnerships:**
 - The State is not doing a good job in communicating and bridging participants to programs that already exist and there needs to be an increase in coordination among active programs.
- **Data:**
 - The Maryland Council for New Americans is looking for ways to expand the mission of local workforce development to include refugees and immigrants. There is no aggregate data because of the basic grouping of races: black, white, and Latino.

Working Lunch Session

During this working lunch session, Mr. Robert Warwick and Ms. Holly Leon-Lierman presented on the International Rescue Committee (IRC) for Maryland. Mr. Warwick is the Executive Director of the International Rescue Committee’s (IRC’s) two Maryland Regional Offices in Baltimore and Silver Spring. He has worked overseas with refugees, internationally displaced persons, and host communities for more than 20 years. Ms. Holly Leon-Lierman co-presented with Mr. Warwick and is an Employment Coordinator for refugees and asylees. She has worked for the IRC at the Baltimore Resettlement Center for the past five years. During their presentation, Mr. Warwick and Ms. Leon-Lierman provided detailed background information on the IRC. The IRC brings sustained support to regions torn apart by violence and deprivation. The organization provides a fresh start in the U.S. for refugees and advocates

tirelessly on behalf of the displaced, addressing the root causes of violence and standing up for the world's most vulnerable populations. Mr. Warwick and Ms. Leon-Lierman listed the main types of work done by the IRC, and presented on their work around “refugee resettlement” which is closely aligned with the goals of the event.

Mr. Warwick and Ms. Leon-Lierman provided information on what a refugee is and stated that refugees have a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of: race, religion, nationality, social group, or political opinion. Refugees flee from war and persecution from countries such as: Afghanistan, Bhutan, Colombia, Iran, Iraq, Myanmar, Rwanda, Somalia, Sudan, and Vietnam. Many refugees have spent years in refugee camps with no way to obtain education or work experience. Mr. Warwick and Ms. Leon-Lierman explained that refugees flee their countries for a variety of reasons. For example, civilians in Iraq are killed everyday by insurgents and nearly four million have fled their homes for this reason. The three main populations the IRC is working with in Maryland are: Bhutanese, Burmese, and Iraqi.

After refugees flee, different things may happen. These include:

- Waiting – most reside in a waiting status, and most want to return home.
- Repatriation.
- Refugee status in host country – most host countries are not able to absorb large numbers.
- Resettlement in third country of asylum – less than one percent are identified for resettlement.

Mr. Warwick and Ms. Leon-Lierman discussed the refugee resettlement process. Resettlement takes place when some refugees are not able to safely return to their home and are not allowed to remain in their host country. In these cases, a third country must be found to accept the refugees. This solution is available to only one percent of the refugee population. Some countries that have resettlement programs are Australia, Canada, England, and the United States. Mr. Warwick and Ms. Leon-Lierman explained that refugees must go through the following resettlement process:

- Referral
- Security clearance
- Adjudication
- Approval and match with resettlement agency- a nonprofit that is asked to help the refugees
- Medical examination/cultural orientation

Refugees are eligible to come to the U.S. if they are considered a “refugee” within the U.S. legal definition, and if they are from a “priority” country. Mr. Warwick and Ms. Leon-Lierman explained that each year, the President comes out with a list of “priority countries,” based on political conflicts and whether refugees from the countries have options, which determines where refugees will be resettled from that year.

United States refugee resettlement programs like the IRC provide refugees with eight months of core services to assist them in achieving self-sufficiency. These services include: finding housing for refugees prior to arrival, providing furniture, toiletries, dishes, and other necessities, and placing them under the assistance of a case manager who shows them around and enrolls them in English classes. The IRC also assists refugees in finding jobs. Other services (including State/Federal programs) refugees are eligible for include: SNAP, social security, resettlement cash assistance, medical assistance, and mental health referrals. In addition to cultural adjustments, clients often face issues such as language proficiency and underutilized skills.

Mr. Warwick and Ms. Leon-Lierman concluded their presentation by stating that the goal of resettlement is to enable each refugee to achieve self-sufficiency and to rebuild a new life in freedom. They explained that people can help the IRC and other agencies like it by donating, volunteering, hiring a refugee, or advocating on behalf of refugees.

Closing Remarks and Evaluation

Maryland has made significant progress in its ability to improve services for its TANF population. Despite its overall successes, it is still a work in progress, specifically when it comes to its immigrant population. Whether it is increasing access to language instruction, enhanced job training or improved employment placement and work services, Maryland is in the process of designing a targeted response to the needs of the growing immigrant population. *Improving Engagement in Work Activities and Creating Pathways to Self-Sufficiency for TANF and Immigrant Populations* devoted two days to the development of not only a vision for change, but also a strategy to greatly increase the pool of resources for Maryland social service programs attempting to respond to the needs of immigrant populations. To close the event, Mr. David Camporeale, Office of Family Assistance, thanked the speakers and participants for sharing their wealth of knowledge and being so engaged and invested in thinking about solutions for serving immigrant and refugee populations in Maryland. He thought that while many of the presenters had unique ideas and strategies to share, most seemed in agreement about fundamental solutions for these populations, such as programs that have a blend of activities like language education and work. He mentioned that he thought the upcoming strategic action planning time for those willing and interested to stay would be very productive. He encouraged participants to check out the Welfare Peer TA Web site at <http://peerta.acf.hhs.gov> to find more resources on other topics relating to welfare reform and social programs. Lastly, he asked participants to fill out the final evaluations in their binders because constructive feedback is essential to improving future events through Welfare Peer TA and making sure participants get the most out of their time and energy invested. See *Appendix C: Evaluation Results* for the complete summary.

Maryland Department of Human Resources, Family Investment Administration Action Planning Time

During the final portion of this event, as an added working session, Maryland's local departments of social services along with Marilyn Lorenzo from the Maryland Family Investment Administration and Patricia Hatch from the Maryland Office of Refugees and Asylees, broke up into two groups to begin to strategize solutions based on the information they gleaned from their two days of participation in the Roundtable. The time was spent brainstorming some broad ideas that Ms. Lorenzo and Ms. Hatch planned to fine-tune and present to the State. A few of the ideas put forth by the local departments included:

- Making sure that the Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA) participants who are being hired as Family Investment Aides include as many immigrants as possible.
- Looking into getting subsidized money to offer employers who want to hire immigrant populations.
- Potentially hiring someone to come and do grant writing for funds through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA).
- Rolling out cultural sensitivity/competency trainings, provided through the resettlement center, for staff across the State who work with immigrant and refugee populations.
- Developing a program that provides a blend of activities (work experience and ESL combined) potentially through Baltimore City Community College (BCCC).
- Looking into whether or not refugees could stay at their resettlement centers longer than eight months so there would be more of a continuity of service and culture shock would not be so high.
- Potentially having a policy that exempts immigrants from participation rates for some time.
- Other counties like Baltimore County and Anne Arundel collaborating together to establish the refugee center like that in Montgomery County.
- Compliance documents being transferred to simple English, then translated to other languages.
- Working with community-based organizations (CBOs) to have ESL classes at the CBOs where trust is already built in the immigrant and refugee community.
- Adding community colleges to distribution list for RFP's and other contracts issued.

The Action Planning lasted a few hours and the Welfare Peer TA team will follow up with Maryland staff in the next few months to discuss their progression with next steps, any challenges they are facing, and any positive outcomes they have garnered.

Appendix A: Agenda

Engaging TANF and Immigrant Populations Into Work Activities That Create Pathways to Self-Sufficiency

**Tremont Plaza Hotel
Edinburgh Hall
222 St. Paul Place
Baltimore, Maryland
November 3–4, 2009**

Agenda

Tuesday, November 3, 2009

8:00 – 8:30 a.m.

Registration

8:30 – 9:15 a.m.

Welcome and Opening Remarks

- *David Camporeale*, Office of Family Assistance, Administration for Children and Families
- *Pamela Green-Smith*, Office of Refugee Resettlement (invited)
- *Peg Montgomery*, Region III, Administration for Children and Families
- *Kevin McGuire*, Maryland Department of Human Resources, Family Investment Administration
- *Patricia Hatch*, Maryland Office for Refugees and Asylees

9:15 – 10:00 a.m.

Peer-to-Peer Dialog

This session will allow participants and presenters to share information and statistics on their current State's or county's immigrant population and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) caseload. Additional dialog will include the challenges in engaging their TANF and immigrant participants in work activities and will allow them to highlight innovative ways in which they are currently addressing the challenges.

10:00 – 10:15 a.m.

Break

10:15 – 11:00 a.m.

Promising Practice Presentation

- *Barbara Sample*, Spring Institute for Intercultural Learning, WorkStyles Program, Denver, Colorado

11:00 a.m. –
12:00 noon

Promising Practice Presentation

- *Lynn Levey*, Vocational ESL Intensive Program, San Francisco, California

12:00 noon –
12:45 p.m.

Working Lunch With Speaker

- *Patricia Hatch*, Maryland Office for Refugees and Asylees
- *Mamadou Sy*, Lutheran Social Services
- *Kevin Meadowcroft*, Baltimore City Community College

12:45 – 1:15 p.m.

Promising Practice Presentation

- *Susan Craver* (via teleconference), Training Futures Program, McLean, Virginia

1:15 – 3:00 p.m.

Expert Panel Discussion

- *Jo Anne Schneider*, George Washington Institute of Public Policy, George Washington University
- *Karina Fortuny*, Urban Institute, Washington, D.C.
- *Demetra Smith Nightingale*, Johns Hopkins Institute for Policy Studies, Migration Policy Institute, Washington, D.C.
- *Donna Kinerney*, Montgomery College

3:00 – 3:15 p.m.

Break

3:15 – 4:15 p.m.

Promising Practice Presentation

- *Tom Medina*, Washington Limited English Proficiency Pathway Program

4:15 – 4:45 p.m.

Round-Robin Discussion Time With Presenters and Report-Out

Content experts will be placed at roundtables for participants to engage in additional dialog and question-and-answer segment with speakers from whom they have heard throughout the day. Speakers, content experts, and participants engage in additional dialog in small groups and will report out to the larger group for overall comments and questions.

4:45 – 5:00 p.m.

Maryland Team Planning for Day 2

The Maryland team will convene to clarify what they have heard throughout the day, ask questions, and work with the Welfare Peer TA Network team to select content experts for one-on-one work during their team times on Wednesday morning.

Wednesday, November 4, 2009

8:30 – 8:45 a.m.

Day 1 Review and Outlook for Day 2

8:45 – 11:30 a.m.

Maryland Team Time With Content Experts

During this session, Maryland team members will have the opportunity to meet one on one with their content experts to explore and learn more about their programs, information, and resources and will discuss various topical issues. Content Expert: *Angela Lagdameo*, Maryland Council for New Americans

11:30 – 11:45 a.m.

Maryland Report-Out on Next Steps

11:45 a.m. –
12:00 noon

Closing Remarks and Evaluation

- *David Camporeale*, Office of Family Assistance, Administration for Children and Families

12:00 noon –
1:00 p.m.

Working Lunch

– *Robert Warwick*, International Rescue Committee for Maryland

1:00 – 4:00 p.m.

**Maryland Department of Human Resources, Family Investment
Administration Action Planning Time**

Appendix B: Participants List



Engaging TANF and Immigrant Populations Into Work Activities That Create Pathways to Self-Sufficiency

Baltimore, Maryland • November 3–4, 2009

■ = Unable To Attend (6)

Final Participant List

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Total Participants (50)

Appendix C: Evaluation Results

Evaluation Statements

**Evaluation Form Average
1 (strongly disagree) – 5 (strongly agree)**

I.	Technical Assistance (TA) staff members handled the logistics, arrangements, and scheduling of the event in a timely and competent manner.	4.56
II.	TA staff members prepared me for the roundtable by providing clear communication regarding the roundtable’s agenda and purpose.	4.38
III.	The presenters had valuable information to share and were thorough in the information provided.	4.63
IV.	The information presented and shared will be useful to support our State in building our TANF/immigrant program.	4.31

What did you find most useful about attending this event (i.e., any immediate or long-term benefits to you or your staff that you anticipate as a result of attending this roundtable)?

- Effective small group discussion.
- I was able to get a better understanding of other jurisdictions' challenges and compare them to my own.
- Networking with quality service providers.
- It was wonderful to have both technical and practical expertise in one room, both Department of Human Resources' Central Policy staff and local Department of Social Services' staff, all working toward solutions.

About what issues would you like to have had more discussion at this event?

- How refugees seeking providers can help local DSS address the needs of the refugee/asylee population.
- Policy changes to support ESL barriers as a disability.
- Successful grant writing scenarios with examples of text.
- Overview of related grants and upcoming opportunities.

On which aspect of TANF and immigrant issues would you like to receive additional technical assistance?

- How to access more training.
- Follow-up with presenters.
- Blended activities and practices used to assist in countable core/non-core activities.
- Developing additional resources.
- Blending ESL/work programs at the community college level.

Please share any overall comments regarding the event that you think might be helpful in planning future programs.

- Wonderful collection of expertise; great opportunity to network.
- Having a continued discussion to network and discuss challenges and what works best.
- Excellent event; glad to have been part of the discussion.
- This was planned to perfection. Great job.
- Great event. I really appreciated the organizers' flexibility in changing the agenda in response to the flow and the objectives.
- Thank you for organizing the event and offering this platform.