



Best Practices for Public Health Practitioners to Conduct Community Mapping & Engage with Newly-Arrived Ukrainians

JUNE 2023



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The International Rescue Committee helps people whose lives and livelihoods are shattered by conflict and disaster to survive, recover and regain control of their future.



The National Resource Center for Refugees, Immigrants, and Migrants (NRC-RIM) is funded by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to support state and local health departments working with RIM communities. Learn more at nrcrim.org. Last updated: 05/19/2023.

Introduction

At the heart of public health is the desire to improve the health and well-being of all members of a community. Yet when it comes to helping new arrival communities, like the Ukrainian diaspora, it can be challenging to know where to begin and how to effectively reach them. The International Rescue Committee (IRC) in partnership with the National Resource Center for Refugees, Immigrants, and Migrants (NRC-RIM) developed this document to provide public health professionals and others with guidance, recommendations, and resources to better serve and engage with Ukrainian new-arrival communities. Additionally, a glossary of terms is included at the end of the document to help public health professionals navigate the content.

The Ukrainian diaspora in the United States is a large, vibrant, and diverse community that includes immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers, and humanitarian parolees. Historically, Ukrainians have come to the U.S. for a range of reasons, from escaping religious persecution to seeking economic opportunities and reuniting with family. More recently, Ukrainians are arriving to escape the current conflict in Ukraine. Many Ukrainians have recently come through programs such as Uniting for Ukraine (U4U) and the [Lautenberg Program](#).

With President Joe Biden's [pledge](#) to welcome as many as 100,000 Ukrainians through a full range of legal pathways, including the U.S. Refugee Assistance Program (USRAP), it is essential that public health professionals understand the health needs of Ukrainians and the best way to ensure that they have access to appropriate healthcare services and are integrated into the larger community in a manner that is respectful of their cultural and social values.

Through this resource, we aim to convey the importance of building trust and relationships with Ukrainian new arrival communities. By collaborating with community-based organizations and using multiple outreach channels, public health professionals and others can tailor their efforts to meet the unique needs of this community. We hope that this resource will inspire a more compassionate, culturally sensitive, and effective approach to serving the health needs of Ukrainian new-arrival communities.

Immigration Statuses and Ways Ukrainians are Coming to the U.S.

It is important to note that while historically Ukrainians needing humanitarian protection came to the U.S. through the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program, many new Ukrainian arrivals are now coming through diverse legal pathways. The immigration type or status of an individual will determine how long they are authorized to stay in the U.S., whether they have access to a pathway to lawful permanent residency, and the types of state and federal benefits for which they are eligible. Because of this, people with different status and types will have different contextual realities and stressors that may impact their health access and priorities. Barriers in access due to differing benefits will also likely influence health priorities. Public health professionals may want to invest time in understanding the immigration type or status of the community they are working with and what benefits they are eligible for to better inform their interventions. Below are 5 common pathways and immigration status and types for new arrivals.

Uniting for Ukraine (U4U)

Provides a pathway for Ukrainian citizens, and their immediate family members, who are outside the United States to come to the United States and stay for up to two years under humanitarian parole. Ukrainians participating in U4U must have a supporter in the United States who agrees to provide them with financial support for the duration of their stay in the United States. Parole is not a permanent form of protection nor a pathway to lawful permanent residency.

[LEARN MORE](#)

Humanitarian Parole

Individuals may request parole into the U.S. for urgent humanitarian reasons or significant public benefit. Individuals may request parole for themselves, or on behalf of another individual. Humanitarian parole is not a permanent form of protection nor a pathway to lawful permanent residency.

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U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP)

Provides eligible Ukrainians outside of the U.S. with greater access to refugee resettlement processing under the Lautenberg Program, while also expanding referral mechanisms for Ukrainians and others fleeing Russia's war in Ukraine who need permanent resettlement.

[LEARN MORE](#)



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Immigrant Visas

Immigrant visas based on family ties, employment, and other visa types.

LEARN MORE



MORE INFO ABOUT DOCUMENTATION + BENEFIT ELIGIBILITY FOR UKRAINIANS

Temporary Protected Status (TPS)

Allows Ukrainians *already present* in the United States, and who meet strict eligibility requirements, to remain in the United States on a temporary basis. TPS does not lead to lawful permanent resident status or give any other immigration status.

LEARN MORE

Most Prominent Health Needs of Ukrainian Newcomers



ACCESS THE CENTER OF EXCELLENCE IN NEWCOMER HEALTH'S BRIEF ON COMMON HEALTH CONDITIONS AND CONCERNS

Ukrainian new arrivals in the U.S. face a range of access challenges, including language and cultural barriers that can make it difficult to access healthcare services. Additionally, many Ukrainian individuals have experienced trauma related to conflict or displacement, which can have long-lasting physical and mental health impacts. Despite these challenges, it's important to recognize the strengths that exist within the Ukrainian community. Ukrainians have a rich cultural heritage, a resilient spirit, and a strong sense of community support. By harnessing these strengths, public health professionals can work collaboratively to address the health needs of Ukrainian new arrivals and promote their overall well-being.

Some of the most common health needs among Ukrainian newcomers include mental health support, chronic disease management, and reproductive health services. Public health professionals should be aware of these needs and work to ensure that Ukrainian newcomers have access to culturally and linguistically appropriate healthcare services. A summary is listed below:

Health Conditions

- Tuberculosis (TB) both active and latent
- Vaccine-preventable diseases (VPD): including pertussis, measles, chickenpox, diphtheria, varicella, hepatitis A, and paralytic polio.

It is important to note that vaccination coverage in Ukraine is among the lowest in the World Health Organization (WHO) European Region, and rates for key vaccines such as BCG, DTP3, Pol3, MCV, and HepB3 are at or below the target threshold. Furthermore, vaccine hesitancy is a significant concern in Ukraine, posing challenges in achieving optimal immunization rates.

- Hepatitis B virus (HBV) and Hepatitis C virus (HCV) infection
- HIV

Common Causes of Death Among Ukrainians

- Ischemic heart disease
- Stroke
- Cirrhosis
- Lung cancer
- Alzheimer's disease
- Cardiomyopathy
- Colorectal cancer
- Self-harm
- Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease
- Stomach cancer

Risk Factors for Death and Disability

- High blood pressure
- Dietary risks
- Tobacco
- High LDL
- High body-mass index (BMI)
- Alcohol use
- High fasting plasma glucose
- Air pollution
- Kidney dysfunction



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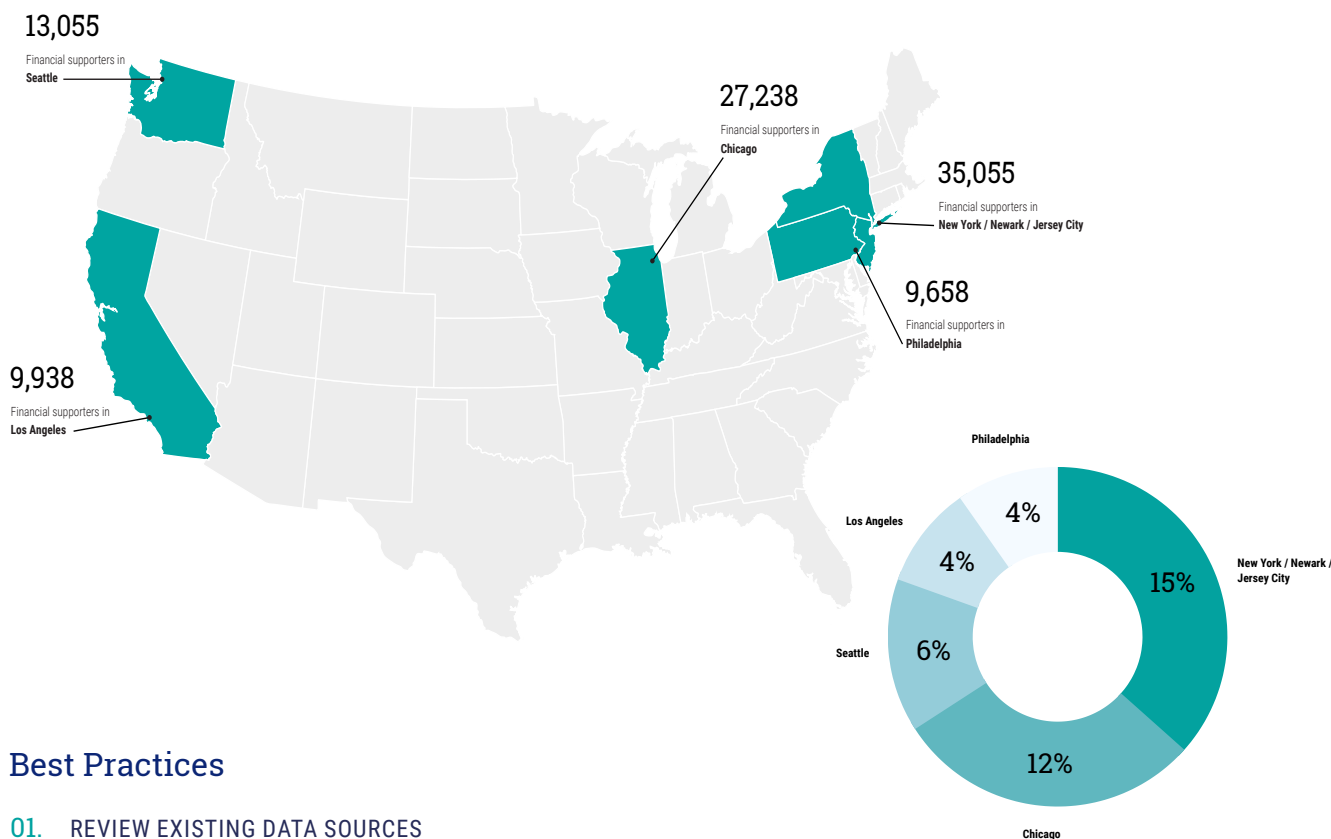


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While above mentioned risk factors for death and disability, as well as common causes of death, are seen in all communities, it is important to consider the specific needs of Ukrainian new arrivals. The available data from the health profile of Ukrainians, retrieved from “Ukrainian Health Brief”, provides insights into the most common risk factors and common causes of death faced by Ukrainians. Public health professionals can prioritize these findings in their efforts to support the Ukrainian community.

Geographic Distribution of Uniting for Ukraine (U4U) Financial Supporters in the U.S.

While data on the specific location of Ukrainians arriving in the United States is not currently available, there is information on where financial supporters of the Uniting for Ukraine (U4U) program are located (as of March 21, 2023). Please note that this information may not always be indicative of where Ukrainian new arrivals will ultimately settle, but it can provide some insight into geographic areas of arrival and where large Ukrainian American communities exist. Given that this represents less than 40% of total arrivals, it also indicates the wide dispersal of new arrivals throughout U.S. communities.



Best Practices

01. REVIEW EXISTING DATA SOURCES

Existing data sources, such as the U.S. Census and local public health data, can provide valuable information on the demographics and characteristics of the Ukrainian community. It is important to consider the timeliness of the data in relation to the needs of Ukrainian new arrivals. It is recommended to seek the most recent data available and complement it with more specific and up-to-date information from local sources or community assessments (see below).

02. IDENTIFY EXISTING RESOURCES AND SUPPORTS

There are many individuals and organizations that work formally and informally with Ukrainian refugees, parolees, asylum seekers, and immigrants in the U.S. By identifying existing organizations and institutions that already provide critical support to the Ukrainian newcomer community, public health professionals can understand the services they provide, their capacity and constraints, the health needs of Ukrainian new arrivals, the barriers they face in accessing health services, and recommendations for how to best



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address those needs and barriers. Professionals can use this information to find community partners, tailor an intervention, establish a referral system, and share information with them about the services that your public health entity offers and when they can refer individuals to you.

The most typical types of organizations to work with Ukrainians are resettlement agencies, ethnic-based community organizations (ECBOs), and faith-based institutions.

Resettlement Agencies

Resettlement agencies play an important role in helping newcomers, including current new arrival Ukrainians, adjust to life in the United States. Resettlement agencies are private organizations that enter into a grant, contract, or cooperative agreement with the U.S. federal government to provide a range of services to help newcomers adjust to life in the U.S., including initial reception and placement support such as assistance with housing, employment, and language learning. These agencies work with the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) to provide services to refugees, asylees, and other eligible communities to help individuals and families achieve self-sufficiency and successfully integrate into their new communities.

While not all these agencies may exclusively focus on supporting Ukrainian communities, they play a vital role in providing resettlement and assistance services to diverse populations, including Ukrainians.

Many of the resettlement agencies have local offices or affiliate organizations which may have different names in locales around the United States. To find a resettlement agency in your community, you can visit the [ORR website](#) or search for resettlement agencies using the following search terms: "resettlement agencies in [your state or city]," "refugee resettlement agencies," or "resettlement service providers."

1. [Bethany Christian Services](#)
2. [International Rescue Committee](#) (IRC)
3. [Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society](#) (HIAS)
4. [Church World Service](#) (CWS)
5. [Episcopal Migration Ministries](#) (EMM)
6. [Ethiopian Community Development Council](#) (ECDC)
7. [U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants](#) (USCRI)
8. [Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service](#) (LIRS)
9. [U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops](#) (USCCB)
10. [World Relief](#)

Faith and Ethnic-Based Community Organizations (ECBOs):

ECBOs and faith-based institutions often provide cultural and social support to the community. They may also receive private or public funding to provide specific support such as job readiness, food assistance programs, integration support, and more. Below are examples of some national ECBOs that work with Ukrainian new arrivals. This is not an exhaustive list and other resources may be available in specific regions or cities.

To find other faith-based institutions or ECBOs supporting the Ukrainian community, use the following search terms: "Ukrainian immigrant services organization in [your state or city]," "Ukrainian American community organizations in [your state or city]," and "Ukrainian church in [your state or city]."

EXAMPLES OF NATIONAL ECBOS:

- [Ukrainian National Association](#) (UNA)
- [Ukrainian Congress Committee of America](#) (UCCA)
- [Ukrainian American Youth Association](#) (UAYA)
- [Razom](#)
- [Ukrainian Immigration Task Force](#) (UITF)



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Legal Service Providers

Many newly arrived Ukrainians may seek information and services related to immigration from attorneys. In some communities, there are pro-bono or low-bono immigration legal service providers who may be working closely with the Ukrainian community. There are also national legal service provider organizations. This is not an exhaustive list and there may be other resources available in specific regions or cities.

To find other legal service providers supporting the Ukrainian community, use the following search terms: "pro-bono immigration legal services [your state or city]."

- [Ukrainian Immigration Task Force \(UITF\)](#)
- [Immigrant Advocates Network's legal services directory](#)

State Refugee Coordinators, State Refugee Health Coordinators, and Quarterly Forums

State Refugee Coordinators and State Refugee Health Coordinators can be important sources of information about newly arrived refugees in your state.

It's worth noting that Ukrainians may not necessarily be designated as refugees in the legal sense, but they may still be eligible for refugee benefits. Therefore, it may be useful to seek information from State Refugee Coordinators and State Refugee Health Coordinators about which groups are eligible

for which types of benefits in your state.

Most communities resettling refugees also have Quarterly Forums for all community providers serving refugees and can be a great way to connect with organizations that serve refugees and immigrants in your area.

To find information on State Refugee Coordinators, State Refugee Health Coordinators, and Quarterly Forums in your state, try searching online using these terms along with the name of your state. Additionally, your local resettlement agency may provide valuable information on these resources in your area. You can also refer to the [list of State Refugee Health Coordinators](#) provided by the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services.

For public health professionals seeking assistance with connecting newly arrived refugees and immigrants to resettlement services and resources, the Virtual Resettlement Line (VRL) may be a helpful tool. The VRL is a one-stop resource provided by the International Rescue Committee (IRC) to assist prospective clients not yet connected to a resettlement agency or those struggling to access benefits/resources in their community. The VRL includes virtual speaking navigators in English, Ukrainian, Russian, Dari, and Pashto, and is open Monday - Friday, 9 AM to 5 PM ET. **Providers can refer their clients to call the VRL at +1 (212) 551-3010 or email VRL@rescue.org to receive assistance.**



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03. IDENTIFYING KEY SUBGROUPS

It is important to identify key subgroups within the Ukrainian community that may have special needs or have particular barriers to receiving services. This may include single mothers, elderly individuals, disabled persons, LGBTQIA+, and other groups that may have specific health needs. Public health professionals may want to consider reaching out to their state's Refugee Health Coordinator to ask about specific demographics with new arrival Ukrainians. Professionals may also want to gather demographics from who is utilizing the services at the specific agencies listed above and compare and contrast to see if any key demographic groups are being left out.

When gathering information from agencies and organizations, community members and subject matter experts, public health officials may also consider asking specific prompts such as:

- Please describe any groups in your community that you believe are having particular challenges (i.e., elderly, disabled, pregnant women, etc.)?
- Please describe any challenges you believe that elderly or disabled members of the Ukrainian community may be having.
- Please describe any challenges you believe that LGBTQIA+ members of the Ukrainian community may be having.
- Please describe any challenges you believe that female members of the Ukrainian community may be having.
- Please describe any challenges you believe that parents or caregivers in the Ukrainian community may be having.

04. DISAGGREGATE DATA

When analyzing existing or gathered data, it is important to disaggregate data to identify any groups that may be at higher risk of being missed or have specific needs that may not be visible when taking an aggregate approach. This is called using an equity lens. For example, by disaggregating data by age, gender, and language proficiency, we may identify certain groups, such as elderly individuals, single mothers, or those with limited English proficiency, who may require targeted interventions or specialized services. When we analyze the data this way, we can ensure that our efforts are targeted towards addressing the needs of all members of the Ukrainian new arrival community.

05. COLLABORATION AND OUTREACH EFFORTS

- **Co-Branding:** It is important to collaborate with CBOs and visibly co-brand outreach efforts with organizations that Ukrainian community members know and trust. This is particularly crucial for communities that have experiences with repressive or corrupt governments. Co-branding can help to build trust and increase the reach and effectiveness of the community mapping exercise. When community members receive messages from organizations they trust, they are more likely to engage with the content and participate in the mapping exercise.
- **Use Multiple Outreach Channels:** To maximize the reach and effectiveness of outreach efforts, it is important to consider using multiple channels and entry points to engage the Ukrainian community. These channels may include community events, social media, audio and print materials, and other digital platforms. It is important to account for varying levels of literacy and preferred communication methods, including age-related preferences. For example, younger people may prefer to receive information through social media or their phone, while older adults may prefer print materials or in-person communication. Collaborating with trusted sources such as doctors, ECBOs, and other community leaders can also help to increase the reach and impact of outreach efforts.
- **Contacting Refugee Health Coordinators:** Consider contacting your State Refugee Health Coordinator (RHC) for advice on how to connect with the Ukrainian community and to learn about current programming. The RHC manages health initiatives for refugees and can be found by visiting the ORR website and searching for Key State Contacts and searching for Key State Contacts.
- **Customize Outreach Efforts:** To effectively reach the Ukrainian community, it is important to involve the community in the outreach efforts. This may involve working with Ukrainian community representatives, members, and organizations to identify the unique health concerns and needs of the community. Once identified, this information can be used to develop targeted messaging and materials that address the specific concerns and needs of the community. Community members can also play a key role in spreading the word about health-related resources and services by sharing information with their networks. This can be done through word-of-mouth, social media, or other channels that are commonly used by the community. It is also important to ensure



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that language barriers do not hinder access to important health information and resources. Translation and interpretation services should be made available and budgeted for, so that Ukrainian-speaking individuals can access health services and resources in their preferred language. It is important to consider cultural validation and community review in the translation process of any health material. Best practices for translation, can be explored through resources available on the [NRC-RIM website](#). These resources provide guidance on maintaining cultural sensitivity and ensuring effective communication with the Ukrainian community.

Special Considerations: Building Trust with the Ukrainian Community

Building trust is essential for effective public health interventions, especially for communities like the Ukrainian community that have experienced historical violence and persecution. This history can lead to mistrust of public health interventions, making it challenging to connect with these communities and introduce interventions like COVID-19 or measles vaccines. To overcome this, it is crucial to take a sustained approach, understanding the historical and contextual factors at play, staying engaged and building trust over time. One way to start building trust is by holding a listening session where community members can share their experiences, concerns, and needs. This can help public health professionals better understand the community's unique context and tailor interventions to meet their specific needs. Additionally, involving the Ukrainian community in the planning and implementation of interventions can also help to build trust. This can include forming a Community Advisory Board that has Ukrainian representation or hiring from the Ukrainian community to work on public health initiatives. To learn more about the benefits of Community Advisory Boards, you can refer to the [NRC-RIM Best Practice Partner document on CABs](#).

It is important to consider language access when working with communities such as the Ukrainian community. This can involve using interpreters, ensuring translations are accurate, and hiring staff from the community whenever possible to increase linguistic access and cultural understanding. While many Ukrainians speak Russian, some may view this language negatively given the history of its imposition on the Ukrainian people. Therefore, ensuring interpretation and translation is in both Russian and Ukrainian and asking people their preference is recommended.

Programs should be mutually beneficial, and the benefit to individuals, families, and communities should be emphasized. It's recommended to involve the community in identifying the specific benefits that are most relevant and impactful for them. It is important to communicate the long-term benefits of public health interventions that are aligned with community values. A thoughtful and sustained approach that includes community partnership will create strong and trusted connections that allow for community health interventions and education across a wide range of issues, including during public health emergencies where quick action may be required, and trust needed.

Conclusion

In conclusion, providing culturally and linguistically appropriate health care services is crucial in promoting the health and well-being of Ukrainian new arrivals. Addressing their unique health needs requires a collaborative effort from healthcare providers, community organizations, and policymakers. By understanding the cultural beliefs, values, and practices of this community, healthcare providers can develop effective strategies to improve access to care, build trust, and ensure better health outcomes. It is essential to prioritize community engagement, health education, and targeted interventions that reflect the community's needs and perspectives. Only then can we achieve health equity for all, including Ukrainian new arrivals.



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Glossary of Key Terms for Refugee Resettlement and Immigration in the United States

Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM)

The Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) promotes U.S. interests by providing protection, easing suffering, and resolving the plight of persecuted and forcibly displaced people around the world.

Community-Based Organization (CBO)

A publicly, privately, or public-private partnership funded organization that is based in the community and has programs, projects, and initiatives to provide services and resources to people living in the community. CBOs are based in the community, which helps them to understand the unique needs, available services, systems, and gaps within that community.

Ethnic Community-Based Organization

A Community-Based Organization whose leadership is typically comprised of refugees, immigrants, and migrants, whose purpose is to serve other refugees, immigrants, and migrants.

Faith-Based Organization

A charitable organization or non-profit whose work is affiliated with a religious group or is centered on the particular faith or tenets of that faith.

Humanitarian Parole

A discretionary grant allowing persons who would otherwise be inadmissible to enter the U.S. for urgent humanitarian reasons for a designated period. Grants of humanitarian parole confer varying periods of time and benefits.

Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR)

The mission and purpose of the ORR is to assist in the relocation process and provide needed services to individuals granted asylum within the United States.

Immigrant

From the perspective of the country of arrival, a person who moves into a country other than that of their nationality or usual residence, so that the country of destination effectively becomes their new country of usual residence.

Lautenberg Amendment

An amendment that allows citizens of former Soviet Union countries who are members of religious minority groups to join family members in the U.S. The Lautenberg Amendment expires every year and must be renewed by Congress. It is operated by USRAP.



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Quarterly Forums

Meetings held by local resettlement agencies, state refugee directors, and other stakeholders to discuss issues related to refugee resettlement and to coordinate services. These forums provide an opportunity to share best practices and identify gaps in services, as well as to discuss strategies for addressing emerging needs within the refugee community.

Refugee

A refugee is an individual outside their country of nationality or last habitual residence who has a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group or political opinion, and is unable or unwilling, as a result of such fear, to avail themselves of the protection of that country (Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, 1951). In the U.S., in a strict legal sense the term refugee means the admission to the U.S. through the United States refugee Admission Program.

Resettlement

Resettlement involves the selection and transfer of refugees from a country in which they have sought protection to a third country that has agreed to admit them as refugees with permanent residence status. The status provided ensures protection against forced return and provides a resettled refugee and their family or dependents with access to rights like those enjoyed by nationals. Resettlement also carries with it the opportunity to eventually become a naturalized citizen of the resettlement country.

Resettlement Agency

An agency that delivers the basic reception and placement services that refugees receive. The agency may offer additional services.

State Refugee Coordinator

State Refugee Coordinators are individuals appointed by their state governors to administer and coordinate refugee resettlement programs within their state. They can provide valuable information on the number of refugees arriving in their state, the organizations that are providing resettlement services, and the specific needs of the refugee community in their state.

State Refugee Health Director

State Refugee Health Directors are responsible for overseeing the health of refugees upon arrival to their state. They work to ensure that refugees receive comprehensive health screenings and are connected to appropriate health care providers in their community. They can also provide information on the specific health needs and challenges faced by refugee communities in their state.

Temporary Protected Status (TPS)

TPS is issued by the U.S. when they determine that conditions in a country make it prohibitive for foreign nationals from that country who are residing in the U.S. to return home—for example, civil war or natural disaster. TPS is for a specific period and prevents removal from the U.S. and allows the holder to obtain employment authorization.

United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services is an agency of the United States Department of Homeland Security that administers the country's naturalization and immigration system.

The United States Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP)

A consortium of federal agencies and nonprofit organizations collaborating overseas and domestically to identify and admit qualified refugees for resettlement into the United States.

United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)

A visa is a government endorsement in a passport, giving permission for a person to enter a certain country.



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