

Office of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance

Funding Announcement and Community Engagement Opportunity

A welcoming community involves supporting all people to fully realize their contributions to society. People who arrive in our communities as refugees and humanitarian immigrants bring diverse skills and strengths. Refugee youth and older adults often experience unique barriers to fully participating and thriving in our community's educational and social support systems. By designing specialized programs and services to remove these obstacles, refugee youth and older adults in our communities will be able to build healthy and prosperous lives.

Washington's Office of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance (ORIA) is excited to announce a *new pilot* Refugee Youth Mentoring Program as well as an expansion of funding for the Services for Older Refugees Program. To assist in developing these programs, ORIA is gathering information about existing programs and services that are available for people who are refugees and humanitarian immigrants, and ORIA is seeking input about the needs and experiences of youth and older adults within different ethnic and geographic communities. In April 2019, ORIA will conduct a series of listening sessions and an online survey to gather this information. All community partners are invited to participate and inform the design and development of these programs.

Refugee Youth Mentoring Program

Funded by the federal Office of Refugee Resettlement, the goals of the Refugee Youth Mentoring Program are to promote positive civic and social engagement and support individual educational and vocational advancement. To accomplish these goals, ORIA is looking to partner with one or more community-based organizations or a consortium of organizations that will match eligible youth with positive adult mentors.

ORIA seeks partners that can offer the following services:

- Recruit and train mentors to support refugee youth
- Screen potential mentors for criminal history or a history of child abuse
- Perform an initial assessment of the needs and goals of the youth and develop a plan to meet those needs through educational, vocational, and social activities
- Provide case management that includes documenting services provided and the progress of each youth

Activities under the Refugee Youth Mentoring Program may focus on but are not limited to the following areas:

- Developing social and life skills
- Helping youth learn about American culture while maintaining and celebrating their cultural heritage
- Providing opportunities for social engagement with peers
- Providing information about opportunities to participate in civic and community service
- Supporting youth to learn English, math, and other skills
- Providing academic support and assisting with transitions in school
- Helping youth with career development
- Supporting youth to develop health and financial literacy

To be eligible to receive services from the Refugee Youth Mentoring Program, individuals must meet the following criteria:

- Have a qualifying immigration status, including refugee, asylee, Cuban/Haitian entrant, Iraqi and Afghan Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) holder, Amerasians, victims of human trafficking¹
- Be between the ages of 15 and 24 years old
- Be within the first five years of entering the United States or receiving their humanitarian immigration status

Services for Older Refugees Program

Through the Refugee Social Services set-aside funding, Washington's Office of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance (ORIA) receives funding to invest in community activities that support integration and wellness for older adults. The overarching goal of the Services for Older Refugee (SOR) Program is to increase integration and independent healthy living for older people who are refugees and humanitarian immigrants. ORIA has historically partnered with organizations in the community to offer specialized services to these individuals. With an increase in funding, ORIA will expand the initiative to include additional community-based partners and to serve more individuals.

The service activities for the SOR Program will focus on the following areas:

- Helping older adults navigate and access services offered by area aging programs that can offer information about supportive services, nutrition services, meal delivery, elder abuse, senior community centers, and intergenerational activities
- Creating opportunities and resources that help people live independently, including transportation, home care, adult day care, and respite care
- Developing opportunities for adults to avoid isolation by connecting with their ethnic communities to participate in support groups and engagement in social and cultural activities
- Assisting older adults on the pathway to citizenship through civics and English classes

To be eligible for services under the SOR Program, individuals must meet the following criteria:

- Have a qualifying immigration status, including refugee, asylee, Cuban/Haitian entrant, Iraqi and Afghan Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) holder, Amerasians, victims of human trafficking²
- Be 60 years of age or older
- Be within the first five years of entering the United States or receiving their humanitarian immigration status

Funding Opportunities

Washington's Office of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance (ORIA) intends to invest \$425,000 for the Refugee Youth Mentoring Program and \$250,000 for the Services for Older Refugees Program. Successful community partners will receive contracts before September 30, 2019. The Refugee Youth Mentoring Program will serve as a one-year pilot program with the opportunity for extension contingent upon continued federal funding. Funding for the SOR Program is also contingent upon the level of federal funds made available.

With limited funding available for each program, ORIA intends to invest funding in communities with the greatest need. Each community is distinct in the people that they welcome and serve. This diversity is

¹ ORR-eligible individuals as per: [ORR Policy Letter 16-1](#), 45 CFR 400.43, 45 CFR 400.111, and 45 CFR 400.208.

² Ibid.

represented in the variety of nationalities and ethnic groups, languages spoken, educational levels, levels of trauma and stress as well as ability of refugee and immigrants to connect to family and friends within their ethnic community or welcoming community. ORIA’s goal is to contract with multiple service providers with experience effectively serving refugee and immigrant communities. ORIA is committed to investing in smaller, ethnic community-based organizations that can offer these services, and ORIA invites all interested organizations to participate in community listening sessions.

Community Listening Session

Community members and the organizations that serve them have a strong understanding of available resources and services as well as the needs that continue to exist. Together, the Refugee Youth Mentoring Program and Services for Older Refugees Program can successfully place young adults on pathways to educational and career opportunities and encourage older refugee adults to fully engage in the community, preventing them from becoming isolated. Washington’s Office of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance (ORIA) is interested in investing in collective approaches that are feasible and effective. This can only be accomplished by learning directly from the community.

ORIA will be hosting listening sessions to learn from community members and organizations.

The key goals for these listening sessions are:

1. To gather information about existing services that address the needs of refugee youth and older refugee adults
2. To highlight successful programs or services that meet the unique needs of refugee youth and older adults
3. To better understand the unmet needs of refugee youth and older refugee adults

Please join ORIA for one or more of the following community listening sessions:

DATE	LOCATION
Wednesday, April 24, 2019, 2:30 pm	Kent Community Service Office, Tahoma Room 1313 W Meeker Street, #100, Kent, WA 98032
Thursday, April 25, 2019, 5:00 pm	Rainier Beach Library, Rainier Beach Meeting Room 9125 Rainier Ave S, Seattle Washington 98118
Monday, April 29, 2019, 6:30 pm	Tukwila Library, Room 1 14280 Tukwila International Blvd, Tukwila, WA 98168
Tuesday, April 30, 2019, 10:00 am	WebEx Tuesday April 30th 2019 10:00 AM—12:00 PM (206) - 454—0887 // (855) - 929—3239 Access Key: 806 272 490

In addition to conducting listening sessions, organizations interested in partnering with ORIA will have the opportunity to complete a survey to inform the development of these programs. Completing the survey is optional and not a requirement to compete in the application process to contract with ORIA. To complete the survey, please follow this [survey link](#). ORIA will be collecting responses to the survey through May 15, 2019. The grant application will come out after the listening sessions are complete in June of 2019. For more information on the listening sessions, please contact Annie Dimitras at DimitA@dshs.wa.gov.