



# Collaborative Pathways to Self-Sufficiency for Refugees

## TANF and ORR Promising Pathways

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# Immigrants, Refugees, and the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Program

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## *Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA), 1996*

- Provides funds to states to administer work-focused public assistance benefits.
- Fundamentally shifted how welfare agencies administer TANF benefits to immigrant populations.
- Defined qualified immigrants.
- Generally barred new legal immigrants and those without verified documentation.

# What is TANF?

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- **T**emporary **A**ssistance to **N**eedy **F**amilies
- Four purposes:
  - assisting needy families so that children can be cared for in their own homes.
  - reducing the dependency of needy parents by promoting job preparation, work and marriage.
  - preventing out-of-wedlock pregnancies.
  - encouraging the formation and maintenance of two-parent families.
- Replaced AFDC/JOBS/EA as nation's "welfare" program.

# Refugees and Immigrants in America

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- According to the US Census Bureau, there are approximately 38.5 million foreign-born individuals in the United States, accounting for 12.5% of the total population.

Of these foreign-born individuals:

- More than half were born in Latin America, and almost one-third were born in Mexico.
- Nearly one in three entered the country in 2000 or later.
- More than half are noncitizens.

# Immigrants, Poverty, and Work

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- Estimates of the poverty rate among the foreign-born ranges from 10% to 17.4%.
- 15.5% of US workers were foreign-born in 2009.
- More than half have a high school diploma or less, and more than half speak English “less than very well.”

# Immigrants and TANF caseload

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- Although caseloads for all families – including immigrant families – have declined, immigrants remain a significant proportion of TANF participants.

# Eligibility Requirements

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- Citizens.
- Refugees arriving after August 22, 1996 are eligible for TANF assistance for their first five years in the country. Most states have chosen to continue eligibility past the five year period and to extend eligibility to refugees entering before the August 22, 1996 cutoff.
- Long-term workers and certain family members – legal permanent residents who have worked or can be credited with 40 quarters of work under the Social Security Act, extends to spouses and children.
- Armed Forces active personnel, veterans, and certain members of their family.

# Barriers to Work for Immigrants and Refugees

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- Limited English Proficiency.
- Low-literacy in Native language.
- Post-traumatic stress.
- Lack of High School Diploma or GED.
- Lack of computer and other technology skills.



# Challenges for Programs that work with Immigrants and Refugee populations

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- Finding translators for diverse dialects within languages (such as Burmese).
- Finding enough classes, programs, and work experience options for immigrants.
- Finding staff trained in legal status, documentation, and needs of different immigrant populations.

# Promising Programs

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Common themes of highlighted programs:

- TANF and ORR collaborations and community/faith-based organizations.
- Seamless social service delivery for refugees using TANF funds.
- Promising pathways to work for refugees in the TANF Case System.
- Strengthening Career Pathways for Refugees.

# TANF For Refugees- Minnesota

Long History of Refugee Resettlement,  
Southeast Asian 1970s  
Somali and Africa 1990s-2011

# TANF and WIA

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- TANF and Refugee Cash Assistance.
- Workforce Investment Act.
- Community Partners- Faith Based.
- Mutual Assistance Agencies.
- Local Employers.
- Job Fairs.

# Collaboration

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- Local School Districts-ESL.
- Faith Organizations-Housing ,Social Services.
- Community Organizations-Support Services.
- State-Targeted Assistance ,Special Programs.
- Local Government-Jobs, Childcare, Transportation, Cash Assistance, Medical.

# Examples of Collaboration

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- Destination Jobs.
- Culturally Appropriate Childcare.
- Summit Academy OIC-School Success.
- Somali Confederation Mental Health Program.
- Specific Hiring of Multilingual Staff.
- Employer Sponsored Job Fairs.
- United Way and Foundation Support.

# New York State Refugee Resettlement Assistance Program

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- State funded program that is intended to supplement mainstream refugee services during the first 60 months of eligibility.
- Fills in gaps not covered by other programs and extends services beyond limits imposed by other programs.
- Utilizes both TANF and non-TANF funds.

# New York State Refugee Resettlement Assistance Program (continued)

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Enhances service delivery by contracting with local voluntary organizations to provide:

- Post-employment services.
- Mental health.
- Residency assistance.
- Case management.
- Services for elderly refugees.



# Illinois Department of Human Services, Hispanic/Latino Affairs

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- Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Initiative - TANF used to fund intensive English language training courses.
  - Students are subject to job placement during their training.
  - Classes operate on a flexible schedule (open-entry and open-exit).
- Internal collaboration - representatives from each of the six program divisions in DHS collaborate as a workgroup to examine current policies and develop a standardized, agency-wide policy to improve access to services for immigrants and refugees.
- External collaboration – 29 community-based organizations provide outreach to the immigrant community by explaining benefits available and offering interpreter services in 18 languages.

# Illinois Department of Human Services, Hispanic/Latino Affairs (continued)

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## New Americans Strategic Plan

- In 2005, Illinois DHS conducted an intensive research project which closely reviewed DHS' six divisions and made recommendations as to how services to LEP individuals, immigrants and refugees could be enhanced.
- This research was the foundation of the New Americans Strategic Plan, which emphasizes:
  - Comprehensive, clear, and consistent policies.
  - Bilingual pay policy – initiative that seeks to increase the number of staff providing services in languages other than English by providing incentives for employees to develop, maintain, and utilize language skills.
  - Focus on data collection, analysis, and performance outcomes.

# Washington WorkFirst Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Pathway Program

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- 34 contracts with local community based organization and nonprofits to provide specialized services to help families with limited English skills.
- Allows LEP parents who receive assistance through WorkFirst to meet their participation requirements through the LEP Pathway program.
- Support services include:
  - Assistance in job search.
  - Orientation to the work environment.
  - Employment training in a bilingual setting and job-retention supports.
- Caseworker incentives to award caseworkers that help clients find high-wage jobs with benefits.

# Vocational ESL Immersion Program (VIP), San Francisco, California

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- Collaboration between City College of San Francisco (CCSF) and San Francisco Human Services Agency (HAS).
- 18-week intensive ESL, Vocational ESL, and Computer Assisted Language Learning program.
- Offers subsidized work experience through the Community Jobs Program to participants in the higher tiers of the program.

# North Dakota Skills Development Project

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- Operated by the Skills and Technology Training Center and funded in part by the North Dakota Department of Human Services.
- Workplace Language Program – provides new Americans with initial skills to be able to complete the Manufacturing Skills Training class and the Certified Nursing Assistance class.
  - In addition to these job specific courses, there is an Achieve Global curriculum component that focuses on critical thinking skills, teamwork, interpersonal skills, work ethic/attitude, time management and conflict management.
- Participants have to pay tuition of \$760, but some scholarship funds are available.

# Workstyles, Denver, Colorado

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- Designed by the Spring Institute for Intercultural Learning.
- Provides pre-employment competency-based training for LEP individuals focused on empowering participants to deal with barriers.
- Takes the format of a two-week, 60 hour intensive course covering content such as:
  - Developing resumes.
  - Completing applications.
  - Interviewing for a job.



Building a PEER TA Network State by State



# Welfare Peer Technical Assistance Network



## What is the Welfare Peer TA Network?

- A Federal initiative through the Office of Family Assistance (OFA), Administration for Children and Families (ACF), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
  - Facilitates the sharing of information about promising practices in implementing the TANF program.
  - Establishes linkages among TANF agencies, low-income families, and their partners at the State, County, local, and Tribal level.



## ■ Welfare Peer TA Goals

Serving as a central outreach and dissemination vehicle for OFA, ACF.

Providing onsite and virtual training and technical assistance to Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program offices.

Strengthening OFA's documentation of evidence-based programs and outcomes.

Connecting and creating an environment of interoperability among programs, offices, and contacts across the United States.



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## Did You Know?

In partnership with the American Public Human Services Association/National Association of State TANF Administrators (NASTA), the Welfare Peer TA Network designed a Roundtable session at the NASTA Annual Meeting in Charleston, South Carolina on September 13, 2010. This Roundtable was designed to engage State TANF Directors in dialogue



The Welfare Peer Technical Assistance Network (Welfare Peer TA) is a technical assistance initiative sponsored by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families (ACF), Office of Family Assistance (OFA).

Welfare Peer TA facilitates the sharing of information between and among States, counties, localities, Tribal organizations, and community-based organizations working

with Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) families. Welfare Peer TA encourages the establishment of linkages between these organizations on the belief that guidance and instruction are best delivered by professionals who have achieved results and outcomes similar to those desired by other related social service organizations. Welfare Peer TA supports federal, State, local, Tribal, and community-based stakeholders by bridging gaps between research and practice, highlighting promising practices and service innovations in the field, and fostering strong peer-to-peer relationships that promote improved service delivery to low-income families.

Various technical assistance strategies and formats are available through Welfare Peer TA, depending on the specific needs of the requesting organization. These organizations can solicit the Welfare Peer TA Network for a technical assistance intervention that shares information on innovative strategies and programs for effectively serving TANF participants, and for purposes of building linkages within and among States and their agencies. Types of technical assistance delivered include Roundtable meetings, site visits, Webinars, promising practice reviews, and moderated teleconferences. Since its inception in 1997, Welfare Peer TA has reached every State in the United States with at least one technical assistance intervention and responded to over 170 requests over the life of the

## Request Technical Assistance

"Thank you again for the excellent workshop here - as usual, it was a pleasure working with Welfare Peer TA, and I look forward to future opportunities."  
- South Carolina Welfare Peer TA Event Participant

To find out how we can help you plan your Welfare Peer TA event: site visit, teleconference, workshop, [click here](#).

## A Look at Welfare PeerTA Impact



E-mail Alert Sign-Up

## Web Site Features

### Innovative Outreach and Dissemination

- ❖ Web-based Innovative Program Nomination form and listing
- ❖ Interactive U.S. Map demonstrating technical assistance delivered since the inception of the Welfare Peer TA Network (including access to reports, resources, handouts, and other related peer-to-peer needs)
- ❖ Online Technical Assistance Request Form
- ❖ Interactive question- and-answer area
- ❖ E-mail alert registration
- ❖ Search tool
- ❖ Share this Page feature (allows e-mail, Facebook, Twitter, and other social media sharing by end users)
- ❖ More than 3,000 welfare resources
- ❖ Virtual webinars
- ❖ RSS feeds

## What is Technical Assistance?

- An intervention that shares information on innovative strategies and programs for effectively serving TANF participants, for the purposes of building linkages within and among agencies.
- Types of technical assistance delivered include:
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  - Site visits.
  - Webinars.
  - Promising practice reviews.
  - Moderated teleconferences.





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## REQUEST TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Introduction

TA Request Form

The Welfare Peer TA Network provides peer-to-peer technical assistance (TA) to States, counties, localities, tribes, or community-based organizations that are operating a TANF program or providing services to TANF families.

Please use the below online form to request technical assistance from the Welfare Peer TA Network.

(If you are unable to use our online form, you can download our form and fax it to the Welfare Peer TA Network at 703-934-3740. Please click on one of the following forms based on the type of TANF agency requesting TA: [TA Request Form for State, County, or Local TANF Agencies](#) or [TA Request Form for Tribes](#).)

### I. Identifying Information

Please complete this section so that the Welfare Peer TA Network can contact you. An asterisk (\*) indicates the field is required. View our [Privacy Policy](#).

\*Title:

Mr. ▼

\*First Name:

\*Last Name:

\*Position Title:

\*Agency/Organization:





Building a PEER TA Network State by State



## Welfare Peer TA Team

<http://peerta.acf.hhs.gov>

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