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Reexamining Cultural Orientation Provided to Newly Arrived Refugees

Sara E. Matchulat
SIT Graduate Institute

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REEXAMINING CULTURAL ORIENTATION PROVIDED TO NEWLY ARRIVED REFUGEES

Sara Elizabeth Matchulat

PIM 71

A Capstone Paper submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Master of Arts in Intercultural Service, Leadership, and Management at the SIT Graduate Institute in Brattleboro, Vermont, USA.

November 10, 2013

Advisor: Charles Curry-Smithson
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Sara E. Matchulat, 11/10/2013
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The provision of cultural orientation is one of many services required by the contract between resettlement agencies and the federal agencies overseeing refugee resettlement, the Cooperative Agreement. This paper explores World Relief in Moline, Illinois as a case study for how small resettlement agencies can provide meaningful and memorable cultural orientations. In order to accomplish this goal, this research utilizes the Empowerment Theory to explore how recently resettled refugees’ perceptions can be taken into consideration as orientation materials are examined. Research sought to compare Cooperative Agreement requirements to current orientation materials, interviewed service providers and recently resettled refugees, and utilized their comments and ratings of orientation in order to determine what aspects of orientation have room for growth, what refugees perceive to be most important to know upon arrival, and if information can be presented in a better way. This research was intended to provide a starting point for agencies to reexamine their cultural orientation programs in light of what their clients believe to have been most beneficial to their own successes. Research demonstrates that current materials are outdated and that a majority of refugees are unable to remember a majority of the information that was supposed to be addressed in their orientations. Findings suggest that by creating orientations that both meet Cooperative Agreement requirements and address what refugees identify as beneficial information, caseworkers would be able to provide orientations that refugees are better able to remember and resettlement agencies would be able to continually improve and update the materials they use.
INTRODUCTION: CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION AND RESEARCH QUESTION

In the wake of World War II, the world saw an outpouring of displaced people. The United States, among other countries, began to adopt policies regarding the resettlement of refugees. As a result of the need created by World War II, international law, specifically the United Nation’s 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, defined a refugee as:

Any person owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it. (Article I(A)(2))

Between 1948 and 1980, US law regarding the resettlement of refugees was very much reactionary, resulting from what was happening around the world at any given point in time. The passage of The Refugee Act of 1980 meant the first US commitment to caring for all refugees, federal money allocated for the support of resettlement of refugees, and an attempt to standardize the services refugees would receive upon arrival (Office of Refugee Resettlement, “History,” n.d.). Services provided to refugees are aimed at instilling self-sufficiency and the importance of refugees obtaining employment as soon as possible. These services are carried out by nine national resettlement agencies, each of whom subcontract with approximately 350 local field offices in 49 of the 50 states (Department of State, “The Reception and Placement Program,” n.d.).

As part of the attempt to standardize services, the US government enters into contracts with these nine national agencies. Each year the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) in
conjunction with the U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) releases a Cooperative Agreement between itself and national refugee resettlement service providers. The Cooperative Agreement defines what the U.S. government requires of resettlement agencies; one such requirement is that the resettlement agency must provide orientation to U.S. life and culture within the refugee’s first thirty days in the country. Each year, the Cooperative Agreement is updated based on the outcomes of case audits and feedback from various sources. At the beginning of fiscal year 2013 (which began October 1, 2012), ORR and PRM expanded their requirements for refugee cultural orientations from a short bullet point list to nearly three full pages outlining topics that must be covered and subtopics that must be addressed. Many agencies were forced to quickly revamp their orientation programs or face violating their contracts with ORR and PRM, a violation that may threaten their existence as a resettlement service provider.

While working with World Relief in Moline, Illinois, a small resettlement field office, I was asked to help improve their cultural orientation materials in light of the new requirements. After speaking with many refugees and several caseworkers, I quickly discovered that many refugees did not recall the material that was covered in their orientation; a problem that can lead to substantial legal and financial trouble as they adjust to their new lives in the U.S. Providing quality cultural orientation within the first thirty days is difficult for both service providers, who have a limited amount of time to provide such a time-consuming service, as well as for refugees, many of whom are overwhelmed and experiencing culture shock. Unfortunately, there are many small field offices like World Relief Moline who only employ two caseworkers, must provide services to approximately 200 clients, and must complete a lengthy list of activities before each
refugee has been in the country for 30 days. I began to explore how I could support World Relief Moline in their efforts to provide a quality orientation that refugees are able to remember.

I quickly found that the orientation materials World Relief Moline was using were uninspiring, to say the least; there was no way that the existing slideshow would serve to inform new refugees about all they needed to know in order to successfully integrate into U.S. society given the new Cooperative Agreement requirements. Keeping in mind that this service is intended to help refugees adjust to life in a new place and culture, it is understandable that the list of required topics and learning indicators includes many topics and each topic includes several vague sub-points to allow for the addition of locally appropriate information and the expansion of knowledge. As a result of all the information that must be presented, cultural orientation is often the most time-consuming service that the Cooperative Agreement requires of resettlement service providers, often lasting several hours (and several days in field offices that have the additional resources to offer extended classes). Due to time and resource limitations, many small service providers utilize a slideshow presentations and very basic handouts. As a result of time and resource constraints, many agencies are forced to gloss over orientation and, consequently, clients struggle to retain the information provided to them. I determined that in order to best understand how orientations can be improved, it was necessary to first understand the refugees’ experience of cultural orientation. I believe that those who have previously experienced such a dramatic shift in life and culture and who have successfully come out of the situation are able to offer the most valuable insight into what information was most helpful and what they wish they would have been told. As a result, I sought to explore how the perceptions of cultural orientations differ between the requirements laid out in the Cooperative Agreement and refugees’ experiences and how can the resulting information be used to improve the
orientation program. This research focuses primarily on the first half of that goal: **what do refugees who have received cultural orientation from World Relief Moline during the past five years recall about the material that was provided to them, how useful did they perceive the information to be, and what are their recommendations for improvement?** In order to answer this question, research compared Cooperative Agreement requirements to current orientation materials, interviewed service providers and recently resettled refugees, and utilized their comments and ratings of orientation in order to determine what aspects of orientation have room for growth, what refugees perceive to be most important to know upon arrival, and if information can be presented in a better way. The conclusion of this paper will utilize the results of research to create recommendations for the improvement of World Relief Moline’s orientation program.
LITERATURE REVIEW

Updates to the Cooperative Agreement for fiscal year 2013, brought expanded requirements to the subsection regarding requirements for cultural orientation (section 8.C.5.e)\(^1\). When looking at this material it is important to note that the Cooperative Agreement specifically directs resettlement staff to the Cultural Orientation Resource Center (CORC), a website created by the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) with funding provided by the U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Population, Refugee, and Migration (PRM). The website offers a variety of resources for professionals working with refugees; refugee culture backgrounds, phrasebooks in a variety of common refugee languages, material for learning about refugees and the refugee experience, orientation Toolkits, and the “Welcome to the U.S. Guidebook” and Videos (also translated in common refugee languages). The materials on this website are often cited as being the preferred material for cultural orientation. The “Orientation Toolkit” offers lesson plans, complete with activities and debriefing questions for each required discussion topic, unfortunately these materials appear to have been designed for large groups of refugees to participate in together over an extended period of time. While it is understandable that this may be feasible in pre-departure orientation and in some U.S. cities that receive thousands of refugees annually, large group classes, offered within each refugee client’s first thirty days in the country, simply is not a realistic option for most resettlement agencies. The “Welcome to the U.S. Guidebook” is a phenomenal tool as it discusses all of the required topics and it has been translated into several common refugee languages and is available for free download and distribution; however, at 230 pages it is simply too long to provide a copy to each new family. Instead, most resettlement agencies are forced to create their own orientation materials, using the

\(^1\) The full language of both the 2012 and 2013 Cooperative Agreement requirements covering cultural orientations can be found in Appendix A.
CORC’s orientation toolkit and guidebook as a loose guide. For those agencies unable to fully utilize the “Orientation Toolkit” or the “Welcome to the U.S. Guidebook” provided by CORC, their partnership with CAL provides access to several published articles about everything from defining a refugee to a report on U.S. orientation practices, which also is several years old (Costello, 2004). Unfortunately, there has been very little published since changes to the Cooperative Agreement went into effect on October 1\textsuperscript{st}, 2012.

It is also important to note that cultural orientation is offered prior to departure in countries with high concentrations of refugees. These overseas orientations last anywhere from 2-30 hours and utilize a combination of lectures and active participation (CORC, “Overseas CO Delivery,” n.d.). Overseas orientation focuses on many of the same topics that the Cooperative Agreement requires of domestic orientation. Many of the overseas orientation sites utilize activities from the CORC’s website and some even provide a copy of the “Welcome to the U.S. Guidebook” or play the “Welcome Video”. Unfortunately, attendance at these orientations is not required so resettlement agencies must not assume that a refugee has any preexisting knowledge.

There are several organizations that have developed successful orientation materials over several decades of service but many are not being utilized or are not being shared with other resettlement offices. Most of the national resettlement agencies offer Best Practices Webinars that are presented by a local field office, but often times this information is not presented with any of the other eight national agencies. U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI), one of the nine national resettlement agencies, has released pamphlets on their website covering several subjects ranging from health to personal finance. These materials are available on their website for printing and distribution in some of the most common refugee languages. The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), another national agency, provides a few short
pamphlets to their field offices covering the facts of life in the U.S. and travel loan basics, but these materials are only available to USCCB field offices. Even ORR (2012) has released a few publications about housing on their website, some of which have been translated. Unfortunately it is much more common for orientation practices to be kept quiet and shared with only local field offices.

A simple Google search for “refugee orientation” will return hundreds of results about orientations provided by various organizations; one will be briefly introduced to the Refugee Development Center in Lansing, MI, Exodus Refugee’s Language Training and Cultural Orientation Classes in Indianapolis, and the Spring Institute for Intercultural Learning’s Cultural Orientation classes in Denver. Or one may even encounter stories of praise about orientation at Caritas of Austin, International Rescue Committee in Baltimore or even the orientation provided by the YMCA of Houston (Einsel, 2007). None of these websites or articles explains how these agencies provide the orientations that are making them famous and when this researcher reached out to ask questions, silence followed. As it currently stands, field offices only exchange success stories with their partner offices.

Likely spurred by attempts to standardize services following the Refugee Act of 1980, CAL (1982) published a 190 pages document about planning and the implementation of orientation programs. The book must have been a great tool at the time of its release; it discussed determining the most appropriate type of orientation, techniques for teaching, and offered sample lesson plans. There have been no similar publications since this time and now changes to Cooperative Agreement requirements and new research on the education of adults and English languages learners has made this book a relic of past practices. In 2006, Costello and Bebic published a short background article for COR Digest about the history and current status of
refugee cultural orientation both in the U.S. and overseas. This piece offers a great starting point for those seeking to understand orientations but it fails to provide any advice or methodology for caseworkers. Clearly, literature regarding orientation presented to refugees leaves much to be desired as well. However, there is some information that can be extrapolated from research done regarding the education of immigrants and refugees. Pfleger and Ranard (1995) compiled fifteen years worth of essays, documenting refugee English education programs in Southeast Asia. Their work has largely been used for English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers and beyond learning about education programs for refugees overseas, the book holds little value for resettlement caseworkers. Seufert (1999) presents an array of issues and concerns relating to refugees as English language learners – many of which can also be applied to refugees as cultural orientation students. Most notably, Seufert creates a list of three factors that ought to be considered when designing an orientation program (limited available time and energy, previous experience with education, and psychological needs during a time of great transition). She continues to create recommendations for English curriculum, and these considerations are as far as caseworkers are able to transfer the information she presents.

If research from the CORC and independent authors and editors cannot prove to be useful due to recent changes in orientation requirements and agencies do not resettle a large enough number of refugees to hold group classes and utilize lesson plans from the “Orientation Toolkit”, these small resettlement agencies must rely on their own understandings of Cooperative Agreement requirements, refugees’ needs, and their own assessments of the effectiveness of previously utilized orientation practices. However, if former refugees are not consulted during this process, the resulting orientation that may be created can leave refugees feeling even more confused and frustrated. Refugees are entering the U.S. in the lowest social and economic levels;
they are often entirely dependent on their resettlement agency and public service benefits until they become gainfully employed. What if agencies were able to empower refugees who have completed all of their required services by providing them with a voice? The research that follows is based on the assumption that ideas from the Empowerment Theory, through requesting and employing the ideas of recently resettled refugees, can be utilized to create meaningful orientations.

While not designed specifically for work with refugee clients, the Empowerment Theory allows for the utilization of previous refugees’ knowledge as a useful tool for the creation of orientation for new refugees. Lee & Hudson (2011) explain, “Utilizing empowerment theory as a unifying framework, it presents an integrative, holistic approach to meeting the needs of members of oppressed groups… Empowerment is about taking control, achieving self-direction, seeking inclusiveness rooted in connectedness with the experiences of other people” (pp. 160). Empowerment Theory exists under the assumption that individuals are able to “solve immediate problems” and follow their solutions to be able to analyze the society around them. Lee & Hudson continue, “Empowerment means that people draw strength from working through the meaning of these different statuses in their lives, which enables them to be the fullness of who they are, persons with a rich heritage” (pp. 166). By encouraging former clients to participate in the improvement of services provided to new refugees, caseworkers are allowing a means for clients to examine their experiences, both successes and struggles, and create solutions others based on their own experiences. Should resettlement agencies seek to rely on the Empowerment Theory, they would be able to create a cycle of empowerment for the refugees which they serve: refugees would transition from requiring the complete support and aid of a resettlement agency and transition to being empowered to have their ideas and experiences support the resettlement
of those refugees who follow. By empowering refugees in such a manner, resettlement agencies are allowing those whom they have recently resettled to have a voice that will encourage them to actively participate in society, thus making them even more successful and contributing members of society.
RESEARCH DESIGN

Seeking to better understand the various perceptions of cultural orientation, this research has utilized a comparison between the perceptions of refugees, current Cooperative Agreement requirements, and reflections on the results of research by service providers. In light of time and geographic constraints, research was focused on cultural orientation at the World Relief field office in Moline, Illinois and the perceptions of clients who have been living in the U.S. for five years or less. Research began by examining current orientation materials utilized by World Relief Moline and comparing them to the updated Cooperative Agreement requirements, noting any apparent areas of focus and any areas needing additional attention. A list was made of the topics covered in the existing World Relief Moline orientation, with topics of apparent focus noted, and the list was set side-by-side with the list of main topics required by the Cooperative Agreement. This provided a baseline for where current orientation practices stand and allowed for an understanding of what the refugees who were interviewed were provided upon arrival in the U.S. Upon completion of this baseline understanding, interviews with refugees who were resettled by World Relief Moline commenced. I sought to obtain qualitative data about the orientations that were provided to them as well as a question seeking a numerical rating of their orientation. Refugees were asked a series of four initial questions to establish the demographics of the refugees that were interviewed. The first two questions establish which country refugees originated from and which country they fled to and were subsequently registered as refugees in. Twenty-six refugees from a variety of countries of origin and who had been resettled over a period of five years were interviewed; five Iraqis who were refugees in both Syria and Jordan, two Cubans, seven Burmese who were refugees in both Thailand and Malaysia, four Congolese who were refugees in Ethiopia, five Bhutanese who were refugees in Nepal, and three Sudanese
who were refugees in Uganda. Clients were then asked how long they had been living in the U.S. Knowing that clients who are enrolled into the Match Grant Program, a federal program offering matching funds for volunteer services and donations in order to provide additional services, receive additional orientation and support, a question was added to identify clients who received these services. The addition of this question would prove to clarify whether additional support provided to refugees would make a difference in their experience of cultural orientation. Once the basic demographic questions had been addressed, I asked questions about what they remembered, what they would change, and what they wish they had been told. A question asking them to rank the usefulness of the orientation that they were provided was also included to provide a means of quantifying the refugees’ responses. Overall, these interviews allowed for a better understanding of refugees’ retention and needs. Once this data was compiled, it was presented to caseworkers and a few local service providers. World Relief employs only two caseworkers, so research expanded to include additional service providers from other local organizations, who have all worked with refugees for many years. A total of five service providers were interviewed on their perceptions of cultural orientations; two caseworkers at World Relief Moline, one outreach nurse who has been working with refugees for thirteen years, one employer who hires large numbers of refugees, and one woman who works with secondary migrants and has worked in with refugees for fourteen years. Service Providers and caseworkers were asked three questions about orientations:

- What do you think is the most important topic that should be discussed in orientation?
- Is there any information that you think refugees are having a hard time learning/remembering?

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2 See Appendix B for Data Collection Questionnaires
• How do you think we can best present cultural orientation?

Upon completion of this research, all three sets of data were compared against one another and notable differences and similarities were documented.

Fortunately, limitations on the completion of this research were minimal. As explained, time and geography limited the research to orientations provided by World Relief Moline, rather than seeking to examine orientations across the nation. Language was not a limitation to completing this research as translators had been arranged and were utilized for all interactions with recently resettled refugees. Time proved to be a challenge, as it took some work to arrange interviews with refugees around their work schedules, as such, it proved to be a challenge but not a limitation. Many refugee cultures are hesitant to criticize so care was taken to explain to refugees that their analytic responses would be used to help improve the orientation that new refugees will receive. The greatest limitation during research was arranging time to speak with caseworkers since the timing of this research fell at the end of the resettlement fiscal year, one of the busiest times for resettlement service providers.
PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

In order to best breakdown and examine what aspects of orientation could use improvement, the data will be presented and analyzed in three separate sections: presentation and analysis of the comparison between current orientation materials and Cooperative Agreement requirements, of refugee responses, and of service provider perceptions.

Current Materials versus Cooperative Agreement Requirements

When I first arrived at World Relief Moline in October of 2012, cultural orientations consisted of a short slideshow\(^3\) and handouts of an AR-11, Change of Address Form, and a Selective Service Registration Form for all men ages 18-25. Orientation materials left much to be desired. The chart below lays the topics currently in World Relief Moline’s next to the updated Cooperative Agreement requirements to demonstrate shortcomings. World Relief Moline Topics with an asterisk (*) denote topics that were stressed; italicized topics only covered a portion of the required Cooperative Agreement topic which it parallels; and blanks indicate that no portion of the topic was addressed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>World Relief Moline Topics</th>
<th>Cooperative Agreement Required Topics</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) The Role of World Relief Moline*</td>
<td>1) Role of the Local Resettlement Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Refugee Status</td>
<td>2) Refugee Status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) English Classes</td>
<td>3) English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Reporting a Move</td>
<td>4) Public Assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) Basic U.S. Laws</td>
<td>5) U.S. Laws</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6)</td>
<td>6) Your New Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7) Employment*</td>
<td>7) Employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8) Health</td>
<td>8) Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9)</td>
<td>9) Budgeting and Personal Finance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10) Housing*</td>
<td>10) Housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11)</td>
<td>11) Hygiene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12)</td>
<td>12) Safety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13)</td>
<td>13) Cultural Adjustment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^3\) A copy of World Relief Moline’s slideshow can be found in Appendix C.
| 14) Education | 15) Transportation |

Caseworkers often talked through a copy of the slideshow, while utilizing a translator, and provided an opportunity for the refugees to ask questions. Typically, this orientation would require approximately two hours of a caseworker’s time. One can clearly see that while the existing materials meet some of the requirements, almost half of the new required topics are being neglected. It was clear that existing materials focused primarily on getting a job, clarifying the role of World Relief Moline, and housing rules and responsibilities while other subjects were glossed over. The 2013 Cooperative Agreement explains that, “to the extent practical, written orientation materials in the refugee’s native language covering the topics listed below shall be made available to the refugee upon arrival.” Currently, World Relief Moline is only handing out two forms (three, if the refugee falls into a certain demographic). Certain that this information is not intentionally being neglected I spoke with the caseworkers to explore how the current materials were developed. It was explained that the current orientation materials were created several years ago and had been updated only a few times, as a need was discovered. After these areas for growth had been noted, it was time to examine whether the refugees were able to identify these shortcomings and what, if any, additional insights they had.

**Refugees’ Perceptions**

Refugees were asked eleven questions. The first four provided background information to better understand the demographics of the study. First refugees were asked what country they originated from: five originated from Iraq, two from Cuba, seven from Burma, four from the Democratic Republic of Congo, five from Bhutan, and three from Sudan. Next, refugees were asked which country they registered as a refugee in (this is also the country in which they were
provided overseas, pre-departure orientation): three individuals from Iraq were refugees in Syria and two in Jordan, the two refugees from Cuba were also registered as refugees in Cuba, four Burmese refugees registered in Thailand while the other three registered in Malaysia, the four Congolese refugees were registered in Ethiopia, all five Bhutanese refugees registered in Nepal, and all three Sudanese refugees registered in Uganda. Next, the refugees were asked how long they had been living in the U.S.: six had been in the U.S. for less than one year, seven for one to two years, four for two to three years, five for three to four years, and four for four to five years. The final question asked if the refugee was enrolled in the Match Grant Program (as explained earlier, this program allows for additional orientation and support): ten had been Match Grant clients, eleven were not, and five couldn’t remember if they were enrolled in the program or not.

Once this demographic data was collected, interviews began to explore the refugees’ memories and opinions of the cultural orientation that was provided to them. Refugees were asked to list the topics that were discussed during their cultural orientation in order to establish a general idea of how much they remembered; no refugees were able to list all of the topics that were covered in the slideshow utilized by World Relief, twenty could remember some of the topics, and six couldn’t remember any of the topics that were discussed. At this point in the interview process, opinions were gathered regarding what refugees deemed most important and what they wish they had been told. Specific responses will be discussed shortly; first we will explore if their responses were topics that the Cooperative Agreement requires or if they were new ideas. When asked what they believe to be the most important topic that ought to be covered in cultural orientation, fifteen provided an answer that fell in line with one or more of the Cooperative Agreement requirements while eleven provided unique ideas. Seventeen explained that the most important lesson they have learned since arriving in the U.S. was a topic that
aligned with one or more required topic while the remaining nine explained lessons they had learned that cover other topics. Then refugees were asked what they wish they had been told; fourteen explained topics that the Cooperative Agreement requires and twelve provided alternate responses.

The final two questions sought to provide a more quantitative evaluation of the orientations that refugees were provided. When asked if they believed orientation provided the necessary information to become successful in the U.S., sixteen said yes and ten wished they had been provided with more information. Finally, refugees were asked to rate the orientation that was provided to them on a scale of zero to five; responses varied. No refugees gave a rating of 5 (Extremely Helpful); six rated orientations a 4 (Very Helpful), eight rated orientations a 3 (Somewhat Helpful), three rated orientations a 2 (A Little Helpful), three rated orientations a 1 (Was Not At All Helpful), and six said that they could not remember their orientations at all. Given this data, the average rating for orientations is a 2 (A Little Helpful).

The following table summarizes refugee responses:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Question</th>
<th>Refugee Responses</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3. Length of Time the in U.S.</td>
<td>0-1 Years: 6 1-2 Years: 7 2-3 Years: 4 3-4 Years: 5 4-5 Years: 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Match Grant?</td>
<td>Yes: 10 No: 11 Can’t Remember: 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Number of Topics Remembered</td>
<td>All Topics: 0 Some Topics: 20 No Topics: 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Most Important Topic</td>
<td>CA Requirement: 15 Not a CA Requirement: 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Most Important Lesson</td>
<td>CA Requirement: 17 Not a CA Requirement: 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Thing Wished Had Been Told</td>
<td>CA Requirement: 14 Not a CA Requirement: 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Did Orientation Provide Necessary</td>
<td>Yes: 16 No: 10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Following interviews with recently resettled refugees, it became clear that cultural orientations leave much to be desired. When asked about what they felt is the most important topic that should be discussed during orientation, all described required topics. It seemed as though refugees noted a variety of topics, likely indicating that the topics they mentioned were ones they had issues with at one time or another and they had not remembered from their orientation. Several required topics that were brought up by refugees were most notably management of personal finance, the importance of knowing U.S. laws, the possibility of family reunification, and the importance of English. One Burmese refugee who has been in the U.S. for three years explained the importance of English, “Don’t be afraid if you don’t know the language. Try first and if you can’t do it at least you tried.” A Bhutanese refugee who had been in the U.S. since 2011 stated that the most important thing refugees must learn is U.S. laws; he described that understanding of the law is the most basic and urgent knowledge and that a refugee can learn the rest on their own as long as they are able to follow the laws and stay out of trouble. When asked, all of the refugees were able to list some of the topics that were covered, but none was capable of listing all the topics that World Relief Moline covers in its slideshow. Questions about what refugees wish they had been told and what they have learned since their arrival brought a range of responses; again, many were required topics but several were new ideas that were never mentioned in orientation and are not topics required by the Cooperative Agreement. One young woman from Burma explained her desire to hear more about the similarities between America and her home country in order to help ease the adjustment to a new culture. Despite initial estimates, refugees who participated in the Match Grant Program showed no better retention than
those who were not enrolled in the program. Perhaps the most important question, that regarding suggestions to how orientation ought to be provided, received several beneficial insights. Several refugees suggested that orientation be provided over the course of several days while others wished they had received printed information that they could look back at later when life had calmed down. One refugee from Iraq had a unique idea - her idea proposes a means of teaching about cultural adjustment through others’ experiences. She explains, “Trust me many refugees are lost and in shock in the first year. For me, before I came here I was following on the Internet many refugees who came to the US, I read and learned from their experiences about life here. So when I came here I didn’t feel shocked, I had my goals, and I'm working on them now.”

Service Providers’ Perceptions

Of the five service providers interviewed (two caseworkers at World Relief Moline, one outreach nurse who has been working with refugees for thirteen years, one employer who typically hires refugees, and one woman who works with secondary migrants and has worked in with refugees for fourteen years) responses almost unanimously explained that there is no one topic that is more important than any other. Each pointed out that certain topics need to be given more emphasis than they currently are. Naturally, the topics they believed ought to be emphasized typically fit in line with the type of interaction they had with refugees. When asked what topic they believe refugees are struggling to remember or understand a range of answers were provided, covering almost every required Cooperative Agreement topic and then even more. The most veteran respondent provided the most all-encompassing response, she pointed to a belief that refugees struggle most to remember that the U.S. is a nation full of rules that must be followed. Whether they are state laws, rules about education, or rules about rental housing, she
stressed the importance that refugees become lifelong learners. The concept of independence was also mentioned by several respondents; they pointed out that many refugees are brought into the U.S. receiving support from many different sources and they noticed the importance of explaining the need to transition from receiving help to being able to do it for themselves. The idea of stressing the importance of self-sufficiency falls in line with the ultimate goals of resettlement and proved to be a surprise that many refugees are still relying on public services and community support and donations to sustain their lives even several years after they have arrived. The question about ideas for the presentation of orientation materials yielded answers that ran the gambit from repetition to workshops to handouts. All of the respondents provided multiple ideas and most were quick to remind the researcher of the importance of patience.
DISCUSSION

This paper set out to better understand what refugees who were resettled by World Relief Moline over the past five years think is most important to know in order to have a successful life in the U.S. Rooted in the belief that those who have experienced resettlement and adjustment are the best resources to identify opportunities for growth and areas of success, this research utilized the knowledge and experiences of refugees themselves coupled with Cooperative Agreement requirements to create several suggestions and recommendations for the cultural orientation program at World Relief Moline and beyond.

Practical Applicability

Given that this research was conducted of refugees who were resettled and provided orientation by World Relief Moline the results are most applicable to this specific agency. However, my experience in several other small agencies would lead me to believe that the results and recommendations can benefit small resettlement agencies across the nation that have struggled with providing efficient yet meaningful and memorable orientations. The hope was that this research could be replicated in other resettlement field offices. This research was intended to provide a starting point for agencies to reexamine their cultural orientation programs in light of what their clients believe to have been most beneficial to their own successes. If resettlement agencies are working to create refugees who are self-sufficient and advocates for themselves, it stands to reason that they must first take ownership of the material that is being presented to them. As such, the format of this research itself can be utilized in other agencies in order to better understand clients’ needs.
**Recommendations for Further Research**

Given the positive feedback and helpful results which were brought to light during interviews, this researcher would recommend that further investigation be conducted regarding domestic cultural orientations. It may be most beneficial to replicate this research for each local resettlement field office; this would serve to ensure that all refugees are receiving orientations that address what they identify as their challenges and concerns, thus utilizing the basic tenants of the Empowerment Theory. If such an undertaking were completed, it would be interesting to compile the data from each field office and compare those results to Cooperative Agreement requirements and be able to present any discrepancies to PRM in order to help improve the following year’s Cooperative Agreement. It would also be an opportunity to present the results of nationwide research to CORC so that they might create orientation materials that are suitable for all agencies, meet the refugees’ needs, and meet Cooperative Agreement requirements. Presenting the resulting information from a nationwide comparative study to CORC might result in the creation of orientation materials suitable for all sizes of field offices that would also remove the need for local field offices to constantly be recreating their orientation materials. Research further into the responses of refugees from different countries of origin would also be beneficial to the field as a whole since it would offer the opportunity to tailor orientations based on what situation the refugee is coming from. For example, refugees who lived in rural Burma with no running water may need different topics stressed than the middle or upper class refugees from Iraq who left behind white-collar jobs and advanced degrees. Under current orientation
practices both sets of refugees would receive identical orientations, with no attention to the fact that they are coming from two seemingly different worlds.

Conclusions and Recommendations

When looking at the research conducted, one can see that there is some work yet to be done to ensure that refugees are provided with a memorable orientation that meets federal contract requirements laid out in the Cooperative Agreement. When current materials were compared to the new requirements, there was much to be desired. Current materials demonstrated a clear emphasis on three topics (role of the local resettlement agency, employment, and housing) while it neglected or glossed over the remaining eight topics. It stands to reason that this information is then not being presented to refugees. Including topics such as safety, budgeting, and education, just to name a few, one can clearly see that crucial information is being left out. There is no doubt that this research demonstrates that orientation materials are in dire need of attention. First and foremost, these materials must be updated to include all of the required topics and subtopics; not only to protect the field office from being reprimanded during their next audit but also for the benefit of the clients whom they are serving. The Cooperative Agreement states that one subtopic that must be discussed is that self-sufficiency and self-advocacy are central to successful adjustment; it is impossible for refugees to achieve these things if they are not provided with the necessary basic information about life in the U.S. Utilizing the experiences of recently resettled refugees to improve orientations provided to new refugees would reinforce both of these topics.

With nearly half of the required topics missing from the orientation slideshow and refugees mentioning in their interviews required Cooperative Agreement topics as subjects they
wish they had been taught, one can assume that attention to detail with regards to addressing
Cooperative Agreement requirements would improve refugees’ perceptions of orientation. While
the refugees interviewed avoided an outright condemnation of the orientation they received, their
responses to questions about what they remembered and what they would change proved that
they are simply not retaining the information that PRM deems necessary for success. Many
refugees explained that they wish they had been presented with printed materials. While working
at World Relief Moline, the assumption was that if printed materials were provided to refugees,
they would simply be added to a pile of paperwork and never looked at again. This research has
identified that at least some portion of the refugees would have preferred to receive information
that they could look at during a later time. Knowing this to be the case, it might behoove the
resettlement agency to spend the money to have materials printed and translated, if necessary. As
it was noted in the literature review, various resettlement agencies across the nation have already
released a variety of printed materials that have been translated into common refugee languages.
By utilizing these preexisting materials caseworkers would save time and agency resources and
clients would benefit from the ability to revisit these materials long after orientation has been
presented. The first thirty days of a refugee’s time in the U.S. is often very busy with English
classes, doctor’s appointments, meetings with caseworkers, and adjusting to life in a new place.
Based on personal experience in the field, it would seem as though providing printed materials to
refugees would allow them to read and learn about these subjects during any free time, therefore
supporting retention while saving some of the caseworkers’ time.

Another common theme among refugee responses was a desire to be provided with
orientation information over a period of several days rather than in one long meeting. While it is
not realistic for caseworkers to exchange one long meeting for several short ones, my experience
is that many topics correspond with other services that are required within the first thirty days (the required timeframe for completing orientation). It may be a better use of resources to provide orientation in segments. Once updated orientation materials are developed, they can be divided by topic and presented on days that related services are being completed (ie: the day of their first doctor’s appointment can be the day that health is discussed, when public benefits are applied for that topic can be discussed, etc). Especially since translators are utilized for these other appointments it would be feasible for caseworkers to provide orientations alongside the required services.

Interestingly, several refugees mentioned the idea of needing to learn from experience. Due to contractual requirements resettlement agencies cannot simply cite this as a reason to provide subpar orientations; however, this can be slightly altered to suggest evidence for a desire to learn from those that have come before. Experiences such as that of the young Iraqi woman who followed other refugees on the internet can be utilized. Connecting new refugees with those who have been in the U.S. can be beneficial to both parties. While something like this may be limited by the work schedules of refugees, it would not be an impossible task. If this type of mentorship and companionship is not possible it is most certainly recommended that resettlement agencies seek out the advice of recently resettled refugees regarding the provision of cultural orientations.

One of the most important things for resettlement offices to remember is that orientation practices must be fluid. Each year, changes to the Cooperative Agreement must be analyzed and taken into consideration as orientation practices are examined at the beginning of each new fiscal year. Research for this paper commenced during the 2013 fiscal year but by the time this research will be presented a new fiscal year, under the contract of a new Cooperative Agreement,
will have commenced. Given this necessary fluidity, the utmost important recommendation that can be offered is that orientation materials and practices are examined and, if needed, updated at the outset of each new fiscal year.

Overall, research was able to successfully explore how orientations can be improved. It was evident, through all three divisions of the research that orientation materials needed to be updated. As a result of this research, the orientation materials utilized by World Relief Moline were updated to include all topics required by the Cooperative Agreement and recommendations were made to present orientation topics at the time that a corresponding service was provided and handouts were suggested to coincide with each required topic. Each refugee interviewed was proud to be able to help those refugees who are yet to arrive and they demonstrated a sense of joy that they were recognized as experts in what information ought to be presented and in what manner.
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APPENDIX A

Section 8.C.5.d of FY 2012 Reception and Placement Basic Terms of the Cooperative Agreement

8.C.5.d. Community and Other Orientation
During the initial reception and placement period, the Recipient shall provide or ensure that the refugees assigned to it are provided orientation, with appropriate language interpretation if necessary, concerning:
1. the role of the Recipient and any other individual or group assisting in sponsorship;
2. public services and facilities;
3. personal and public safety;
4. public transportation;
5. standards of personal and public hygiene;
6. the availability of other publicly supported refugee services;
7. the importance of learning English;
8. personal and household budgeting and finance;
9. information on permanent resident alien status and family reunion procedures;
10. the legal requirement of each adult refugee to fully repay his or her IOM transportation loan in accordance with the established payment schedule;
11. the legal requirement to notify the U.S. Department of Homeland Security of each change of address and new address within ten days. Authority: Secs. 103, 265 of the Immigration and Nationality Act, as amended by sec.11, Public Law 97-166, 95 Stat. 1617 (8 U.S.C. 1103, 1305).
12. the legal requirement for males between the ages of 18 and 26 to register for the selective service within 30 days of arrival.
To the extent practical, written orientation materials covering the topics listed above in the refugee’s native language shall be made available to the refugee upon arrival. An intake interview and housing and personal safety orientation shall be conducted within five working days of arrival. Complete orientation on other topics shall be completed within 30 days of arrival.

Section 8.C.5.e of FY 2013 Reception and Placement Basic Terms of the Cooperative Agreement

8.C.5.e. Orientation
During the initial reception and placement period, the Recipient shall provide or ensure that the refugees assigned to it are provided orientation, with appropriate language interpretation if needed. To the extent practical, written orientation materials in the refugee’s native language covering the topics listed below shall be made available to the refugee upon arrival. Complete orientation on all topics shall be completed within thirty (30) days of arrival. An orientation curriculum and teaching materials as well as the complete list of learning indicators for each topic and the content objectives will be available from the Center for Applied Linguistics.
Cultural Orientation Resource Center at [www.culturalorientation.net](http://www.culturalorientation.net). Orientation topics and objectives must include:

1) Role of the Local Resettlement Agency
   - The local resettlement agency is not a government agency.
   - Assistance provided by the local resettlement agency and public assistance is limited and benefits vary across agencies, locations, and cases.
   - There are a number of organizations that will work alongside local resettlement agencies to assist with access to locally-available programs and provision of services.
   - The local resettlement agency provides assistance to refugees through the provision of items and/or money to meet initial needs, a limited scope of services, and advocacy on refugees’ behalf to receive service for which they are eligible.
   - The quality and quantity of items provided will vary.
   - Refugees and the local resettlement are responsible in partnership for successful resettlement.

2) Refugee Status
   - There are rights related to refugee status.
   - There are responsibilities related to refugee status.
   - Applying for permanent residency and naturalization are important steps in the adjustment process.
   - There may be immigration consequences to breaking U.S. laws.
   - Refugees may be eligible to file for family reunification, which would allow family members overseas to come to the U.S.

3) English
   - For both adults and children, learning English is critical to successful adjustment in the U.S.
   - Learning English will take time and the process may vary from person to person.
   - There are a variety of ways to learn English.

4) Public Assistance
   - Public assistance is available to help refugees pay for their needs, but is limited in amount and scope.
   - There are a variety of types of government assistance.
   - The local resettlement agency will provide help in accessing public assistance services.
   - There are responsibilities associated with some types of assistance.

5) U.S. Laws
   - The U.S. is governed by the rule of law.
   - The U.S. has many laws governing behavior in public.
   - There are legal rights and restrictions related to family life.
   - There are rights and responsibilities related to U.S. residency and citizenship.

6) Your New Community
   - There are community and public services that are available to support residents.
   - The local resettlement agency will assist refugees in becoming acquainted with their new community.
   - Members of the refugee’s ethnic or religious group who live in the area may be a good source of support.

7) Employment
• Early employment and job retention are essential to survival in the U.S., and must be the primary focus for all employable adults (men and women).
• A person’s initial job might not be in their chosen profession.
• The refugee himself or herself plays a central role in finding/obtaining employment in the U.S.
• A crucial way of finding better paying jobs is learning how to speak English.
• There are general characteristics of U.S. professional and work culture to which refugees must adapt in order to be successful in finding and maintaining employment.
• Employees have rights as well as responsibilities in the workplace.

8) Health
• Only critical and immediate health care needs may be met in the initial weeks of resettlement.
• Initial health screenings and immunizations will be scheduled within thirty (30) days of arrival.
• The U.S. has no universal healthcare system and refugee medical assistance (RMA) differs state by state. In many cases RMA is available for eight months.
• A variety of health care services are available in the U.S.
• Preventative health care plays a large role in maintaining good health.
• There are norms associated with health care services in the U.S.
• U.S. health practices may differ from those of other cultures or countries.
• There are local resources available to support refugees’ mental health.

9) Budgeting and Personal Finance
• Refugees are responsible for managing their personal finances.
• In the U.S., financial transactions are mostly conducted through the banking system.
• Paying taxes is a legal obligation in the U.S.

10) Housing
• There are a variety of types of housing arrangements depending on affordability and the local context (including shared housing, apartment, house, etc.).
• The local resettlement agency provides assistance in home orientation, after which housekeeping and home maintenance are individual and family responsibilities.
• Understanding basic safety considerations and use of appliance/facilities will promote safety in the home.
• There are additional domestic life skills that facilitate independent living.

11) Hygiene
• There are norms for personal hygiene in the U.S.

12) Safety
• Attention to personal safety is an important consideration for all people.
• Police and law enforcement agencies exist to help people if they become a victim of a crime.
• It is important to be prepared for emergencies.
• It is important to be familiar with safety procedures.

13) Cultural Adjustment
• There are core characteristic that define the American experience.
• There are cultural norms and expectations that are fairly widespread throughout the U.S.
The philosophies of self-sufficiency and self-advocacy are central to American culture and to refugees’ cultural adjustment.

There are numerous phases of cultural adjustment.

Resettlement may have an impact on family roles and dynamics.

Expectations regarding parenting practices may differ in the U.S. from what refugees are used to.

There are some basic coping mechanisms to deal with the stress of adjustment.

There are ways to seek assistance from others in your community.

14) Education

There are legal and normative expectations regarding schooling in the U.S.

The value for adults and teenagers to continue formal education should be weighed against the need to work.

There are many options for continuing education and training beyond compulsory K-12 schooling.

15) Transportation

Public transportation options exist in most communities.

Owning or having access to a personal vehicle comes with benefits and responsibilities.
APPENDIX B

Data Collection Questionnaire

Refugee Questionnaire:

Before we begin this conversation it is important that you know that you have the right to end this conversation if you begin to feel uncomfortable or stressed in any way. Your name will not be used at all in this research. You have the right to receive a copy of the completed research if you would like, if so please check the box on the informed consent form. I will take notes on your answers during the course of this conversation to help remember what you have said and ensure I have obtained the necessary information. Thank you,

1. What country were you born in?
2. What country did you register as a refugee in?
3. When did you arrive in the U.S.?
4. Were you a Match Grant client?
5. Do you remember what was discussed in cultural orientation? Can you tell me some of the topics?
6. What do you think is the most important topic that should be discussed in cultural orientation?
7. What was the most important thing you have learned about life in the U.S.?
8. What do you wish someone would’ve told you about life in the U.S.?
9. Did orientation provide you with the necessary information to live in the U.S.? If not, what other information do you wish you would’ve been told?
10. How do you think we can improve how we present cultural orientation here in the U.S.?
11. On a scale of 1-5, how would you rate the orientation you were given?
   0= I do not remember my orientation, 1= Was not at all helpful, 2= A little helpful, 3= Somewhat helpful, 4= Very helpful, 5= Extremely helpful,

Service Provider Questionnaire:

For the sake of anonymity, no names will be utilized - simply the capacity in which you work with refugees and your length of service. If you are willing to participate in this research I ask that you please take a few moments to reflect on your experiences with refugees and complete the following questions.

Thank you,

1. How long have you been working with refugees?
2. What do you think is the most important topic that should be discussed in cultural orientation?
3. Is there any important information about life in the U.S. that you think refugees are having a difficult time learning/remembering?
4. How do you think we best present cultural orientation here in the U.S.?
APPENDIX C

World Relief Moline Orientation Slideshow

30 DAYS ORIENTATION

* World Relief & Our Services
* Housings
* Community Services-DHS, SS, CHC, RICHD
* Budgeting & Finances
* Adjustment of Status & Family reunification
* Employment
* Education
* Churches & Volunteers
* Health & Hygiene
* Safety
* Travel Loan
* Change of Address_ AR-11
* Green Card & Citizenship application
* Basic Laws of U.S
Moline and Rock Island are two of the four Quad Cities.

The other two cities are Davenport and Bettendorf, Iowa.
WELCOME TO AMERICA
world relief™
Refugee Orientation for New Arrivals

Joseph - Orientation Coordinator
Your Agency or Sponsor here in Illinois is WORLD RELIEF.

World Relief is a Christian organization, but we work with people of all different faiths.

We will be your agency for 3 months.

Your Case Manager/Worker is Teresia.

To phone World Relief, dial (309)764-

You can meet with your case manager Monday through Friday. The office is closed on Fridays, weekends and public holidays. Please call for an appointment.
Self Sufficiency

Our Goal is to help you reach Self-Sufficiency:

To help you and your family adjust successfully to the United States and learn how to take care of yourselves without depending on World Relief, so that you become independent community members.
World Relief Services: What we do and do not do

Our role/services: Case management, Medical, Employment, Public Aid, Immigration, etc.

Your first weeks here

- Many appointments: social security, ESL registration, public aid, medical screenings, interviews with employment case managers, orientations, registration with MidAmerican (electric company)
Housing and Home Care:
Rent

World Relief's Rent Policy
- Rent needs to be paid on the first of each month for the apartment in which you are living.
- Apartments also require a security deposit.
- WR has been given a little money from the government to help you with your security deposit, rent and other things in your first few months (IRG money-$425 per person)
- As long as you are moving forward with the employment search, and attending ESL, WR will get donations to assist you with part of your rent for the first three months until you get employed. You must contribute 90% of what you receive from Public Aid or employment earnings for rent/utilities in order to receive World Relief's rental assistance. There is a possibility of a fourth month of rental assistance if you have just received a job but not received a paycheck yet. No WR rental assistance after the fourth month.
- Match Grant is a different program that some families are selected to be in, and the rent policy for that program is slightly different.
Housing and Home Care:
Donated Furniture & Household Items

World Relief gets furniture from volunteers. We make sure you have basic necessities. World Relief can only give you furniture one time.

Please be careful about collecting furniture from the road or friends. Sometimes furniture has bugs in it, and if you don’t know where it comes from, you may bring them into your house.

Sometimes World Relief receives donations of bikes, TVs etc. We give these out when we have them. If you get a bike, always lock it up when not in use, or it will be stolen.

Volunteers will help deliver and set-up the initial items for your house.
Bed bugs

Bed bugs are bugs that can bite you while you sleep. They live in your bed or furniture. World Relief takes care to be sure the furniture receive does not have bugs. If you pick up furniture from the street or from people you don’t know, it may have bed bugs. If you are being bitten while you sleep, please tell your Case Worker and landlord immediately, it is a problem that needs to be solved quickly!
Housing and Home Care:
Leases

- You will sign a lease with the help of your case worker
- All leases are one year long and required a security deposit
- It is very important to keeping the apartment clean so that bugs will not come and you will enjoy living there
- When you move out, the apartment must be empty and clean so the landlord will give back the security deposit
- Do not forget that you must pay the rent on the FIRST of each month. Landlords will charge a late fee if you have not paid by the fifth.
- Eviction - if you don’t pay rent, you can be forced to leave and move out of the apartment
- If you break the lease, you may need to pay more money than your deposit, and you will not get your deposit back
- Breaking a lease may also cause long term credit problems
Utilities

- **Electricity** - World Relief will ensure that you are registered for MidAmerican. Remember to turn off the lights and TV whenever you go outside or go a different room, this will help your bill be cheaper.

- **Gas, Water/Trash/Sewage** - Many landlords include these charges with your rent; however, if you must pay it, your case worker will help you register with the company.

- It is very important that you pay bills on time. World Relief staff or volunteers will help teach you how to go to a currency exchange to make a money order, or to write a check.

- World Relief does **not** help setting up phone service, and we suggest that you wait until you are working because phones can be expensive. You should have a friend, relative, or volunteer help you sign up for a phone when you are able to pay for it.
Other things about your apartment

- What to do if things break - contact the landlord
- Laundry should be done in a machine.
- Trash needs to go in the dumpster; littering in America is illegal.
- Toilets - do not put trash in the toilets, only toilet paper
- Locks/keys - you can copy keys, but do not lose them. Make sure you have a key for your mailbox.
- We suggest keeping a calendar of your appointments
- Be respectful to your neighbors by not making a lot of noise or playing loud music.
- Smoke detectors - These are to alarm you in case of a fire, so you can call the fire department. Do not take these off the wall - and be sure to replace the battery when it is used up. Do not burn papers or anything else in the apartment. If the smoke detector goes off while you are cooking, open windows to clear the smoke.
- All apartments are different with different rent amounts
- Keep the apartment clean!
Housing and Home Care 2: Mail

Please check your mailbox daily as you will receive mail every day except Sunday. You will need to label the mailbox with your last name.

If you receive any mail that you do not understand, you can bring it to your case worker.

If you receive any mail from Social Security, DHS (public aid) or the US government, you should bring it to your case worker as soon as possible.
Community Services

- There are some communities services in the Quad Cities...

- DHS – You will be getting some assistance from DHS and those assistance have limited time frame and the time is vary base on the sizes of the family and incomes.

- Its very importance to report your income changes to the employment specialist or directly to DHS office. Because you will be asked to pay back if you have enough income for your family members and if you over used the benefits. And also time to time they will send you a letter regarding your benefits. So, be sure to read those letter and response according to the requirements.
• RICHCD- Rock Island County Health Department is the place where you will be going for immunization shots and some other health screenings.

• They also have WIC program for children and mothers, birth control program, Nest program and some other medical related things. Be sure to learn how to get there either by public transportation or your own. And sometimes, they also provide transportation for unable clients and pregnant mothers.
• Social Security- Within one week of your arrival you will be going to Social Security Office to apply for the Card. It is also importance to keep your card safely. Because if you lost your card you can reapply for the replacement card but not more than ten times for your whole life.
• CHC- Community Health Care Clinic is a place where you can meet Doctors for any medical health screening. Because there are some health care who does not accept the Public Medicaid.
1 or 2 months of your arrival you will be getting some benefits from DHS like Cash, food stamps, and Medical Card.

So, it is your responsible to wisely manage your money for your house whole. Because after a few months you will be paying for your rent, and some other bills.
Your Status: REFUGEE

- Your I-94 is your legal document to stay in America.
- You will also receive a social security card and EAD card. These are documents necessary for Employment.
- All the documents you have and will receive KEEP THEM SAFE!
• If you are resettled without your family members you are eligible to file for your immediate family members. You can apply for your spouse and children as soon as you arrived.
• If you have children they should be under 21 years of age and not legally married.
• But if you would like to apply for your siblings and parent, you firstly have to become a citizen of United States.
Employment

Job class is available to you after ESL, and it's very important that you attend.

Importance of learning English

We are required to tell public aid when you start working. This will affect your food stamp balance and cash assistance.

You can look for work on your own through a friend or relative, but it's important to tell your employment counselor if you find work.

Once you receive your first pay stub please bring it to World Relief for us to make copies. It is important for us discuss budgeting with you.

You should try to save as much money as you can. You will soon open a bank account with the help of World Relief staff or volunteers, and may be able to participate in various savings programs available to you.
When you do start working...

- Hourly wage
  - When you start a job, your employer will pay you an hourly wage.
  - If the amount of money you earn per hour goes up or down, you must report this to your case worker.

Work Schedule
- When you start a job, your employer will schedule you to work an assigned number of hours each week.
- If the amount of hours you work each week goes up or down, you must report this to your case worker.

Pay Day
- When you receive your first pay check you must provide a copy to your case worker.
School/ESL

- ESL meets Monday-Friday with the exception of Wednesdays during the fall. Depending on where you live, taking public transportation, or walking.
- There is childcare for young children while you are in class.
- Attendance is important for public aid, and so that you can learn your way in America. The more English you speak, the better job you will be able to find.
- Once you start working you can attend evening classes on Tuesdays and Thursdays.
- There are also clubs and activities for youth after school.
Churches & Volunteers

World Relief partners with churches and volunteers to help you adjust to life in America. Some ways they can help:

- English Practice
- Transportation
- Understanding the culture
- Friendship

Linsey - Volunteer coordinator
Staying Healthy

• Wash your hands before you eat, after using the bathroom, and after being in public
• Keep your home clean to keep bugs away
• Keep good hygiene - brush teeth, take showers, use deodorant
• In the winter, wear warm clothes (hat, gloves, socks, boots—not sandals!—scarf, heavy coat etc.)
• Do not leave your doors or windows open in the winter
• Wash your clothes every week
• Sneeze or cough into your sleeve, rather than your hand
Health Care and Doctors:  
Medical appointments

- Teresa, your case worker, will schedule many of your medical appointments for your first three months.
- Make sure you are at home and ready on time for Teresa or a Volunteer to take you to your appointment.
- If the doctor schedules you for a follow-up appointment, you must tell us or bring the appointment card to us to read.
- If you have an emergency, you need to go to the hospital emergency department. You do not need an appointment for this.
- Pay attention when you go to the doctor because soon you will be going to the doctor without the help of World Relief with the help of volunteers, public transportation, or your own vehicle.
- Because of the number of people we help, World Relief will not be able to help with all of your medical needs in these first three months.
Medicaid Card

The Department of Human Services (Public Aid) will provide each person a Medicaid card if you are eligible. The card will come in the mail every month. This card should be kept with you at all times.

It will pay for all doctor and dental appointments, hospital visits, and prescription drugs.

Sometimes it takes a long time to arrive in your mailbox, but you are covered and the card will work retroactively. So if you need to go to the hospital, you can still go.

Adults without children have it for 8 months, while families with children have it longer, depending on income and the age of the youngest child.
SAFETY:
Emergency Services

If you have an emergency, dial 9-1-1
- Your name
- Reason
- Address, and don’t hang up until the operator says it’s ok.

What is an emergency?
- A fire
- Someone is seriously hurt or sick
- A car accident
- Violence toward you or someone else
- In America you will hear sirens, this could be from police cars, fire brigade or ambulance. At times sirens may go off to warn people due to the weather changes such as tornado warnings or severe weather warnings.

- You should lock your doors when you are sleeping, and when you are not home.

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SAFETY: Discipline and Laws

- You are allowed to teach your children right and wrong.
- You are not allowed to hit your children and leave a mark, physically hurt them, or threaten them with this kind of harm.
- You are not allowed to leave your children alone at a young age.
- You can go to jail for hitting your husband or wife, or anyone else.
- Do not allow your young children to play in parking lots or places where they are unsupervised.
- You can only drive a car with a driver’s license.
Travel Loan

3 to 6 months after your arrival, World Relief Head Quater will send you a form to start paying your IOM bill or travel Loan.

The minimum payment should start as soon as you receive the payment form from the mail Box. The payment will establish your credit history in United States.
Reporting of Moving

- There are laws to abide by as a refugee in the United States, one of them is reporting of moving from place to place.

- Whenever you move from one place to another you must fill up the AR-11, called Alien’s change of address and send it to the address listed. If you failed to do so, you could risk being evicted of violation of the laws.
Green Card

- If you were admitted as a refugee, you are required by law to apply for a green card (permanent residence) in the United State 1 year after being admitted as a refugee.

- As a permanent resident you have right to:
  live permanently in the Country
  work legally
  Be protected by all laws of US

- As a permanent resident, you are:
  required to obey all laws of the US.
  required to file your income tax returns and report your incomes.

- Required, if you are a male age 18 through 25, to register with the selective service.
Citizenship

- To be eligible for naturalization:
  - Be 18 or older
  - Be a permanent resident for at least 5 years.
  - Have lived within state.
  - Be able to read, write, and speak English and have knowledge and an understanding of US history and government (civics)
  - Be a person of good moral character.
Communication
Phone and Message

• Sometimes people consider it rude to answer a cell phone during a meeting, at meals, at the library, or when talking with friends. For this reason, you often need to leave and receive messages.
• If you don’t leave a message, do not expect a call back.
• If you must accept calls in inappropriate places, keep your conversation brief and your voice low.
• Be aware that if you get into a car accident while driving and talking on the phone, you may be considered a negligent driver and at fault in many states. In some states driving while talking in a cell phone is illegal.
### Some Basic Laws in The U.S.

Like other countries, the United States of America has many laws and rules. It is very difficult to learn all the laws and rules within a short period. However, you can start with the few that you need to know about now. These laws also vary when you travel from one state to another state.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Law Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Alcohol/Cigarettes - It is against the law to sell or give alcohol and/or cigarettes to a minor – the age of minors for these offenses may vary from state to state.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Alcohol Consumption - You may be fined for drinking alcohol in public – e.g., while walking on the street or in a park.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Bribery - Bribery is illegal in the U.S. You do not bribe police officers or other public officials; tipping public officials is also not acceptable in the U.S.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Change of Address - As a refugee, you are required by law to inform the US Citizenship and Immigration Services every time you change your address until you get your Green Card.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Child Neglect - It is illegal to leave children unattended – this age varies among states.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Child Support - You are required by law to financially support your children until they are 18 years old, even if the children are not living with you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Driving - It is illegal to drive a car that is not registered or insured. It is illegal to drive while intoxicated or under the influence of drugs. It is illegal to drive without a U.S. driver’s license. It is illegal to ride in or drive a car without a seat belt on. It is illegal for infants/children to ride in a car without being in a safety seat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Drugs - It is illegal to purchase, sell or use drugs. “That ‘gun’, ‘chat’ or ‘chat’ is illegal in the U.S.</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Female Circumcision - This practice is not allowed in the U.S. – It is a very serious offense.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Fraud - It is against the law to lie in order to get public assistance, immigration benefits and/or other public services. You may be fined, imprisoned, and/or deported.</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Human Trafficking - To bring people to the United States in order to exploit them sexually or economically is illegal and can lead to imprisonment and/or deportation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Hunting &amp; Fishing - It may be unlawful to hunt or fish without a permit.</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Incest - It may be an offense to have sexual activity with your close family members (other than spouse).</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Jay-Walking - You may be fined for walking across the street outside of a designated area.</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Littering - You may be fined if you throw trash on the street or out the window of a car.</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Marriage Age - In most states, there is a specific age below which people are not allowed to marry.</td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Military Service - All males 18-25 in the U.S. must register with the selective service, a government agency that can call individuals to military service.</td>
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<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Money Transfer - You may be fined for transferring money without license and/or on behalf of other people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Nudity/Indecency - You may be fined for exposing your private parts in public.</td>
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<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Physical Abuse - Hitting, punching, threatening, and mistreating your spouse and children is Domestic Violence – it is an illegal and punishable offense in the U.S. You children may be taken away from you if you abuse them. You may also be deported.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Police - You should always obey a police officer, disobeying may lead to imprisonment.</td>
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<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Polygamy - It is illegal to be married to more than one person at a time.</td>
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<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Prostitution - Prostitution, including soliciting a prostitute is an offense for which you could be imprisoned and/or deported.</td>
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<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>School - Children aged 6-16 are required by law to attend school.</td>
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<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Sex - It is illegal to have sex with minors, even with their consent. Minors are those persons under 18 years of age.</td>
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<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Sexual Harassment - Offensive comments or behaviors of a sexual nature are illegal in the workplace. Any comments of a sexual or personal nature is considered offensive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Shoplifting - The taking of goods from a store or street vendor without paying is illegal.</td>
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<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Smoking - You may not be allowed to smoke in some public places. Check regulations in advance.</td>
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<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Urinating and Defecating In Public - It is an offense to urinate and/or defecate in public areas. You may be fined up to $500.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Treatment of Animals - It is illegal to sacrifice animals, abuse or neglect pets, or to kill animals for food in one’s home.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Trespass - It may be an offense for you and/or your animals to go into somebody else’s premises.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) can revoke your status as a refugee if you are convicted of a serious crime like dealing in drugs, murder, arson, terrorism, etc.
AR-11, Alien's Change of Address Card

This card is to be used by all aliens to report a change of address within ten days of such change.
The collection of this information is required by Section 265 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1305). The data is used by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services for statistical and record purposes and may be furnished to Federal, State, local and foreign law enforcement officials. Failure to report a change of address is punishable by fine or imprisonment and/or removal.

ADVISORY: This card is not evidence of identity, age, or status claimed.

Paperwork Reduction Act:
An agency may not conduct or sponsor an information collection and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. The public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated at five minutes per response, including the time for reviewing instructions and completing and submitting the form. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to: U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, Regulatory Management Division, 111 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., 3rd Floor, Suite 3008, Washington, DC 20529. OMB No. 1615-0007. Do not mail your application to this address.

Mail Your Form to the Address Shown Below:

Department of Homeland Security
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
Change of Address
P.O. Box 7134
London, KY 40742-7134
Change of address checklist

• Mid-American Energy
• Bank
• Travel Loan Department (WR)
  • AR-11 form
• DHS (if you are receiving any benefits)
• Social Security (if you are receiving benefits)
  • Employer
  • Post Office
• State ID/Driving license
  • School
  • Doctor
• Mail subscriptions (newspaper, magazine)
  • Cable/Internet
• Telephone company
  • Landlord
IMPORTANT LOCATIONS

- Rock Island Housing Authority (RIHA)
  227 21st Street, Rock Island 785-0825

- Community Health Care (CHC)
  2750 11th Street, Rock Island 843-327-2100
  1106 4th Ave, Moline (563) 327-2000

- Department of Human Services (DHS)
  2821 5th Street, Rock Island 794-6930
  500 42nd St, Suite E, Rock Island, IL 61201

- Rock Island County Health Dept. (RICHG)
  Also Women/Infants/Children (WIC) 794-7070
  2112 25th Ave, Rock Island 793-1955

- Social Security Administration
  2350 4th Avenue, Rock Island 793-5852

- Rock Island/ Milan Public Schools
  Also Head Start Offices 793-5900
  2101 6th Avenue, Rock Island 793-5900

Trinity Regional Health
- 2701 17th Street, Rock Island (Trinity West)
- 7th St and John Deere, Moline (Trinity 7th)