



# FACT SHEET

June 2016

## REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT PROGRAM



### Program Description

The California Refugee Resettlement Program (RRP) and the Cuban/Haitian Entrant Program (CHEP) are administered by the Refugee Programs Bureau (RPB) under the Child Care and Refugee Programs Branch, Welfare to Work Division, California Department of Social Services (CDSS). The RPB supervises county administration of the RRP and the CHEP within the parameters of federal regulations, state statutes and the State Plan for Refugee/Entrant Assistance and Services.

The RPB is committed to leading California in the efficient administration of the RRP and CHEP and coordinating refugee programs and services to achieve successful refugee resettlement that fosters early employment and self-sufficiency.

When the term "refugee" is used in this fact sheet, it is intended to include all eligible populations as described below.

### Who We Serve

**Refugees** are individuals who are unable to return to their country of origin because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group or political opinion.

### Other Populations Served

**Cuban and Haitian Entrants** are nationals of Cuba and Haiti who are in the United States (U.S.) and are granted a special status by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services.

**Asylees** are individuals who are in the U.S. and fear that they will be persecuted if they return to their home country. To become classified as an asylee, the person must go through an immigration hearing or court process.

**Amerasians** are persons born in Vietnam after January 1, 1962, and before January 1, 1976, fathered by a U.S. citizen. The Amerasian's mother, her spouse, her other children or someone who has acted as the Amerasian's mother, father or next of kin (and the spouse and children of that person) are also included in this category.

**Human Trafficking Victims** are individuals subjected to force, fraud or coercion for the purpose of sexual exploitation or forced labor and have a certification or eligibility letter from the federal Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR).

**Afghan and Iraqi Special Immigrants** are displaced persons from Afghanistan and Iraq admitted to the U.S. with Special Immigrant Visas (SIVs). These Afghans and Iraqis were employed by or assisted the U.S. government with translation and other services.

### California's Refugee Population

California has received over 700,000 refugees\* since 1975. For data on refugee arrivals, country of origin, and county of resettlement, click on the following link: <http://www.cdss.ca.gov/refugeeprogram/PG1537.htm>.

\*The term "refugees" in this paragraph is limited to refugees and does not include other groups under the heading "Other Populations Served".

### Benefits and Services

#### Cash Assistance

Refugees are eligible to apply for the same assistance programs as U.S. citizens, including the California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs), CalFresh, Medi-Cal, Supplemental Security Income (SSI)/State Supplementary Payment (SSP) Program, Cash Assistance Program for Immigrants (CAPI), and General Relief/General Assistance.

Single refugee adults or families without children who are not eligible for other cash assistance may be eligible to receive Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA) or Entrant Cash Assistance (ECA) for their first eight months in the U.S. Eligibility for RCA/ECA primarily parallels that of the CalWORKs Program.

All 58 counties must provide RCA/ECA benefits to refugees that apply for and are eligible to receive RCA/ECA. The RCA/ECA Program and related administrative costs are 100 percent federally-funded under the RRP.

#### Employment Services

Refugees who have been in the U.S. for five years or less are eligible to participate in employment services designed to help them become employed within one year or to retain employment after finding a job. These

services are provided through the Refugee Social Services (RSS) and/or Targeted Assistance (TA) Programs.

### **The Unaccompanied Refugee Minor (URM) Program**

The URM Program provides foster care services for refugee children who have come to the U.S. without a parent(s) or a close relative to care for them. The RPB, in coordination with Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County, and Crittenton Services for Children and Families, affiliated with Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, in Southern California, operates the URM Program in California.

### **Funding**

Funding for refugee services and benefits is 100 percent federally- funded and has the following components: Cash, Medical and Administration (CMA); Formula RSS, Formula TA, TA Discretionary, Older Refugee Discretionary (ORD) Funding and the Refugee School Impact Grant (RSIG).

### **CMA Funding**

CMA funding is provided to the state by the ORR for reimbursement of all costs associated with administering the RCA/ECA and the URM programs. The CDSS reimburses all counties' costs for administering the RCA/ECA program, including cash assistance payments. The CDSS reimburses the URM providers in California for administering the URM program.

### **Formula RSS Funding**

Formula RSS funding is awarded to the state by the ORR based on refugee arrivals during the most recent two Federal Fiscal Years (FFYs). The CDSS then allocates the Formula RSS funding to eligible counties. The eligible counties that receive Formula RSS funds are Alameda, Contra Costa, Los Angeles, Orange, Sacramento, San Diego\*, San Francisco, Santa Clara, and Stanislaus.

Funding is allocated to these counties based on the number of refugees currently receiving cash assistance in each county.

### **Formula TA Funding**

Formula TA funding is awarded to the state for specific counties with large refugee populations and high refugee concentrations to facilitate employment and self-sufficiency. The counties are determined by the ORR once every three years. The ORR uses a formula that takes into consideration the number of refugee arrivals during the most recent two FFYs.

There are nine California counties currently eligible to receive Formula TA funding: Alameda, Los Angeles,

Orange, Sacramento, San Diego\*, San Francisco, Santa Clara, and Stanislaus. The CDSS allocates funding to these counties based on the amounts determined by the ORR.

\*A resettlement agency in San Diego County also operates the Wilson/Fish Project, an alternative program that assists those refugees who are ineligible for CalWORKs or other cash assistance. The amount of funding for RSS and TA services is determined by the ORR each year.

### **TA Discretionary Funding**

TA Discretionary funding is awarded through a competitive application process for a two-year period. Six counties currently participate in this grant: Alameda, Los Angeles, Sacramento, San Diego, San Francisco, and Santa Clara. Projects provide supplemental employment services for newly-arrived refugees who have been unable to transition to economic self-sufficiency due to special circumstances.

### **ORD Funding**

ORD funding is awarded through a competitive application process for a three- year period. Seven counties participate in this grant: Alameda, Los Angeles, Orange, Sacramento, San Diego, San Francisco, and Santa Clara. Projects provide outreach to the state's older refugee population to link them with mainstream programs for the elderly and provide assistance with the citizenship process.

Funding is allocated to participating counties based on the number of older refugees currently receiving public assistance in each county. For more information, click the following link:

<http://www.cdss.ca.gov/refugeeprogram/Pg2433.htm>

### **RSIG**

The RSIG-funding-has been awarded to the CDSS to provide additional educational services that assist refugee students, i.e., after school tutoring, summer school, and parental involvement programs.

Through a Request for Application process, the CDSS provides funding to local school districts in counties that have received the greatest number of school age refugee children over the previous three years. For more information on the RSIG, click the following link: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr/programs/school-impact/about>

### **Collaborative Partners**

Successful refugee resettlement is a collaborative effort requiring the cooperation and coordination of a number of agencies both within and outside of state government. The following is a list of the agencies that the RPB collaborates with to coordinate services.

### **County Welfare Departments (CWDs)**

California's cash assistance programs are supervised by the CDSS and administered in the 58 counties by the CWDs. These agencies accept applications for cash assistance, determine eligibility and need; deliver benefits and services; and make referrals to other agencies and providers when appropriate. The CWDs may also provide services to refugees, directly or through subcontracts, in counties eligible to receive RSS and TA.

### **Employment Services Providers**

Providers of refugee employment services are selected by counties through a competitive bid process. Many non-profit agencies, including Ethnic Community-Based Organizations (ECBOs) and other service providers have been formed specifically for the purpose of aiding refugee resettlement by providing linguistically- and culturally- appropriate services.

### **Resettlement Agencies (RAs)**

Core resettlement services by the RAs are provided within the first 90 days of a refugee's arrival in the U.S. and include reception and placement services; counseling and referral services in the areas of orientation, health, employment, and coordination with local services; and assistance to children separated from parents. Each RA provides a variety of optional services beyond these core services as the individual agency's ability permits.

### **Private Foundations**

A number of philanthropic foundations in California play an active role in refugee resettlement. They fund agencies to provide services and to perform functions for refugees that are not funded with public resources.

### **Advisory Groups**

Many advisory groups currently in existence are directly involved in refugee issues and refugee resettlement is their primary concern. They are the: State Advisory Council on Refugee Assistance and Services, local forums on refugee affairs and Joint Resettlement Agencies Committee of California.

### **State Agencies**

The CDSS works with a number of state agencies to coordinate services for refugees. A description of these agencies and their responsibilities are as follows:

The California Department of Health Care Services administers the Medi-Cal Program, pursuant to the California State Plan for Medical Assistance and

Title XIX of the Social Security Act. Refugee Medical Assistance\Entrant Medical Assistance is administered in conformity with the State Plan for Medical Assistance, with certain exceptions required by the Refugee Act of 1980. The California Department of Public Health administers the Refugee Health Assessment Program, which funds refugee-impacted local health jurisdictions to provide comprehensive refugee health assessments.

The California Department of Aging provides information on services and resources for elderly refugees, which the CDSS disseminates to interested organizations and local governments through its website.

The California Department of Education provides a wide variety of educational services, including traditional kindergarten through twelfth grade, adult education, English-as-a-Second Language instruction and vocational education.

For more information regarding California's RRP, please visit the RPB web site at [www.cdss.ca.gov/refugeeprogram](http://www.cdss.ca.gov/refugeeprogram) or e-mail the RPB at [RPB@dss.ca.gov](mailto:RPB@dss.ca.gov), or by telephone at (916) 654-4356.