Interdisciplinary Focus Groups

Informed Consent

Purpose of this interview
This interdisciplinary focus group is intended to gather input from a wide cross-section of resettlement, integration, education, health and mental health, human services, labor, and other related professionals. Focus groups represent an efficient way to engage more stakeholders and identify synergy across sectors.

How your responses will be used
Responses will be reviewed by the project team and used to identify themes and insights. The input you provide may be used to inform how the emerging State-centric refugee resettlement framework is designed including related assessment and implementation tools.

Participation is voluntary
Your participation is voluntary. You may skip any question or exit the focus group at any time.

Time commitment
Each focus group is expected to take approximately 90-120 minutes to complete.

Confidentiality
This is an on-the-record focus group. It is not confidential. The data and documentation collected or produced during this focus group may be shared with the Office of Refugee Resettlement in progress or final reports. Names will not be included with or connected to shared findings.

Required PRA Language
A Federal agency may not conduct or sponsor, and no individual or entity is required to respond to, nor shall an individual or entity be subject to a penalty for failure to comply with a collection of information subject to the requirements of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, unless that collection of information displays a currently valid OMB Control Number. The OMB # is 0970-0531 and the expiration date is 9/30/2028

Questions
If you have any questions about this survey or the project, including feedback on the form or the burden estimate, please contact Welcoming Initiative for Newcomers EcosystemPartners@welcominginitiative.org

Consent

By continuing, you acknowledge that you understand the purpose of this focus group and consent to participate.

Interdisciplinary Focus Group Guide

Each interdisciplinary focus group will follow a semi-structured and facilitated format. The facilitator will introduce the thematic topic for a specific focus group and ask up to five to 10 sets of questions associated with that topic:

1. **Theme 1: Health and Mental Health**

- How does your work relate to health and/or mental health services for refugees?
- How do you communicate health and mental health information with your State and ecosystem partners? How do they communicate related information with you?
- What factors need to be considered as part of capacity planning to ensure access to initial domestic medical screening?
- What criteria are used to identify medically complex cases?
- What health information do you need to effectively plan for pre-arrival and placement of refugees, including individuals with medically complex cases? When do you need that information?
- How does your State determine the capacity of the local healthcare systems?
- What are the main data sources? How could the process be improved?
- How does your State determine the capacity of your local mental health system? How could the process be improved?
- What community resources and/or partnerships are needed to successfully resettle and integrate someone with a complex medical history?
- Given the limitations of Medicaid and Refugee Medical Assistance, how can States better collaborate or incentivize employer provided health insurance? What workarounds is your State exploring in response to changes to Medicaid policies and their impact on refugees, including those with medically complex conditions?
- What workarounds is your State exploring in response to changes to SNAP policies and their impact on refugees, including those with medically complex conditions?
- How might the shift to a State-centric resettlement model impact refugee health, including those with medically complex medical conditions?

2. Theme 2: Housing

- How does your work relate to housing for refugees?
- How do you communicate housing information with your State and ecosystem partners? How do they communicate related information with you?
- What case information do you need to effectively plan for housing during the pre-arrival and placement phase of resettlement? When do you need that information?
- How does your State assess local housing capacity? How could the process be improved?
- What are the main housing market data sources in your State?
- How could ORR address variations in housing costs across states and communities? What other housing-related policy recommendations do you have for ORR?
- What community resources and/or partnerships are needed to resettle refugees in safe, stable, and affordable housing?
- What are promising practices for engaging local housing authorities and/or landlords?
- What innovative solutions has your organization explored to meet refugees' housing needs?
- How might the shift to a State-centric resettlement model impact housing for refugees?

3. Theme 3: Overseas Coordination

- How does your work relate to pre-arrival coordination, placement and planning?
- What is involved in pre-arrival coordination? To what extent do States and local resettlement providers have a role in that?
- What is involved in placement activities? To what extent do States, local resettlement providers, and other ecosystem partners have a role in that?
- What is involved in planning activities? To what extent do States, local resettlement providers, and other ecosystem partners have a role in that?
- Which international actors and federal partners do you interact with? How do each of them communicate pre-arrival, placement and planning information with you? How do you communicate related information with your State and ecosystem partners? What changes or recommendations would you implement in overseas coordination with these actors?

- What data systems do you use to perform pre-arrival, placement and planning activities? What changes would you make to these data systems and/or the type of data they contain?
- In addition to the information you currently receive, what information is essential to effectively plan for pre-arrival and placement phase of resettlement? Why is that information important? When do you need that information?
- What are promising practices for coordinating with overseas partners? What are promising practices for coordinating with States, local resettlement providers and other domestic ecosystem partners?
- What innovative solutions has your organization explored to improve overseas coordination?
- What is your top recommendation for States taking on a lead role in pre-arrival coordination, placement and planning?

4. Theme 4: Program of initial resettlement

- How does your work relate to initial resettlement services?
- What data systems do you use to manage initial resettlement cases?
- How does the per capita funding affect initial resettlement services? What funding models would improve the program?
- What are the main monitoring and compliance challenges in the Program of Initial Resettlement and/or the former Reception and Placement program?
- How do you manage secondary migration, outmigration and transfers from one State to another? How do you manage such moves from one national network to another?
- What are the lessons learned from resettling refugees through the Preferred Communities program?
- What are the pros and cons of the allocation or distribution process under the current Program of Initial Resettlement compared to the former Reception and Placement model?
- What are promising practices for virtual initial resettlement services?
- What are promising practices for transitioning refugees from initial resettlement services to longer-term integration supports?
- How might the shift to a State-centric resettlement model impact initial resettlement for refugees?

5. **Theme 5: Community-based Resettlement Support**

- How does your work relate to private or community sponsorship?
- What are the current roles and responsibilities of States, resettlement agencies, local service providers and sponsors? Who determines or assigns these roles and responsibilities?
- How do you communicate sponsorship information with your state and ecosystem partners? How do they communicate related information with you?
- How does sponsorship affect pre-arrival and placement decisions? How could sponsorship be better integrated into that phase of resettlement?
- What case information do you need to effectively plan for sponsored refugees? When do you need that information?
- How are sponsorship cases reflected in your State's capacity determination and planning? How could the process be improved?
- What reporting, oversight, and accountability measures are in place for sponsorship cases in your state?
- What community resources and/or partnerships are needed to integrate sponsorship with other resettlement pathways and longer-term integration services?
- What are promising practices for engaging sponsors and sponsor-supporting organizations?
- How might the shift to a State-centric resettlement model impact sponsored refugees and sponsorship programs?

6. **Theme 6: Tiered service delivery model**

- How do you assess what levels of service refugees need?
- To what extent does your State or organization use a stratified or tiered case management model? What data do you use to determine the tiers?
- How are resources allocated to cases with different levels of need?
- How does your organization know when a refugee's level of need changes? What systems or tools are in place to assess and respond to such changes?

- How do you communicate levels of need to your State and ecosystem partners? How do they communicate related information with you?
- What are the pros and cons of using a tier-based model for placement decisions and service delivery?
- What are the top three implementation considerations for adopting a tiered approach? What attitudes and/or beliefs might your community have about a tiered service delivery model?
- What factors might influence the likelihood of your State resettling refugees with higher levels of need?
- What is your top recommendation for designing and implementing a tiered model?

7. Theme 7: Workforce safeguards and labor alignment

- How does your work relate to employment opportunities for refugees?
- What case information do you need to effectively align local labor market needs with refugees' job skills during the pre-arrival and placement phase of resettlement? When do you need that information?
- How does your State assess local labor shortages? How could the process be improved?
- How does your State assess wage and worker protections such as fair pay and workplace safety? How could the process be improved?
- What are the main labor market and employment data sources in your State that would be an indicator of community capacity?
- To what extent do you coordinate with State workforce agencies and labor protection groups in your State? To what extent do you coordinate with your local chamber of commerce?
- How do refugee-owned businesses affect local labor market needs?
- What are promising practices for engaging employers? What are promising practices for engaging chambers of commerce?
- What innovative solutions has your organization explored to align labor market needs with refugees' job skills?
- How might the shift to a State-centric resettlement model impact employment for refugees? How might it affect employment for other community members?

8. Services to Children and Youth

- How does your work relate to services for children and youth?
- Are school systems and youth providers active participants in state refugee consultations and planning?
- What factors would need to be considered when assessing capacity and services for children and youth?
- Are there specific programs or services that are critical to supporting children and youth?

- Are there specific State or local data or metrics that could support capacity discussions and assessments (etc youth/teacher ratios, language access, proficiency, etc).
- How do you engage with local school systems and districts to determine capacity?
- In the past when arrivals have placed a strain on local school systems - have there been best practices or initiatives to support districts to address any issues?
- How might the shift to a State-centric resettlement model enhance the coordination of services and support for children and youth?

The facilitator may ask additional probing or clarifying questions during the focus group. Examples include:

Can you tell me more about that?
Why do you think that is?
Can you give an example?