

Supporting Higher Education in Refugee Resettlement

Building the capacity of colleges and universities to support resettlement.

SHERR Communities of Practice and Action Update #1 | March 2024

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SHERR Communities of Practice and Action Update

SHERR Communities of Practice and Action (CoPAs) are off to a fantastic start. Each of the four groups convenes representatives of higher education and resettlement fields and all groups have been capped at 30 participants. Here are major highlights and insights from our inaugural sessions. Second meetings will take place in April.

English Language Learning and Career Pathways Support (Facilitator: Olga Prizhbilov, Los Rios Community College District) | Session 1: March 5, 2024

- The group members collectively serve thousands of refugees and have a vast amount of experience and information to share. By sharing information and best practices in this group and making it available to others more broadly through SHERR, we empower each other and look for actionable solutions to needs and gaps in the current resettlement process.
- We reviewed needs and gaps that this CoPA could address, including the need for prior learning assessment, capturing skilled labor and creating fast tracks for U.S. training gaps, developing trauma informed instruction modules, addressing childcare challenges, mapping state and local level resources available that could help us create more partnerships and/build upon the existing ones for sustainability and furthering the reach.
- The group reviewed strengths and successes of ELL and Career Pathways programs at community colleges, universities, resettlement organizations and agencies.

Housing and Campus Utilization (Facilitator: Dr. Diya Abdo, ECAR) | Session 1: February 29, 2024

- The group shared successes and strategies for housing refugees on campuses to date. Examples included World Learning/School for International Training campus in Brattleboro, VT, St. Ambrose University campus in Davenport, IA, Russell Sage College in Troy, NY, and Washington State University in Pullman, WA.
- We considered different contexts and strategies unique to private vs. public schools, small vs. large campuses, rural vs. urban settings. We began discussing challenges and resource gaps in this area.

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

- We considered the need to collect and identify obstacles and solutions that can be shared, such as for state schools, ROI (return on investment) issues, insurance, policy, etc.

Educational Opportunities: Reducing Barriers to Enrollment (Facilitator: Marina Chakmakchi, University of Southern Maine) | Session 1: February 28, 2024

- We are excited to have this space for refugee serving organizations & higher education institutions to be connected and work together in the best interest of refugee clients/students.
- Participants shared and compiled trainings 1) about refugees for campus staff, 2) for refugees about higher education, and 3) for refugee students about higher ed once they are enrolled/current students.
- We started discussing statewide coalitions and data collection and will continue to explore this topic in future sessions.

Service Learning & Volunteer Engagement (Facilitator: Dr. Carina Black, Northern Nevada International Center @ University of Nevada Reno) | Session 1: March 1, 2024

- The group acknowledged that there are unique challenges and opportunities about working through higher education institutions to recruit for roles in resettlement support volunteers.
- We explored how to best facilitate connections between HEIs and RAs and sustain those partnerships.
- Examining how to find, empower, and leverage relevant student groups.

If you have any questions about the CoPAs, please email: SHERR@worldlearning.org

Mark your calendars for the upcoming webinar

On **March 20 (2:00pm ET)**, SHERR consortium partner, **Presidents' Alliance for Higher Education and Immigration** will host a **webinar** on "Higher Education and Opportunities to Promote Refugee Integration" featuring programs and grant opportunities available through the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR). We will spotlight past recipients of Refugee Career Pathways funding. Follow [this link](#) to register and learn more.

Speakers Include:

- **Nasir Kaihan**, Project Manager, Arizona Refugee Career Pathways Program, Arizona State University's Education for Humanity
- **Karissa Porter**, Refugee Career Pathways Director, Bluegrass Community & Technical College
- **ORR staff members** from the Interagency Outreach and Response (IOR) Team and the Division of Refugee Services (DRS)
- **Laura Wagner**, Director of Refugee Student Initiatives, Presidents' Alliance on Higher Education & Immigration

The Refugee Resource Hub Directory of Practitioners is up and running!

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

Supporting Higher Education in Refugee Resettlement

Join the [Directory of Practitioners](#) to network, build coalitions, and share information with other colleges and universities, resettlement agencies, and refugee-serving organizations focused on the intersection of higher education and refugee resettlement across the U.S.

Check out the newest Refugee Resource Hub Spotlights!

- Arizona State University: [Education for Humanity](#)
- Bard College: [enrolling and supporting displaced students and scholars](#)
- The [Duolingo University Access Program](#)
- Georgetown University: [The Refugee Health Navigator Program](#)
- The School for International Training and World Learning: [The New Vermonter Education Program](#)

We need your help in building out our library of success stories and models of refugee support programs at U.S. higher education institutions. Do you want to share your model or recommend we reach out to an institution to feature their program? Reach out to Axelle Nassirou (axelle@presidentsalliance.org) or fill out the [online form](#).

Supporting Higher Education in Refugee Resettlement (SHERR) builds the capacity of higher education institutions across the U.S. to support refugee resettlement with the aim to improve newcomers' experiences and outcomes upon their arrival into the United States. SHERR is led by World Learning in collaboration with the Ethiopian Community Development Council, the Presidents' Alliance on Higher Education and Immigration, and Welcome.US.

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