

Supporting Higher Education in Refugee Resettlement

Building the capacity of colleges and universities to support resettlement.

SHERR Communities of Practice and Action Update #3 | May 2024

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SHERR Communities of Practice and Action Update

SHERR Communities of Practice and Action (CoPAs) are nearing the half-way point of their collaborative work. The four groups include representatives from higher education institutions and resettlement agencies and affiliates, as well as federal and state government representatives. They have been busy mapping out existing resources and identifying areas where resources are most needed to help campuses engage with refugees along the four topic areas. In this update, we share the major highlights and insights from the third round of sessions and as always appreciate the contributions and support of our group members.

English Language Learning and Career Pathways Support (Facilitator: Olga Prizhbilov, Los Rios Community College District) | Session 3: May 7, 2024

- The group reviewed teaching curricula and effective teaching practices most commonly used when teaching refugee students; we discussed materials and approaches for teaching emergent learners (also referred to as pre-literate learners) as well as highly educated/advanced level learners;
- Guest speaker Ariana Moir of [The Immigrant Learning Center, Inc.](#) presented some of their resources for immigrant and refugee students;
- Using information collected collaboratively, the group will create a toolkit with a listing of best curricula and teaching approaches and resources that can be used in support of refugee-focused ELL & Career Pathways programs. When completed, this toolkit will be made available on the Refugee Resource Hub.

Housing and Campus Utilization (Facilitator: Dr. Diya Abdo, ECAR) | Session 3: May 6, 2024

- The group discussed various types of partnerships and forms of stakeholder engagement when seeking to offer housing for refugees on campus;

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- The meeting featured a presentation from Leon McClinton, Director of Housing at Oklahoma State U and past president of the [Association of Campus and University Housing Officers](#); the discussion included questions about messaging points and approaching university leadership, housing officers, and community stakeholders;
- At the next session, the group will review existing campus housing resources from organizations such as ECAR, NASH RRI, RWC, and RHS/IRC to ensure that any new toolkits and materials are complementing the existing pool; new materials will be made available through the Refugee Resource Hub.

Educational Opportunities: Reducing Barriers to Enrollment (Facilitator: Marina Chakmakchi, University of Southern Maine) | Session 3: May 8, 2024

- The group compiled possible goals and stakeholders to include in statewide coalitions at the intersection of higher education and refugee resettlement and will dive into how to get started this summer.
- Members continued to discuss funding opportunities and how to ensure the information is accessible to refugee students.
- The group reviewed and shared existing models of refugee student data collection and are exploring solutions to address the general lack of available data.

Service Learning & Volunteer Engagement (Facilitator: Dr. Carina Black, Northern Nevada International Center @ University of Nevada Reno) | Session 3: May 6, 2024

- The group is exploring how to map service-learning/community engaged learning programs around the U.S., and what would be included and who is the target audience.
- Members learned about opportunities to leverage [Community Service Federal Work Study](#).
- Working in small groups, participants focused on tips for building relationships between higher education institutions and resettlement agencies and community engaged learning.

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

SHERR news and upcoming events

In the news!

SHERR has awarded eight **Innovation Incentive grants** to stimulate innovation in refugee resettlement, and each recipient represents a partnership between a U.S. higher education institution and a refugee resettlement organization. Grants were awarded for projects mainly focusing on temporary campus housing for refugees and service-learning opportunities for students. For details, please read [this announcement](#).

The Housing CoPA welcomed the immediate past president of ACUHO-I (Association of Campus and University Housing Officers International), Dr. Leon McClinton, to present on campus engagement with refugees. A conversation with Dr. McClinton, Dr. Diya Abdo of ECAR, Dr. Randy Kluver of Oklahoma State University and Matt Brown of SHERR is featured in

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ACUHO-I's [Talking Stick publication](#). SHERR, ECAR, and Oklahoma State will co-present at the June 2024 ACUHO-I conference in Milwaukee, WI.

Coming soon:

Please watch this space for an upcoming **SHERR Spotlight Series** on campus engagement with refugees. Over the next several months we will be spotlighting higher education institutions and resettlement agencies working together in support of refugees through innovations in housing, community-engaged learning, English language and career programs, and educational opportunities.

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

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!

- **Washington State University:** [Health Navigator Program – pairing nurses and newcomers](#)
- **Georgia Piedmont Technical College:** [providing high school equivalency, English language and career pathway options to refugee students](#)
- **University of Tulsa:** [leveraging unused housing on campus and partnering with local resettlement agencies to house newcomers](#)

We welcome 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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