

# BOARD OF ADVISORS FOR THE UTAH REFUGEE SERVICES OFFICE



REPORT TO THE  
GOVERNOR

December 1, 2021



# refugee.utah.gov

Equal Opportunity Employer/Program

Auxiliary aids (accommodations) and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities by calling 801-526-9240. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have speech impairments may call Relay Utah by dialing 711. Spanish Relay Utah: 1-888-346-3162.



# CONTENTS

- Letter from Workforce Services Executive Director** ..... 2
- Refugee Services Office Overview** ..... 3
- Resettlement in Utah** ..... 5
  - Covid-19 Pandemic Response
- Department of Workforce Services Funded Services** ..... 7
- Utah Refugee Center** ..... 8
  - Center Goals
  - Program Partners
- Refugee Services Office Activities** ..... 9
  - Employment ..... 9
    - Case Management
    - Employment Services
    - Humanitarian Center
    - Refugee Supportive Housing Assistance
    - Short-Term Occupational Training
    - Upward Mobility
  - Integration ..... 14
    - Community Team
    - English as a Second Language
    - Health Department Support for Refugees
    - Mental Health Support
    - Refugee Capacity Building
    - Refugee Leadership Training
    - Refugee School Impact Grant
    - Services for Older Refugees
    - World Refugee Day
    - Know Your Neighbor Volunteer Program
  - Additional Coordination and Key Activities ..... 20
    - AmeriCorps VISTA
    - Refugee Services Fund
    - Utah Department of Public Safety
    - Youth Coordination
    - Youth Mentoring Program
    - Unaccompanied Refugee Minor Program
- Refugee Success** ..... 24
- Conclusion** ..... 25

## DEAR GOVERNOR COX,

Thank you for the opportunity to share the Refugee Services Office (RSO) annual report from your Board of Advisors for state fiscal year (SFY) 2021. This report chronicles the work of more than 30 public employees assisting refugees in the state.

The past year has presented exceptional challenges and opportunities in serving refugees. COVID-19 caused our team to adapt how we offer services and provide training. Many programs were transitioned to Zoom and staff increased their availability to help customers over the phone and online.

We also played a key role in hosting vaccination clinics for the refugee community. In partnership with the Utah Department of Health, more than 600 refugees received their first or second COVID-19 vaccination at the Utah Refugee Center.

Our team also led communication outreach for refugees with the latest information about COVID-19. Executive Director Asha Parekh sent daily and then weekly email updates to refugees, partners and community stakeholders about Covid-19 resources and support. Refugee Services staff also hosted regular Zoom meetings with refugee community leaders to better understand needs and empower them to share information with their communities. Asha led the housing subcommittee for the Multicultural COVID-19 Task Force and supported educational and outreach efforts on the state-level COVID-19 response.

In August, following an appeal to President Biden for Utah to help Refugee Services support emergency Afghan resettlement in the U.S., the Refugee Services team convened the Board of Advisors, stakeholders, resettlement partners and community leaders to organize a response. Resources were gathered to determine and meet basic needs, assist with housing and medical care, and organize Afghan community members in Utah. Following a continuing resolution passed by the U.S. Congress that extended refugee benefits to this group of Afghans, the Afghan Community Fund was established to fill in needs gaps where federal dollars were not adequate. Working together, Utah has begun welcoming Afghans to the state and helping them establish a new life. We expect to resettle 865 Afghans by February 2022.

We appreciate your generous support for refugee resettlement in Utah. We have built a nationally recognized program that is successful thanks to leaders who understand the importance and value of helping these vulnerable groups as well as the richness and diversity refugees bring to our communities.



Casey Cameron  
Executive Director  
Department of Workforce Services

# Refugee Services Office

# OVERVIEW



We believe **ALL REFUGEES** should have access to family-sustaining employment opportunities.

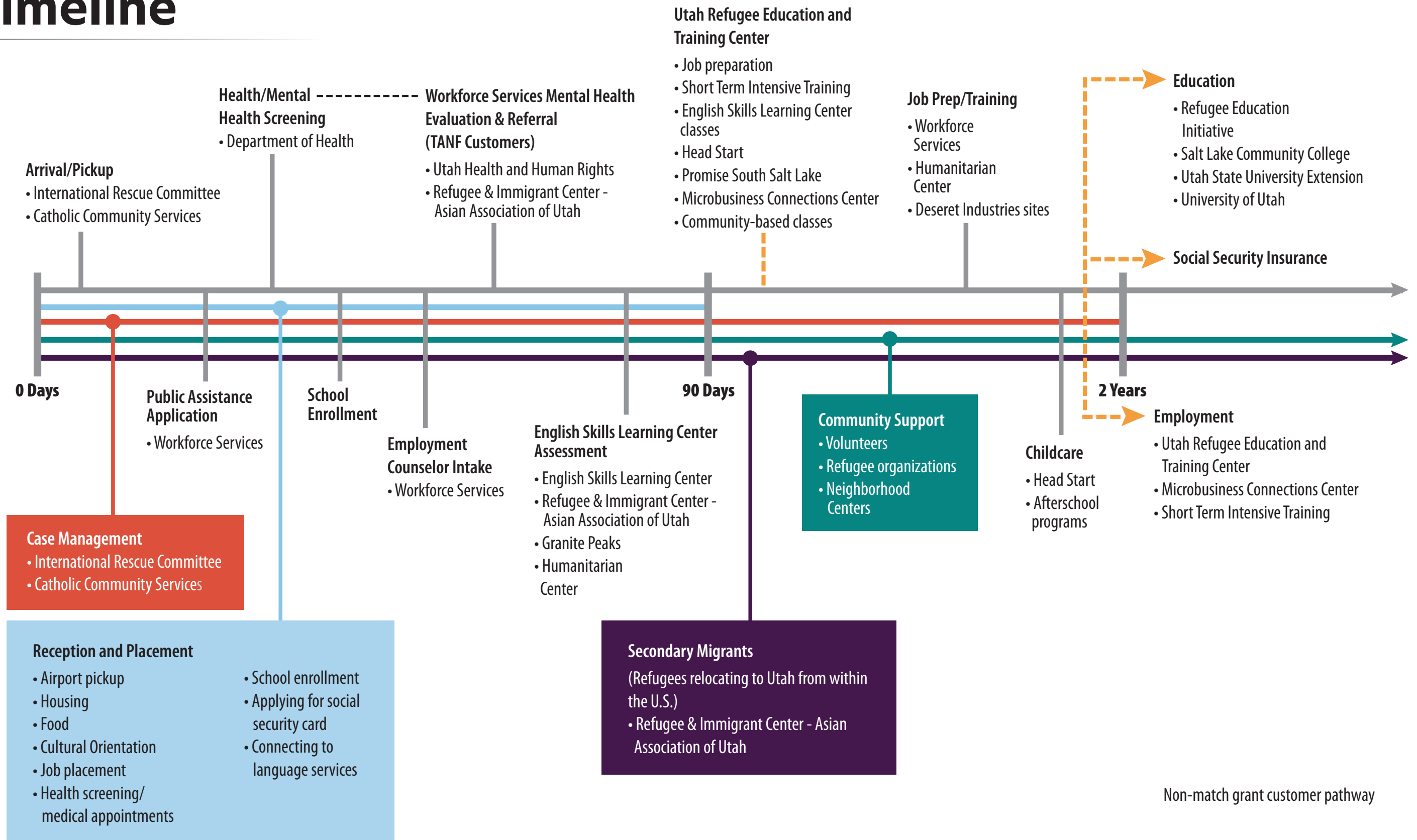
## THE REFUGEE SERVICES OFFICE

(RSO) works in collaboration with the Refugee Services Board of Advisors, who meet on a quarterly basis to support and advise RSO. The Board of Advisors provides a forum for identifying, addressing and recommending solutions to encourage the successful integration of refugees in the state of Utah.

RSO houses the State Refugee Coordinator and serves as the designated state agency to receive and direct money from the U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement. Most of these funds are granted to community service

providers and other agencies to deliver vital services for the successful integration of refugees in Utah. RSO is also home to a dedicated refugee employment team, which administers the Family Employment Program and Refugee Cash Assistance program for Utah's newly arrived refugees. The team works in a collaborative environment to develop employment plans and offers job preparation services to refugee customers. Additionally, RSO assists in the support of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families-funded refugee programs, including case management, housing, ESL and other employment programs for Utah's refugees.

# Refugee Services Timeline



Non-match grant customer pathway

# Resettlement in **UTAH**

## **EVERY YEAR, THE UNITED STATES**

resettles refugees from around the world who have been prosecuted because of their religion, race, political opinion, nationality or membership in a particular social group. Less than one-half of one percent of the world's refugees are resettled.

Utah is proud to be recognized as one of the most welcoming states to refugees and as having one of the best refugee resettlement systems in the country. RSO coordinates refugee resettlement in Utah, managing the majority of federal funding the state receives to support refugees, as well as ensuring ongoing services to refugees for up to five years after arrival. Two local resettlement offices, Catholic Community Services and the International Rescue Committee, provide initial resettlement services for newly arrived refugees coming to Utah. Services include airport pickup, housing, food, clothing and referral to ongoing services. These initial services last up to 90 days, after which services funded and managed by RSO support refugees including employment, temporary short-term cash and medical assistance, language training, lifeskills training, and connection to the greater community.

An estimated 65,000 refugees, former refugees and their children live in Utah, the majority of whom are in the Salt Lake Valley. The largest groups include Vietnamese, Bosnian, Iraqi, Sudanese and Somali refugees. Other groups include Congolese, Bhutanese, Burmese, Russian (USSR), Ethiopian and dozens of others.

Finding a good job is critical to a newly arrived refugee. They also need connections to the greater community and language learning

## **COVID-19 Pandemic Response**

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, RSO quickly adapted all services to offer remote support while working with refugees and community partners to help identify and fill newly formed gaps in support and services for the refugee community. Refugee Community Based Organizations (RCBOs), which RSO helped create, develop and fund over the past several years, were crucial to these efforts, serving as hubs to bring individuals together to share information and connect with resources. Our efforts include the following:



CATHOLIC  
COMMUNITY  
SERVICES





<b>Community Outreach</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 16 refugee community meetings</li> <li>• 27 community-wide email updates</li> <li>• 8 COVID-19 informational video translations</li> </ul>
<b>Individual Outreach</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 978 individuals contacted with check-in calls</li> <li>• 468 COVID-19-positive families provided food and hygiene items in partnership with LDS Church and Utah Refugee Connections</li> <li>• 1,925 individuals provided walk-up support at Utah Refugee Center</li> <li>• 42 youth connected with tutors</li> </ul>
<b>Vaccinations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 vaccination clinics at Utah Refugee Center</li> <li>• 611 Individuals vaccinated</li> </ul>
<b>Programming</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9 RSO-led programs adapted to distance learning</li> <li>• 15 RCBO grant-funded programs transitioned to providing COVID-19 support</li> <li>• 705 individuals supported</li> <li>• 2,441 issues addressed</li> <li>• 19 informational webinars</li> <li>• 361 referrals to service providers</li> </ul>

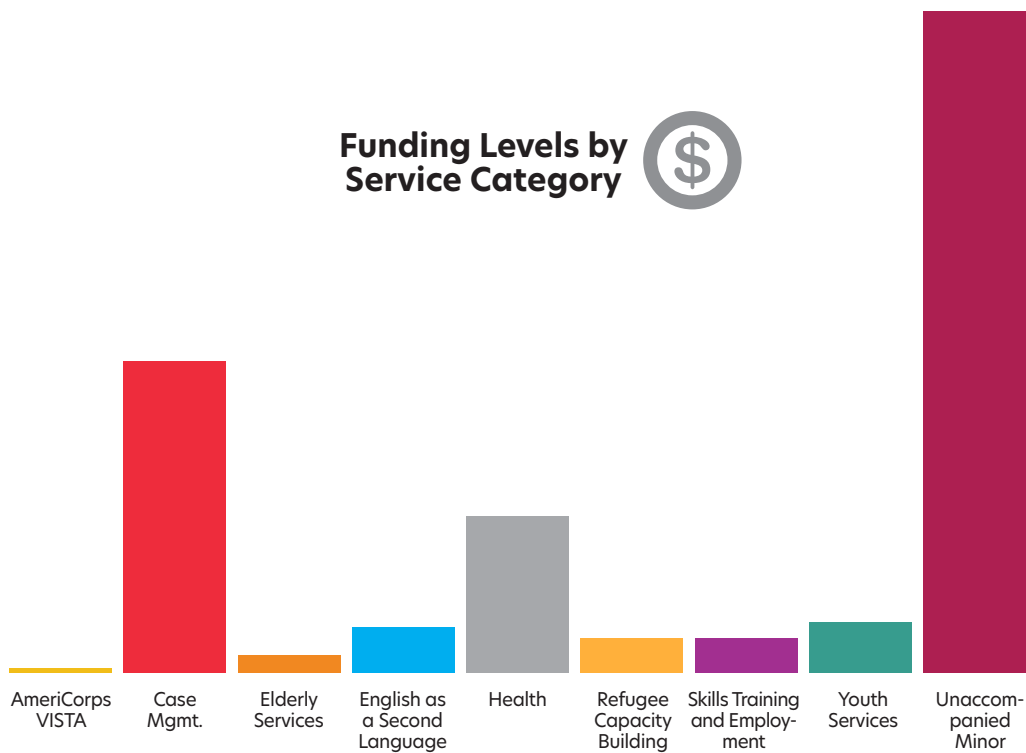


# Department of Workforce Services

## FUNDED SERVICES

**THE MAJORITY OF REFUGEE** services are federally funded through the U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) and the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program (with the exception of

\$200,000 provided by the state of Utah). RSO administrators administer approximately \$1.3 million from TANF and \$5 million from ORR for refugee services in Utah. Overall funding levels are broken out by the level of service listed below.



<b>AmeriCorps VISTA</b>	\$21,927
<b>Case Management</b>	\$1,488,755
<b>Elderly Services</b>	\$84,124
<b>English as a Second Language (ESL)</b>	\$217,305
<b>Health</b>	\$747,944

<b>Refugee Capacity Building Organizations</b>	\$166,610
<b>Skills Training and Employment</b>	\$166,610
<b>Youth Services</b>	\$240,310
<b>Unaccompanied Minor</b>	\$3,166,677

# Utah REFUGEE CENTER



**ON NOVEMBER 11, 2020**, the Utah Refugee Center took a new home in a state-owned building in Salt Lake City that is closer to both resettlement agencies and located conveniently along a TRAX line. While our location has changed, our mission, services and commitment to serving Utah's refugee population remains the same.

Due to the pandemic, much of the time in the new location has had reduced in-person programs and services, though we have steadily seen an increase in our walk-in customer base. As of August, we resumed in-person programming and extended evening and weekend hours. We hope to be at full programming capacity by the end of the year.

Our current space is phase one of a multi-tiered plan which includes remodeling the existing building to accommodate additional classrooms, partners and refugee community organizations.



## Center Goals

The Utah Refugee Center (formerly the Utah Refugee Education and Training Center) serves two purposes:

1. to foster opportunities for refugees to access family-sustaining employment, and
2. to support refugee communities' efforts to find appropriate solutions towards integration.

### Core Partners

- Salt Lake Community College
- Utah Department of Workforce Services
- Utah State University

## Programming Partners

- English Skills Learning Center
- Salt Lake Community College
- Utah State University 4-H
- Microbusiness Connection Center
  - International Rescue Committee
- Promise South Salt Lake
- Salt Lake City Mayor's Office – Know Your Neighbor

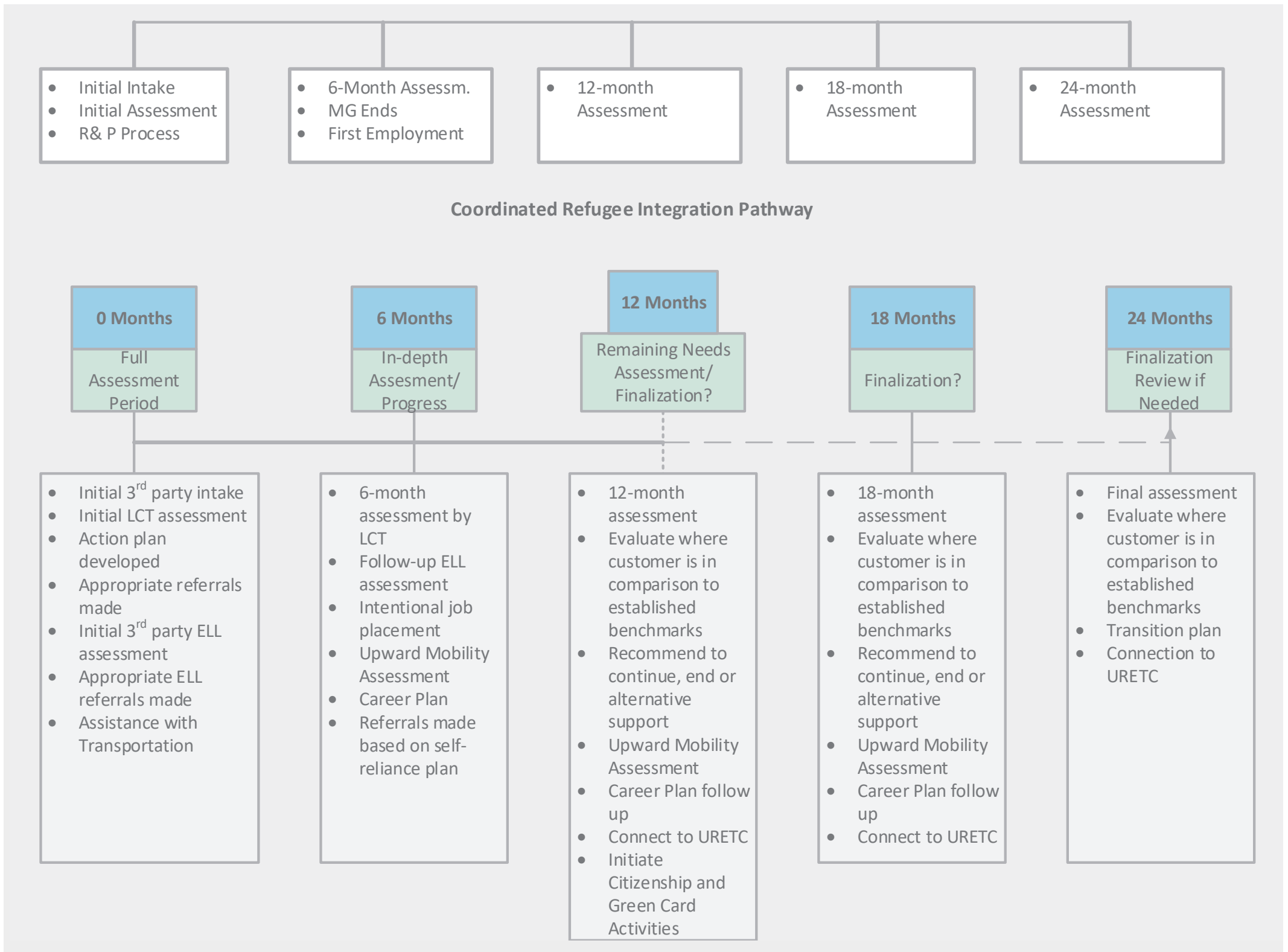
Summary Data July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021\*

- Average quarterly number of refugee visits: 2,341
- Average quarterly number of activities held at the Utah Refugee Center: 19
  - 38% led by Workforce Services
  - 60% led by Partners
  - 2% led by Refugee Communities

\*Utah Refugee Center 2020-2021 data impacted by COVID-19 restrictions

# ACTIVITIES

## EMPLOYMENT Coordinated Case Management vs. Refugee Integration Pathway (IRC & CS) Refugee Coordinated Case Management



## Case Management

Since 2009, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) Refugee Social Services have funded case management for all newly arrived refugees. Extended case management is the foundation of refugee services in Utah, connecting refugees to resources that will improve integration into the communities in which they live. Our case management model includes an initial assessment followed by an assessment every six months for each individual, 18 years of age and above, conducted in coordination with the RSO Licensed Clinical Therapist (LCT) and resettlement agency case manager (CM). The LCT team and the refugee case management agencies completed 636 assessments for the period of July 2020 through June 2021.



In 2017, RSO shifted to an outcomes-based case management assessment, resulting in coordinated service delivery to provide refugees with tools and resources to become more economically and financially stable. RSO collected data for 24 months of case management services for arrivals from January 1, 2017. Thus far, reported results indicate case management's positive impact on refugee integration in Utah. Based on the reported data, at the end of 24 months of case management services, refugees who had an assessment show an overall increase in progress assessment:

- 92% of assessed refugees, 18 years of age and older, show improvement in employment outcomes
- 100% live in safe and affordable housing
- 33% can successfully navigate educational and training opportunities (Refugee and Immigrant Center Asian Association of Utah case managed refugees)
- 64% navigate community support services
- 53% speak functional English
- 83% are able to accomplish life skills tasks such as transportation and parenting, and navigate U.S. civic, legal and law enforcement systems
- 100% of employed refugees are making \$12 an hour or higher

During FFY 2020, 209 individuals were resettled through Catholic Community Services (CCS) and the International Rescue Committee (IRC). There were 12 secondary resettlement refugees aided by the Refugee and Immigrant Center Asian Association of Utah (AAU).

- CCS resettled 28 cases, including 70 refugee individuals in FFY 2021. They also helped 18 cases, including 42 individuals who were humanitarian parolees or asylees.
- IRC resettled 61 cases, including 139 refugee individuals in FFY 2021. They reported that they did not help any asylees or parolees in FFY 2021.
- The Refugee and Immigrant Center at Asian Association of Utah helped 7 cases, including 12 individuals who were refugee secondary migrants. They also helped 10 cases, including 18 individuals who were asylees; 7 cases, including 10 individuals who were victims of trafficking; and 3 individuals.

## Employment Services

RSO's team of employment specialists help ensure refugees are successful in their employment search, job placement and retention. Refugee-focused employment specialists screen and assess applicants, provide workshops and services, and support employers in hiring refugees. When the COVID-19 pandemic forced closure of our office, these services had to be modified. Employer-related events were held via Zoom. Supportive services were provided to refugees by phone. There was a huge increase in the need for supportive services during the pandemic. As COVID-19 restrictions have been lifted, many of the supportive services for refugees have moved to in-person services. However, employers continue to utilize virtual services. We have seen a significant increase in the number of employers who are interested in learning about and hiring refugees.

RSO's Job Development Team has adapted to meet the needs of customers seeking employment during the COVID-19 pandemic. This data demonstrates the efforts the team has made in responding to the pandemic between July 2020 and June 2021:

- Job placements: 351
- Average hourly wage: \$14.01

During SFY 2021, RSO's employment team helped an average of 363 refugee customers per quarter, with an average of 175 quarterly job acquisitions and a 59 percent retention rate.

The current overall average hourly wage increased for refugee customers to \$13.37 an hour. RSO served 183 customers as part of the Family Employment Program and Refugee Cash Assistance program. RSO successfully closed 144 cases and achieved a positive closure rate of 78.69

percent. Of these positive closures, 78 percent were due to employment or higher earnings.

Supportive services provided by RSO's employment team during SFY 2021 (based on quarterly averages) include:

- 417 supportive services to job seekers, including job applications, resumes, mock interviews, translation and transportation
- 75+ employment-related events, including job fairs, resume workshops, Job Connections, application labs, interview preparation, employer education, and networking and employer site tours
- 610 services provided to Utah employers
- 65 distinct employers engaged in hiring refugees

## Humanitarian Center

In 2009, the Humanitarian Center Project was created as a partnership between Workforce Services, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and various local refugee service providers. As the only program of its kind in the U.S., the Center is used to teach English and provide job training to 150 newly arrived refugees (75 referred by Workforce Services and 75 referred by Latter-day Saint bishops) for 12 months at a time. In SFY 2021, 12 refugees completed the program and 3 participants found jobs. Participants can spend eight months in the program. However, a significant number of participants leave earlier than eight months for employment opportunities. In SFY 2021, 25 percent of refugees in the program were placed on the job with an average wage of \$14.83. Due to low numbers of newly arrived refugees and closures due to COVID-19, the number of participants in this program dropped in SFY 2021. However, with the increase in new arrivals and COVID-19 restrictions being removed, participation in this program is increasing significantly.



## Housing Assistance

### *Refugee Employment Subsidized Housing (RESH)*

Workforce Services, in partnership with Housing Connect, administers the Refugee Employment Subsidized Housing program (RESH) for single-parent households who are prepared to work. For the period of July 2020 to June 2021, the program served 64 households including six new refugee households with eight exits from the program due to employment or an income increase. Participation in this program was impacted by both fewer arrivals into the state during this period as well as COVID-19.

### *Bud Bailey Case Management*

The Bud Bailey Apartment Community has 136 units, with 45 units reserved for housing vouchers assigned to refugee families. A contract agreement between RSO and Housing Connect supports two case managers who currently provide case management services to 40 refugee voucher households. The areas of focus for the refugee families are:

- housing stability
- financial capability/self-sufficiency
- family services for after-school programs

The case managers at the Bud Bailey Apartment Community are using a case management assessment tool that tracks progress in the seven integration outcome areas. The outcomes for the period of July 2020 to June 2021 demonstrate the following progress:

1. 68% of assessed refugees, 18 years of age and older, show improvement in employment outcomes
2. 99% live in safe and affordable housing
3. 65% can successfully navigate educational and training opportunities
4. 96% understand how to access health care systems
5. 89% navigate community support services
6. 73% speak functional English
7. 82% are able to accomplish life skills tasks such as transportation and parenting, and navigate U.S. civic, legal and law enforcement systems
8. 37% of employed refugees are making \$12 an hour or higher

## Short-term Occupational Trainings

Short-term occupational training improves employment outcomes. RSO, in partnership with Salt Lake Community College, continues to expand short-term training offerings. Despite the challenges of COVID-19 and fewer new arrivals of refugees, RSO was still able to offer a successful warehousing and distribution, phlebotomy and IT training programs.

### *Warehousing and Distribution*

Three warehousing and distribution trainings were held in SFY 2021, serving 10 students and resulting in a 100 percent graduation rate. Seven students are currently employed in the industry with an average wage of \$15.65 an hour.





### ***Phlebotomy***

Phlebotomy continues to be a very popular training with refugee communities. This year 10 students completed phlebotomy training with a 90 percent graduation rate. Five of these students completed their training at the end of October. We are currently working to place them in jobs in the industry.

### ***Web Development***

Twenty-three students are working to complete Web Development training. The training concluded at the end of November 2021.

### ***IT Training***

Microsoft Certified Solutions Associate (MCSA) training was piloted at RSO last year. This year, the training focused on AWS training and is proving to be popular among refugee communities. The training is a nine month training course that started in April 2021. Students continue to work diligently to complete the training. Although the training is still ongoing, two of the 27 students have been offered employment in the industry with an average wage of \$22 per hour. From the prior cohort of MCSA, six students were employed in the industry making an average wage of \$18.76 an hour.

## **Upward Mobility**

In SFY 2021, RSO continued to conduct upward mobility assessments for newly arrived refugees and those interested in short-term training opportunities. The

Upward Mobility Planner meets with new arrivals at six months as part of their case management plan. The goal of this initial meeting is to map out a longer-term upward mobility strategy for each new arrival to help them identify a pathway to a living wage that can support their family. During this year, the upward mobility planner met with 159 refugees to ensure they have the tools and support necessary to be successful.

A key strategy of upward mobility involves short-term training where refugees can learn English along with key employment skills in trades that pay higher wages. Some short-term trainings offered in partnership with Salt Lake Community College include forklift and warehousing, phlebotomy and IT. English taught in the classes is specific to the training industry.

All refugees in short-term training meet with the Upward Mobility Coordinator to create a unique plan specific to them.

# INTEGRATION

## Community Team

The RSO Community Team supports successful integration for refugees through:

- Capacity Building – Building refugee community resilience that strengthens self-reliance and facilitates integration
- Crisis Intervention – Providing a safety net to assist refugees in crisis resolution
- Education – Increasing knowledge for refugees to remove barriers towards integration
- Community Connection – Linking refugees to resources that move them towards self-sufficiency

On average, quarterly during SFY 2021, the Community Team supported:

- **Individuals:** 554 distinct refugees per quarter
- **Services:** More than 1,900 unique services, such as interpretation, advocacy, applications, teaching and making appointments, and referrals to available mainstream community resources
- **Events:** More than 120 events and workshops focused on economic stability, education, health and life skills
- **Outreach:** Over 700 individuals contacted for recruitment and connections to services per quarter

## English as a Second Language

Since the beginning of the U.S. Refugee Resettlement Program in 1975, the abilities to speak, read and write English are the major indicators for a person to become self-sufficient and eventually integrate into the greater community. With the growing diversity of refugees resettled in Utah and the low literacy levels of some of these major groups, ensuring the literacy of all refugees has become an increasing challenge.

English language instruction funding provides English Language Learner (ELL) training for refugees enrolled in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Humanitarian Center skills training program, as well as classes in various locations and for different English language skill levels, including work readiness English language classes.

In the last six months of the training program, students demonstrated 60 percent excellent progress in gaining English proficiency competencies with 89 percent class attendance.

In 2018, in collaboration with ELL providers, RSO moved toward teaching functional English to support better

Since the beginning of the U.S. Refugee Resettlement Program in 1975, the abilities to speak, read and write English are the major indicators for a person to become self-sufficient.





employment placement, as well as competency-based metrics. RSO continues to collaborate with English as a Second Language (ESL) training providers in the community and contracts with them for services related to English testing and support for training programs, and hosts classes onsite at the Refugee Center. Courses include Citizenship, Food Handlers permits, occupational training and others.

## Health Department Support for Refugees

Newly arriving refugees often have complex medical conditions that require more intensive and frequent medical treatments. By coordinating activities between local providers, resettlement agencies, local health departments, Workforce Services, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR), the Utah Health Department's Refugee Health Program facilitates and promotes programs and services for successful resettlement and integration in a culturally and linguistically sensitive manner.

The program focuses on five priority areas:

- Health Screening
- Care Coordination
- Mental Health
- Tuberculosis (TB) Control
- Health Promotion

The Refugee Health Program has extensive experience working within refugee resettlement, particularly refugee health. Areas of expertise include: epidemiology, data collection and analysis, program management, quality management, provision of clinical services, contract management and monitoring, budget management and fiscal oversight, and community collaboration.

### **During FFY 2021 the Utah Health Department reported:**

- 245 new refugee arrivals completed health screening
- 269 patients received care coordination including appointment coordination, transportation, interpretation and one-on-one health orientations
- 242 received mental health screening and 55 patients were referred for further mental health evaluation and counseling

- 100% completed screening for Tuberculosis (TB)
- 237 received Health Promotion programming; 150 served by resettlement agencies and 87 served by Refugee Community Based Organizations: Best of Africa, Bhutanese Community, and Greater Equatoria Regional Association

## Mental Health Support

The RSO Licensed Clinical Therapist (LCT) team offers mental health support to help refugees become aware of the emotional, psychological and physical trauma related to their experiences, and to seek mental health services to overcome them. The purpose of the LCT team is to help refugees access holistic and culturally relevant treatment to manage mental health symptoms and be able to work and integrate into their new community. The LCT team assesses, educates, refers, coordinates and monitors follow-through with services. During this fiscal year, the LCT team conducts case management assessments with refugees and their case managers within thirty days of arrival, at six months thereafter and up to 24 months after arrival. The LCT team coordinated with community partners to support refugees impacted by COVID-19 through education, supporting vaccine clinics, rental assistance, food and essential supplies.



From July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021:

- 42 individuals attended parenting classes
- 36 families who were impacted by COVID-19 received assistance with essential resources, education and connection to services.
- 209 individuals were referred to community partners for additional resources and support
- 636 mental health and coordinated case management assessments were conducted by the team.

## Refugee Capacity Building

The 2020-21 Refugee Community Based Organization (RCBO) Capacity Building Grant, a collaboration between Workforce Services and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, focused on building organizational capacity, implementing programs and meeting outcomes. Refugee capacity building funding is a crucial component in supporting the development, organization and overall integration of Utah's refugee population.

Through this grant, RCBOs grow their ability to successfully build and facilitate sustainable programs around expected outcomes. Additionally, they broaden their organization's scope through Workforce Services' required grant trainings to address common gaps in organizational capacity, identified in a mediated assessment with each community organization at the beginning of the grant period.

During the last grant term between July 2020 and June 2021, 15 community-based organizations were funded to facilitate 24 unique programs. These programs focused on assisting refugee communities with integration, improving their well-being and teaching the basic skills crucial for success in the United States. During this period, 896 unique participants attended more than 866 program workshops. These organizations also partnered with 112 outside organizations while utilizing the support of more than 128 volunteers. Community leaders made 1,218 home visits which resulted in 307 individuals being referred to programs and resources.

## Refugee Leadership Training

The Refugee Leadership Training is a partnership between Salt Lake Community College, RSO and American Express. The goal of the training is to provide refugees an opportunity to develop their leadership skills and connect to resources that will help benefit their respective communities. This year marked the eleventh year the training was offered to adult refugees and the fourth year for youth.

### *Adult Cohort*

Upon finishing the 16-week training, participants received a certificate of completion from Salt Lake Community College. Participants included 11 men and seven women representing 13 refugee communities. Leadership topics focused on public speaking, assessing community needs,





civic responsibility and conflict resolution. Each year a highlight of this class is touring the Utah State Capitol and learning how the government functions in Utah. Additionally, this year each student will be developing and implementing a community service project to utilize the skills learned throughout the course.

### **Youth Cohort**

For the fourth annual youth leadership class, RSO, in partnership with USU's 4-H program, led a 12-week course focusing on personal, organizational and community leadership. The youth cohort consisted of 14 boys and 12 girls from six different refugee communities, all of whom received a certificate of completion from Salt Lake Community College. Similar to the adult cohort, the youth class is also highlighted by a tour of the Utah State Capitol.

## **Refugee School Impact Grant**

The Refugee School Impact (RSI) program offers resources to new arrivals and refugee students who have been in the U.S. under five years. The purpose of the program is to strengthen academic performance and facilitate social adjustment of school-aged refugees. RSO focuses these efforts on college and career readiness, English language acquisition, newcomer support and school support services coordination. The grant's primary objectives include:

- Broad partnerships focused on newly arriving refugee populations, such as cultural orientation, refugee parent-teacher meetings and school orientations
  - In 2021, Granite School District (GSD) used this funding to ensure refugee students attended school regularly and fulfilled graduation requirements. GSD provided services to 93 students during this time period.
- Programming supported integration of ORR-served youth into school systems such as English Language Learner, buddy programs, mentoring and group activities
  - In 2021, GSD used this funding to support growth of English levels for refugee students enrolled in the Language Academy at Cottonwood High School. During this period, 93 students attended the summer program and earned 100.5 credits through the Language Academy.

RSO monitors and tracks student progress, facilitates meetings between the school district and the refugee resettlement agencies, and is available as a resource for school districts.

### **Services For Older Refugees**

RSO has contracted with Salt Lake County Adult and Aging Services to develop programs for senior refugees.

The purpose of this agreement is to create a Case Manager position to assist refugee seniors in accessing existing mainstream services in the community including supportive services, citizenship resources, connecting and referring senior refugees to the benefits resources, interpretation and translation services, and training and workshops to address their needs. The goal is to reduce social isolation of senior refugees, integrate them into the community, enhance community connections, and promote health and wellness.

### ***Case Management***

From July 2020 to June 2021, 35 seniors and refugee communities received services related to obtaining citizenship and referrals to community resources. The communities served during this reporting period were from Liberia, South Sudan, Burundi, Congo, Somali, Rwanda, Bhutan, Burma, Syria and Iraq. Three older adult refugees received citizenship referral resources and one person was approved for SSI services. Salt Lake County hosted workshops for refugee seniors featuring various providers, partners and community leaders.

### ***Sewing Activity***

Refugees, both male and female, continued to attend the weekly sewing group at the Taylorsville Senior Center. In recent months, however, this activity was put on hold due to COVID-19.

### ***Intergenerational Activities***

Intergenerational activities are being coordinated with the local Refugee charter school students and the Bhutanese refugee participants at a nearby senior center. In recent months these activities were put on hold due to COVID-19.

There were nine elderly refugees who regularly attended a 6-week class and learned how to use an iPad and the Internet.

### ***Translation***

Salt Lake County has developed and translated brochures and pamphlets of information relevant to seniors into five major refugee languages: Russian, Swahili, Spanish and Arabic. In addition, the training manual for the Foster Grandparent Program has been translated into Spanish. An aging resource book called the 55+ Book was translated into Spanish, Arabic, Swahili and Somali. Additional resources were translated into multiple languages such as information for the Ombudsman Program to support long-term care residents, and information for Adult Protective Services. These tools increase access to vital services for refugee seniors.

### ***Community Outreach***

Community training and meetings were held with representatives from more than 20 agencies and community organizations. Food Baskets for the 35 elderly refugee clients were delivered in 2021 .



World Refugee Day is a celebration of the strength, courage and perseverance of millions of refugees who fled their homes.



## World Refugee Day

World Refugee Day (WRD) is a celebration of the strength, courage and perseverance of millions of refugees who fled their homes as a result of persecution in search of a better life and a future for their children. It is also an opportunity for the mainstream community to interact with and learn about the refugees who make Utah their home. WRD is celebrated during the third week of June.

Following a successful virtual celebration in 2020 due to COVID-19 shut downs, RSO and WRD partners decided on a hybrid celebration for 2021. The goal of the celebration was to use creative digital tactics to honor, celebrate and showcase refugees in Utah and their important contributions to our communities, while encouraging traffic to the virtual global marketplace, hosting a naturalization ceremony at the Utah State Capitol and promoting the in-person celebration. The adjusted plans allowed the opportunity to extend the celebration from a weekend to two weeks.

Using Facebook as the primary medium, RSO featured dance and cooking tutorial videos; shared celebratory messages from local leaders, the Refugee Services staff and others; promoted a Virtual Global Market with refugee entrepreneurs; and even hosted a virtual film festival. More than 162,000 individuals viewed the online events during World Refugee Week. The naturalization ceremony received widespread positive news coverage and the in-person activities were attended by more than 2,000 people. Additional metrics included:

- 17,325 post engagements (up 5,936%)
- 104 page likes (up 225%)
- Even after the virtual celebration concluded, we continued to see video shares, likes, new followers and increased engagement.

On average, videos posted for WRD (including the film festival showings) received between 117 and 10,000 views. The main video posted Saturday, June 19, including the message from Governor Cox, received more than 954 views and nine shares.

The virtual WRD celebrations included the following partners: Catholic Community Services, Their Story is Our Story, English Skills Learning Center, International Rescue Committee, LDS Church, Women of the World, Youthline, Utah Health and Human Rights, Good Samaritan Foundation, Utah Department of Public Safety, Salt Lake City, Utah Refugee Connection and other local community partners.



## Know Your Neighbor Volunteer Program

The Know Your Neighbor Volunteer Program is a collaborative effort between the Salt Lake City Mayor's Office and RSO. Know Your Neighbor's goal is to integrate Utah's welcoming community and refugees resettled in the Salt Lake City area by developing friendships through volunteer opportunities. The program is based on the idea that every refugee in the Salt Lake Valley should have an American friend and that every American should have a refugee friend.

Refugees make requests to RSO for different kinds of volunteer support, often tutoring for school, citizenship, or language. Volunteers are recruited, provided orientation, interviewed and background checked. One-on-one matches between individual refugees or refugee families are made with individual volunteers or volunteer families. At least two hours of contact are required each week for a minimum of six months, assuring ongoing contact which promotes communication, trust and, hopefully, fosters friendship.

Volunteers are also invaluable in teaching classes at the Utah Refugee Center. Classes in tech skills, sewing and public speaking are among others taught by volunteers.



## ADDITIONAL COORDINATION AND KEY ACTIVITIES

### AmeriCorps VISTA

AmeriCorps VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) is the domestic equivalent of the Peace Corps and one of several national service programs administered by the Corporation for National and Community Service. VISTA members commit to:

- Living and serving in some of the nation's poorest urban and rural areas for a full year
- Subsisting on a living stipend that equates to less than \$5/hour
- Creating and expanding sustainable programs for local organizations and nonprofits

With passion, commitment and hard work, their programs are designed to bring individuals and communities out of poverty.

RSO houses the Utah Refugee VISTA Project, which is made up of 11 members from eight organizations assisting the refugee communities in Utah to build their capacity

to become self-sufficient. Many of RSO's VISTA members have completed their year of service and continue to work with refugees in Utah. The VISTA Project strives to assist refugees in three ways:

1. **Integration** — Involving and incorporating resettled refugees as equals into the local community
2. **Education** — Bringing both refugees and the welcoming community members together to learn from each other and work together
3. **Programming** — Developing programs to assist refugees in the process of integrating into their new home

In 2020, AmeriCorps VISTA members raised around \$15,956 in cash resources and \$74,403 in-kind donations. To date, it is estimated that 5,081 individuals volunteered a total of 48,228 hours at various events and refugee stakeholder organizations organized by the VISTA members. VISTAs also succeeded in creating 72 new programs, resources and guides, and made more than 49 new community partner connections.

## Refugee Services Fund

At the end of SFY 2021, the Refugee Services Fund had a balance of \$208,327.29. From July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021, RSO received \$109,150 in donations and sponsorships to the fund and spent \$4,300 to support refugees.

### Funds were used for:

- Funerals — \$2,500
- Refugee Training — \$1,800

## Utah Department of Public Safety

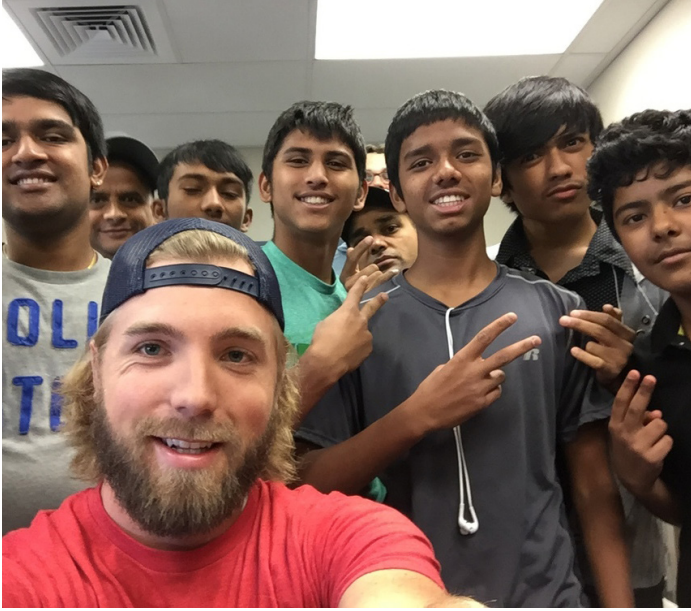
In November 2015, in response to heightened security concerns surrounding terrorism worldwide, Governor Gary Herbert directed the Utah Department of Public Safety to conduct a review of the federal screening process for refugees and security procedures related to refugee resettlement in Utah. This process led to a partnership between RSO and Public Safety, with a Public Safety officer assigned as a refugee liaison to work with local law enforcement, resettlement agencies and other organizations as a resource and to build relationships with Utah's refugee community. This is a unique partnership in Utah and nationally.

The numbers of incoming refugees has dropped drastically over the past few years. With the COVID-19 pandemic interaction, events and gatherings have been difficult between refugees and law enforcement.

Between November 2020 and October 2021, the efforts of Public Safety have resulted in:

- newly resettled refugee contacts
- 5 U.S. law orientation classes taught at International Rescue Committee
- 2 gang prevention classes taught for refugee youth
- 3 law enforcement presentations for refugee communities on their rights, traffic law and gang prevention
- 8 cases opened or referred to local law enforcement of potential refugee victimization
- 8 refugee youth at the Salt Lake Valley Youth Detention Center engaged with twice a month





## Youth Coordination

Supporting refugee youth arriving in Utah is a priority for RSO each year. Young refugees face a challenging transition both academically and socially. The Refugee Youth Services Coordinator provides collaboration, support and coordination to ensure that refugee youth feel supported and are able to access services equitably. Additionally, RSO's youth coordinator works to build relationships with refugee communities, address gaps and create new programming and opportunities.

2020 Youth Overview:

- 181 youth participated in RSO-led programming
- 360 youth participated in Refugee community-led programming (supported by RSO)
- 123 youth participated in RSO supported partner programming at the Utah Refugee Center

2020 highlights include:

- 58 youth connected to a tutor through the Know Your Neighbor Volunteer Program in partnership with the Salt Lake City Mayor's Office.
  - 3,616 volunteer tutoring hours contributed
  - 83% of parents reported seeing academic improvements in their children

- 44 youth participated in Youth Public Speaking Training
  - 20 youth presented speeches in large group settings for both the Salt Lake City and County mayors
- 43 youth participated in JAVA Computer Programming Training
  - 69% of students completed the extended course
  - 88% of graduates plan to pursue higher education in the CS field
- 18 girls participated in the Girl's Lobby Program
  - 100% of students joined a state legislative session
  - 60% of students wrote a state legislator

## Youth Mentoring Program

The high numbers of refugee students and families who have resettled since 2011 into the Salt Lake area has affected the education system. Many refugee families choose to enroll their youth in the Utah International Charter School (UICS) due to their methods of specialized instruction, smaller class-size and focus on providing individualized student support. Many refugees have an interrupted formal education background, lack of supportive mentors in their lives, and limited opportunities for engagement and social integration with their American-born peers.



The Youth Mentoring program was established to promote positive civic and social engagement and support individual educational and vocational advancement. To accomplish these goals, the youth coordinator matches eligible youth with positive adult mentors who provide the youth with personalized interaction. The youth coordinator also provides case management to support educational and career development. The program administers a pre- and post-assessment survey designed to track growth in the following areas: self-esteem, trust in community and connection to community.

The Youth Mentoring Program has served 49 refugee youth and seven students in the community-based peer-mentoring approach program. The aim of a group-based, peer mentor approach is to help students identify elements of effective mentorships, and initiate their own. There were 45 consultations made during this reporting period. All consultations are designed to support and promote positive advancement of participants in three categories: educational, vocational, and civic and social.

### **Unaccompanied Refugee Minor Program**

The Department of Workforce Services receives funding from ORR to contract with Catholic Community Services (CCS) to resettle and support unaccompanied refugee minors brought to the U.S. by the Department of

State. Among the services provided by CCS are a foster parent program to furnish long-term foster care and a supported independent living housing and support program. Workforce Services has a single contract with CCS, which is an affiliate of the national resettlement agency United States Catholic Conference of Bishops (USCCB). The USCCB is one of two national voluntary agencies authorized to provide relocation and resettlement assistance to unaccompanied refugee minors. CCS is licensed by the state of Utah to obtain legal custody of refugee minor children through the Utah justice system.

The Unaccompanied Refugee Minors (URM) Program assists unaccompanied minor refugees and entrants with developing appropriate skills to enter adulthood and to achieve economic and social self-sufficiency. The URM Program ensures that unaccompanied minor refugees and entrants receive the full range of assistance, care and services to which all children in the state are entitled. A legal authority is designated to act in place of the child's unavailable parent(s). Services provided through the program include English language training, career planning, health/mental health care, socialization skills/adjustment training, family reunification, residential care, education/skill training and ethnic/religious preservation. Utah is one of the top five largest URM programs in the country, with 105 capacity. Currently, 86 URMs are in the program.





## Refugee **SUCCESS**

### **TECH STUDENTS GIVE BACK**

Nabin, a refugee from Bhutan, was contacted by RSO staff several years ago regarding new IT classes offered through the Utah Refugee Center. At that time he was working at a Wendy's fast food restaurant and looking for a way to expand his career potential. He joined the free volunteer-led Saturday program, which ran the course of a full year. Before the course was complete, he landed

his first job in the IT field at Les Olson Company. Once on the job, Nabin began to feel that he also needed to improve his communication skills to be more suitable for promotion and career growth. He returned to the Utah Refugee Center and joined the public speaking course which culminated in him writing a speech titled, "How IT Changed My Life" which he discussed live on KRCL radio. Nabin now regularly attends the current IT cohorts where he serves as both a volunteer instructor and mentor to other students following in his footsteps. In his professional life, Nabin is still with the Les Olson Company where he has already achieved several employment advancements and has also assisted his fellow Refugee Center IT students in gaining employment there as well.

# CONCLUSION

**THE REFUGEE SERVICES OFFICE** remains committed to providing the highest quality services and best practices for refugees who now call Utah home. The work continues for both newly arrived refugees and individuals who have lived in Utah for five, 10, 15 or more years. As part of Workforce Services, the Refugee Services Office will continue to develop, fund and support programs and services that allow refugees to become integrated members of the Utah community.



Visit

**[refugee.utah.gov](https://refugee.utah.gov)**

or [facebook.com/UTRefugeeServices](https://facebook.com/UTRefugeeServices) to learn more  
about the Refugee Services Office.

americanjobcenter®

**BOARD OF ADVISORS FOR THE  
UTAH REFUGEE SERVICES  
OFFICE**

REPORT TO THE GOVERNOR



**WORKFORCE  
SERVICES  
REFUGEE  
SERVICES**