INTRODUCTION

The Cultural Orientation Resource Exchange (CORE) is a technical assistance program designed to strengthen linkages between overseas Cultural Orientation (CO) programs at Resettlement Support Centers (RSCs) and CO activities conducted as part of Reception and Placement (R&P) services in the United States. Funded by the U.S. Department of State, Bureau for Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM), and administered by the International Rescue Committee, CORE provides information, materials, and technical assistance to overseas CO programs and to domestic refugee service providers.

This toolkit describes CORE's Refugee Communications Initiative and provides guidance on using the tools CORE has developed to enhance your organization's communication with refugees about the resettlement process and CO.

INCLUDED IN THIS TOOLKIT

- CORE's Refugee Communications Initiative Overview
- CORE's Refugee Communications Tools
- Refugee Communications Action Plan Checklist
- Refugee Communication Poster and Palm Card

CORE'S REFUGEE COMMUNICATIONS INITIATIVE OVERVIEW

REFUGEE COMMUNICATIONS CHALLENGES

During the resettlement process, from pre-departure to post-arrival, refugees need vital information to prepare for and adjust to life in the United States. They need this information when their attention may be divided as their living circumstances are significantly changing and their mental resources are likely stretched. This may make it difficult for them to retain new concepts.

Additionally, refugees often hear information about the United States Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) from friends and relatives who may be at a different stage in the resettlement process and/or receiving resettlement services in a location different from the refugees' final destination. Therefore, the accuracy of informal, word-of-mouth information can vary. Refugees may also hear deliberate misinformation from scams or fraud attempts.

In the face of these challenges, resettlement staff must convey complex pre-departure and post-arrival resettlement information. They must do this on site, at RSCs and Resettlement Agencies (RAs), as well as in the field during circuit rides or at-home orientation sessions. Under these challenging circumstances, resettlement staff must ensure that refugees around the globe consistently receive accurate information.

REFUGEE COMMUNICATIONS SOLUTIONS

With guidance from PRM and in consultation with key stakeholders in refugee resettlement, CORE identified specific refugee communications objectives to address these challenges and support refugees in their adjustment to life in the United States. These objectives are best achieved by empowering all staff—from case workers and health and employment specialists to those responsible for delivering CO—to utilize the tools described in this toolkit. Anyone from support staff to volunteers can also be helpful in using these tools to connect refugees to vital resettlement information. This toolkit is designed to assist resettlement offices in establishing a strategic, integrated approach to CO in order to communicate critical information to refugees about the resettlement process.

The objectives of the Refugee Communications Initiative are to:

- Increase touch points with refugee applicants and keep them engaged in the resettlement process in between face-to-face appointments at RSCs and RAs
- Harmonize resettlement and CO messaging so that refugees around the globe receive the same information
- Increase the quality, quantity, and methods for delivering resettlement and CO information
- Act as an aid during CO instruction and supplement CO education

TARGET AUDIENCE

REFUGEES

Refugees are the primary target audience for CORE's Refugee Communication Initiative. As such, resources and materials discussed in this toolkit prioritize the following:

- Visual simplicity and design clarity
- Low-literacy, low digital literacy needs
- Cultural and linguistic adaptability

REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT STAFF

Refugee resettlement staff around the world at RSCs and at domestic RAs are the secondary audience for CORE's Refugee Communication Initiative and the primary audience for this toolkit. While CORE's mandate is to support domestic and overseas CO providers, CORE's Refugee Communications Toolkit can be used by any resettlement staff engaged in the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP).

IMPLEMENTING A STRATEGIC, INTEGRATED APPROACH

Classroom and one-on-one CO sessions are the most intensive opportunities refugees have to obtain instruction on the resettlement process, and CO providers play an essential role in connecting refugees to resources and information that can aid them on their path to self-sufficiency upon arrival. However, there are competing demands for refugees' attention and time, even during CO sessions, and intensive instruction can often overload students with information. An iterative, whole office approach to using CORE's refugee communications tools will help integrate key resettlement messages with the delivery of other services and give refugees more time to digest and apply the lessons they receive.

There are many ways offices can implement an integrated, whole office approach using some or all of the tools described below. Administrative staff who work in reception can ensure that the waiting areas are optimized with CORE's refugee communications tools and can regularly replenish the resources. Staff who manage websites or social media can embed or share CORE videos and podcasts on a variety of USRAP or CO topics. Case workers and health and employment specialists can share relevant fact sheets as take-home resources to reiterate key messages. Volunteers can be engaged as digital coaches helping refugees learn new technology skills by exploring the *Settle In* mobile app with them. All of CORE's resources are free to access and use in any way that supports the efforts and meets the needs of each office.

CORE'S REFUGEE COMMUNICATIONS TOOLS

Refugee resettlement staff can select the communications resources and tools that will be most helpful at their locations. The communications tools CORE has developed are:

1. The CORE Resettlement Navigator (COREnav) Website
2. Waiting Room Resources for Refugees
3. The *Settle In* Mobile and Desktop App
4. The TextCOREnav Short Message Service

Each tool is described in detail below.

TOOL #1: THE CORE RESETTLEMENT NAVIGATOR (COREnav) WEBSITE

The CORE Resettlement Navigator (www.corenav.org) website presents a wealth of content as "suites" in multiple languages and in multiple formats (videos, podcasts, and fact sheets). These suites maximize visual communication, address low-literacy and low digital literacy, and accommodate cultural and linguistic differences as much as possible.

WEBSITE FEATURES AND RESOURCES

The COREnav website is a mobile-optimized website designed to provide refugees with clear and vital U.S. resettlement and CO information in an engaging and interactive way. It is meant to be accessed directly by refugees themselves for self-learning at any time and at their own pace. The straightforward, functional layout separates USRAP and CO pathways upon entry to the website and offers one or more media resources on each USRAP and CO page. These include:
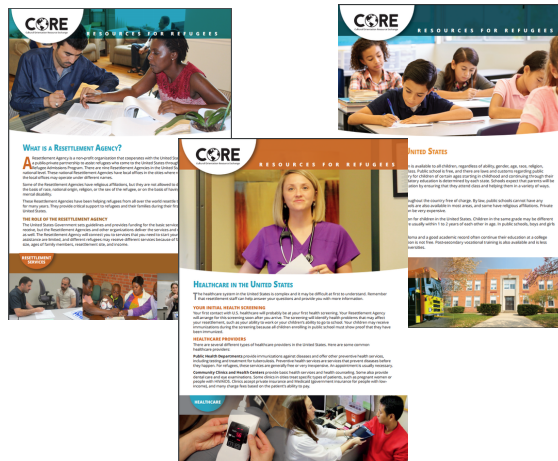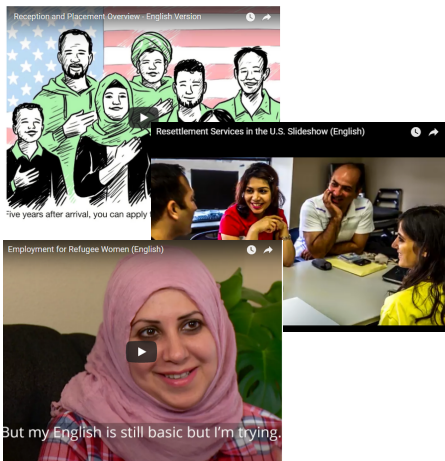
Videos

Fact Sheets

Podcasts

These USRAP and CO resources help refugees manage resettlement expectations and anxieties by creating a "digital bridge" that connects the pre-departure and post-arrival experiences for refugees resettling to the United States.

The COREnav website also provides a one-stop-shop for staff at RSCs and RAs to access all refugee-facing resources on the For Providers page. The COREnav website can be used by all refugee resettlement staff, not just CO providers, when speaking with refugees about USRAP- and CO-related topics.

The COREnav website is not intended to supplant existing websites or information portals that RSCs and RAs may already have in use, but to augment current refugee communications strategies.

Options for Using COREnav in Your Work

- Show COREnav videos during CO class
- Use COREnav podcasts during CO class
- Embed COREnav videos and podcasts on your organization's website
- Include COREnav as a resource on tablets and computers used by refugees at your organization's office
- Include COREnav as a resource for new employees, volunteers, interns, and interpreters as a part of their orientation
- Use COREnav during caseworker appointments to aid in CO related instruction such as employment
- Use COREnav during at-home CO to aid in housing orientation

TOOL 2: WAITING ROOM RESOURCES FOR REFUGEES

The *Waiting Room Resources for Refugees* includes materials CORE has developed to help bridge the pre-departure and post-arrival refugee journey. They are designed to utilize the time refugees spend in waiting areas at RSCs and RAs, making this vital resettlement and CO information practical to use in these environments. Recognizing the benefit of repetition, these resources can increase the number of opportunities refugees have to encounter CO messages, make sure the messages are engaging and accessible to its audience, and ensure that the messages are consistent and harmonized wherever they are encountered.

FEATURES AND RESOURCES

The *Waiting Room Resources for Refugees* include the following resources:

Fact Sheets—CORE fact sheets cover multiple USRAP and CO topics and are available in multiple languages. CORE recommends placing fact sheets on a waiting room table or in a display case and encouraging refugees to take them. They can also be included in refugee information packets or handed out at Cultural Orientation sessions.

Posters and Palm Cards—CORE has created a refugee-facing poster and a smaller, take-away palm card, both of which can be placed in the waiting room or other office areas that refugees frequent. This poster and palm card have information about CORE's digital resources. While they are currently only available in English, text is limited while prioritizing visually engaging images with clear links to digital resources including QR codes for digitally adept users.

> ### Options for Using Waiting Room Resources for Refugees in Your Work
>
> - Place fact sheets and palm cards in waiting areas
> - Show COREnav videos on a loop on waiting room TVs or kiosks
> - Hang posters in waiting areas
> - Place fact sheets in refugee information packets and distribute to refugees during caseworker appointments
> - Bring fact sheets and/or mobile devices on circuit rides, to airport reception, appointments, and home visits

Across all topics, formats, and languages, there are over 300 resources in multiple formats and languages available on the CORE Resettlement Navigator website that can be used in your office. For a complete list, see the Refugee Communications Resource Catalog.

SETTING UP WAITING AREAS TO MAXIMIZE REFUGEE COMMUNICATIONS

Many waiting rooms may be equipped with TVs. Some RSCs have set up digital kiosks where refugees can access RSC websites. Additionally, establishing a "listening corner" in a quiet area or nursing station would require little more than a low-tech audio device. Mobile tablets can be purchased and used during circuit rides or at-home visits. TVs, kiosks, audio devices, and tablets can all be programmed with "resettlement playlists" using the many translated videos and podcasts available on the CORE Resettlement Navigator website. Utilizing the time refugees spend waiting for appointments can actually turn the waiting room experience into a valuable opportunity to create understanding about the resettlement process and build knowledge that will prepare refugees for arrival and integration.

TOOL 3: THE *SETTLE IN* MOBILE & DESKTOP APP

The *Settle In* mobile and desktop app serve as a Cultural Orientation travel companion for refugees throughout the resettlement journey from pre-departure to post-arrival. With a focus on an interactive, personalized experience and on-the-go needs, *Settle In* allows refugees to jump directly into any USRAP or CO chapter and find iterative, instructional lessons followed by easy, game-like quizzes. Using images that mirror the COREnav website, *Settle In* has a welcoming color palette and rewards users with customized badges for completed chapters. To protect user privacy and personal information, no login is required for use, and progress through the app is stored only on the user's device. Refugees are free to skip around, retake lessons, and share with family and friends. In this way, *Settle In* enhances the understanding and retention of vital resettlement and CO information.

The *Settle In* mobile app is available for download on the App Store and Google Play. The *Settle In* desktop app (desktop.settlein.app) offers the same content and interactivity as the mobile version, but allows access via a work or personal computer. As such, CO providers can more easily integrate *Settle In* into their CO delivery either in the classroom or during one-on-one or small group CO.

Options for Using the *Settle In* in Your Work

- Augment CO instruction by using *Settle In* in class
  - Create activities using the mobile app lessons by encouraging refugees to download the app or provide tablets or phones to refugees
  - Assign *Settle In* chapters as homework
- Use *Settle In* as a way to impart CO information during casework appointments, circuit rides, or home visits
- Download *Settle In* onto a tablet or mobile phone and ask a volunteer to encourage refugees to play with it in your lobby or waiting area
- Encourage all staff at the RSC/RA to download *Settle In* and use it to empower refugees to learn more on a specific topic
- Promote *Settle In* to new staff, interns, interpreters, and volunteers to increase knowledge about refugee resettlement

TOOL 4: TextCOREnav SHORT MESSAGE SERVICE

CORE's TextCOREnav Short Message Service (SMS) is a secure, ready-to-use, web application that enables an organization to send and receive text messages at scale anywhere in the world and in multiple languages. The key feature is the drag-and-drop interface which allows easy building, scheduling, and triggering of automated text messages to recipients. The only contact information required is a refugee's phone number.

TextCORENav has been piloted and is currently being used by select RSCs to send bulk SMS messages about anti-fraud warnings, holidays and office closures, general resettlement information, and links to additional resources on COREnav, *Settle In*, and RSC websites.

Options for Using TextCOREnav in Your Work

PRM approval is required to use TextCOREnav at your office. If your organization is interested in implementing an SMS campaign using TextCOREnav, please contact CORE at COResourceExchange@rescue.org for more information. Please use the subject heading "TextCOREnav SMS Campaign".

CONCLUSION

There is no one-size-fits-all approach when it comes to reaching refugees with USRAP and CO information. This overview offers a diversified communications approach that suggests a variety of ways to increase touch points with refugees throughout their resettlement journeys. Offices can deploy CORE's refugee communications tools in a strategic, integrated way. An office may tailor the tools to their needs and budget, or individual staff can deploy the resources in creative ways that enhance their work. CORE will continue to add to the library of resources and look for ways to augment the refugee communications capacity of refugee resettlement staff at RSCs and RAs. Please check back often for new resources and sign up for CORE's eNewsletter here.

APPENDIX

I. Refugee Communications Action Plan Checklist
II. Refugee Communication Poster and Palm Card

I. REFUGEE COMMUNICATIONS ACTION PLAN CHECKLIST

The following list of proposed activities will help you identify steps your office can take to utilize CORE's resources and optimize refugee access to vital information. This list is suggestive and should be tailored to your office's needs and resources.

ACTIVITIES TO USE COREnav IN YOUR WORK

- ☐ Show COREnav videos during CO class
- ☐ Use COREnav podcasts during CO class
- ☐ Embed COREnav videos and podcasts on organization's website
- ☐ Include corenav.org as a resource for refugees on tablets and computers used at organization's office
- ☐ Include corenav.org as resource for new employees, volunteers, interns, and interpreters as a part of their orientation
- ☐ Use corenav.org during caseworker appointments to aid in CO related instruction such as employment
- ☐ Use corenav.org during at-home CO to aid in housing orientation

ACTIVITIES TO USE CORE'S WAITING ROOM RESOURCES FOR REFUGEES IN YOUR WORK

- ☐ Print and place CORE palm cards and fact sheets in waiting areas
- ☐ Print and hang posters in waiting areas
- ☐ Place fact sheets in refugee information packets
- ☐ Distribute relevant fact sheets to refugees during interviews and appointments with caseworkers depending on literacy levels
- ☐ Bring fact sheets on circuit rides, to airport reception and home visits
- ☐ Show COREnav videos on a loop on waiting room TVs or kiosks

ACTIVITIES TO USE THE *SETTLE IN* APP IN YOUR WORK

- ☐ Use *Settle In* app during CO (create activities using the mobile app lessons by encouraging refugees to download the app or provide tablets or phones to refugees; assign *Settle In* chapters as homework)
- ☐ Use *Settle In* app during caseworker appointments
- ☐ Use *Settle In* app during at-home CO
- ☐ Download *Settle In* onto an organization-owned and monitored tablet or phone and provide to refugees in waiting area or CO classroom
- ☐ Download *Settle In* onto all organization-owned staff mobile phones
- ☐ Promote *Settle In* to new staff, interns, interpreters, and volunteers via e-communications

II. REFUGEE COMMUNICATION POSTER AND PALM CARD

The poster and palm card thumbnail images below are examples of ready-to-use promotional material that can be used to direct refugees to the CORE Resettlement Navigator website and *Settle In* mobile app. While they are currently only available in English, text is limited and visually engaging images are prioritized with clear links to digital resources, including QR codes for digitally adept users. Both can be hung or placed in the waiting room or other office areas that refugees frequent. The palm cards can also be inserted into orientation packets, if available. The poster can be printed either as 24 x 36 poster or scaled to fit standard 8.5 x 11 printer paper. We recommend printing the palm cards on card stock, if possible.

POSTER

PALM CARD

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