

# Supporting Higher Education in Refugee Resettlement

*Building the capacity of colleges and universities to support resettlement.*

## SHERR Communities of Practice and Action Update #5 | September 2024

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### SHERR Communities of Practice and Action Update

SHERR Communities of Practice and Action (CoPAs) are back in full swing this fall! We are now transitioning fully to the 'action' portion of our collaboration. Group members, representing higher education institutions and resettlement agencies and affiliates, as well as federal and state government offices, are developing a variety of tools, talking points, guiding documents, and other materials. All resources which are being created by the CoPA groups aim to address urgent resource gaps and help enable greater participation by higher education in resettlement. The process of co-creating resources by all four CoPA groups is an opportunity to harness the collective knowledge of practitioners in order to make it publicly available through the online [Refugee Resource Hub](#), which is being built out under SHERR.

#### **English Language Learning and Career Pathways Support (Facilitator: Olga Prizhbilov, Los Rios Community College District) | Session 5: September 10, 2024**

- The group discussed ways in which higher education programs link education and career pathways
- Participants shared their experiences with partnerships, outreach, and maintaining relationships with community partners.
- Working Groups continued collaboration on two resources: *Partnerships Toolkit* and an *ELL Teaching Practices for Adult Refugees Guide*. The group continues to collect information about *Funding ELL & Career Pathways* programs as well as inspirational examples of campuses running successful ELL & Career Pathways programs

#### **Housing and Campus Utilization (Facilitator: Dr. Diya Abdo, ECAR) | Session 5: September 9, 2024**

- The group recapped and finalized details around the specific resources to be co-created this fall

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- Working Groups within the CoPA will focus on developing the following resources:
  - *Responding to resistance from audiences skeptical about housing refugees on campus*
  - *Messaging for Executives, Chancellors, Presidents, Deans and other decision makers*
  - *Preparing Refugees to Use Campus Housing: norms, practices and culture*
- Further, the CoPA continues to collect information about *funding sources for campus housing*, as well as specific examples of campuses housing refugee families

## **Educational Opportunities: Reducing Barriers to Enrollment (Facilitator: Marina Chakmakchi, University of Southern Maine) | Session 5: September 11, 2024**

- The group discussed and compiled ways in which institutions and programs are engaging and staying connected with alumni.
- Participants discussed how institutions and programs are providing career and professional network support for refugee students.
- We reviewed and are continuing to develop resources on *Building Statewide Coalitions* and recommendations around *Collecting Refugee Student Enrollment Data*.

## **Service Learning & Volunteer Engagement (Facilitator: Dr. Carina Black, Northern Nevada International Center @ University of Nevada Reno) | Session 5: September 13, 2024**

- Guest Presenter- Jessi Kalambayi shared about the [University of Denver Ready for Hospitality Program](#) .
- Participants appreciated the mutually beneficial nature of the project for the DU students and the refugee participants, having a shared goal/project, and the sustainability of the program through endowed external funding.
- Breakout groups identified *top 5 Tips for Universities to Partner with Resettlement Agencies (RAs), RAs to partner with universities* and for *RAs and universities to work together related to service learning/volunteer engagement*.

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

## SHERR news and upcoming events

### In the news!

During Welcoming Week 2024, SHERR hosted its informational webinar “**Campus Engagement with Refugees: Why and How.**” The event drew 570 registrants and nearly 260 live attendees, including 152 from colleges and universities. The event included remarks by Rafael Nevárez, Director of International Affairs, Office of the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education, Kathleen Sheehan, Program Officer at the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, Dr. Miriam Feldblum, Founder and Executive Director of the Presidents’ Alliance on Higher Education and Immigration, and Dr. Diya Abdo, Founder of Every Campus A Refuge (ECAR) and Lincoln Financial Professor of English at

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Guilford College. To access the webinar recording and links to shared resources please click [here](#) and navigate to the Why and How webinar.

### Coming soon:

This fall and winter, we invite you to join the [SHERR Spotlight Webinar Series](#) on campus engagement with refugees. Webinars will feature higher education institutions and resettlement agencies working together to support refugees through innovations such as temporary campus housing, community-engaged learning, refugee health, English language and career programs, and increasing educational opportunities for refugee students. Please join us and share broadly.

**October 24** at 1pm ET: “Bringing the World to Campus through Refugee Resettlement – Opportunities for **Student Service**.” Co-hosted with Refugee Welcome Collective. Register [here](#).

**November 13** at 1pm ET: “**Campus Housing** for Refugees.” Co-hosted with Refugee Housing Solutions. Register [here](#).

**December 5** at 1pm ET: “Higher Education Partnerships in **Refugee Health**.” Register [here](#).

**January 22** at 1pm ET: “**Enrolling and Supporting** Refugee Students.” Register [here](#).

**February 12** at 1pm ET: “Supporting Refugees with **English Learning and Career Pathways**.” Register [here](#).

### 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. We currently have sixty-six profiles on the Directory! If you are not yet a member, please submit your profile [here](#).

### Check out the newest Refugee Resource Hub Spotlight!

- **BRAVE:** [Building Refugee Achievement through Vermont Education](#). The refugee resettlement agency ECDC Multicultural Community Center-Vermont (MCC-VT) leads BRAVE in partnership with several higher education institutions and support organizations.

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](mailto: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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