



Building Strong Refugee Families: Building Bridges to Education and Career Pathways

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***Collaboration and Innovation: Key to
Engaging TANF Customers***

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Barriers to Employment for Immigrants and Refugee Families



- Limited English Proficiency.
- Need to be employed quickly but not entering a career pathway- just a job placement.
- Low-literacy in Native language.
- Unfamiliarity with US workplace and culture.
- Post-traumatic stress.
- Lack of High School Diploma or GED.
- Lack of computer and other technology skills.
- Finding enough low cost or free classes, programs, and work experience options.
- Finding staff trained in legal status, documentation, and needs of different immigrant populations.

Additional Barriers for Credentials/Skills Received prior to living in United States



- Understanding the American workplace culture and recruiting practices and language proficiency
- Recognition of formal academic qualifications or credentials (especially medical profession, engineering) is hard and confusing with multiple Federal, state, and local rules, procedures, etc.
- Differences across States in licensures, depending on where refugees are placed.

Programs are being created to target these refugees and immigrants (such as Northern Virginia Family Service' Training Futures program)

Bridges for Refugees and Asylees



Connecting Refugees to Four Purposes of TANF



- Four purposes of **T**emporary **A**ssistance to **N**eedy **F**amilies:
 - assisting needy families so that children can be cared for in their own homes.
 - reducing the dependency of needy parents by promoting job preparation, work and marriage.
 - preventing out-of-wedlock pregnancies.
 - encouraging the formation and maintenance of two-parent families.
- Needing to connect refugees to healthy marriage and responsible fatherhood programs to strengthen parenting, cultural understanding

Environmental Scan of Programs



Purpose: To document knowledge and research of employment, workforce, career pathways, and adult literacy programs that are reaching refugees and asylees to support technical assistance efforts and knowledge of the field. Three methodological approaches were used:

1. Needs Assessment around TANF and Healthcare Challenges and Strengths (2013)
2. Literature Review
3. Semi-Structured Interviews with ORR Coordinators

Highlighted Programs from Needs Assessment/TA Webinars from 2013



- **Colorado:** Colorado Works and Colorado Refugee Services Program, Colorado Department of Human Services
- **Minnesota:** Minnesota Department of Human Services
- **Utah:** Refugee Services Office and WDD Program and Training, Utah Department of Workforce Services
- **Washington:** Office of Refugee & Immigrant Assistance, Washington State Department of Social and Health Services

Webinar Materials Accessible at: <http://peerta.acf.hhs.gov>

Case Studies of Promising Programs



- Illinois Special Units Office Provides Culturally Competent and Linguistically Appropriate TANF Services for Refugee Participants.
- Moving Refugees Towards Self-Sufficiency Pathways in Erie County, New York: Communication, Collaboration, and a Focus on Cultural Knowledge.
- Refugee Organizations Provide Collective Voice for Refugees in Lansing, Michigan.

Case Studies of Promising Practices Accessible at:
<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr/resource/tanf-refugee-program-partnerships>

Case Studies of Promising Programs



- Utah Leverages TANF and Refugee Services Partnership to Provide Refugees with Integrated Employment and Education Support.
- Washington State Implements Pilots to Promote Self-Sufficiency Among Refugees with Low English Proficiency.
- Work Progression for Refugees Tied to English Literacy Levels in Colorado.
- *Case Studies of Promising Practices Accessible at:*
<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr/resource/tanf-refugee-program-partnerships>

Ensuring Self-Sufficiency Success- Webinars



- Six Upcoming Webinars:
 - ORR 101 for the Workforce Field (held May 2014)
 - Navigating Labor Market Information for Refugee Agencies and Programs (held July 2014)
 - Preparing Refugees for Employment: the ABC's of Understanding the American Work place- resources, tools, and programs (September 16, 2014)
 - Secondary Migration: What States and Counties are Doing to Ensure Success and Self-Sufficiency for Second Wave of Refugees (September 23, 2014)
 - Putting the Puzzle Together: Helping Refugees Navigate Social Service Agencies, Programs, and Community Providers (Fall 2014)
 - Models of Collaboration Guide: Highlighting Practices from Written Report (Fall 2014)

- *Webinar Materials Accessible at:*
<https://peerta.acf.hhs.gov/index.cfm?event=viewWebinarList&nav=19>

Barriers to Employment for Immigrants and Refugees



- Web site: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr>
 - Online Resources Library – New topic specific pages featuring the strongest resources on resettlement, integration, health, economic development, employment, unaccompanied children, and trafficking.
 - Online Calendar – Updated continuously on ORR’s website to highlight ORR-specific events, as well as a broader set of events that relate to refugee resettlement.



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