



Supporting Higher Education in Refugee Resettlement (SHERR)

REPORT ON 2023 NATIONAL WORKSHOP, “Higher Education and Refugee Resettlement: Partners in Action”

NOVEMBER 8-9, 2023 | COLLEGE PARK, MARYLAND



Funded by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration

OVERVIEW

Supporting Higher Education in Refugee Resettlement (SHERR) is a three-year project, funded by the Department of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, designed to increase the capacity of higher education institutions to engage in refugee resettlement. A core element of SHERR, the SHERR national workshop, “Higher Education and Refugee Resettlement: Partners in Action,” took place on November 8-9, 2023, at the University of Maryland, College Park. The workshop convened approximately 120 participants representing 23 states and diverse stakeholders including: higher education institutions, national resettlement agencies, technical assistance projects and supporting organizations, federal and state government offices, and students, scholars, and practitioners with refugee backgrounds and lived experience.

The workshop aimed to **deepen and advance the engagement of colleges and universities in refugee resettlement** by focusing on two key objectives:

1. Increase coordination and information sharing among diverse leaders, experts, practitioners, and people with lived experience at the intersection of higher education and refugee resettlement.
2. Actively develop strategies to begin, improve, strengthen and/or expand the engagement of colleges and universities in refugee resettlement, for student and non-student refugees, independently and in collaboration with resettlement agency networks and other resettlement and community actors, as related to the SHERR Engagement Pathways.

Participation in the workshop was free of charge and by invitation, due to the narrow thematic focuses and funding considerations. Across the U.S., there are many enthusiastic and passionate resettlement practitioners and institutions who were not present or represented. This report is intended not only to document the workshop, but also to share with a larger audience of current and potential practitioners whose voices are essential to the goals of SHERR. We believe the workshop to be but one component of larger efforts at coordination and collaboration toward the goal of increased engagement of higher education institutions and increased national capacity to support refugee resettlement.

The workshop was designed to maximize opportunities for information sharing and discussion. In a series of **Plenary sessions**, the Workshop provided an overview of the current refugee resettlement context in the United States and the role of higher education in supporting refugees and vulnerable populations. Four **“Spotlight”** sessions highlighted best practices and innovative programs that support refugees around the country, including initiatives at community colleges, four-year public and private institutions, and partnerships between resettlement organizations and universities. Several **breakout sessions** provided a forum to discuss challenges, opportunities, and necessary strategies related to core SHERR pathways of engagement and anticipated Communities of Practice: language learning tied to career pathways, housing and campus utilization, educational opportunities, and service learning/volunteer engagement.

This report provides a snapshot of the workshop agenda and summaries of the sessions and discussions, including highlights of potential action items for SHERR's anticipated, action-oriented Communities of Practice as brainstormed by participants during breakout sessions. Please also see the full workshop booklet (which includes details about all speakers) and presentation slides, available through separate online links.

World Learning and SHERR consortium members wish to express their gratitude to the University of Maryland staff, faculty, and students for their support of this important event.

Top Tier Takeaways

- Resettlement support meets core educational goals for colleges and universities: it means campus engagement with the community, it means people on campus learn from the lived experiences and expertise of community members, and it's a way for institutions to give back.
- There is significant interest in dialogue and collaboration in all directions – including regionally and nationally, between higher education institutions and resettlement organizations, and with all types of higher education institutions.
- The resettlement support landscape is complicated and evolving; coordination, information-sharing and general dialogue are essential.
- There are many replicable, scalable, and inspirational examples of resettlement support that deserve to be shared (unilateral and collaborative efforts).
- The community has wonderful ideas about ensuring SHERR's Communities of Practice have maximum impact on capacity-building and resettlement outcomes.
- Campus support for housing for non-student refugees is challenging but possible.

Next Steps for SHERR

- SHERR Innovation Incentive Grants program is launching December 2023.
- SHERR Communities of Practice are launching January 2023 and will be action oriented.
- Refugee Resource Hub (complement to the Higher Ed Immigration Portal, administered by SHERR consortium partner - Presidents' Alliance for Higher Education and Immigration) will be launching in December 2023.

EVENT SNAPSHOT

Day 1 (November 8, 2023)	
	Buffet Breakfast and Networking
Plenary	Welcomes and Opening Remarks: University of Maryland, World Learning, U.S. Department of State
Plenary	Connecting the Dots: Higher Education, Resettlement Organizations, Resettlement Outcomes for Student and Non-Student Refugees (panel)
Plenary	Spotlight: Western Kentucky University
Breakouts	1st Community of Practice Breakouts: Higher Ed Action: Unilateral and Collaborative
	Buffet Lunch. Networking.
Plenary	Housing and Campus Utilization for Non-Student Refugees (panel)
Breakouts	2nd Community of Practice Breakouts: Barriers and Opportunities
Plenary	Poetry Reading: “Always Arriving” by Dr. Fatemeh Keshavarz, University of Maryland
Plenary	Spotlight: Middlebury College – Jiran Program
Plenary	Breakout Reports. Reflections.
Day 2 (November 9, 2023)	
	Buffet Breakfast. Networking
Plenary	Funding and Resources (panel)
Plenary	Spoken Word Performance: “Ciudadania” by Camilo Montoya
Plenary	Spotlight Suite: Partnership Innovations and Inspirations Northern Nevada International Center (Reno, NV), Arizona State University (Phoenix, AZ) University of Denver (Denver, CO)
Breakouts	3rd Community of Practice Breakouts: Funding and Resources
	Buffet Lunch. Networking.
Plenary	Spotlight Suite: Community College Innovations and Inspirations Bunker Hill Community College (Boston, MA), Pima Community College (Tucson, AZ), Los Rios Community College District (Sacramento, CA), Montgomery College (Rockville, MD)
Breakouts	4th Community of Practice Breakouts: Expectations and Deliverables
Plenary	Communities of Practice Summaries. Reflections. Call to Action.

OPENING REMARKS

Three opening speakers framed and inspired the workshop by sharing thoughts and experiences regarding the potential and the imperative for increased action and engagement in refugee resettlement on the part of U.S. higher education institutions.

In opening the workshop, **World Learning CEO Carol Jenkins** said, “Refugee resettlement depends on a whole-community approach. As pillars within their communities, higher education institutions have incredible potential in this context, especially if schools join forces with resettlement agencies and experts in their communities. There is so much that schools and their campuses can offer when they harness their diverse resources, and when they collaborate.” She offered an example of how World Learning and its School for International Training have utilized their campus in Brattleboro, Vermont, where “we are implementing the New Vermonter Education Program. Working with ECDC and the Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation, we have provided temporary housing on campus for over 220 refugees, offered English language training and cultural orientation, and helped refugees gain the specific language skills needed to launch their local career pathways.”

In welcoming remarks from the **University of Maryland, College Park, Dr. Patricia Perillo, Vice President of Student Affairs**, talked about her institution’s experience providing support for four Afghan families in 2022 and 2023, when “our community opened its doors, offering housing and a support system to aid in their integration, language development, employment, and more. Now, those four families have moved into the local community, transitioning from our direct support to standing as inspiring examples of resilience and integration. Their journeys, which we have had the privilege to help facilitate and witness, underscore the tangible impact of our combined efforts and strengthen our resolve to continue this vital work.” Dr. Perillo concluded, “This SHERR workshop is the embodiment of our belief in the transformative power of education and partnership. It is here, through our shared experiences and the exchange of knowledge, that we can continue to chart the way forward better together.”

Dr. Perillo also shared words of welcome from **University President Dr. Darryll J. Pines**, including, “On behalf of the University of Maryland, welcome to our campus. As an institution dedicated to tackling humanity’s grand challenges and partnering to advance the public good, we are proud to join you in your mission to enhance higher education’s role in refugee support. This is a tremendous opportunity to bring together experts and stakeholders to share innovative strategies and leverage collective wisdom for actionable steps and practical tools. We look forward to what we can accomplish together for the benefit of refugees, academic institutions, and our global community.”

Holly Herrera, Section Chief, Domestic Resettlement, U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration framed the context and her ambitions for the workshop and the SHERR project overall. She talked about the anticipated major increase in the numbers of refugees to be admitted into the U.S., challenges facing the existing refugee resettlement infrastructure, and the potential for the resources available to higher education institutions to support a shared national effort to welcome newcomers.

PLENARY PANELS

Plenary Panel 1: “Connecting the Dots: Higher Education, Resettlement Organizations, Resettlement Outcomes for Student and Non-Student Refugees”

The panel focused on how we can take higher education’s engagement in refugee resettlement to the next level, with an ultimate goal of greater U.S. capacity to welcome and integrate refugees, by uplifting what is working well – from the perspective of refugees, refugee resettlement agencies, government, and higher education institutions – and to seize new opportunities.



While the primary goal is increasing our capacity to welcome and support refugees, supporting refugee resettlement also meets core educational goals for colleges and universities. We must consider the vital importance of community engagement for campuses, and the importance of reciprocity – that those on campus learn from the lived experiences and expertise of community members. And it is important to remember how this kind of engagement can be transformational for students, staff, and faculty, and how institutions can and should give back and contribute to the communities.

Plenary Panel 2: “Housing and Campus Utilization for Non-Student Refugees”

This panel explored opportunities, innovations, and challenges in the utilization of campus housing, specifically for non-student refugees, against the backdrop of a nationwide housing crisis.

Panelists provided concrete examples and diverse perspectives on refugee housing solutions, emphasizing practical experiences and scalability challenges in addressing housing for non-student refugees via college and university campuses. The panel shared real-life examples of how higher education institutions are currently navigating the complexities of housing and related initiatives for refugees.

Panelists stressed the challenge facing the refugee resettlement sector given the anticipated number of up to 125,000 refugees being resettled in this fiscal year (up from roughly 60,000 resettled last year) and emphasizing the critical role that higher education can and should play in refugee resettlement. They also discussed the benefits to colleges and universities and local communities of welcoming refugees. Resources were shared on best practices and roadmaps for successfully utilizing campus facilities for refugee populations.



Plenary Panel 3: “Funding & Resources”

This panel signaled a shift to the “how” – resources to support higher education engagement in refugee resettlement. Panelists highlighted ways that their initiatives are providing funding or resources at the intersection of higher education and refugee resettlement. Examples sparked ideas about what is possible.

The panel mapped the landscape of technical assistance providers and support organizations in refugee resettlement and at the intersection of higher education and refugee resettlement.

Panelists outlined some of the types of funding and resources available, including:

- Connection and support from peers and experts through networks such as Welcome Campus Network, National Association of System Heads | Refugee Resettlement Initiative (NASH RRI), Every Campus A Refuge (ECAR), Presidents’ Alliance for Higher Education and Immigration, Welcome Corps on Campus, and more;
- Refugee Resettlement Technical Assistance Providers, such as: CORE, Switchboard, Refugee Welcome Collective, Settle In, and more;
- Refugee Resettlement support organizations and networks, such as: Refugee Congress, Refugee Advocacy Lab, Refugee Resettlement Academy, Welcome.US, Refugee Council USA, Welcoming America, and more;
- Possible partnerships and grant opportunities from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR);
- Financial support from the Institute of International Education (IIE), and private funding
- Opportunities to leverage state funding; and
- Other grant opportunities (NASH/RRI, ECAR, and SHERR, among others)

Finally, as announced by the panel moderator, SHERR is supporting the development of a new online Refugee Resource Hub as a complement to the Higher Ed Immigration Portal created by Presidents’ Alliance for Higher Education and Immigration. This new portal, which will include an online directory of resources specifically focused on refugees, can be found here:

<https://www.higheredimmigrationportal.org/areas/refugee-students/>



BREAKOUT SUMMARIES BY ENGAGEMENT PATHWAY

1. English Language Learning and Career Pathways Support: Discussions and Looking Ahead

In four breakout sessions, participants exchanged ideas, strategies, and information that could support the enhanced engagement of colleges and universities, resettlement agencies, directly impacted communities, teaching and employment specialists, and other actors at the intersection of English Language Learning (ELL) and Career Pathways support. A representative from Bluegrass Community and Technical College shared their experience with the Refugee Career Pathways (RCP) program funded by the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR). A doctoral student from Arizona State University kicked off a brainstorming exercise on barriers and opportunities to ELL and Career Pathways Support. Representatives from World Education Services, Upwardly Global, the School for International Training, and other institutions in attendance shared information about their programs and resources.

Community college representatives shared their experiences and discussed the transitional and transformational role of community colleges and the need for increased dialogue with resettlement partners. For example, one participant highlighted that a fundamental challenge to working in close collaboration with local resettlement affiliates has been a lack of technical understanding of community colleges' work in this context, partly leading to higher turnover and underdeveloped partnerships. Similarly, a representative of a resettlement agency shared that in the view of resettlement practitioners, a greater understanding of case management is needed among community colleges and other education institutions engaged in language learning and vocational pathways.

Participants discussed notable practices and activities, including how RCP grants are accessed and structured, in addition to some of the structural challenges impacted students may experience when accessing these and similar programs. Additional **barriers** discussed included lack of childcare support, inaccessibility including in digital literacy (especially for remote and online teaching), lack of training from admissions officers, and challenges to accessing quality curricula and other teaching resources specifically tailored for refugees and other impacted communities. Participants also discussed discrepancies and gaps between funders, resettlement agencies, and higher education institutions concerning expectations on successful outcomes. Two individuals – a resettlement agency practitioner originally from Afghanistan and another organizational representative originally from Syria – with lived experience/displacement background also shared their own, direct experiences navigating programs, including difficulty accessing funding.

Participants discussed how **solutions and opportunities** may be found through leveraging state programs, developing tools for refugees and other impacted communities to access bridge funding, and addressing transversal issues, such as by bridging the data gap, defining successful outcomes, and learning about successful and *practical* models across states and communities.

Ideas for the SHERR Community of Practice: The final breakout session focused on brainstorming potential deliverables for the soon-to-be-launched Community of Practice **on ELL and Career Pathways Support**. Participants discussed the need to ensure integration of perspectives from resettlement agency practitioners, ELL teachers, employment specialists (including career center staff at higher education institutions), and directly impacted persons. The following ideas were generated, which will help the SHERR team further define the scope of an action-oriented Community of Practice:

1. Create an online hub on existing resources including tailored teaching curricula and funding opportunities (ideally can be filtered by state).
2. Develop case studies on best practices and models, including for effective approaches to linking ELL and Career Pathways.

3. Develop messaging designed to encourage participation by HEIs (including career center and administrative staff) in ELL and Career Pathways and greater understanding of newcomers' distinct experiences and needs.
4. Build and maintain a repository featuring "success" and other stories of diverse experiences of impacted individuals to be used for outreach/inspiration and knowledge sharing.
5. Developing effective training materials, including on how to design and implement effective newcomer-tailored teaching curricula and build partnerships between HEIs and local resettlement affiliates.

The SHERR team is grateful to representatives of Bluegrass Community and Technical College, Arizona State University, World Education Services, Upwardly Global, and School for International Training for serving as designated "conversation starters" during these breakouts to share their inspirational and informative perspectives.

2. Housing and Campus Utilization: Discussions and Looking Ahead

In four breakout sessions, participants discussed the enormous capacity challenges in housing newcomers, and the clear, immediate need to deepen and expand strategic engagement with university and college campuses and their ecosystems. Sessions served as an opening for deepening dialogue and knowledge sharing on this critical issue. A representative from the University of Maryland College Park shared that institution's experience with housing refugee families in collaboration with the International Rescue Committee and with support from ECAR. Resettlement agency staff from Church World Service highlighted key barriers and opportunities for housing and campus utilization. A program officer from the Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration expressed ideas for collaboration, and shared information about ongoing capacity growth planning processes at PRM.

Barriers discussed included funding, accessibility, liability and insurance issues, prolonged or strenuous processes for developing Memoranda of Understanding, differences between resource availability and applicable models across colleges and universities, and lack of rental and credit history of newcomers to more easily secure housing. Participants highlighted **opportunities** such as leveraging increased housing unit vacancies during the summer, exploring external university properties and off-campus apartments, repurposing facilities for housing that are no longer in use, and embracing proactive advocacy strategies that connect the missions and programming of schools and resettlement organizations and build greater operational and financial support from school leadership. In addition, participants discussed various models for university programming. For example, ECAR/Guilford College designed an academic minor in which students receive credit for volunteer service in family hosting and implementing resettlement tasks. Representatives from ECAR and resettlement technical assistance projects Refugee Housing Solutions and Switchboard shared information about relevant **resources**.

Ideas for the SHERR Community of Practice: Finally, participants discussed ideas for **deliverables and action items** that could be explored and carried out by the **SHERR Community of Practice on Housing and Campus Utilization**. The following ideas were brainstormed, which will help the SHERR team further define the scope of an action-oriented Community of Practice:

1. Clearly define and differentiate the SHERR Community of Practice from others that touch on questions of housing;
2. Develop an online resource repository of **campus models and best practices**;
3. Review existing and develop complementary **operationally focused resources** such as: standardized housing check form, draft MOU between colleges/universities and Resettlement Agencies, standard operating procedures for refugee housing, sample "elevator pitch" for donors, videos, and data sheets;
4. Consider **staffing a specialist/liaison** focused on university housing and nation-wide outreach;
5. Engage **university housing professionals and associations** such as the Association of College and University Housing Officers – International (ACUHO-I) for sharing perspectives and identifying operational opportunities.

The SHERR team is grateful to representatives of University of Maryland, College Park, Church World Service, Refugee Housing Solutions, U.S. Department of State Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, ECAR, and Switchboard, for serving as designated ""conversation starters" during these breakouts to share their inspirational and informative perspectives.

3. Educational Opportunities: Discussions and Looking Ahead

In four breakout sessions, participants shared their work to enroll refugees as students. Participants primarily came from four-year institutions that have some experience enrolling refugee students, but also included support organizations such as IIE, ECE Aid, and OneRefugee, as well as several community colleges. Experience working with refugees varied from enrolling students with refugee backgrounds as international students (on F1 visas), to enrolling resettled refugees at community colleges, to helping to implement bridge programs for refugees overseas. The majority of participants' most recent experience was with enrolling Afghan students through the Asian University of Women, QSAP, or other programs. As participants identified current efforts, discussion emerged of what is needed and best practices that could be adapted on more campuses.

On many campuses, efforts to support refugee students depend on a single champion on campus, and often, but not always, those people are from international student services offices. Breakout participants highlighted the importance of building whole campus support for refugee students so that they receive holistic wraparound supports and the campus is inclusive. This involves building **cross-campus task forces or working groups** and educating the campus on the needs of refugee students. Many campuses expressed the need for a **dedicated staff person** on campus to coordinate support for refugee students, such as a "student-navigator" who can help to demystify higher education systems as well as serve as the campus-wide coordinator and awareness builder. **Peer mentors** also hold potential for supporting refugee students.

There are opportunities to continue to build more **partnerships and collaborations** to meet many of the needs and barriers for enrolling refugee students. This includes mental health supports (organizations and higher ed services), funding (alumni and private donors), legal services (parents, alumni, campus legal clinics), etc. Participants discussed the opportunity to partner with local newcomer high schools or refugee youth programs as a great entry point to engaging in refugee resettlement. There are also resources such as ECE Aid and WES that can support campuses to overcome barriers such as credential evaluation. Participants expressed specific interest in building **state-wide collaborations** and exploring state government support.

Ideas for the SHERR Community of Practice: Finally, participants discussed ideas for **deliverables and action items** that could be explored and carried out by the anticipated **SHERR Community of Practice on Educational Opportunities**. The following ideas were brainstormed, which will help the SHERR team further define the scope of an action-oriented Community of Practice:

1. Develop and share **campus models**, formatted as policy briefs, that offer a practical and replicable model of what a campus is doing to support refugee students. This would include models that support enrollment as well as ways to promote **student success**;
2. Form **statewide coalitions** and networks of colleges and universities engaged in refugee resettlement to better leverage state support, policies, and resources; and
3. Conduct research to establish a **baseline report of refugee student enrollment** in the U.S. This addresses the lack of data identified by participants, and the need to understand who the refugee students on campus are; research and data collection are necessary in order to meet the needs of students, advocate for enrollment and supports, and leverage funding.

Participants believed that through these deliverables, the Community of Practice would be able to expand the number of colleges and universities engaged in refugee resettlement, and expand capacity and quality, leading to more students being able to access higher education and an improved student experience.

The SHERR team is grateful to representatives of Bard College, One Refugee - Utah, The George Washington University's REAL Lab, and Community Sponsorship Hub / Welcome Corps on Campus for serving as designated "conversation starters" during these breakouts to share their inspirational and informative perspectives.

4. Service Learning, Volunteer Engagement, and Staffing: Discussions and Looking Ahead

During four breakout sessions on Service Learning, Volunteer Engagement, and Staffing, takeaways from the plenary panels were identified regarding barriers/challenges, available resources/tools, and areas of opportunity for engaging colleges and universities and Resettlement Agencies in service-learning opportunities. **Barriers** included high staff turnover and limited capacity of RAs to participate meaningfully in this work, disparities in resettlement resources available between urban and rural communities, animosity between different actors in the resettlement sector, and difficulty identifying overlapping priority areas for HEIs and RAs. Other challenges included difficulty coordinating academic calendars and RA programming calendars, and limited resources/knowledge available on campuses to support newcomer students.

The discussions highlighted several important examples of HEI/RA collaborations, and participants shared the resources/tools, networks, and recommendations they have utilized or were aware of to advance the shared objective of supporting newcomers on their campuses. **National resources** included Refugee Welcome Collective; Their Story is Our Story; Welcome Campus Network; Cultural Orientation Resource Exchange (CORE); Refugee Resettlement Academy (USCCB); Welcome Corps on Campus; Welcoming America; and Refugee Congress. **State/local resources** included Colorado Refugee Speakers Bureau (serves as a collective of each representative from each agency in the state; provides training and support); Bard Center for Civic Engagement (scholarships for unpaid internships posted on Handshake; used for professional development); MedStar (Georgetown Refugee Health Navigator program utilized their translation services); and student clubs (such as ASU; REACT: Refugee Education and Clinic Team).

Participants discussed **funding opportunities**. These included: state funding options (example: Vermont funding is available to develop healthcare and career workforce development pathways); local corporations, as corporations are looking to be more active in their community, and application processes are straightforward; and local Rotary and Lions Clubs.

Ideas for the SHERR Community of Practice: The final breakout session focused on identifying deliverables for the soon-to-be-launched SHERR Community of Practice around Service Learning, Volunteer Engagement, and Staffing. The following ideas were brainstormed, which will help the SHERR team further define the scope of an action-oriented Community of Practice:

1. Create a resource hub of **best practices and models** of existing service learning and volunteer engagement programs at colleges and universities and resettlement agencies/organizations; share resources through different formats (such as sharing best practices via infographics or podcasts);
2. Implement a **welcoming campus certification** to encourage HEI participation in welcoming newcomers;
3. Develop **messaging language and strategy** designed to encourage HEI participation (such as a letter from the Department of State to university presidents);

4. Develop user-friendly **playbooks** for RAs and schools to launch strategically **during a crisis**, including identifying a point of contact for basic needs and services, developing unified message/response to media, identifying volunteers, etc.; and
5. Develop a **point-of-contact list** at participating RAs and HEIs interested in participating in refugee resettlement collaborations.

Participants suggested including newcomer and non-newcomer students and student clubs in the community of practice.

The SHERR team is grateful to representatives of the U.S. Department of State Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, USCCB, University of Maryland College Park, Maryland Office for Refugees and Asylees, and Georgetown University School of Medicine Refugee Health Navigator Program for serving as designated "conversation starters" during these breakouts to share their inspirational and informative perspectives.

SPOTLIGHT SESSIONS

The workshop provided nine “spotlight” moments to present examples or models that are instructive and inspirational. Following are the nine examples spotlighted, and a blurb about some of the relevant work of each institution or initiative.

SPOTLIGHT ON WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY

In December 2021, a tornado devastated Bowling Green and caused destruction throughout the community. For the recently arrived refugees from Afghanistan the tornado was yet another trauma. Staff and students at WKU quickly learned that refugees faced significant barriers and deep gaps when trying to enroll at our university. WKU formed a refugee task force in January 2022 to address these concerns. The Resilient Refugee Program offers displaced students eligible for the Kentucky Innovative Scholarship Pilot Program (KISPP) access to personalized support navigating the complexities of life at an American university. WKU has teamed up with the city government, local non-profits, our regional campuses, and local businesses to support integration of our refugee population. Prior to this generous scholarship program, university education was out of reach for nearly all refugee students. For more information, visit: <https://www.wku.edu/refugee/>



“It is a great success story; we need more of these! Once again, an example of just one or two people, including leadership, to see the 360-degree value of campuses engaging with refugee resettlement.” – anonymous Workshop participant.

SPOTLIGHT ON MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE – JIRAN PROGRAM

Jiran is a unique language program that pairs university students learning critical languages with refugee and newcomer families for a summer of reciprocal learning. The university students are part of an immersive language program focused on forced migration while they work to address families’ needs in their new communities. Participating newcomer families act as linguistic and cultural guides for students while benefiting from student linguistic and cultural expertise. Students are responsible for helping their partner family make social connections in their new community, work towards their personal goals, and explore the culture of their new community. Jiran has been an Arabic immersion program in Connecticut for the past five years but aspires to work with additional universities and communities interested in adapting the model to other languages and locations. For more information, visit: <https://schoolinjordan.middcreate.net/acas/>

“Great model, especially to learn about agency of refugee families to determine outcomes for their participation” – anonymous Workshop participant.

“Totally inspired by this session, I LOVED it! especially the focus on leveling the playing fields and the lifting up the dignity of the refugees” – anonymous Workshop participant.



PARTNERSHIP SPOTLIGHT: NORTHERN NEVADA INTERNATIONAL CENTER AND UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA RENO

The Northern Nevada International Center (NNIC) is a non-profit organization running professional and cultural exchange programs, refugee resettlement and language access for underserved populations. It is an affiliate of USCRI, one of the ten national resettlement agencies and is also affiliated with the University of Nevada Reno. This unique partnership between a resettlement agency and a higher education institution allows for many collaborative programs that blend service learning and internships for UNR students, mentorship programs for refugee youth, and other programs. NNIC has successfully resettled over 500 displaced people in Reno since August 2016. For more information, please visit:

<https://www.unr.edu/nnic/about>

PARTNERSHIP SPOTLIGHT: ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY AND IRC

Arizona State University is an official co-sponsor with the International Rescue Committee for the resettlement of the Afghan students in Arizona and provides academic support and housing for the students as they complete their degrees. Amid the chaos of Taliban takeover of Afghanistan in 2021, ASU's President Michael Crow, generously offered his school's support to help bring 61 Afghan female students to Phoenix. Pam DeLargy, executive director of Education for Humanity at ASU, led the multi-faceted initiative to arrange the students' arrival, orientation, and transition to life in Arizona by leveraging the bandwidth of the university, local organizations and the aviation community. The link to the video shared during the Workshop is here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jmk2l6owsbE>
To learn more about this and other initiatives in support of refugees at ASU, please visit: <https://asuforrefugees.asu.edu/>

PARTNERSHIP SPOTLIGHT: UNIVERSITY OF DENVER AND ECDC ACC-DENVER

The Fritz Knoebel partnership with the Ethiopian Community Development Council's African Community Center, a refugee resettlement agency, represents a powerful educational framework to enable effective learning experiences for responsible leadership. Ready for American Hospitality (RAH) is a collaborative training program between the University of Denver (DU) and African Community Center. Refugee students are paired with students from DU's Fritz Knoebel School of Hospitality management (Knoebel) Human Capital Management course. The DU students and refugee students establish a mentor/protégé relationship as they meet twice per week. RAH protégés gain knowledge, skills, and experience working in the food service industry while gaining a better understanding of work culture and expectations in the U.S. This ultimately leads to employment opportunities and additional nurturing throughout the integration process. To learn more, visit:

<https://daniels.du.edu/hospitality-management/rah/>



"It was great to hear the breadth of models and opportunities" – anonymous Workshop participant.

"I learned a lot. I think the spotlight sessions were very important to highlight approaches that are working." – anonymous Workshop participant.

COMMUNITY COLLEGE SPOTLIGHT: BUNKER HILL COMMUNITY COLLEGE (BOSTON, MA)

The SHERR team thanks President Pam Eddinger of Bunker Hill Community College for sharing introductory remarks to kick off the Community College Spotlight Suite. President Eddinger stressed the important role that community colleges play in workforce development and providing quality and inclusive education in communities across the country. Her comments about how community colleges often reach whole families by working with one person resonated with the workshop audience. Bunker Hill Community College is the largest community college in Massachusetts. The school welcomes applications from all immigrant students, regardless of immigration status. To learn more, visit: <https://www.bhcc.edu/>

COMMUNITY COLLEGE SPOTLIGHT: PIMA COMMUNITY COLLEGE (TUSCON, AZ)

Pima Community College, Adult Basic Education for College & Career has served adult learners in Pima County with Adult Basic Education, Adult Secondary Education, English to Speakers of Other Languages, Refugee Education, Rights and Responsibilities of Citizenship, Student Engagement, and Transition programming and services for over 50 years. More than 4,000 adults are served at three large learning centers, college campuses, in community locations, and at the Pima County Jail. Classes are offered in the morning and evening, Monday through Thursday through a variety of modalities which include in-person, virtual, hyflex, hybrid, and distance learning. The Refugee Education Program (REP) began offering English language training services to learners of refugee backgrounds in 1978. Over the years, REP has served a diverse group of learners from more than forty countries. Since the majority of REP learners did not get the opportunity to receive formal education even in their native language, REP's class structure is designed to support learners from foundational literacy to college and career development. To learn more, please visit: <https://www.pima.edu/academics-programs/adult-basic-education/index.html>

COMMUNITY COLLEGE SPOTLIGHT: LOS RIOS COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT (SACRAMENTO, CA)

Los Rios Community College District runs Refugee Career Pathways, a new support program for refugees, those with special immigration status (SIV), and asylum seekers. The program, funded partly by ORR, helps with identifying, planning, and starting a career in in-demand fields, such as health, business, entrepreneurship, early childhood education, and information technology. Los Rios Community College District has partnered with community-based organizations, including IRC, Open Doors, World Relief Sacramento and Asian Resources, Inc., to assist those in the program with obtaining certificates and services. These services are available in refugees' first languages. To learn more, visit: <https://losrios.edu/community/refugee-career-pathways>

COMMUNITY COLLEGE SPOTLIGHT: MONTGOMERY COLLEGE (ROCKVILLE, MD)

The Refugee Training Center at Montgomery College, a community college serving residents in the state of Maryland's Montgomery County, offers English Language and Career Pathways programming and serves diverse needs of refugee populations through robust community partnerships, and collaboration with the International Rescue Committee. The school's decades of experience working with refugees have allowed it to develop vibrant vocationally focused language programs to facilitate successful integration and full participation in the community, and also to develop a strategy for leveraging resources, tracking data, sharing best practices, and developing durable long-term solutions that allow for securing funding and continuing to offer programs that adapt to the shifting needs of refugees and benefit the broader community. To learn more, visit: <https://www.montgomerycollege.edu/index.html>

"Loved this. Really helped me understand [community colleges] actually have more resources than some private and public units. CHILDCARE?! Who knew?" – anonymous Workshop participant.

"Very inspiring. The community colleges are at the forefront of work educating refugees" – anonymous Workshop participant.

PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

Participant feedback on the workshop, including through online surveys and real-time comments, was overwhelmingly positive.

Here are some statistical highlights:

- 79% of survey respondents said the plenary sessions were “very helpful” or “extremely helpful.”
- 74% of survey respondents said the breakout sessions “very helpful” or “extremely helpful.”
- 51% of respondents after the first day reported establishing 3-5 professional connections; 32% reported establishing 6-10 connections.
- 100% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they were interested in maintaining contact with other Workshop participants.

Here are some examples of participant comments:

- *“As someone who has experience working at the local level, I am walking away with HOPE. Local [resettlement] affiliate offices are so busy, burnt out, underfunded, understaffed, and it’s easy to walk away feeling discouraged and like every day you are failing newcomers. The energy and motivation here for finding solutions to big issues. We need each other -- leveraging/leaning on each other’s strengths is critical.”*
- *“Key takeaway: as a higher education coordinator, I found it really significant that resettlement providers have been so interested in connecting with higher education. I hope spaces like SHERR can be good connections for resettlement providers to actors on campuses!”*
- *“I’m so thankful to be here among such inspiring peers in this work who care about utilizing and engaging universities to welcome newcomers. I’m feeling so hopeful for the work to come.”*
- *“Alumni and alumni groups should have a role in influencing their alma maters to welcome refugees, especially with housing for non-students.”*
- *“With so many resources and actively engaged folks, it came up that more coordination and outreach and sharing is necessary and would be crucial to future assistance for refugees, higher ed, and workforce development. So...more of these types of workshops and conferences like these please!”*
- *“It was helpful to hear the various barriers and opportunities that exist in having refugee students on campus.”*
- *“This was an excellent workshop, I met so many new people and have a list of follow-up conversations to conduct. I feel inspired to dream big and bold and bring along my campus for this important work. Thank you so much!”*

Funded by the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM), SHERR is a collaboration led by World Learning, in partnership with the Presidents’ Alliance on Higher Education and Immigration, Welcome.US, and the Ethiopian Community Development Council (ECDC). The SHERR program aims to strengthen pathways of engagement for U.S. colleges and universities to participate in refugee resettlement by offering access to a growing network of practitioners, building a suite of resources, tools, and training, and administering innovation incentive grants.