

ROLE OF THE LOCAL RESETTLEMENT AGENCY

CONTENT OBJECTIVE

The local resettlement agency is not a government agency

Assistance provided by the local resettlement agency and public assistance is limited and benefits vary across agencies, locations, and cases

There are a number of organizations that will work alongside local resettlement agencies to assist with access to locally-available programs and provision of services

The local resettlement agency provides assistance to refugees through the provision of items and/or money to meet initial needs, a limited scope of services, and advocacy on refugees' behalf to receive services for which they are eligible

The quality and quantity of items provided will vary

LEARNING INDICATORS

- Participants can articulate the difference between the local resettlement agency and the government
- Participants can articulate that the services they receive will be for a limited time
- Participants can state that the services they receive may not be the same as what other refugees will receive
- Participants can verbalize that they will receive assistance but non-urgent issues may not be addressed immediately
- Participants can consider the implications of moving away from their initial resettlement site
- Participants can identify the local resettlement agency as the first point of contact for accessing services
- Participants can articulate that the local resettlement agency may assist refugees with access to other agencies or organizations for services
- Participants can identify four types of items that will be provided soon after arrival: initial housing, basic furnishings, seasonal clothing as necessary, food or food allowance
- Participants can identify basic services provided by the local resettlement agency
- Participants can state that they may receive money and/or money may be spent on their behalf
- Participants can identify factors related to the quality and quantity of items they might receive, including the availability of resources, the need of the family, and budgets
- Participants can state that the items they receive might not be new or what they would choose for themselves
- Participants can state that the items or money they receive may not be the same as what other refugees will receive

ROLE OF LOCAL RESETTLEMENT AGENCY (CONTINUED)

Refugees are responsible for their own successful resettlement in partnership with the local resettlement agency

- Participants can affirm that refugees and the local resettlement agency work in partnership and have rights and responsibilities with respect to each other
- Participants can articulate that they are ultimately responsible for their success
- Participants can name the local resettlement agency case manager as a source of reliable and accurate information
- Participants know the caseworker/office contact info and how and when to contact them
- Participants understand role of co-sponsor and US tie (if any)

There are rights related to refugee status

- Participants can name different kinds of refugee benefits and government assistance for which they are eligible
- Participants understand that as refugees they are authorized to work in the U.S.

There are responsibilities related to refugee status

- Participants understand their obligation to repay the travel loan
- Participants know how to submit a change of address form
- Participants recognize that refugee and public assistance are limited in scope

Applying for permanent residency and naturalization are important steps in the status adjustment process

- Participants can acknowledge that they are required to apply for permanent residency as soon as they become eligible and they may eventually apply for U.S. citizenship

There are immigration consequences to breaking U.S. laws

- Participants know what behaviors may hinder their adjustment of status or naturalization or lead to deportation

Refugees may be eligible to file for family reunification

- Participants know where to get assistance in the filing process

ENGLISH CONTENT OBJECTIVE

For both adults and children, learning English is critical to successful adjustment in the U.S.

LEARNING INDICATORS

- Participants can list reasons why learning English is important for successful adjustment in the U.S.
- Participants can acknowledge that learning English is their responsibility

Learning English will take time and the process may vary from person to person

- Participants can acknowledge that they should not delay employment, enrolling in school, applying for assistance, or participating in community life until they have learned English
- Participants know their rights to interpretation services (e.g., in hospitals, schools, and courts)
- Participants are aware that children may learn English faster than adults
- Participants are aware that the relative fluency in English among members of the family may lead to changes in family roles

ENGLISH (CONTINUED)

There are a variety of ways to learn English

- Participants understand that they will be referred to free classes by the local resettlement agency, but these classes may have a waiting list and/or the schedule or location of the classes may not be ideal
- Participants are aware of other types of ESL classes for which there may be a fee to participate
- Participants understand the importance of attending ESL consistently
- Participants can name additional ways that they can learn English outside of formal classes

PUBLIC ASSISTANCE

CONTENT OBJECTIVE

Public assistance is available to help refugees pay for their needs, but is limited in amount and scope

LEARNING INDICATORS

- Participants know that there are limitations on eligibility based on employment and marital status, income level, family size, etc.
- Participants can acknowledge that assistance varies from state to state

There are a variety of types of government assistance

- Participants know that there is assistance available for low-income families (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families [TANF], Electronic Benefit Transfer [EBT, formerly food stamps], Medicaid, public housing assistance, unemployment)
- Participants know that there is assistance available for people with disabilities and the elderly (Social Security, Medicare)
- Participants can identify types of assistance for families (e.g., WIC, Children's Health Insurance Program [CHIP], free/reduced school lunch program)
- Participants can identify types of assistance for refugees (R&P, Matching Grant, Wilson Fish)

The local refugee agency will provide help in accessing public assistance services

- Participants understand how to apply for or access assistance
- Participants understand how to fill out forms or to get help in filling out forms
- Participants understand how to use assistance on an ongoing basis (e.g., EBT card)

There are responsibilities associated with some types of assistance

- Participants can identify the responsibilities associated with the types of assistance they are receiving, such as community service or attending job readiness classes
- Participants understand the importance of maintaining communication with their public assistance caseworker (when applicable)

U.S. LAWS

CONTENT OBJECTIVE

The U.S. is governed by the rule of law

LEARNING INDICATORS

- Participants understand that they have a responsibility to know American laws
- Participants understand that they have accountability under the law

The U.S. has many laws governing behavior in public

- Participants understand laws and norms for the use of alcohol, tobacco, drugs, and firearms
- Participants understand laws and norms related to sexual harassment

U.S. LAWS (CONTINUED)

There are legal rights and restrictions related to family life

- Participants know laws regarding domestic violence
- Participants know laws regarding child supervision, neglect, and abuse, including acceptable methods of disciplining a child

There are rights and responsibilities related to U.S. residency and citizenship

- Participants are aware of basic civil rights (e.g., right to free speech, assembly, worship, legal assistance)
- Participants understand that when they become citizens they will have the right to vote
- Participants understand the importance of selective service registration and implications if they do not register
- Participants understand that breaking the law may affect their legal status

YOUR NEW COMMUNITY

CONTENT OBJECTIVE

There are community and public services that are available to support residents

- Participants can identify community services relevant to their specific needs, such as senior services or child care/day care
- Participants can identify community services that refugees may need to access, such as food banks, family support services, and the local government

The local resettlement agency will assist refugees in becoming acquainted with their new community

- Participants know where to find and how to use critical services such as stores and laundromats
- Participants know where to find and how to access other community services such as the library, houses of worship, area attractions, community recreation, banks, and the post office
- Participants understand where they live in the U.S. (region, state, city)

Members of the refugee's ethnic or religious group who live in the area may be a good source of support

- Participants are aware of Ethnic Community-Based Organizations or other organizations that serve members of their community
- Participants can identify where to find neighborhoods, associations, or business establishments where they would be likely to find members of their home community

EMPLOYMENT

CONTENT OBJECTIVE

Early employment and job retention are essential to survival in the U.S., and must be the primary focus for all employable adults (men and women)

LEARNING INDICATORS

- Participants can list positive consequences of early employment and negative consequences of delayed employment or lack of employment
- Participants can identify good interview skills such as firm handshake, eye contact, appropriate body language and also negative actions such as not answering questions well, stressing the need for a lot of money, or a disinterested expression
- Participants can articulate that turning down any job could be used as a reason to lose benefits
- Participants understand the importance of retaining their job

EMPLOYMENT (CONTINUED)

A person's initial job might not be in their chosen profession

- Participants can articulate that employment is not static and that employment opportunities may expand based on skills acquired and good job performance
- Participants can list positive consequences of accepting employment outside their chosen profession
- Participants can identify types of jobs they may hold in the U.S. during the initial resettlement period

The refugee plays a central role in finding/obtaining employment in the U.S.

- Participants can explain the role of the resettlement agency and various outside service providers in assisting them with employment services
- Participants (if employable adults) can identify themselves as responsible for obtaining employment in the U.S.

A crucial way of finding better paying jobs is learning how to speak English

- Participants can identify English language acquisition as a key to a better job

There are general characteristics of U.S. professional and work culture to which refugees must adapt in order to be successful in finding and maintaining employment

- Participants can identify appropriate and desirable workplace behavior
- Participants can list effective ways to communicate with their employer and fellow employees
- Participants can list aspects of U.S. professional and work culture that may differ from their homeland

Employees have rights as well as responsibilities in the workplace

- Participants can acknowledge that they have the right to be paid for their work and to work in a safe environment free from discrimination and harassment
- Participants can acknowledge that they have the right to understand how they will be paid and what benefits they might receive
- Participants can list rights and responsibilities in the workplace

HEALTH

CONTENT OBJECTIVE

Only critical and immediate health care needs may be met in the initial weeks of resettlement

LEARNING INDICATORS

- Participants can indicate they understand that only emergencies can be dealt with on arrival
- Participants can distinguish between urgent and routine health care and identify where to go for each

Initial health screenings and immunizations will be scheduled within 30 days of arrival

- Participants can acknowledge that a basic health screening and immunizations will be scheduled for after their arrival
- Participants can state that it is their responsibility to attend that health screening and any follow up appointments

HEALTH (CONTINUED)

The U.S. has no universal health care system and refugee medical assistance (RMA) differs state by state. In many cases RMA is available for eight months

- Participants can acknowledge that health care in the U.S. is very expensive and that the government will only pay for this care for refugees up to their first eight months in the U.S. After that, it is the individual's responsibility to obtain insurance or pay for services
- Participants can acknowledge that health insurance is generally tied to employment
- Participants recognize that after eight months, refugees not eligible for Medicaid and not receiving health insurance as a benefit of their job will be responsible to pay for their own health care
- Participants can acknowledge that persons 65 or older and those with disabilities may qualify for government health insurance (Medicare)

A variety of health care services are available in the U.S.

- Participants can identify types of places where they might seek health services, including clinics, offices, and hospitals
- Participants can identify types of health professionals that they may encounter, including pediatricians, dentists, and social workers
- Participants understand how to use pharmacies to obtain prescriptions and over-the-counter medicine

Preventative health care plays a large role in maintaining good health

- Participants understand the importance of preventative health care to maintain good health
- Participants understand the role of good nutrition and dental care in their overall health
- Participants understand the importance of immunizations and vaccines for themselves and their children

There are norms associated with health care services in the U.S.

- Participants can acknowledge the importance of being on time for health appointments
- Participants can acknowledge that personal medical information that is shared with a health provider is kept confidential
- Participants understand how to effectively communicate with health care professionals

U.S. health practices may differ from those of other cultures or countries

- Participants can indicate how health practices are similar to or different from norms in their home country
- Participants are aware that some traditional medicines or practices could be considered unsafe or even illegal by U.S. standards
- Participants can identify potential consequences of not adopting U.S. health practices

There are local resources available to support refugees' mental health

- Participants understand that experiencing culture shock is a normal part of adjustment
- Participants understand that services are available to support their mental health

BUDGETING AND PERSONAL FINANCE

CONTENT OBJECTIVE

Refugees are responsible for managing their personal finances

LEARNING INDICATORS

- Participants know their total monthly income and expenses, including rent and utilities
- Participants can explain and create their monthly budget, differentiating between wants and needs
- Participants can identify sources of income when initial assistance ends
- Participants understand the importance of paying bills on time
- Participants can acknowledge that employable members of the family may all have to work in order to meet their financial needs
- Participants can acknowledge that their financial obligations in the U.S. (e.g., rent, travel loan) will affect their ability to remit money to relatives back home
- Participants have an understanding of their likely financial situation over time

In the U.S., financial transactions are mostly conducted through the banking system

- Participants can identify the different denominations of U.S. currency
- Participants know how to open a bank account and use various bank products and services (including checking and savings accounts and ATMs)
- Participants understand fees associated with using check cashing or remittance services
- Participants understand how to build and maintain a good credit history
- Participants can articulate measures to protect themselves from financial fraud and identity theft
- Participants understand the benefits of direct deposit of their paychecks to a bank account
- Participants understand that banking in the U.S. is safe and should be used
- Participants understand the risks associated with using paycheck cashing stores and keeping large amounts of cash at home
- Participants are familiar with financial institutions that can accommodate cultural beliefs (such as avoiding institutions that collect interest)

Paying taxes is a legal obligation in the U.S.

- Participants can acknowledge that paying taxes is a personal responsibility
- Participants understand when and how to pay taxes
- Participants understand the concept of withholding (for taxes, social security, etc.) on paychecks

HOUSING

CONTENT OBJECTIVE

There are a variety of types of housing arrangements depending on affordability and the local context (including shared housing, apartment, house, etc.)

Housing comes with rights, responsibilities, restrictions and regulations

The local resettlement agency provides assistance in home orientation, after which housekeeping and home maintenance are individual and family responsibilities

Understanding basic safety considerations and use of appliances/ facilities will promote safety in the home

There are additional domestic life skills that facilitate independent living

LEARNING INDICATORS

- Participants can describe different types of housing
- Participants can acknowledge that the affordability of housing differs across and within localities and may affect the choices that are available to them

- Participants understand the importance of and the process for paying rent and utilities
- Participants understand how to end their lease and the process for moving to a new residence
- Participants can list rights and responsibilities of landlords and tenants regarding housing and utilities
- Participants are aware of norms and rules that apply to common areas
- Participants are aware of factors that positively or negatively impact their rental history, including behaviors that may lead to eviction

- Participants are familiar with basic upkeep of a home, including preventative maintenance and prevention of pest infestations, and know who to contact for help with repairs
- Participants are familiar with basic household products, including their safe use and disposal
- Participants understand how to clean their home and remove trash
- Participants know how to control utility costs through conservation

- Participants can describe safe and appropriate use of basic appliances and bathroom facilities
- Participants understand fire prevention in the home, as well as the use of fire alarms and extinguishers

- Participants know how to identify and respond to mail
- Participants know how to make and receive telephone calls

HYGIENE

CONTENT OBJECTIVE

There are norms for personal hygiene in the U.S.

There are norms and rules regarding public hygiene in the U.S.

LEARNING INDICATORS

- Participants understand the norms of personal hygiene in the U.S.
- Participants understand the effect of personal hygiene on interpersonal relationships, particularly with those from outside their cultural group
- Participants understand the effect of personal hygiene on maintaining good health

- Participants can identify potential legal consequences of behaviors such as spitting or urinating in public
- Participants can identify expectations in the workplace and other public spaces regarding public hygiene

SAFETY

CONTENT OBJECTIVE

Attention to personal safety is an important consideration for all people

LEARNING INDICATORS

- Participants understand the concept of personal and family safety
- Participants know that they need to protect their property
- Participants know how to recognize and avoid scams and prevent fraud and identity theft

Police and law enforcement agencies exist to help people if they become a victim of a crime

- Participants understand the role of the police and know that police and other law enforcement officials are trustworthy and are there to help them
- Participants can identify crimes that are reportable as well as what incidents may not be serious enough to report to the police
- Participants know how to report crime

It is important to be prepared for emergencies

- Participants can ensure that all residents of the household know their address and phone number
- Participants understand basic fire safety
- Participants have a plan and know what to do in the event of a natural or man-made disaster
- Participants know how to access emergency services and how to dial 9-1-1

It is important to be familiar with safety procedures

- Participants are familiar with general safety procedures related to traffic (as a driver, bike rider, public transit user, or pedestrian)
- Participants are familiar with norms and laws related to animal care
- Participants know how to keep themselves safe and comfortable in unfamiliar weather conditions

CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT

CONTENT OBJECTIVE

There are core characteristics that define the American experience

LEARNING INDICATORS

- Participants understand that the U.S. is a culturally diverse society and that there can be widely- varying cultural norms in different parts of the country
- Participants are familiar with key philosophies that are the foundation of American culture and law, such as individualism, non-discrimination, and gender equality

There are cultural norms and expectations that are fairly widespread throughout the U.S.

- Participants are familiar with issues of etiquette, such as punctuality, politeness, appropriate noise levels, and appropriate dress and appearance
- Participants are familiar with patriotic and cultural customs and rituals

The philosophies of self-sufficiency and self-advocacy are central to American culture and to refugees' cultural adjustment

- Participants can acknowledge the importance of self-sufficiency
- Participants understand the importance of politely communicating their needs and wants

CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT (CONTINUED)

There are numerous phases of cultural adjustment. Resettlement may have an impact on family roles and dynamics

- Participants can indicate that cultural adjustment is a multi-step, long-term process

Resettlement may have an impact on family roles and dynamics

- Participants can identify situations in which current roles and family dynamics may be challenged upon resettlement in the U.S.

Expectations regarding parenting practices may differ in the U.S. from what refugees are used to

- Participants can identify parenting practices that may be unfamiliar or challenging
- Participants can identify parenting practices that are illegal or unacceptable in the U.S.

There are some basic coping mechanisms to deal with the stressors of adjustment

- Participants can list possible coping mechanisms for themselves and their families
- Participants can articulate that honoring and preserving their home culture can help facilitate successful adjustment to life in the U.S.
- Participants can identify the types of religious and/or cultural resources that may exist in the communities where they settle
- Participants can state that learning English will facilitate their adjustment to life in the U.S.

There are ways to seek assistance from others in your community

- Participants can identify possible sources of assistance when facing adjustment challenges

EDUCATION

CONTENT OBJECTIVE

There are legal and normative expectations regarding schooling in the U.S.

LEARNING INDICATORS

- Participants can acknowledge that schooling is compulsory until at least the age of 16 for both boys and girls and is free in public schools
- Participants who have children can identify services and educational options that might be relevant for them (preschool, day care, special public school options)
- Participants can identify the rights and responsibilities of parents and children in the school system
- Participants understand the concept of parental involvement in schooling
- Participants understand that there are costs associated with free public education (e.g., school supplies)

The value for adults and teenagers to continue formal education should be weighed against the need to work

- Participants can acknowledge that education is a goal to be achieved but should be weighed against other factors such as need for income
- Participants can identify education as a lifelong experience

EDUCATION (CONTINUED)

There are many options for continuing education and training beyond compulsory K-12 schooling

- Participants can acknowledge that there are educational and training options that allow them to work while going to school
- Participants understand the process for obtaining a high- school equivalency diploma (GED)
- Participants can identify types of higher education and training that might benefit them (including university study or vocational training)
- Participants can acknowledge that some financial aid may be available for higher education
- Participants understand options for continuing education and training related to their employment

TRANSPORTATION

CONTENT OBJECTIVE

Transportation options exist in most communities

LEARNING INDICATORS

- Participants are aware of public transportation options in their locality
- Participants understand how to navigate the public transportation system, including the use of maps and schedules and payment methods (tickets, passes, etc.)
- Participants understand how to safely board, ride, and exit the types of public transportation they are likely to use

.....

Owning or having access to a personal vehicle comes with benefits and responsibilities

- Participants are aware of legal requirements such as a driver's license and insurance
- Participants understand the importance and legal requirements for drivers' education
- Participants are aware of safety issues and legal requirements, including the use of child seats
- Participants understand that buying and maintaining a car can be very expensive

Cultural Orientation Resource Exchange

8719 Colesville Road, 3rd Floor • Silver Spring, MD 20910

www.coresourceexchange.org



These objectives and indicators were developed by the Bureau of Population, Refugee, and Migration Cultural Orientation Working Group. The contents of this document were developed under an agreement financed by the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, United States Department of State but do not necessarily represent the policy of that agency and should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government. This material is in the public domain and may be reproduced.