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***Community Services  
Block Grant***

**Dear Colleague Letter**

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
Administration for Children and Families  
Office of Community Services  
Division of State Assistance  
370 L'Enfant Promenade, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20447

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ocs/programs/csbg>

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**Re: Partnership with the Office of Refugee Resettlement      Date: June 20, 2014**

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Dear Partners:

In our mutual work to combat poverty, the Office of Community Services (OCS) encourages you to identify and work with newly-arriving populations in your communities as part of a new initiative between OCS and the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) at the Administration for Children and Families (ACF).

Refugee resettlement is intended to occur in close cooperation and consultation with federal, state and local entities. Through these partnerships, we can better support our nation's humanitarian commitments toward populations who have fled persecution and are granted protection by the United States (U.S.) government. As U.S.-citizens-in-waiting, refugees qualify for mainstream federal public benefit programs, such as Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), designed to assist underserved and vulnerable populations; refugees adjust their status to lawful permanent residents within a year of arrival and are eligible for citizenship after five years.

ORR provides time-limited benefits and services to refugees and other eligible populations, such as asylees and foreign victims of human trafficking. Each state has a State Refugee Coordinator working within the state government structure helping to oversee the administration and coordination of these services (similar to the role of the CSBG Administrators). Upon arrival to the U.S., refugees and other ORR-eligible populations must immediately work to become economically self-sufficient. Although highly resilient and resourceful, many face distinct challenges during their transition to the U.S. such as: learning English, a new culture, social norms, and systems (i.e. financial, transportation, health, community and social services, child care, education, food, legal, etc.). Refugees must face these challenges while looking for employment and raising their families without the same social or cultural support systems previously afforded to them in their home country.

As new members of the U.S. society, refugees can be considered in great need of culturally and linguistically competent systems, and refugees and their families can benefit greatly from supportive and integrated community services. In order to promote refugees' health and

socioeconomic well-being it is crucial to connect them to mainstream resources as soon as possible.

OCS-funded Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) services can complement ORR's programs, and help connect ORR-eligible populations to critical mainstream resources. Serving refugees requires a community-wide engagement across this nation, particularly for programs and agencies combatting poverty and responding to the health and human service needs of low-income and underserved populations.

To facilitate a partnership with ORR and the refugee resettlement network, please view: [ORR State/Regional Contacts](#); [ORR State Programs Overview](#) (Funding Map and Grantee Contacts); [ORR Fact Sheets](#); [ORR Events Calendar](#); and the ORR Listserv sign-up (bottom right: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr>).

Examples of linkages to be made include, but are not limited to:

- Invite [ORR State/Regional Contacts](#) and [Grantees](#) to join community strategic planning efforts, boards, councils, community development initiatives, listservs, meetings and events.
  - Include refugees in strategic plans and other communications.
  - Invite refugee stakeholders to public engagement and outreach initiatives.
  - Ensure refugee stakeholders are represented on relevant boards, committees, events, and councils.
- Provide materials, brochures, and resources to refugee-serving agencies.
- Provide program overview presentations and webinars for regional, state, and local refugee resettlement network on your agency's programs and services, as well as funding opportunities.
- Request refugee stakeholders' overview presentations and webinars on target populations, appropriate cultural interactions, and programs.
- Share resources and technical assistance for target populations; provide mutual support.

For additional inquiries regarding partnership opportunities please contact:

OCS— Sara Lee at [sara.lee@acf.hhs.gov](mailto:sara.lee@acf.hhs.gov)

ORR—Mariestella Fischer at [Mariestella.Fischer@acf.hhs.gov](mailto:Mariestella.Fischer@acf.hhs.gov)

Thank you as always for your collaboration and tireless service.

\_\_\_\_\_/s/\_\_\_\_\_  
Jeannie L. Chaffin  
Director  
Office of Community Services

\_\_\_\_\_/s/\_\_\_\_\_  
Seth Hassett  
Director, Division of State Assistance  
Office of Community Services