

Transitional Assistance in Springfield

I. Cash Assistance

- a. Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA)
For refugees without dependent children (non-TAFDC), refugee cash assistance is provided for a maximum of 8 months after a client's date of eligibility (date of arrival or date received ORR qualified status). If a refugee has increase income (example due to employment) cash assistance is reduced or terminated.
- b. TAFDC
For refugees with dependent children. Assistance is provided in the same manner as for other eligible individuals
- c. Social Security
Assistance is provided in the same manner as for other eligible individuals
- d. Food Stamps
Assistance is provided in the same manner as for other eligible individuals

II. Case Management Services

- a. Reception and Placement (R&P)
Core case management services are provided under a cooperative agreement with the Department of State. This agreement outlines specific assistance items to be provided.
- b. Refugee Case Management
RCA Eligible clients receive case management services for up to 8 months after their date of arrival/eligibility for the duration that a client is receiving cash assistance. Non-RCA clients receive core case management for up to one month for intake, assessment, and referrals. Core case management services include: intake; orientation; employability assessment; referral to Refugee Employment Services (RES); assistance with accessing/referral to other available benefits/services; Refugee Cash Assistance, for RCA-eligible clients.
- c. Refugee Community Services
The Refugee Community Services program provides community education and orientation, including cultural orientation to mainstream services; outreach, screening and referral services; and case management services.
- d. Citizenship for New Americans Program (CNAP)
The citizenship for new Americans program assists legal permanent residents of the Commonwealth in becoming citizens of the United States. The program provides assistance to persons who are within 3 years of eligibility to become citizens of the United States. Services provided include: ESOL/civics classes, citizenship application assistance, interview preparation and support services including, but not limited to, interpretation and referral services.
- e. Case Management Support – Refugees with Disabilities
Ongoing case management services for refugee and immigrant families addressing the specific needs related to developmental disabilities. Services are renewed on an annual basis in accordance with the Department of Disability Services and the Individual Service Plan.

III. Employment Readiness and Search Services

- a. Comprehensive Refugee Employment Services (CRES)
CRES is an integrated service program including employment services, English language training, literacy training, and skills training.
- b. Targeted Assistance Grant/Formula (TAG/F)
Contracted with the City of Springfield and sub-contracted with JFS. The TAG/F Program is employment based and provides direct services intended to result in the economic self-sufficiency and reduced welfare dependency of our clients. Funding based upon the number of refugees and ORR eligible population living in the Springfield area over the past 5 years.
- c. Refugee Independence through Service Enhancement (RISE)
RISE services are provided together with the CRES program to provide enhanced employment services to newly arrived refugees' intensive needs and serious challenges which prevent them from making the transition to self-sufficiency prior to the ending of their cash assistance.
- d. Employment Support Services Program (ESSP)
The Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) Employment Support Services Program (ESSP) provides comprehensive, bilingual/bicultural employment services to refugees and immigrants with time-limited TAFDC benefits. TAFDC eligible employable refugee clients must be referred to ESSP before any other refugee employment services program. The purpose of ESSP services is to assist refugees and immigrants, who are applying for, already receive, or are former recipients of TAFDC benefits, and are subject to the two-year time limit of TAFDC eligibility, in entering the work force, retaining employment and advancing toward economic self-sufficiency.
- e. Massachusetts Refugee Enterprise Achievement Program (MassREAP)
The MassREAP program operates out of LSS' office in Worcester but has started 8 businesses creating 8 jobs in the City of Springfield. MassREAP helps refugees develop either small-scale, home-based businesses or traditional non-home-based business ventures. In addition to start ups, MassREAP assists with the stabilization or expansion of existing refugee enterprises. Services provided include intensive training, assistance with development of business plans, support services, and ongoing technical assistance. The program also facilitates partnerships with lending institutions to assist participants in securing micro loans.
- f. DRIVE (Driver's Education Program for newly arrived refugees)
DRIVE helps clients overcome transportation barriers to employment. The program provides intensive classroom instruction focused on passing the Learner's Permit Test; and provides access to on-the-road driving instruction with linguistically supportive services to assist participants who have obtained a Learner's Permit to pass the road test and obtain their MA Driver's License.
- g. Federal Matching Grant (MG) employment assistance to new arriving refugee families, focusing on employment and removal of barriers to employment. Volunteers and donations provide additional support for new arrivals and eligible families and individuals.
- h. New Lands Farm offers a range of assistance to refugees who want to work in agriculture, from maintaining family gardens to starting their own farms. Produce supports good nutrition and is sold at farmer's markets to support families.

IV. Adult English Language Assistance

- a. The employment based CRES program provides a specialized employment focused English Language assistance and literacy training as needed.
- b. The DRIVE program uses the driver's manual to help clients learn English and become safe drivers.
- c. Adult Literacy classes, offered to adults who are illiterate on arrival. Clients are eligible for up to 5 years of literacy education with a priority given to newly arrived refugees.
- d. Financial literacy for refugee women geared toward empowering refugee women to manage and understand their finances independently. SNAP-ED – A nutritional education program for refugees and immigrants in the community offered to promote better health through nutrition.

V. Educational Support for Children

- a. Refugee School Impact Program (RSI)
The Massachusetts Refugee School Impact (RSI) program addresses the impact of refugee children on local public school districts by assisting in the identification and addressing of gaps in services to refugee students. Activities are conducted in partnerships between refugee service providers and local public school districts to collaboratively design, implement and evaluate programs and services to address the needs of refugee children and their families; support local public school districts to develop programs targeted specifically to refugee students; promote English Language Learning (ELL); promote academic success, high school completion, cultural enrichment and integration of refugee students at the middle and high school level through after school and summer programs; enhance parent involvement with their children's education through Parent Liaison, outreach and education; and support culturally appropriate and linguistically accessible school programs and services through the provision of interpreters, bilingual/bicultural aides and tutors. Available for up to 5 years after client's eligibility.
- b. Refugee Education Achievement Program (REAP)
JFS has this program at Commerce High School in Springfield. REAP was an after-school program offering career services and college connections for refugee high school students who attend Commerce High School in Springfield. JFSWM REAP staff helped refugee high school students access career services through local one stop career point, work with the Hamden County Regional Employment Board to help refugee high school students get connected with local youth employers, and expose the students to local colleges so that they understand college admissions and the benefits of a post-high school education. The goal of this program was to empower refugee high school students with information they need so that they positively transition to employment and/or college after high school. REAP was funded by the United Way of Pioneer Valley from January 1, 2012 to June 30, 2013 for a total of 18 months.
- c. ELL Task Force
Advises and meets with Dr. Delia Bello, Springfield Public Schools' (SPS) ELL Director, and SPS Superintendent, consists of Springfield Public Schools senior officials, representatives of JFSWM and LSS, and volunteers who are advocates

for refugee students' education. This Task Force meets on trimestral basis and takes minutes for each meeting.

VI. Medical Assistance

- a. Massachusetts Refugee Preventive Health Project (MRPHP)
This program is designed to complement existing refugee health assessment services and other state and local services to strengthen coordination of refugee access to health services and provide community outreach and education on health care issues relevant to refugees.
- b. Refugee Medical Assistance (RMA)
Refugee Medical Assistance provides transitional medical coverage for those refugees ineligible for the Medicaid program (referred to as MassHealth Standard in Massachusetts). Resettlement Agencies (JFS & LSS) refer refugees (and other ORR eligible populations) who are not eligible for RMA, to the MA Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) to complete applications for MassHealth Standard; and to complete applications for the State Children's Health Insurance Program, for attached minors who are not eligible for MassHealth. These applications are completed at the time of intake at DTA, when clients also apply for other benefits such as cash assistance and food stamps.
- c. Medical Screenings
As part of initial resettlement, the Refugee Health Assessment Program (RHAP) screens ORR eligible populations for communicable diseases and other health problems within 90 days of their entry to the U.S. RHAP is operated through an Interdepartmental Service Agreement between ORI and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH). In order to meet the goals of reception and placement and public health, the Massachusetts health assessment provides health assessment within the first 30 days after refugee arrival.

RHAP is designed to ensure follow-up of medical issues identified during the overseas medical examination; identify persons with communicable diseases of potential public health importance; enable a refugee to successfully resettle by identifying personal health conditions that, if left unidentified, could adversely affect his or her ability to resettle; and refer refugees to primary care providers for ongoing health care.

In Massachusetts, health assessments are provided through a network of providers, primarily community health centers, through contracts with MDPH that are awarded through a competitive procurement. RHAP services have four components: core services, targeted testing, medication and adult vaccine, and vaccination services (i.e. accelerated services to promote child entry into school, and adult follow-up services within one year to facilitate completion of the vaccination series). The core service elements include medical history and physical assessment, laboratory testing, follow-up services, triage/referral for positive findings, and referral to primary care.

VII. Psychological Counseling

- a. Refugee and Immigrant Safety and Empowerment (RISE)
The RISE program provides domestic violence prevention and intervention services to refugee women and their children. Trained program staff offer

education and resources. The Community Support Program is a prevention and mental health diversion program helping eligible refugees to best adjust to their new lives. A team of bilingual, bicultural family support specialists work with more "at-risk" families and provide intensive outreach case management services focused on accessing and coordinating resources, diverting crises and promoting family stability with the eventual goal of independent functioning.

- b. The Community Support Program is prevention and mental health diversion program helping eligible refugees to best adjust to their new lives. A team of 20 bilingual, bicultural family support specialists speaking 15 languages that work with more "at-risk" families and provide intensive outreach case management services focused on accessing and coordinating resources, diverting crises and promoting family stability with the eventual goal of independent functioning. Any refugee regardless of date of arrival is eligible for this service if they meet certain criteria.

VIII. Peer Support Groups

- a. Program to Enhance Elder Refugee Services (PEERS)

The primary objective of the Program to Enhance Refugee Elder Services (PEERS) is to strengthen relationships between elder and refugee organizations to link refugees to elder services in their communities. PEERS providers offer social and supportive services, either directly or by referral. Services include case management, senior center programs, and transport escort service. All services are designed to meet the specific needs of refugee elders, such as providing ethnic food in Meals on Wheels programs, organizing social support groups, or sponsoring health education workshops and activities. Available until the refugee receives US Citizenship.

IX. Housing Selection and Support Services

Under the Cooperative Agreement between agencies and the Department of State (for the Reception & Placement program to resettle refugees) each agency is required to place refugees in safe and sanitary living conditions. New clients receive case management through JFS & LSS and case managers visit homes on a regular basis. When problems are identified Case Managers notify landlords of any issues.

X. Volunteers and Donations

Apartments are typically furnished with household items donated by community members (note: every refugee receives a new mattress). Volunteers work closely with many refugees to assist with integration into the community. Volunteers provide mentoring, English language support, assistance with understanding their new environment and friendship.