



Best Practices in Serving LGBT Refugees

September 17, 2015



Bridges for Refugees and Asylees is an Office of Refugee Resettlement technical assistance initiative supported by ICF International

Presenters



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Agenda



- A national perspective
- A regional perspective
- Two local perspectives: East Bay, CA and Philadelphia, PA
- Q and A

Q & A



A screenshot of a meeting software interface. The top navigation bar includes "Attendees (85)", "Voice & Video", "Q&A", and "Meeting". The "Q&A" tab is active. The main content area shows a question input field with the placeholder text "What is the...?". To the right of the input field is an "Ask" button with a close icon and a hand icon. A tooltip labeled "Ask a Question" is visible over the hand icon. Below the input field, a message states "No questions have been answered yet." The interface is set against a dark blue sidebar on the left.



INTERNATIONAL
RESCUE
COMMITTEE

Commitment to serve LGBTI Refugees



Engagement at a National Level



Activities Across the IRC Network



Future Actions

- Staff Training
- Formalized Tracking
- Financial Resources
- Working Group
- Mainstreaming services
- Welcoming Spaces
- LGBT Caucus Community Education and Awareness Program
- Workshop @ 2015 CalWORKs and Refugee Programs Training Academy



CWS

Regional Considerations

Regional Considerations

1. Pre-departure perceptions of relative safety for LGBTI populations
2. Legal protections and relative safety
3. City size and types and variety of housing options

Pre-Departure Perception

Access to information overseas impacts refugee perceptions in ways that may impact their sense of fear and insecurity in their new homes.

New York Man Arrested In Attack On Gay West Point Couple

Associated Press | Curtis M. Wong | Posted 08.12.2015 | [Gay Voices](#)

Read More: [Voices](#), [Gay Hate Crime](#), [Anti-Gay Hate Crime](#), [West Point](#), [New York](#), [Gay](#)

(function(){var src_url="https://spshared.5min.com/Scripts/PlayerSeed.js?"



Teen Lesbian Couple Attacked In Alleged Hate Crime At Six Flags New England

MassLive | Curtis M. Wong | Posted 08.02.2015 | [Gay Voices](#)

Read More: [Hate Crime](#), [Six Flags](#), [Six Flags New England](#), [Anti-Gay Hate Crime](#), [Anti Gay](#), [Gay Hate Crime](#), [Gay Voices News](#)

AGAWAM -- Two women were arrested Wednesday after allegedly attacking and injuring a lesbian couple they observed kissing at Six Flags New England, a...

[Read Whole Story](#)

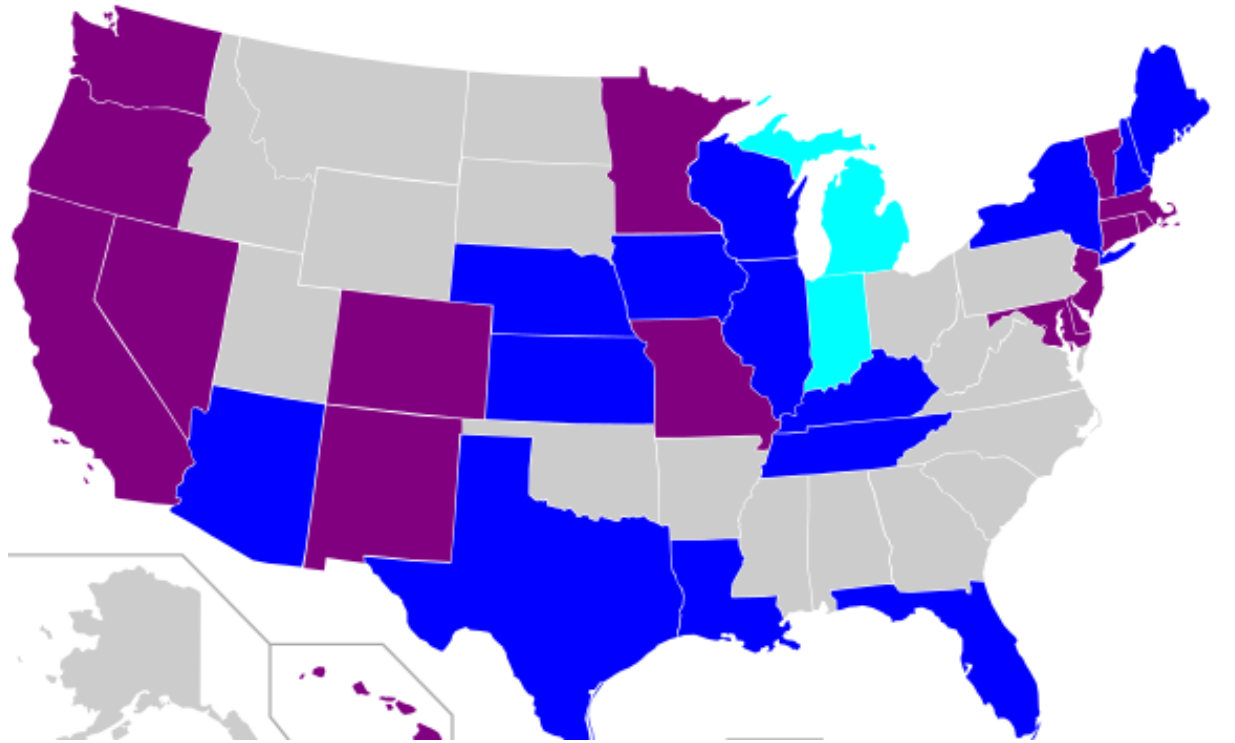






Authorities Are Investigating This College Shooting As A Possible Anti-Gay Hate Crime

AP | EMERY P. DALESIO, MARTHA WAGGONER and MIKE SCHNEIDER | Posted 04.15.2015 | [Gay Voices](#)

Read More: [Kenneth Morgan Stancil III](#), [Kenneth Morgan Stancil III Arrested](#), [Kenneth Morgan Stancil III Hate](#)

Current US LGBT Hate Crimes Laws



-  Sexual orientation and gender identity recognized in state hate crimes law
-  Sexual orientation recognized in state hate crimes law
-  Sexual orientation recognized for data collection about hate crimes
-  State hate crimes law uninclusive of sexual orientation or gender identity

City Size and Housing Options

Is it possible to “blend in” in this environment?

Do all newly arrived refugees live in the same places or are they more widely dispersed?

Can we offer protection without creating isolation?

Does the location have LGBTI organizations that have immigrant membership/leadership?

Regional Conclusions

- The perception of insecurity has the same impact on an individual as the reality of insecurity.
- A state's commitment to equal treatment and protection are important indicators
- Every location has its own opportunities and challenges to think through

Providing Housing and Support for LGBT Refugees in the Bay Area

Carol Palecki, Coordinator
LGBT Refugee Services

JFCS/East Bay in Berkeley and Walnut Creek, CA



LGBT Refugee
Services



JFCS/East Bay LGBT Refugee Services

- Resettled 17 refugees from Africa and the Middle East.
- All of the refugees who have been here more than eight months have found work and are relatively self sufficient.
- Assisted 22 asylees, mainly from Latin America.



LGBT Refugee
Services



Housing Strategies

- For refugee housing, we have used a “hosted housing” model asking local LGBT and faith community members to house a refugee in their home for a low rent.
- We have placed 17 refugees in more than 35 different homes.
- JFCS/East Bay staff provides ongoing support for housing hosts.



LGBT Refugee
Services



Housing Appeals

- JFCS/East Bay makes frequent email appeals to the LGBT and faith communities to identify housing for LGBT refugees. We also make appeals via social media, including Facebook, Twitter, and Nextdoor and have information on our agency website for potential housing hosts.
- Before a specific refugee arrives, we do a lot of targeted appeals describing the individual in terms of nationality, age, interests, and education.



LGBT Refugee
Services



Challenges

- There's a housing shortage in this area, and it takes a lot of staff time to find housing.
- Many hosts are disappointed that the refugees aren't more social.
- Many hosts only want to commit for a month, so there's not continuity in the client's life.
- Refugees sometimes wish that they didn't have to conform to the rules of a household or family and want to live alone.



LGBT Refugee
Services



Volunteer Support Groups

We provide a team of volunteers for each LGBT refugee consisting of 5 to 8 volunteers, who:

- Provide practical support, such as accompanying refugees to medical appointments or a social service agency.
- Help with English by tutoring and assisting with paperwork.
- Provide social support by showing refugees local places and helping them get oriented to the community.



LGBT Refugee
Services



Resettling LGBT Refugees Nationalities Service Center Philadelphia, PA



JULIANE RAMIC

**SENIOR DIRECTOR OF REFUGEE AND
COMMUNITY INTEGRATION**



Building Capacity / Preparing



- Physical Space
- Train and support staff
- Examine existing management and service delivery systems are inclusive
- Consider partners that support the delivery of core services



Service Considerations



- **Housing**
- **Employment**
- **Activities to prevent or address feelings of isolation**



Q & A



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Wrap Up



March 18, 2015



QUICK CONNECTION: Updates and Announcements from ORR

Reminder: Submissions Due March 19 for Welcoming Refugees Contest

[Click here](#) for more information, contest rules, and the application process.

Proposals Due May 4 for Refugee IDA Program

ORR's [Refugee Individual Development Account](#) (IDA) program funds projects that help eligible refugee participants to open and contribute systematically to IDAs for specified goals, including home ownership, business capitalization, vehicles for educational or work purposes, professional certification, and certain educational opportunities. For more information review the [funding opportunity announcement](#) and [apply on Grants.gov](#) by **May 4**.

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