



Understanding the Intersection Between TANF and Refugee Cash Assistance Services

Serving Refugee Families through TANF: Lessons from the Field

Angela Gaffney with Mary Farrell, Sam Elkin, and Robin Koralek

About the TANF-RCA Study

This brief presents findings from data collected for the Understanding the Intersection Between TANF and Refugee Cash Assistance Services (TANF-RCA) study, sponsored by the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

The study's main purpose is to learn how state and local systems serve refugees through the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA) programs, how these programs interact, and how they might foster positive employment outcomes and refugee self-sufficiency.

The strategies discussed in this brief are drawn from insights gained from a 2016 online survey of State Refugee Coordinators (SRCs) in 49 of the 50 states (Wyoming has no refugee program) plus the District of Columbia and California's San Diego County (which operates a refugee program separate from the rest of the state). It also draws from qualitative fieldwork in eight sites conducted from July to November 2016. Site visits included interviews with managers and staff at agencies and organizations serving refugees, including TANF agencies, as well as focus groups with refugees served.

Disclaimer: The survey asked SRCs to respond to the best of their knowledge. To the extent survey questions may have focused on topics outside their purview, the findings may not reflect actual federal or state policies and practices.

For more information:

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/research/project/understanding-the-intersection-between-tanf-and-refugee-cash-assistance-services>

Highlights

Challenges Faced by TANF Agencies Serving Refugees

State and local TANF agencies serve customers with a wide range of educational backgrounds, skills, service needs, and barriers to self-sufficiency. Refugee families with children are among those who receive cash assistance through the TANF program. Compared with other program applicants, many refugees with children arrive at TANF agencies with distinct challenges, including limited English proficiency; lack of familiarity with written forms generally and applications for government services specifically; and, for some, very limited education and work experience.

At the same time, TANF agency staff face a number of challenges providing services to refugees, such as:

- addressing language barriers in the provision of services;
- tailoring employment services for refugees' wide range of educational and skill levels; and
- helping refugees balance their TANF work requirements and their need to obtain adequate English language skills in a short time period.

However, states (and some counties) have considerable flexibility to design their TANF programs to better serve refugees. For example, they can modify application processes, tailor employment services, or prioritize English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction in refugees' employment plans.

Promising Strategies to Serve Refugee Families

The TANF-RCA study identified four key strategies TANF agencies can implement to help refugee families participate in TANF services and transition to self-sufficiency:

1. Provide specialized and culturally appropriate support during the TANF application process.
2. Ensure access to adequate ESL training through integration with TANF programming.
3. Provide culturally appropriate and individualized employment services.
4. Help refugees with professional skills and credentials earned and recognized in their home country obtain employment in their field.

Introduction

Since 1975, the United States has resettled more than 3 million refugees from around the world who have fled their home countries as a result of persecution due to their race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion. In addition to the trauma many refugees experienced in their home countries, they face the challenge of adapting to life in the United States.

Recognizing the many challenges refugees face upon their arrival, the U.S. Refugee Resettlement Program provides support to help refugees integrate into their new communities.¹ Under the program, eligible refugees are connected with several federally-funded cash, medical, and social assistance programs. They are eligible for public benefits to the same extent as U.S. citizens and are also subject to the same program rules.

¹ The U.S. Refugee Resettlement Program is operated by the Departments of Homeland Security (DHS), State (DOS), and Health and Human Services (HHS). Refugee Cash Assistance and Refugee Social Services are administered by ACF's Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR).

Refugees with dependent minor children are generally eligible for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) cash benefits and employment-related services provided they meet income, asset, and household eligibility criteria within the state in which they are resettled. Refugees without dependent minor children are eligible for other cash assistance options, including Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA) or the Matching Grant program, which are not the focus of this brief.²

For most newly arrived refugee families with dependent minor children, TANF supports are critical. TANF cash assistance is typically their primary source of income, and its employment services are their first connection to work opportunities. However, refugee families' experiences with TANF are often different from those of other TANF participants. Refugees arrive with varying English language proficiency and familiarity with applications or written forms. Many face challenges navigating the TANF application process, balancing their required work participation activities with the need to become proficient in English quickly, and becoming job-ready through employment services that are usually not tailored to refugees. At the same time, TANF agency staff may face challenges serving refugees, including language differences, and also the scarcity of employment services tailored to refugee needs, due in part to lack of familiarity with refugees' unique circumstances.

To address these challenges, the federal TANF program gives states flexibility to design services for refugees and other populations. Within federal limitations, states determine eligibility requirements, assistance payments amounts, the range of other services offered, and what activities will count towards participants' work requirements. Some TANF agencies have used this flexibility to provide additional or different types of assistance to refugees applying for and receiving benefits. This brief summarizes these strategies. In doing so, it provides information that TANF agencies can use to serve refugees. It begins by providing background information on refugees to frame the service strategies, answering questions that TANF administrators frequently ask about refugees. It then describes four strategies identified through the TANF-RCA study that TANF agencies can implement to support refugee families' self-sufficiency.

Background on Refugees for TANF Agencies

Developing effective strategies to serve refugees requires understanding refugee families' unique circumstances, needs, and capabilities. This section provides context that may be beneficial to TANF agencies as they consider different approaches to serving refugees.

Who are refugees?

Refugees are individuals unable to live in their home country because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution on account of their race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion. Those resettled in the United States are granted refugee status by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security prior to admission to the United States. In addition to refugees, other groups eligible for refugee services in the United States include asylees, Cuban-Haitian entrants, Special Immigrant Visa holders, Amerasians, and victims of a severe form of trafficking. Box 1 provides an overview of each of these groups by immigration status. This brief uses the term "refugee" to refer to all groups with special immigration status as it relates to TANF eligibility and services.

Based on available arrivals data from the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM), refugees admitted to the United States are a culturally and linguistically diverse group; the countries from which they arrive and the languages they speak vary from year to year. For example, more than half of all refugees who arrived in FY 2017 were from the Democratic Republic of Congo, Iraq, Syria, and Somalia,³ and the most common languages spoken by newly resettled refugees in the past 10 years, including in FY 2017, are Arabic, Somali, and Nepali.⁴

Refugees also arrive with a diverse range of educational and professional backgrounds, language proficiencies, and experiences with trauma. Many refugees have fled war and violence, and many have lived in refugee camps, often waiting for extended periods of time to be resettled. While this cultural diversity can enrich host communities within the United States, it can also require specific approaches to service delivery.

Box 1: Groups Eligible for Refugee Services

Refugees are individuals granted "refugee" status by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. This report uses the term "refugee" to refer to all populations eligible for U.S. refugee services, including the following:

- **Asylees** are individuals who enter the United States or arrive at a port of entry without refugee status but who are found after arrival to meet the definition of a refugee.
- **Cuban/Haitian entrants** are nationals of Cuba or Haiti who are granted parole status as a Cuban or Haitian entrant, or are in removal proceedings, or have an application for asylum pending.
- **Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) holders** are individuals from Iraq and Afghanistan who assisted the U.S. government or U.S. military forces overseas. The Department of State grants them SIV status overseas and then the Department of Homeland Security approves them for admission to the United States.
- **Amerasians** are persons fathered by a U.S. citizen and born in Vietnam after January 1, 1962, and before January 1, 1976. Amerasians are eligible for ORR refugee benefits and services beginning on the date of their entry into the United States.
- **Victims of a severe form of trafficking** are individuals who are subjected to sex trafficking or labor trafficking.

² This study's Final Report describes in detail the other programs for which refugees are eligible, including how these other programs interact with TANF.

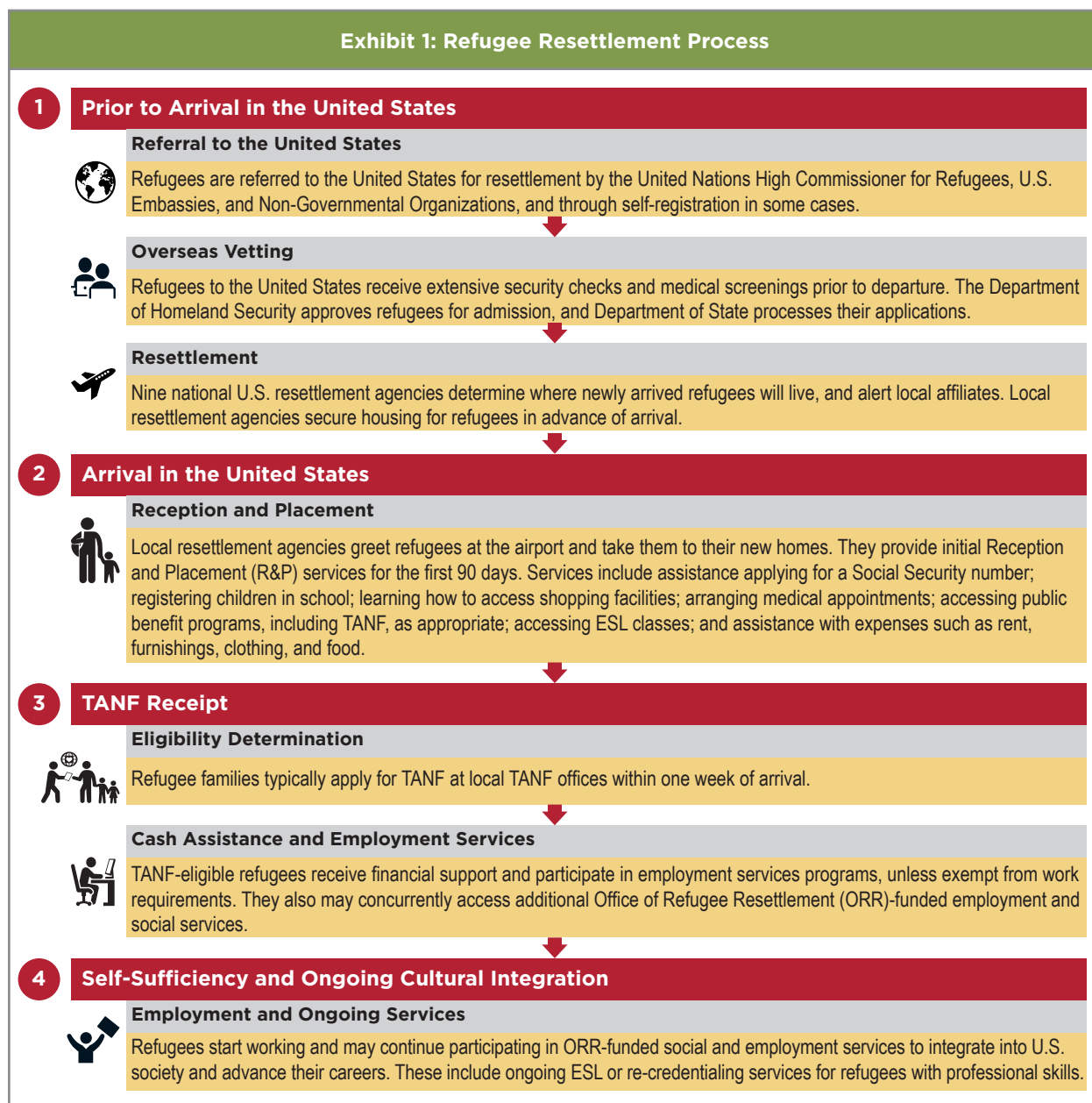
³ Note: FY 2017 arrival figures cited here refer to those with "refugee" status only; they do not include other immigrant groups listed in Box 1.

⁴ Source: "Admissions & Arrivals" [Refugee Processing Center website], accessed October 9, 2017, at <http://www.wrapsnet.org/admissions-and-arrivals/>. The number of refugee families who received TANF in FY 2017 is unknown, and data on the experiences or outcomes of refugees who receive TANF are limited. This study's Final Report explores the availability of existing data that can be analyzed to better understand refugee services under TANF. Read more about the study at <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/research/project/understanding-the-intersection-between-tanf-and-refugee-cash-assistance-services>.

What steps do refugees take prior to seeking TANF services?

Exhibit 1 summarizes the refugee resettlement process within the U.S. Refugee Resettlement Program.

Prior to admittance in the United States, refugees undergo extensive background checks overseas. Those approved for resettlement are eligible for Reception and Placement (R&P) services for the first 90 days upon arrival, which are funded by PRM (see specific services listed in **Exhibit 1**). Upon arrival in the United States, refugee families may apply for cash assistance, such as TANF and related employment services as a first step toward self-sufficiency and cultural integration.



Which refugees are eligible for TANF, and how do they apply?

Generally, refugees with at least one dependent minor child (or pregnant women in their third trimester) are eligible for TANF if they meet all other income and eligibility requirements as determined by the state where they are resettled. Resettlement agency staff screen refugees for initial TANF eligibility based on household composition, income, assets, and other criteria. In most cases, refugees have few or no other financial resources upon arrival to the United States and are determined eligible for TANF based primarily on household composition (e.g., if there is a minor child in the home).

Application processes vary by state but typically are completed at the local TANF office. Resettlement agency staff may accompany refugees to apply for TANF (and in some cases, for other public benefit programs) at the local TANF office, usually within one week of arrival. Refugees with dependent children can receive federal TANF cash assistance for up to 60 months (lifetime), subject to income verification for ongoing eligibility, though time limits vary by state.

Are refugees who receive TANF subject to the same work requirements as non-refugee TANF recipients?

Like U.S. citizens, adult refugees receiving TANF cash assistance must participate in work-related activities to prepare them for employment and eventual self-sufficiency, unless they are exempt due to physical or mental health challenges. Typically, refugees are subject to the same work participation requirements as non-refugees, but states may tailor the requirements to encourage participation in ESL and other activities. Refugees, like other TANF participants, are also eligible for support services such as childcare, transportation assistance, and assistance with expenses related to finding and keeping a job (e.g., uniforms). As noted above, states and counties can structure employment service offerings and work requirements to meet the needs of refugees.

What other federally funded services can refugees receive?

In addition to the R&P services they receive during their first 90 days (see **Exhibit 1**), refugees, including those eligible for TANF, may also be eligible for Medicaid, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), and nutrition assistance programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC). Eligibility requirements for these programs are the same for refugees and other applicants.

Refugees who are not eligible for TANF or Medicaid may be eligible for RCA or Refugee Medical Assistance, respectively, for the first eight months in the United States. Refugees considered likely to become self-sufficient in a short period of time (less than six months) may be eligible for the Matching Grant program.⁵

TANF-eligible refugees can also access ongoing employment and social services funded by ACF's Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR). ORR works through states and nongovernmental organizations to provide language, employment, and social services such as re-credentialing assistance and citizenship and naturalization classes. Refugees may access these services for their first five years in the United States. In some cases, TANF-eligible refugees may access ORR-funded employment services in addition to, or instead of, participating in TANF-affiliated and -funded employment services. TANF programs can also contract with these ORR-funded service providers to serve TANF-eligible refugees (see Strategy #3 below).

How is serving refugee families in the TANF program different from serving non-refugee families?

Refugees arrive with varying levels of English proficiency, education, work skills, and physical and mental health barriers, which can present challenges for TANF agencies serving refugees. Among these are:

- **Wide range of native languages and English proficiency levels.** Because refugees arrive with varying degrees of English proficiency, TANF agencies may need to provide interpretation starting with eligibility determination and continuing through ongoing case management and employment services. Resettlement agency staff who are multilingual sometimes accompany refugee families to apply for TANF benefits. However, beyond the initial meeting, their availability for ongoing interpretation services is limited, so TANF agency staff may face difficulties communicating directly with refugees. TANF agencies may also struggle to locate employment services that can serve refugees in their native language. Furthermore, for refugees who have low literacy levels in their native language, learning English using written materials is even more challenging, so TANF programs may struggle to refer refugees to ESL programs that match their needs.
- **Varying levels of education, literacy, and familiarity with written forms or computers.** Some refugees hold postsecondary degrees, whereas others have had little or no formal education, and TANF employment services staff may face challenges in making available program offerings appropriate for refugees with different educational levels. Regardless of education level, refugees may be unfamiliar with written forms such as benefit applications, or with online tools used to document work participation or to re-apply for benefits, which can present challenges for eligibility staff working with refugee families to complete all required documents.
- **Varying levels of work experience and exposure to Western work norms.** Some refugees are highly skilled, career professionals, whereas others performed manual labor or worked in the informal economy in their home country. In addition, some refugee women might be unaccustomed to working outside of the home. This variation in skill levels can require assignment to a range of different work-related activities, from basic skill acquisition to professional re-credentialing services, which TANF employment services programs may not regularly provide to their non-refugee participants.
- **Physical and mental health barriers.** Many refugees experienced physical and emotional trauma or lived in environments such as war zones that left them with ongoing physical and mental health issues. TANF agency staff unfamiliar with the level and nature of these barriers may face challenges in appropriately assessing refugees for exemptions from work participation requirements or services to help refugees meet these requirements.

⁵ For more information about cash assistance programs for refugees (i.e., TANF, RCA, and the Matching Grant program) see the TANF-RCA final report at <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/research/project/understanding-the-intersection-between-tanf-and-refugee-cash-assistance-services>.

Strategies to Effectively Serve Refugee Families through TANF

The flexibility of the TANF block grant enables TANF programs to provide additional or different types of assistance to refugees applying for and receiving TANF in order to address their unique needs. Specifically, TANF programs can modify application processes, employment programming content, use of ESL as an allowable employment activity, work participation hour requirements, and support services available to address the needs of refugees.

The TANF-RCA study documented several strategies TANF agencies use to help refugees apply for TANF, find employment, apply their professional skills in their local labor markets, and improve their English proficiency.

This section describes four key strategies that states and counties use (see **Exhibit 2**). Text boxes highlight specific examples from sites visited as part of this study. Local TANF agencies interested in better serving refugee families can work with their state administrators to secure the authorization or resources necessary to implement these strategies, as needed.

Exhibit 2: Four Strategies to Better Serve Refugees



Strategy #1: Provide specialized and culturally appropriate support during the TANF application process through co-location, specialized units, or coordination with resettlement agency staff

The challenge:

TANF staff who do not have experience working with refugees may not be knowledgeable about refugee eligibility for TANF and their unique service needs. Staff also may struggle to serve refugees given the diversity of languages spoken and different experiences and cultural norms around work.



What TANF agencies can do:

- **Using TANF block grant funds, create specialized units or designate individual staff within local TANF offices to work with refugees and other applicants with limited English proficiency.** Staff within these units should be multilingual, trained on cash assistance eligibility policies for refugees (e.g., documentation requirements) and circumstances unique to refugees. These units can reduce language barriers and confusion about agency processes or specific case details between agencies. Staff in these units also can provide more direct lines of communication through which TANF agencies can coordinate with resettlement agencies. For example, resettlement agency staff can alert the specific TANF unit if they are aware of an upcoming group of new arrivals, and specialized unit TANF agency staff can email appointments to resettlement agency staff in turn. While resettlement agencies and TANF programs typically communicate at an agency level, increased communication between frontline staff in these specialized units and resettlement agencies can make the process more efficient and less confusing for refugees.
- **Invite refugee service providers to create a “one-stop hub” at the TANF office.** TANF agencies can provide space at the TANF office for resettlement agency staff and other refugee organizations to deliver services to refugee families to consolidate them in one place (e.g., assistance with Social Security card applications or housing search assistance). This arrangement makes interpretation and translation services more accessible and allows for quick communication across agencies as questions and issues arise, particularly given the trusted role that resettlement agency staff play in refugee families’ lives through their existing relationships.
- **Co-locate TANF staff at refugee organization offices.** Similar to TANF agencies providing space to resettlement agencies to provide services, TANF agencies can co-locate staff at resettlement agencies or other refugee organizations to deliver services they would normally provide at the TANF office. For example, TANF agencies can assign TANF eligibility staff to work at a resettlement agency or other refugee serving organization at least part-time to help with eligibility determination and answer questions related to refugee families’ TANF cases and other public assistance.

- **Invite refugee stakeholders to provide “Refugees 101” trainings to TANF staff.** Resettlement agencies, State Refugee Coordinator offices, and ethnic community-based organizations have tremendous knowledge about the refugee resettlement process, including information about refugees’ cultural norms or common issues that affect refugees’ participation in employment services. Inviting these stakeholders to provide “Refugees 101” trainings can benefit TANF staff by providing them with context and resources on ways to address some of the issues facing refugees (e.g., strategies to engage trauma-affected refugees and address mental health concerns within TANF programming).

TANF-RCA STUDY SITE EXAMPLE:

TANF agency staff in Montgomery County, Maryland, are co-located at local resettlement agencies. Co-located case managers determine initial eligibility for TANF and are responsible for case management for refugees receiving TANF. Case managers also connect TANF recipients to other public benefit programs such as SNAP and Medicaid, whereas resettlement agency staff provide more refugee-specific social services.

Strategy #2: Help refugees access the English language training they need to integrate into society and obtain employment

The challenge:

Many refugees arrive in the United States with very limited English proficiency and must quickly learn the language to integrate into their new communities and obtain employment. Though refugees can count some of their time in ESL classes toward TANF work participation hours, they may need more hours to become proficient. However, attending additional ESL class hours can be difficult to balance with other work participation requirements. TANF programs must develop work participation plans that balance refugees’ need to obtain English language skills with federally mandated work participation requirements. Moreover, without sufficient English language training, refugees may be unable to secure employment.



What TANF agencies can do:

- **Integrate ongoing ESL instruction into vocational education training such that the combined activity counts fully toward work participation requirements.** States may include hours spent in ESL for work participation rate calculations as a core activity as long as it is integrated within or concurrent with vocational educational training.⁶
- **Modify work participation expectations to prioritize ESL during refugees’ initial months.** TANF agencies can allow refugees with very limited English skills to take ESL classes full time. Though states cannot choose what activities are included as part of the federal work participation rate, they can choose to allow certain populations (e.g., refugees) to engage in activities, such as ESL, that do not count in the work participation rate unless combined with core work activities.
- **Develop ESL classes tailored for particular refugee groups in conjunction with public education systems, including community colleges.** TANF agencies can work with local community colleges or public education systems skilled in developing ESL curricula for specific groups to develop curricula targeted for refugees. Such curricula could include ESL classes focused on life skill development (e.g., teaching English used in the context of grocery shopping, banking, navigating healthcare systems) or “acculturation” (i.e., adjusting to living in a new culture) for refugees with especially limited English proficiency and unaccustomed to formal education settings.

TANF-RCA STUDY SITE EXAMPLE:

Resettlement agencies in Jefferson County, Kentucky, provide initial ESL for refugees who receive TANF. The county allows TANF-receiving refugees to take ESL classes full-time at its resettlement agency offices for their first two months in the country. After two months, TANF-eligible refugees are required to participate in countable work activities along with their non-refugee peers, including part-time ESL classes offered through employment services contractors or the local public education system.

Strategy #3: Help refugees find employment by providing culturally appropriate and individualized assistance

The challenge:

Refugees receiving TANF may need customized assistance to become job-ready. In some cases, refugees receiving TANF seek employment services from refugee-serving community-based organizations because TANF services do not address their needs.

⁶ Per the Final Rule of the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005. For more information about ways states can combine activities designed to improve basic skills in vocational educational training, visit ACF’s Office of Family Assistance website “Q&A: Counting and Verifying Hours of Work Participation” at <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ofa/re-source/q-a-counting-and-verifying-hours-of-work-participation>.

What TANF agencies can do:

- **Using TANF block grant funds, contract with culturally competent employment services vendors who have experience working with refugees.** Many resettlement agencies and other refugee service providers deliver parallel TANF employment services to refugees receiving RCA (e.g., vocational training, employer outreach, interviewing skills) and could provide employment services to refugees receiving TANF, as well. As part of their refugee-tailored employment services, resettlement agency or other refugee-specific employment services staff can also act as interpreters, such as during job interviews or subsidized employment placement.
- **Create a specialized unit within the TANF employment services program to provide customized services for refugees.** As noted above, a specialized TANF unit can help refugees apply for benefits. Such units could also provide employment services tailored to refugees' needs. Specialized staff should be multilingual and, as noted below, able to prepare refugees for what are likely different workplace norms in the United States.



TANF-RCA STUDY SITE EXAMPLE:

Washington State's LEP Pathways Program funds a network of culturally competent employment service providers to deliver employment services to refugees. Washington's state TANF agency, in collaboration with the State Refugee Coordinator's office, has developed a specific employment services pathway for all immigrants or populations with limited English proficiency (LEP), combining ORR and TANF social services funding. The state contracts with culturally competent employment and training organizations—including resettlement agencies, ethnic community-based organizations, and community colleges—to provide employment services for all LEP Pathways participants receiving cash assistance (TANF or RCA). Refugees participate in similar work-preparation and job search activities as non-refugee TANF recipients, with contracted case managers who can deliver culturally and linguistically appropriate employment services.

- **Provide training programs specifically targeting refugees with limited exposure to Western workplaces.** Regardless of whether services are provided by standard TANF staff or specialized units, employment services should include training modules that help refugees better understand U.S. workplace norms, including the application and interview processes. As a way to help transfer skills, TANF agencies can also develop (or work with community colleges or other institutions to develop) short-term training programs in fields similar to those in which refugees worked in their home country (e.g., food production) or foster relationships with employers in those fields. Leveraging refugees' existing skillsets can be an initial step to a higher-paying job.
- **Expand work experience placements for refugees with nonprofit organizations.** Community service placements that offer unpaid work experience can help refugees build their resumes and help them meet work requirements. To increase the number of these opportunities available for refugees, TANF agencies can work with refugee-serving nonprofit agencies or other organizations whose staff are multilingual to identify additional community service placements. TANF agencies can also explore opportunities to increase subsidized job programs that pay refugees for their work experience placements.

Strategy #4: Help refugees with professional skills and credentials earned and recognized in their home country obtain employment in their field

The challenge:

Some refugees arrive with relatively high education levels and in-demand professional backgrounds (e.g., engineering or health care).⁷ However, they may have credentials or certifications that are not recognized in the United States or may lack the professional contacts to find employment in their field. This makes it challenging for TANF employment services programs to match their skills to appropriate employment opportunities.



What TANF agencies can do:

- **Locate and refer refugees to re-credentialing programs.** Re-credentialing programs can help refugees with professional certifications from their home country obtain U.S.-recognized certifications. ORR provides funding to states and community-based organizations for employability services,⁸ which may include re-credentialing support services. TANF employment services providers can refer TANF recipients to these organizations when services are not available in-house.
- **Develop networking opportunities for refugees with professional backgrounds.** TANF agencies can partner with local industries or municipal government agencies to organize networking opportunities for refugees. Such opportunities can include developing formal mentorship opportunities for refugees with backgrounds in engineering, health care, or public

⁷ For example, the TANF-RCA study found this to be true among many Special Immigrant Visa holders from Afghanistan and Iraq and Cuban entrants.

⁸ ORR-funded employability services are designed to help refugees obtain jobs within a short period of time.

administration. To facilitate these connections, TANF agencies can work with employment services staff at local resettlement agencies, who may be especially well connected to organizations or community members interested in working with refugees as a result of their employer outreach efforts.

- **Identify short-term trainings that prepare refugees for locally in-demand occupations in their professional field.** This allows refugees to use and advance their skills in the U.S. context. For example, case managers can identify trainings in health care that will help medical professionals boost their long-term employment prospects in the health care field.

Next Steps for TANF Agencies

Though TANF agencies unaccustomed to serving refugee families may face challenges, the agencies' goals and core services are well aligned with the policy goal for refugee families to become self-sufficient quickly in their new communities, especially when services are tailored for their unique needs.

Further, refugees receive services from an interconnected network of public and private organizations that includes not just TANF agencies, but also resettlement agencies, school districts, community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, and local employers. Many offer programming designed to help refugee families become self-sufficient during their first years in the country. Various strategies outlined in this brief reflect ways that TANF agencies can coordinate or partner with these other organizations to support refugees' self-sufficiency.

TANF agencies interested in partnering with these other refugee stakeholders or in learning more about specific refugee populations in their state or county should consult their State Refugee Coordinator's office or ORR Regional Representatives for more information and to explore opportunities for collaboration.⁹

TANF-RCA STUDY SITE EXAMPLE:

The TANF agency in Fairfax County, Virginia, hosts networking opportunities for foreign-trained professionals. The county has resettled highly skilled refugees and Special Immigrant Visa holders from Iraq and Afghanistan who are highly educated and speak English well. To connect the refugees with working professionals in the area, it developed an "International Trained Professionals Event," which draws more than 300 attendees annually and provides networking opportunities for newly resettled refugees. The TANF agency partnered with the city, local community colleges, and community-based organizations to host it and has seen interest in professional field-specific spin-off networking events.

⁹ ORR's list of Coordinators is available online: <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/orr/resource/orr-funded-programs-key-contacts>.

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PROJECT OFFICER:

Tiffany McCormack, Office of Planning, Research,
and Evaluation

PROJECT DIRECTOR:

Robin Koralek, Abt Associates

CONTRACT NO:

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