

SECTION I

ADMINISTRATION

A. Designations of Authority

1. The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) is the designated state agency responsible for the development of the State Plan for Refugee/Entrant Assistance and for the administration of the plan in accordance with 45 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Section 400.5.
2. Ms. Rita Saenz, the Director of the CDSS, has been designated as the State Coordinator and has the authority to ensure coordination of public and private resources in the refugee resettlement in the state.

B. Organization

1. Welfare to Work Division

On August 22, 1996, President Clinton signed into law the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) (Public Law 104-193). This new welfare reform law established the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program that replaced the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program.

The TANF program that began November 1, 1996 was implemented in California on January 1, 1998 through enabling legislation. This legislation created the CalWORKs Program in California which shifted the focus of welfare from primarily issuing grants to working with families to obtain employment and self-sufficiency, and to ensure parental responsibility.

The Welfare to Work Division supervises the county delivery of CalWORKs benefits to welfare recipients and the provision of services that foster self-sufficiency and personal responsibility. The Welfare to Work Division is comprised of the following Branches: Employment and Eligibility Branch, Food Stamp Branch, Work Services and Teen Programs Branch, Program Integrity Branch, and the Refugee Programs Branch.

2. Refugee Programs Branch

The Refugee Programs Branch (RPB) has responsibility for managing and coordinating the delivery of benefits and services to the refugee and entrant populations. The RPB administers the Refugee Resettlement Program (RRP) and the Cuban/Haitian Entrant Program within the pertinent federal Guidelines and funding constraints and the State Plan. The RPB is committed to continuing California's leadership in the efficient administration of the RRP. It is our mission to provide state-level leadership and coordination of refugee programs and services to achieve successful refugee resettlement and self-sufficiency.

As of October 1, 2001, staff in the RPB will be responsible for coordinating the annual Refugee Information Exchange Conference (RIEC) and the Women's Leadership Training. Prior to this time, the conference and the training were the responsibility of the Office of Community Relations.

The RPB is comprised of the following:

a. The Policy Bureau

The Policy Bureau is responsible for:

- Developing and disseminating Refugee Program Policy;
- Providing technical assistance to counties, refugee community-based organizations (CBOs) and the public on program policy issues;
- Developing and maintaining a Resource Center of materials and data on the Refugee Program;
- Developing and maintaining the California Refugee Plan as required by federal law;
- Coordinating with other CDSS units, other departments and agencies, and with other states on Refugee Program Policy;
- Coordinating the State Advisory Council activities and providing administrative support;
- Developing and submitting applications for the state's Targeted Assistance and Discretionary Funds;
- Developing outreach materials for asylees to inform them of benefits and service for which they may be eligible; and
- Conducting customer service surveys and issuing a report describing the survey results.

b. The Community Development and Fiscal Services Bureau

The Community Development and Fiscal Services Bureau is responsible for:

- Coordinating and maintaining the Medi-Cal Eligibility Determination System's Refugee Program file;
- Allocating available funds to counties;
- Managing Program Cost Accounts for the Refugee Program funding sources;

- Developing and maintaining databases on the following:
 - Funding and cost data for each refugee program funding source;
 - Assurances and arrivals;
 - Caseload and activity data;
 - Secondary migration information;
- Coordinating the RIEC and Women's leadership training events;
- Responding to all requests from governmental agencies, legislative requests, court mandates, media requests and public requests for refugee statistical and cost data; and
- Developing and maintaining a refugee web page.

c. Operations and Performance Bureau

The Operations and Performance Bureau is responsible for:

- Preparing the Quarterly Report of Performance and the Quarterly Progress Report for Targeted Assistance Discretionary funded projects for submission to the federal Office of Refugee Resettlement;
- Preparing the Elder Discretionary Report for forwarding to ORR;
- Reviewing and approving all county refugee plans, including assurance that the services are appropriate for refugees and that the plans are coordinated with the county California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) plans;
- Evaluating county program performance, provision of technical assistance and coordination with ORR in setting program goals;
- Leading implementation teams to improve the overall effectiveness of refugee resettlement and the achievement of major program initiatives;
- Reviewing the Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA) program; and
- Attending Refugee Community Information Forums, Quarterly Refugee Coordinator meetings and attending Refugee Awareness Month celebrations.

3. The CDSS Interfaces in Refugee Resettlement

a. State Agencies

California has a number of other departments and organizations involved in carrying out the State Plan. A description of these governmental agencies and their responsibilities follow:

1) Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA)

The HHSA provides California with basic health, employment, rehabilitation, and welfare services. The Departments within HHSA are: Aging, Alcohol and Drug Programs, Child Support Services, Developmental Services, Community Services and Development; Emergency Medical Services Authority, Employment Development Department, Health Services, Health and Human Services Data Center, Managed Risk Medical Insurance Board, Mental Health, Rehabilitation, Social Services, Statewide Health Planning and Development, and Workforce Investment Board. The HHSA Secretary reports to the Governor on major policy and program formation in health and welfare matters.

2) CDSS

The CDSS supervises county administration of the CalWORKs program funded by the TANF block grant and Food Stamp program. The CDSS also monitors federal administration of the Supplemental Security Income/State Supplementary Program (SSI/SSP) and is responsible for community care licensing, disability evaluation, and social services. This responsibility includes supervision of the county social services programs mandated by state and federal law. The CDSS emphasis in all social services and income maintenance programs is to ensure efficiency, effectiveness, and equity in the delivery of benefits and services at reasonable administrative costs and in compliance with federal and state regulations.

3) California Department of Health Services (CDHS)

The primary objective of the CDHS is to protect and enhance the health of Californians by managing a wide variety of health-related programs.

The CDHS is responsible for the administration of the Medi-Cal Program in accordance with the provision of the California State Plan for Medical Assistance under Title XIX of the Social Security Act. Refugee/Entrant Medical Assistance (R/EMA) is administered in conformity with the State Plan with the exception of those exemptions required by the Refugee Act of 1980.

The CDHS also administers the Statewide Refugee Health Program which employs funding from two sources to provide a comprehensive package of services to refugees. The Cash and Medical Assistance (CMA) funds pay for health assessments and related support services provided at the time the refugees arrive in California. Preventive health services funds are used for outreach, case finding, control and prevention of tuberculosis, hepatitis B and other communicable diseases, health provider referral for follow-up services, health education and counseling, and support services. These services are available to the destitute general population through public facilities as required by ORR Action Transmittal 75-27.

4) California Department of Developmental Services (CDDS)

The CDHS enters into an interagency agreement with the CDDS to ensure that quality care is provided to those persons with developmental disabilities or mental illnesses who have been admitted to a state hospital. The CDHS, using RRP funds, reimburses the CDDS for inpatient costs for time-eligible refugees and entrants when those costs are not already covered by other federal or privately-funded programs.

5) California Department of Aging (CDA)

The CDA administers a broad range of services for seniors 60 years of age and over. This is done through a statewide network of 33 Area Agencies on Aging that coordinate with local agencies to address concerns at the community level. Services include: in-home services to enable the senior to stay at home as long as possible; congregate and home-delivered meals and nutritional instruction; legal services for problems with programs such as Medicare, Supplemental Security Income, and consumer fraud; elder abuse protection; case management to link frail elderly to community services such as transportation and housing assistance; respite care for caregivers; adult day care; senior employment; and, senior companions and foster grandparents. This is the second year of the partnership between CDA and RPB to increase the awareness and utilization of these services by elderly refugees.

6) Department of Mental Health (DMH)

The DMH implements and maintains a system for assuring the continuation of oversight related to the licensing certification of facilities, such as psychiatric health facilities and mental health rehabilitation. The Department also administers the Pre-Admission Screening and Resident Review program for appropriateness in the placement of individuals in a nursing facility. The Department oversees federal funds used by local departments to support health services by conducting reviews of programs and providers and resolving audit issues. Management audits are also conducted of state and federal funds for compliance with various laws, regulations and policies.

7) Other State Departments

Other departments of the State of California offer services to refugees as part of their ongoing responsibilities including the Department of Community Services and Development. For example, the California Department of Education provides a wide variety of educational services (traditional kindergarten through twelfth grade, adult education, vocational education, etc.). Special arrangements to serve the refugee population in these areas of instruction are often made. In some cases, special funding has been made available through the federal Department of Education to provide limited assistance for these services.

b. Other Agencies

Successful refugee resettlement is a joint effort requiring the cooperation and coordination of a number of agencies outside of state government. These agencies are discussed below:

1) County Welfare Departments (CWDs)

California's welfare programs are supervised by the CDSS and administered in the 58 counties by the CWDs. These agencies accept applications for assistance from refugees/entrants, determine eligibility and need, deliver benefits and services, and make referrals to other agencies and providers when appropriate. Allowable ORR-funded services include cash assistance, medical assistance, and county social services. The CWDs may also provide Refugee Employment Social Services (RESS) and Targeted Assistance (TA) funded services to refugees directly or through subcontracts if designated by the County Board of Supervisors as the county agency to administer those funds. In addition, most county TA- and RESS-funded Refugee Coordinators are located in the CWDs.

2) Employment Services Providers

Providers of refugee/entrant employment services are selected by the counties on a competitive contract bid basis. The contracts are funded by RRP social services and TA funds. The public and private nonprofit providers accept referrals for services from the Central Intake Point (CIP), accept applications from refugees, determine the refugee's/entrant's eligibility and/or priority for services and provide services based on a services plan developed by the CIP.

3) Voluntary Resettlement Agencies (VOLAGs)

Resettlement services by the VOLAGs include core services provided within the first 90 days of arrival as follows: pre-arrival services, reception services, counseling and referral services in the areas of orientation, health, employment and coordination with local services, assistance to

children separated from parents, service to unaccompanied minors, and consultation with public agencies. Each VOLAG provides a variety of optional services beyond these core services as the individual agency's ability permits.

4) Other Non-profit Organizations

Many non-profit organizations, including Mutual Assistance Associations (MAAs), have been organized specifically for the purpose of aiding refugee resettlement.

5) Private Foundations

A number of philanthropic foundations in California play an active role in refugee resettlement. They fund agencies to provide services and to perform functions for refugees that cannot be funded with public resources. The CDSS attempts to coordinate its activities with these foundations.

c. Advisory Groups

Many advisory groups currently in existence are directly or indirectly involved in refugee issues. Refugee resettlement is the primary concern for some of these groups, but is only one of the many areas of interest for others.

1) State Advisory Council (SAC) on Refugee Assistance and Services

In accordance with the Refugee Act of 1980, the SAC was established by the CDSS, and represents a cross section of expertise and experience from all sectors involved in or affected by the refugee resettlement process.

Members of SAC, appointed from refugee nationality groups eligible for services under the Refugee Act of 1980, are representatives from local government, VOLAGs, service providers, and other interested private organizations and individuals.

To ensure that the SAC membership is reflective of the communities it represents, the CDSS has implemented the following criteria for selecting council members:

- Seven public positions are held by members of the refugee community selected from nominations made by MAAs, VOLAGs, service providers, and other interested organizations or individuals on a statewide basis.
- Nine organizational/agency assignments are allocated. One nominee is submitted by each of the following to fill these permanent

assignments: California State Refugee Forum; Joint VOLAG Committee; Director, CDHS; County Welfare Directors Association (CWDA); County Refugee Coordinators; the California Workforce Investment Board; the local Refugee Health Program Coordinators, RPB and the Governor's Office.

- The public members serve for a term of three years. Other members serve at the pleasure of the appointing agency.

The SAC meets on a regular basis to analyze critical issues affecting refugees and to develop, adopt, and submit recommendations to the HHSA, CDSS, other state departments, and federal authorities. The SAC assures citizen involvement in policy discussions crucial to the development of a cost-effective, sensitive, and comprehensive refugee resettlement program. The CDSS attempts to keep the SAC informed on current issues affecting refugee resettlement in California and solicits advice from the SAC on the administration of the RRP. The advice given to the CDSS by the SAC, through formal recommendations and general discussions at SAC meetings, is seriously considered by the Department in the development of the RRP and TA policies and procedures in California.

2) Local Forums on Refugee Affairs

Forums on refugee affairs have been established in communities with large concentrations of refugees. Membership in these local forums consists of representatives from CWDs, VOLAGs, MAAs, RESS providers, TA providers, and other public and private organizations interested in refugee resettlement matters.

The mission of the forums is to support all efforts, which would assist refugees in the attainment of self-reliance and self-support, and to encourage recognition of their rights and responsibilities as residents of the United States.

Major goals include: 1) identification of strengths and needs of existing and proposed programs for refugees; 2) recommendation of action for public and private planning and policy development; 3) promotion of awarding of funds for effective programs and areas of needs; and, 4) assessment of the resettlement needs of California's refugee population. Representatives from the CDSS attempt to attend all local forum meetings.

The CDSS uses the meetings with the forums and other advisory groups (e.g., the SAC and the Joint VOLAG Committee of California) to meet the quarterly consultation requirements specified under 45 CFR 400.5(h).

3) Joint Voluntary Agencies Committee of California (JVCC)

The membership of the JVCC is comprised of representatives from each VOLAG in California. Its purpose and goals are to share statewide issues and concerns and share successful resettlement strategies and programs on a county-by-county basis. The JVCC coordinates with public officials on refugee resettlement matters and works toward the improvement of the public image of refugees. Representatives of the CDSS attend each meeting.

d. CDSS Communications with Agencies and Refugees/Entrants

In addition to the meetings discussed above, various methods are employed by the CDSS to communicate with agencies and refugees/entrants.

The CDSS informs public agencies (such as CWDs and California state departments) of program or policy changes through All-County Letters and All-County Information Notices. These documents, which are subject to a formal review and approval process, transmit information with appropriate references and background data.

Information is given to County Refugee Coordinators through Refugee Coordinator letters.

The CDSS also maintains a list of refugee MAAs and sends pertinent information to them as needed. In addition, RPB staff is assigned specific liaison functions with service providers, TA/RESS Coordinators, MAAs and CWDs.

Public and private agencies, refugee/entrants, and the general public communicate with CDSS through various means. The advisory groups described above are a particularly important communication link. Both the RPB and the CDSS Public Inquiry and Response Unit receive and respond to a heavy volume of correspondence and telephone inquiries. Finally, special hearings, task forces, and ad hoc committees are convened as appropriate to obtain public comment and assist in program development.

C. Assurances

1. The CDSS assures that it will:
 - a. Comply with the provisions of Title IV of the Immigration and Nationality Act and official issuances of the Director;
 - b. Meet the requirements of 45 CFR Part 400;
 - c. Comply with all other applicable federal statutes and regulations in effect during the time the Department is receiving grant funding; and,

- d. Amend the plan as necessary to comply with standards, goals, and priorities established by the Director.
2. The CDSS will ensure, as specified under Section 400.5(g), that assistance and services funded under the plan will be provided to refugees and Cuban/Haitian entrants without regard to race, religion, nationality, sex, or political opinion.
3. The CDSS will ensure, as specified under Section 400.5(h), that, unless exempted from this requirement by the Director, it will convene meetings not less often than quarterly with representatives of: 1) local affiliates of voluntary agencies; 2) local community service agencies and other agencies that serve refugees; and, 3) state and local governments to plan and coordinate the appropriate placement of refugees in advance of their arrival.
4. The CDSS will ensure, as specified under Section 400.145(c) that women have the same opportunities as men to participate in all services, including job placement services.

SECTION II

ASSISTANCE AND SERVICES

A. CMA Programs

Fundamental to the achievement of the program goals is the coordinated and effective provision of two interrelated program components: Cash Assistance and Health Services. Each of these components is described below.

1. Cash Assistance

Eligible refugees and entrants may receive Cash Assistance benefits through the CDSS-supervised RCA, Entrant Cash Assistance (ECA), Unaccompanied Minors (UM) and CalWORKs programs; the federally-administered SSI/SSP; and the county-administered General Assistance/General Relief (GA/GR) program. Eligible refugees and entrants may also receive Food Stamp program benefits. Eligibility for RCA/ECA and UM is determined in accordance with requirements contained in 45 CFR 400. Eligibility for CalWORKs, SSI/SSP, and Food Stamp benefits is determined for refugees in the same manner as that for nonrefugees. The Cash Assistance programs are described as follows:

a. CalWORKs

As of January 1, 1998, the CalWORKs program (California TANF program) replaced AFDC.

As of that date, refugees/entrants, Amerasians, and asylees who meet eligibility criteria for the CalWORKs program will be aided under that program.

b. SSI/SSP

This combined federal/state program provides financial assistance to aged, blind, or disabled California residents who otherwise qualify because of insufficient income and resources. The SSI portion of the grant is federally-funded under the provisions of Title XVI of the Social Security Act; the SSP portion is funded by the state. The Social Security Administration is responsible for determining eligibility, computing grants, and disbursing the combined federal and state payment. In addition, there are a number of other SSI/SSP-related benefits such as the Interim Assistance and the Special Circumstances programs.

Refugees and entrants who were receiving SSI/SSP on August 22, 1996, are eligible to receive SSI/SSP. Refugees and entrants arriving after that date will, if otherwise eligible, qualify for SSI/SSP for their first seven years in the United States. Eligible asylees and aliens whose deportation has been stayed may receive SSI/SSP for seven years after such status or stay is granted.

c. RCA/ECA

The RCA/ECA programs and related administrative costs are 100 percent federally-funded under the federal RRP. Program benefits are provided for refugees/entrants who have been in the United States eight months or less and are ineligible for CalWORKs or SSI/SSP. Currently, the program is the state's last federally-approved Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) Plan with the exception of the Minimum Basic Standard of Adequate Care and the Maximum Aid Payment. ORR granted a waiver on September 29, 1998, to allow the state to use the need and payment standards for the TANF program for recipients of RCA which is to the advantage of the RCA recipient.

In accordance with 45 CFR 400, as a condition of RCA/ECA eligibility, the client, unless exempt, must: 1) participate in employability and training services which are designed to assist refugees in becoming employed; 2) go to job interviews as directed; and, 3) accept any appropriate employment offer. These mandatory participation requirements which are contained in Sections 69-208.12 of the CDSS' Special Programs Manual and 42-800.1 of the CDSS Eligibility and Assistance Standards Manual of Policies and Procedures, are explained to the client by the CWD during program orientation.

At intake, the CWD informs the client of available employment/training services and supportive services (i.e., childcare, transportation, work-related expenses). The client is then assessed for employment/training service needs. The assessment is conducted either by the CWD or by a contracted service provider. The available employment/training services are provided by local service providers. The client's failure to participate and/or accept appropriate employment is reported to the CWD. If good cause is not found, the CWD may impose financial sanctions.

In accordance with the Executive Summary, Office of Refugee Resettlement's Final Rule Amending Current Requirements Governing Refugee Cash Assistance and Refugee Medical Assistance, the following provisions are applicable to the current RCA program effective May 1, 2000:

- In determining income eligibility, counties must use the \$225 and 50 percent disregards used in the CalWORKs program; and
- Any reception and placement cash received by a refugee may not be considered in determining income eligibility (45 CFR Section 400.66 (d)). (Voluntary resettlement agencies are still contacted to ascertain whether the refugee has refused an offer of employment or has voluntarily quit a job.)

On April 21, 2000, the federal Office of Refugee Resettlement issued revised regulations for operating the Refugee Cash Assistance Program. The regulations gave states the flexibility to establish a public/private refugee cash assistance program with local resettlement agencies, operate a publicly-

administered RCA program modeled after a state's TANF program, or establish an alternative approach under the existing Wilson/Fish program, or obtain a waiver to continue to operate an AFDC-type RCA program. The California Welfare and Institutions Code, Section 10800, Administration as County Function; Establishment of County Department, states, ". . . the administration of public social services in each of the several counties of the state is hereby declared to be a county function and responsibility and therefore rests upon the boards of supervisors in the respective counties pursuant to the applicable laws, and in the case of public social services for which federal or state funds are provided . . ." In accordance with this requirement, California is mandated to adopt the option of operating the RCA program as publicly administered and modeled after California's CalWORKs Program. The Department is currently in the administrative process of developing and adopting the regulations necessary to align the RCA program with CalWORKs.

It is anticipated the new RCA regulations will be adopted by the Summer of 2002. In the interim, the RCA program will continue to operate under AFDC.

It has always been California's policy that service providers providing case management and employment training services are culturally and linguistically proficient in the refugee cultures and languages so that they are able to meet the needs of refugees with limited English proficiency.

Through arrivals and assurances data provided by ORR and disseminated by RPB, counties are able to evaluate the potential number of refugees that may resettle in their particular county. From this data, the languages can also be identified. It has always been the policy that the language of the individual is recorded in the case file. In those rare instances where service provider staff is not proficient in the language a refugee speaks, arrangements are made for interpreter services. As a matter of course, service providers identify resources to implement language access programs and make the necessary arrangement for the refugee to access and to participate in English language training while concurrently participating in employment training services. In addition, all written materials are routinely translated into a language the refugee understands.

Asylees now may receive refugee benefits under the RCA/ECA program from the date asylum is granted and not from the date of entry into the United States. In addition a new category has been recognized by ORR as eligible to receive benefits. The new category is "Victims of a Severe Form of Trafficking."

d. General Assistance/General Relief (GA/GR) Programs

The State of California does not have statutory authority for the state administration of the required local GA/GR program. Refugees qualify for GA/GR on the same basis as other residents. This program is solely

administered at the county level and is 100 percent county funded. The program requirements and benefits vary among the state's 58 counties.

e. Unaccompanied Minor (UM) Program

In accordance with 45 CFR 400.115 and the Welfare and Institutions (W&I) Code Section 300 or Probate Code Section 1500 or 1501, the county in which the UM is placed establishes protective legal custody for the child within 30 days of the child's arrival. Primary responsibility for the child's welfare is vested in the CWD, which ensures that the child receives the full range of child welfare benefits and services provided to nonrefugee children in foster care.

The services may include, but are not limited to: initial assessment and development of a service plan; coordination and supervision of the activities listed in the plan; referral to service activities; and selection and placement activities to ensure the appropriate placement of the child. Case planning for the refugee UM must also include: 1) orientation, assessment, and counseling to facilitate the adjustment of the child to American culture; and, 2) preparation for participation in American society with special emphasis on English language instruction and occupational as well as cultural training as necessary to facilitate the child's social integration and to prepare the child for independent living and economic self-sufficiency.

The UM program is provided until the minor is emancipated, reunited with parent(s), or united with a nonparental adult who is granted legal custody or guardianship under state law.

California will continue to comply with 45 CFR Section 400 Subpart H, Child Welfare Services, in providing services under the UM program.

f. Child Welfare Services Program

CDSS provides child welfare services to refugee children according to the state's child welfare standards, practices and procedures. Payments may also be made for eligible children removed from their own homes due to neglect, abuse, or exploitation and placed in the Foster Care program.

g. Federal Food Stamp Program/California Food Assistance Program

In response to PRWORA and the subsequent passage of the Agricultural Research, Extension and Education Reform Act of 1998 (AREERA), CDSS has implemented a Food Assistance program to cover those adversely affected by the PRWORA and AREERA limitations. The benefits were equivalent to the benefits provided under the federal Food Stamp program.

2. Health Services Programs

Health Services programs are administered by the CDHS through public and private providers.

The CDHS is responsible for the administration of the Medi-Cal Program in accordance with the provision of the California State Plan for Medical Assistance under Title XIX of the Social Security Act. The CDHS is also responsible for the administration of the Refugee and Entrant Medical Assistance (RMA/EMA) provided by the Medi-Cal program for an eligibility period of eight months. Regulations for RMA/EMA are in accordance with Title 45, Code of Federal Regulations, Subpart G, Part 400, as filed by the federal Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR).

Each refugee is assessed for eligibility for SSI, TANF, or the Medi-Cal programs. If they are not eligible for any of these programs, then they may be determined eligible for the RMA/EMA program for a period of eight months and receive the same benefits as a Medi-Cal beneficiary.

Under ORR regulations effective June 20, 2000, refugees will continue to receive RMA/EMA benefits without redetermination or change in benefits if they are discontinued from cash assistance for any reason. If they are receiving RMA/EMA only, and the refugee receives increased earnings from employment, the refugee will continue to receive RMA/EMA until the end of the eight-month eligibility period without a redetermination or a change in benefits. Every refugee is guaranteed eight months of medical assistance.

Refugee information is reported to the Medi-Cal Eligibility Data System by the county welfare departments. This information is used by CDHS to claim 100 percent federal financial participation (FFP) for medical assistance rendered to time-eligible refugees. CDSS uses this information to claim 100 percent FFP for Refugee Cash Assistance and for allocation of RESS and TA funds.

a. Medi-Cal Benefits

Medical assistance costs are subject to reimbursement from ORR on the same basis as cash assistance. The medical assistance program in California is known as Medi-Cal, and Medi-Cal eligible refugees are entitled to the full range of benefits which are presently covered under the Medi-Cal program. General health assessment services include a physical examination and health history, vision and hearing testing, dental examination, testing for communicable diseases, blood count, urinalysis, stool culture, and X-rays. Related therapeutic services, which are covered by Medi-Cal, include treatment of tuberculosis cases, tuberculosis chemoprophylaxis, identification of hepatitis B carriers and immunization of contact, and treatment for intestinal parasites.

Refugees who are ineligible for CaWORKs, Healthy Families, SSI, or Medi-Cal only can receive a Medi-Cal card under the Refugee Medical Assistance

(RMA)/Entrant Medical Assistance (EMA) programs for the first eight months they are in the United States. These refugees must meet the specific requirements for RMA/EMA as set out in the Department of Health Services' Medi-Cal Eligibility Procedures Manual in Article 24. These procedures fully reflect federal regulations under 45 CFR Subpart G, Part 400, Refugee Medical Assistance. Refugees will receive eight months of medical assistance regardless of whether or not they receive Refugee Cash Assistance.

Asylees now may receive refugee benefits under the RCA/ECA program from the date asylum is granted and not from the date of entry into the United States. In addition a new category has been recognized by ORR as eligible to receive benefits. The new category is "Victims of a Severe Form of Trafficking."

B. Refugee Specific Employment Services System

1. RESS

California's RESS program is administered at the local level by county agencies in counties which the state has defined as refugee-impacted based upon refugees receiving cash assistance (see Exhibit A). Each county administers the RESS program in accordance with the provisions of Subpart I of 45 CFR 400, as amended in 2000, state-developed Guidelines and regulations and the county's state-approved Refugee Services Plan. The RESS services are provided either directly by the county or via contracts between the county and public and private nonprofit or for-profit agencies.

Eligibility for RESS services is limited to refugees who have been in the United States 60 months or less. In compliance with 45 CFR 400.147, priority for participation in RESS services is as follows: 1) refugees during their first year in the United States; 2) refugees receiving Cash Assistance; 3) unemployed refugees who are not receiving Cash Assistance; and, 4) employed refugees who are in need of services to retain employment or attain economic independence. For the purposes of providing RESS services, the definition of Cash Assistance includes the following persons: 1) applicants for and recipients of RCA; 2) refugee applicants for and recipients of CalWORKs or county GA/GR; 3) refugees receiving assistance through the Matching Grant Program; 4) refugees receiving reception and placement services from VOLAGS; and, 5) refugees who enter services while receiving Cash Assistance but lose Cash Assistance eligibility during participation.

In accordance with W&I Code Section 13278, to the extent permitted by federal law and regulations, counties may use RESS funds to pay for refugees, including RCA applicants/recipients, participating in the Welfare-to-Work (WtW) program. Except where prohibited by law or regulations, RCA clients will have the same rights and responsibilities as any WtW participant. As of January 1, 1998, the WtW program was implemented as the state's mandatory employment and training program for CalWORKs recipients. It is the state's intent that counties

will have the option of using RESS funds to pay for refugees, including RCA clients, participating in the WtW program. Again, subject to federal/state law and regulations, RCA clients will have the same rights and responsibilities as any WtW participant.

Rather than serve RCA clients via WtW, counties may elect to establish a separate RCA-specific services system. Refugee CalWORKs clients, if referred, may be served by this system. To the extent that funds are available and client priorities are met, counties may also serve any refugees who volunteer to participate in the RCA Services System.

It is federal and state intent that RESS services are focused toward the achievement of refugee family self-sufficiency. Therefore, RESS-funded services must be provided within the framework of a family self-sufficiency plan, which consists of individual employability plans for each employable family member. Also, the services must be designed to assist refugees in becoming employed within one year. Counties are also encouraged to develop services which supplement and are coordinated with mainstream employment services and are designed to move the refugee to self-sufficiency as rapidly as possible.

Services provided to refugees by counties and their subcontractors include:

- Client Intake Services;
- Support Services (child care, counseling referrals, transportation, and work related);
- Employment Services;
- English-as-a-Second Language;
- On-the-Job Training;
- Vocational Training;
- Vocational English-as-a-Second Language;
- Work Experience;
- Educational Services; and,
- Other Employment-Related Services;
- And Other Social Services.

Counties must ensure that refugees receive the maximum benefit and maximum results from services provided during the time-limited service eligibility period. Services are provided in a manner that is linguistically and culturally compatible to all refugees. Such services include the use of bilingual women on service agency staffs to ensure adequate access to services by refugee women; and English language instruction which must be provided in a concurrent, rather than sequential time period with employment-related services. Strategies for the provision of services are outlined in the individual county plans which are updated as County Guidelines are issued.

Intake services are provided by an agency(ies) as designed by the county. It is the responsibility of the designated agency/agencies to determine the necessary services that a refugee needs to become self-sufficient and to manage the

refugee through those services. Intake and assessment activities include the following:

- Determines eligibility for services;
- Assesses refugees' employability;
- Develops a service plan;
- Refers refugees to other service components (listed above); and,
- Monitors their progress through those services and provides follow-up.

The intake services agency also certifies to the CWD-funded program participation of refugees mandated to participate in those services as a condition of receiving cash assistance.

Counties must ensure that refugee women have the same opportunities as men to participate in refugee program-funded services including job placement. Counties are encouraged to treat day care services as a priority employment-related service in order to allow women with children the opportunity to participate in employment services or to accept or retain employment.

Section 13276(a) of the W&IC requires the CDSS, after setting aside the necessary state administrative funds, to determine which counties are eligible to receive RESS funds and to establish RESS allocations for those eligible counties. California, therefore, allocates all social services funds to each impacted county based on the proportion of adult refugees on aid in the county, who have been in the United States 60 months or less, to the total adult refugees on aid, who have been in the United States 60 months or less, in all eligible counties.

2. TA Program

The TA funds are allocated to eligible counties in accordance with ORR's recommended allocation methodology.

In accordance with 45 CFR Section 400.152, effective October 1, 1995, counties are required to use their TA funds to provide employment-related services for refugees who have been in the United States 60 months or less. In accordance with 45 CFR Section 400.314, services are provided in the following order of priority: 1) Cash Assistance recipients; 2) unemployed refugees who are not receiving Cash Assistance; and, 3) employed refugees in need of services to retain employment or attain economic independence.

Counties are required to develop county plans for delivery of TA-funded services describing the types and mix of services to be provided, target groups for services, and funding levels. The services are delivered by local public and private agencies under contract with the county.

The TA-funded service may be provided for a refugee after job placement, as part of a family self-sufficiency plan, to help the refugee retain employment or to move the refugee toward self-sufficiency if the placement has not resulted in sufficient earnings to terminate the refugee from cash assistance. In addition, TA funds may be used to provide business and employer incentives and business technical assistance.

The CDSS issued County Guidelines on April 29, 1999, that provide instructions regarding the counties' administration of the federal RESS, TA, and Discretionary funds. See Exhibit A which shows by county the type of funds received.

3. WtW Activities

Effective January 1, 1998, CalWORKs cash assistance recipients, unless exempted, are required to participate in WtW activities under CalWORKs. CalWORKs includes employment services, employment-directed training and education, and supportive services to enable recipients to become self-sufficient by obtaining unsubsidized employment.

As part of the CalWORKs, counties use screening, vocational testing, and assessment techniques that result in an individual WtW plan. The plan takes into consideration the participant's need for unsubsidized and subsidized employment, adult basic education (General Educational Development preparation, basic English or math, or English-as-a-Second Language), job seeking skills, vocational classroom training, on-the-job training, or work experience programs. Self-initiated education or training programs are allowed if they are consistent with the program's employment and self-sufficiency focus and are tied to the local labor market. Failure of the WtW program participant to meet the provisions of his or her WtW plan can result in financial sanctions.

The CWDs are responsible for designing the local structure for administering its WtW program through a planning process described in state law.

C. Special Program Support Activities

In addition to the program components described above, the CDSS has developed systems and projects designed to produce an efficient and equitable program of service delivery to refugees to facilitate their economic self-sufficiency.

1. Discretionary Projects

- a. ORR has made available to states TA Discretionary grants for services to refugees under RRP. These grants, which are awarded on a competitive basis, are for localities impacted by refugees.

On behalf of the following counties, the state received funding for discretionary grants to serve the elderly. The projects will run through September 2002: San Francisco, Orange, Santa Clara, Fresno, Sacramento, Contra Costa, Riverside, Los Angeles, Yolo, San Joaquin, Merced, Alameda, San Diego, and San Bernardino.

- b. The state provides to ORR the necessary assurances for counties to receive the RESS Set Aside funds. One set of funds has been designated to provide outreach services to refugees to access low-income programs and to hire and train interpreters for medical and certain legal services. The following counties received continuation funding and services will continue through FFY 2002: Alameda, Los Angeles, Fresno, Orange, Sacramento, San Diego, San Francisco, Santa Clara, and Yolo. In addition, a portion of these funds will be used by the CDHS Refugee Health Program for accessing and interpreting medical services.

The second set of funds has been designated to provide outreach, referral and social services for asylees.

2. Annual Conference

During August 2001, the CDSS sponsored the annual Refugee Information Exchange Conference. The conference theme was "Achievements and Contributions of Refugees" and focused on sharing innovative ideas, information and resources through plenary sessions, presentations, panel discussions, exhibits and workshops.

3. Support of MAAs

The MAAs are private, nonprofit organizations which have been established and operated by refugees. The ORR requires that not less than 51 percent of the composition of the Board of Directors or governing board of the MAA consist of refugee or former refugee men and women. Recognizing the strength and potential of refugee MAAs as resources in the resettlement of other refugees, the CDSS will continue to assist MAAs in the following areas:

- Encourage counties to utilize MAAs as service providers to the maximum extent possible, and when contracting for services, including employment services, to give consideration to the special strengths of MAAs whenever contract bidders are otherwise equally qualified, provided that the MAA has the capability to deliver services in a manner that is culturally and linguistically compatible with the background of the target population to be served;
- Assist MAAs in seeking other public and/or private funds for the provision of services to refugee clients;
- Establish a sound working relationship with counties and service providers to enhance communication and facilitate problem resolution;
- Encourage and assist MAAs and other refugee community leaders to actively participate in the development of the county plan and to provide

input to various local forums, coalitions, and community groups on refugee issues;

- Provide training and technical assistance, including upgrading the skills of MAAs; and,
- Facilitate newly-formed MAAs in the incorporation process, organizational development, and development of cultural and social service programs.

Since the intent of TA and RESS is to increase the self-sufficiency of the refugee community, the RPB will also assist those MAAs which receive TA and RESS funds in:

- Administration and program implementation; and,
- Organizational development in order to enhance the MAAs' ability to become viable, self-supporting entities.

4. Women's Leadership Training

During May 2001, the CDSS sponsored a Women's Leadership Training to enhance the leadership skills of refugee women. The training is designed to bring refugee women together to address the economic and social problems of refugee families and the refugee community. Training refugee women to be effective leaders enables them to develop their networks and increase participation in decision processes.

SECTION III

SUBMISSION OF THE STATE PLAN

A. Review and Signature of Governor or Designee

This plan was reviewed and signed by the Governor's Designee (the California Refugee State Coordinator): Ms. Rita Saenz, Director, California Department of Social Services

Date

RITA SAENZ, Director
California Department of Social Services

EXHIBIT A

COUNTIES RECEIVING FUNDING
FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR 2001/02

	TARGETED ASSISTANCE	RESS SET ASIDE	RESS	TARGETED ASSISTANCE DISCRETIONARY	ELDERLY DISCRETIONARY
ALAMEDA		X	X	X	X
CONTRA COSTA					X
FRESNO	X	X	X		X
LOS ANGELES	X	X	X	X	X
MERCED					X
ORANGE	X	X	X	X	X
RIVERSIDE					X
SACRAMENTO	X	X	X		X
SAN BERNARDINO					X
SAN DIEGO	X				X
SAN FRANCISCO	X	X	X	X	X
SAN JOAQUIN				X	X
SANTA CLARA	X	X	X		X
YOLO	X	X	X		X