

Refugee Assistance Services Program Section: Accomplishments July, 2008 to June, 2009

1. Under the refugee employment and training programs (SS ET and Road to Work), refugee agency staff helped 1,264 refugees secure employment in 2007-2008: a tremendous accomplishment created in the face of significantly worsening economic times.
2. Resettled 905 refugees from 2007-09, the largest number coming from Somalia and former Burma (Karen and Chin). This includes a handful of Iraqi and Afghani refugees. The Bhutanese refugees represent a brand new refugee ethnicity.
3. Funding
 - a. Renewal requests submitted for
 - i. ORP \$215,000
 - ii. RtW \$600,000
 - iii. Preventive Health \$100,000
 - b. Awarded from ORR Standing Announcement for Recently Arrived Refugees, \$102,000 to develop a mental health assessment tool for employment case managers to use.
4. Transition to DCF announced in the proposed state biennial budget for 2010-2011, and preparations underway.
 - a. Coordinated an outreach meeting for Secretary Bicha, Dept. of Children and Families, to meet with refugees in Milwaukee.
 - b. Facilitated the development of two ongoing refugee workgroups in Milwaukee: one, the Africa and Asian for Change worked with Secretary Bicha's staff at DCF which resulted in a subcontract of Brighter Future funding for PACA and HAWA.
 - c. Coordinated one W-2 listening session with refugees for Dept. of Children & Families in Milwaukee and planning another for La Crosse.
5. Develop, distribute, review and approve refugee consortia contracts for 2009
6. Conducted seven agency site visits: Sheboygan HMAA/Manitowoc HMAA, La Crosse AHMAA/Western Wisconsin Refugee Network, MARC, AARC, Dr. Sebastian, Workforce Resources/Barron, DRN.
7. Supported medical interpreter trainings; participants completed training; scholarships provided; developed contract with one new training providers.

8. Supported Refugee Mental Health Consortium efforts to secure state GPR funding for refugee mental health services
 - a. worked closely with John Easterday and his staff at the Dept. of Health Services to coordinate mental health and AODA services for refugees in Milwaukee, resulting in a fee-per-service AODA subcontract for Sebastian Family Psychology.
9. Managed 14 contracts with WI public health departments for refugee initial health screenings.
10. Supported nonprofit ECBO development for two new communities, Somali in Barron and Karen/Chin in Milwaukee
11. Section staff work with W-2 staff to ensure culturally and linguistically competent service policy is incorporated in the upcoming W-2 RFP.
12. Section staff met with DCF State Transitional staff and submitted issue paper for improving services for refugees in Milwaukee as the State plans to take over the administration of the Milwaukee County income maintenance.
13. Provided on-going program and technical assistance to refugee consortia agencies
14. Section staff coordinated DWD's co-sponsor of the 14th Annual Hmong National Conference held in April 2008 in Appleton as well as took part in the Conference Planning Committee.
15. Supported outreach efforts for both American Recovery and Reinvestment funding and for Novel AH1N1 flu epidemic health education.
16. Developed draft Executive Order and rationale memorandum for the New Americans' Initiative with the help of UW Social Work Graduate Intern, Jessica Derenne.
17. Section staff built a new bridge with the Wisconsin State Human Relations Association, where Shoua Vang now serves as a facilitator to talk about gang activities among Hmong youth.
18. Section staff participated in the WI Literacy Biennial Health Literacy Summit as presenters with a session on the Refugee Health Information Network web site with multi-language health materials.
19. Dijana Dzamonja made two presentations about refugees, one at a Naturalization Ceremony at the Milwaukee regional USCIS offices and the other for Women's Day.

20. Additionally, section staff collaborated with Association of State Refugee Health Coordinators (ARHC) and Savitri Tsering (WI DHS), our state refugee health coordinator to improve outreach and health education for refugees. June 29 held a day-long training for the Milwaukee region nurses' association. Recently Section staff also worked with DHS and Savitri to distribute Novel H1N1 flu prevention information.