



Connecting Refugees to TANF Services in Minnesota and Utah

*Office of Refugee Resettlement
Webinar*

June 27, 2013

Overview of Webinar



Mitiku Ashebir

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Poll Questions



Please respond to the three poll questions that will appear on your screen.

Thank you!

Asking Questions



The screenshot shows a web browser window titled "Microsoft Office Live Meeting - livemeeting.com - NHMRC July Webinar Practice Session". The browser tabs include "Attendees (1)", "Voice & Video", "Q&A", and "Meeting". The "Q&A" tab is active, displaying a text input field with the placeholder text "Type your question here." and a button labeled "Ask" with a hand icon. Below the input field, it says "No questions have been answered yet." Three numbered instructions are overlaid on the screenshot:

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Speakers from Utah



Gerald Brown

Director, Refugee Services Office, Utah Department of Workforce Services

Sisifo Taatiti

Program Manager, WDD Program and Training, Utah Department of Workforce Services



UTAH DEPARTMENT OF WORKFORCE SERVICES:

Integrating TANF and Refugee Services

“The Refugee’s Road to Integration”

Refugee Services Office Business Plan

Overall Map: Integrating Services to Address Key Barriers for Refugees

- Employment Services
- Education
- English Language Learners/ESL
- Sustainable Housing
- Transportation
- Disaffected Youth
- Mental Health Services
- Health Care
- Isolation
- Lack of Coherent Economic Program for Refugees



“The Refugee’s Road to Integration”

Refugee Services Office Business Plan

The Integration of TANF/Refugee Services

- Eligibility/
Employment
Specialists to State
Staff are Co-located at
same locations
- Translation and
Language Support
- Connections to
Community
- Conduct Work
Readiness Evaluation
- Referrals and Close
Partnerships to
Domestic
Violence/Mental
Health Services
(Valley Mental
Health)
- Regular
Communication with
resettlement agencies



“The Refugee’s Road to Integration”

Refugee Services Office Business Plan

TANF and Employment Services

ROADBLOCK	SOLUTIONS
<p>Employment Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Find more effective ways to put refugees in jobs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">⊗ More creative collaboration with mainstream DWS⊗ Humanitarian Center project⊗ Find more effective ways to educate employers⊗ ○ RSO staff person dedicated part time to coordinate refugees employment efforts⊗ ○ Move refugees outside the valley to locations with jobs○ Redistributing RSO employment funding to most effective providers○ Engaging Refugee Community Organizations in job development○ Chamber of Commerce Workshops○ Target employers who use visa workers○ Strengthen/shake up refugee employment community○ More jobs



“The Refugee’s Road to Integration”

Refugee Services Office Business Plan

Education and English Language Learners

ROADBLOCK	SOLUTIONS
<p>Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• English<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Fed. Rules (re: worksite participation limit time for English learning)- Affordable transportation- Lack of classes where ref are- Lack of intensive ESL classes- Lack of funding• K-12• Post Secondary	<ul style="list-style-type: none">☒ Humanitarian Center Project (TANF)☒ United Way funded Welcome Centers☒ Convince Fed Gov to make ESL a core activity of TANF○ Added support for Eng Skils Learn. Cntr. (which uses volunteer teachers)○ New RSO employment staff convince more employers to allow ESL at work



LESSONS LEARNED:

Integration of Services to Refugees -

- Provides comprehensive case management around ESL/Employment, soft skills, and credentials
- Increases ability for TANF and ORR to deliver employment and education/training services in an integrated manner
- Leverages partnerships and resources across the State
- Requires consistent and regular communication

Thank you!

Gerald Brown

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Speakers from Minnesota



Gus Avenido

Refugee Coordinator, Minnesota Department of Human Services

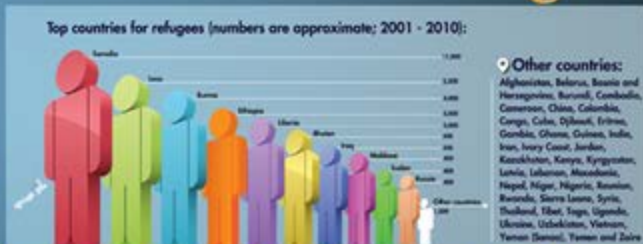
Jane Delage

TANF Policy and Performance Manager, Minnesota Department of Human Services



Children and Family Services

Minnesota becomes home for thousands of refugees



Forced to flee

"We knew that it was dangerous because of things that happened before. But we had no choice... [My wife] asked, 'What is it that you can do now?' And I said, 'Run away.'"
 - Malaba, refugee from Zimbabwe*



A United Nations Convention defines a refugee as anyone forced to flee their home country due to a well-founded fear of persecution because of:

- Race
- Religion
- Nationality (citizenship)
- Social group membership
- Political opinion.

About 3,000 refugees arrive in Minnesota every year.

Connected with others

"I thought the war was over when I left Cambodia, but I realize now that for survivors and all those involved, the war is never over just because the guns have fallen silent."
 - Long Ung, refugee from Cambodia**



Refugees arriving in Minnesota are connected with a network of organizations from the day of arrival to receive:

- Basic needs support
- Home visits
- Case management
- Community orientation
- Referrals to health services
- Employment services
- Education and training.

This network continues to support refugees as they integrate.

Integrated successfully

"These women and men become our next door neighbors, coworkers, and trusted friends in the reshaping of Minnesota and our country."
 - Gus Arevalo, Minnesota Department of Human Services*



Six hallmarks of successful integration:

- Stable housing
- Current/up-to-date immigration status
- A safe living environment
- Involvement in community services and programs
- Ability to function independently
- Employment for adults.

* From *This Much I Can Tell You: Stories of Courage and Hope from Refugees in Minnesota*

** From DoOneThing.org

BETTER GOVERNMENT FOR A
BETTER MINNESOTA



The Minnesota approach:

- ❖ MFIP policy was designed to include TANF applicants/recipients who are refugees
- ❖ The Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP), Minnesota's TANF program, provides the main cash assistance and employment services to refugee families in Minnesota
- ❖ Refugee families apply for MFIP within days of arrival. They are assigned MFIP an employment services agency within 7 working days of MFIP approval
- ❖ The MFIP job counselor develops the employment services plan with individual refugees. The plan serves as a starting place for additional employment services funded by ORR

Key MFIP policies that benefit refugees

- ❖ MFIP combines SNAP and TANF into one program with one set of rules
- ❖ Like other MFIP participants, refugees receive **child care assistance** and **transportation** to support activities in their employment plans
- ❖ Family Stabilization Services (state funded) is a special track for new immigrants and others unable to immediately meet work participation rate
- ❖ Acquisition of language skills and knowledge of US work culture encouraged, particularly within the 1st year

Key MFIP policies that benefit refugees

- ❖ MFIP ES providers expected to provide culturally appropriate services
- ❖ Specialized child care
- ❖ Bi-lingual and bi-cultural county and ES staff
- ❖ Use of refugee agencies (MAAs and Volag affiliates) as ES providers

Key MFIP policies that benefit refugees

- ❖ MFIP grant (\$532 for family of 3) falls near the higher tier of TANF grants across the continental USA where the highest is \$723 and the lowest is \$170
- ❖ Income disregards
- ❖ 5-year time limit with extensions for those working 30 hours or more or who have specific medical conditions



Coordination between the two programs

- MFIP participants are referred to Refugee services by their MFIP job counselor
- The Refugee services case managers report hours to the MFIP job counselor
- In FFY 13, only 25% (618 refugees) are receiving additional ES from Refugee Services
- Refugees that are more independent do well in regular MFIP services without specialized providers



Is the Minnesota approach working?

- ✓ Refugees do well under the Minnesota Self-Support Index, a three year measure of those working 30 hours a week or off assistance.
- ✓ The approach used in Refugee Services has been replicated as a model for services for other populations in the state that have disparate outcomes
- ✓ Minnesota's large refugee migrations from other states indicate that refugees choose to live here



Ways Refugee Services supplement MFIP services

❖ Refugee providers

- Are able to provide more hands case management services
- Help bridge the cultural gaps
- Explain job duties to new workers
- Work with employers to meet their needs

❖ Refugee providers

- Help with work supports in excess of what is available from MFIP
- Help with housing issues
- Interpret program rules, help fill out forms, smooth the way

Lessons Learned:

When TANF policies on cash assistance and employment services accommodate refugees -

- ✓ Employment results occur
- ✓ Statewide access to TANF cash benefit and employment services occur
- ✓ Co-case management by TANF job counselors and ORR funded job counselors demonstrate a high level of collaboration
- ✓ Refugees are not diverted from TANF



Thank You!

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Question and Answer Session



Question and Answer Session

Asking Questions



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Accessing Materials



THANK YOU for attending the Webinar!

A transcript and audio recording will be available approximately 10 days on the Office of Refugee Resettlement Web site and the Welfare Peer TA Network Web site.

Please be sure to register for additional upcoming Webinars through the Welfare Peer TA Network Web site.



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