

Building and Crossing Bridges
**Refugees and Law
Enforcement Working Together**



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Working Together**

**National Crime Prevention Council
Washington, DC**



Bureau of Justice Assistance

Office of Justice Programs ■ U.S. Department of Justice

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**
Administration for Children and Families
Office of Refugee Resettlement



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**TAKE A BITE OUT OF
CRIME®**

The National Crime Prevention Council is a private, nonprofit tax-exempt [501(c)(3)] organization whose principal mission is to enable people to prevent crime and build safer, more caring communities. NCPC publishes books, kits of camera-ready program materials, posters, and informational and policy reports on a variety of crime prevention and community-building subjects. NCPC offers training, technical assistance, and national focus for crime prevention: it acts as secretariat for the Crime Prevention Coalition, more than 120 national, federal, and state organizations committed to preventing crime. It also operates demonstration programs and takes a major leadership role in youth crime prevention. NCPC manages the National Citizens' Crime Prevention Campaign, which includes the McGruff "Take A Bite Out Of Crime" public service advertising and is substantially funded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice.

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The 16 refugee community sites listed at the end of this document built and crossed the bridges that the document describes. The dedicated involvement of dozens of organizations and hundreds of individuals over nearly two years is at the heart of the program and the knowledge reflected here. These people are the real source, as you will see, of much of the pragmatic knowledge and information that makes this document a rich resource.

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INTRODUCTION

In many U.S. communities, large and small, refugees who have fled unsafe conditions in their native countries and have been granted asylum in the United States are experiencing the often difficult process of adapting to their new environment among people who speak a different language and live by a different set of cultural standards. These refugees, who come from Vietnam, the former Soviet Union, Laos, Cambodia, Romania, Ethiopia, Cuba, Iran, Haiti, Afghanistan, Poland, Albania, Iraq and other countries, must face the daily challenges of adjusting to new homes, preparing their children to enter new schools, entering a complex world of employment, shopping for a wide range of new products, and integrating into new social arenas. And the key to meeting these challenges - two-way communication - can be the most challenging task of them all.

Because the United States relies on a system of laws to

maintain social order, it is important for refugees to learn, as quickly as possible, what these laws permit and prohibit in their adopted country. Laws not only reflect a culture's social structure and mores; their violation has direct punitive consequences. The U.S. legal system can seem complicated and overwhelming to a new resident, who must try to understand specific laws as well as the complexities of the culture that the laws serve.

It is also important for newcomers to learn that the law enforcement process in the United States is not a national police force but a series of local, regional, and state agencies that take seriously their obligation to "serve and protect" law-abiding residents. Newcomers need to know that police can teach them how to protect themselves and their families from becoming victims of crime. Many refugees come from situations in which the criminal justice

The U.S. Legal system can seem complicated and overwhelming to a new resident.

Many refugees came from situations in which the criminal justice system operates with tyranny, repression, and fear.

Since 1975, more than 1.6 million refugees have been granted legal asylum in this country.

system operates with tyranny, repression, and fear.

Law enforcement officers and other members of the criminal justice system can help ease this transition by working not only to communicate with new settlers but also to understand them and the complexities of their native cultures. The mere absence of conflict in a neighborhood does not mean that residents of different cultures have found harmony and a cooperative working relationship. True multi-cultural integration occurs when various cultures reach a comfortable day-to-day interaction marked by respect, interest, and caring.

The U.S. Refugee Resettlement Program

The Refugee Act of 1980 created the Refugee Resettlement Program to help refugees achieve economic self-sufficiency as quickly as possible after their entry into the United States. The domestic resettlement program is the responsibility of the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR), an office of the Administration for Children and Families in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The number

of refugees admitted into the U.S. each year is determined by the President in consultation with Congress. In fiscal year 1992, about 132,000 refugees and people of AmericanAsian parentage (Amerasians) were admitted to the U.S. for resettlement. Since 1975, more than 1.6 million refugees have been granted legal asylum in this country. According to the 1990 census, America is home to nearly 20 million foreign-born residents - both refugees and immigrants - the highest number in this country's history.

Until recently, most refugees have come from countries in Southeast Asia. But with political upheaval in the former Soviet Union and Eastern European countries, the number of refugees from that part of the world has rivaled those from Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia.

When refugees arrive in the U.S., they are aided by voluntary assistance agencies (such as the Church World Service, the International Rescue Committee, the Episcopal Migration Ministries, the International Rescue Committee, Inc., the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, the U.S. Catholic

Conference, and other private and religious groups) in obtaining housing, furnishings, food, and clothing for a minimum of 30 days. During this time, they learn how to access health care, employment information, and English language and vocational training.

They may also be assisted in resettling by Mutual Assistance Associations (MAAs), refugee self-help groups who understand the needs and interests of their refugee countrymen. MAAs vary greatly from community to community in their form and in the types of services they offer to newly settled refugees. The nature of services often depends on the perceived needs of the community and available resources. MAAs can provide a broad range of services from helping with English language classes to cultural orientation to job development and placement.

If refugee men, women, and children are to integrate successfully into American communities, two things must happen: The refugees must make an effort to learn about American culture, and, equally important, the host community must welcome its new members and become familiar with the traditions, values, and cultural heritage they bring. Diversity of cultures adds strength to a community only when the people involved understand, respect, and celebrate each other.

Cross-cultural education — when two or more cultures gain understanding of each other's traditions, religious practices, social standards, family roles, ways of thinking, and behaviors — is necessary to developing the kind of harmonious, supportive community that everyone wants. But it is not sufficient. Such learning must be followed by community action.

Community action can encompass a wide range of specific programs, but its ultimate goals should be to formalize community policies and to set standards for cooperation. Communities that have undergone successful change have taken actions that include creating multi-cultural coalitions, instituting school programs to educate young people, establishing outreach and crime prevention programs, and encouraging refugees to work as employees or volunteers with local law enforcement. Community

Refugees must make an effort to learn about American culture; the host community must welcome its new members

action should be tailored to the specific needs of both established residents and newcomers.

How This Book Can Help

This book helps the refugee and law enforcement communities work together in two ways. It encourages novice community activists and law enforcement personnel to work in partnership with members of other cultures and describes the benefits of doing so. And it leads seasoned multi-cultural activists, already familiar with the advantages of diversity, toward programs that will enhance action in their communities.

This book seeks to increase understanding and promote cooperation between members of refugee communities and those who operate the U.S. criminal justice system. It is not designed to "Americanize" other cultures by asking them to substitute American traditions for the rich history of their own countries.

Rather, these chapters will help refugees add new knowledge and understanding to their lives in the United States to help them integrate more easily into the social, academic,

business, legal, and religious life of their adopted country.

Likewise, this book will help law enforcement personnel better serve and protect those in their community who are refugees. Members of the law enforcement community have found that actively reaching out to refugees, through both informal neighborhood contact and special programs and services, substantially improves understanding. Such efforts have been successful in Boston; Lincoln, Nebraska; Seattle; Portland, Oregon; Westminster, California; Elgin, Illinois; St. Paul, Minnesota; and many other cities.

Developing a solid two-way relationship between law enforcement and the refugee community is more than a luxury. Failure to do so can lead to a refugee's sense of fear, victimization, and social isolation. For some youthful refugees, it can lead to or exacerbate gang involvement or other lawbreaking behavior. It can frustrate law enforcement officers and other criminal justice system personnel whose attempts to assist refugees are sometimes rejected or misinterpreted.

This book encourages partnership with members of other cultures.

The phrase "building bridges" is often used to illustrate the process of bringing culturally diverse groups together. It is certainly necessary to build bridges between communities, but true cultural harmony occurs when these bridges are crossed from each side. This book focuses on bridge-building and bridge-crossing.

Communities in which refugees and law enforcement have established close positive ties derive a wide array of benefits. Refugees gain greater access to police and other services, such as youth programs, victim assistance, parenting classes, medical assistance programs, business networking, and neighborhood groups. Crime decreases in communities where law enforcement officers help refugees learn to protect themselves more effectively against crime. Law enforcement officers can more easily assist refugees who are victims of crime.

This book can help those who work in the criminal justice system develop more constructive relations with the refugee community. Community service officers, crime prevention organizations,

local neighborhood associations, victim service providers, mediators, teachers of English as a Second Language (ESL), civic leaders, and school and community-based organizations will find this information useful. It will also be helpful to Mutual Assistance Associations (MAAs), voluntary agency staff, state refugee coordinators, and others working with refugee resettlement.

The examples in this book are offered by U.S. communities that successfully host refugees from a wide variety of cultures. In Seattle, Washington, the Khmer Community works with the police department to present workshops for businesses and residents on crime prevention. In Abbeville, Louisiana, the Migration and Refugee Services organization educates Vietnamese refugees about reporting crimes. At St. Rita's Asian Center in the Bronx, New York, Cambodian and Vietnamese staff members provide crisis intervention and victim assistance information. The Inter-cultural Mutual Assistance Association of Rochester, Minnesota, has four full-time interpreters on staff - Lao, H'mong, Cambodian, and Vietnamese - to offer education, counsel-

It is certainly necessary to build bridges, but true cultural harmony occurs when these bridges are crossed from each side.

U.S. communities successfully host refugees from a wide variety of cultures.

ing, recreation, mediation, and employment services.

Although many of the examples are specific to partnerships between law enforcement and Asian (Laotian, Cambodian, Vietnamese, H'mong) refugee communities, the principles of bridge-building between cultures apply to all communities and cultures. It is important to determine the specific needs of individual communities and cultures, but the bridge foundations are universal.

This book is organized into three chapters and closes with 'An Optimistic Word' about the possibilities of the future and lists of additional resources.

- **Chapter 1. A Chapter for Everyone** explains how cultural differences can be a challenge and a benefit and guides culturally diverse community members through the bridge-building and bridge-crossing process.
- **Chapter 11. A Chapter for Law Enforcement** illustrates a refugee's experience in a new country, offers methods for establishing trusting relations with refugee communities, and explains how challenges

presented by cultural differences can be addressed constructively.

- **Chapter III. A Chapter for Refugee Organizations** reviews the principles and basic procedures of the U.S. criminal justice system and explains how law enforcement can help refugees adapt to life in the United States.
- **An Optimistic Word** provides a glimpse into the future of communities with multi-cultural populations; and
- **Helpful Lists** includes sites with active refugee-law enforcement programs and State Refugee Coordinators, complementing the resources listed with each chapter.

Once community activists and law enforcement personnel gain an understanding of refugee resettlement, law enforcement and community accommodation, the appropriate action is up to them. This book provides resources rich in experience — people and organizations who act as guides to solutions for problems many communi-

ties have today. These experts welcome inquiries and stand ready to share their stories.

A Note About Terms

Although specific terms will be explained throughout the book, we have already used three terms that need some clarification: refugee, law enforcement, and program.

A refugee under U.S. law must meet explicit criteria. According to the law, a refugee is someone who leaves or escapes from his or her own country because of a well-founded fear of persecution due to race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion. Refugees admitted to the United States may have close ties to the U.S. through prior employment or education or through relatives who have already settled here. Refugees differ from immigrants, who might have chosen to leave their native country to seek better economic or other opportunities but did not leave out of significant fear of persecution on the grounds noted above.

In this book, law enforcement includes sworn officers, of course. But others in the

criminal justice community can also benefit from it: non-sworn law enforcement staff; community relations officers; crime prevention officers; police detectives and criminal investigators; prosecutors district attorneys, and other legal staff; judges and other court personnel; corrections, parole, and probation officers.

The programs illustrated in this book are not meant to be finite, with defined beginnings and endings. They should become standard operating procedure, the way of doing business, for both the refugee community and law enforcement. The daily needs of refugees in the community should fall within the parameters of routine police services as do the elderly, at-risk teens, and people with other special needs. Likewise, refugees must consider their new roles in their new neighborhoods as ongoing, lifetime commitments to community involvement.

This document looks specifically at refugees, but much of what it describes can also help law enforcement and immigrants develop a positive, mutually supportive relationship.

This document looks specifically at refugees, but it can also help law enforcement and immigrants develop a positive relationship.

General Resources

Office of Refugee Resettlement
Administration for Children and
Families
U.S. Department of Health and
Human Services
370 L'Enfant Promenade, SW, 6th
Floor
Washington DC 20447
202-401-9246

The primary federal agency responsible for refugee assistance in the U.S., ORR provides funds to states for a limited period of time for refugee medical assistance grants, social services, economic assistance, and the development of basic skills and knowledge necessary to provide for the economic security of the individual or family. ORR also provides funds for community meetings that bring together police and refugee leaders to address local issues of crime.

Bureau of Justice Assistance
Office of Justice Programs
U.S. Department of Justice
633 Indiana Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20531
BJA Clearinghouse: 800-688-4252

BJA oversees and administers a variety of grants programs and other ongoing initiatives to strengthen criminal justice at the state and local levels. It provides

technical assistance, reports on programs, and a variety of other forms of help to law enforcement agencies and others working to make communities safer. For specific information and materials, call the BJA Clearinghouse.

National Crime Prevention Council
1700 K Street, NW, Second Floor
Washington, DC 20006-3817
202-466-6272

A private, non-profit organization whose principal mission is to enable people to prevent crime and build safer, more caring communities. NCPC publishes books, brochures, program kits, and other reproducible materials; operates demonstration programs; provides training on a wide range of topics; and offers technical assistance and referral services.

Community Relations Service
U.S. Department of Justice
5550 Friendship Boulevard
Suite 330
Chevy Chase, Maryland 20815
301-492-5929

A division of the U.S. Justice Department that provides dispute mediation to communities experiencing racial or cultural strife.

CHAPTER I

A CHAPTER FOR EVERYONE

This chapter contains information intended to help both groups refugees and law enforcement - understand the value of establishing a partnership. It also highlights some of the challenges that have been encountered by communities with refugee populations and suggests ways to overcome them.

Addressing — and Celebrating — Differences

"Variety is the spice of life" is a phrase familiar to most English speakers. Natives of other cultures may know similar phrases in their language, such as the French "Vive le difference! ", that celebrate the fact that our lives aren't all the same. The daily experiences of members of the H'mong community, Soviet Jews, Afghans, and Ethiopians, for example, are vastly different from those of most residents of the United States. But there are many similarities. Members of all cultures seek security, safety from harm, the ability to raise

their children to be productive adults, the freedom to express their values and religious beliefs, and the opportunity to meet their families' financial needs.

The United States has long been a haven for people from other cultures who feel they can no longer live safely in their own homelands. In addition, the U.S. has a proud history of cultural diversity, a rich mixture of backgrounds that has brought strength to this country. In many U.S. cities, anyone observing a public gathering sees a variegated patchwork of skin colors, facial features, clothing, and hair styles representative of cultures around the planet.

With approximately 20 million foreign-born residents recorded in the 1990 U.S. census, people across the country are revising the ways they think about community life, political influence, social association, and economic equality. The need to integrate

The need to integrate many cultures is becoming a critical issue as we approach the twenty-first century.

many cultures is becoming a critical issue as we approach the twenty-first century.

Communication The First Barrier

Despite the cultural variety already prevalent in many American cities, it is often difficult for a person raised outside the U.S. to settle into a new community. When a Vietnamese refugee family settles in Houston, Texas, for example, they bring with them a lifestyle based on accepted ways of doing things in Vietnam that are dramatically different from those practiced by their American neighbors. It probably takes a considerable amount of time and effort for this Vietnamese family to feel comfortable in the grocery store, at school, in the workplace, or as members of community organizations. Initially, the most daunting barrier to "fitting in" is often the inability to speak or understand the English language.

According to a 1993 Ford Foundation study,
... it should come as no surprise that communication — language — stands out as the most important feature of interactions among newcomers and

established residents. Language binds and separates. Patterns of language usage often express power relations. But they also reveal individual and collective perceptions of the human experience. Language serves throughout diverse communities as a source of inter-group conflict, tension, and distance. Creating institutional settings for language acquisition provides a source of shared interests, an opportunity for interaction and a purpose behind cooperation.

Other cultural differences present daunting challenges. Members of this Vietnamese family will not easily understand routine traffic laws, neighborhood safety tips, the need for a license to catch fish, car registration procedures, or basic legal rights, even if local officials reach out to talk with them. The immediate problem? The police and other civic officials can't speak Vietnamese.

Language is much more than a technical skill; it is a key to economic well-being. Refugees who have

Language is much more than a technical skill; it is a key to economic well-being.

difficulty learning English also have more difficulty finding a job or, if they are able to secure employment, functioning in the workplace. To continue with the example of the Vietnamese family in Houston, the language barrier could pose serious challenges when a helping agency tries to assess skills and past work experience, when a personnel manager needs to explain insurance forms and benefits, or when the first paycheck shows that money has been withheld for something called FICA.

Success in the workplace often requires employees to understand explicit instructions as well as to communicate effectively with their colleagues. For example, if the Vietnamese employee encounters a work-related safety problem, he or she needs to be able to tell someone accurately and immediately in order to get help.

There are nonverbal communication barriers between cultures as well. Efforts to communicate are further hampered by differing styles, gestures, word connotations, and nonverbal expressions. For example, in some cultures a polite person does not make direct eye contact with someone

older or in authority. In America, this failure to look someone in the eye may be perceived as a sign of guilt or deception. In some cultures, gesturing with the left hand is considered an insult. Even within regions, there are important variations. When a Vietnamese adult touches the head of a child, it is a sign of affection. This gesture is taboo in some other Asian cultures where the head is considered sacred.

In America, the regional variations in speech, slang, and accent can be confusing to a newcomer trying to learn English. In Louisiana, for example, its long-standing French heritage has contributed to a colorful variation of English called Cajun, sometimes incomprehensible to visitors. Long-time residents of Maine also speak in a way that may cause first-time listeners to scratch their heads in wonder. Communication problems between cultures are not insurmountable. They can be resolved with energy and time, through special language classes. Meanwhile, progress in understanding can be built through the use of interpreters and translators.

Communication problems between cultures are not insurmountable.

Many refugees have the opportunity to take ESL classes, either through their local resettlement agency or through an adult education program. A number of communities offer such programs free. Some ESL programs use law enforcement materials on personal and home safety as tools for learning English. Law enforcement personnel can quickly learn key phrases of the refugee's language by working with bilingual representatives of the refugee community, who also serve as interpreters and translators. Translators may also be available from local university graduate schools offering language programs.

Language translation and interpretation may seem to be a solution to communication barriers, but they pose serious problems within the context of the criminal justice system. In studies of the experiences of Asian- and other foreign-born residents appearing in U.S. courts, experts have found that court interpreters have "the powerful capability of changing the intent" of the testimony of non-English speaking witnesses.² By substituting key words in a refugee's testimony — for example, "had sex" for "sexually assaulted" — the inter-

preter has presented a linguistically biased version of the facts to the jury, one that can dramatically affect the outcome of the proceedings.

According to Ruth Hammond, an expert who has studied the problem of interpreters in the court system, courtrooms hire untrained "bilingual cooks, secretaries, college students, social workers, and insurance agents" to interpret for witnesses and defendants who have no real assurance that the words heard by the jury will be the "legal equivalent" of what they have stated in their own language.³ The Federal Court Interpreters Act of 1978 established the right of non-English-speakers in federal courts to have certified interpreters. However, many interpreters who fail tests for certification are still found in courtrooms across the country. The system in state courts is worse. A New Jersey Supreme Court task force study found that more than two-thirds of interpreters frequently used in state courts had no training in law and legal terminology, and nearly nine in ten had no interpreting training at all. Though the consequences of these inadequacies are some-

Many interpreters who fail tests for certification are still found in courtrooms around the country.

times tragic, they have their lighter moments. One Spanish interpreter rendered the statement "I now pronounce you man and wife" as "Now you are hunted."⁴

The role of the courtroom interpreter is to present neutral verbatim testimony. Likewise, interpreters working with police officers or other members of the criminal justice system must provide true, accurate, and complete interpretation of the exact statements used by non-English-speaking victims, witnesses, or suspects. A few states are starting to introduce high-standard testing for court interpreters, but most states currently conduct little or no interpreter screening.

If language is a serious barrier between cultures in your community, here are some key pointers for communicating more effectively:

- Be patient when speaking with someone who does not clearly understand your language. Speak slowly and distinctly. Be willing to repeat words or phrases if there appears to be confusion. Remember that

shouting never helps someone understand better. Be careful with your choice of words, selecting those that are clear, straightforward, and simple to understand. Avoid colloquialisms and slang at all costs.

- Allow extra time for investigating situations when the people involved have not mastered English.
- Be sure that someone serving as an interpreter or translator is fully qualified and has had experience. Interpreting under pressure is a difficult task; lack of training can lead to mistakes, misunderstanding, and inaccurate information.
- Be candid about your ability to speak or understand a language. Trying to "fake it" just leads to confusion, misunderstanding, and misspent time.
- Never assume that someone is less intelligent just because he or she doesn't speak English well.

A few states are starting to introduce high-standard testing for court interpreters.

Building trust between two cultures takes two strategies: Learning and doing.

Women are often at the front of the barrier-breaking process.

Forging Mutual Trust

Although the language barrier is serious and immediate, it can be overcome with training, motivation, and time. Overcoming lack of trust and understanding may not be as straightforward.

Building trust between cultures takes two strategies: learning and doing. This is not to imply that lack of trust can always be easily remedied. But many communities have found effective ways to develop and strengthen trust between refugee communities and law enforcement through programs that educate both groups and then encourage community action that brings them together.

Experts who have studied the integration of foreign-born residents into American communities have found that success results from a bottom-up, not a top-down process.⁵ People don't begin to work, plan, socialize, and cooperate with each other because there are institutional policies directing them to do so. Rather, the relationships are developed at the individual level, face-to-face - in the neighborhood, at the grocery store, at school, at the playground, at the workplace. For established residents and

refugees, learning about each other begins with everyday encounters.

Women are often at the forefront of the barrier breaking process. The recent Ford Foundation study on immigration documents that women are generally more active in the community, serving as the connection between newcomers and established residents. They are usually more involved in educational and civic activities, often organizing responses to local conditions. If there are concerns in the neighborhood, it is more often the women who get together to identify the problem, consider options for solutions, and contact appropriate authorities for assistance.

The accumulated result of these day-to-day interactions is mutual trust.

- In Long Beach, California, the Cambodian Association of America learns about law enforcement and personal safety through community education workshops.
- In Elgin, Illinois, the YWCA Refugee Crime Prevention Project is

successfully providing cross-cultural awareness to a large Laotian community. The Project funds a bilingual Lao community outreach worker at the police department who offers victim/witness assistance, translation, and direct police liaison with the Southeast Asian community. This project has strengthened mutual trust between refugees who have been victims of crime and law enforcement.

- In Jersey City, New Jersey, trust is growing between established residents and newcomers from Vietnam and the former Soviet Union. The International Institute of New Jersey is planning to hire a bilingual coordinator and establish a crime watch group. The group also will install a telephone line providing information in English, Vietnamese, and Russian about crime reporting procedures.

Experience shows that when groups come together in a shared task — usually to improve conditions in a

community — they develop strong ties. The Ford Foundation reports on the accommodation between newcomers and established residents in the U.S.:

[These] groups are not searching consciously for cross-cultural means to improve an abstract sense of "quality of life." Rather, in these situations, they are struggling together over a loss of control in the face of dramatic changes in their standard of living. Shared activities reduce tension and competition and build bonds of trust among groups. Other activities, like sports and recreational clubs, also provide opportunity for positive interaction among groups. When given the opportunity, occasion, and shared project, newcomers and established residents show a willingness to work together.⁶

When law enforcement and other services providers work with refugee families in ways that meet their needs as well as respect their

Experience shows that when groups come together in a shared task, they develop strong ties.

culture, refugees become more trusting. As refugees learn to trust law enforcement, police personnel find that their ability to work closely and constructively with members of refugee communities increases. The benefits to each community are substantial.

Discard Those Useless Stereotypes!

A third barrier to harmonious relations among many cultures deserves serious attention because it can hamper understanding. What's wrong with these statements?

All Russians wear thick fur hats.

All Asian kids join gangs.

All Americans have jobs and are rich.

The only thing police officers do is chase criminals.

These statements spring from stereotypes — statements that assign a certain characteristic to all people who are members of a certain group. None of them is true, and they are damaging to the process of building bridges between cultures.

Stereotypes can be modified or erased through personal contact and education, but it is a process that takes time and a determined effort. Sometimes a person may find it easy - a cultural shortcut, of sorts - to rely on stereotypical thinking about someone who has grown up in a different culture. That person may accept certain generalizations about other ethnic groups without taking the time to learn the facts about individuals who have resettled in his or her community. When the tables are turned and the same people become the focus of stereotypical thinking, they usually object strongly, but they are often unaware that they commit this mistake themselves. It takes a conscious effort to discard the tendency to stereotype, which stands as a barrier to accurately see, hear, and understand a person from another culture.

If the Goal Is Cultural Bridge-Building, Who Should Lay the First Plank?

Popular etiquette guides would probably decree that the host community is responsible for making new residents feel wel-

Stereotypes can be modified or erased through personal contact and education.

come. That is what actually happens. When a refugee family settles in America, the Office of Refugee Resettlement makes sure that their immediate needs are provided for several months.

Local organizations also reach out as sponsors and assist refugees with day-to-day as well as long-term services. These services help to make a family feel part of a new community, but other groups and governmental institutions - such as schools, religious groups, neighborhood organizations, youth groups, and law enforcement - also can take important steps to make refugee families feel welcome. Similarly, refugee families must resist the inclination to associate only with members of their own culture. By reaching out, meeting local neighbors and shop owners, inviting new friends to traditional holiday celebrations and encouraging children to participate in sports or youth activities, refugees will increasingly feel comfortable with the daily routines and cultural standards of their American neighbors.

Reaching out must come from both directions. In Lincoln, Nebraska, a free eight-week Citizens' Academy for

refugees has been established to let newcomers know what law enforcement does and how it works, but the refugees need to take advantage of the opportunity to learn.

In Boston, Massachusetts, many of the street signs in certain areas of the city are now posted in two languages. The municipal transportation department made the effort to accommodate people who do not speak English; the refugees worked with the transportation department and the police to make a change that is helpful to resettled ethnic groups in the city.

Bridges Can't Be Built in a Day

For an entire lifetime, people learn about and adjust to the standards and habits of their own culture. Success in adapting to a new culture does not happen overnight, or in a week, or in a month.

If a Cambodian refugee settling in the Bronx finds that American neighbors are slow to accept dress customs, types of food eaten, or family traditions, the community can be educated by sharing her-

Local organizations assist refugees to make (them) feel part of a new community.

Success in adapting to a new culture does not happen overnight or in a week or a month.

Acceptances of some differences, such as dress or cooking, may come quickly. Others may take longer and be more difficult.

To begin bridge-building, determine the needs of your specific community and of the refugee group or groups.

itage in a presentation to school children, through a cultural festival, or at a neighborhood social gathering. It may take time for your neighbors to understand your culture, but it will happen.

If a community service officer in the police department finds that few Cambodian women are taking part in an ESL class at the high school, suggest that the class move to a neighborhood meeting hall or some other place where the women might feel more comfortable. Day care for very young children may be the issue. Ask leaders in the community if there are meeting places that provide safe areas for children and inquire about temporary baby sitting or supervising services. Some refugees may resist joining a community program immediately but may warm up to the idea later if the program is presented through a workplace or at a religious institution.

Acceptance of some differences, such as dress or cooking, may come quickly. Others - those based on less visible cultural concepts - may take longer and be more difficult. For example, Americans tend to view the concept of time

and punctuality as more important than do a number of other cultures. The Asian concept of authority is strongly rooted in the power of the family, headed by a dominant male. Some ethnic groups view problems or conflicts as private, personal matters, not to be shared with law enforcement or others.

Each of these conceptual differences is deep-rooted and not easily - or quickly - changed to conform with the cultural traditions of a new country. But they can be explained, demonstrated, and accommodated within a framework of cooperation and earnest effort to learn and share among ethnic groups. One place to start is in a multi-cultural group, focused on solving local problems.

Creating a Multi-Cultural Coalition and Setting Priorities

It is critical to begin a bridge-building and crossing partnership by determining the needs of your specific community and of the refugee group or groups. If most of the refugees in your community arrived in the United States with a functional

command of English, then your efforts should be directed toward meeting other needs, such as setting up a job fair, helping establish a Business Watch program, or arranging organized activities for young people. Community priorities must be established, preferably through a coalition of all members of the community. This group's task is to accurately assess needs, design appropriate programs, and find funding and other resources, if needed.

In Portland, Oregon, the Police Bureau and H'mong American Unity of Oregon, Inc., an organization of H'mong refugee leaders, signed a Letter of Agreement in support of a comprehensive partnership to educate H'mong families on Oregon law and educate specially designated police officers in ethno-cultural expectations of the H'mong-American community. The refugees promised to assist the Police Bureau by reporting crime, testifying in court, and helping to locate suspects. The Police Bureau promised to train officers to work closely with the H'mong community to ensure greater safety in their neighborhoods.

According to Sgt. Larry Ratcliff and Community

Policing Assistant Doan Thaoanh of the Portland Police Bureau, members of the Bureau first met informally with community leaders, then expanded the group to include representatives of other ethnic groups. They set up a Task Force and developed a mission statement, directing the participants to facilitate communication, cooperation, and assistance between the law enforcement and Asian communities.

The Task Force sponsored a workshop for Asian leaders focusing on why and how the police do their job. The participants then returned to their communities and taught others what they had learned. In return, Asian community members teach law enforcement about their culture and traditions. The Task Force also addresses conflict resolution between ethnic groups and multi-cultural education in schools. It has the support of the mayor, the chief of police, the district attorney's office, and the city council. According to Sgt. Ratcliff, this political support has helped the City of Portland work toward the goal outlined in the Letter of Agreement that was signed by the president of the Hmong American

The Police Bureau and refugee leaders signed a letter of agreement in support of a comprehensive partnership.

As a result ... Asian residents are more willing to report crimes, community members feel safer, fear has been reduced ... and trust has increased.

Unity of Oregon, Inc. and the Portland chief of police:

WHEREAS the City of Portland has made it a concern of priority to empower the citizenry of the City to direct the Bureau of Public Safety to work collaboratively with the various and diverse communities constituting the City of Portland in establishing community based systems of support and enforcement for the ordinances of the City of Portland, and the State of Oregon, i.e. "Community Policing"

WE ... pledge the honor of our respective offices, and the resources of our respective organizations, toward the execution of a comprehensive partnership agreement of mutual policies and practices conforming to the aspirations of the Oregon Constitution, the expectations of Federal, State and local law, in deepest respect toward the ethno-cultural norms of the H'mong customary law (where such law is not inconsistent with the letter and interests of Oregon law)⁷

The Task Force also involves young people in the community by meeting with them at pizza restaurants to hear their concerns. The youth go on summer field trips where counselors talk with them about drug use, violence, and gang activity. The Task Force's future goals for youth include helping them with their homework, encouraging them to stay in school, and securing scholarships for college.

Portland reports that, as a result of the Task Force and the Letter of Agreement, Asian residents are more willing to report crimes, community members feel safer, fear has been reduced in the community, and trust has increased between the Asian population and law enforcement.

When organizing a multi-cultural task force, this checklist offers a good framework:

- Getting started. Will all cultures in the community be fairly represented? Is power evenly distributed? Can the coalition make changes in the com-

munity that will meet the needs of the participants? Is funding available?

- Working out logistics: Is there a meeting time that is agreeable to all Task Force members? Is the meeting place readily accessible to everyone? It might be necessary to schedule two meetings to enable the greatest number of community residents to attend.
- Designing goals and strategies: Are there sufficient data to determine the real needs of the refugee and host communities? Will the strategies result in long-term changes? Are they focused on the real problems? Are the goals reasonable and reachable? Are the strategies agreeable to all coalition members?
- Leadership: Can the leaders work harmoniously together to advance task force goals? Have they developed a system for arriving at consensus within the membership? Are the leaders trained and culturally

sensitive? Are they able to discourage stereotyping and relieve inter-group tensions? Task Force members might consider using facilitators to help develop effective leaders.

- Evaluation: When a program or activity is implemented, is there a system for measuring success and recognizing the efforts of those involved? Any system used to measure success should reflect the group's goals. If possible, group members should agree at the outset on how they will measure progress.
- Sensitivity: Because the task force consists of members of diverse cultures, it is important to be sensitive to the needs of different religious groups when establishing meeting times. Create a multicultural calendar that notes all groups' important observances, and use it.

When structuring a task force or coalition, reach out to a wide variety of groups, such as neighborhood associations, civic groups, parent-teacher

When structuring a task force or coalition, reach out to a wide variety of groups.

Help can also come in the form of volunteerism, talent, and donations of supplies or refreshments.

Conflicts are natural and normal. They can include matters or personal taste as well as matters of ethnic identity.

organizations, business leaders, and social service providers.

A Note About Funding

If the task force or coalition has chosen projects that require money, it will need to look for funding sources — cash or in-kind donations. Foundations and corporations frequently have special funds for local groups. Local community foundations are an excellent resource. The group may apply for funds from local, state, or federal government agencies, through departments of community action, drug prevention, public safety, public housing, neighborhood revitalization, or economic development. Local libraries often have listings on funding resources in the community. The Chamber of Commerce and the local economic development office may have excellent suggestions.

Help also can come in the form of volunteerism, talent, and donations of supplies or refreshments. Don't overlook the assistance of neighborhood residents, students, business owners, and other organizations. Churches and civic clubs are

often eager to get involved with community programs. Just ask.

Managing Conflicts

When culturally diverse groups work together, it is inevitable that conflicts will emerge. Conflicts are natural and normal. They can range from seemingly minor differences arising from social custom, such as gestures or facial expressions, to major differences of opinion, such as the roles of family members. They can include matters of personal taste as well as matters of ethnic identity. The following tips for managing conflicts between cultures are adapted from suggestions by conflict resolution experts.⁸

- Don't try to minimize differences; they are real. Ignoring cultural differences may be as harmful as exaggerating them.
- Let the disputants use language, symbols, and communication styles necessary for expressing themselves. Ask someone who is cross-culturally trained to facilitate — and interpret — the discussion.

- Don't assume anything about the disputants. Accrue and evaluate the facts as they are presented.
- In inter-cultural encounters, what was perceived to have happened is more important in resolving conflict than what really happened.
- Never put anyone down for beliefs or standards.
- Listen carefully and validate the concerns of each party.
- Be patient and willing to learn. Many Americans want quick results. People from some other cultures work on different timetables.
- Use win-win negotiating principles. Try to come up with acceptable solutions - or compromises - for both sides, perhaps using multiple options. Avoid using power plays.
- Reach solutions creatively. In managing a conflict, there are many perfectly acceptable avenues from Point A to Point B.
- Expect different expectations. The rules of the

game cannot be taken for granted.

Nonverbal behavior - gestures, eye contact, silences, seating arrangements, appearance, and concepts of time - have different levels of importance and even different meanings in different cultures. Many cultures emphasize nonverbal over verbal communication, resulting in serious misunderstandings during conflict management. Inviting a cross-culturally trained individual to be a part of the process is critical.

Even reaching agreement can be confusing. "Being reasonable" can vary from culture to culture, making some disputants seem rigid or illogical.

Working With the Media

The media in the community - newspapers, local radio, and television stations - can have both positive and negative effects on multi-cultural bridge-building. On one hand, the media can help by publicizing special events, festivals, social or sports activities, or safety programs that bring together neighbors from

"Being reasonable" can vary from culture to culture.

The media can have both positive and negative effects.

The school system is a natural avenue for reaching children — both refugee and non-refugee.

different backgrounds and traditions. On the other hand, the media sometimes perpetuate stereotypes by running stories that characterize all members of a community by the activities of a few. For example, if there are gang problems in a certain neighborhood, the report on the local news may tend to incriminate all the young people in that neighborhood rather than the few who are actually involved. That same neighborhood may also be the home of young people who have excelled in school, in playing the piano, or in volunteer work with the elderly. Often these kinds of youth are overlooked in the rush to report more sensational news.

An excellent way to encourage the media to spread positive information in the community is to invite them to attend your bridge-building activities. Supply community events reporters with background information, people to contact for further details, and a list of events planned for the future. Ask someone to write a feature story on a refugee family that has adjusted successfully to their new life. Submit details of a program that translates important safety materials into

other languages, perhaps as part of an ESL class.

Working With Schools

- In Lowell, Massachusetts, the Cambodian community outreach specialist working with the police department takes his culture to the classroom, sharing information about his native land and traditions with school children.
- In Willows, California, a family from Laos has taken the lead in battling the language barrier. Both husband and wife are working with the school system to teach ESL classes for Laotian refugees.
- In Rochester, Minnesota, the Inter-cultural Mutual Assistance Association places counselors in public schools to provide intervention and mediation services.
- The Vietnamese Parent Association of Oregon annually presents the Vietnamese Senior Excellent Student Award, which is a

tradition in Vietnam. The Association raises funds from the Vietnamese business establishment, local financial institutions, and other organizations to provide the awards.

The school system is a natural avenue for reaching children — both refugee and non-refugee. Social contact between cultures occurs frequently in the classroom, on the playground, and during after-school events; social contact and interaction form the basis of cultural acceptance. Teachers and other adults can present age-appropriate information to young people during assemblies; in conjunction with curriculum units on geography, government, religion, or social science; or as part of special events, such as cultural heritage festivals.

Check with members of the local school board or the school principal to develop a program that will introduce positive images of different ethnic cultures to young people in the community. Educating young people often serves as sufficient momentum to make changes throughout the community.

General Resources

National Coalition Building Institute
1835 K Street, NW, Suite 715
Washington, DC 20006
202-785-9400

A national organization committed to building coalitions and reducing prejudice in business, schools, universities, and other groups. NCBI sponsors three institutes a year to educate the public about conflict mediation and prejudice resolution.

Community Relations Service
U.S. Department of Justice
5550 Friendship Boulevard,
Suite 330
Chevy Chase, Maryland 20815
301-492-5929

A division of the Justice Department that assists communities experiencing racial or ethnic strife, by mediating disputes.

National Multi-Cultural Institute
3000 Connecticut Avenue, NW
Suite 438
Washington, DC 20008-2556
202-483-0700

The Institute is a national training and development organization that provides a forum for discussion of critical issues of multi-culturalism. It organizes three conferences a year, offers diversity training and consulting, develops educational materials, and maintains a multilingual mental health counseling and referral service.

The National Conference (formerly the National Conference of Christians and Jews)
71 Fifth Avenue
Suite 1100
New York, New York 10003
212-206-0006

A human relations organization dedicated to fighting bias, bigotry, and racism. The National Conference promotes understanding and respect among all races, religions and cultures through education, advocacy, and conflict resolution.

World of Difference
Anti-Defamation League of B'Nai B'rith
823 United Nations Plaza
New York, New York 10017
212-490-2525

National, multiracial, nonprofit organization that seeks to build public opposition to hate group activity and bigoted violence and to assist victims of such violence. Conducts educational programs, research, victim assistance, community organization, leadership training, and public policy advocacy.

Notes

- ¹ The Ford Foundation, *Changing Relations, Newcomers and Established Residents in U.S. Communities*, New York: 1993, p. 20.
- ² Susan Berk-Seligson, "The Bilingual Courtroom," 1990; cited in Ruth Hammond, "Lost in Translation," *The Washington Post*, October 24, 1993, p. C-3.
- ³ Ruth Hammond, "Lost in Translation," *The Washington Post*, October 24, 1993, p. C-3.
- ⁴ Hammond, "Lost in Translation."
- ⁵ The Ford Foundation, pp. 50-59.
- ⁶ The Ford Foundation, p. 6.
- ⁷ Revision Three signed April 28, 1993 by Chief Tom Potter and President Paul Pia Cha.
- ⁸ Inter-cultural Resource Center, Roslindale, CA; Susan B. Goldstein of the Neighborhood Justice Center Data Project (Program on Conflict Resolution, University of Hawaii, "Cultural Issues in Community Mediation"; and Jan Jung-Min Sunoo, Commissioner of the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service, Glendale, CA.

CHAPTER II

AN INTRODUCTION TO REFUGEES FOR THE LAW ENFORCEMENT COMMUNITY

This chapter will help members of the criminal justice community develop methods for serving refugee communities more effectively. It offers suggestions for getting to know newly resettled refugees and helping them learn how to live safely. It also discusses the problems of youth gangs and bias-motivated crimes. Finally, it describes successful cross-cultural law enforcement programs and the challenges they encountered - in communities around the country.

Though many Americans have lived and worked beside people who grew up in a different culture, a large number have not. For those who have never shared experiences with people from other cultures, the "American way of doing things" might seem to be the "right" way, or the "only" way. They are not sensitive to the fact that there are other valid cultural values around the world. This cultural insensitivity may not be intentional, but it becomes a serious barrier to helping

refugees through the difficult process of settling in a new community.

Differences between cultures affect basic standards of behavior, religious or holiday traditions, verbal and non-verbal communication patterns, styles of dressing, social attitudes, work ethics, and family relations. But "different" doesn't mean "wrong."

Different cultures can exist even within a region. The statement that a community of Southeast Asian refugees has settled in a city or town is not very specific. Similar to the regional differences found between residents of New Orleans, Louisiana, and Bronx, New York, substantial differences exist between refugees from Cambodia, Vietnam, and Laos. "Southeast Asian" is a term covering a broad expanse of cultures, all of them in the same section of the world but all having

Cultural insensitivity may not be intentional, but it becomes a serious barrier to helping refugees.

Languages may sound similar but have substantive differences in connotation and phrasing.

distinctive histories, religions, and social heritages.

Regional differences occur between natives of different towns in those Southeast Asian countries. The languages, which may sound similar, have substantive differences in connotation and phrasing. A comparable example from the English language is the British use of "bonnet" for the hood of a car or "lift" for an elevator.

Other refugees also come to the U.S. with adjustment problems - some similar and some quite dissimilar to those faced by Southeast Asians and with a variety of background experiences. One early study (1986) of Afghan refugees found that many of them viewed their stay as temporary and did not put much effort into assimilating into their new community.

According to the same 1986 study, Ethiopians who resettled into the U.S. had high education levels — in fact, many of them had been college students - but their work experience was relatively limited. Knowledge of English varied greatly. The study found that Ethiopians had

serious difficulty adjusting to the U.S.

Polish refugees, many of whom were highly educated, were able to find employment more easily than some other refugee groups, the same study showed. Romanians were generally well-educated, highly motivated to find jobs, and hard-working. However, as a group they did not socialize with existing residents; their churches were their main focus of community interaction.

Why Learn About the Cambodians, the Romanians, the Haitians, or the Laotians?

The answer is simple. They are members of the community that law enforcement protects and serves. Certainly, members of the community share the responsibility for keeping themselves safe, but they can do so only if they understand how, when, and why. That is why they need to understand the police, and the police need to understand them.

Minority ethnic residents may currently represent only a small portion of a jurisdiction's total population, but consider some

Refugees need to understand the police and the police need to understand them.

projections for the future. A study published in 1992 estimates a remarkable shift in American cultural diversity over the next 50 years.² By the year 2040, it is projected that the nation's population will grow to 355.5 million and experience a profound change in its racial and ethnic makeup. That total is expected to include:

- 210.5 million (non-Hispanic) European Americans, an increase of less than 13%;
- 44.1 million African Americans, an increase of almost 50%;
- 34.5 million Asian and Pacific Islander Americans, an increase of nearly 400%; and
- 64.2 million Hispanics, an increase of nearly 200%.

If refugees (or other cultural minorities) live in a community, its law enforcement personnel need to be culturally competent to be able to do their job well. The Community Relations Service of the U.S. Department of Justice says that 'becoming culturally competent is a developmental process for the individual and for the system. It is not something that happens because one reads a book or

attends a workshop or happens to be a member of a minority group. It is a process born of commitment to provide quality services to all."³ Becoming culturally competent requires understanding how values, beliefs, attitudes, and traditions influence behavior.

Coming to America: A Refugee's Experience in a New Land

The formal process of refugee resettlement begins with an official approval from the U.S. Department of State for the refugee, and possibly his or her family, to come to the United States. After arriving in a U.S. refugee camp, the refugee is processed through a Volunteer Assistance Agency (VOLAG) that contracts with the State Department to attend to the refugee's immediate needs for language training, medical credentials, job development and training, living arrangements, and skills leading to self-sufficiency. The refugee may meet with a representative from the state Office of Refugee Resettlement, a sponsor, or a member of a Mutual Assistance Association, who may help him or her

Becoming culturally competent requires understanding how values, beliefs, attitudes, and traditions influence behavior.

with cultural adjustment. This process — and the assistance provided - is highly variable, and in some cases, the resettled refugee may have received little practical assistance before reaching a community.

Try to imagine being suddenly removed from familiar surroundings in Houston, Topeka, Jersey City, or Jacksonville. Imagine being suddenly transported with limited possessions to a community in Poland or Russia where few people speak English. There is some assistance from a local group with housing and immediate needs, but that is all. Imagine being responsible for assimilating yourself and your family into a new community.

Imagine being in this young Vietnamese woman's shoes: Six months after she arrived in the Portland area, she became a victim of sexual assault. She spoke very little English, felt overwhelmed by the strange surroundings, and was terrified after the incident. Even though women in her culture traditionally don't speak of such personal things, she was encouraged to talk to the police about her assault and was assisted with the reporting procedure. She was also

referred to the Women's Strength Program of the Portland Police Bureau that teaches women self-defense tactics. Unfortunately, she could not attend the program because she spoke so little English. However, Portland reports that the program is currently developing a course for non-English-speaking newcomers.

In Lincoln, Nebraska, a Vietnamese family was threatened in their home by a young male who set fire to their trash can after midnight. The suspect then knocked on the door and demanded a hundred dollars to extinguish the fire. The family called the police but were unable to explain in English what had happened. The next day, the family went to the Lincoln Police Department and, with the help of a community service liaison as interpreter, reported the details. The police officer and the interpreter suggested that the family have a home security survey and join Operation I.D. With the family's consent, the community service liaison accompanied the home security officer as he conducted the survey.

In New Jersey, a Vietnamese woman was

Try to imagine being suddenly removed from your familiar surroundings, transported with limited possessions to a community overseas where few people speak English.

injured and robbed by a group of teenagers. She was scared and didn't report the crime to anyone because, based on her experiences in her home country, she thought no one would pay attention. The teens returned to her apartment to harass and threaten her, saying they would kill her if she told anyone. They phoned her, sent her threatening letters, and rang her doorbell. She and her mother, who lived with her, felt frightened and helpless. The woman gathered her courage and reported her experiences to the International Institute of New Jersey. According to Phi Nguyen, the Institute's Crime Victimization Coordinator, the woman sought help from the Crime Victimization Program, which acted as a bridge to services from the local police department. "She now freely reports crimes to the police with the aid of a translator and sees the police as supportive public servants," reports Nguyen.

The complicated realities of laws, rights, and regulations can overwhelm a new resident. The confusion of their new experiences is compounded by strange driving regulations, unfamiliar symbols on street signs, grocery stores with unusual foods, unaccustomed school enrollment

procedures, congested traffic, and the many differences in day-to-day commerce. And everything is labeled in a strange new language. For some refugees, it means starting life completely anew. When they feel comfortable in asking for help, newcomers look to people who can explain the social regulations and institutions that now shape their lives. If law enforcement reaches out with a patient and friendly hand, it can erase old stereotypes and build strong, safe bridges of understanding.

Taking the Lead

Although a partnership is a two-way street, the host community often has the resources and the community base to take the lead in reaching out to new residents.

Additionally, police officers and other members of the criminal justice system are role models for the community at large. If law enforcement takes the first step in working with families from another culture, others will follow that lead. This sets the stage for community-wide action to work more closely with refugees.

To become culturally competent, take the first

For some refugees, it means starting life completely anew.

If law enforcement takes the first step, others will follow.

Actively reach out to all ethnic groups in the community.

step to get to know the new members of the community. Take time out to talk with Cambodian shopkeepers. Spend an hour each afternoon at the playground in the area where Russian families have settled. Ask to talk about home security to a women's group, with help from an interpreter. Actively reach out to all the ethnic groups in the community. Check with local refugee resettlement groups for guidance.

Gaining Access to Refugee Communities Informally and Formally

According to research conducted by the Ford Foundation, positive personal interaction is key to gaining access to refugee communities.' Law enforcement often has excellent opportunities to do this through day-to-day application of community policing techniques. Walking through housing complexes, talking with merchants, attending social or holiday gatherings, getting to know children playing on the street - these techniques are building blocks of inter-cultural trust.

- In Willows, California, ethnic tensions among youth

have decreased since a Community Service Officer began meeting with the parents of Asian gang members.

- In Portland, Oregon, police meet regularly with H'mong community leaders and clan heads to discuss problems in their community. As a result of a better understanding between refugees and law enforcement, refugees are more comfortable in reporting crime, and community members are experiencing both a decrease in fear and a sense of increased protection.
- In Abbeville, Louisiana, the Office of Migration and Refugee Services and the Vietnamese-American Voters Association invited the mayor, a district court judge, and the chief of police to a town meeting focusing on crime reduction. A translator served as liaison in the dialogue.

One of the more effective methods of gaining access to the refugee population is through a local Mutual Assistance Associ-

Positive personal interaction is key to gaining access to refugee communities.

ation (MAA) or voluntary agency that has assisted or sponsored a local refugee resettlement. Although MAAs don't yet exist in all communities where refugees have settled, they are part of a growing movement to enable foreign-born residents to settle in the United States with a greater sense of cultural accommodation.

Some MAAs are loosely structured; others are sophisticated, incorporated organizations. The groups provide a range of services to newcomers, varying from emergency assistance to formal employment and social service programs to long-term community development. They can be categorized into six major types, according to their primary service or program focus:

- Cultural preservation and social activities: generally operating on a voluntary basis and picking up where the domestic resettlement system left off by helping newcomers find a home in American society.
- Religious services: providing traditional religious

and cultural services and/or informal counseling; usually headed by a monk, priest, or other religious leader.

- Special constituency groups: including women's groups, senior citizen societies, specific fraternal groups (such as veterans), students, and professional societies. These groups are usually able to mobilize volunteers and carry out well-organized programs of activities that address the interests of their membership.
- Resettlement/social services: providing a range of services with access to limited public funding. These groups usually have more demands on their services than they can meet.
- Business and economic development: providing programs with the potential to enhance refugee economic power. These groups lay the groundwork for local refugee business associations, chambers of commerce, and community development corporations.

MAAs provide a range of services to newcomers.

- Advocacy and political action: focusing on political action and advocacy, including election year politicking, voter registration drives, and working for selected candidates.⁵

MAAs are an excellent source of help for law enforcement officers seeking to reach out to the refugee community. Many MAAs rely on a network of volunteers to offer interpreter/translation services or to serve as liaison between refugees and elements of the criminal justice system. They also help ease tensions if there is a lack of understanding between newcomers and law enforcement and work directly with law enforcement to establish personal safety, crime prevention, or other education programs. Lists of local MAAs and of Volunteer Assistance Agencies (VOLAGS) are usually available from state offices of the Office of Refugee Resettlement or from the contact for volunteer organizations in the governor's office.

Community Relations

In some communities, officers are accompanied on their beat by personnel hired

from the refugee community. In others, there are sworn Community Relations or Outreach Officers who serve as liaison between the department and the refugee population(s).

The role of community relations personnel is most often defined by the needs of the department and the community. Among the duties described by a number of community relations personnel across the country are:

- serve as general liaison between ethnic community and police;
- educate refugees about law enforcement, sometimes in their homes;
- translate important legal documents;
- meet with parents of gang members;
- begin crime watch groups;
- work with youth groups;
- teach crime prevention to merchant groups and others;
- encourage victims to report domestic violence or child abuse; and
- help when there are medical emergencies or other crises.

According to Lt. Andrew Hall of the Westminster,

MAAs are an excellent source of help for law enforcement officers seeking to reach out to the refugee community.

California, Police Department, the benefits of working with ethnic community relations liaisons include:

- more effective problem-solving;
- minimization of the language barrier;
- reduction of stereotypes;
- cross-cultural education;
- cross-cultural friendship and trust; and
- increased liaison between communities.

Some police officers who come from the refugee community have expressed difficulty in trying to "work in two camps at the same time." Serving as liaison between two communities, they feel that they are expected to solve all the problems for everyone. When hiring an officer or staff member from another culture, it is important that the police department clearly define roles and responsibilities; the organization must provide sufficient support so that the employee can address problems effectively.

It is critical to provide cultural training to refugees who join a law enforcement staff, either as sworn officers or as civilians. Make sure that they

receive comprehensive information not only about crime and the legal process, but also about victim assistance, domestic violence, and the cycle of violence, when victims of abuse continue the violence by abusing others. Often these concepts are perceived differently, or the crimes are ignored, in their cultures.

It is also important to teach ethnic law enforcement personnel how to remain accessible to members of their community. This lesson can often be taught by example: when police officers and staff are accessible to all community residents, refugee employees learn to overcome cultural inhibitions. Create an atmosphere where refugees feel comfortable asking questions. Take the time to find solutions to their problems and concerns.

It is critical to understand that hiring one ethnic employee — or a representative of only one gender — is not sufficient to meet the needs of a multi-cultural community. One officer or staff person is a good start; several officers, including males and females, are considerably better, particularly if the community includes a variety of ethnic groups.

Hiring one ethnic employee is not sufficient to meet the needs of a multi-cultural community.

Police storefront (stations) bring a variety of services to refugee neighborhoods.

Uniformed police officers patrol the public housing communities, making friends with the residents and helping them with their problems.

Hiring ethnic community service personnel should be just one part of a comprehensive strategy.

Storefronts

Police storefronts successfully bring a variety of services directly to refugee neighborhoods in several communities. A storefront in Dorchester, Massachusetts, staffed with one Vietnamese woman serving as community liaison and three full-time police officers assigned to assist her, provides a wide range of services to the Vietnamese community. The storefront staff gives presentations on crime prevention to ESL classes and distributes brochures on crime and gang prevention techniques. They also arrange for court translation and assist with community organization, reaching the community through posters and newspaper ads.

The Dorchester storefront has made strong inroads into the community's fear of crime. According to John Chen, the storefront's Community Service Officer: "When residents see you are making an effort and spending time with the community, they trust you."

Community Outreach

In St. Paul, Minnesota, A Community Outreach Program — ACOP — brings the police department and the city's public housing agency together to offer personal safety and crime prevention programs to the large Southeast Asian refugee population. ACOP has eight uniformed police officers — including three H'mong officers and one plainclothes officer who patrol the public housing communities, making friends with the residents and helping them with their problems. They perform all the regular duties of a police officer, walking through the community on foot during the summer months, and routinely attend resident council meetings, coach athletic teams, and provide leadership for youth activities. There are also two full-time Cambodian crime prevention specialists who have established block clubs that meet regularly.

ACOP also sponsors an Asian social worker who assists young people involved in first-time misdemeanor offenses and provides emergency intervention services and

counseling to families in crisis situations, such as domestic disputes.

The police department and the housing agency have dedicated phone lines with Asian-speaking operators for calls from residents who do not speak English. In addition, more people are willing to report concerns or criminal incidents because they feel they have developed a special relationship with the officers who patrol their neighborhoods. Seven days a week, ACOP has interpreters who provide assistance in English, Lao, H'mong, and Thai.

Working with Young Refugees

Children in the refugee community often feel caught in the middle between the traditions of their parents' culture and the exciting possibilities of their new lives in America. Fashion styles, social activities, and peer interaction can become battlegrounds between members of the younger generation and their more traditional elders. Parents fear that their children will lose cultural ties to their homeland when they choose to speak English, join American youth in their activities, and spend less time with the family.

As rifts grow between generations of refugees, young people sometimes seek support and acceptance from other groups, such as gangs. While their parents are dealing with the difficulties of settling in a new and often unaccommodating country, the teens see youth gang members wearing gold jewelry and driving expensive cars. They equate gang membership with success and acceptance.

Programs that offer alternatives have been able to provide the same sense of acceptance and belonging that youth seek from gangs. To be successful, such programs involve the parents of potential gang members, teaching them parenting skills and ways to recognize the signs of gang activity in their communities. The entire community must be educated and actively engaged in keeping gangs out of their neighborhoods.

When working with young people who come from different cultures, it is helpful for law enforcement to enlist the aid of someone who can help bridge the cultural and generational gap - an adult who understands the traditions, values, and beliefs of the young person's native culture. Many

Seven days a week ACOP has interpreters who provide assistance in English, Lao, H'mong, and Thai.

Enlist the aid of someone who can help bridge the cultural and generational gap — an adult who understands the traditions, values, and benefits of the young person's native culture.

young people are intimidated by a police officer's authority; it is important to develop and foster the understanding that police and sheriff's deputies seek to serve and protect as well as enforce.

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In Lincoln, Nebraska, the Community Services Unit of the Police Department is a sponsor of the Lincoln Asian Youth Club, open to young people who are enrolled in ESL classes. The Club seeks to "help students preserve and promote their own culture(s) and at the same time improve their understanding and knowledge about the new culture through information and community activities such as recreation and entertainment, job readiness and career orientation workshops, and volunteer services." Young members are encouraged to make positive contributions to the community, to pursue higher educational goals, and to become productive citizens.

Meeting every month, the youth attend workshops selected by the members. Some of the workshops included tours of a TV station, a dental college, and a hospital. There have been talks on the techniques of photography and how to apply

for college scholarships. The group helped the Lincoln Asian Community and Cultural Center raise funds for their Asian Night and attended the Governor's Conference on Violence and Youth.

Hate- or Bias-Motivated Crimes

As law enforcement personnel know, a hate- or bias motivated crime occurs when a person or person(s) representing one race, religion, value system, gender, or ethnic origin commits a crime specifically against someone who fits into a group hated by the perpetrator. Bias-motivated violence can be a physical or emotional act performed with the intent to intimidate or harm a person or the person's property.

Incidents of hate- or bias-motivated crimes, from vandalism to murder, are rising. Their victims are four times more likely to be hospitalized for injuries than are victims of other assaults.⁶

The Hate Crimes Statistics Act of 1990 identifies the following as crimes that may be bias motivated:

- damage, destruction, or vandalism of property;
- arson;
- motor vehicle theft;
- larceny/theft;
- burglary;
- intimidation;
- simple assault;
- aggravated assault;
- robbery;
- forcible rape; and
- murder or negligent manslaughter.

Many perpetrators of hate crimes are in their teens, but these crimes have proven to be more than acts of youthful rebellion. Rather, they are violent expressions of feelings about someone considered different and therefore "wrong." The crimes are motivated by a deep emotional commitment to and defense of one's own group, and in most cases are carried out by groups of four or more people — people who would not necessarily have acted alone.

Thomas Lee, the Community Relations Officer for the Willows (CA) Police Department, reports that feelings of hate and bias have decreased since he started making presentations to groups in the community. "Among the young people, there has been much less tension and name

calling," he explains, citing his program as a catalyst for the change. "When you explain the ways of the minority community to the residents — and explain the law enforcement system to the refugees — the myths about each community start to dispel. And there have been fewer newspaper articles that contain myths about refugees and law enforcement since we started giving people factual information."

Officer Lee says that the decrease in hate and bias in his community is directly due to the lessening of tension, brought about by cultural education.

Education is critical to reducing these crimes. Many communities have solicited public support and cooperation to organize hate-violence prevention and victim assistance efforts. Schools educate students about the traditions and standards of other cultures, helping young people develop respect for people from other countries and understand that being different is not "wrong." Neighborhood groups invite speakers from different ethnic backgrounds to enlighten them on a vast array of cultural traditions. Police

These crimes have proven to be more than acts of youthful rebellion.

Education is critical to reducing these crimes.

Refugees may not immediately welcome what they may perceive as intrusions into their lifestyle.

When teaching crime prevention, avoid increasing a newcomer's fear of crime.

departments encourage refugees to report hate violence, helping to bring the perpetrators to justice for their crimes.

Crime Prevention: Personal Safety, Neighborhood and Business Watch

Teaching personal safety and organizing crime prevention programs in multi-cultural communities pose unique challenges. Refugees may take a long time to adjust to their new surroundings, not immediately welcoming what they may perceive as intrusions into their lifestyle. Once trust has been established, interest in and acceptance of local programs will come, even if the process is slow.

The language barrier is the first problem. It can be overcome at least in part with competent interpreters and well-translated materials. When approaching new people in a refugee community, law enforcement will be received with greater hospitality and less reluctance if accompanied by someone the refugees trust, such as a representative from the volunteer agency that helped with the initial resettlement process.

It is important when teaching crime prevention techniques to avoid increasing a newcomer's fear of crime, which could result in isolation from the rest of the community. Accurate information can also emphasize the positive skills of self-protection. Assure newcomers that neighbors, police officers, and community groups are there to help them live safely in their new community.

Developing or expanding a crime prevention program that addresses the concerns of refugees is more successful when it couples efforts to teach personal safety techniques with those that bring the neighborhood together. Personal safety should emphasize such basic rules as locking doors and window, even when someone is home; leaving lights on outside the home after dark; keeping a list of emergency phone numbers posted by the phone; storing large sums of money or valuables in a safety deposit box rather than at home and keeping money safely concealed, except when paying for something.

Neighborhood programs, such as Neighborhood Watch and Business

Watch, encourages residents to watch for suspicious activity in the community and summon appropriate help. When educating neighbors to be more alert in recognizing suspicious activities, also teach them the appropriate action to take. New-comers to the neighborhood may be willing to join a watch program when they feel comfortable being around their American neighbors. Watch organizers should make special attempts to make refugees feel welcome and carefully explain the details of the program.

When organizing a Neighborhood or Business Watch group, ask for help from local government agencies, private advocacy and service organizations, religious institutions, mediation services, and other groups experienced in working with refugees or immigrants. An interpreter will be helpful during meetings. Print materials in appropriate languages, if reliable translators are available.

Evaluating Bridge-Building and Crossing Efforts

It is vitally important to be able to evaluate efforts to build and cross cultural bridges with

the refugee population in the community.

Program evaluation is a practical tool. It shows whether the program should keep doing what it's doing, do more of it, do it differently, or stop doing it.

- Evaluation tells if goals have been reached, such as:
- reducing crime in refugee communities;
- reducing the fear of crime;
- developing long-term programs that help refugees become participating members of the community;
- helping refugees become self-sufficient;
- keeping young refugees out of gangs or other trouble;
- increasing reports of crimes against refugees; and
- raising the quality of life for refugees moving into the community.

Program evaluation has other useful benefits. Valid records of successes (or failures) — barriers faced, lessons learned — will

Ask for help from groups experienced in working with refugees and immigrants.

Program evaluation is a practical tool.

Think in terms of goals, what elements must go into the program to reach the goals, and the expected results.

affect the amount of public, volunteer, and other support the program might attract as well as the amount of future funding it receives.

When setting up a program, think in terms of the goals (desired outcome) of the program, what elements must go into program to reach the goals, and the expected results. For example, if a youth program was established to deal with high school graffiti that makes ethnic slurs against Jewish teens from the former Soviet Union, the program's success might be assessed this way:

- The desired outcome: greater cultural sensitivity among teens and reduction or elimination of ethnic-bias hate crimes at school and after school.
- Program elements: A multi-cultural youth club that sponsors an athletic program, social opportunities for young people from differing ethnic backgrounds, a graffiti paint-out squad, and a twice-yearly assembly program featuring skits and ethnic songs and dances for all students.

- Program results: The athletic program developed into one of the sports highlights of the year, resulting in a yearly tennis tournament with other school teams. After two assembly programs, the American students expressed an interest in sponsoring a multi-cultural food fair as a fund-raiser. Incidents and perpetrators of anti-refugee graffiti were reported to school security and the police department. Six months after the youth club was organized, the graffiti problem was under control. Only one incident and that was non-ethnic - had been reported in the six months compared with six or seven at the program's start, all of which were anti-semitic.

In this example, the measurements of success are two-fold: simply put, the problem — anti-ethnic graffiti — was resolved. Additionally, attitudes toward refugee students changed, as measured by increased interest, involvement, and acceptance by the American students. These changes

can be gauged by student surveys, crime reports, clippings from the student newspaper or the local media, or interviews with teachers, coaches, and other school personnel.

Crime data are valuable as pre- and post-program measurements. They measure the situation before the program began and compare it with the situation after the program has been in effect for a reasonable amount of time, which varies with the type of program.

Mid-program evaluations are also valuable for recording problems that may have developed. If the program is not eliciting the desired outcome, it may be wise to conduct a mid-course correction by changing some of the program elements. A midterm evaluation may also reveal that the program is not working at all and that the best choice is to discontinue that effort and develop a substitute or alternate program.

In these times of limited resources, it is also useful to determine whether the program is cost-effective. Measure both direct and indirect costs that have gone into the program,

such as costs for printing translated educational pamphlets, purchasing athletic equipment, and providing refreshments. Indirect costs can include time at the school, talking with parents about the program, and any travel costs incurred.

If graffiti at the high school is costing \$3,000 a year to clean up and the program that eliminates graffiti costs \$1,750 a year, the program is certainly cost effective.

After the program has achieved measurable success, with evidence that it is making a difference not only at the school but also in the reduced amount of graffiti on buildings in the community, business owners may be willing to become partners by donating funds to support a program expansion — or at least a continuation. They may prefer to donate sports equipment, food for social events, or other in-kind items. Always remember to publicly acknowledge donations from benefactors. Public recognition will elicit continued support from current partners and encourage new partners to get on the bandwagon.

After the program has achieved measurable success, (others) may be willing to become partners.

Successful Bridge-Crossing: A Summary of Actions Law Enforcement Can Take

- When refugees have resettled in the community, take the lead - assign officers to patrol their neighborhood on foot to get to know them, one-on-one. This process may take time, but the time and effort are worth it.
- Ask a qualified bi-lingual member of the refugee community to volunteer or work as a liaison between the refugee and law enforcement communities.
- Set up a storefront in a refugee neighborhood to provide decentralized police and interpreter services. Encourage other government agencies social services, medical, family assistance - to offer services and information through the storefront.
- Start a community outreach program that strengthens trust between law enforcement and refugees through counseling, athletic programs, housing assistance, and other services.
- Make a special effort to befriend young refugees who often find barriers easier to overcome than do their parents. Teaching children to roller skate may help them win acceptance from American children in the neighborhood. Coaching a young boy or girl on a softball team may keep him or her from joining a gang.
- Educate the community about bias- or hate-motivated crimes. Community intolerance of hateful prejudice is the keystone of hate-crime prevention.
- Develop personal safety and Neighborhood or Business Watch programs that include refugees. Take a little extra time for people who are just learning to speak and understand English.

Resources

Center for Applied Study of Ethno-Violence

Room 132, Stephens Hall Annex
Towson State University
Towson, Maryland 21204
410-830-2435

A national center dedicated exclusively to the study of and response to violence and intimidation motivated by prejudice. Collects, analyzes, produces, and disseminates information and materials on programs of prevention and response.

Southeast Asian Resource Action Center

1628 16th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20009
202-667-4690

SEARAC educates the public concerning Southeast Asia and assists private and public agencies in meeting the needs of refugees from Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam. The organization provides a clearinghouse, training, and technical assistance. It addresses such areas as leadership development, advocacy, community empowerment, and international development and reconstruction.

Refugee Women in Development, Inc.
1735 1 Street, NW, Suite 501
Washington, DC 20006
202-289-1104

Helps refugee women resettled in the United States attain social and economic independence and

security. Programs focus on women from Southeast Asia, the Middle East, Central America, and the Horn of Africa. Programs include expanding leadership skills, conducting research on needs and priorities, developing community training curricula, and supporting education and advocacy for refugee women.

The Cambodian Network Council
713 D Street, SE
Washington, DC 20003
202-546-9144

Assists Cambodian-Americans to achieve self-sufficiency through training, leadership development, advocacy, and coalition-building. Programs include information-sharing, site visits to resettled refugee communities, technical assistance to Mutual Assistance Associations, projects for people with special needs (youth, women, elderly), and enhanced public education.

Ethiopian Community Development Council
1038 South Highland Street
Arlington, Virginia 22204
703-685-0510

Nonprofit organization provides a variety of services, such as employment counseling, transitional housing, micro-enterprise grants, translation services, and referrals to Ethiopian refugees.

Notes

- 1 The Economic and Social Adjustment of Non-Southeast Asian Refugees, Vols. I and II, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1986.
- 2 Barry Edmonston and Jeffrey S. Passel, "U.S. Immigration and Ethnicity in the 21st Century," *Populations Today*, October 1992.
- 3 National Crime Prevention Council, *When a Child Reports a Crime*, Washington, DC: 1992, p. 58.
- 4 Ford Foundation, p. 6.
- 5 Le Xuan Khoa and Diane Bui, "Indonesian Mutual Assistance Association" in *Bridging Cultures*, Washington, DC (Publisher unknown), 1980.
- 6 National Crime Prevention Council, *Talking with Youth about Prevention*, Washington, DC: 1992, p. 329.

CHAPTER III

AN INTRODUCTION TO LAW ENFORCEMENT FOR THE REFUGEE COMMUNITY

This chapter is for anyone associated with refugee resettlement and serves to introduce the basic operation of the American criminal justice system. It outlines the issues of refugee victimization and how refugees can work with law enforcement to decrease their chances of being targets of crime. It also provides suggestions for working more closely with American members of the community to break down cultural barriers. In this context, law enforcement can include members of city police departments; county sheriffs' offices; state police and/or highway patrol offices; and federal, regional or state offices of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), U.S. Customs, and Department of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF).

Changes in Policing in the United States

In the past decade, a "quiet revolution" within police

departments has resulted in changes in policies and attitudes about policing.¹ Chief among these is an understanding of the importance of a community partnership in controlling and preventing crime. Police departments and sheriffs' offices are relying increasingly on non-police resources, such as neighborhood associations, other governmental offices, and even youth organizations, to create conditions that increase public safety. Law enforcement has begun to focus on solving problems and assisting the community to learn to live more safely, not just reacting to calls for help.

Experts have documented that crime is heavily affected by social forces poverty, social isolation, low education levels, lack of family stability — and that community — based action must be the cornerstone of any effort to increase public safety.²

With this new emphasis on a police-community

Law enforcement has begun to focus on solving problems and assisting the community, not just reacting to calls for service.

With this new emphasis on police-community partnership comes a wide range of opportunities.

partnership comes a wide range of opportunities for cooperative police-refugee relations. Though not all police departments or sheriffs' offices practice community policing, most have established programs that address personal safety, the fear of crime in the community, victim assistance, youth outreach, crisis intervention, crime witnessing, and social service referral. These programs lay the groundwork for more effective personal, face-to-face contact between the community and members of the police department.

This philosophy of policing, also called problem-oriented policing, emphasizes creative problem-solving and crime prevention strategies based on the identified needs of the community. Police who patrol neighborhoods on foot have greater opportunity to talk to the residents, become acquainted with local merchants, understand local problems and needs, and reduce the fear of crime simply by their presence.

In Jersey City, the International Institute of New Jersey works with the police department in a Crime Victimization Project that provides crime prevention and

other information through workshops to Russian, Cuban, and Vietnamese refugees settled in the area.

In Long Beach, California, police are working to develop close ties to Latino and Cambodian and other Asian people through a neighborhood storefront walk-in center that offers on-site translation of important materials, community education on crime prevention, and after-school activities for refugee youth. They also reach out to ethnic groups through home visits, flyers distributed throughout the neighborhood, and workshops and meetings on issues of concern to residents.

Refugees in any community can access police programs by requesting that the department provide printed materials that describe community-based services. These materials can be translated and distributed door-to-door or through schools, community businesses, or other local agencies that serve refugees. It is critical, however, to ensure that any translation reflects the actual intent of the document by requiring that the materials be "back translated" — translated from the ethnic language back

into English to cross-check for changes or nuances in meaning.

If materials are not available, inquire if there is a community relations or crime prevention officer who can meet with members of the community. If language is a barrier, perhaps a member of the refugee community or the local Mutual Assistance Agency can interpret.

An Overview of the Criminal Justice System

A police department's crime prevention program and other community services directly affect a refugee community, because police are the first point of contact many refugees have with the criminal justice system. It is important for a newcomer to this country to understand how the criminal justice system works. A well-translated guide to the criminal justice system would serve as a valuable resource for refugees newly settled in the United States.

The U.S. criminal justice system is based on state and federal laws that spell out acceptable and prohibited behavior. The system guarantees all residents certain constitutional and civil rights. Such rights include the right to

protection from physical abuse or threats from police to have an attorney present during questioning, to remain silent when questioned without an attorney present, to be heard by the Court, to present evidence on one's behalf, to cross-examine witnesses, and to examine pertinent court files. There is a system of appeals to help ensure these rights.

In a question-and-answer session at a town meeting in Abbeville, Louisiana, the chief of police and district court judge clarified the following set of rights for the Vietnamese audience:

The [U.S.] Constitution guarantees the right to privacy. An officer cannot come into your home unless he has a warrant or unless you invite [him] into your home. [T]here are only three ways a policeman can search your home:

1. If you invite him to do so (give your permission).
2. If a criminal has been followed into the home.
3. If the police hear and believe that

Police are the first point of contact many refugees have with the criminal justice system.

Refugees need access to translated documentation of their rights protected by law.

something inside the home is illegal. [Then] they go to the judge [who reviews the information]; [then] he signs a search warrant.

... No matter who is in your house, you can only use force (gun or any other weapon) if that person comes at you with a weapon.³

One of the most urgent criminal justice needs of refugees is access to translated documentation of their rights as protected by U.S. law. This information should explain as well as cite those rights.

Law enforcement work covers a wide variety of duties, including directing traffic and enforcing traffic laws to investigating accidents, teaching crime prevention, conducting home security surveys, working with community groups to heighten awareness of crime, and investigating serious crimes, such as burglary, assault, and murder.

If a law enforcement officer is called to investigate a crime, the following sequence of events is common (although there can be some variation from one part of the country to another):

1. Someone commits a crime.

2. Someone else — the victim, a witness, a bystander — notifies the police department usually by calling 9-1-1 as soon as possible.

3. The responding officer(s) identifies him- or herself as police, as required by law, and makes sure the victim is all right, or, if not, sees that he or she gets proper help.

4. The police department starts an investigation, which may be conducted by a different officer, to find out what happened, identifying witnesses, if any, and taking their statements and their names and addresses.

5. If the police have enough evidence to identify a suspect, they obtain an arrest warrant from the court and arrest the suspect(s).

6. The facts of the case are presented to the prosecuting (state or district) attorney who determines the appropriate charges to be filed.

7. The accused faces a preliminary hearing where the victim or witness may be asked to testify. The

accused may be allowed to post bail to be released from jail. Bail is an amount of money set by the court to guarantee that the defendant will return to court for trial.

8. The accused stands trial; the victim and/or witness is again asked to testify.

9. The jury or judge decides if the defendant is innocent or guilty, based on the evidence and personal testimony of witnesses.

10. If guilty, the defendant receives a sentence. He or she may (or may not) have to go to jail, pay a fine or restitution (payment to the victim for damages), and/or complete a community service project.

Note in the seventh item above, the U.S. criminal justice system also grants rights to the accused by permitting a suspect to pay (or have paid on his or her behalf) a specified amount of cash, set by the court, as security for being released from jail until he or she comes to trial in court. This is called bail; it may also be called a security release. The suspect who does not show up for trial forfeits bail. Sometimes, if the alleged criminal is considered to be a good risk and

not a physical threat to the community, he or she can be released from custody on his or her own recognizance, without bail, until court proceedings. Other suspects are released under the supervision of another person or a program, such as a drug rehabilitation clinic.

If the defendant is convicted at trial, he or she has the right to appeal the conviction to a higher court if procedural error, a misapplication of the law, or a denial of key rights is believed to have occurred.

If the crime is theft, the victim may get the property back (if it is recovered) and/or receive financial assistance. The victim generally has the right to sue the perpetrator for financial retribution in civil court.

The principles of law enforcement may have been different in those countries represented by the refugees in the community. One critical difference is that in the United States, many law enforcement officers are trained to help people and the community with specific needs, not just "catch the bad guys." The police are responsible for arresting criminals who are then processed through the

The principles of law enforcement may have been different in those countries represented by the refugees.

criminal justice system, but they also help keep people from being victimized. The primary job of law enforcement is helping the community.

Most police and sheriff's departments have crime and drug abuse prevention programs that aim to keep crime and substance abuse out of neighborhoods. These programs are supplemented by instruction in areas such as domestic violence and child abuse prevention, senior citizen safety, home security, and school safety. Police departments are also an integral part of Neighborhood and Business Watch programs, which have decreased the incidence of burglary, vandalism, and other crimes in many communities.

Crime Against Refugees: Avoiding Victimization

Although official crime statistics do not account separately for victimization among refugees, it is valid to assume that newcomers have certain vulnerabilities that make them targets of criminals. Refugees who are uncertain about the workings of the American criminal justice system, who speak or understand little English, and who may be reluctant to talk freely with police authorities due

to experiences in their native land, open themselves to a wide array of crimes, many of which are never reported.

Crime victimizes a community in many ways:

- Residents fear and distrust people around them. Neighborhood anxiety and tension increase.
- Criminals take over public spaces, such as parks, forcing residents back into their houses.
- The prices of goods and services may increase to cover losses incurred due to crimes.
- Local businesses may close or move to a safer neighborhood, thus decreasing opportunities for employment and services available to local communities.
- Abandoned buildings attract further criminal activity — drug sales, arson, and vandalism.
- The sense of community cohesion and pride may deteriorate as individual isolation increases.

Refugees (may) open themselves to a wide array of crimes, many of which are never reported.

- Crime also interferes with civic activity, such as welcoming and supporting refugees. It interferes with a community's ability to deal with constructive change.

Groups or individuals associated with refugee resettlement - and refugees themselves can take steps to decrease their chances of refugee victimization:

- Encourage community familiarity and solidarity. Plan picnics, festivals, or other social events to draw neighbors out of their houses. Plan a wide range of opportunities sports events, concerts, summer day camps, art shows — for neighbors to get to know each other. Neighbors who know each other watch out for each other.
- Get in touch with law enforcement and experienced community crime prevention organizations. Ask them to come into the community to make presentations, such as how to report crimes and participate in court processes.
- Organize a youth patrol — teens who help clean up the

neighborhood, provide baby-sitting services, or assist elderly residents with routine chores.

- Contact government agencies, such as housing and transportation, to address physical problems in the neighborhood, such as abandoned cars, deteriorating housing, and poor street lighting.
- Organize a citizens' committee to design neighborhood strategies for increased personal and neighborhood safety.

Victimization rates decrease when community members learn both how to work together to prevent crime as well as how to work with the police when crimes occur.

How Refugees Can Help Law Enforcement Protect Them

Refugees can contribute to the safety and security of their neighborhoods by learning to work in an effective partnership with law enforcement officials. They can learn how to use crime prevention skills and how to report suspicious activities to the police department. Documents that explain the following steps can be translated

Refugees can contribute to the safety and security of their neighborhoods.

Refugees will find that there are people and organizations who share common interests with them.

into the native language of the refugees in the community.

- Anyone witnessing or experiencing a crime should do the following:
- Call the police (in most communities, 9-1-1) immediately.
- Try to stay calm, even though the experience may be upsetting.
- Tell the police what happened, where it happened, and the caller's name.
- If anyone is hurt, ask for medical assistance.
- Write down everything about the crime to tell the police.
- Try to remember as many details as possible, such as the scene of the crime, number and description of suspects (age, sex, color of hair, height, weight, distinguishing features) or description of criminal's vehicle (make, model, color, license number) and which direction it traveled when it left the scene.
- If asked to make a complaint or testify in court, do so.

Cooperation might keep the criminal from victimizing someone else.

- If asked to identify a suspect in a lineup, do the best possible job, and remember that the suspect can not see the people looking at him.

Joining Groups: Becoming an Involved Community Member

When refugees first arrive in their new community, they are faced with the immediate challenges of learning a new language, adjusting to a new social atmosphere, seeking employment, and establishing a daily routine that fits into the standards and traditions of a new culture. This period of adjustment may take many months — or longer — but at some point, the initial shock of resettlement will be replaced by a feeling of familiarity and accommodation.

While going through this period of adjustment, refugees will find that there are people and organized groups who share common interests with them in neighborhood improvement, community safety, recreational activities, political issues envi-

ronmental concerns, and economic progress, among other things. These groups are able to bring support and power to an issue that individuals alone could not. They work for the betterment of the community in many ways. Many have funds that enable the group to reach its goals more easily.

By becoming active in efforts to improve their community, refugees find their concerns get greater attention from the community. Involvement in local groups such as neighborhood associations, school organizations, service clubs, and church-related groups bring their refugee interests and concerns to a wider audience, resulting in partnerships for positive action.

For example, if members of a Polish refugee group in Chicago find that there are insufficient business networks that include Polish merchants, they can join a neighborhood merchants' association that works closely with the Chamber of Commerce. Through this link, the Polish merchants can bring their concerns to the attention of the Chamber, requesting inclusion in Chamber-sponsored events, such as neighborhood business breakfasts and

seminars. As a result, Polish refugees become acquainted with other business owners and are exposed to a wider range of economic opportunities.

Using Existing Systems To Educate Others

Part of the challenge for refugees is to learn about life in the United States. The other part is to teach Americans about the refugees' native cultures. This two-way educational process is critical for mutual understanding and trust.

Many avenues for cultural education already exist. There are ready-made audiences in schools, special interest groups, law enforcement-sponsored events, religious institutions, neighborhood organizations, civic groups, businesses, and youth clubs. Newcomers can share information about national history, religious traditions, holidays, cooking styles, literature, music, or art.

Approaching a group to offer cultural education can be as simple as making a phone call or writing a letter. Find out the name of the person in charge of

By becoming active in the community, refugees find that their concerns get greater attention.

The two-way educational process is critical for mutual understanding and trust.

scheduling special events. Ask if there are people in the group interested in learning about another culture. Tell the scheduling chairman:

- the subject of the talk is (probably something that would be of specific interest to them, such as a presentation on schooling in the refugee's home country to an assembly at the local elementary school);
- when the talk can be given (ask when it would be convenient for them);
- how long the presentation will take (this will depend on the age of the audience; younger groups tend to become restless during long presentations);
- whether special equipment, such as a microphone, slide projector, blackboard, or record player will be needed; and whether materials will be handed out.
- whether materials will be handed out.

A brief, one-time presentation may expand to become a yearly — or more frequent — event for all the students at the high school, or for a local art museum association, or for a group of music historians. Find

out how many and who the audience will be. Tailor the presentation to the audience's interest, bring artifacts or examples, and leave time to answer questions.

Successful Bridge-Crossing: A Summary of Actions Refugees Can Take

- Plan a neighborhood picnic or other outdoor event to get to know the people who live next door. Remember to invite the police officer(s) assigned to the area.
- If bilingual, offer to serve as a translator and/or interpreter for the police department. Assist in translating important legal documents and crime and drug prevention materials for distribution to the refugee community.
- Learn how to be a good witness and report crime.
- Ask the police department to demonstrate crime prevention and personal safety techniques to residents of the neighborhood or members of a temple.
- If time permits, join community groups, such as the school's Parent-

Teacher Association, the neighborhood association or block group, the Boy or Girl Scouts, a homemakers' club. If work or another commitment conflicts with joining, find out about participating in a one-time special event, such as a weekend cultural fair or group picnic.

- Plan a special event at home and invite new friends or co-workers to share the celebration. Cook native foods, or demonstrate ritual clothing or festival activities.
- Arrange talks about refugee native cultures to school children, community associations, coworkers, religious groups, or special interest organizations.

Resources

International Association of Chiefs of Police
515 N. Washington Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314-2357
703-836-6767

International membership organization of law enforcement executives that develops policy, offers advocacy and training, and publishes information on the full range of policing issues. Can provide law enforcement documents and legal literature for translation.

Police Executive Research Forum
2300 M Street, NW, Suite 910
Washington, DC 20037
202-466-7820

National membership organization dedicated to improving policing and advancing professionalism through research and involvement in public policy debate. Provides an extensive number of publications on a wide range of law enforcement topics, such as community policing.

National Organization for Victim Assistance
1757 Park Road, NW
Washington, DC 20010
202-232-6682

NOVA works to achieve recognition and implementation of victims' rights and services. Provides training, technical assistance, and direct services to crime victims. Maintains an information clearinghouse on issues related to victimization.

Office for Victims of Crime
Office of Justice Programs
U.S. Department of Justice
633 Indiana Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20531
202-307-5983

Federal office addressing the needs of crime victims. Recommends system reforms for improving victim treatment and provides national leadership by administering grants. Supports training, forums, publications, and task forces that help states improve their response to crime.

National Victim Center
2111 Wilson Boulevard
Suite 300
Arlington, Virginia 22201
703-276-2880

Dedicated to reducing the consequences of crime on victims and society by promoting victims' rights and victim assistance, the Center offers training and technical assistance, a quarterly newsletter, legislative database, toll-free information and referral, and a crime victim civil litigation referral service.

Immigration and Naturalization Service
U.S. Department of Justice
4251 Street, NW
Washington, DC 20536
202-616-7762

Administers U.S. immigration and naturalization laws. Provides, through community voluntary agencies, training and

instruction that facilitate immigrants' compliance with legal requirements for residency and citizenship.

National Institute for Dispute Resolution
1726 M Street, NW, Suite 500
Washington, DC 20036
202-466-4764

Promotes development of fair, effective, and efficient conflict resolution processes and programs in new arenas locally, nationally, and internationally. Stimulates innovative approaches to productive resolution of future conflict. Programs include initiatives in public policy, youth, quality of justice, communities, and education.

National Sheriffs' Association
1450 Duke Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314
703-836-7827

Sponsors a number of programs including Neighborhood Watch and National Sheriffs' Institute. Conducts victim assistance program, provides training, research, technical assistance, and publications. Offers consultation and technical assistance in several areas. Partners with American Association of Retired Persons and International Association of Chiefs of Police in Triad program assisting the elderly in preventing crime.

Office of Juvenile Justice and
Delinquency Prevention
Office of Justice Programs
U.S. Department of Justice
633 Indiana Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20531
Juvenile Justice Clearinghouse:
800-638-8736

The central federal agency for juvenile justice and delinquency prevention matters, OJJDP conducts research, funds demonstration programs, and provides training and technical assistance. Administers state formula grant program; disseminates information and publications.

American Bar Association
Section on Dispute Resolution
1800 M Street, NW, Suite 209
Washington, DC 20036
202-331-2258

Sponsors more than 400 dispute resolution programs across the nation. Provides a clearinghouse for conflict mediation information and sponsors a program that encourages law offices to adopt local high schools and assist them in implementing mediation programs.

Administration on Children and
Families
U.S. Department of Health and
Human Services
370 C Street, NW, Room 2428
Washington, DC 20201
202-205-8024

Oversees the Youth Gang Drug Prevention Program, which conducts community-based, comprehensive, coordinated activities to reduce and prevent the involvement of youth in gangs that engage in illicit drug activities.

National Association of Town Watch
Post Office Box 303
7 Wynnewood Road, Suite 215
Wynnewood, Pennsylvania 19096
610-649-7055

Non-profit membership organization that sponsors the National Night Out, an annual neighborhood event that encourages community residents to get to know each other. Dedicated to the development and promotion of organized community crime and drug prevention activities.

Notes

- 1 "Police and Communities: The Quiet Revolution," *Perspectives on Policing*, No. 1. Washington, DC: US Department of Justice, 1988.
- 2 Dennis P. Rosenbaum, "Community Crime Prevention: A Review and Synthesis of the Literature," *Justice Quarterly*, No. 5, 1988, pp. 323-395.
- 3 Durwood Conque, Judge 15th Judicial Court of Louisiana and Michael D. Hardy, Chief of Police, City of Abbeville, Louisiana, n.d.

AN OPTIMISTIC WORD

The United States, like other countries, has had to address problems associated with strained relations between cultures. Unfortunately, sometimes this strain has led to violence by American citizens and by newly-settled residents.

But most Americans and most leaders of refugee groups are intolerant of bias-related crime, and many organizations focus on building harmony and healing between races. Communities highlighted in this book - while not completely free of tension between cultures - are bringing newcomers and established residents together.

The 1993 study by the Ford Foundation urges that the U.S. promote opportunities for resettled refugees to interact with established residents "in ways that build meaningful shared interests and goals while maintaining distinct identities."¹

Identify shared interests:

Diverse cultures come together successfully to improve the quality of life in their community. Focus attention on unifying activities that require the energies and talents of all people to reach a shared goal.

Support local initiatives:

Communities should support policy initiatives that bring together newcomers and established residents. Local initiatives should include education, community development, special events (such as festivals and inter-ethnic conferences), and day-to-day activities.

Participate in the political

arena: Refugees who become citizens should become active in local political processes. The starting point is voting in local elections, but active involvement in the promotion of specific community issues, such as economic policy, community safety, and environmental improvement, can further lead to bridge building and strengthening.

Emphasize language training: Language barriers are a major source of tension between cultures. Newcomers should have easy access to English language instruction, but Americans should also strive to expand their proficiency in other languages.

Strengthen local organizations: Existing organizations need to analyze their resources and goals in light of the new diversity in communities in the 1990s. These groups need to eliminate exclusionary policies and practices and to develop operational policies that make the group more flexible and accessible.

Identify and train leaders: Trained leaders and organizers from both cultures are critical to successful efforts in bringing

cultures together. Leaders must have the ability to communicate meaningfully with a variety of individuals. In many communities, women and teenagers have naturally assumed the role of leaders through their day-to-day interaction with neighbors.

As the Ford Foundation report concludes, finding answers to problems that arise when refugees and other newcomers from different cultures settle in the U.S. can be challenging. But many communities across the country have taken positive steps to accommodate them, and their efforts are producing positive results.

Notes

1 Ford Foundation, page 6.

HELPFUL LISTS

Office of Refugee Resettlement Sites

Khmer Community of Seattle-King County
10025 16th Avenue, SW
Seattle, Washington 98146
206-762-3922

Services available: Residential and business workshops on crime prevention, translation and interpretation, tutoring, group and individual counseling, social services.

Ethnic populations: Vietnamese, Cambodian, and Laotian

•

Boston Police Department
40 Gibson Street
Dorchester, Massachusetts 02122
617-343-4524 or 436-7057

Services available: Court translation, classroom instructors, community organization, and gang prevention.

Ethnic populations: African American, Spanish, Cape Verdian, Vietnamese

•

Cambodian Community of Massachusetts, Inc.
375 Broadway, Room 208
Post Office Box 6013
Chelsea, Massachusetts 02151
617-884-8004

Services available: work in cooperation with local law enforcement to help missing, runaway, and abused children and victims of domestic violence; gang prevention; court translation; domestic violence programs; on-call translation for police department.

Ethnic population: Cambodian

•

Elgin Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA)
220 East Chicago Street
Elgin, Illinois 60120
708-742-7930

Services available: Translation, interpretation, bilingual counseling, legal system information, domestic violence aid, workshops on gangs and substance abuse.

Ethnic populations: Laotian, Hispanic, Ethiopian

•

Lowell Police Department
Community Relations Bureau
50 Arcand Drive
Lowell, Massachusetts 01852
508-937-3208

Services available: Civil rights program, gang awareness, Street Smarts program, Neighborhood Crime Watch, violence prevention; school,

business, and civic group presentations, tours of police station, residential programs.

Ethnic populations: Cambodian, Laotian, Vietnamese, Thai, Hispanic, Polish, Greek, Indian, Portuguese, French, Chinese

•

Migration and Refugee Services
1408 Camel Avenue
Lafayette, Louisiana 70501
318-261-5535

Services available: On-site translation for police, victim assistance, court translation, educational seminars.

Ethnic population: Vietnamese

•

Portland Police Bureau
1111 SW 2nd Avenue
Portland, Oregon 97204
503-823-4106

Services available: Multi-cultural advisory council, 24-hour interpreting service, gang prevention, crime prevention, summer youth activities.

Ethnic populations: Vietnamese, Chinese, Cambodian, Laotian, Mien, H'mong

•

Lincoln Police Department
233 South 10th Street
Lincoln, Nebraska 68508
402-441-7245

Services available: Translation for police, presentations on crime prevention and

victim services, youth group, Refugee Task Force, Vietnamese videos on public access channel.

Ethnic populations: Vietnamese, Russian, Laotian, Cambodian

•

International Institute of New Jersey
880 Bergen Avenue
Jersey City, New Jersey 07306
201-653-3888

Services available: Ethnic advocacy, crime victim counseling, employment services, information and referral, on-site interpreting for police, court interpreting.

Ethnic populations: Cuban, Vietnamese, Russian

•

Willows Police Department
201 North Lassen Street
Willows, California 95988
916-934-3456

Services available: Criminal justice agency documents translation, gang prevention, Southeast Asian Task Force, police interpretation on- and off-site, community crime prevention, referrals, counseling

Ethnic populations: H'mong, Laotian

•

St. Rita's Asian Center
2342 Andrews Avenue
Bronx, New York 10468
718-295-8175

Services available: Court translation, on-site interpretation for police, after school activities, recreation program, victim assistance.

Ethnic populations: Vietnamese, Cambodian,
Amerasian, Ethiopian

•

Inter-cultural Mutual Assistance Association
16 SW 7th Avenue
Rochester, Minnesota 55902
507-289-5960

Services available: Education, counseling,
recreation, community service, mediation,
employment services.

Ethnic populations: Laotian, Cambodian,
H'mong, Vietnamese

•

Cambodian Association of America
2501 Atlantic Avenue
Long Beach, California 90806
310-988-1863

Services available: Storefront walk-in center,
community outreach through home visits
and workshops, on-site translation,
community education, after-school
activities.

Ethnic populations: Latino, African-American,
Cambodian, Laotian, H'mong, Korean,
Vietnamese

•

Westminster Police Department
8200 Westminster Boulevard
Westminster, California 92683
714-898-3315, ext. 591

Services available: Business Watch,
Neighborhood Watch, outreach meetings,
crime prevention presentations, resource
center, translation.

Ethnic populations: Vietnamese, Hispanic

•

St. Paul Police Department
A Community Outreach Program (ACOP)
100 East 11th Street
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101
612-488-9272

Services available: Crime prevention,
counseling, after school activities,
tutoring, Southeast Asian Advisory Board,
advocacy and referral, translated material,
victim services, 24-hour interpreter
services, block clubs, athletic clubs, gang
prevention activities, crisis intervention.

Ethnic populations: Cambodian, H'mong,
Russian, Romanian, Ethiopian, Latino,
Laotian, Vietnamese, Afghan

•

Haltom City Police Department
4916 East Belknap Street
Haltom City, Texas 76117
817-834-3456

Services available: crime prevention, 24-hour
interpreter service, advocacy and referral,
ESL classes, and gang prevention
activities.

Ethnic populations: Vietnamese, Laotian,
Cambodian

State Refugee Coordinators

ALABAMA

State Refugee Coordinator
Department of Human Resources
South Gordon Persons Building
50 Ripley Street
Montgomery, Alabama 36130
205-242-1773

ALASKA

Alaska Refugee Outreach
2222 East Tudor
Anchorage, Alaska 99507
907-561-0246

ARIZONA

Refugee Program Coordinator
Department of Economic Security
Community Services
Administration
PO Box 6123
1789 West Jefferson, 3rd Floor
Phoenix, Arizona 85005
602-542-6600

ARKANSAS

Division of Human Services
Donaghey Building, Slot 1225
PO Box 1437
Little Rock, Arkansas 72203
501-682-8263

CALIFORNIA

Deputy Director
Department of Social Services
1255 Imperial Avenue, Suite 751
San Diego, California 92101
619-338-2799

COLORADO

State Refugee Coordinator
Department of Social Services
Refugee and Immigrant Services
Program
789 Sherman, Suite 250
Denver, Colorado 80203
303-863-8211

CONNECTICUT

State Refugee Coordinator
Special Programs Division
Department of Social Services
1049 Asylum Avenue
Hartford, Connecticut 06105
203-424-5878

DELAWARE

Refugee Coordinator
Division of Economic Services
Department of Health and Social
Services
1901 North DuPont Highway
Connecticut Building
New Castle, Delaware 19720
302-577-4453

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Refugee State Coordinator
Office of Refugee Resettlement
Department of Human Services
645 H Street, NE, Room 4001
Washington, DC 20002
202-724-4820

FLORIDA

Refugee Programs Administrator
Department of Health and
Rehabilitative Services
1317 Winewood Boulevard
Building E, Room 423
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0700
904-488-3791

GEORGIA

State Refugee Coordinator
DFCS/DHR
Community Programs Unit
2 Peachtree Street, NW
12th Floor, #402
Atlanta, Georgia 30303-3180
404-657-3428

HAWAII

Office of Community Service
335 Merchant Street, Room 101
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813
808-586-8675

IDAHO

State Refugee Coordinator
Bureau of Family Self Support
Department of Health and Welfare
450 West State Street,
7th Floor PO Box 83720
Boise, Idaho 83720
202-334-0980

ILLINOIS

State Coordinator
Refugee Resettlement Program
527 South Wells, Suite 500
Chicago, Illinois 60607
312-793-7120

INDIANA

Refugee Co-Coordinators
402 West Washington Street
#W-363
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204
317-232-4919

IOWA

Bureau of Refugee Programs
1200 University Avenue, Suite D
Des Moines, Iowa 50314-2330
515-283-7904

KANSAS

Refugee Resettlement Coordinator
Department of Social and
Rehabilitation Services
Smith-Wilson State Office Building
300 SW Oakley Street
Topeka, Kansas 66606
913-296-6977

KENTUCKY

State Refugee Coordinator
Department for Social Services
Commonwealth of Kentucky
275 East Main Street, 6-W
Frankfort, Kentucky 40621
502-564-6750

LOUISIANA

State Refugee Coordinator
Office of Community Services
Department of Social Services
2026 Saint Charles, 2nd Floor
New Orleans, Louisiana 70130
504-568-8958

MAINE

State Refugee Coordinator
Division of Purchased Services
Department of Human Services
221 State House Station 11
Augusta, Maine 04333
207-287-5060

MARYLAND

State Refugee Coordinator
Maryland Office for New Americans
Department of Human Resources
311 West Saratoga Street
Room 222
Baltimore, Maryland 21201
410-767-7021

MASSACHUSETTS

Office for Refugees and Immigrants
China Trade Center
Two Boylston Street
Third Floor
Boston, Massachusetts 02116
617-727-7888

MICHIGAN

Refugee Assistance Division
Department of Social Services
Michigan Plaza
1200 Sixth Street, Suite 462
Detroit, Michigan 48226
313-256-1740

MINNESOTA

State Refugee Coordinator
Department of Human Services
Self-Sufficiency Program Division
444 Lafayette Road
St. Paul, Minnesota 55155-3837
612-297-3210

MISSISSIPPI

State Refugee Coordinator
Placement Services
Department of Human Services
PO Box 352
Jackson, Mississippi 39205
601-359-4947

MISSOURI

Division of Family Services
Refugee Assistance Program
Broadway State Office Building
PO Box 88
Jefferson City, Missouri 65103
314-751-3823

MONTANA

State Refugee Coordinator
Department of Social Work
Rankin Hall
University of Montana
Missoula, Montana 59812
406-243-2336

NEBRASKA

Coordinator of Refugee Affairs
Department of Social Services
5th Floor
PO Box 95026
301 Centennial Mall South
Lincoln, Nebraska 68509
402-471-9200

NEVADA

State Refugee Coordinator
Catholic Community Services
1501 Las Vegas Boulevard North
Las Vegas, Nevada 89101
702-383-8387

NEW HAMPSHIRE

State Refugee Coordinator
Governor's Office of Energy and
Community Services
57 Regional Drive
Concord, New Hampshire 03301
603-271-2611

NEW JERSEY

State Refugee Coordinator
Department of Human Services
Division of Youth and Families
Capital Center, 7th Floor
50 East State Street, CN 717
Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0717
609-984-3154

NEW MEXICO

State Refugee Coordinator
Department of Human Services
ISD-CAS
PO Box 2348, Pollen Plaza
2009 South Pacheco Street
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87504
505-827-7248

NEW YORK

State Refugee Coordinator
Department of Social Services
40 North Pearl Street
Albany, New York 12243-0001
518-432-2510

NORTH CAROLINA

State Refugee Coordinator
Family Services Section
Department of Human Resources
325 North Salisbury Street
Raleigh, North Carolina 27603
919-733-4650

NORTH DAKOTA

State Refugee Coordinator
Children and Family Services Division
Department of Human Services
600 East Boulevard Avenue,
Judicial Wing
State Capitol, 3rd Floor
Bismarck, North Dakota 58505
701-224-4934

OHIO

State Refugee Coordinator
Department of Human Services
65 East State Street
5th Floor
Columbus, Ohio 43215
614-644-6140

OKLAHOMA

Refugee Program Supervisor
Department of Human Services
PO Box 25352
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73125
405-521-4091

OREGON

State Refugee Coordinator
Department of Human Resources
500 Summer Street, NE
2nd Floor
Salem, Oregon 97310-1013
503-945-6099

PENNSYLVANIA

State Refugee Resettlement
Program Manager
Department of Public Welfare
PO Box 2675
1401 North 7th Street
Bertolino Building, 2nd Floor
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17110
717-783-7535

RHODE ISLAND

State Refugee Coordinator
Department of Human Services
275 Westminster Mall, 5th Floor
Providence, Rhode Island 02893
401-277-2551

SOUTH CAROLINA

State Refugee Coordinator for Refugee
and Legalized Alien Services
Department of Social Services
PO Box 1520
Columbia, South Carolina
29202-1520
803-737-5941

SOUTH DAKOTA

Refugee Resettlement Coordinator
Department of Social Services
Richard F. Kneip Building
7800 Governors Drive
Pierre, South Dakota 57501-2291
605-773-3165

TENNESSEE

State Refugee Coordinator
Department of Human Services
Community Services
14th Floor
400 Deaderick Street
Nashville, Tennessee 37248
615-741-5949

TEXAS

Executive Director
Texas Office of Immigration and
Refugee Affairs
Department of Human Services
9101 Burnet Road, Suite 216
Austin, Texas 78758
512-873-2400

UTAH

State Refugee Coordinator
Department of Human Services
120 North 200 West, Room 325
Salt Lake City, Utah 84145-0500
801-538-4092

VERMONT

State Refugee Coordinator
Agency of Human Services
103 South Main Street
Waterbury, Vermont 05671-0204
802-241-2223

VIRGINIA

State Refugee Coordinator
Department of Social Services
Office of Newcomer Services
730 East Broad Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219-1849
804-692-2218

WASHINGTON

State Refugee Coordinator
Bureau of Refugee Assistance
Department of Social and Health
Services
1009 College Street
PO Box 45420
Olympia, Washington 98504
206-438-8385

WEST VIRGINIA

Refugee Coordinator
Department of Human Services
1900 Washington Street, East
Charleston, West Virginia 25305
304-558-8290

WISCONSIN

State Refugee Coordinator
Department of Health and Social
Services
PO Box 7935
131 West Wilson Street
Room 802
Madison, Wisconsin 53707
608-266-0578

WYOMING

State Refugee Coordinator
Division of Youth Services
Department of Family Services
Hathaway Building, Room 352
Cheyenne, Wyoming 80002
307-777-6081