

-OBSOLETE per DS 3173-
Operations Memorandum - Employment & Training
OPS981106

11/16/98

SUBJECT: Option to Conduct Initial Job Search through Office of Refugee Resettlement
Employment Services Provider

TO: Executive Directors

FROM: Raymond E. Schlechter, Director, Bureau of Operations

Purpose

To provide county assistance offices (CAOs) with guidance concerning the initial job search options available to refugees who receive employment services funded by the Federal Refugee Resettlement Program.

Background

Individuals in Pennsylvania who receive cash assistance benefits and who are not exempt or do not have good cause are considered mandatory and are required to participate in the Road to Economic Self-Sufficiency through Employment and Training (RESET) Program. This means that refugees who are considered mandatory for RESET are required to complete an initial job search, participate in work-related activities, and fulfill all the requirements of the RESET Program that are required of any other cash assistance recipient, regardless of their ability to speak English, understand American culture, or any other resettlement barriers they face in attempting to secure employment.

The Federal Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) provides funding for employment services for refugees. This funding is targeted for the first 12 months after a refugee arrives in the United States, but can continue for up to five years on an as needed basis. Refugees who later change their status to permanent alien remain eligible for employment services through ORR. The Immigration and Naturalization Service includes a class code on the back of the Resident Alien Identification Card (I-551) that identifies the person who was admitted into the United States as a refugee. Supplemental Handbook 730.2 **IDENTIFICATION OF REFUGEES** provides a description of the class codes and a complete list of non-citizens who are eligible for employment services as refugees. ORR's philosophy is that the path to self-sufficiency and assimilation into life in the United States is based on early employment. ORR requires that refugees begin looking for work as soon as they are resettled. English language training (ELT) is also funded, but as a supplement to employment services. ELT must be available in the evenings, so full-time job search and/or employment activities are not compromised. No ORR funds are available for training and long-term training activities that refugees may pursue on their own are discouraged. Additionally, assistance to refugees who wish to upgrade their employment is funded and available to refugees who have entry-level jobs, but have educational backgrounds or

job experiences that qualify them for better jobs. This assistance usually occurs once the refugee improves his/her English language skills.

Questions have been raised concerning the coordination procedures for refugees who receive employment services funded through the ORR as they relate to compliance with the requirements of the RESET program.

Discussion

Because of the obvious advantages to refugees of conducting an initial job search through a service provider experienced in dealing with the obstacles refugees face and because of the work-first philosophy of the ORR-funded employment services providers, CAOs are instructed to offer the refugee who must conduct an initial job search the choice of doing so through an ORR-funded provider in addition to the options of CAO- directed and contracted job search. The client's choice must be recorded on the Agreement of Mutual Responsibility.

In Pennsylvania, the ORR funds are distributed to local contractors through the Office of Social Programs and its prime contractor, Lutheran Children and Family Services of Eastern Pennsylvania. A list of local service providers that provide employment services to refugees is being sent via regular mail. However, only the Regional Contractors are assigned Project Identification Codes as only they will be providing the project data via Automated Interface Management System (AIMS).

NOTE: Though absent from the attached list of refugee service providers, refugees, residing in Philadelphia, who have been in the United States for 12 months or more and who choose to conduct an initial job search through a contractor, must be referred to the Targeted Assistance Program (TAP) administered by the City of Philadelphia.

TAP is located at:

100 South Broad Street
Fourth Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19110

Contact Persons: Sangwon Laonady or Siekkim Lem
Telephone: (215) 686-9240

The Office of Social Programs has directed its contractors to provide services to refugees so that the recipient may fulfill the RESET Program requirements. Therefore ORR-funded employment service providers will provide services equivalent to an initial job search and will emphasize that a refugee must seek, accept and maintain employment. After the initial job search, refugees can continue to have the ORR-funded services count as their work-related activity.

A new Project Code (PR) = X has been added to CIS System Reference Tables to support the CAO with the accurate tracking of clients who are receiving services through ORR. There have also been five new Project Identification Codes (PJID) added to the TPOI System Reference

Table to identify the five regional contractors who are running the refugee program. The Project Operators list is being sent via regular mail.

In order to refer a client to a Refugee Resettlement contractor, the CAO must enter the correct Project Code (X) and the appropriate PJID for the county on the CSPREN screen in CIS. Refer to the TPOI table to find the correct code. The referral is sent to the contractor on a PA782 form. The contractor will provide the CAO, via the PA782, with a Project Begin Date if the client is enrolled in the program or a referral rejection if the client is not accepted in the program.

The contractor will also enroll the client in one or more activities. The activities available to this program are:

Activity Code :

11	English as a Second Language
13	General Equivalency Diploma (GED)/High School
42	Contracted Job Search/Prep Training
46	Contracted Job Development

A list of valid Project Codes and associated activities is available on the TPRC System Reference Table. The Activity Code, Activity Begin Date, and the Expected Number of Hours will be provided to the CAO on the initial PA782. The contractor will provide the actual hours of participation on a monthly basis. The CAO will record the activity information on a timely basis on the CSIETP screen in CIS.

When an activity closes or a new one is added or the client is terminated, the contractor will provide the Activity and Project End Dates and the appropriate Termination Codes for each.

Next Steps

1. Review your refugee cases to identify potential referrals.
2. Referrals are to be made to the local refugee employment services provider named on the attached list.
3. Offer all refugees who are required to conduct an initial job search, the opportunity to choose an ORR-funded provider as well as a CAO-directed or contracted job search.
4. Record the client's choice on the AMR.
5. Questions regarding this memorandum may be directed to Ms. Tamila Lay- Krehling at (717) 783-9977.
6. This operations memorandum becomes obsolete when this information is incorporated into the Cash Assistance Handbook.

Attachments (being sent via regular mail)