

**Supporting
Statement for OMB
Clearance Request**

**APPENDIX D: Site
Visit Interview Guide
for Voluntary Agency
Staff**

**Understanding the
Intersection Between
TANF and Refugee
Cash Assistance
Services**

New Collection

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Submitted by:
Office of Planning,
Research & Evaluation
Administration for Children & Families
U.S. Department of Health
and Human Services

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Appendix D: Site Visit Interview Guide for Voluntary Agency Staff

Instructions for OMB Reviewer

This information collection request includes four field interview guides (Appendices B-E). Many questions are identical or similar across these interview guides. To help reviewers know which questions are shared across all guides, we have included a parenthetical note (e.g., “Question Asked in All Interview Guides”) for each question that is asked across all four field interview guides. An asterisk indicates that the corresponding question contains small differences from the other guides, but the question is still very similar across all interview guides.

Below are some examples to illustrate what we mean:

Example 1: What is your official job title? (**Question Asked in All Interview Guides**)

Example 2: Do you have to report information to any funders or government bodies (e.g., legislature, governor, county executives, etc.)? If so, which? And what information? (**Question Asked in All Interview Guides***)

Introduction: We are members of the research team conducting the study “Understanding the Intersection Between TANF and Refugee Cash Assistance Services.” The study is funded by the Administration for Children and Families in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Its purpose is to learn how state and local systems are serving refugees through TANF and the Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA) programs, how these programs intersect, and how these programs may be related to refugee self-sufficiency and employment outcomes. As part of the study, we are visiting a number of sites across the country where refugees have been resettled and access public benefits and services. We are talking with individuals who help implement or operate the programs and services accessed by refugees in these communities.

Before beginning our discussion, we want to thank you for agreeing to talk with us today. We know you are busy and will try to be as focused as possible. The interview will take about 90 minutes. Your participation is voluntary, and there are no penalties for choosing not to take part in the interview. Although your answers are important to the study, you can refuse to answer any questions or stop the interview at any time. Our aim is to learn from your insights and experience, not to audit or judge your agency or programs. Your answers will be kept private to the extent permissible by law. However, because of the relatively small number of organizations participating in the study, there is a possibility that a response could be correctly attributed to you. Information you provide will not be shared with other staff at your program or organization. Only the study team will have access to the information you provide through this interview. Your name will not be listed in any published reports, and comments will not be attributed to you. Instead, your information will be combined with information provided by others.

The Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This collection of information is voluntary and will be used to document changes in program operations or the provision of services for resettled refugees, as well as implementation challenges. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 90 minutes per response, including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and reviewing the collection of information. An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. The OMB control number for this collection is 0970-XXXX and it expires XX/XX/XXXX. Please send comments about this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Abt Associates, 4550 Montgomery Avenue, Suite 800 North, Bethesda, Maryland 20814, Attn: Robin Koralek OMB-PRA 0970-XXXX.

Please note that throughout this guide, except where noted, we use the term “refugee” to refer generally to all populations eligible for refugee services, including refugees, asylees, Cuban-Haitian entrants, and Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) holders.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

I. Organization and Respondent Background

[Note – organizational focus is primarily on local affiliate, not national organization.]

1. What is your official job title? **(Question Asked in All Interview Guides)**
2. How many years have you worked in this position? At this agency/organization? **(Question Asked in All Interview Guides)**
3. What was your professional background before this position? **(Question Asked in All Interview Guides)**
4. Please briefly describe your current position and job responsibilities, including your day to day work with refugees. **(Question Asked in All Interview Guides)**
 - a. Probe on the following responsibilities, as appropriate given specific interviewee **(Question Asked in All Interview Guides*)**:
 - Enrollment in cash assistance
 - Referral to cash assistance
 - Administration of cash assistance
 - Enrollment in other programs (please list briefly)
 - Case management
 - R&P services
 - Employment services
 - English language training
 - Social adjustment/cultural orientation
 - Referrals/navigation of other services
 - Other
5. Please briefly describe the overall programs and services your organization provides.
6. *[Ask as appropriate based on services described in response to previous question:]* How do [cash assistance/employment services] fit within the overall mission and services of your organization?
7. What geographic region does this organization serve? In how many locations does your organization operate? What area does this location serve? **(Question Asked in All Interview Guides*)**
8. Do you have a copy of an organizational chart for *[agency/organization]* that you can share with us? **(Question Asked in All Interview Guides)**

9. How many staff members does your organization have in total? *[Ask as appropriate based on services described:]* How many administer cash assistance to refugees? How many work on providing employment, education, or training services to refugees? Providing referrals for these services? **(Question Asked in All Interview Guides*)**
10. What steps does your organization take to make sure staff can serve refugees in a culturally competent manner?
 - a. Are there bilingual/bicultural staff?
 - b. Are there contracts with CBOs or other organizations to help with language access?
 - c. Do staff receive special training about serving participants from specific cultures?
 - d. Are there contracts with CBOs or other organizations to help with language access or culturally-specific issues?
11. What is your organization's overall funding? What are the main funding sources? Roughly what portion of your funding is for serving refugees?

II. Local Context

1. How would you describe the economy in your area? **(Question Asked in All Interview Guides)**
 - a. How available are jobs?
 - b. What types of jobs are available? In what industries?
 - c. What kinds of jobs are available to the refugees that you work with?
 - d. Are there any special local economic conditions that might have a particular impact on refugees?
2. What are the largest languages spoken in the area, other than English? **(Question Asked in All Interview Guides)**
3. How would you describe the level of community support for refugees in the area? **(Question Asked in All Interview Guides)**

III. Characteristics of Refugee Population in the Community

1. What are the main populations of refugees that have been resettled in this community over the past year? Past five years? (Probe on national origin and, if relevant, ethnic group.)
2. Is there secondary migration into or out of the community? How does it affect the number and national origins of refugees in the community?
3. Overall, how would you describe the characteristics of the refugees resettled in this community in terms of:
 - a. Free versus family cases

- b. Family size and structure (families versus individuals, single-two parent families, older relatives, number of children, gender breakdown)
 - c. English language ability
 - d. Education and job skills
 - e. Employment experience
 - f. Prevalence of disabilities
 - g. Prevalence of mental health issues
 - h. Other resettlement-relevant characteristics?
4. How much do the populations and characteristics of refugees resettled in this community change from year to year?
- a. Probe on:
 - Number
 - National origin
 - English language ability
 - Education
 - Service needs (e.g. employment services, education and training, ESL, disability, mental health services, etc.)
 - Family structure

IV. Characteristics of Refugee Population Served By Agency/Organization

1. What are the main populations of refugees served by your agency/organization? (Probe on national origin and, if relevant, ethnic group.) Roughly speaking, how many refugees in each population did you serve in the past year? *[Can ask them to e-mail this after the interview if they do not feel comfortable providing estimates.]* **(Question Asked in All Interview Guides)**
2. How does the main populations of refugees your agency/organization serves compare to the populations of refugees within the community?
3. Among the individuals you serve who are eligible for refugee services, how many are refugees v. asylees v. Cuban-Haitian entrants v. SIV holders v. other statuses? **(Question Asked in All Interview Guides)**
4. Does secondary migration into or out of the community occur at an early enough stage to affect who receives reception and placement services? How does secondary migration affect later services such as cash assistance or employment services?
5. What is the mix of families with children, versus adults without children?

6. How would you characterize the population of refugees you serve in terms of **(Question Asked in All Interview Guides)**:
 - a. Family size and structure
 - b. Education
 - c. Employment experience
 - d. English language ability
 - e. Prevalence of disabilities
 - f. Prevalence of mental health issues
 - g. Service needs
 - h. Other challenges
7. How do changes in the number or characteristics of refugee populations from year to year affect your service planning and service provision? **(Question Asked in All Interview Guides)**
 - a. How much does the population of refugees your organization serves change from year to year?
 - b. How much does the number of refugees you serve change from year to year?
 - c. How much do the national origins of refugees change from year to year?
 - d. How different are the characteristics of the different refugee groups you might serve from one year to the next?
8. What, if any information, does this agency receive about upcoming resettlement of refugees? What agencies or organizations provide this information? How much lead time do you get regarding the nature of the refugee population (for planning purposes)? What additional information would be helpful? **(Question Asked in All Interview Guides)**
9. How much information do you get about family structure? About the prevalence of mental health, disability, or other issues that will require services?

V. Reception and Placement Services

1. At what point in the resettlement process does your organization become involved? In what capacity?
2. Does your organization provide Reception and Placement (R&P) services to newly arriving refugees?
3. What [other] organizations provide R&P services to newly arriving refugees in your state/locality? **(Question Asked in All Interview Guides)**

If organization provides Reception and Placement Services:

4. Please give an overview of the services that newly arriving refugees receive within their first 90 days?
5. How are refugees receiving these services connected with your organization? Are they all resettled by the national Volag, or do others, such as the state or local county refugee coordinator's office make referrals to your R&P services?
6. What cash assistance is given as part of the R&P services?
7. Please describe the processes for helping refugees enroll in longer-term cash assistance programs.
 - a. How do you decide what cash assistance program to refer refugees to?
 - b. How do you assist them with their application?
 - c. What support do you provide them in understanding the requirements and expectations of the programs?
 - d. What follow up do you provide to ensure that refugees can successfully participate in the programs?
8. What do you do to help refugees access services for other public assistance programs?
 - a. Probe:
 - SNAP
 - Medical assistance
 - Housing assistance
 - Support with mental health issues
 - Support for mental or physical disabilities
 - Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
 - Other services?

If organization does not provide Reception and Placement Services:

9. Do you coordinate or collaborate with the agencies/organizations providing R&P services? If so, what is the agency/organization's role? Has it changed over time? Would it be helpful for the agency/organization to have more or less of a role? **(Question Asked in All Interview Guides)**
10. To what extent do they collaborate with your organization on services you provide? **(Question Asked in All Interview Guides*)**
 - a. Do they play a role in how individuals enroll into your programs/services? If so, what?
 - b. Do they play a role in how you deliver your services to refugees? If so, what?

VI. Provision of Cash Assistance

[Ask this section if organization directly administers Refugee Cash Assistance through a Wilson Fish or PPP program.]

1. How do refugees served in your organization's Refugee Cash Assistance program learn about the program? To what extent are they already working with your organization due to R&P services or other services? If not, are they referred to your organization? How, and by what organizations?
2. Please provide an overview of the Refugee Cash Assistance program that your organization administers.
 - a. How is it funded? Under which program arrangement is cash assistance administered?
 - b. For how long can refugees receive cash assistance through your program? Is it different for families versus adults without children?
3. Please give an overview of the enrollment process for the cash assistance program.
4. Program rules:
 - a. Are there work participation requirements for refugees on your cash assistance program? If so, what are they?
 - i. Is there a minimum number of hours participants are required to participate in work activities? If so, how many?
 - ii. Are there core and noncore requirements? If so, what are they?
 - iii. Do ESL classes count towards work participation requirements? If so, is there a limit on the hours of ESL that can be counted? What is it? Do they count as core or noncore activities?
 - iv. How do you monitor that they are meeting these requirements?
 - b. Do you track work activities that refugees participate in? If so, what kind of work activities do they participate in? Do you refer refugees to particular activities? If so, what are these activities and what is the reason behind this referral? If not, how do refugees decide what activities to participate in?
 - c. Are participants in your program subject to sanctions? If so, on what grounds? What do the sanctions consist of?
 - i. Are these partial or full-family sanctions?
 - ii. How often are refugees exempted from requirements due to reasons such as disability? Other than disability, what are the reasons might they be exempted from requirements?

How does the frequency with which refugees are exempted for these reasons compare to other, non-refugee clients?

5. What support services are available to refugees through your program? How do you assess need for supportive services? What needs do they have, and what are your approaches to addressing them?
6. What steps does your organization take to provide services to people who do not speak English? What percent of participants do not speak English or speak very limited English?
7. How does your agency ensure that services are delivered to refugees in a culturally competent way?
8. What do refugees do after they time out of your cash assistance program? For those who might be eligible for cash assistance in another program (e.g., TANF), do you provide assistance in applying?
9. Is there a difference in the experiences of individuals or families receiving cash assistance from different programs (specifically, RCA v. TANF)? (*Probe on differences in requirements, activities, and engagement with organization staff.*)
10. How do changes in the number or characteristics of refugee populations from year to year affect your service planning and provision of your cash assistance program?

VII. Employment, Education, and Training Services

1. What employment, education, or training activities and services does your agency/organization provide in-house? (**Question Asked in All Interview Guides**)
 - a. Probe on:
 - English language training
 - Job search assistance
 - Adult basic education
 - Vocational training
 - On-the-job training or subsidized employment placement
2. Do other organizations provide employment activities for refugees, and if so, what organizations and what kinds of activities? Do you make referrals to these organizations? What are the reasons for making referrals rather than providing services yourselves? (**Question Asked in All Interview Guides**)
3. What kinds of employment, education, or training activities do refugees participate in most frequently? How are needs determined? (**Question Asked in All Interview Guides**)

4. Are there requirements that refugees participate in certain employment activities in order to receive services? Do you have a role in helping them meet these requirements? What happens if they do not meet these requirements? *[Note – if interviewee administers cash assistance, we will have already asked about work participation requirements and sanctions; the interviewer can refer back to those responses.]*
5. Does your agency provide any post-employment services to refugees to make sure they retain and/or advance in their jobs? **(Question Asked in All Interview Guides)**

VIII. Other Refugee Services

1. Other than cash assistance and employment services, what are the key services your organization provides to refugees? Please describe the major services. *(Note: interviewees may have provided this information earlier when talking about their own job responsibilities.)*
(Question Asked in All Interview Guides)
 - a. Probe on:
 - Social adjustment and cultural orientation services
 - Mental health services
 - Physical or cognitive disability services
 2. Are these services tied to cash assistance and/or employment services? If so, in what way?
(Question Asked in All Interview Guides)
 3. Do the same staff who work with refugees on cash assistance or employment services also work with them on these services? If not, how are these services coordinated with cash assistance or employment services?
 4. Regarding mental health and disability services **(Question Asked in All Interview Guides):**
 - a. How are needs for these services assessed?
 - b. Are any steps taken to make sure these services are provided in a culturally competent way? If so, please explain.
 - c. How do identified mental health or disability service needs affect the work requirements facing refugees or choices of activities that refugees are referred to in order to meet these requirements?

IX. Other General Services

1. What other programs or services do refugees you work with generally access, either with your organization or elsewhere in the community? What organizations or agencies provide them?
(Question Asked in All Interview Guides)
 - a. Probe specifically on:

- SNAP
 - Disability services
 - Mental health services
 - Child care
 - Other employment programs than already discussed
 - Other education than already discussed
2. Do you provide assistance to refugees in connecting with these services? If so, what kind of assistance? **(Question Asked in All Interview Guides*)**
- a. Probe specifically on:
- *[For cash assistance providers]* Direct enrollment as part of TANF/RCA enrollment process?
 - Referral?
 - Help with the application?
 - Direct involvement with the program on the refugee's behalf?
 - Help to the participant during program participation?
3. If you do not provide assistance in connecting to these services, how do refugees connect with and enroll in these programs? **(Question Asked in All Interview Guides)**

X. Coordination/Integration

1. Coordination/Collaboration (See probes at bottom of this set of questions)
- a. What, if any, other agencies or organizations do you work with to ensure that refugees are receiving cash assistance? What kinds of services do they provide? What is the nature of your coordination or partnerships with these organizations? **(Question Asked in All Interview Guides)**
- i. In what ways do you help refugees obtain TANF and/or RCA at the local public assistance agency?
 - ii. To what extent would you say the local public assistance agency processes TANF and/or RCA applications by refugees in a timely and accurate manner?
 - iii. How often does your agency help refugees challenge negative eligibility determinations? How often are these challenges effective? What are the most common reasons that the public assistance agency has made a negative determination for a refugee who should be eligible for TANF or RCA?

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- iv. Do you provide training or retraining for eligibility workers at the public assistance agency on determining public assistance eligibility for refugees? If so, how often? What does the training cover?
 - b. What, if any, other agencies or organizations do you work with that provide employment, education, or training services to refugees? What kinds of services do they provide? What is the nature of your coordination or partnerships with these organizations? **(Question Asked in All Interview Guides)**
 - c. What, if any, other agencies or organizations do you work with that provide other services to refugees? What kinds of services do they provide? What is the nature of your coordination or partnerships with these organizations? **(Question Asked in All Interview Guides)**
 - d. For each of the above questions, probe on:
 - Referrals to/from the other organization
 - Co-location
 - Onsite provision of services
 - Regular meeting
 - Collaborate on events, workshops, or meetings
 - Staffings on particular individuals
 - e. Are there formal MOUs in place? If so, what is required of the partners under the MOU? **(Question Asked in All Interview Guides)**
2. Are there specific features of your partnership(s) that you feel have contributed to positive or promising outcomes for refugees? Which services and which outcomes? **(Question Asked in All Interview Guides)**
 3. If a refugee receives services from more than one program at your agency/organization, do they work with the same staff members for all programs, or different staff members for each program? How do you coordinate services that refugees access across the various programs your agency/organization offers? What are some of the challenges your agency/organization faces in coordinating across programs within the organization? **(Question Asked in All Interview Guides)**
 4. Do you see any new potential opportunities for further coordination or integration with your existing partners in the future? Do you see any new potential opportunities for new partnerships in the future? **(Question Asked in All Interview Guides)**
 5. What are some of the challenges your agency faces in coordinating with other refugee service providers? **(Question Asked in All Interview Guides)**

XI. Goals and Outcomes

1. What performance measures or other goals does your organization monitor in administering *[as appropriate]* the following programs to refugees: The cash assistance program? The employability programs? Other refugee service programs? Are these for all refugees you serve, or just a subset (e.g., just those refugees receiving ORR-funded services)? If so, what subset? **(Question Asked in All Interview Guides)**
2. What outcomes have your participants achieved with regards to these measures? **(Question Asked in All Interview Guides)**
 - a. If not specifically mentioned as part of their measures, also ask about the ORR Performance Outcome Measures shared for Publicly Administered Programs, Public Private Partnerships, and Wilson/Fish Programs (but not Matching Grant):
 - Entered employment
 - Average Wage at Employment
 - Employment with Health Benefits
 - Job Retention for 90 days
 - Cash Assistance Reductions due to Earnings
3. Cash Assistance Termination due to Earnings *[Ask if organization runs a cash assistance program]* To what extent have the refugees you have served left the cash assistance programs you administer? **(Question Asked in All Interview Guides*)**
 - a. For what reasons did they leave? Probe on jobs, sanction/time limits, moved away.
 - b. To what extent did they continue to receive benefits from other public assistance programs, such as SNAP?
4. *[Ask if organization does not run a cash assistance program]* To what extent have refugees you have served left public assistance programs such as cash assistance or SNAP? **(Question Asked in All Interview Guides*)**
 - a. For what reasons did they leave? Probe on jobs, sanction/time limits, moved away.
5. What kinds of jobs have refugees served by your program obtained? **(Question Asked in All Interview Guides)**
6. On average, about how long has it taken them to find jobs? **(Question Asked in All Interview Guides)**

XII. Promising Practices and Challenges

1. Are there any special programs, services, or initiatives offered by your agency/organization or by others in the community that you think are particularly effective, innovative, or unique in how they meet refugees' needs or help them achieve self-sufficiency? If so, please describe. **(Question Asked in All Interview Guides)**

- a. Probe particularly on programs related to:
 - Access to cash assistance and other benefits
 - Helping refugees fulfill requirements for cash assistance programs
 - Employment
 - English language acquisition
 - Job training
 - Social adjustment and cultural orientation services
 - Mental health services
 - Physical or cognitive disability services
 - Other services
2. What do you think are the main promising practices your agency/organization has had in working with refugees who have received cash assistance or employment services? **(Question Asked in All Interview Guides)**
3. What are some of the challenges your agency/organization has faced in working with refugees? **(Question Asked in All Interview Guides)**
4. Are there particular needs of refugees that you think are not being met by your agency/organization and others in the community? If so, what are these needs and why are they not being met? **(Question Asked in All Interview Guides)**
 - a. Are there particular groups of refugees not being well served or whose needs are not being met? If so, what groups, and in what ways are their needs not being met? Why? **(Question Asked in All Interview Guides)**
5. Are there any ways you would improve the services you provide to refugees? **(Question Asked in All Interview Guides)**

XIII. Data

1. What type of system(s) do you use to track information on refugee services?
2. [Ask if organization runs a cash assistance program]
 - a. What intake information do you collect on cash assistance recipients?
 - b. Beyond intake information and benefits provided, what information do you capture on cash assistance recipients? Their characteristics? Services provided to them?
3. [Ask if organization does not run a cash assistance program]
 - a. Do you capture information on cash assistance received by refugees? If so, what?

4. Do you capture information on the work-related activities of refugees who receive cash assistance? If so, what?
5. Do you capture information on services that refugees you serve receive from other organizations? If so, what?
6. Probe on outcome measures discussed earlier.
7. What other data do you collect on the refugees you serve?
8. Are there data you are not currently collecting that would be helpful to you? **((Question Asked in All Interview Guides))**
9. Do you have to report any information on services provided to refugees? If so, to whom? **(Question Asked in All Interview Guides)**
 - a. Do you have to report information to any funders? If so, which funders? And what information? **(Question Asked in All Interview Guides*)**
 - b. Are there any state reporting requirements? If so, please describe what information you have to report. **(Question Asked in All Interview Guides)**
 - c. Are there any other organizations or agencies to which you are required to report information on refugee services? If so, what organizations/agencies? And what information? **(Question Asked in All Interview Guides)**
10. Beyond required reporting, do you share data on refugee clients with other organizations? Which ones? What data do you share? **(Question Asked in All Interview Guides)**
11. Are there copies of reports or forms that you can provide us? **(Question Asked in All Interview Guides)**

Program Materials to Obtain

1. Organizational background information (brochures, annual reports, etc.)
2. Organizational chart
3. Copies of forms agency/organization uses to gather information on characteristics of refugees served and services delivered (if available)
4. Data reports on characteristics of refugees served and services delivered (if available)