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The Evaluation of the Refugee Social Service (RSS) and Targeted Assistance Formula Grant (TAG) Programs: Synthesis of Findings from Three Sites

Prepared for:
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
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Contents

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This report synthesizes findings from three separate site reports: the Houston report, authored by Randy Capps of the Urban Institute, the Miami report authored by Nancy Pindus of the Urban Institute, and the Sacramento report authored by Sam Elkin of the Lewin Group.

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ACRONYMS

Administration for Children and Families (ACF)
Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM)
Cuban Haitian Entrant Program (CHEP)
Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)
Department of Homeland Security (DHS)
Department of Human Assistance (DHA)
Department of State (DOS)
Employment Authorization Document (EAD)
English as a Second Language (ESL)
English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)
Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR)
Immigration and Nationality Act (INA)
Legal Permanent Resident (LPR)
Mutual Assistance Association (MAA)
Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR)
Public/Private Partnership (PPP)
Reception and Placement Services (R&P)
Refugee Arrival Data System (RADS)
Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA)
Refugee Medical Assistance (RMA)
Refugee Social Services (RSS)
Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC)
Social Security Administration (SSA)
Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
Targeted Assistance Formula Grant (TAG)
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
Unemployment Insurance (UI) wage records
United Nations High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR)
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)
Workforce Investment Act (WIA)
Voluntary Agency (Volag)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Refugee Social Service (RSS) and Targeted Assistance Formula Grant (TAG) programs provide services to refugees and members of certain other eligible groups with the objective of helping them achieve economic self-sufficiency soon after entering the country. The Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) administers these programs and sponsored the evaluation to assess how program services are delivered and how refugees who receive these services fare over time. The Lewin Group and its partners, the Urban Institute, Johns Hopkins University, National Opinion Research Center (NORC), and Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC), conducted this evaluation focusing on three sites: Houston, Texas; Miami, Florida; and Sacramento, California.

The report summarizes findings from two components of the evaluation: an implementation study examining how RSS and TAG programs operate in different settings and an outcome study examining refugees' receipt of services and employment and public benefit outcomes over time. This report synthesizes findings from three separate site reports that provide more detailed information on program implementation and outcomes. Another component of the study—the continuous evaluation design study—examines potential steps that can be taken to support continued program improvements in the future. The continuous evaluation recommendations are contained in a separate report to ORR.

A. Findings in Brief

This report focuses on refugees who entered the country between the years 2000 and 2004, were between the ages of 18 and 55 at entry, and who received RSS or TAG services at some point in one of the three study sites. It relies on administrative data and a client survey conducted between September 2006 and March 2007. The report's key findings include the following:

- **The refugee programs operate under diverse circumstances and adapt their processes to serve the groups of refugees they resettle.** Refugees come to the United States under very different circumstances and with a wide range of education and work skills. Some communities, such as Houston, resettle a continually changing population, requiring the service agency to be adept at understanding newly arriving refugees' cultural experiences and helping them attain self-sufficiency within a short period of time. Other communities resettle a population that varies less over time and can rely on family and community support to assist with service delivery.

- **To provide services to refugees, the communities rely on a cohesive group of experienced service providers and community support.** All three sites have a long history of resettling refugees and have developed intricate networks of providers that meet regularly and discuss how best to serve the refugees. Many staff members providing services came to this country as refugees themselves.

- **The welfare context matters.** Refugees in Houston and Miami, two communities in states that provide low TANF and other welfare benefits relative to benefits provided in other states, cannot subsist on public assistance. The TANF programs in these two states

also have a strong work-first emphasis. The TANF program in Sacramento, on the other hand, provides comparatively high TANF benefits; provides more government assistance in the form of child care, Medicaid, and disability assistance; and is flexible in allowing TANF recipients to pursue education activities, including English as a Second Language (ESL), to fulfill their work requirements. Perhaps as a result, Houston and Miami have higher employment rates than in Sacramento, especially in the first year after entry. However, Sacramento refugees have higher incomes overall owing both to higher average public assistance and earnings.

- **The vast majority of refugees who receive RSS and TAG services are able to find employment.** At the time the survey was conducted, from 70 to 86 percent of refugees reported being employed, depending on the site. Virtually all refugees in Houston and Miami (96 and 97 percent, respectively) and 84 percent of refugees in Sacramento had had a job at some point since they had entered the country. This is especially noteworthy given the lack of education and work experience among some groups, especially those resettled in Houston. Overall, family income was modest for all three sites (from $21,000 to $25,000 a year).

- **Different philosophies exist regarding the emphasis of ESL instruction versus rapid employment.** Sacramento encourages its refugees to learn English and gain an adequate command of the English language before moving into the workplace.[1] In contrast, Houston and Miami emphasize rapid employment as a way to self-sufficiency. In these two sites, ESL instruction is available in the community, but refugees need to find a way to take these classes during times when they are not working. In all sites, non-English-speaking refugees have been able to find employment; to advance in the workplace, however, they need to learn English.

- **Refugees' wages increase over time**. Among those working, refugees experienced increases in their hourly wages (from an average of 9 to 14 percent a year) and overall quarterly earnings (from an average of 5 to 25 percent a year), depending upon the site. The largest gains were in Sacramento.

B. Background

A refugee, as defined by the Immigration and Nationality Act, is a person who is outside his or her country of nationality or country of last habitual residence and in his or her own country faces "persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion." A number of other related groups are eligible for and receive the same services that refugees receive, including those funded through RSS and TAG. These include asylees, Cuban/Haitian entrants, Amerasians, and victims of a severe form of trafficking. For ease of reference, this report generally uses the term "refugees" to refer to all such groups that qualify for RSS- and TAG-funded services.

[1] In the context of providing ESL, Sacramento's program addresses employment issues, including the job search process, transportation, safety on the job, and on-the-job communication (following directions and clarifying instructions).

Refugees are provided a myriad of benefits and services to help them successfully transition to life in the United States. These can include reception and placement (R&P) services during their first 30 days in the country, cash and medical assistance, RSS and TAG services, and other assistance provided by other discretionary programs.[2] Cash assistance is provided by the Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA) program, the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, or the Matching Grant program (which also provides employment services). Other assistance is provided by Food Stamps and Medicaid (or Refugee Medical Assistance). Voluntary agencies (Volags) provide R&P services, through contracts with the U.S. Department of State.

Refugees are eligible for employability and other services funded through the RSS and TAG programs during their first five years of residence in the country. RSS provides funding to states with allocations based on the previous three years of refugee, asylee, and Cuban/Haitian entrant arrivals. In contrast, TAG assists counties "highly impacted" by large numbers of refugees. Allocations are based on the number of new refugees, asylees, and Cubans/Haitians entrants in the previous five years.

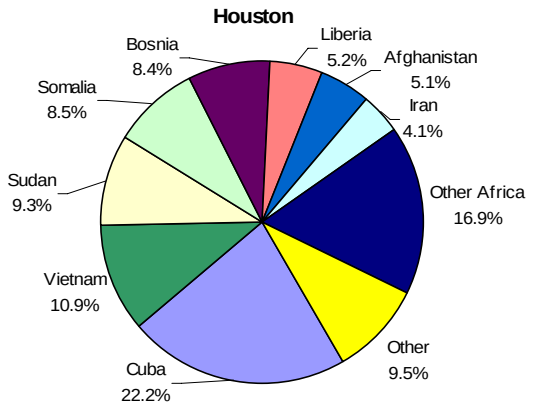
C. Refugees Served

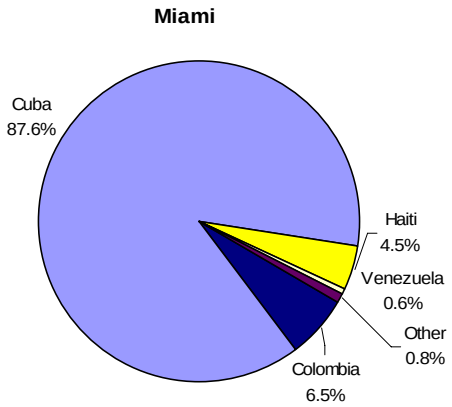
Between 2000 and 2004, the three sites served very different groups of refugees. ***Figure ES.1*** shows the countries of origins of the refugees in these communities during this period, along with a description of their characteristics. As the figure shows, Houston resettles the most diverse group of refugees, with many refugees coming from Cuba, several African countries (Sudan, Somalia, and Liberia being the largest), Vietnam, Bosnia, and the Middle East. Miami primarily serves Cubans and Haitians, with some asylees from Colombia and Venezuela. Sacramento serves refugees from the former USSR (Ukraine, Moldova, Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Armenia, and Uzbekistan), Laos (Hmong), Iran, and Vietnam.

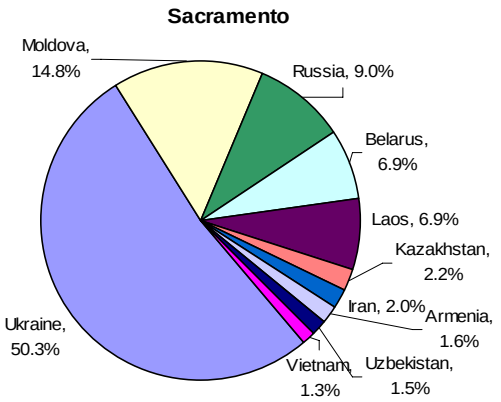
Overall, refugees from Houston are considered the most disadvantaged among the three sites in terms of their education and work skills, although a wave of Hmong arrivals with very little formal education began arriving in Sacramento in 2004. Refugees, entrants, and asylees in Miami have considerably more education and, relative to the other two sites, have a higher portion of college graduates, many with professional degrees.

[2] R&P services are funded by the Department of State. Asylees, Cuban and Haitian entrants, and victims of a severe form of trafficking are not eligible for R&P services.

Figure ES.1: Arrivals Between 2000 and 2004







- Houston primarily serves free cases (refugees who are not joining family members)
- Over one-fifth of RSS and TAG participants never attended school when they arrived in the U.S.; most illiterate refugees are African
- About half of RSS and TAG participants arrive unmarried
- Over 30 different languages are spoken by refugees

- Most arrivals in Miami are Cuban/Haitian entrants or asylees and are not resettled by a Volag
- Most RSS and TAG participants (80 percent) have high school educations, and many have professional degrees
- About 46 percent of RSS and TAG participants are married; 14 percent had previously been married
- The primary languages spoken are Spanish and Creole

- Sacramento primarily resettles family reunification cases
- Slavic refugees tend to have some education; the Hmong (from Laos) lack formal educations or have only primary educations
- Three-quarters of refugees served are married, and most of these couples have children
- Over 60 percent of the refugees speak Russian

Sources: Arrivals by county supplied by state refugee offices

D. Differences in Approaches to Delivering Services

States have the option of providing RCA and social services through a publicly-administered program or entering into a partnership with local resettlement agencies to administer the programs.[3] The latter is referred to as a public/private partnership (PPP). Among the study states, California and Florida operate publicly-administered programs and Texas operates a PPP.[4]

- **Publicly-administered program.** In a publicly-administered approach, Volag staff will meet the refugee at the airport when he or she arrives and provide R&P services during the first 30 days. During this period, the Volag will refer the refugee to the welfare agency, where the refugee applies for RCA or TANF and Food Stamps. The welfare agency staff will refer the refugee to the RSS and TAG provider for employability services.

- **Public/private partnership.** Under the PPP approach, the Volag staff will meet the refugee at the airport and provide R&P services. Unlike the publicly-administered program, the state contracts with the Volag to provide cash assistance to the refugees directly. The Volag also arranges for the refugees to receive Food Stamps and Medicaid assistance. In Houston, the RSS and TAG services are provided either by the Volag or an education provider that is a member of the Texas Consortia of Refugee Providers (T-Corp, referred to as the consortium).

Since the PPP is limited to providing RCA to individuals not eligible for TANF assistance, the Texas Volags use the Matching Grant program to provide cash assistance to families with dependents eligible for TANF. In Texas, the RCA and Matching Grant programs provide a larger cash benefit than the TANF program.[5]

The different approaches used may reflect the populations served and the differences in welfare policies and service delivery. In Texas, the state offers one of the lowest TANF benefits in the country. In addition, the state receives a highly diverse and continually changing group of refugees each year, requiring a level of cultural competency that the Volags can provide but the state lacks. By using a PPP, in combination with reserving Matching Grant funds for families, the state is able to provide greater benefits for a limited time and use organizations that are familiar with the refugee population to provide services.

Unlike Houston, Sacramento and Miami receive a relatively stable group of refugees (from the former USSR and East Asia, in Sacramento, and from Cuba and Haiti, in Florida). Over time, the welfare and other service agencies have developed the cultural understanding required to serve this population.

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[3] Additionally, the Wilson/Fish Program is an option to states. States that determine that a public/private RCA program or a publicly-administered program modeled after its TANF program is not their best approach may apply to establish an alternative approach under the Wilson/Fish program. If a state withdraws from all or a portion of the refugee resettlement program, a public or private nonprofit organization may apply to operate refugee programs in the state under the Wilson/Fish program. None of the study sites are located in Wilson/Fish states or communities.

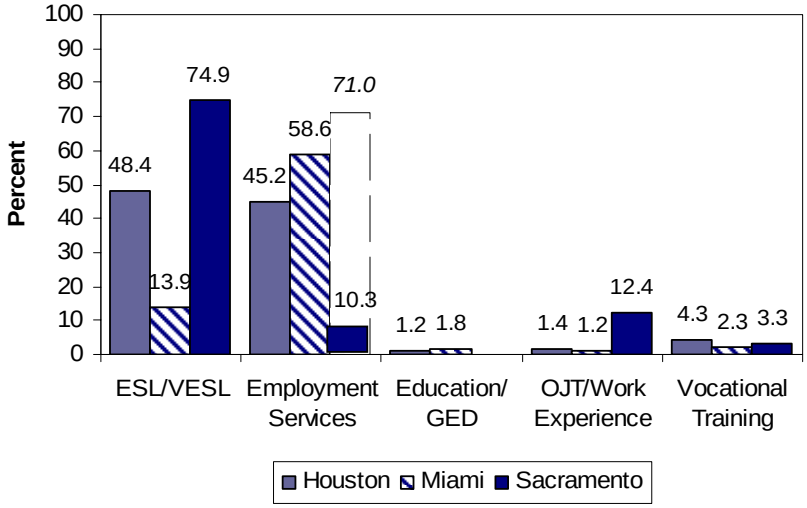
[4] California operates a county-administered program, which devolves the administration of the program to the county.

[5] Matching Grant clients receive a cash allowance of $200 per month for adults and $40 per month for minors in the case. Cash allowance is disbursed in addition to maintenance assistance which includes provision of food or food subsidies, suitable housing, and transportation assistance. Maintenance assistance is provided primarily through cash match and in-kind donations solicited through the sponsoring agency.

E. RSS and TAG Service Receipt

Among refugees who received RSS and TAG services at some point since their entry into the United States, the mix of services varies by site (See ***Figure ES.2***).

Figure ES.2: Percentage of Refugees Receiving RSS and TAG Services within One Year after Entry into the United States



Source: RSS and TAG program data provided by states
Note: The Sacramento Employment Services solid bar shows services provided exclusive of ESL; the dotted line includes vocational ESL (VESL)

- Houston refers many refugees to ESL instruction; indeed, 48 percent attended RSS or TAG-funded ESL classes within the first year. The Houston Volags emphasize rapid employment, and while the refugees are receiving ESL, Houston Volag staff work closely with the refugees to help them get interviews and find employment. Close to half of all refugees received employment services within the first year.

- Similar to Houston, Miami providers emphasize rapid employment for the refugees it serves. Because it is possible for Spanish-speaking individuals to find employment without learning English, many program participants delay participating in ESL. Only 14 percent of the RSS and TAG participants received RSS- or TAG-funded ESL in the first year.

- Sacramento providers emphasize the need for refugees to learn English before moving into employment, and this is reflected in the program data. Almost three-quarters of all RSS and TAG participants received ESL instruction in their first year in the United States. While employment services are often included as part of the ESL component, only 10 percent received employment services alone. Compared with the other two sites, a higher share of refugees (12 percent) received OJT or work experience.

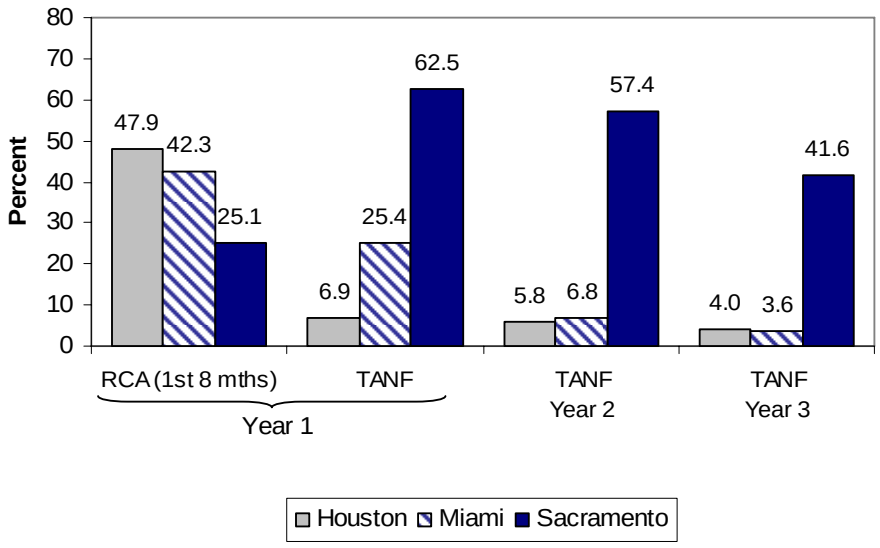
Few participants in any sites received education aside from ESL, and from 2 to 4 percent received vocational training. In addition to the services shown in the figure, Miami used RSS or TAG funding to provide legal services for employment authorization documents (EADs) and preparation for naturalization to 30 percent of its participants, and Houston provided driver education to one-quarter of its refugees. The sites also provide social adjustment and case management services.

F. Refugees' Self-Sufficiency Outcomes

As noted earlier, the objective of the RSS and TAG programs is to help refugees achieve economic self-sufficiency soon after entering the country. This evaluation examined how quickly refugees moved into employment and off cash and other government assistance.

Overall, a higher share of refugees in Sacramento continued to receive TANF assistance over time relative to the other two sites (see ***Figure ES.3***). (As individuals can only receive RCA within eight months of their date of entry, the table does not present receipt of RCA beyond the first year.)[6]

Figure ES.3: Percent Receiving TANF or RCA by Year after Entry



Sources: State TANF and RCA administrative data

In the first year after entry, about 55 percent received TANF or RCA in Houston, 66 percent of all refugees received TANF or RCA in Miami, and over 80 percent received assistance from either source in Sacramento.[7] By year 3, 42 percent of refugees in Sacramento continued to receive TANF, compared with just 4 percent in Houston and Miami. Several factors contribute to this finding. Relative to other states, California provides a comparatively high TANF benefit,

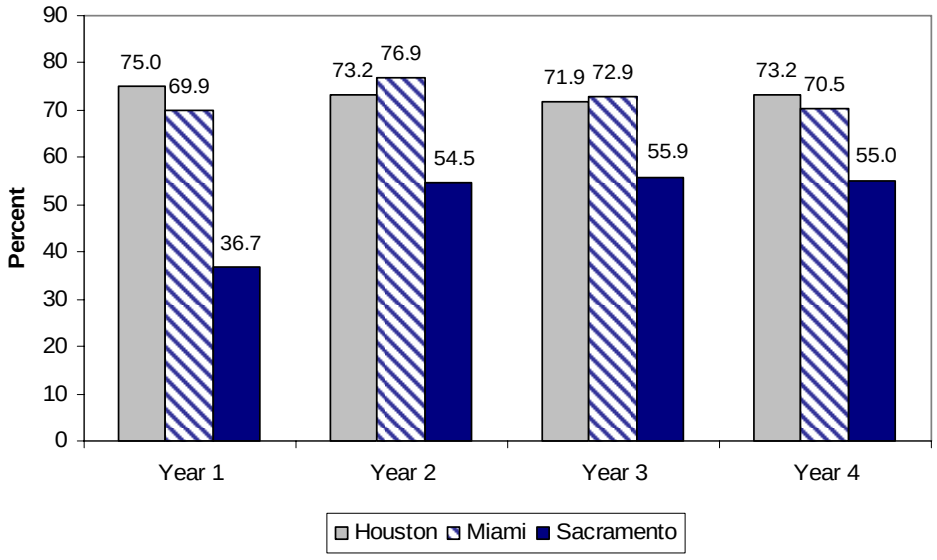
[6] For refugees and entrants, this date of entry is based on their date of arrival (on the I-94). For asylees, it is the date of the final grant of asylum (on approval letter). For victims of trafficking, it is the date of certification or eligibility (on the certification or eligibility letter).

[7] In addition, some refugees received Matching Grant cash assistance, especially in Houston (data report that close to half of RSS and TAG participants in Houston had been enrolled in the Matching Grant program before moving into RSS or TAG).

which allows refugees, like other TANF recipients, to work and still be eligible for cash assistance. In contrast, Florida and Texas provide low TANF benefits relative to other states. Sacramento also has a higher share of refugees with dependent children, meaning more Sacramento refugees would qualify for TANF, which is available only for families with children.

Overall, refugees' employment rates are high, especially in Houston and Miami. Analysis of unemployment insurance (UI) wage records shows that over time about 70 to 75 percent of refugees were working in UI-covered employment in Houston and Miami each year; about 50 percent are employed in Sacramento (see ***Figure ES.4***). The client survey reveals higher rates of employment than reported in UI wage data. At the time the survey was conducted (between September 2006 and March 2007) the reported employment rates were 78 percent in Houston, 86 percent in Miami, and 70 percent in Sacramento. The difference in employment rates from the two sources suggests that many were employed in non-UI covered jobs (e.g., domestic work, informal child care, and landscaping services).

Figure ES.4: Percent Employed by Year after Entry



Source: State unemployment insurance wage records

Table ES.1 presents refugee families' overall monthly income, including government assistance, in the month before the survey was conducted (the family includes the earnings of the refugee and his or her spouse). The families' income averaged about $1,700 a month in Houston and Miami, and about $2,100 in Sacramento. Sacramento's income was higher because earnings were higher and the families received higher levels of government assistance.

Table ES.1: Average Monthly Income (Refugee and Spouse)

Income Measure ($)	Houston	Miami	Sacramento
Earnings	1,619	1,653	1,695
Cash assistance	19	15	148
Food Stamps	54	25	122
Disability income	29	7	90
Unemployment compensation	8	10	8
Other income	9	31	17
Total income	1,738	1,742	2,080

Source: Refugee Assistance Survey

Thus, the typical refugee family in these three states has an annual income somewhere between $21,000 and $25,000 a year. Without Food Stamp benefits (a noncash benefit not included in the Census Bureau's definition of "money income" used in the poverty calculation), the total income ranges from $20,000 and $23,000 a year. This is equivalent to the 2006 poverty threshold for a family of four ($20,614 in 2006) and low relative to the median household income in the United States.[8]

G. Findings from the Statistical Analysis

In addition to analyzing the data descriptively, this report presents findings from a regression analysis that shows the relationship of refugee characteristics and employment outcomes for Miami and Houston (comparable data were not available for Sacramento). Key findings from this analysis include the following:

- Compared with women, men were more likely to be employed and have higher earnings. In particular, being male was associated with a 6 percent increase in employment in Houston and a 5 percent increase in Miami and an increase of $3,500 in earnings for Houston and $5,800 for Miami.

- Other factors associated with increased earnings in all three sites include being married ($700 to $1,400), completing high school ($1,300 to $1,600), and speaking English on arrival ($2,200 to $2,400).

- Receiving employment assistance services and ESL in both sites was associated with increased earnings, as was receiving drivers' education in Houston and education services in Miami. It is not possible to determine whether participation in these services increased the earnings or whether other factors associated with the individuals who chose to participate in the services affected this outcome.

[8] The median income for a household size of four in the United States was $72,870 in 2006. U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, 2007 Annual Social and Economic Supplement (http://pubdb3.census.gov/macro/032007/hhinc/new01_001.htm).

H. Promising Strategies

The three programs varied in the populations they served, the welfare context within the state, and the types of organizations providing services. Given these differences, several promising strategies were identified to address the needs among the refugee community. These include the following.

- **Strong coordination between service providers.** As mentioned above, all three sites have a long history of resettling refugees and have developed comprehensive systems for serving them. In Houston, the consortium consisting of five Volags and two education providers meets regularly and coordinates its work so services are provided effectively and in a similar fashion within the community. In Sacramento, the workforce agency has the primary contract to deliver RSS and TAG services, but it relies on community-based organizations, many of which are mutual assistance associations (MAAs), to provide the services.[9] The group of providers meets monthly to discuss service delivery. Miami, the largest program among the three sites, has the most extensive network of service providers administered through the workforce agency, community college, and public school district. A refugee coalition in Miami meets monthly to share information and coordinate activities.

- **Bringing ESL instruction where refugees live.** Houston offers ESL classes in the four apartment complexes where refugees are resettled. This is helpful because many refugees do not have any means of transportation when they first arrive. Additionally, the ESL provider offers babysitting services at the complex so the women can attend. ESL instructors noted that it was not uncommon for them to go to the refugees' apartments and encourage those who were not attending to come to class.

- **Integrating ESL in employment settings.** Some Miami employers integrate ESL instruction with employment. For example, a rehabilitation center hires refugees that have professional training in health care to be certified nursing assistants (CNAs). Many of their CNAs are overqualified and need to learn English so they can move up to other jobs in the health care field. The goal of the program is for students to improve their English to a level that would enable them to pass licensing tests and advance in the health profession. Another employer, a pharmacy, has contracted with a private language training organization for a special English class for managers and assistant managers.

- **Certification and career laddering program.** Miami serves a number of refugees who were professionals in their native country but who lack certification to do similar work in the United States. These workers include professors, health care providers, engineers, architects, and accountants. The Career Laddering initiative in Miami is designed to assist refugees with credentialing, training, and obtaining employment in a field consistent with

[9] An MAA is a nonprofit community-based organization whose governing board comprises mostly of current or former refugees. The purpose of an MAA is to address the social service needs of refugees. Generally, MAAs are not national organizations with affiliates like Volags, nor do MAAs have direct contracts with the Department of State to resettle refugees. They are smaller grassroots organizations that work in specific communities and geographic areas.

the refugees' career goals. The goal of the program is placement as close as possible to the field they worked in when in their home country.

- **Cultural competency provided by former refugees.** All the programs rely on staff and organizations in the community that have a deep understanding of the issues refugees are facing. Many who serve refugees were refugees themselves at one point and have since established their lives in the mainstream community. In Houston, since Volags receive a continually changing group of refugees, they rely on earlier waves of refugees from a given country to serve as interpreters and assist them in acculturating refugees in their new communities. Sacramento has the most extensive network of MAAs, which assist the refugees and serve as places where refugees can meet and socialize with others from their home countries.

I. Conclusion and Implications

This study focused on three communities in the United States and found exceptional diversity in the populations served, the processes for delivering services, and the interaction between refugee programs and the state welfare system. Given the study was limited to these communities and was focused on two programs (RSS and TAG), it is not a national assessment of how refugees are served in the United States. The study also focused on three communities that are very experienced in providing services to refugees.

Overall, the study found that most refugees, even the ones with the most significant barriers to employment, found employment and left cash assistance. Family income, however, is modest and close to the poverty level for a family of four, at least during their initial years in the United States. What is not known is how these refugees will fare over a longer period. In the course of conducting this study, several opportunities for future research were identified:

- **Conducting studies in additional communities.** In particular, it would be worthwhile to conduct studies in communities that have smaller programs and less experience resettling refugees. In addition, refugees are moving to particular communities after being resettled elsewhere, and including communities subject to secondary migration is important. Finally, this study did not examine Wilson/Fish states or communities, another approach to providing refugee services in the United States or the Matching Grant program in sites other than Houston.

- **Evaluating most effective approaches to delivering services.** There is a growing debate within the refugee community regarding which approach best serves refugees and increases refugees' employment and self-sufficiency: to have programs delivering services administered by the Volags (either through a Texas-style PPP, a Wilson-Fish program, the Matching Grant program, or some new model) or by state or county agencies. Both strategies have certain advantages: Volags have the background and understanding of the cultural issues refugees face, while the welfare and workforce agencies have the social service and employment expertise. A demonstration could be conducted in states or communities interested in moving to a PPP or Wilson/Fish model to test the outcomes using the new procedures relative to the publicly-administered approach. Alternatively, a demonstration could be conducted among Volags serving some

refugees with the Matching Grant program, while referring others to the publicly-administered program. If refugees are randomly assigned to the two programs, to ensure the refugees in each group are similar, their outcomes could be compared over time to determine which approach is most effective.

- **Evaluating approaches to providing ESL.** The study identified differences in service delivery that warrant further study, including whether refugees fare better when they focus on learning English before moving into the labor market or when they move quickly into the labor market, which could mean dropping out of ESL. Other differences that could be studied include strategies to provide ESL instruction in the workplace, programs that combine employment services with ESL in one setting, and programs that combine literacy education with ESL.

- **Following refugees over a longer period.** This study examined employment outcomes and family income over the refugees' first few years in the country. Another study could examine longer-term outcomes. It could examine whether refugees remain in entry-level jobs or improve their human capital and find better jobs, how their children fare over time, and how the refugees and children adjust to life in the United States.

Finally, new waves of refugees will be coming to the United States in the next few years. There will be additional opportunities to obtain information on these new refugees, including their education and past work experience, languages spoken, needs, and employment outcomes.

I. INTRODUCTION

The United States has a long history of accepting refugees who have fled persecution in their home countries and providing them with safe haven. Refugees are a diverse group, arriving in the United States under various circumstances and possessing a wide range of education and skills. Refugees from Africa, for example, arrive after civil conflicts forced them from their homes; many of these refugees have little or no education, have known only an agrarian lifestyle, and have little knowledge of living in the United States. Refugees from countries in the former Soviet Union, on the other hand, often arrive with higher levels of education and might be joining family members already living in the United States. Cubans are a special group of individuals and families who are allowed into the United States through a lottery system or who find their own means to the United States and are allowed to stay once they arrive. They arrive with high levels of education, and many have professional degrees.

The Refugee Social Service (RSS) and Targeted Assistance Formula Grant (TAG) programs provide services to refugees and members of certain other eligible groups with the objective of helping them achieve economic self-sufficiency soon after entering the country. The Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) administers these programs. ORR sponsored an evaluation of the RSS and TAG programs to assess how program services are delivered and how refugees who receive these services fare over time. The Lewin Group and its partners, the Urban Institute, Johns Hopkins University, NORC, and Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC), conducted this evaluation focusing on three sites: Houston, Texas; Miami, Florida; and Sacramento, California. This report synthesizes findings from the evaluation.

This report synthesizes findings from three separate site reports that provide more detailed information on program implementation and outcomes[10] A framework for evaluating these programs in the future is described in a separate report to ORR.[11]

A. Background

1. Definition of "Refugee"

A refugee, as defined by the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA), is a person who is outside his or her country of nationality or of last habitual residence and faces in his or her own country "persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion."[12] Each year, the United States admits a certain number of refugees from among groups determined by the president, in consultation with members of Congress, public and private groups, and the United Nations High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR), to be of special humanitarian concern. From 2000 to 2004,

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[10] See Randy Capps, *The Evaluation of the Refugee Social Service (RSS) and Targeted Assistance Formula Grant (TAG) Programs: Houston Case Study*; Nancy Pindus, *The Evaluation of the Refugee Social Service (RSS) and Targeted Assistance Formula Grant (TAG) Programs: Miami Case Study*; and Sam Elkin *The Evaluation of the Refugee Social Service (RSS) and Targeted Assistance Formula Grant (TAG) Programs: Sacramento Case Study*; all March 2008.

[11] Demetra Nightingale, *A Framework for Continuous Evaluation of Office of Refugee Resettlement Formula Programs Supporting Employability Services*, March 2008.

[12] 8 USC § 1101(a)(42).

the average annual number of refugees admitted by the United States was approximately 50,000. The number varies from year to year, with 73,147 refugees admitted in FY 2000 and 27,110 admitted in FY 2002.[13] ***Appendix Table A.1*** shows the number of refugees settled by state during this period.

In addition to refugees, a number of other humanitarian categories are eligible for the same benefits and services for which refugees are eligible, including those funded through RSS and TAG. These groups include the four listed below:

- ***Asylees:*** Individuals who enter the United States or arrive at a port of entry in any immigration status, undocumented, or unlawfully present (and without refugee status) and who are then determined to meet the definition of a refugee. Refugees and asylees differ in that refugee status is conferred overseas and thus refugees enter the country as refugees, while asylees apply for asylum at a port of entry or after entering the country. Asylees and refugees must meet the same statutory definition of refugee and requirements in the INA.

- ***Cuban/Haitian entrants:*** (a) Any individual granted parole status as a Cuban/Haitian Entrant (Status Pending) or granted any other special status subsequently established under the immigration laws for nationals of Cuba or Haiti, regardless of the status of the individual at the time assistance or services are provided; and (b) Any other national of Cuba or Haiti (1) Who: (i) Was paroled into the United States and has not acquired any other status under the Immigration and Nationality Act; (ii) Is the subject of exclusion or deportation proceedings under the Immigration and Nationality Act; or (iii) Has an application for asylum pending with the Immigration and Naturalization Service; and (2) With respect to whom a final, nonappealable, and legally enforceable order of deportation or exclusion has not been entered.[14]

- ***Amerasians:*** Certain Amerasians from Vietnam who are admitted to the U.S. as immigrants pursuant to Sec. 584 of the Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 1988 (as contained in Sec. 101(e) of Public Law 100-202 and amended by the 9th proviso under Migration and Refugee Assistance in title II of the Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Acts, 1989 (Public Law 100-461 as amended) and "was born in Vietnam after January 1, 1962 and before January 1, 1976 and was fathered by a citizen of the United States." Amerasians are admitted to the United States as immigrants, rather than refugees.

- ***Victims of a severe form of trafficking:*** Individuals who are subjected to (1) sex trafficking, which is the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for the purpose of a commercial sex act,[15] in which a commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person forced to perform such an act

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[13] Data from table entitled "Cumulative Summary of Refugee Admissions" in U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, *Summary of Refugee Admissions for Fiscal Year 2006*, October 3, 2006. Available at http://www.state.gov/g/prm/refadm/rls/85970.htm, accessed August 22, 2007.

[14] Refugee Education Assistance Act of 1980, Pub. L. No. 96-422.

[15] As defined by the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000, the term "commercial sex act" means any sex act on account of which anything of value is given to or received by any person.

is under the age of 18 years; or (2) labor trafficking, which is the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery.

For ease of reference, this document generally uses the term "refugees" to refer to all such groups that qualify for RSS- and TAG-funded services.

2. Services Provided to Refugees

Refugees are offered a myriad of benefits and services to help them successfully transition to life in the United States and gain economic self-sufficiency as soon as possible. These services include the following:

- ***Reception and placement (R&P) services:***[16] Individuals brought into the country as refugees receive help upon their arrival from voluntary agencies ("Volags") for the first 30 days. The services provided by Volags include help with refugees' immediate food, clothing, and shelter needs, an introduction to the new culture in which they will be living, and help accessing resources and services available to them. Volags receive funding to provide R&P services through the U.S. Department of State.

- ***Cuban Haitian Entrant Program (CHEP):*** U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) administer CHEP, a program that ensures the orderly migration of Cubans and Haitians paroled into the U.S. Through agreements with national non-governmental organizations, USCIS coordinates the structured reception, processing and community placement of Cubans and Haitians who are paroled into the U.S. from various ports-of-entry or Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Processing Centers. Cubans are also paroled into the U.S. directly from Havana through the Cuban Special Migration Program, and Cubans and Haitians have been paroled from Offshore Safe Havens such as the Guantanamo Bay, Cuba Naval Base. Services under CHEP may include family reunification or placement in a free case site for individuals with no family or other ties in the U.S. Family reunification cases may receive services for 30 days for adults and 90 days for unaccompanied minors, while free cases may receive services for 180 days.[17]

- ***Cash and medical assistance:*** Refugees with dependents can receive Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and Medicaid as long as they meet the same eligibility requirements U.S. citizens must meet. Refugees ineligible for TANF or other federal assistance (e.g., those without dependents), and who meet income limits and other program criteria, are eligible to receive Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA) for up to eight

[16] R&P services are not available to asylees, entrants, and victims of a severe form of trafficking.
[17] This program affects both Miami and Houston.

months following their entry.[18] Similarly, refugees ineligible for Medicaid can receive Refugee Medical Assistance (RMA) over that period.[19]

- ***RSS and TAG programs:*** These state-administered and Wilson/Fish[20] programs provide services to help refugees obtain employment and achieve economic self-sufficiency quickly following their entry into the United States.

- ***Matching Grant program:*** An alternative to the public cash assistance programs, this program also aims at helping refugees achieve self-sufficiency. The Matching Grant program provides matched funds to Volags for intensive case management and employment services during the first four to six months of a refugee's eligibility.

- ***Other:*** A variety of other ORR-funded discretionary programs exist to aid refugees and related populations, such as discretionary grants to communities receiving a large number of refugees or to target specific needs, or special programs to help survivors of torture.

The Matching Grant Program

The Matching Grant Program is an alternative to public cash assistance and is offered through the Voluntary Agency network. The principle goal of the program is to obtain economic self-sufficiency within six months without accessing public cash assistance. Participating Volag affiliates are required to provide employment services, case management, maintenance assistance (which includes provision of food or food subsidies, housing, and transportation) and cash allowance. Enrollment in Matching Grant services must be within the first 31 days of eligibility, with maintenance assistance provided for at least four months, and case management/employment services continuing for 180 days (six months).

Refugees who participate in Matching Grant are eligible for RSS and TAG employability services after the Matching Grant period has expired. In Houston, the Matching Grant Program is an integral part of employability services for refugee families. In order to get a complete picture of the services refugees receive, it is included as part of the Houston case study.

3. Overview of the RSS and TAG Programs

RSS and TAG are primarily employability programs. The Immigration and Nationality Act specifies that in providing refugee assistance, "employable refugees should be placed on jobs as soon as possible after their arrival in the United States." ORR uses RSS and TAG formula funds to fulfill this intent of the law, subject to federal regulations governing the administration of the programs.[21]

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[18] For refugees and entrants, this is based on their date of arrival (as recorded on the I-94 record of arrival). For asylees, it is the date of final grant of asylum (recorded on the asylum approval letter). For victims of trafficking, it is the date of certification or eligibility (on the certification or eligibility letter).

[19] General eligibility requirements for RCA are listed under 45 CFR §400.53. General eligibility requirements for RMA are listed under 45 CFR §400.100.

[20] Wilson/Fish programs, funded through RSS and Cash and Medical Assistance (CMA) funding, provide integrated services and cash assistance to refugees. They represent an alternative approach to a publicly-administered program or a public/private partnership. None of the sites studied as part of the evaluation are located in Wilson/Fish states or communities.

[21] ORR makes the text of the relevant legislation and regulations available on its web site at http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr/policy/legislative.htm and http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr/policy/orr_regulations.htm, respectively (accessed August 22, 2007). The legislative citation is Section 412(c)(2)(B)(i) of the INA. The INA also establishes an

a. *Types of services provided with RSS and TAG*

RSS and TAG services are aimed at addressing barriers to employment and integration into the United States. Refugees are eligible for employability and other services funded through the formula RSS and TAG programs during their first five years of residence in the United States.[22] Employability services are meant to enable refugees to obtain employment within one year of enrollment and to achieve economic self-sufficiency as quickly as possible. The services that can be provided through these programs include

- employment services such as the development of a family self-sufficiency plan and individual employability plan, job orientation, job development, job referral, job search, placement, and follow-up;
- employability assessment services, including aptitude and skills testing;
- on-the-job training (expected to result in full-time, permanent, unsubsidized employment with that employer);
- English language training (emphasizing English needed to obtain and retain a job); and
- short-term vocational training, including driver's education and training as part of an employability plan. (RSS and TAG funds cannot be used for long-term training lasting more than one year or for general education not intended to lead to employment within one year.)

A number of employability support services can also be provided to refugees, including

- skills recertification;
- assistance in obtaining work-related documentation (e.g., employment authorization documents);
- day care for children whose parents are participating in employability services or are employed;[23]
- transportation, when necessary for participation in employability services;
- translation or interpreter services related to employment or employability services; and
- employment-focused case management.

In addition, in recognition of the challenges facing refugees in integrating and adjusting to a new country, regulations allow the use of RSS and TAG to provide a number of other services.[24] Examples include

- information, referral, and outreach to facilitate refugees' access to available services;

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additional statutory requirement for TAG that funds be used "primarily for the purpose of facilitating refugee employment" (Section 412 (a)(1)(B)(i).) Regulations governing the use of RSS and TAG funds are found in 45 CFR Part 400.

22 Regulations governing employability services (and support services related to employability services) can be found in 45 CFR §400.154.

23 Day care can be provided if no other publicly funded child care funding is available. Day care for working refugees is only available for up to one year after the refugee becomes employed.

24 The regulations governing these other services are in 45 CFR §400.155.

- social adjustment services such as emergency response to families in crisis, health-related information, referral, and assistance in scheduling appointments, counseling regarding physical and mental health needs, and home management services;
- citizenship and naturalization preparation services;
- day care and transportation to support participation in services other than employability services; and
- translation, interpretation, and case management, other than what is provided in support of employability services.

Beyond these services, states can use RSS or TAG funding to provide additional services only if they acquire ORR's approval. Further, the only RSS- or TAG-funded services a refugee can receive 60 months after his or her date of entry are referral, interpreter, and citizenship and naturalization preparation services.

b. Rules, restrictions, and principles

The regulations governing RSS, TAG, and other refugee services establish numerous rules and restrictions that programs must conform to in using the funding to provide services. These rules are important parts of the context in which to understand how programs in different states or counties serve refugees. For example, programs using RSS and TAG funds must develop with the refugee family a coherent family self-sufficiency plan and individual employability plans to address the family's needs from time of arrival until attainment of economic independence.[25] RSS and TAG's primary focus in providing English language training is to reduce the barrier that lack of English proficiency creates to employability, and the rules require that programs using RSS or TAG funds for English language training must provide it concurrently, not sequentially, with employment or employment-related activities.[26] Similarly, employable refugees must participate in employability services as a condition of receiving RCA unless exempt.[27]

Social services must be provided in a manner that is culturally and linguistically compatible with a refugee's language and cultural background, to the maximum extent feasible. States are encouraged to contract services to public or private nonprofit agencies such as resettlement agencies**,** faith-based and community or ethnic service organizations, particularly considering the special strengths of mutual assistance associations (MAAs). (In official documents related to the awarding of TAG grants, ORR states that it "believes it is essential for refugee-serving organizations to form close partnerships in the provision of services to refugees in order to be able to respond adequately to a changing refugee environment."[28])

States must ensure that women have the same access as men to training and instruction and must endeavor to include bilingual/bicultural women on service agency staff to encourage adequate

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[25] 45 CFR 400.79 and 400.156(g).

[26] 45CFR400.156(c).

[27] 45CFR400.76

[28] See, for example, Office of Refugee Resettlement, "Final Notice of Fiscal Year 2006 Final Formula Allocations for Targeted Assistance Grants to States for Services to Refugees," September 15, 2006, available at http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/open/HHS-2006-ACF-ORR-TA-0116.html (accessed August 22, 2007).

service access by refugee women. RSS and TAG programs must attempt to obtain child care services, preferably subsidized, to assist parents with children to participate in employment services or to accept or retain employment.

The regulations set an order of priority for delivering services. For RSS, this order is as follows:

a) newly arriving refugees during their first year in the United States;

b) refugees receiving cash assistance;

c) unemployed refugees not receiving cash assistance; then

d) employed refugees in need of services to retain employment or to attain economic independence.

TAG services target refugees with difficulty in securing employment beyond their initial resettlement, and therefore the services use a slightly different order of priority that does not include newly arriving refugees. TAG priorities specify that providers first serve long-term cash assistance recipients.[29]

c. Determination of RSS and TAG grant amounts

ORR awards RSS and TAG formula funds to publicly-administered programs, public/private partnerships (PPPs), and Wilson/Fish alternative programs. RSS provides funding to states with allocations based on the most recent three years of refugee arrivals. In federal fiscal year (FY) 2005, about half the funding went to the four states with the largest service populations: Florida, California, New York, and Minnesota. In contrast, TAG assists counties "highly impacted" by large numbers of refugees. Allocations are based on the most recent five years of refugee arrivals. TAG was enacted to address very high rates of cash welfare use by refugees in the early 1980s, especially in California. The states receiving the most TAG funding in FY 2005 were Florida, California, New York, and Texas.

B. The Evaluation of the Refugee Social Services and Targeted Assistance Grants Programs

1. Overview of the Evaluation

This evaluation of the RSS and TAG programs examines the programs' effectiveness in improving refugees' employment and income over time. Its key research questions include these three:

- How are RSS- and TAG-funded services delivered to refugees? To what extent do refugees receive these services?
- What are the employment and income outcomes of refugees served by the RSS and TAG programs?

[29] The order of priority for TAG is established at 45 CFR §400.314. The order for RSS is established at 45 CFR §400.147.

- Do different refugee groups have different outcomes? If so, what factors are associated with this variation?

There are three components to the evaluation:

- ***An implementation study*** examining how the programs operate in different settings and what types of services are provided to refugees. This analysis relies on information obtained from site visits, including interviews with program staff and refugees, and analysis of program data.
- ***An outcome study*** examining refugees' receipt of services and employment and public benefit outcomes over time. This component of the study relies on administrative data and a survey of refugees.
- ***A continuous evaluation design study*** that presents to ORR a range of options it might consider to complement its existing performance and evaluation strategies.

The study began in October 2004. Stages in the study included preliminary visits to various communities to identify the sites on which the evaluation would focus, collection of program and administrative data, visits to the three sites, focus group discussions with refugees who had received RSS or TAG services, and a survey of more than 900 refugees in the three sites.

This synthesis report analyzes overarching themes from the three sites and the three case study reports describe the findings of the implementation and outcomes studies for each site. A separate, stand-alone report to ORR addresses potential plans for continuous evaluation.

2. Research Methodologies

a. Site selection

ORR, in consultation with the project team, identified several potential communities that could serve as the focus of the study. Based on the project team findings from preliminary phone conversations and site visits, ORR selected Houston, Miami, and Sacramento based on the following criteria:

- caseload size;
- high levels of RSS and TAG support;
- the availability of complete and accessible program data for research purposes;
- the cooperativeness of the local resettlement agencies and of the state and local administrators; and
- diversity among the sites, including diversity of service delivery strategies, geography, and population served (e.g., variation in the countries of origin; native languages and English language speaking abilities; education levels; family structure; age at entry; and entry as refugees, Cuban-Haitian entrants, or asylees).

b. *Implementation study*

The purpose of the implementation study is to understand how the RSS and TAG programs operate in different settings and how RSS and TAG funds are used to provide services to help refugees achieve economic success and social adjustment. The study examines what factors influence the structure, organization, and management of the programs in each site.

Two types of information collection were conducted for the implementation study: interviews with program administrators, partners, and employers at each of the three sites; and focus groups with program participants in each site. In addition, analysis of program data and the client survey —discussed in the section on the outcome study—help inform the analysis performed as part of the implementation study.

i) Site visits

The team conducted intensive site visits at each site. During the visits, project team members met with program staff at the agency coordinating RSS and TAG funding, RSS and TAG service providers, local welfare offices, employers of refugees, and staff of other organizations providing services to refugees. Topics covered included program goals, organization, staffing, services provided, population served, community and economic context, coordination among agencies and other organizations, and data systems. The team asked employers about their experiences employing refugees and the employers' involvement with refugee service providers.

During the visits, the project team members also reviewed documents provided by the agencies and organizations they were interviewing, such as client flow charts and memoranda of understanding (MOUs), and conducted case review discussions. During the case review discussions, service providers walked through selected individual case files, discussing the process the client went through, the services provided, the case management involved, and the client's progress toward achieving participant goals.

The site visits occurred in spring 2006.

ii) Focus groups

SEARAC conducted three focus groups in each site with recipients of RSS- and TAG-funded services. Seven to 20 individuals participated in each group. Participants were recruited with the help of local service providers; some had entered the country as recently as 2006. Questions were open-ended and designed to elicit detailed responses, including anecdotal material. Key topics included services received, agencies visited, satisfaction with services and providers, employment experiences, other service needs or gaps in services, and the refugee's adjustment to his or her new community. Within the basic format and topical areas, focus group questions were tailored to the circumstances of each site and of particular refugee groups, and moderators allowed the direction of the conversation in each particular group to develop flexibly within the framework set by these questions.

The focus group discussions occurred in June and July 2006.

c. *Outcome study*

The outcome study includes two components: (1) descriptive analysis of services refugees received and employment and other economic outcomes since coming to the United States, and (2) a statistical analysis that shows associations between refugee characteristics and services and their outcomes.

i) Research sample and period of focus

The evaluation focuses on adult recipients of RSS and TAG services who entered the country in federal fiscal years 2000 through 2004 (or, for asylees, who were granted asylum status during that period). The research sample was identified using service data from the providers of RSS- and TAG-funded services in each site. For the purposes of the research sample, "adult" is defined as being at least 18 years old at the time of entry. The subsample of refugees selected for the survey was further restricted to include only working-age adults, defined as those between the ages of 18 and 55 at the time of entry. Due to limitations in the data for Sacramento, this case study only focuses on refugees entering in 2001 through 2004.

The period over which outcomes are analyzed varies by data source. NORC administered the survey between September 2006 and March 2007; it measured outcomes at the time of the survey, as well as earlier periods for selected outcomes. The outcome study uses unemployment insurance (UI) wage data to measure employment outcomes through the end of FY 2006. The period over which there is administrative data on public assistance receipt varies by site.

ii) Data sources

Data for the outcome study come from various sources:

- ***Refugee entry data.*** ORR provided the project team with data from the Refugee Arrival Data System (RADS) database. It includes basic demographic information on all refugees and somewhat more limited information on entrants. RADS data provided to the research team did not include information on asylees due to restrictions contained in an Attorney General Waiver of 8 CFR 208.6(a) that allows ORR to receive asylee information from USCIS and the Department of Justice's Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR), but prevents ORR from sharing these data except as aggregate statistics.

- ***Program data.*** At each site, the agency administering RSS and TAG services provided data on recipients of RSS and TAG services. The data kept by each site differs, but each data set contains at least some demographic information on the recipients and data on which RSS and TAG services the refugee received.

- ***Matching Grant data.*** In Houston, most families with children in the research sample are first placed into the Matching Grant program instead of immediately receiving RSS and TAG services. (Some later receive RSS and TAG services when their eligibility for Matching Grant ends.) National and local Volags provided enrollment data and basic demographic information on Matching Grant participants in Houston.

- ***Welfare administrative data.*** State welfare departments provided data recorded in the welfare system on individuals in the research sample. Information provided include various demographic characteristics, TANF and RCA cash benefits received, and Food Stamp benefits received.

- ***Unemployment insurance wage records.*** State labor departments provided administrative data on wages earned in each quarter by individuals in the research sample. The data come from UI wage records.[30]

- ***Survey of refugees.*** As part of this study, NORC conducted a survey of RSS and TAG clients in each site randomly selected from the research sample. The project team designed the survey instrument, which asked respondents about their receipt of the services provided through the RSS and TAG programs, their income, their employment histories, their program participation, and other characteristics that could influence their ability to achieve self-sufficiency through employment such as education level, English language skills, and their health status.

  When the respondent spoke English sufficiently well, interviews were conducted in English. For other respondents, the interviews were conducted in the respondent's own language. This was done using a translated version of the instrument and bilingual reviewers for five languages: Arabic, Russian, Spanish, Ukrainian, and Vietnamese. Interviewers in other languages used interpreters provided through an over-the-phone interpretation service.

  The survey was administered through a "mixed mode" method that involved both telephone and in-person interviews. NORC began by attempting to interview each respondent by phone; if that was not successful within a reasonable period, NORC later attempted to interview the respondent in the field. Interviews were attempted with a total sample of 1,488 refugees, and 955 were completed. Sample sizes, completed interviews, and response rates for each site are shown in ***Table I.1.***

Table I.1: Sample Sizes and Response Rates in the Survey of Refugees

Size	Houston	Miami	Sacramento
Total sample	509	537	402
Number of interviews completed	315	334	306
Response rate (%)	62	62	76

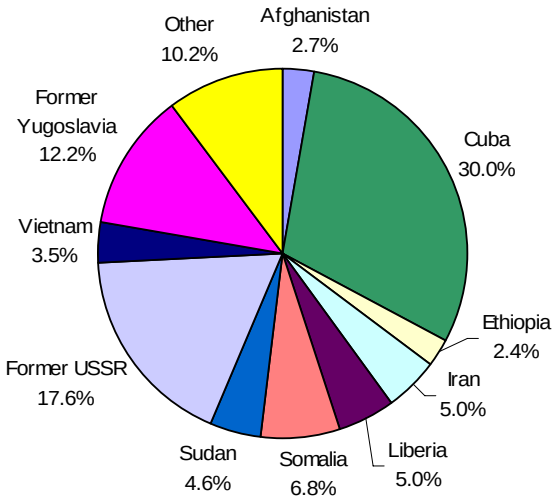
Note: Total sample excludes "out-of-scope" cases such as deceased individuals or individuals found not to fit the criteria that defined the research sample (e.g., were not working-age adults).

[30] UI wage records do not capture work in a small number of sectors. Overall, it is estimated that about 98 percent of non-farm wage and salary employment is covered by unemployment insurance. Certain occupations and wages, however, are not captured by these data. Many employees not covered are agricultural workers, state and local governmental employees, domestic workers, and those in the Armed Forces. See Bureau of Labor Statistics, BLS Handbook of Methods, Chapter 5, "Employment and Wages Covered by Unemployment Insurance," April 1997, available on the BLS web site at http://www.bls.gov/opub/hom/pdf/homch5.pdf. Informal or "off-the-books" employment will not be captured in the UI wage records.

II. MAJOR REFUGEE POPULATIONS

Between 2000 and 2004, the United States admitted just over 340,000 refugees, who came from more than 64 countries. ***Figure II.1*** shows the largest groups admitted during this period. Cubans are the largest group, followed by those from countries in the former USSR and countries in the former Yugoslavia (primarily Bosnia).

Figure II.1: Arrivals into United States by Country of Origin (2000–2004)

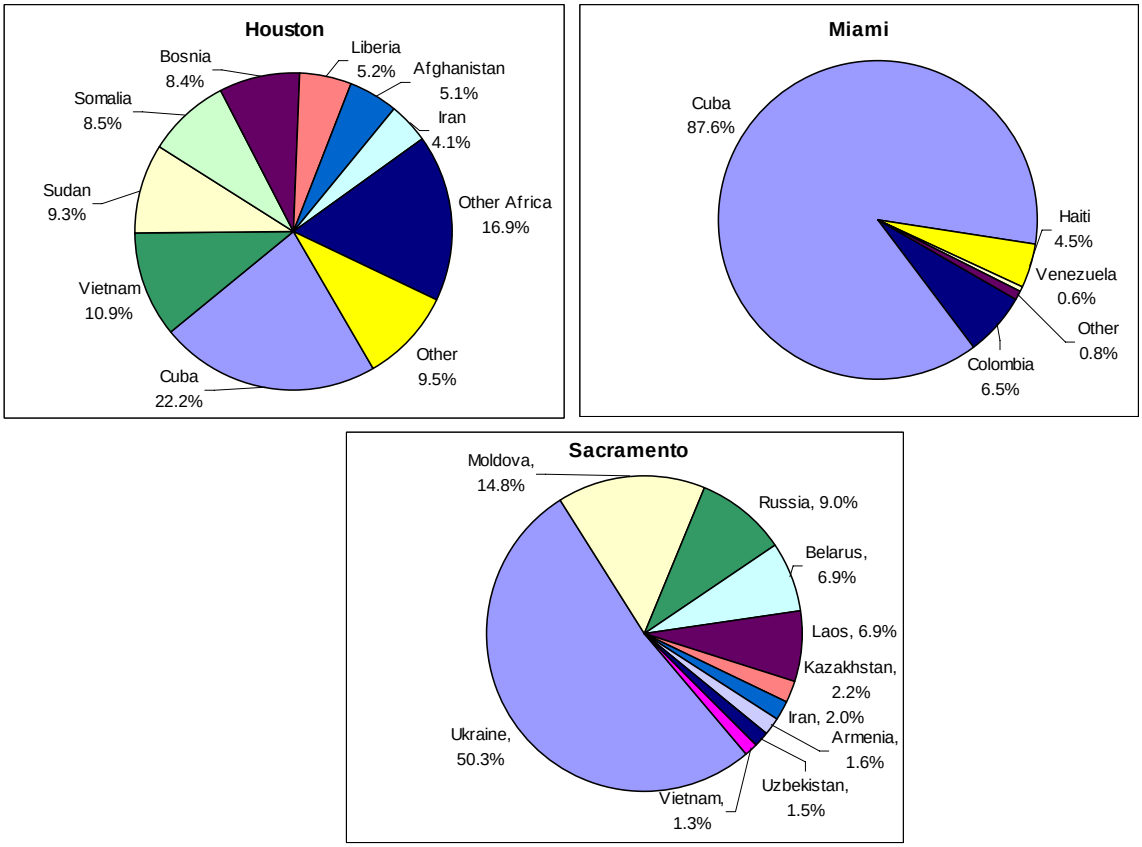


Source: Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR), Annual Report to Congress, 2004
Note: Includes refugee, Amerasian, and entrant arrivals; does not include asylees

Just five years before the period shown in the above figure (between 1995 and 1999), the composition of U.S. refugee arrivals was considerably different. The more recent period includes a higher proportion from Cuba, African countries, and Middle Eastern countries and a lower proportion of refugees from the former USSR, Vietnam, and former Yugoslavia. This change in refugee populations is partially a reflection of increasing political and civil conflicts in Africa and the Middle East, and of U.S. foreign policy.

Together, the three sites served the main groups of refugees and others eligible for RSS and TAG services admitted to the United States. As ***Figure II.2*** shows, Houston resettles the most diverse group of refugees among the three sites, with many refugees coming from Cuba, several African countries (Sudan, Somalia, and Liberia being the most common), Vietnam, Bosnia, and the Middle East. Miami primarily serves Cubans and Haitians, with some asylees from Colombia and Venezuela. Sacramento serves refugees from the former USSR (Ukraine, Moldova, Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Armenia, and Uzbekistan), Laos (Hmong), Iran, and Vietnam.

Figure II.2: Arrivals into Three Communities by Country of Origin (2000–2004)



Sources: Arrival by country information supplied by state refugee offices
Note: From 2000 – 2004, arrivals were 6,912 in Houston, 68,634 in Miami, and 9,336 in Sacramento

Table II.1 shows the gender, age at entry, marital status, education, and language of refugee arrivals age 18 to 55 at entry in the three sites. Houston and Miami have a higher proportion of refugees who are male, compared with Sacramento, which is more evenly split by gender. Three-quarters of all refugees are married at entry in Sacramento compared with fewer than half in the other two sites.[31] Houston has the highest share of refugees (47 percent) who enter as singles.

Differences across sites in the languages spoken by refugees reflect the differences in their countries of origin. The vast majority of refugees (91 percent) in Miami speak Spanish, while 9 percent speak Creole (Haitians).[32] In Sacramento, over 60 percent speak Russian, with the next largest share (5 percent) speaking Hmong.[33] Houston has the most diverse set of languages, with 33 percent speaking Spanish, 9 percent speaking Arabic, and 7 percent speaking Vietnamese; the remaining refugees (51 percent) speak a wide range of other languages, many of which are spoken in Africa.

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[31] Marital status is missing in Sacramento's data for half of all cases, but the survey also found that three-quarters of all respondents were married and living with their spouses at the time the survey was conducted.

[32] Language percentages in Table II.1 may not correspond with country of origin percentages in Figure II.2 due to differences in data source and sample. Figure II.2 includes total arrivals while Table II.1 includes only adults who received RSS or TAG program services.

[33] While the Ukrainians speak Russian, they also speak Ukrainian, which is not recorded in the data.

Table II.1: Demographic Characteristics

Characteristic	Houston	Miami	Sacramento
Gender (%)			
Female	42.7	46.0	49.0
Male	57.3	54.0	51.0
Age at entry (%)			
18 to 25	22.9	16.0	25.8
26 to 35	33.8	41.0	29.2
36 to 45	29.0	29.7	27.6
46 to 55	14.3	13.3	17.4
Marital status (%)			
Married	44.9	46.0	75.0
Single	47.3	39.7	21.7
Divorced	3.4	7.8	1.6
Separated	3.0	6.0	0.2
Widowed	1.4	0.5	1.5
Education level [a] (%)			
Never attended school	22.4	0.8	--
Some school	21.2	19.0	--
High school or more	55.5	80.2	--
Other	0.9	-	--
Language [b] (%)			
Amharic	4.2	-	-
Arabic	8.9	0.0	-
Armenian	0.1	-	1.5
Bosnian	2.2	0.0	-
Burmese	1.1	0.0	-
Creole or Creole / French	-	8.9	-
English	3.9	0.0	0.1
Farsi	4.6	0.0	0.1
French	5.3	0.1	-
Hmong	-	-	5.4
Maay Maay	1.3	-	-
Russian	0.6	0.1	62.5
Somali	5.5	-	-
Spanish	33.2	90.7	-
Swahili	1.3	-	-
Vietnamese	6.8	-	0.9
Other	21.2	0.1	29.6
Sample size	2,120	52,174	3,518

Sources: Refugee Arrivals Data System and RSS and TAG program data provided by states
-- Data not available; - Data not reported
[a] Education levels missing for Sacramento
[b] In Houston, this represents "native language"; in Sacramento, "primary language"; and in Miami, "other language." Sacramento has a missing rate of 54 percent.

III. PROCESS FROM R&P TO RSS AND TAG

The process by which refugees and other groups eligible for RSS and TAG reach the provider after arriving in the United States depends on their alien status and on the community in which they reside. This chapter describes that process for Houston, Miami, and Sacramento.

A. Reception and Placement (R&P)

Individuals who enter the United State as refugees—rather than as asylees, entrants, and victims of trafficking—receive reception and placement services provided by Volags which are funded by the U.S. Department of State (DOS). DOS enters into cooperative agreements with 10 entities (nine national Volags and one state): Church World Service, Ethiopian Community Development Council, Episcopal Migration Ministries, Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, International Rescue Committee, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, World Relief Corporation, and the State of Iowa's Bureau of Refugee Services. These organizations contract, in turn, with their local affiliates to provide the services.

The local Volag affiliates provide R&P services to refugees during the first 30 days they are in the country. The services include providing basic food, clothing, shelter, orientation, and referrals to other organizations, including referrals to the organizations providing RSS and TAG services. The Volags are required to conduct one home visit and ensure that, during the 30-day period, the refugees apply for a Social Security card; apply for cash assistance, medical assistance, and Food Stamps, as appropriate; and register their children for school.

The level of R&P services provided depends on whether the cases are free cases (refugees who are not joining family members already settled in the community) or family reunification cases. For free cases, the Volags provide all resettlement services; for family reunification cases, family members are asked to assist the Volags with some activities.

The Sacramento and Miami programs primarily resettle family reunification cases. In these two communities, the refugees' family members assist the Volag in R&P activities. It is important to note that most participants in Miami do not enter as refugees but as entrants, or asylees, and thus are not eligible for R&P. Refugees in Houston are primarily free cases and the Volags are responsible for providing all R&P activities.

B. Public/Private Partnerships Compared with Publicly-Administered Programs

States have the option of providing RCA and social services through a publicly-administered program or entering into a partnership with local resettlement agencies to administer the programs. The latter is referred to as a public/private partnership. Among the study states, California and Florida operate publicly-administered programs and Texas operates a PPP.[34] Most

[34] Additionally, the Wilson/Fish program is an option to states. States that determine that a public/private RCA program or publicly-administered program modeled after its TANF program is not their best approach may apply to establish an alternative approach under the Wilson/Fish program. If a state withdraws from all or part of the refugee resettlement program, a public or private nonprofit organization

states operate publicly-administered programs. (See Appendix Table A.1 for a listing of all states and the type of program operated in the state.)

A state may enter into a PPP to strengthen the link between the initial placement of refugees and the RCA and social service programs, providing services more seamlessly. The hypothesis is that refugee resettlement agencies have a greater understanding of the cultural issues faced by refugees than state agencies and can serve them more effectively. States that continue to provide assistance through publicly-administered programs may believe the public delivery system has the expertise required to provide services more effectively and efficiently than community-based organizations.

Figure III.1 illustrates the differences between the publicly-administered and PPP approaches. As this figure shows, in a publicly-administered approach, the Volag staff will meet the refugee at the airport when he or she arrives and provide R&P services during the first 30 days. During this period, the Volag staff will refer the refugee to the welfare agency, where the refugee applies for RCA or TANF and Food Stamps. The welfare agency staff will refer the refugee to the RSS and TAG provider for employability services.

Under the PPP approach, the Volag staff will also meet the refugee at the airport and provide R&P services. Unlike the publicly-administered approach, however, the Volag will provide cash assistance to the refugees directly (in Texas, this is either RCA or a Matching Grant). The Volag staff will submit the Food Stamp program application on behalf of the refugee to a Texas call center that has dedicated workers assigned to work with the Volags. The Volag or an education provider that is part of the Houston consortium (described below) provides the RSS and TAG services.

Since the PPP is limited to providing RCA to individuals ineligible for TANF assistance, the Texas Volags use the Matching Grant program to provide cash assistance to families with dependents who are eligible for TANF. The Matching Grant program provides a larger cash benefit, although benefits expire four to six months after refugees arrive.[35]

These different approaches used may reflect the populations served and the differences in welfare policies and service delivery in the state. In Texas, the state offers one of the lowest TANF benefits in the country. In addition, the state receives a highly diverse and continually changing group of refugees each year, requiring a level of cultural competency that the Volags can provide but the state lacks. By using a PPP, in combination with reserving Matching Grant funds for families, the state is able to provide greater benefits for a limited time and use organizations familiar with the refugee population to provide services.

Unlike Houston, Sacramento and Miami receive a relatively stable group of refugees (from the former USSR and East Asia, in Sacramento, and Cuba and Haiti, in Florida). Over time, the welfare and other service agencies have developed the cultural understanding required to serve these populations.

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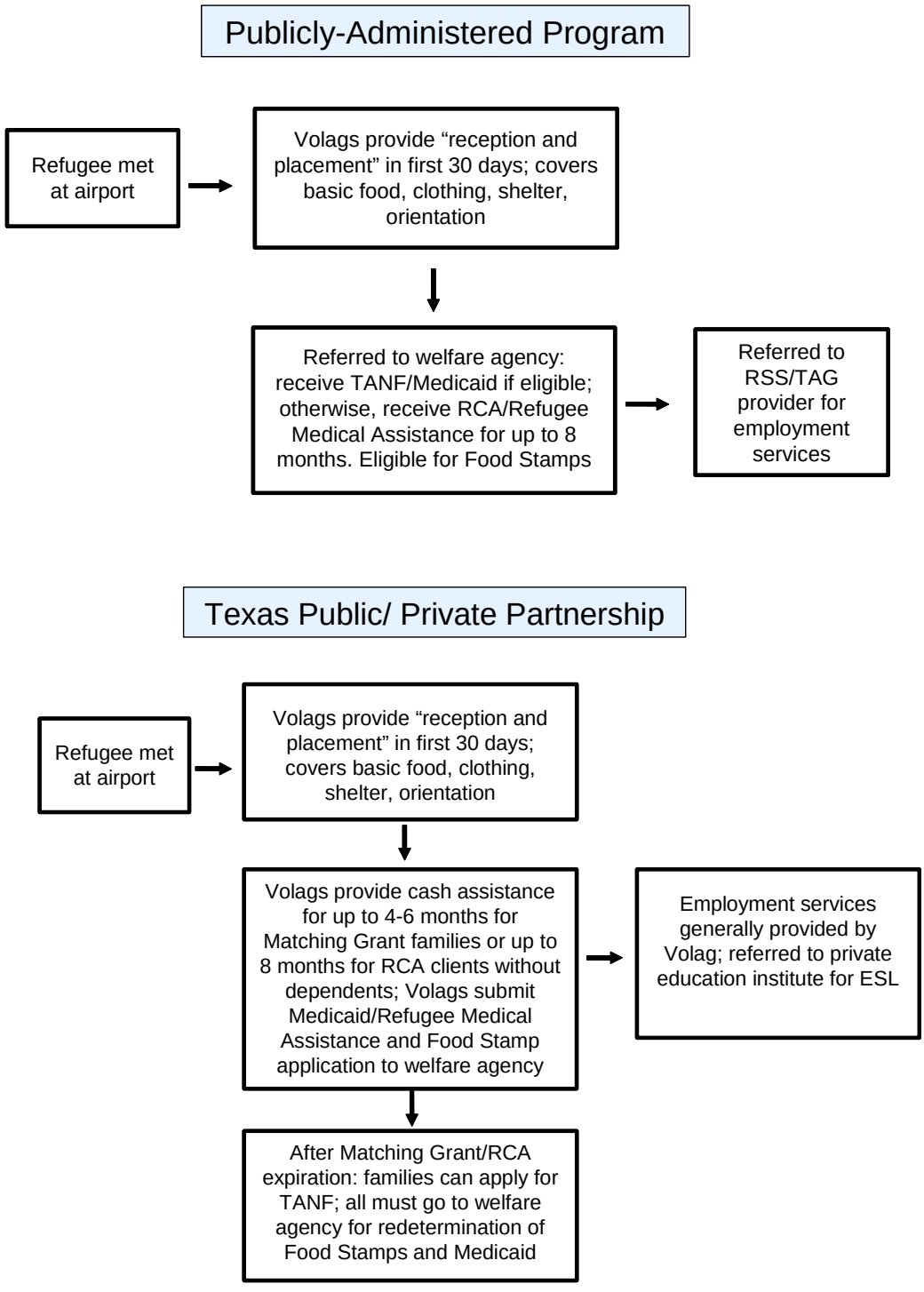
may apply to operate refugee programs in the state under the Wilson/Fish program. None of the study sites are located in Wilson/Fish states or communities.

[35] For the most part, the Sacramento Volags do not operate Matching Grant programs. In Miami, Volags reserve Matching Grant slots for refugees considered more job ready and in need of assistance for only a limited period.

Figure III.1: Two Approaches for Delivering Services



C. Referral to RSS and TAG

In Houston, the Volag resettling the refugee manages the RSS and TAG cases. Houston provides services through the Texas Consortia of Refugee Providers (T-Corp, referred to as the consortium) comprising five Volags, a private education institute that provides ESL instruction, and the local community college. The Volag that resettled the refugee will continue to manage the case and refer the refugee to other members of the consortium for services as needed.

In Sacramento, the workforce agency for the city and county—the Sacramento Employment & Training Agency (SETA)—has the contract to provide RSS and TAG services. It subcontracts with seven community-based organizations (several of which are MAAs), two school districts, and a Volag to provide services.[36] SETA distinguishes between employment service contractors and contractors that provide social adjustment and cultural orientation services. The county TANF agency refers refugees applying for TANF or RCA to SETA or one of the RSS and TAG providers. In addition, in many cases, clients find their way to a particular service provider through word of mouth or through outreach efforts by the providers.

In Miami, eight contractors receive RSS and TAG funds: two for education, four for legal and employability status services, one for employment services, and one for child care.[37] South Florida Workforce (SFW), a Miami-Dade County agency, has the contract with the state to provide employment services. SFW, in turn, subcontracts with 14 providers across the county to deliver employment services.

[36] An MAA is a nonprofit community-based organization whose governing board comprises mostly current or former refugees. The purpose of an MAA is to address the social service needs of refugees. Generally, MAAs are not national organizations with affiliates like Volags, nor do MAAs have direct contracts with Department of State to resettle refugees. They are smaller grassroots organizations that work in specific communities and geographic areas.

[37] Legal assistance is assistance in obtaining Employment Authorization Documents (EADs) and citizenship and naturalization preparation service.

IV. RECEIPT OF EDUCATION- AND EMPLOYMENT-RELATED SERVICES

The RSS and TAG program database provided by each state includes information on the mix of services refugees receive that are paid for with RSS and TAG funding. In addition, some refugees obtain education and employment-related services on their own. This section first describes the RSS- and TAG-funded services and then turns to overall participation in these types of services.

A. RSS- and TAG-Funded Services

Table IV.1 shows the percentage of RSS and TAG participants who received each service component through the RSS and TAG programs within one year after entry into the country. The mix of services refugees received varies by site, reflecting the services offered, the emphases placed by the providers, and the preferences and needs of the refugees.

1. ESL/VESL

Almost 50 percent of all refugees receive ESL or vocational ESL (VESL) services in Houston within one year, 75 percent in Sacramento, and just 14 percent in Miami. These statistics support what was observed during the site visits.

Table IV.1: Receipt of RSS and TAG Services within One Year after Entry

Service Component (%)	Houston	Miami	Sacramento
ESL/VESL	48.4	13.9	74.9[a]
Employment services	45.2	58.6	10.3—71.0[b]
Education/ GED	1.2	1.8	-
OJT/work experience	1.4	1.2	12.4
Vocational training	4.3	2.3	3.3
Legal services	-	30.2	-
Driver education	24.7	-	-
Social adjustment/case management	32.3	-	24.8
Sample size	1,674	52,174	3,196

Source: RSS and TAG program data provided by states
[a] In Sacramento, VESL refers to ESL integrated with employment services, while ESL does not include employment services. Most refugees in this category were receiving VESL.
[b] The lower bound reported in the table includes the percent of refugees who received employment services exclusive of ESL and the upper bound includes the percent who received VESL or employment services.

Discussions with service providers and welfare office staff in Sacramento gave several indications of the strong emphasis placed on learning English at an early stage by service providers, case managers, and the refugees themselves. Provision of ESL is often integrated with the provision of employment services; in the context of providing ESL, the program discusses the job search process, transportation, safety on the job, and on-the-job communication. Job developers also meet with students enrolled in ESL. Several providers described a process whereby the English instructors will notify the job developers when a refugee is "job ready."

Most classes have monthly tests and weekly quizzes to determine whether the refugee is ready for employment.

Houston also emphasizes ESL instruction for refugees who recently arrived in the country. One private education institute receives RSS and TAG funding from the consortium to provide ESL instruction to all refugees who need this assistance during their initial months. Because Houston places a high priority on moving refugees into employment quickly, most refugees receive ESL within their first 60 days. The classes are held two hours a day, five days a week, at the school campus and at the apartment complexes where many refugees are resettled. Having classes at the apartment complexes is helpful because many refugees do not have any means of transportation when they first arrive. Additionally, the ESL provider offers babysitting services at the complex so the women can attend.

In Miami, the state contracts with the Miami-Dade Public Schools and with Miami-Dade Community College to provide ESL. These entities hold classes at various times and locations across the city. Staff and respondents reported that learning English is not immediately required for Spanish-speaking refugees because Spanish is widely spoken in the community and refugees can find employment without speaking English. The goal of the Miami program, in fact, focuses on survival first, and then improvement once the client has a better background in English.

Several staff mentioned that for refugees to advance in their jobs, they needed to learn English. Some Miami employers integrate ESL instruction with employment. For example, a rehabilitation center hires refugees that have professional training in health care to be certified nursing assistants (CNAs). The center offers daily ESL instruction to help the refugees learn English to help them pass certification tests that would allow them to advance in their jobs. Another employer, a pharmacy, has contracted with a private language training organization for a special English class for managers and assistant managers.

2. Employment Services

Fifty-nine percent of all Miami refugees receive employment services in their first year, compared with 45 percent in Houston and 10 percent in Sacramento (this estimate only includes employment services that are offered separately from ESL). Given the emphasis on rapid employment in both Houston and Miami, it is not surprising that a relatively high share of refugees receive these services within the first year.

In Houston, the refugees rely on the Volag employment staff to help them find employment. The job developers in each Volag share job leads and often work collectively to develop positions with particular employers or industries (e.g., manufacturing plants and hotels). Most jobs are entry-level jobs that require few skills and only limited English proficiency. The Cubans and other Spanish speakers have the widest range of job options, as Spanish is spoken widely in several large sectors of Houston's economy, including manufacturing, construction, trade, and services. However, the Spanish speakers often find jobs on their own through family members, friends, and other informal contacts, while the refugees from Africa and other countries tend to

be more reliant on the Volags for assistance (see text box for an example of employment services provided by an RSS and TAG service provider in Houston).[38]

An African Father Needs Multiple Job Placements before Securing His First Job

A French-speaking man with a wife and two children arrived in Houston from Africa in 2004. During their R&P period, the Volag referred the parents to an ESL class offered in their apartment complex and a job developer. They were placed on Matching Grant, which paid their rent for the first several months. About ten days after their first Matching Grant check was issued, the Volag staff assigned to work with the couple took the father to apply for a job as a kitchen helper at a restaurant, but he did not get the job because of his poor English skills. About ten days later he took a test at the Volag for a warehouse job and got an interview, but was not offered this second job either, again because of his English ability. A week later he had an interview for a third job at a coffee shop, but he never heard from the employer. The father went on two more interviews—one at a cleaning job and one at a retailer—but failed to get those jobs as well. Almost three months after resettlement, the husband finally got a job working as a dishwasher at a hotel in downtown Houston. The Volag staff also helped his wife obtain a job. Even in cases like this, where the husband needed six job referrals and 10 interviews before he got his first job, the Volag staff are generally able to find refugees employment within the four-month matching grant period.

In Miami, employment services are provided by teams of social workers who conduct assessments and serve as case managers, and job developers who work with employers and with clients specifically on employment and job search activities. Miami also offers a certification program for refugees who were professionals in their native country and are not certified to do similar work in the United States. The program assists refugees to obtain the credentials and find employment in a field consistent with the refugees' career goals.

All Sacramento employment service contractors have job developers who are responsible for finding employment opportunities for their refugees. Employment services are often provided in conjunction with VESL, and, in some cases, job developers will meet clients after class to provide job counseling. The percentage of refugees receiving VESL combined with employment services or employment services alone is 71 percent. The level of employment services delivered as part of the ESL classes varies, from teaching basic English skills relevant to employment and job search to coordination with full employment services. About 10 percent of all refugees received employment services exclusive of ESL. These services were provided to refugees no longer eligible for cash assistance (RCA or TANF), and the emphasis was on immediate employment.

3. OJT/ Work Experience

On-the-job training (OJT) and work experience are used more frequently in Sacramento than in Houston or Miami; 12 percent of Sacramento refugees received an OJT placement in the first year. OJT placements refer to arrangements where the service provider pays half the total wages

[38] According to the survey, 55 percent of refugees from Africa reported they found their first job after coming to the United States with assistance from a refugee service agency, mutual assistance association, or voluntary resettlement agency, compared with just 16 percent of refugees from a Latin American country.

and the employer pays the other half, for 240 to 480 hours, which generally occurs over a period of six to eight weeks.

In Sacramento, strategies for the use of OJT placements differ among service providers. One provider noted that it uses OJT placements for experienced refugees; the provider tries to match these individuals with stable companies as a way to ensure longer-lasting employment. In contrast, another provider focuses OJT placements on refugees it feels might not be able to find employment otherwise and uses the subsidy to entice employers to hire these individuals. While OJT does not always lead to a permanent job, providers said that they do not continue to offer OJT placements to employers who repeatedly fail to offer permanent employment to OJT participants. Both providers and the employers interviewed said that most OJT placements lead to permanent employment.

4. Vocational Training

Vocational training is provided to between 2 and 4 percent of refugees in the three communities within their first year in the country. In Houston, it is provided by the Houston Community College, and refugees take classes with non-refugees. In recent years, refugees have enrolled in training to become CNAs, auto mechanics, welders, machinists, plumbers, electricians, truck drivers, air conditioning repair workers, and hotel/restaurant workers. Some of the programs, such as the CNA program, require a high school degree and strong English skills. The community college also developed a small hotel certificate training program specifically for the hardest-to-serve refugees, who are illiterate in their native language, that would help them find employment in hotels. While this two-month program has since ended, it emphasized vocabulary needed in the hotel industry as well as job skills.

As in Houston, a single provider in Sacramento has a contract to provide vocational training with RSS and TAG funding. An adult school, it offers training in building maintenance, forklift operations, and office skills. These classes are not limited to refugees. In Miami, the training includes computer-related skills, cosmetology, nursing, pharmacy technician, security guard, and auto mechanics and is provided through the public schools and the community colleges.

5. Social Adjustment and Case Management

RSS and TAG can be used for case management and social adjustment services. Case management services include determining which services to refer refugees to, referring them to services, and tracking their participation in the services. Social adjustment includes such services as emergency services for families in perceived crisis; health-related services, such as information and referrals to appropriate resources, including assistance in scheduling appointments and obtaining services; and home management services, such as assistance on budgeting, home maintenance, nutrition, housing standards, tenants' rights, and other consumer education services.

Approximately 25 percent of refugees in Sacramento receive "social adjustment and cultural orientation," or SA & CO, services (on the federal level, these are referred to as social adjustment, information and referral, outreach, and other services). The activities covered under the contract include translation and interpretation, crisis intervention, individual or group

counseling, and information or access to services (e.g., housing, health services, legal services, and citizenship). During the site visit, one provider estimated that half the SA & CO funding is used for medical interpretation, as many families have health problems and disabilities. Another provider noted that the recent wave of Hmong refugees has needed more assistance with interpretation and resettlement than other groups. The text box provides an example of how one service provider helped a Hmong refugee in Sacramento address her health issues. Case management services are not captured separately in the Sacramento RSS and TAG program database.

Assisting Refugee with Health Problems in Sacramento

A young Hmong refugee who was pregnant was receiving prenatal care, but she was having problems accessing health care services with her MediCal card. (MediCal is California's Medicaid program.) Through conversations with the Medicaid agency and the hospital, the woman's case manager was able to resolve this issue. In addition, the case manager referred the client to the Health Rights Hotline and translated their services. After she was able to start using her MediCal card, the pregnant woman learned that she was hepatitis B positive and diabetic. The case manager educated the client about the implications of these diagnoses for her pregnancy, referring her to a hepatitis B specialist and advising her to seek counseling. After the client gave birth to her child, the case manager escorted her with her baby to services she needed (such as appointments at the hospital).

In Houston, about one-third of all participants receive what the site refers to as case management services, but which is limited to helping refugees remove barriers to employment. Services may include health and emergency services as well as cultural adjustments for healthy family services. Cultural adjustments include helping refugees shop for clothes and use the bus system to get to their jobs. Some refugees, such as the Somalia Bantu and Liberians, were unfamiliar with modern urban life and had great difficulty adjusting to apartment living and hygiene in the workplace (the Volags supplemented the RSS and TAG funding with discretionary grant funds to assist with this population). In addition, RSS and TAG staff in Houston manage cases and make referrals to services, although this might not be captured in the case management program component.

In Miami, each subcontractor monitors participation in activities and makes appropriate referrals. This information is not captured in the program database. The activities considered social adjustment services are provided primarily from discretionary funding and not through the RSS and TAG programs.

6. Additional Services

Other services funded with RSS and TAG include a limited amount of basic education in Houston and Miami (1 to 2 percent of refugees), legal services in Miami (30 percent), and driver's education in Houston (25 percent). Houston offers a basic literacy class for the recent refugees who are illiterate in their native language. Generally, refugees do not complete the 80-hour course but leave when they find employment. Miami's adult and vocational schools provide general adult education classes.

The relatively high share of refugees who received legal services in Miami reflects the special assistance Cubans and Haitians require to obtain proof of work authorization (EADs). Legal services help them obtain parolee status, or for Haitians (who are ineligible for parolee status), their asylee status. The legal service providers in Miami described challenges including a backlog in the issuance of alien numbers, a backlog in court procedures, and difficulties obtaining asylum status for Haitians.

The relatively high share of refugees receiving driver's education in Houston reflects Houston's large, dispersed metropolitan area with limited public transportation. One Volag in the consortium offers a driver's education course, which includes both classroom instruction and driver's instruction that ends with a written and driving test. This component is popular, and there is a waiting list for the course.

B. Overall Client Satisfaction

The Refugee Assistance Survey asked refugees how they would assess "services and assistance received to help settle, become adjusted, and support" themselves (see ***Table IV.2***). Although the majority of refugees in all sites rated services as "excellent" or "good," a substantial share in Houston (30 percent) rated services and assistance as "fair or poor," higher than the share reported in Miami (16 percent) and Sacramento (12 percent). The Houston Volags resettle refugees with the greatest barriers across the three sites and can only provide limited cash assistance (6 to 8 months). Refugees in focus groups in Houston were particularly critical of the limited amount of cash assistance available to them and having to take the first job they could get. Many would have preferred spending more time learning English and improving their skills before moving into the job market, but they could not attend the ESL classes regularly owing to their work schedules.

In Sacramento, because of California's higher welfare benefits, refugees can spend more time gaining the necessary skills before they move into the workforce. In addition, because the Volags do not resettle free cases, most refugees have additional support in the community and from their families. Finally, focus group participants were generally satisfied or happy with the services they had received, although some voiced specific complaints about class sizes, limited availability of services outside work hours, and not being alerted to some services available to them. The Sacramento survey respondents' satisfaction was the highest among the three sites.

Table IV.2: Assessment of Services and Assistance Received

Rating (%)	Houston	Miami	Sacramento
Excellent	25.8	32.1	37.9
Good	44.2	50.9	49.8
Fair	18.1	11.7	10.6
Poor	11.6	4.0	*
Don't know	*	*	*
Sample size	316	335	306

Source: Refugee Assistance Survey
* Indicates a category that contains fewer than five individuals

C. Education and Other Service Receipt

The Refugee Assistance Survey captures additional information on service receipt. Some of this information reflects services refugees received from RSS and TAG providers, but it also includes additional services they received from other funding sources or on their own. Unfortunately, because refugees often do not know the funding source, it is not possible to distinguish RSS and TAG services from other services.

As ***Table IV.3*** shows, over 50 percent of refugees in all three sites received job search services at some point after entering the country. Over 90 percent of all refugees served by RSS or TAG in Sacramento received ESL at some point, compared with 69 percent in Houston and 61 percent in Miami. These percentages are much higher than those in the RSS and TAG program data, implying that many refugees attend other ESL classes offered in the community. Similarly, a higher percentage of refugees reported receiving education and vocational skills training than is reported in the program data. A relatively high percentage also received legal services and translation and interpretation services. Legal services are defined on the survey as help getting documentation for employment, help with citizenship and naturalization preparation, help getting a green card, or other legal assistance.

Table IV.3: Receipt of Employment and Education Services

Percent receiving service	Houston	Miami	Sacramento
Ever received services (%)			
Job search	68.0	52.5	53.5
Subsidized employment	8.0	2.1	8.6
Vocational skills training	16.1	16.7	11.8
GED/ABE instruction	13.6	5.7	6.2
ESL/English language training	68.7	61.2	91.2
Legal services	49.7	29.3	58.6
Translation/interpretation services	35.8	11.9	42.7
Sample size	316	335	306

Source: Refugee Assistance Survey

V. WHO RECEIVES RSS AND TAG SERVICES?

Refugees and other eligible groups[39] can receive RSS and TAG services for up to five years after entering the United States.[40] The survey captured detailed information on the characteristics of refugees receiving RSS and TAG (and in Houston, Matching Grant) services.

A. Household Composition

As ***Table V.1*** shows, the typical refugee receiving services had between three and five individuals in the household (with averages ranging from 3.0 individuals in Miami to 4.7 in Sacramento) at the time the survey was conducted. On average, there were 1.7 working individuals in the household in all sites. Most refugees lived in households with at least two adults, and close to one-third of households had at least three adults. Sacramento households were larger relative to the other two sites, with a smaller share of single-adult households and a significantly higher share with at least three minors. Refugees in Sacramento were more likely to be married and living with their spouse (74 percent compared with 53 percent in Houston and 46 percent in Miami), and 70 percent were living with their children.

Table V.1: Household Characteristics

Characteristic	Houston	Miami	Sacramento
Average number of individuals in household	3.7	3.0	4.7
Average number of working individuals in household	1.7	1.7	1.7
Number of adults (%)			
1 adult	20.3	21.2	10.8
2 adult	51.6	46.9	57.5
3 or more	28.2	31.9	31.7
Number of minors (%)			
1–2	40.5	51.9	35.6
3–5	15.2	2.7	28.4
6 or more	2.5	0.0	7.2
Percentage of respondents living with:			
Spouse	52.8	46.0	74.2
Parent(s)	10.8	14.0	16.7
Son/daughter(s)	59.5	59.1	70.3
Grandparent(s)	*	*	*
Grandchild(ren)	1.6	2.7	2.6
Sibling(s)	10.4	7.5	14.7
Other relative(s)	6.0	7.2	3.3
Nonrelative(s)	14.2	18.8	2.0
Sample size	316	335	306

Source: Refugee Assistance Survey
* Indicates a category that contains fewer than five individuals

[39] Eligible groups include asylees, Cuban and Haitian entrants, Amerasians, and victims of a severe form of trafficking.
[40] States can apply to waive the five-year limit on service receipt. Among the study states, California received a waiver.

B. Education and Language Skills

Across the three sites, education levels among the refugees varies, with Houston refugees' education levels significantly lower at arrival in the United States than levels in the other two sites. As shown in ***Table V.2***, in Houston, 39 percent of the refugees surveyed lacked a high school degree or certificate when they arrived, compared with about 14 to 15 percent in the two other sites. Indeed, 6 percent of Houston refugees surveyed had entered the country having never attended school. This reflects what was learned during the site visits; Volag staff reported that many refugees arriving from African countries, such as Liberia and Somalia, arrived with no formal education. This also corresponds with refugees' self-assessment of their native language skills; 14 percent of refugees in Houston said they did not read and write well or at all in their native language.

A higher portion of refugees in Miami (31 percent) arrived with a college or professional degree than in Houston or Sacramento (17 percent and 12 percent, respectively). Forty-eight percent of all refugees in Sacramento had a high school diploma but not a college or professional degree. Four percent of refugees in Sacramento had no education at arrival, primarily reflecting the lack of education among the Hmong.

While Miami refugees possess the highest education levels among the three sites (and Houston refugees the lowest), schooling levels do not correspond with English language skills. Miami refugees have the lowest English language skills, on average, while Houston refugees have the highest. Some Houston refugees come from African countries, such as Liberia, where English is the official language. Although these refugees speak English, service providers noted that they speak a unique form that Americans do not easily understand. In Miami, service providers noted that many Spanish-speaking participants are reluctant to learn English, as they can communicate in Spanish in the Miami community and on their jobs.

C. Health Conditions

Most refugees responded on the survey that their health was good to excellent (see ***Table V.3***). About one-quarter to one-third rated their health as fair to poor, which is more than double the national average for adults.[41] The reported incidence of work-preventing disabilities was low.

Service providers describe a range of health issues faced by refugees they serve. In Sacramento, the Hmong have problems associated with tuberculosis, as there had been high rates of tuberculosis infection at the temple in Thailand where many lived before coming to the United States. In Houston, some refugees from Africa came with chronic illnesses that prevented some from finding employment. A recent group of Meshketian Turks had especially high rates of cancer, diabetes, and dental problems. In Miami, providers noted that conditions such as high blood pressure, diabetes, and asthma were prevalent.

[41] On the 2005 National Health Interview Survey, 12 percent of all adults age 18 and older reported fair or poor health.

Table V.2: Education and English Ability

Measure	Houston	Miami	Sacramento
Education			
Education level on arrival (%)			
None	6.3	0.0	3.9
Primary	14.6	2.7	3.6
Some secondary school	17.7	12.4	6.6
High school diploma	31.0	34.1	48.2
Some college or university	11.1	16.9	14.1
College or university degree	14.2	26.3	11.1
Professional degree	3.2	5.1	*
Other degree or certificate	1.9	2.4	11.1
English Language Skills			
Understand English (%)			
Very well	15.1	6.0	7.2
Well	41.7	31.5	32.9
Not well	36.9	45.3	52.3
Not at all	6.4	17.1	7.6
Speak in English (%)			
Very well	11.5	2.7	4.9
Well	34.0	22.5	22.0
Not well	44.9	42.0	58.6
Not at all	9.6	32.7	14.5
Read English materials (%)			
Very well	16.0	7.8	7.6
Well	32.7	29.7	36.4
Not well	33.3	33.9	40.1
Not at all	17.9	28.5	15.9
Write in English (%)			
Very well	9.9	5.1	4.9
Well	31.1	24.3	25.0
Not well	37.5	31.5	53.9
Not at all	21.5	39.0	16.1
Native Language Skills			
Read and write in native language (%)			
Very well	72.1	77.8	63.8
Well	13.6	20.4	31.9
Not well	5.5	1.8	2.6
Not at all	8.8	0.0	1.6
Sample size	316	335	306

Source: Refugee Assistance Survey
* Indicates a category that contains fewer than five individuals

Table V.3: Health Condition

Measure	Houston	Miami	Sacramento
Respondent's health status (%)			
Excellent	21.0	24.5	18.7
Very good	20.1	10.6	12.7
Good	33.1	41.5	35.5
Fair	17.8	21.2	24.7
Poor	8.0	2.1	8.4
Disability (%)			
Has work-preventing disability	4.1	3.3	7.7
Has disabled family member (adult)	3.2	2.7	2.0
Has disabled family member (minor)	2.2	3.3	5.0
Sample size	316	335	306

Source: Refugee Assistance Survey

Service providers in all three sites also reported that mental health issues were common among many of the refugees. Some refugees suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder when they arrive owing to separation from their families, traumatic experiences in their home countries, and experiences associated with living in a new country. Many refugees escaped civil wars in their countries and had been victims of violence or witnessed atrocities committed to others, including family members. Despite the need for mental health services, service providers reported a reluctance among some groups to seek out treatment.

VI. REFUGEE OUTCOMES

The objective of the RSS and TAG programs is to help refugees achieve economic self-sufficiency soon after entering the country. This chapter examines the extent to which refugees moved into employment and off cash and other government assistance.

A. Receipt of Cash Assistance and Food Stamps

Refugees with dependents may receive TANF assistance if they meet eligibility criteria established by the state, and they must follow the state TANF policies. Those not eligible for TANF may be eligible for RCA for up to eight months following entry. Refugees meeting income and resource limits established by the federal government are eligible for Food Stamps.

1. Cash Assistance

States have considerable flexibility in how they design their TANF programs; therefore, the benefits refugees receive vary depending on the site in which they are resettled. States determine the level of TANF benefits provided, the length of time people can receive TANF assistance, the activities TANF recipients can pursue to fulfill TANF work requirements, the level and type of enforcement (i.e., sanctioning) applied when recipients do not participate in required activities, and the other services provided to TANF recipients, such as child care and transportation.

According to staff interviewed in Sacramento, the TANF office rarely sanctions parents who do not comply with work requirements. Generally, recipients who are sanctioned are those who fail to show up for scheduled appointments, and the sanction results in a reduction in the TANF grant. Florida and Texas, on the other hand, adopted full-family sanctions that cancel the entire families' benefits when recipients fail to comply with program requirements. The Florida and Texas TANF models tend to have a strong work-first emphasis, while Sacramento's program allows more flexibility in meeting the work requirement (e.g., allows recipients to meet the requirement by attending ESL classes). Florida and Texas place a time limit on cash benefits (24 to 36 months in Florida and 60 months in Texas), while California does not terminate assistance as long as families meet other eligibility requirements.[42] Finally, refugees in Sacramento can receive substantially higher cash benefits than those in the other two sites (see ***Table VI.1***).[43]

Table VI.1: Monthly Cash Benefit Levels for TANF Family of Three or RCA Individual with No Income, 2006

	TANF ($)	RCA ($)	Matching Grant ($)
California (Sacramento)	689	331	na
Florida	303	180	na
Texas	236	200 + rent (245)[44]	200/adult + 40/child + full rent

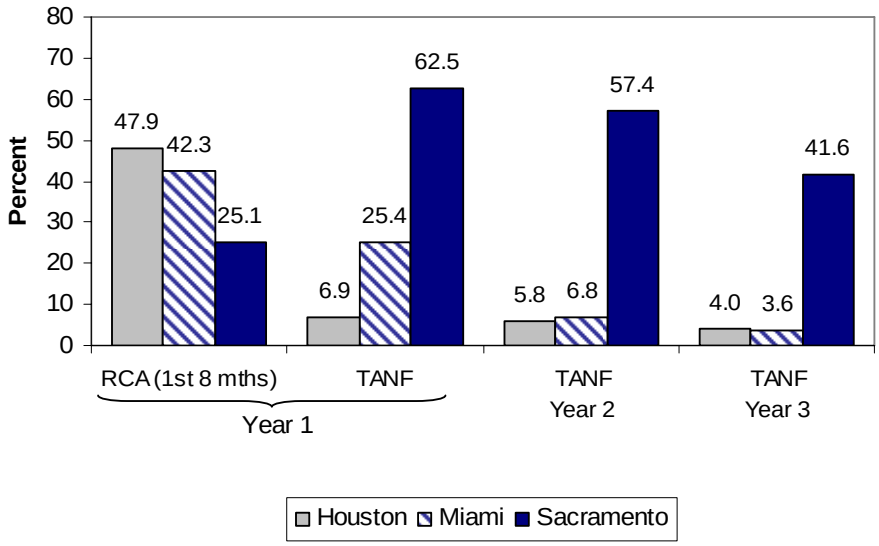
[42] The time limit (24 or 36 months) an individual on TANF in Florida receives is based on his or her welfare history, age, education credentials, and recent work experience. In Texas, the cash grant is reduced after 24 months and cancelled at 60 months. In California, the cash grant is reduced after 60 months has elapsed.

[43] This table includes Matching Grant benefits for Houston as most families received this funding for the first four to six months after entering the country. These families can transition into TANF after the Matching Grant period ends.

[44] Benefit amount listed is for the first four months. The remaining four months benefit is $187.50 per month without rent subsidy.

Figure VI.1 shows refugees' receipt of TANF and RCA by year relative to their date of entry. As the figure shows, while cash assistance is an important financial support for refugees in the first year in all sites, it only plays a substantial role in Sacramento in later years. In the first year after entry, 63 percent of refugees in Sacramento received TANF assistance and 25 percent received RCA; 80 percent received either TANF or RCA.[45] This share compares with 55 percent that received either TANF or RCA in Houston and 66 percent that received either source in Miami. (Matching Grant data were not available for this study, so 55 percent underestimates the share of Houston families that received cash assistance in the first year.) While fewer than 7 percent of refugees in Miami and Houston received TANF in Year 2 and 4 percent received it in Year 3, 42 percent of all refugees in Sacramento continued to receive TANF assistance in Year 3. (As individuals can only receive RCA within eight months of their date of entry, the figure does not present receipt of RCA beyond the first year.)

Figure VI.1: Receipt of TANF and RCA by Year after Entry



Sources: State TANF and RCA administrative data

Table VI.2 provides more detailed information on the average monthly TANF and RCA benefits among those who received these benefits. Reflecting California's higher TANF benefit levels and the larger family size among Sacramento refugees relative to the other sites, the average TANF benefit was $905. The RCA benefits were higher than TANF benefits in Houston, reflecting the higher RCA benefit Texas provides as part of its PPP program. The average number of TANF monthly payments received in the first two years after entry was also higher in Sacramento—15 months, compared with 8 months in Houston and 5 months in Miami. The number of RCA months averaged 5 months in all sites.

[45] This implies some refugees (8 percent) were getting both RCA and TANF within the first year. Receipt of both programs is due, in part, to changes in the family status of some refugees (e.g., refugees having children in the first year) and also due to data issues (i.e., the state miscoded some benefits as RCA or TANF).

Table VI.2: Average Cash Assistance among Early Cohort

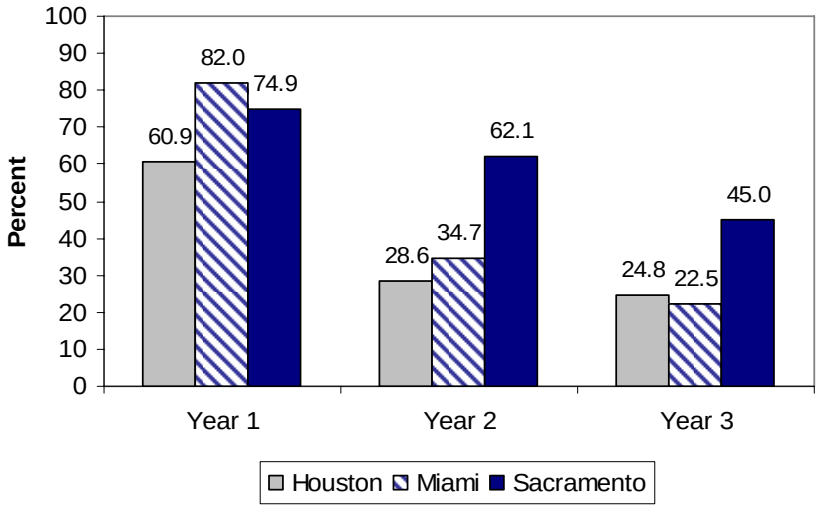
Measure	Houston		Miami		Sacramento	
	TANF	RCA	TANF	RCA	TANF	RCA
Average monthly benefit ($)	260	346	316	238	905	393
Average number of months receiving benefit within 24 months of entry	8.2	4.6	4.6	5.1	15.3	5.4
Sample size	20	161	2,132	3,862	458	260

Sources: State TANF and RCA administrative data
Notes: Sample limited to those entering the United States in FY 2003 in Houston and in FY 2002 in Miami and Sacramento. The monthly benefit includes the average amount for the cash assistance case. For RCA, this includes the amount provided to all adults on the case, and thus is greater than the individual level reported in Table VI.1.

2. Food Stamp Assistance

Figure VI.2 shows Food Stamp receipt for the first three years after entry into the United States by site. In the first year, roughly 82 percent of all refugees received Food Stamps in Miami, 75 percent received them in Sacramento, and 61 percent received them in Houston. From additional analysis conducted for Houston, but not shown in this figure, the lower percentage of Food Stamp receipt among Houston refugees is driven by an earlier cohort of refugees (pre-2003) who had to apply for Food Stamps in person at the welfare agency. After the state moved to the PPP and the Volags began handling the Food Stamp applications, rates of Food Stamp receipt increased (74 percent, on average, for FY 2003–04 cohorts).

Figure VI.2: Food Stamp Receipt by Year after Entry



Sources: State Food Stamp administrative data

By Year 3, rates of Food Stamp receipt had fallen to 25 percent in Houston, 23 percent in Miami, and 45 percent in Sacramento.

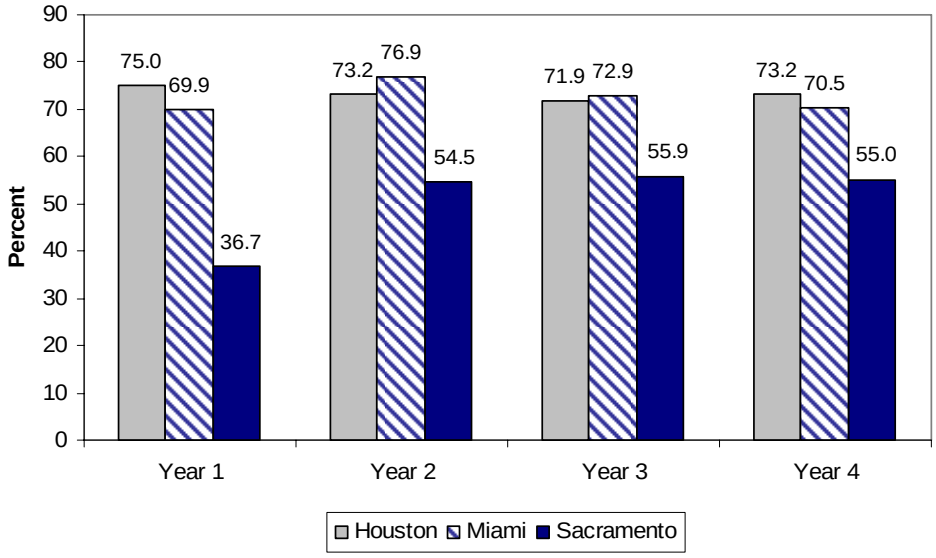
B. Employment Patterns and Job Characteristics

The employment outcomes come from two sources: unemployment insurance (UI) wage records and the client survey. The UI wage records are collected by calendar quarter and include earnings on all jobs covered by the UI system. Some employment, such as self-employment (e.g., domestic work, informal child care, and landscaping services) are not captured in the data but might be captured in the survey. In addition, the UI wages reflect only employment within the state. If refugees moved to this state from another state, the estimate does not include their earnings in the other state. The survey was also able to ask refugees more detailed information on the types of jobs and their hourly wages.

1. Employment

Figure VI.3 shows the percentage of refugees employed (from UI wage records) in the first four years after arriving in the country. In Houston and Miami, most refugees were steadily working throughout the first three years, averaging from 70 to 77 percent. These rates are significantly higher than the rates for refugees in Sacramento.

Figure VI.3: Percent Employed by Year after Entry



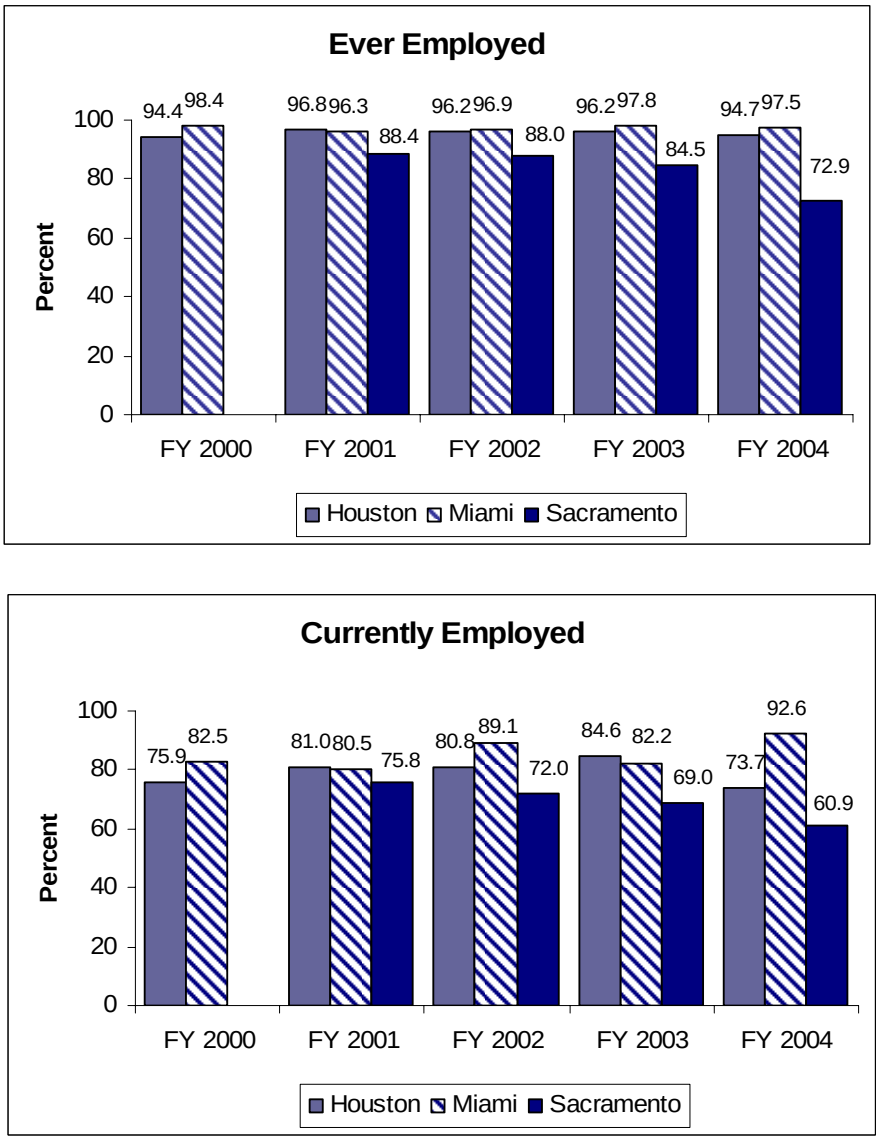
Sources: State unemployment insurance wage records

The lower employment rate in Sacramento can be attributed to several factors. First, Sacramento refugees were more likely to be families with children, and in these families, one adult might have chosen to stay at home to care for the children. A higher portion of refugees in Sacramento were also female, and further analysis found that women had lower employment rates than men in all sites. Also, as discussed above, Sacramento offers comparatively higher welfare benefits and has a TANF system that allows families to focus more on education, training, and skill development than immediate employment during the initial years. The site also emphasizes the importance of gaining English skills before moving into the job market, a philosophy that is less prevalent in the other two sites.

The survey shows higher percentages of refugees were working than is shown in the UI wage data in all sites, suggesting many refugees worked on their own in jobs that were not covered by the UI system. At the time the survey was conducted (September 2006 to March 2007), from 70 to 86 percent of refugees reported being employed, depending on the site. Overall, virtually all refugees in Houston and Miami (96 and 97 percent, respectively) and 84 percent of refugees in Sacramento had a job at some point since they had entered the country.

Figure VI.4 shows employment rates from the survey by the year when refugees entered the United States. The top half shows the share that were ever employed since entry into the United States, while the bottom half shows the share that were employed when the survey was conducted. From 94 to 98 percent of refugees in Houston and Miami and 73 to 88 percent of refugees in Sacramento had a job at some point after they entered the country.

Figure VI.4: Employment Rates from Survey by Entry Cohort



Source: Refugee Assistance Survey

Examining current employment by year of entry, Houston rates ranged from 74 to 85 percent depending on when refugees entered the country, Miami's employment rates ranged from 80 to 93 percent for the most recent cohort, and Sacramento's rates ranged from 61 percent (most recent cohort) to 76 percent (earliest cohort).

2. Job Tenure and Turnover

Table VI.3 shows that, on average, most refugees in Houston and Miami have worked in about three jobs since arriving in the United States; in Sacramento, they worked in fewer than two jobs. For those who entered in FY 2004, the most recent cohort, the number of jobs was slightly lower: 2.5 in Houston, 2.6 in Miami, and 1.3 in Sacramento.

Table VI.3: Average Number of Jobs and Time in Current Job

Employment Outcome	Houston	Miami	Sacramento
Average number of jobs in U.S. by cohort:			
FY 2000	3.5	2.7	-----
FY 2001	2.8	3.1	1.9
FY 2002	3.0	2.9	1.8
FY 2003	2.7	3.3	1.7
FY 2004	2.5	2.6	1.3
Total	2.8	2.9	1.7
Of those currently working:			
Average number of jobs working	1.1	1.1	1.1
Average months at current job	24.8	25.9	23.2
Average number of hours working a week	43.1	41.5	37.1
Sample	305	317	292

Source: Refugee Assistance Survey

Most refugees worked about 40 hours in a week and had spent from 23 to 26 months in their current job. While service provider staff said that refugees often have several jobs at one time, the survey found that, on average, refugees who are working have 1.1 jobs.

3. Industries and Occupations

Table VI.4 shows the refugees' industry and occupation for their current job or most recent job if they were not working. As this table shows, refugees in Houston were most likely to be employed in the manufacturing industry, followed by the leisure and hospitality industry. Manufacturing has been a mainstay of refugee employment in Houston—especially for lower-skilled refugees—for several years. The site visits revealed that Volag staff work closely with area employers at manufacturing plants and hotels and refer large numbers of refugees to specific employers. The text box provides examples of two companies that employ refugees in these industries.

Two Houston Employers

Manufacturer of Cables

A Houston manufacturing plant employs about 250 people, about 200 of whom are refugees. The refugees are generally temporary hires who work on the assembly line and in sewing and soldering positions. Entry-level jobs pay $6.25 an hour and include holiday, vacation, medical/dental coverage, and overtime. Soldering positions pay from $7 to $11 an hour. Seventy-five to 80 percent of the temporary workers do not speak English; there are plant supervisors who speak Spanish and Vietnamese, but workers who speak other languages sometimes have difficulty communicating with supervisors.

The entry-level jobs on the assembly line are physically demanding but pay well because of overtime. About half the workers are men; men tend to do the most physically demanding jobs, and women do more of the jobs requiring dexterity, such as sewing. Most workers put in 60 hours a week in 12-hour shifts, with overtime paid (1.5 times the normal wage) after 40 hours. This employer tends to be popular among refugees because of the overtime pay, the fact that non-English speakers can get entry-level positions, and the proximity of the plant to the apartment complexes where most refugees live. Employees who refer other people for jobs receive bonuses, and many refugee employees have been referred this way.

International Hotel Chain

The main downtown hotel employs more than 800 people. Refugees are hired for all entry-level positions but most typically for housekeeping or dishwashing because of language barriers. These jobs start at $6.50 an hour for 32- to 40-hour weeks (depending on scheduling), and carry benefits after 90 days. If refugees have an employment history (e.g., as a busboy) and some English skills, they can work at higher-paying jobs in the kitchen. Owing to rapid turnover, there are about 50 openings in these entry-level jobs every month. Many refugees cannot work nights or weekends because buses do not run at those times, and they have no other form of transportation.

The Volag staff bring refugees in for group interviews and act as translators (hotel supervisors speak Spanish, French, and Arabic, but not the wide range of languages spoken by the refugees). Many refugees—particularly women—prefer hotels to manufacturing because the work is less physically demanding, the environment is cleaner, and the hours are more flexible. The employment manager reported that refugees generally make faithful employees because they stay on the job for at least six months, resulting in lower turnover than for other employees.

Table VI.4: Industry and Occupation of Current Job (percent)

	Houston	Miami	Sacramento
Business or industry of current or most recent job			
Manufacturing	23.3	9.5	6.0
Construction	5.3	13.3	18.5
Wholesale and retail trade	13.0	13.9	16.5
Education and health services	9.3	17.4	16.5
Leisure and hospitality	16.0	13.3	10.1
Transportation and utilities	12.0	9.8	9.7
Professional and business services	5.3	6.6	5.6
Other services	7.0	5.7	7.7
Other	8.7	10.8	9.3
Occupation of current or most recent job			
Service	29.4	29.7	33.6
Transportation and material moving	20.7	12.9	14.0
Production	19.4	8.8	7.2
Installation, maintenance, and repair	6.4	11.0	12.0
Professional and related	8.7	10.4	9.2
Sales and related	8.0	9.1	6.8
Management and business operations	2.3	8.2	4.0
Office and administrative support	4.7	3.8	3.2
Construction trades and related workers	0.3	5.7	8.4
Farming, fishing, and forestry	0.0	0.0	*
How found current or most recent job			
Refugee service agency, mutual assistance association, or voluntary resettlement agency	13.4	2.5	13.0
Welfare or public employment agency	7.4	1.5	11.1
Private employment agency	8.7	4.3	5.5
Newspapers or other advertisements	17.7	8.3	13.0
Religious institution	2.3	*	2.8
College or job training program	2.0	*	7.5
Friend, relative, or sponsor	60.5	66.5	58.5
Other	7.4	12.6	6.7
Sample	301	296	254

Source: Refugee Assistance Survey
* Indicates a category that contains fewer than five individuals

In Miami, the most common employers of refugees were in the education and health services, leisure and hospitality, and construction industries. Based on site visit information, the jobs in the education and health service sector are most likely in the health and allied health field such as nurse aides, home health aides, licensed practical nurses, and pharmacy aides and technicians. In Sacramento, about half the jobs the refugees have fall within three industry groups: construction, education and health services, and wholesale and retail trade.

In terms of occupations, about a third of the jobs in which refugees are working are service jobs, ranging from 29 percent in Houston to 34 percent in Sacramento. Houston has a higher share in transportation and material moving and production occupations than the other sites. Miami and

Sacramento have higher shares in installation, maintenance, and repair; management; and construction occupations.

Most refugees in all three sites found their current or most recent jobs through a friend, relative, or sponsor. About 13 percent of refugees in Houston and Sacramento found their jobs through a refugee service provider, MAA, or Volag; only 3 percent found their jobs through one of these sources in Miami. A relatively high share of refugees (11 percent) in Sacramento found their jobs through the welfare or public employment agency. The percent of refugees who found their *first* job through a refugee organization is higher (37 percent in Houston, 10 percent in Miami, and 20 percent in Sacramento). Note that some individuals who reported finding jobs through friends, newspaper advertisements, and other independent sources may have done so using skills obtained through the refugee, welfare, or employment agency.

4. Wages and Earnings

Wages for refugees are generally low, although they progress over time. At the time of the survey, the median wage in the current job ranged from $9 to $12 an hour for respondents, depending on the cohort and site, with Sacramento reporting higher median wages than the other two sites.

Among refugees who had at least two jobs, the median wages increased by $2.26 an hour in Houston, $2.58 in Miami, and $3.50 in Sacramento between their first job and their current or most recent job (as of the survey) (see ***Table VI.5***). The median annual percent increase in median hourly wages was 9 percent in Houston, 12 percent in Miami, and 14 percent in Sacramento.[46]

Table VI.5: Estimated Annual Percent Increase in Wages of Current and First Jobs

	Hourly Median Wages		Wage difference ($)	Average annual percent increase
	First job ($)	Current job ($)		
Houston	6.74	9.00	2.26	9.0
Miami	6.50	9.08	2.58	11.8
Sacramento	8.00	11.50	3.50	13.9

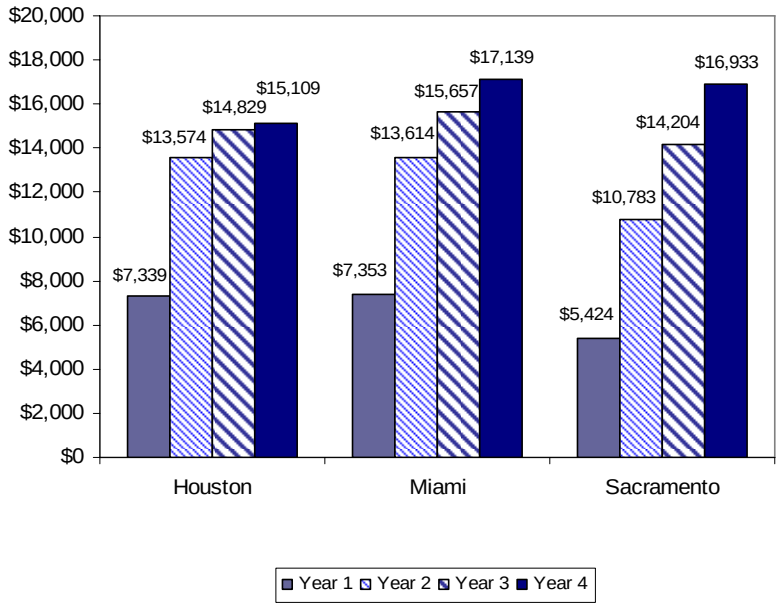
Source: Refugee Assistance Survey
Note: Calculated annual percent increase among those with at least one year elapsed between jobs.

Figure VI.5 shows the increase in average annual earnings over time relative to when the refugees entered. (This figure includes only those refugees who were employed at some point during the year.) In the refugees' first year, they earned only about $7,300 in Houston and Miami and $5,400 in Sacramento. Most refugees included in this analysis were not employed all four quarters in the first year (among those with earnings, refugees were employed about 2.5 quarters, on average, in Houston, 2.4 in Miami, and 2.0 in Sacramento). The lower amount in Sacramento reflects the lower number of quarters worked. In the second year, the refugees experienced a

[46] The wages are not inflation adjusted, and the sample includes only those who had two separate jobs, so it does not measure wage increases from a single job.

jump in their wages to about $13,600 in Houston and Miami, and to $10,800 in Sacramento. The gains over the next two years were not as large in Houston, with just a 2 percent increase between years 3 and 4, and Miami, with a 9 percent increase, but gains were quite large in Sacramento (19 percent). The primary reason for the increase in annual earnings in Sacramento is because they had higher wages per quarter, not more quarters of employment in the year. It is not possible to assess whether the greater gains in wages in Sacramento were the result of external factors such as the economy, the refugees' ability to focus on their education and skill development during the earlier years, or the fact that more refugees in Sacramento in comparison with Houston arrived with a high school education.

Figure VI.5: Average Annual Earnings by Year after Entry into the United States



Sources: State unemployment insurance wage records

C. Employment Benefits and Health Insurance Coverage

Health insurance coverage through employment is one of the standard indicators for evaluating the RSS and TAG programs. Fewer than half of all refugees were offered health coverage or other benefits through their employers (see ***Table VI.6***).

Table VI.6: Employment Benefits and Health Care Coverage

Measure	Houston	Miami	Sacramento
Benefits offered from current or most recent job (%)			
Sick days with full pay	37.1	30.3	21.5
Paid vacation	52.4	44.7	29.4
Dental benefits	38.7	25.7	24.9
Retirement plan	40.1	24.9	27.6
Health plan or medical insurance	47.4	35.8	33.1
Health insurance in prior month (%)			
Private health insurance coverage	36.8	35.3	26.7
Public health insurance coverage	15.9	10.5	51.5
Other insurance coverage	3.5	4.5	1.6
Uninsured	48.1	53.9	26.5
Sample size	316	335	306

Source: Refugee Assistance Survey

The proportion offered health insurance through their employer is higher in Houston than in Miami and Sacramento; in Houston, the manufacturers and hotels that employ refugees offer health benefits to refugees after they had been employed a certain length of time. In Sacramento about half the refugees received public health insurance coverage, substantially higher than in the other two sites. The Sacramento refugees were more likely to have dependents, which increased their eligibility for publicly funded coverage; and, as shown earlier, Sacramento refugees were more likely to be receiving other benefits from the county.

Approximately half of all refugees in Houston and Miami and one-quarter of refugees in Sacramento lacked health insurance. Given the health problems facing refugees that staff raised during site visits, this gap in coverage could lead to serious problems when some health conditions (e.g., diabetes, tuberculosis, asthma, and high blood pressure) are left untreated.

D. Child Care and Transportation

To address two common barriers to work, the survey asked respondents about their use of child care and their access to transportation (See ***Table VI.7***). Among those refugees with young children (under the age of 13), about half the refugees in Sacramento had placed their children in child care, compared with 32 percent in Houston and 37 percent in Miami. Sacramento refugees were also more likely to use child care regularly.

Table VI.7: Child Care and Transportation

Measure	Houston	Miami	Sacramento
Among those with children under age 13 (%)			
Ever placed children in child care	31.8	37.4	48.6
Ever used child care regularly (i.e., at least once a week for at least a month)	24.4	30.8	44.6
Among those with child care			
Child care paid for by (not mutually exclusive) (%):			
Self	73.2	72.3	11.9
Government program	14.3	27.7	83.1
Employer	*	0.0	0.0
Community or nonprofit organization	*	*	*
Provided free by friend or family member	18.2	23.4	10.8
Hours a week in child care	25.7	29.3	33.7
Transportation (%)			
With valid driver's license	80.7	93.1	87.3
Access to car or truck to get to work	84.5	89.3	89.9
Ever received transportation assistance	84.8	89.8	90.5
Sample size	316	335	306

Source: Refugee Assistance Survey

* Indicates a category that contains fewer than five individuals

Among those who used child care, 83 percent of the refugees received government-subsidized child care in Sacramento, compared with just 14 percent in Houston and 28 percent in Miami. During the Houston site visits, staff reported a lack of subsidized child care available in the community. This lack is complicated by the fact that the Volags place the refugees with dependents in the Matching Grant program rather than in TANF and TANF families are given priority for child care (other low-income families are placed on waiting lists and often must wait months, if not years, for slots to become available). Among those who used child care, most in Houston and Miami paid for it themselves; 18 percent in Houston and 23 percent in Miami relied on child care provided free by a friend or family member.

Poor public transportation was a common complaint in all three sites. As a result, a driver's license and access to a car were high priorities for refugees. Eighty-one to 93 percent of refugees responded that they had a driver's license and most had access to a car or truck to get to work. Most refugees also received transportation assistance at some point. (Transportation assistance was described in the survey as a van service; help paying for gas or for repairs to a vehicle; or tokens, passes, or vouchers for public transportation.)

E. Monthly Income

The survey asked refugees to detail all sources of their income in the previous month and, if they were married and living with their spouse, their spouse's income. Total monthly incomes for

refugee families ranged from about $1,700 in Houston and Miami to $2,100 in Sacramento. Most of this income came from earnings, although 19 percent came from other sources in Sacramento.

Table IV.8: Monthly Income

	Houston		Miami		Sacramento	
Measure	Dollars ($)	% of total	Dollars ($)	% of total	Dollars ($)	% of total
Earnings	1,619	93	1,653	95	1,695	81
Cash assistance	19	1	15	1	148	7
Food Stamps	54	3	25	1	122	6
Disability income	29	2	7	0	90	4
Unemployment compensation	8	0	10	1	8	0
Other income	9	1	31	2	17	1
Total income	1,738	100	1,742	100	2,080	100
Sample size	316		335		306	

Source: Refugee Assistance Survey
Note: Percents may not total 100 percent because of rounding.

In all three sites, refugees' average annual income is modest and about at the federal poverty threshold for a family of four in 2006 (about $20,614 a year).[47]

About three-quarters of all refugees in Houston and Miami, and half of all refugees in Sacramento, sent remittances back to their friends or family in their native country at some point (see ***Table VI.9***). The average amount refugees had sent since entering the country was about $3,000 in Houston and $2,000 in Miami and Sacramento. Over half of refugees (54 percent) in Houston, 43 percent in Miami, and 34 percent in Sacramento reported sending back more than $1,000 since entering the country.

Table VI.9: Remittances

Measure	Houston	Miami	Sacramento
Ever sent remittances to friends or family (%)	74	72	49
Total amount sent since entry:			
$1–$500 (%)	26	36	37
$501–$1,000 (%)	20	21	29
More than $1,000 (%)	54	43	34
Average ($)	2,970	2,113	1,955
Sample size	316	335	306

Source: Refugee Assistance Survey

[47] U.S. Census Bureau, "Poverty Thresholds 2006", available at http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty/threshld/thresh06.html.

F. Housing

Despite low wages and incomes, about 30 percent of refugees in Houston and Miami and 38 percent in Sacramento reported owning their own home. Very few received public housing assistance (public housing or Section 8 housing) in Miami, 17 percent received assistance in Houston, and 19 percent received assistance in Sacramento (see ***Table VI.10***).

Table VI.10: Housing

Measure	Houston	Miami	Sacramento
Housing (%)			
Own with mortgage or loan	27.6	26.9	37.9
Own without mortgage or loan	*	3.9	*
Rent	69.8	65.1	60.5
Occupy without payment of cash rent	1.6	3.9	0.0
Public programs (%)			
Public housing	11.7	2.1	8.5
Section 8 housing	5.1	*	10.2
Receipt of energy assistance	6.8	*	41.6
Number of bedrooms in home (%)			
No bedrooms	2.2	6.3	0.0
1 bedroom	30.5	25.8	8.3
2–3 bedrooms	57.8	61.3	69.2
4 or more bedrooms	9.2	6.0	21.9
Crowded housing (%)			
2 or more household members per room	11.2	7.3	11.7
Average monthly housing expenses ($)	663	949	1,068
Sample size	316	335	306

Source: Refugee Assistance Survey
* Indicates a category that contains fewer than five individuals

The most common type of housing was two- and three-bedroom units, with over half of all refugees living in this type of housing in all sites. Houston and Miami refugees were more likely to live in homes with fewer than two bedrooms. While refugees in Sacramento had more bedrooms, they were also more likely to have two or more household members per room. Monthly housing expenses were highest in Sacramento ($1,068), reflecting both the higher housing costs in California and the larger families, followed by Miami ($949) and Houston ($663).

VII. RELATIONSHIP OF PROGRAM SERVICES TO OUTCOMES

The statistical analysis in this section expands on the descriptive analysis discussed earlier in this report by presenting the findings from the multivariate regression analysis. While descriptive analysis illustrates how outcomes vary by participant characteristics and services received, it does not establish clear relationships between participant characteristics, services received, and outcomes. Regression analysis, on the other hand, examines the partial effect of each variable on an outcome while holding all other variables constant.[48] The results of the analysis demonstrate which client characteristics or conditions are statistically associated with various client outcomes and the strengths of the relationships.

The regression analysis utilizes data from the administrative sources for both Houston and Miami. Given the high rate of missing information for some of the key characteristics in the Sacramento administrative data, Sacramento could not be included in the comparative regression analysis of administrative data. However, the discussion includes regression results from Sacramento survey data when they are relevant and statistically significant.

As with all studies using regression analysis, this analysis has some potential limitations and should be interpreted with caution. While regression analysis shows the relationship of independent variables to the dependent variables, this does not necessarily imply causality. The analysis does show, however, which factors are associated with service receipt and employment outcomes.

A. Service Receipt

The first regression model examines the relationship between the type of services refugees received and fiscal year cohort. It controls for differences in sociodemographic characteristics, country of origin, and service receipt in the first two years. As ***Table VII.1*** shows, there are some differences between Houston and Miami in the factors that predict service receipt.

In Houston, males were 17 percent more likely than females to receive employment services, yet gender did not appear to be associated with the receipt of ESL services. The opposite is true in Miami, where men were slightly less likely than women to receive both employment and ESL services. Survey data in Sacramento has a pattern consistent with Houston; men were 12 percent more likely than women to receive employment services, but gender was not correlated with the receipt of ESL services.

In both Houston and Miami, being married reduced the likelihood of receiving employment services, yet it was not significantly correlated with the receipt of ESL services. In Houston, those who completed high school were 14 percent more likely than those who had not completed high school to receive employment services. At the same time, high school completion did not have a significant association with ESL participation in Houston. In Miami, completion of high school was correlated with a higher probability of receiving both types of services.

[48] Technically, the equation estimated the form $Y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_{1i} + \beta_2 X_{2i} + \ldots. + \varepsilon_i.$, where Y_i is the value of the outcome for person i, the variables X_{1i} through X_{ni} are the explanatory variables for person i in the model that are hypothesized to affect the outcome, ε_i is a random term that indicates that the model cannot perfectly predict Y, and the β terms are the parameters to be estimated.

Not surprisingly, speaking English at entry into the United States was correlated with lower likelihoods of participation in ESL services in both Houston and Miami. Speaking English at entry also reduced the likelihood of receiving employment services in Miami, but it did not have a statistically significant association in Houston. Being an asylee did not have any significant correlation with the receipt of employment services in either Houston or Miami. Yet, asylees in Houston were 26 percent less likely than non-asylees to participate in ESL services. In Miami, asylees were 8 percent more likely to participate in ESL services than non-asylees.

Because each study site consists of refugees from different countries of origin, it is not possible to compare country of origin across the sites. However, regression results show that in both Houston and Miami, country of origin was, in most cases, correlated with the likelihood of service receipt. Cubans were more likely to receive employment services in Miami, relative to other groups, but there is little association with receiving ESL. African refugees in Houston were more likely to receive employment services in Houston and less likely to receive ESL. This might be because some of the refugees from Africa speak English. Survey data from Sacramento also suggest that country of origin is related to the likelihood of service receipt for ESL services (refugees from the former USSR were more likely to receive ESL). There is not a significant correlation, however, between country of origin and employment service receipt.

Finally, the type of services that the refugees received in their first two years after entry was often correlated with other service receipt. In both Houston and Miami, receipt of education services during the first two years was positively correlated with the receipt of employment services. In Miami, receipt of education services was also positively correlated with the receipt of ESL services. Receipt of employment services in both study sites was negatively correlated with ESL service receipt.

Table VII.1: Regression Results: Employment Service and ESL Service

	Employment Service[a]				ESL Service[b]			
	Houston		Miami		Houston		Miami	
Fiscal Year Cohort[c]								
2001			0.025	***			0.018	***
2002			-0.051	***			0.148	***
2003	0.029		-0.176	***	0.212	***	0.307	***
2004	0.054		-0.149	***	0.307	***	0.287	***
Sociodemographic characteristics								
Age at entry	-0.001		0.005	***	0.005		-0.008	***
Age at entry squared	0.000		-0.000	***	-0.000		0.000	***
Male	0.172	***	-0.006	*	-0.005		-0.029	***
Married	-0.123	***	-0.008	**	0.019		0.003	
Completed high school	0.136	***	0.034	***	-0.020		0.053	***
Speaks English at entry	0.015		-0.304	***	-0.123	***	-0.036	***
Asylee	-0.009		0.089		-0.264	***	0.081	***
Country of origin[d]								
Miami								
Haiti			-0.370	***			-0.009	
Colombia			-0.228	***			0.018	
Other, non-Cuban			-0.144	***			0.065	***
Houston								
Sudan	0.092	*			0.188	***		
Cuba	-0.098	**			0.140	***		
Vietnam	-0.036				0.154	***		
Other, non-African	-0.093	***			0.133	***		
Service receipt in first two years								
Education	0.082	*	0.036	***	0.066		0.333	***
Employment services					-0.122	***	-0.072	***
ESL	-0.120	***	-0.091	***				
Case management/orientation	-0.106	***			-0.033			
Driver's education	-0.029				-0.008			
Constant	0.567	***	0.789	***	0.216		0.201	***
Observations	1,674		52,266		1,674		52,266	
R-squared	0.144		0.413		0.122		0.287	

Sources: RSS and TAG program data provided by states
* significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%
[a] For Houston, employment service since entry; for Miami, in first two years
[b] For Houston, ESL since entry; for Miami, in first two years
[c] For Houston, excluded category is 2002; for Miami, excluded category is 2000
[d] For Houston, excluded category is Other Africa; for Miami, excluded category is Cuba

B. Job Outcomes

The second regression model examines the relationship between employment and earnings and fiscal year cohort, sociodemographic characteristics, country of origin, and service receipt in the first two years. ***Table VII.2*** presents the results from this second regression model.

Gender was strongly correlated with both employment and earnings in Houston and Miami. Compared with women, men were more likely to be employed and earning higher wages. This was also true in Sacramento, from the analysis of survey data. Being married increased the likelihood of employment and earnings in Miami.

Completion of high school and the ability to speak English at entry increased the likelihood of employment in Miami. Both variables were also correlated with increased earnings in both Houston and Miami. In Houston, completion of high school was correlated with an increase in earnings of $1,300, and ability to speak English well was correlated with an increase in earnings of $2,400. In Miami, completion of high school was correlated with an increase in earnings of $1,600, and ability to speak English well was correlated with an increase in earnings of $2,200. Survey data from Sacramento shows a positive correlation between completion of high school and employment. Sacramento regression results also show a positive correlation between ability to speak English well and earnings.

Again, the different refugee countries of origin in each study site make it impossible to compare country of origin across the sites. Regression results suggest that being Haitian was associated with a reduction in earnings of $700 compared with being Cuban. Haitians, however, were more likely to be employed.

Receipt of education services in the first two years had a positive correlation with employment and earnings in Miami; this was not true in Houston, although that result might reflect the low level of participation in education services in Houston. Employment service receipt was positively correlated with employment and earnings in Houston. In Miami, receipt of employment services was correlated with an increase in earnings, but the size of the effect was much smaller than in Houston (an increase of about $700 in Miami compared with $2,400 in Houston). The receipt of ESL services was positively correlated with both employment and earnings in Houston and Miami, and associated with an increase in employment of 5 percent (about $1,100) in Houston and 3 percent ($1,500) in Miami.

Table VII.2: Regression Results: Employment and Earnings

	Employment[a]			Earnings[b]		
	Houston		Miami	Houston		Miami	
Fiscal year cohort[c]							
2001			-0.032 ***			498 ***
2002			-0.015 **			690 ***
2003	-0.015		-0.048 ***	-1911		1143 ***
2004	-0.107	*		-2393	*	
Sociodemographic characteristics							
Age at entry	0.009		-0.001	412	**	243 ***
Age at entry squared	-0.000		0.000	-7	**	-4 ***
Male	0.064	**	0.049 ***	3488	***	5808 ***
Married	0.044		0.014 ***	1370	**	729 ***
Completed high school	0.008		0.057 ***	1279	*	1618 ***
Speaks English at entry	0.046		0.072 ***	2385	***	2208 ***
Asylee	0.004		0.002	892		426
Country of origin[d]							
Miami							
Haiti			0.048 ***			-672 **
Colombia			-0.014			683 *
Other, non-Cuban			-0.016			694
Houston							
Sudan	-0.039			-418		
Cuba	-0.020			168		
Vietnam	-0.158	**		-2232	*	
Other, non-African	-0.065	*		190		
Service receipt in first two years							
Education	0.004		0.042 ***	452		1322 ***
Employment services	0.172	***	0.009	2430	***	719 ***
ESL	0.053	**	0.033 ***	1122	**	1498 ***
Case management/orientation	0.051	*		-313		
Driver's education	0.080	***		1348	**	
Constant	0.481	***	0.693 ***	-214		808
Observations	1192		35117	1192		35117
R-squared	0.085		0.011	0.099		0.076

Sources: State unemployment insurance wage records
* significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%
[a] For Houston, employment in Year 2; for Miami, employment in Year 3
[b] For Houston, earnings in Year 2; for Miami, earnings in Year 3
[c] For Houston, excluded category is 2002; for Miami, excluded category is 2000
[d] For Houston, excluded category is Other Africa; for Miami, excluded category is Cuba

VIII.CONCLUSION

This study focused on three communities in the United States serving large numbers of refugees. It found exceptional diversity in the populations served, the processes for delivering services, and the interaction between refugee programs and the state welfare system. Given that the study was limited to these communities, and was focused on two programs (RSS and TAG), it is not a national assessment of how refugees are served in the United States. It also focused on three communities that are very experienced in providing services to refugees.

Overall, the study found that most refugees, even the ones with the most significant barriers to employment, are finding employment and are able to become self-sufficient. Family income, however, is close to the poverty level for a family of four during the first years in the United States.

The study identified several promising strategies. These include the following:

- **Strong coordination between service providers.** As mentioned above, all three sites have a long history of resettling refugees and have developed comprehensive systems for serving them. In Houston, the consortium consisting of five Volags and two education providers meets regularly and coordinates its work so services are provided effectively and in a similar fashion within the community. In Sacramento, the workforce agency has the primary contract to deliver RSS and TAG services, but it relies on community-based organizations, many of which are mutual assistance associations (MAAs), to provide the services. The group of providers meets monthly to discuss service delivery. Miami, the largest program among the three sites, has the most extensive network of service providers administered through the workforce agency, community college, and public school district. A refugee coalition in Miami meets monthly to share information and coordinate activities.

- **Bringing ESL instruction where refugees live.** Houston offers ESL classes in the four apartment complexes where refugees are resettled. This is helpful because many refugees do not have any means of transportation when they first arrive. Additionally, the ESL provider offers babysitting services at the complex so the women can attend. ESL instructors noted that it was not uncommon for them to go to the refugees' apartments and encourage those who were not attending to come to class.

- **Integrating ESL in employment settings.** Some Miami employers integrate ESL instruction with employment. For example, a rehabilitation center hires refugees that have professional training in health care to be certified nursing assistants (CNAs). Many of their CNAs are overqualified and need to learn English so they can move up to other jobs in the health care field. The goal of the program is for students to improve their English to a level that would enable them to pass licensing tests and advance in the health profession. Another employer, a pharmacy, has contracted with a private language training organization for a special English class for managers and assistant managers.

- **Certification and career laddering program.** Miami serves a number of refugees who were professionals in their native country but who lack certification to do similar work in

the United States. These workers include professors, health care providers, engineers, architects, and accountants. The Career Laddering initiative in Miami is designed to assist refugees with credentialing, training, and obtaining employment in a field consistent with the refugees' career goals. The goal of the program is placement as close as possible to the field they worked in when in their home country.

- **Cultural competency provided by former refugees.** All the programs rely on staff and organizations in the community that have a deep understanding of the issues refugees are facing. Many who serve refugees were refugees themselves at one point and have since established their lives in the mainstream community. In Houston, since Volags receive a continually changing group of refugees, they rely on earlier waves of refugees from a given country to serve as interpreters and assist them in acculturating refugees in their new communities. Sacramento has the most extensive network of MAAs, which assist the refugees and serve as places where refugees can meet and socialize with others from their home countries.

In the course of conducting this study, several opportunities for future research were identified, including the following:

- **Conducting studies in additional communities.** In particular, it would be worthwhile to conduct studies in communities that have smaller programs and less experience resettling refugees. In addition, refugees are moving to particular communities after being resettled elsewhere, and including communities subject to secondary migration is important. Finally, this study did not examine Wilson/Fish states or communities, another approach to providing refugee services in the United States or the Matching Grant program in sites other than Houston.

- **Evaluating most effective approaches to delivering services.** There is a growing debate within the refugee community regarding which approach best serves refugees and increases refugees' employment and self-sufficiency: to have programs delivering services administered by the Volags (either through a Texas-style PPP, a Wilson-Fish program, the Matching Grant program, or some new model) or by state or county agencies. Both strategies have certain advantages: Volags have the background and understanding of the cultural issues refugees face, while the welfare and workforce agencies have the social service and employment expertise. A demonstration could be conducted in states or communities interested in moving to a PPP or Wilson/Fish model to test the outcomes using the new procedures relative to the publicly-administered approach. Alternatively, a demonstration could be conducted among Volags serving some refugees with the Matching Grant program, while referring others to the publicly-administered program. If refugees are randomly assigned to the two programs, to ensure the refugees in each group are similar, their outcomes could be compared over time to determine which approach is most effective.

- **Evaluating approaches to providing ESL.** The study identified differences in service delivery that warrant further study, including whether refugees fare better when they focus on learning English before moving into the labor market or when they move quickly into the labor market, which could mean dropping out of ESL. Other differences

that could be studied include strategies to provide ESL instruction in the workplace, programs that combine employment services with ESL in one setting, and programs that combine literacy education with ESL.

- **Following refugees over a longer period.** This study examined employment outcomes and family income over the refugees' first few years in the country. Another study could examine longer-term outcomes. It could examine whether refugees remain in entry-level jobs or improve their human capital and find better jobs, how their children fare over time, and how the refugees and children adjust to life in the United States.

Finally, new waves of refugees will be coming to the United States in the next few years. There will be additional opportunities to obtain information on these new refugees, including their education and past work experience, languages spoken, needs, and employment outcomes.

APPENDIX A: REFUGEE ARRIVALS

Appendix Table A.1: Refugee Arrivals by State and Type of State Program Fiscal Years 2000–2004

State	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2000–2004	Type of program
Alabama	152	116	44	49	86	447	W/F
Alaska	13	55	19	28	42	157	W/F
Arizona	2,420	2,399	1,034	1,038	2,263	9,154	PA
Arkansas	17	14	0	5	20	56	PA
California	9,640	10,148	4,293	4,205	6,749	35,035	PA & W/F[a]
Colorado	955	1,026	449	476	798	3,704	W/F
Connecticut	1,029	989	456	214	427	3,115	PA
Delaware	46	62	36	40	10	194	PA
District of Columbia	233	116	33	107	65	554	PA
Florida	22,880	19,883	17,616	10,224	19,675	90,278	PA
Georgia	3,296	2,522	911	1,102	2,205	10,036	PA
Hawaii	28	19	4	15	24	90	PA
Idaho	671	676	280	257	362	2,246	W/F
Illinois	3,206	2,701	918	953	1,420	9,198	PA
Indiana	648	528	181	262	457	2,076	PA
Iowa	1,342	1,054	411	227	461	3,495	PA
Kansas	167	161	49	99	138	614	PA
Kentucky	1,454	1,327	711	555	1,367	5,414	W/F
Louisiana	521	397	150	113	381	1,562	W/F
Maine	241	224	92	106	187	850	PA
Maryland	975	1,354	418	793	935	4,475	PPP
Massachusetts	1,961	1,964	759	832	1,540	7,056	W/F
Michigan	2,924	2,633	689	546	1,388	8,180	PA
Minnesota	3,492	3,232	701	1,750	5,827	15,002	PPP
Mississippi	47	107	11	3	12	180	PA
Missouri	2,489	2,267	769	444	925	6,894	PA
Montana	15	10	4	34	7	70	PA
Nebraska	552	661	199	212	489	2,113	PA
Nevada	720	553	333	390	722	2,718	W/F
New Hampshire	606	538	255	240	561	2,200	PA
New Jersey	1,605	1,607	587	659	887	5,345	PA
New Mexico	303	285	190	96	194	1,068	PA
New York	6,930	6,988	2,796	2,503	3,683	22,900	PA
North Carolina	1,064	1,065	1,388	596	1,130	5,243	PA
North Dakota	636	367	52	105	222	1,382	W/F
Ohio	1,780	1,364	561	658	1,437	5,800	PA
Oklahoma	102	126	52	61	92	433	PPP
Oregon	1,636	1,499	1,072	866	1,598	6,671	PPP
Pennsylvania	2,602	2,691	1,115	1,322	1,814	9,544	PA
Rhode Island	309	313	40	130	315	1,107	PA
South Carolina	82	85	81	116	150	514	PA
South Dakota	378	298	107	159	329	1,271	W/F
Tennessee	1,078	924	357	458	952	3,769	PA
Texas	4,347	3,804	1,697	1,810	4,086	15,744	PPP
Utah	1,137	922	251	400	772	3,482	PA
Vermont	275	261	89	78	235	938	W/F
Virginia	2,167	1,824	687	850	1,694	7,222	PA
Washington	4,378	4,300	2,615	2,751	3,018	17,062	PA
West Virginia	11	11	1	2	0	25	PA
Wisconsin	599	585	187	236	1,670	3,277	PA
Wyoming	2	0	0	1	0	3	None
Puerto Rico	61	49	43	25	30	208	None
Total	94,222	87,104	45,793	39,201	73,851	340,171	

Source: Office of Refugee Resettlement
http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr/data/refugee_arrival_data.htm

W/F = Wilson/Fish; PPP = public/private partnership; PA = publicly-administered

Notes: Includes Amerasians, aslyees (from Northern Iraq), and entrants

[a] California operates a publicly-administered program in all counties except San Diego, which operates a Wilson/Fish program

GLOSSARY

Amerasian: Certain Amerasians from Vietnam who are admitted to the U.S. as immigrants pursuant to Sec. 584 of the Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 1988 (as contained in Sec. 101(e) of Public Law 100-202 and amended by the 9th proviso under Migration and Refugee Assistance in title II of the Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Acts, 1989 (Public Law 100-461 as amended) and "was born in Vietnam after January 1, 1962 and before January 1, 1976 and was fathered by a citizen of the United States." Amerasians are admitted to the United States as immigrants, rather than refugees. They and their immediate relatives are entitled to ORR-funded refugee services and benefits to the same extent as refugees.

Asylee: Under Section 208 of the Immigration and Nationality Act, individuals who meet the legal definition of refugee, but who apply for asylum status after they are already present in the U.S. or at a port of entry. Asylum applicants can have any (or no) immigration status when they apply. Asylum status can be granted by either a USCIS asylum officer or by an Immigration Judge with the U.S. Department of Justice's Executive Office of Immigration Review. Asylees are eligible for ORR-funded refugee benefits and assistance beginning on the date of their final grant of asylum.

Cuban/Haitian Entrant: (a) Any individual granted parole status as a Cuban/Haitian Entrant (Status Pending) or granted any other special status subsequently established under the immigration laws for nationals of Cuba or Haiti, regardless of the status of the individual at the time assistance or services are provided; and (b) Any other national of Cuba or Haiti (1) Who: (i) Was paroled into the United States and has not acquired any other status under the Immigration and Nationality Act; (ii) Is the subject of exclusion or deportation proceedings under the Immigration and Nationality Act; or (iii) Has an application for asylum pending with the Immigration and Naturalization Service; and (2) With respect to whom a final, nonappealable, and legally enforceable order of deportation or exclusion has not been entered. (Refugee Education Assistance Act of 1980, Pub. L. No. 96-422)

Economic Self-Sufficiency: For the purposes of programs administered by the ORR, earning a total family income through unsubsidized employment at a level that enables a family unit to support itself without receipt of a cash assistance grant.

Date of Entry: An ORR term for the date on which individuals become eligible for ORR benefits and services. For refugees this is their date of arrival in the U.S. (as recorded on the Form I-94 Arrival/Departure Record). For Cuban/Haitian entrants this is the date they were granted Cuban/Haitian entrant status, which is typically the date of their parole into the U.S. For asylees this is the date of final grant of asylum (as noted on the approval letter or immigration court order). For victims of a severe form of trafficking it is the date of certification or eligibility (as noted on the certification or eligibility letter), or date they were granted a T visa.

Legal Permanent Resident (LPR): A non-U.S. citizen (i.e., alien) who has been given permission to remain permanently in the U.S., subject to continued compliance with the Immigration and Nationality Act. LPRs are sometimes called "immigrants" and the I-551 which

is evidence of LPR status is commonly known as a "green card". After five years in LPR status and if otherwise not ineligible an LPR is eligible to apply for naturalization to become a U.S. citizen. LPRs who obtained LPR status by marriage to a U.S. citizen are eligible to apply for naturalization in three years.

Matching Grant: The ORR discretionary Matching Grant program is an alternative to public cash assistance offered through the voluntary agency (Volag) network. ORR provides matched funds to participating Volag affiliates that are required to provide employment services, case management, maintenance assistance (which includes provision of food or food subsidies, housing, and transportation) and cash allowance. Enrollment in Matching Grant services must be within the first thirty-one days of eligibility, with maintenance assistance provided for at least four months, and case management/employment services continuing through 180 days (six months). Services are designed to assist refugees enter employment, achieve self-sufficiency, and not access public assistance.

Medicaid: Medicaid is a state administered program, jointly funded by the states and federal government that provides medical coverage to eligible persons based on age, income, and/or disability status. Eligible groups include children, adults with dependent minors, and SSI recipients. Each state sets its own guidelines regarding eligibility and services.

Mutual Assistance Associations (MAA): A non-profit, community-based organization promoting successful refugee resettlement comprised of refugee populations. Generally, MAAs are small grass-roots organizations that work in specific communities and geographic areas. ORR encourages states to give special consideration to MAAs in contracting refugee services.

Parolee: An alien permitted entry to the U.S. for humanitarian reasons or when determined to be for significant public benefit. Parole does not constitute a formal admission to the United States and confers temporary status only. Absent a change in or adjustment of status, parolees must depart the U.S. when the conditions supporting their parole cease to exist. There are several types of parole, including parole authorized as part of an overseas parole program (such as the U.S. has with Cuba), port-of-entry parole, deferred inspection parole, advance parole, humanitarian parole, or public interest parole.

Public-Private Partnership (PPP) Program: States have the option of entering into a partnership agreement with local resettlement agencies for the operation of a public/private refugee cash assistance (RCA) program. The partnerships facilitate the successful resettlement of refugee by integrating cash assistance with resettlement services and ongoing case management. Through these public/private RCA programs, States are permitted to include employment incentives that support the refugee program's goal of family self-sufficiency and social adjustment in the shortest possible time after arrival.

Reception and Placement Program: Upon arrival, refugees are provided initial resettlement services through cooperative agreements to voluntary agencies (Volags) by the Department of State. These initial "nesting" services cover basic food, clothing, shelter, orientation, referral, and other services for the first 30 days after the refugee's arrival in the U.S.

Refugee: Any person who is outside any country of such person's nationality or, in the case of a person having no nationality, is outside any country in which such person last habitually resided, and who is unable or unwilling to return to, and is unable or unwilling to avail himself or herself of the protection of that country because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion. The term "refugee" is distinguished from "asylee" in that "refugee" refers to individuals admitted into the U.S. under Section 207 of the Immigration and Nationality Act and determined to be refugees before arriving in the U.S., while asylees are aliens in the U.S. who are determined to meet the legal definition of "refugee" and are granted asylum in the U.S.

In this report, the term "refugee" is often used inclusively to refer to anyone eligible for ORR benefits and services (such as RSS or TAG), including refugees, asylees, Cuban-Haitian entrants, Amerasians, victims of a severe form of trafficking, and Lawful Permanent Residents (LPRs) who have held one of these statuses in the past.

Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA): A short-term need-based cash benefit available to ORR-eligible populations for up to eight months from their date of entry. Refugees who meet the income and resource eligibility standards of TANF or SSI, but are not otherwise eligible for those programs, such as single adults and childless adults, and meet other eligibility requirements may receive benefits under RCA.

Refugee Medical Assistance (RMA): Short-term need-based medical insurance available to ORR eligible populations for up to eight months from their date of entry. Refugees who meet income limits and other eligibility requirements, but are not eligible for Medicaid or the State Child Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), may receive benefits under RMA. All recipients of Refugee Cash Assistance but not Medicaid or SCHIP, are eligible for RMA.

Refugee Social Services (RSS): Intensive social services provided to help refugees obtain employment, achieve economic self-sufficiency, and realize social adjustment. Programs that administer RSS services are funded through the Office of Refugee Resettlement, which provides both state grants and direct-service grants. The programs provide employability and other services which may include employment assistance, job training, English language training, and social adjustment. Refugees and other ORR eligible populations are only eligible for this program for the first 60 months from their date of entry.

Section 8 Vouchers: Federal housing assistance for low-income renters provided under the Housing Choice Voucher Program. Assistance is in the form of direct payments to private landlords and limits the monthly rent payment paid by the tenant.

Supplemental Security Income (SSI): Federally-administered program that provides assistance for individuals who are aged, blind, or disabled and have limited income and resources as established under title XVI of the Social Security Act.

Targeted Assistance Formula Grant (TAG): The targeted assistance program funds employability and other services for refugees who reside in areas of high need. These localities are defined as counties or contiguous county areas with unusually large refugee populations, high

refugee concentrations in relation to the overall population, or high use of public assistance among refugees. Targeted assistance services are similar to refugee social services except targeted assistance prioritize serving clients who are long term cash assistance recipients compared to newly arrived refugees. Refugees and other ORR eligible populations are only eligible for this program for the first 60 months from their date of entry.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF): State-administered program, jointly funded by the states and federal government, that provides cash assistance and work opportunities to needy families with dependent children. States are granted wide flexibility to develop and implement their own welfare programs.

Victims of a Severe Form of Trafficking: Individuals who are subjected to (1) Sex Trafficking, which is the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for the purpose of a commercial sex act[49], in which a commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person forced to perform such an act is under the age of 18 years; or (2) Labor Trafficking, which is the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage or slavery. Victims of trafficking are eligible for ORR benefits and services and other federal benefits provided they have been certified as a victim of trafficking by ORR.

Voluntary Agency (Volag): Public or private agencies that provide initial reception and placement services to newly-arriving refugees under cooperative agreements with the Department of State. Currently, the Department of State has such agreements with nine national Volags and one state government agency (Iowa). Local affiliates of these national agencies are also referred to as Volags and are responsible for providing initial "nesting" (Reception and Placement) services covering basic food, clothing, shelter, orientation, referral, and other services for the first 30 days after admission for refugees, and often serve as providers of other services, including RSS, TAG or Matching Grant.

Wilson/Fish Alternative Program: Wilson/Fish is an alternative to the traditional publicly administered refugee resettlement program (as outlined in the ORR regulations) for providing integrated assistance (cash and medical) and services (employment, case-management, ESL and other social services) to refugees and others eligible for refugee benefits. The purpose of the Wilson/Fish program is to increase refugee prospects for early employment and self-sufficiency and reduce their level of welfare dependence; promote coordination among voluntary resettlement agencies and service providers; and to ensure that refugee assistance programs exist in every State where refugees are resettled.

States that determine that a public/private RCA program or publicly-administered program modeled after its TANF program is not the best approach for the state may apply to establish an alternative approach under the Wilson/Fish program. If a state withdraws from all or part of the

[49] Any sex act on account of which anything of value is given to or received by any person.

refugee resettlement program, a public or private nonprofit organization may apply to operate refugee programs in the state under the Wilson/Fish program.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

For definitions of immigration statuses, see USCIS Glossary (http://www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis/menuitem.eb1d4c2a3e5b9ac89243c6a7543f6d1a/?vgnextoid=b328194d3e88d010VgnVCM10000048f3d6a1RCRD&vgnextchannel=b328194d3e88d010VgnVCM10000048f3d6a1RCRD)

For definitions of services provided to refugees and related populations, see websites of the Office of Refugee Resettlement (http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr/) and the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (http://www.state.gov/g/prm/). Particularly useful subpages of these websites include:

- ORR programs page: http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr/programs/index.htm
- ORR benefits and services page: http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr/benefits/index.htm
- Most recent ORR annual report: http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr/data/05arc2.htm#_Ref532867079
- Regulations governing programs administered by ORR: http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr/policy/orr_regulations.htm
- Most recent PRM report on proposed refugee admissions: http://www.state.gov/g/prm/refadm/rls/rpts/52366.htm