

Supporting Higher Education in Refugee Resettlement

Building the capacity of colleges and universities to support resettlement.

SHERR Communities of Practice and Action Update #2 | April 2024

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SHERR Communities of Practice and Action Update

SHERR Communities of Practice and Action (CoPAs) are continuing to meet, share expertise and plan out strategies for co-creating new resources. Our groups include representatives from higher education institutions and resettlement agencies and affiliates, as well as federal and state government representatives. We're excited to share the major highlights and insights from the second round of sessions and grateful for the contributions of our group members.

English Language Learning and Career Pathways Support (Facilitator: Olga Prizhbilov, Los Rios Community College District) | Session 2: April 9, 2024

- The group began identifying and mapping funding resources for refugee-focused ELL & Career pathways programs and discussed the importance/value of building diverse partnerships with multiple community stakeholders;
- Using information collected collaboratively, the group will create a toolkit to help colleges and universities identify funding and build/sustain partnerships in support of refugee-focused ELL & Career Pathways programs. All resources created by this CoPA will eventually be available on the Refugee Resource Hub.

Housing and Campus Utilization (Facilitator: Dr. Diya Abdo, ECAR) | Session 2: April 11, 2024

- The group shared challenges with housing refugees on campuses to date and began to consider approaches to overcome barriers such as funding, lack of university leadership support, antagonistic groups and political climate, etc.
- The meeting featured a successful collaboration between a state university and the State Refugee Coordinator's Office to support a [long-term refugee ESL program](#) and wrap-around services that include on-campus housing for refugee families in Oklahoma;
- The group is in the process of planning messaging toolkits and collecting impact stories and models to share more broadly through the Refugee Resource Hub for various purposes, such as to persuade decision makers and as a guide and inspiration to those seeking to take new or initial actions.

Funded by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration.

Educational Opportunities: Reducing Barriers to Enrollment (Facilitator: Marina Chakmakchi, University of Southern Maine) | Session 2: April 8, 2024

- The group explored wrap-around services provided for refugee students and identified: 1) Support in financing education, 2) Mental health services, 3) Ongoing English Language Acquisition, and 4) Immigration legal services as particularly important services. Support for transportation and childcare were identified as gap areas. The next session will dive deeper into financing education;
- The group continues to work on how to build statewide coalitions at the intersection of higher education and refugee resettlement, as well as how to find and leverage data on refugee student enrollment. Toolkits created as a result of the group's collaboration will eventually be available on the Refugee Resource Hub.

Service Learning & Volunteer Engagement (Facilitator: Dr. Carina Black, Northern Nevada International Center @ University of Nevada Reno) | Session 2: April 12, 2024

- The group is compiling models of service-learning courses (soon to be available through the Refugee Resource Hub) and exploring how students are prepared to volunteer for refugee resettlement and potential gaps in this preparation;
- The group is examining best practices for partnerships between RAs & HEIs (including with student groups). These will be made available as toolkits and tip sheets on the Refugee Resource Hub.

If you have any questions about the CoPAs, please email: SHERR@worldlearning.org

SHERR past and upcoming events!

In case you missed it:

On March 20 SHERR consortium partner, **Presidents' Alliance on Higher Education and Immigration** hosted a webinar on **"Higher Education and Opportunities to Promote Refugee Integration"** featuring programs and grant opportunities available through the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) and spotlighting ASU and Bluegrass Community and Technical College - past recipients of Refugee Career Pathways funding. Follow [this link](#) to view the recording.

On April 17 **SHERR and World Learning's TESOL team** co-hosted a webinar on **"Teaching English to Adult Refugees,"** an overview of an upcoming online certificate program. To view the recording, please follow [this link](#). Click [here](#) for a copy of the resources shared during the webinar.

Coming soon:

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Supporting Higher Education in Refugee Resettlement

Please watch this space for an upcoming **SHERR Spotlight Series** on campus engagement with refugees. Over the next several months we will be spotlighting higher education institutions and resettlement agencies working together in support of refugees through innovations in housing, community-engaged learning, English language and career programs, and educational opportunities.

The Refugee Resource Hub Directory of Practitioners is up and running!

Join the [Directory of Practitioners](#) to network, build coalitions, and share information with other colleges and universities, resettlement agencies, and refugee-serving organizations focused on the intersection of higher education and refugee resettlement across the U.S.

Check out the newest Refugee Resource Hub Spotlights!

- **University of Denver and Ethiopian Community Development Council's African Community Center:** [The Ready for American Hospitality Program](#)
- **Middlebury College's** [Jiran: The Arabic Community Action Summer](#)
- **Washington University of St. Louis's** [EMPOWER: Building Professional Skills & Opportunities for Refugees](#)

We welcome your help in building out our library of success stories and models of refugee support programs at U.S. higher education institutions. Do you want to share your model or recommend we reach out to an institution to feature their program? Reach out to Axelle Nassirou (axelle@presidentsalliance.org) or fill out the [online form](#).

Supporting Higher Education in Refugee Resettlement (SHERR) builds the capacity of higher education institutions across the U.S. to support refugee resettlement with the aim to improve newcomers' experiences and outcomes upon their arrival into the United States. SHERR is led by World Learning in collaboration with the Ethiopian Community Development Council, the Presidents' Alliance on Higher Education and Immigration, and Welcome.US.

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