



**Office of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance
Funding Opportunity- Letter of Interest
Services to Older Refugees Program
August 1, 2019**

1. Introduction

A welcoming community involves supporting all people to fully realize their contributions to society. People who arrive as refugees and humanitarian immigrants bring different skills and strengths that contribute to our communities. Older Refugees (60 years old and older) often experience isolation due to a number of reasons, including: lack of English skills, age related or untreated medical issues, lack of knowledge of local services and their surroundings, and lack of transportation. Although some elders may be living with family, they often do not have the social interaction they may have enjoyed in their home country with their peers and familiarity of their local community. The changes they experience after arrival to the U.S. may cause social isolation, depression and inability to engage with others outside their home.

Washington's Office of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance (ORIA) will invest **\$250,000** for ORIA's "Refugee Elders Program" for Federal Fiscal Year 2020. ORIA intends to contract with multiple organizations who have the capacity to serve refugee elder groups in their community. The program will serve as a one-year program with the opportunity for extension contingent on funding from the federal Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR). Funding is available for activities that support integration and wellness for refugee elders who meet service eligibility. ***In lieu of proposals, ORIA is requesting interested organizations to submit a Letter of Interest.***

2. About the Washington Office of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance

The Washington Office of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance (ORIA) coordinates and implements the state plan for refugee resettlement (under 45 CFR 400.5) and facilitates services for low-income immigrants across the state. ORIA's overarching goal is to promote economic security and integration for refugees and immigrants in communities in Washington.

To achieve this goal, ORIA braids funds from the federal Office of Refugee Resettlement with other federal and state dollars to invest over \$25 million into local communities. Services and programs focus on helping refugees and immigrants to secure progressive employment opportunities, access specialized health services, and gain community integration supports, such as intensive case management or assistance applying for naturalization. ORIA's programs focus on five key areas: Health and Wellness; Employment and Training; Immigration and Naturalization Assistance; and Whole Family Services. The Refugee Elders Program supports ORIA's vision to help all members of the refugee family receive the support they need to thrive in Washington's communities.

3. Refugee Elder Program Goals

The overarching goal for this program is to provide activities that support integration and wellness for older ORR-eligible eligible populations. To accomplish these goals, services should focus on the following areas:

- a. Helping Refugee Elders access mainstream aging services in the community such as information about supportive services, nutrition services, meal delivery, elder abuse, senior community centers and intergenerational activities.
- b. Providing Refugee Elders with appropriate services that are not available in the community such as educational workshops, elder groups and other direct services provided in the participants' primary language.
- c. Creating opportunities for Refugee Elders to live independently as long as possible such as providing bilingual advocacy to assist in accessing transportation, home care, adult day care and respite care.
- d. Developing opportunities for Refugee Elders to connect with their communities to avoid isolation. Examples include mental health support, community navigators, elder support groups, intergenerational activities and opportunities for engagement in social and cultural activities.
- e. Assisting Refugee Elders on the path to citizenship, especially those at risk of losing Supplemental Security Income or other federal benefits, to naturalize. This may include workshops relevant to the Naturalization process, citizenship preparation classes designed for older learners and mock interview practice. Application assistance is not included in this program therefore applicants should be referred to ORIA's Naturalization providers for state funded application assistance. *For programs offering citizenship preparation classes, Refugee Elders may have resided more than 5 years in the U.S.*
- f. Providing relevant survival English language classes and conversation circles to improve their English proficiency and conversational skills.
- g. Providing opportunities for elders to be more familiar with their local surroundings through day trips and experiential activities. Such opportunities may provide them with more knowledge and navigation skills in their local community.

4. Participant Service Eligibility- Individuals eligible for services must be:

- a. Residents of Washington; and
- b. Ages 60 years or older; and
- c. Within **five years** of receiving their humanitarian status as Refugee, Asylee, Amerasians, Cuban or Haitian entrants, Iraqi and Afghan Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) holder, and Victims of human trafficking;¹

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

5. **Minimum Qualifications to Provide Services** -Organizations must meet the following qualifications:

- a. Have bilingual and bicultural staff that mirror participants' primary language; and
- b. Provide services that are culturally relevant; and
- c. Are experienced (minimum 2 years) in working with refugee communities and experience providing services to older refugees; and
- d. Have knowledge and/or experience working with the local Area Agencies on Aging and Senior service providers in the communities they propose to serve; and
- e. Have an accessible service location(s) close to public transit for refugee elders to meet and participate in services; and
- f. Have the minimum hardware and software requirements to be able to contract with DSHS. Minimum hardware requirements include a computer with internet access. Minimum software requirements include Office 2010 (or higher) and Internet Explorer Version 10 (or higher)

6. **ORIA Priorities**

ORIA intends to award contracts to organizations who meet the minimum qualifications, propose services that will address challenges refugee elders experience in their communities and demonstrate the capacity to begin services shortly after contract initiation. Due to confidentiality policies, DSHS cannot refer potential clients to service providers. Since many do not participate in other services such as employment, English language training or social services, they may be difficult to locate to recruit. Outreach must be creative and constant.

ORIA intends to award multiple contracts statewide. Contract amounts will be no less than \$35,000. Contracts must be in place on September 30, 2019 and program services must begin no later than Nov. 1, 2019. ORIA is committed to investing in smaller, ethnic community-based organizations that can offer these services. ORIA welcomes applications from all organizations, and reserves the right to conduct site-visits prior to making funding decisions.

7. **Letter of Interest (LOI) & Submission Instructions**- Please include the following information:

- a. Name of Agency, Contact Person with email address and phone number;
- b. Services the agency plans to provide;
- c. Ethnic elder groups to be served;
- d. Number of individuals to serve annually;
- e. Agency plans to recruit participants (how and where); and
- f. Location(s) of Proposed Services

Letters of Interest may be up to 3 (three) pages, single spaced, using 12 point Times New Roman or Calibri font. **Submit letters to ORIA via electronic mail with Subject line:** DSHS – ORIA Refugee Elder Program – [Your Organization Name] to ORIAInfo@dshs.wa.gov. The deadline for Letters of Interest is 5:00 PM on **August 15, 2019**. ORIA staff will contact organizations to set up a meeting or conference call to discuss proposed services. ORIA staff will contact selected providers by **September 1, 2019**.