



ADMINISTRATION FOR  
**CHILDREN & FAMILIES**

Office of Refugee Resettlement

# Supporting Workplace Success for Refugees

How Workforce Agencies Can  
Collaborate with Refugee Programs

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June 12, 2014

# Habtome Yayinshet

## Northern Virginia Family Service Training Futures Graduate



# Weltee Wolo

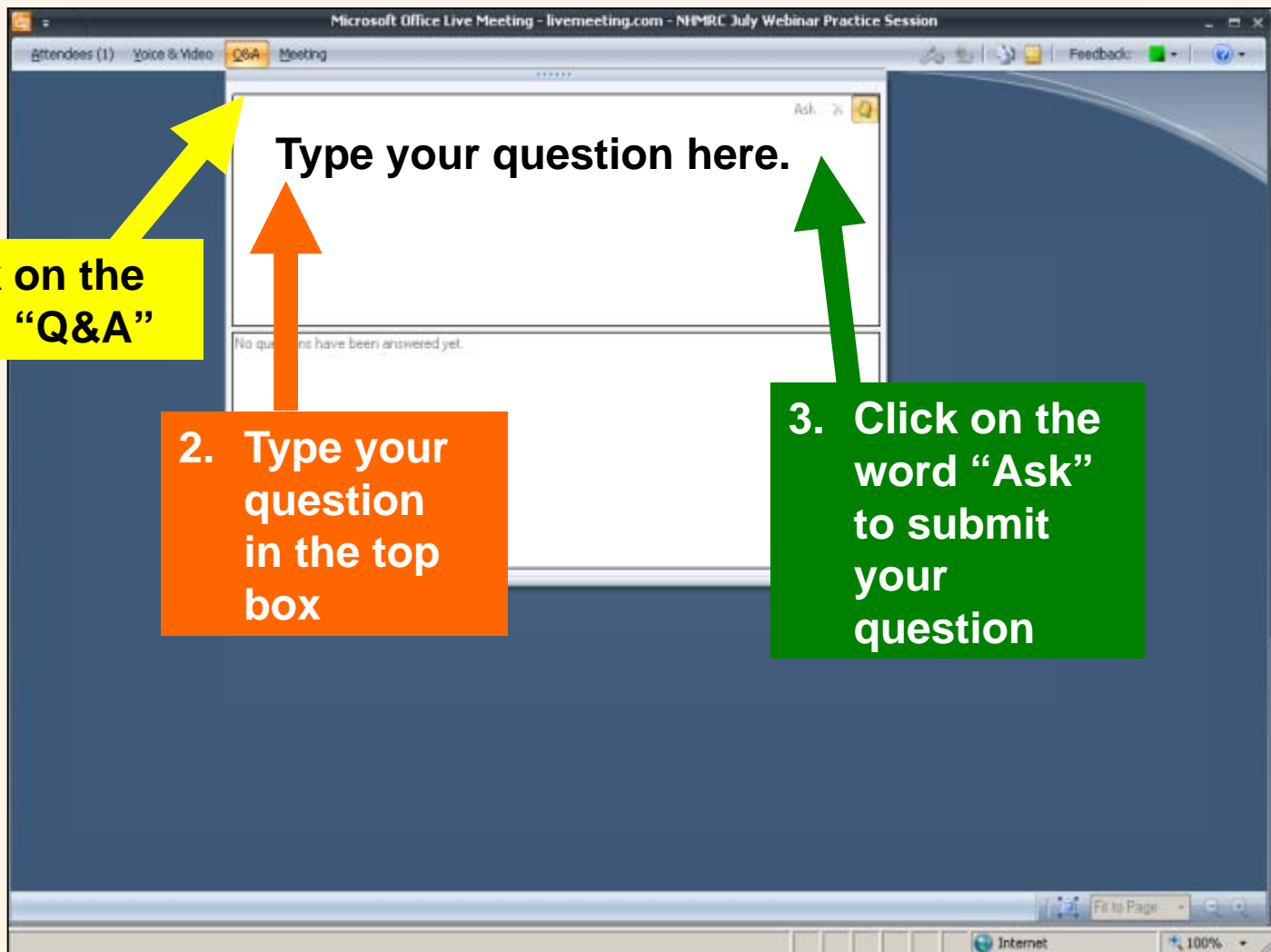
## Anoka County Job Training Center



# Objectives

- Identify who comprise refugees and what skills they bring to the American workplace
- Share information about the refugee resettlement “ecosystem”
- Highlight opportunities for workforce development agencies and refugee service organizations to collaborate to produce strong employment outcomes

# Asking Questions

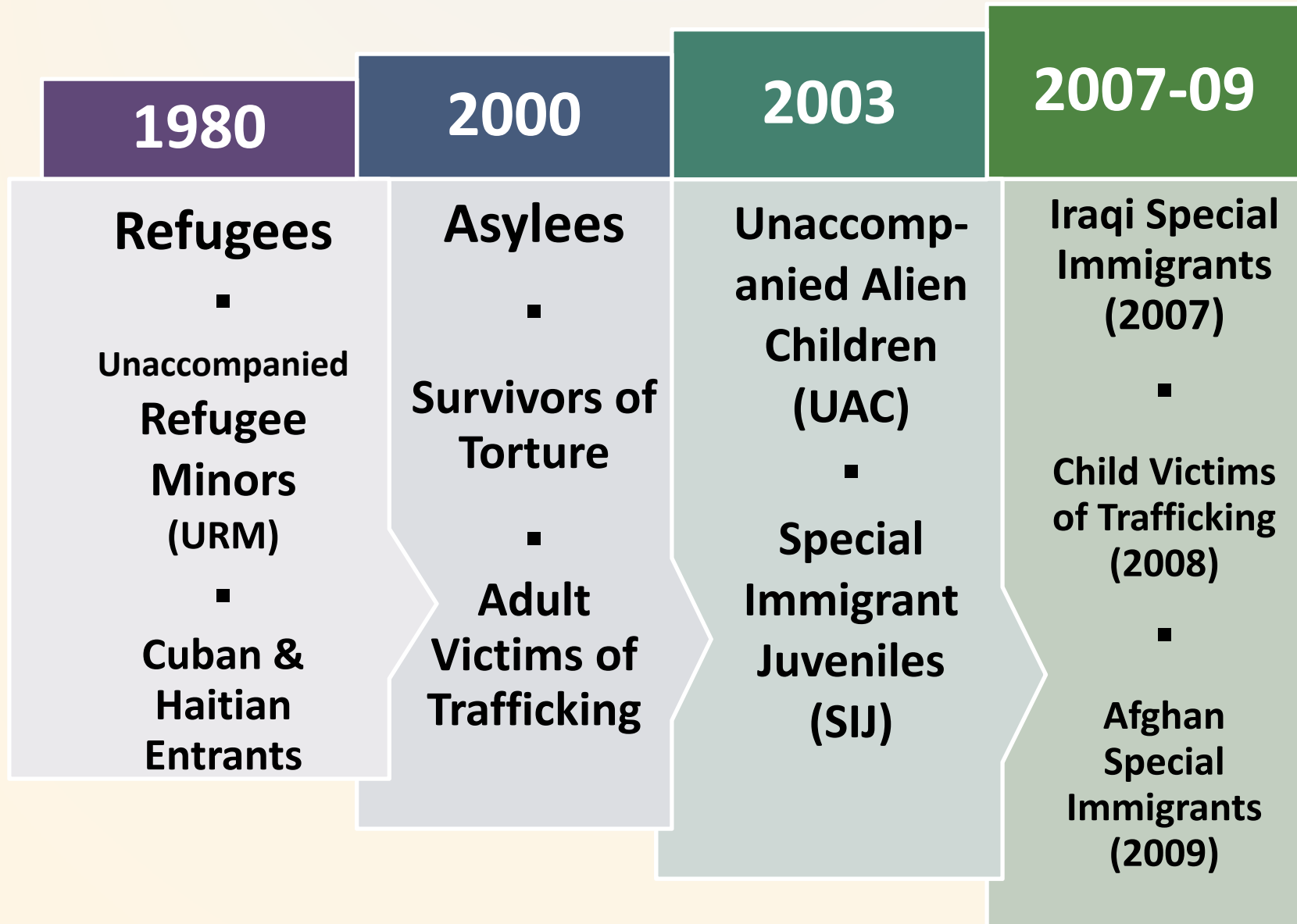


1. Click on the word "Q&A"

2. Type your question in the top box

3. Click on the word "Ask" to submit your question

# Who Does ORR Serve?

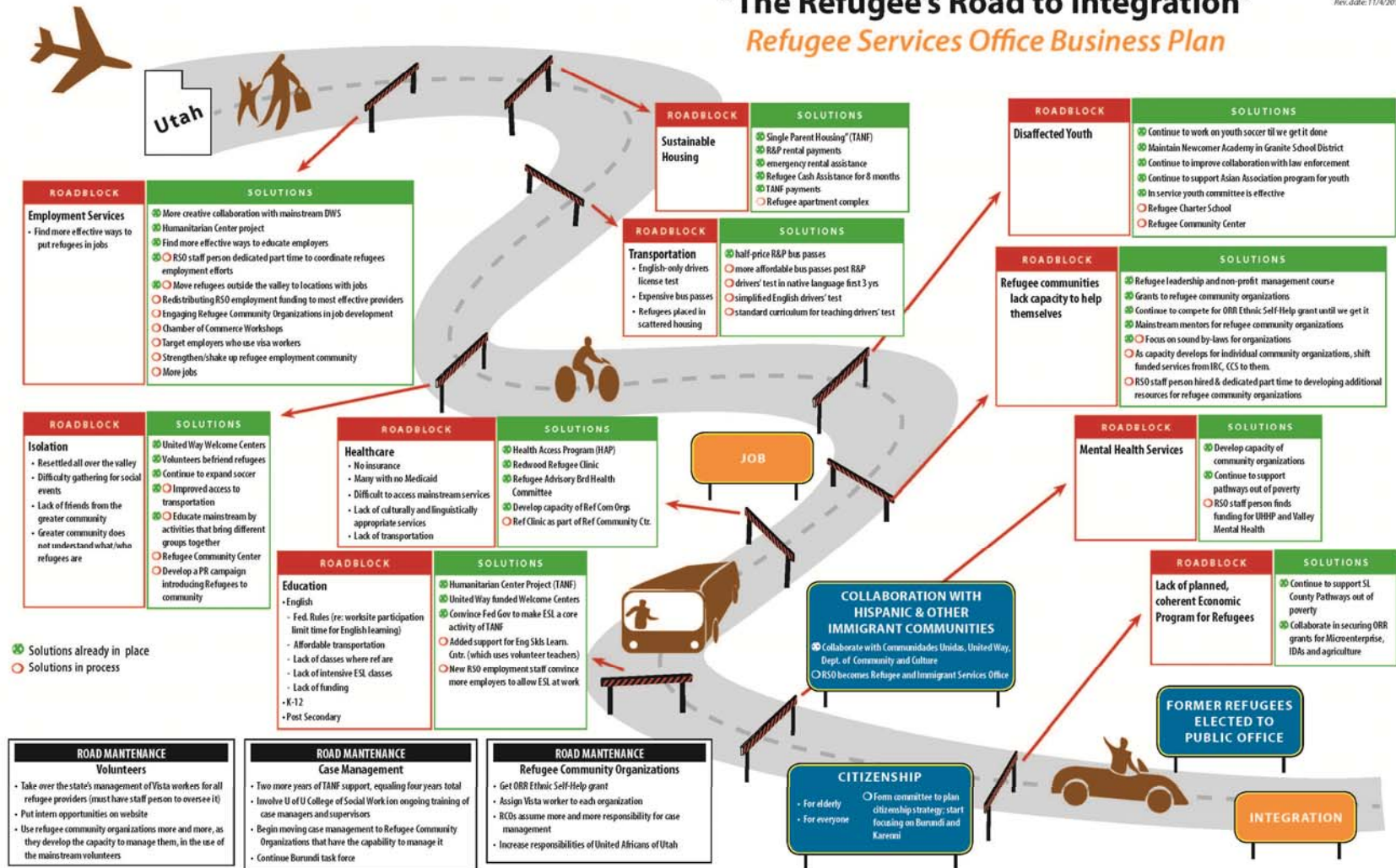


# Refugee Resettlement Roadmap

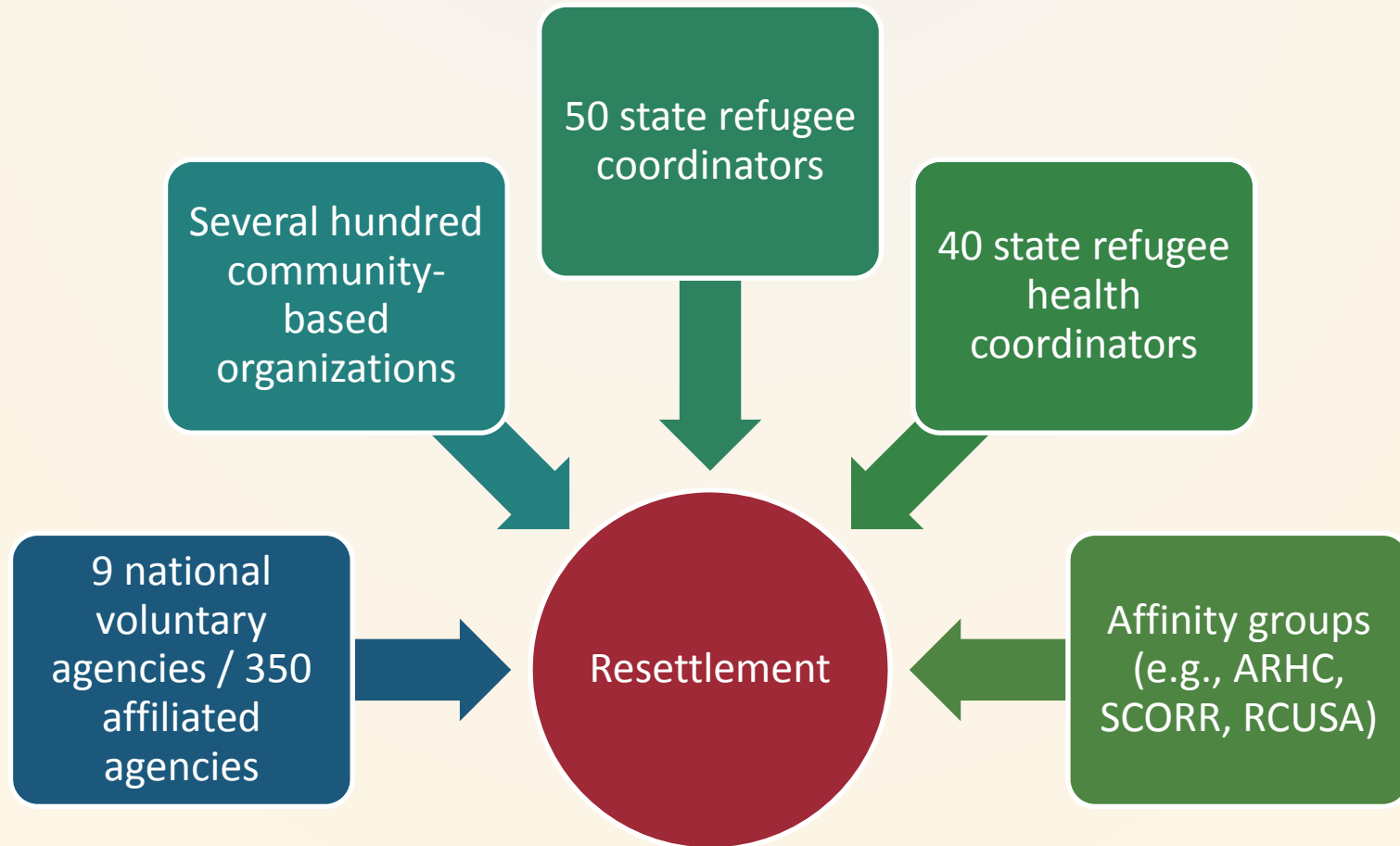
## "The Refugee's Road to Integration"

### Refugee Services Office Business Plan

Rev. date: 11/4/2010



# Refugee Resettlement “Ecosystem”



**Plus:** Workforce development agencies; mayors; governors; city councils; public school systems; human services offices; members of the business community; health care workers, and volunteers



# Refugees Are Eligible for Mainstream Benefits

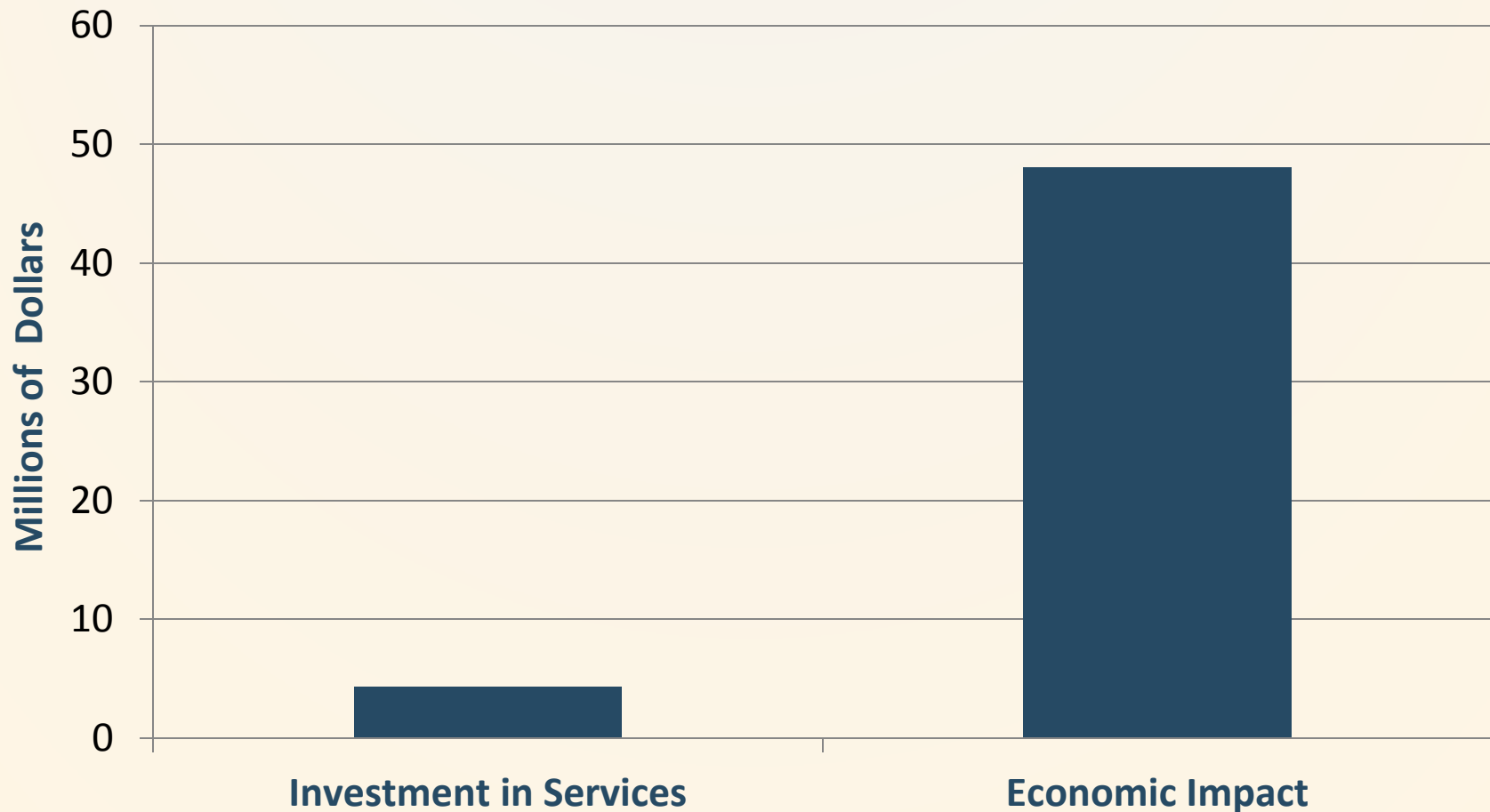
- TANF
- Medicaid/SCHIP
- SNAP/Nutritional Assist./School Lunch
- SSI
- Child Care/Head Start
- Workforce Development Services

# Refugees: Strong Contributors to the Workforce

Refugees bring:

- A range of skill levels and educational backgrounds
- A strong work ethic
- High work retention rates
- Positive economic and community impact
- Tax incentives

# Case Study: Refugee Economic Impact in Cleveland, OH



Source: Asian Services In Action, ASIA Inc.

# Cultural Issues Refugee Groups May Face

- Need for more supports: English language, transportation, childcare
- Highly educated refugees do not want low-level service, factory jobs
- Traditional gender roles may impact work placement
- Trauma, violence and mental health issues
- Need American workforce information: documents needed for work, resume creation, dress and communication for interviews

**PROGRAMS AND ORGANIZATIONS  
SUPPORTING RESETTLEMENT**

# Defining “Successful” Refugee Resettlement

Employment /  
Self-sufficiency

Home  
Ownership

Successful  
Resettlement

Business  
Development

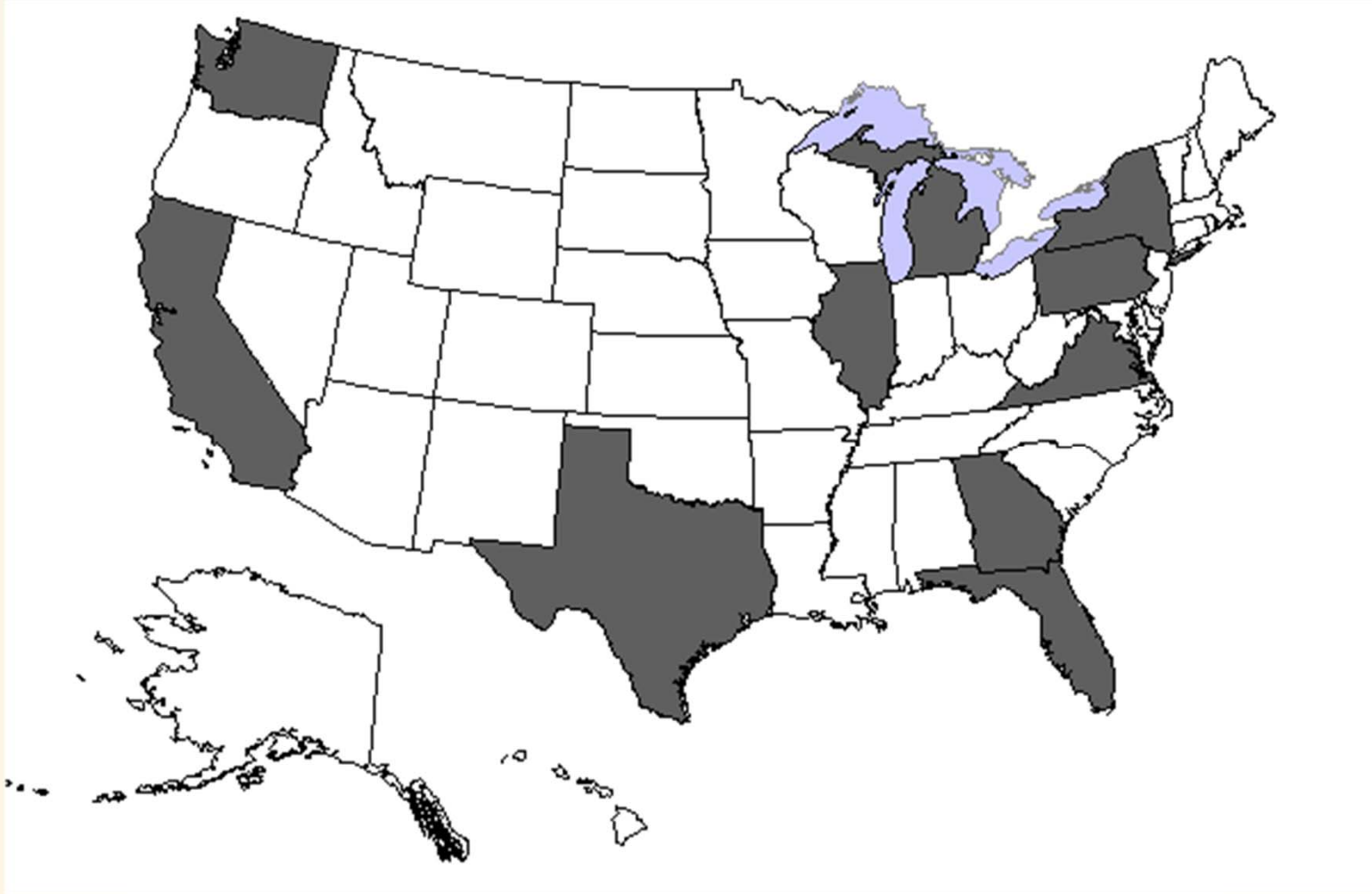
Naturalization

# FY2013 Reception and Placement Program Affiliate Sites



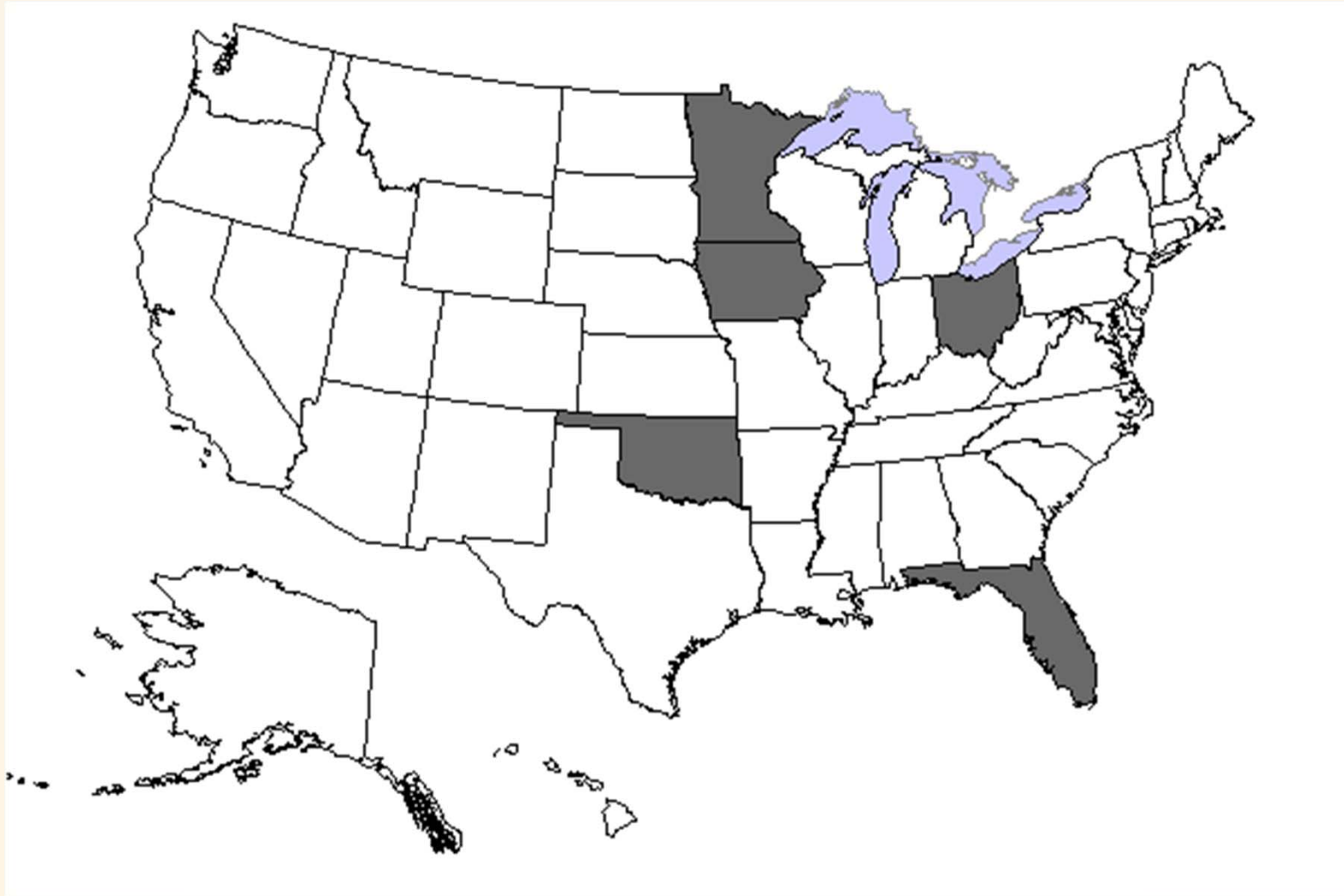
Source: Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, U.S. Department of State

# Top Ten States Receiving Refugees FY2013





# Top Five States for Secondary Migration FY2013



**OPPORTUNITIES  
FOR COLLABORATION**

# Key Strategies

- **Strategy One:** Information Sharing at State and Community Levels
- **Strategy Two:** Refugee-Focused Employment Services
- **Strategy Three:** Integration of Labor/Employment Services for Refugees
- **Strategy Four:** Partnering with refugee community-based organizations as service providers

# Strategy One: Information Sharing at State and Community Levels

- Regular convenings of
  - State and local workforce program staff
  - AJCs
  - WIBs
  - Refugee service providers
- Share information about job development leads, job fairs, best practices, events and trends within the refugee community, and more

# Strategy Two: Refugee-Focused Employment Services

|   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <b>Pre-screen applicants to find the most qualified workers</b>     | <b>Provide a consistent source of reliable workers</b>           | <b>Provide interpretation services for initial job training (when needed)</b> |
| Match employers with dependable employees                           | Offer English classes and workshops about the American workplace | Increase productivity by reducing staff turnover                              |
| Manage external factors so that employees can focus on work at work | Follow-up – do not disappear after the placement is made         | Facilitate communication between the employee and employer                    |

# Strategy Three: Integration of Labor/ Employment Services for Refugees

## WIA Funding Flow

**U.S. Department of  
Labor**

Oversees the service delivery system

**State Agency/State Workforce  
Investment Boards**

Provides leadership to the local boards  
and informs local strategies

**Local Workforce  
Investment Boards**

Provides strategic direction of their areas,  
setting training and investment priorities

**Local American Job  
Centers**

Provides services to jobseekers and  
employees

**Service Providers**

Including community colleges  
and CBOs

# Strategy Three: Integration of Labor/ Employment Services for Refugees

## American Job Centers

- Required AJC partners (linked by memorandum of understanding)...
  - ✓ Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Activities under WIA
  - ✓ Employment Service (Wagner-Peyser)
  - ✓ Trade Adjustment Assistance
  - ✓ Veterans Employment and Training Programs
  - ✓ Unemployment Insurance
  - ✓ Job Corps
  - ✓ YouthBuild
  - ✓ Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)
  - ✓ Migrant and Seasonal Farm Workers Employment and Training Programs
  - ✓ Vocational Rehabilitation
  - ✓ Native Americans Employment and Training Programs
  - ✓ Adult Education and Literacy
  - ✓ Postsecondary Vocational Education
  - ✓ Community Services Block Grant

# Collaborate for Client Referrals

- Arrange for refugees to tour an AJC
- Exchange best practices and job development leads
- Coordinate job fair activities
- Share other knowledge leading to seamless service provision among partners.
- Ask for cultural sensitivity training for workforce staff
- Co-locate employment services once a week



## **Strategy Four: Partnering with refugee community-based organizations as service providers**

- Develop resource guide for staff that includes:
  - Refugee CBOs, including ethnic community based organizations
  - Interpreters, refugee employment specialists
  - Employers hiring large groups of refugees
  - Organizations providing ESL, GEDs, and job training for immigrants and refugees
  - Meet with partners monthly

# Questions Workforce Agencies Should Ask Themselves

- Do we know the refugee service ecosystem in our locale/state?
- Are we *collaborating* with organizations that serve refugees to ensure that all employable refugees get a path to meaningful employment and growth?

# Where are you in your collaboration?

|  | Level 1  | Level 2  | Level 3  | Level 4  |
|--|--|--|--|--|
| <b>Current Partnership Profile</b>   | <p><b>Share information about programs</b> available to families. (i.e. meet with cross-service provider staff routinely to share information, produce a newsletter or brief about the needs and services available to refugees, information and referral efforts in the city for refugees, etc)</p> | <p><b>Staff from your agencies work on projects together</b> to improve each other's services. (i.e. received a grant that supports multiple agencies individual work, improved outreach awareness efforts together, etc.)</p> | <p>We have <b>changed some rules in the community for serving refugees.</b> (i.e. targeted families are first-in-line for services, staff from service providers are co-located, hours or locations of services have changed to be more convenient, etc)</p> | <p>We have <b>changed the "system" of services that affect or support refugees</b> in our community. (i.e. significant funding has been redirected, staff from separate agencies are cross-trained, governing bodies of organizations have adopted policy changes, etc.)</p> |
| <b>Refugee Agency</b>  |  |  |  |  |
| <b>Labor</b>   |  |  |  |  |
| <b>TANF</b>  |  |  |  |  |
| <b>Our summary of current strengths and limitations of partnership efforts</b> |  |  |  |  |

# Questions Workforce Agencies Should Ask Themselves

- Are we educated about the groups of refugees coming to our cities and states? Do we understand their assets and skills they bring to our workforce? Do we understand the challenges they may be facing?
- Are we including all relevant populations—particularly the most vulnerable and underserved/underrepresented such as refugees—in our initiatives, discussions, events, agendas, listservs, or meetings with federal, regional, and state/local partners?

# Resources for More Information

- Office of Refugee Resettlement:  
[www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr/](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr/)
  - See especially the *Employment Resources* page:  
<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr/employment-resources>
- Higher: <http://www.higheradvantage.org>
  - See especially the Online Learning Institute

# Resources for More Information

- ORR and DOL Employment Training Administration (ETA) Collaboration:  
<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr/resource/state-letter-13-04-0>
  - Refugee Mapping Tool
  - “Refugee 101” Webcast and Summary Fact Sheet
  - Models of Collaboration Guide (Forthcoming)

# Upcoming Webinars

- Understanding Labor Market Information for Agencies Serving Refugees
- Preparing Refugees for Employment: The ABC's of understanding the American workplace - resources, tools, and programs
- Models of Collaboration between Workforce Investment and Refugee Resettlement Stakeholders