

Supporting Higher Education in Refugee Resettlement

Building the capacity of colleges and universities to support resettlement.

SHERR Communities of Practice and Action Update #4 | June 2024

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SHERR Communities of Practice and Action Update

We have now reached the half-way point in the collaborative work of the SHERR Communities of Practice and Action (CoPAs). All four groups, representing higher education institutions and resettlement agencies and affiliates, as well as federal and state government offices, have identified deliverables which will help fill some of the resource gaps within each topic area. We are excited to share the updates with you and appreciate everyone's active contributions. The groups are taking a break for the summer and will reconvene in September.

English Language Learning and Career Pathways Support (Facilitator: Olga Prizhbilov, Los Rios Community College District) | Session 4: June 11, 2024

- The group reviewed career pathways programs and services offered to support employment of refugee clients, including most in-demand career fields and trainings to increase employability and retention;
- Guest speaker Luana DeBorst, from [ECDC](#), discussed the [Matching Grant](#) (MG) program as a federal funding source for economic self-sufficiency and employment support programming for refugees;
- Guest speaker Haji Shukran, from [Opening Doors Sacramento](#), discussed his organization's partnership with Los Rios Community College District and programs they offer to support refugee clients with securing employment;
- The group started work on a toolkit with a listing of best curricula, 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 4: June 10, 2024

- The group discussed the role of trainings and consultations when establishing [ECAR chapters](#) and building new partnerships with community partners to support housing for refugees on campus;

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- Speakers from [ECAR](#), [NASH RRI](#), [Refugee Welcome Collective](#), and [Refugee Housing Solutions](#) presented information about their resources related to campus housing for refugees, including guides for partnership building, sample MOUs, trainings, tenant toolkits, webinars, and more;
- The group discussed ideas for deliverables – resources that fill existing gaps and which will support higher education institutions and resettlement agencies in collaboration around campus housing; any new resources and materials created by the SHERR Housing CoPA will be complementing and not duplicating the existing pool of resources; 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 4: June 12, 2024

- The group compiled the ways in which they collect and share refugee student success stories as well as ways in which they engage alumni;
- [Their Story is Our Story](#) shared about their approach and best practices in capturing and sharing refugee student stories;
- Members continued to discuss existing models of refugee student data collection and are exploring recommendations 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 4: June 17, 2024

- Rhiannon Kelly, from [Every Campus a Refuge](#), shared about her work hosting an Alternative Spring Break opportunity for students focused on refugee resettlement as well as the vast resources that ECAR has for campuses interested in engaging in this work;
- The group is exploring how to map resettlement and higher education connected service learning/community engaged learning and related programs around the U.S., what would be included, and who would be the target audience(s);
- The group reviewed an outline of a toolkit that can serve as a resource for higher education institutions and resettlement agencies to partner in community engaged learning, internships, and volunteer engagement.

If you have any questions about the CoPAs, please email: SHERR@worldlearning.org.
To access past CoPA updates, please visit the SHERR CoPA page linked [here](#).

SHERR news and upcoming events

In the news!

Ahead of World Refugee Day on June 20, 2024, **U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and U.S. Secretary of Education Dr. Miguel A. Cardona co-signed a [letter](#) addressed to the leadership of U.S. universities and colleges**. The letter expresses appreciation to schools who have welcomed refugees on their campuses and encourages deepening the commitment on

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the part of higher education institutions more broadly to engage with refugees and support resettlement efforts. We hope that this letter will help advance the conversation about higher education engagement in resettlement and bring new partners and commitments to the landscape. Please share with your colleagues and networks and feel free to contact sherr@worldlearning.org with any questions.

SHERR recently 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](#).

Coming soon:

SHERR invites you to join the free **webinar “Campus Engagement with Refugees: Why and How?” on September 18, 2024** at 1pm ET on Zoom. The webinar will provide an overview of benefits to campuses of engagement with refugee resettlement, and types of engagement pathways available to institutions. Attendees will gain a better understanding of how involvement with refugees advances the mission of higher education institutions while providing urgent support and opportunities for refugees – both students and non-students. Click [here](#) to register and feel free to share.

Please watch this space for a fall/winter **SHERR Spotlight Series** on campus engagement with refugees. Webinars will spotlight higher education institutions and resettlement agencies working together in support of refugees through innovations such as temporary campus housing, community-engaged learning, English language and career programs, and increasing educational opportunities for refugee students.

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!

- **International Institute of New England, UMass Boston, and Northeastern University collaborative:** [Resettle Together Higher Ed program - transformational service learning curriculum](#)
- **The University of Tulsa:** [a service learning course to support students’ participation in its ECAR chapter](#)

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](#).

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Supporting Higher Education in Refugee Resettlement

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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