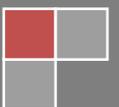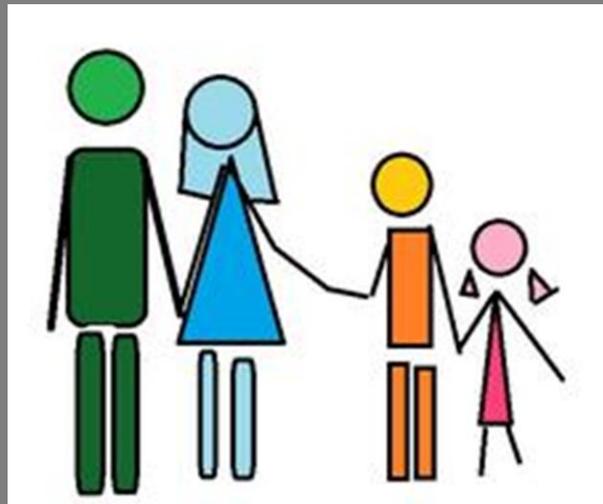# 2016

HOUSING FOR REFUGEES

RESOURCE GUIDE

This information was prepared by California's Refugee Programs Bureau (RPB) and is being shared with you for informational purposes only. The sharing of this information does not constitute an endorsement, recommendation, or favoring of the material, web sites or organizations. If you have any questions regarding the content of this material, please contact the originating agency/organization

INTRODUCTION

As the housing market prices in California continue to increase, affordable housing can be challenging for low-income families, especially refugees. Affordable housing for refugees has consistently been voiced as a major concern by the Resettlement Agencies (RAs); therefore, the Refugee Programs Bureau researched some best practices for the RAs to use as tools to assist refugees to obtain affordable housing.

WHAT ARE THE GOALS?

This resource guide was created to assist the RAs with their work to search for affordable housing for refugees; the goals are:

- To highlight the importance of assessment and plan development;
- To consider temporary housing as an emergency housing option;
- To prepare families and individuals to obtain affordable permanent housing; and
- To share tips and resources for affordable housing.

ASSESMENT AND PLAN DEVELOPMENT

- Assess the individual/family for possible housing assistance options such as: Housing Choice Voucher, Shelter Plus Care, Conventional Housing, Public Housing, Mental Health Service Act Housing, Low Income Housing for Seniors, Low Income Housing for People with Disabilities, Tax Credit Units, etc.

Develop an individual service plan to identify barriers and assist to resolve them and achieve goals; make sure that goals are specific, attainable, and realistic. Be creative and combine effective housing programs as a way to increase options.

TEMPORARY HOUSING

- Utilize temporary housing, such as shelters, transitional housing, or shared housing as a way to assist individuals to regain their productive capacity and obtain proper documentation to lease a unit.
- Transitional housing can be an opportunity for new arrivals to get oriented.
- Single Room Occupancy can be an option for single individuals.

7 Benefits of Corporate Housing

PREPARE FOR OBTAINING HOUSING

- Ensure that participants obtain a permanent job that will enable them to be self-sufficient.
- Educate participants about available housing resources and assistance in the community.
- Assist participants to establish credit, for example, acquiring a gas card, retail card or secure card as an easier way to build credit.
- Assist in the housing search process.
- Educate about tenant's rights and lease responsibilities.
- Provide information about Fair Housing Laws.

WHAT ARE SOME BEST PRACTICES?

Networking

Invite other community-based organizations to participate in monthly/quarterly meetings as a way to develop a network and share resources.

- Attend or create landlord networking meetings as a way to develop a professional relationship with landlords.
- Identify what incentives your program can provide when recruiting landlords. This can include your follow-up case management, financial assistance, and your ability to help fill their units quickly.

COMMUNITY REPUTATION

- Enhance your reputation and goodwill in the community by participating in housing forums and other events.

- Educate the community to erase the misconceptions of refugees by sharing successful stories.
- Conduct outreach to property owners and managers.
- Always search for new landlords.

OTHER SUGGESTIONS

- Be familiar with quality housing standards to avoid unsafe living conditions.
- Share with landlords information about refugees circumstances before they arrive to the U.S.; create a cultural orientation list.
- Search affordable housing databases
- Explore all the possible affordable housing options rather than focusing on one.

EXAMPLE OF TRANSITIONAL HOUSING BEST PRACTICE MODEL

- **Immanuel House** in Santa Clara, this transitional home for refugees provides a safe place for residents to adjust to their new lives in the U.S. Residents can remain in this transition home for about three months before moving on to more permanent housing. The Immanuel House's staff continues working closely with resettlement agencies to ensure that residents have access to the tools that they need to become self-sufficient, like intensive English classes and assistance in continuing their education or finding a job.

WHAT RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE?

Housing Choice Voucher and Public Housing

- Search for Housing Choice Vouchers and Public Housing open waiting list. Do not get discouraged by a waiting list; it is better than not being on a waiting list at all.
- Sign up for mailing notifications so that you can receive notices when the waiting list is open.
- Visit this website to search for the Housing Authority in your county/city:

  http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/public_indian_housing/pha/contacts/ca

  http://www.tacinc.org/knowledge-resources/vouchers-database/?state=CA

AFFORDABLE APPARTMENT SEARCH

- Visit HUD's website to look for affordable apartments; you can search by category: disabled, elderly, family, etc. Keep in mind that participants can be on more than one waiting list.

  www.hud.gov

  Visit California Department of Housing and Community Development's website for a list of affordable rental housing:

  http://www.hcd.ca.gov/financial-assistance/affrdble-housng.html

TAX CREDIT BUILDINGS

- Although low-income housing tax credit buildings are income-based, the rent portion is still below fair market.
- Be aware of upcoming housing projects, then go to the developer's website to obtain the contact number for leasing.
- Visit this website to search for tax credit buildings:

  http://treasurer.ca.gov/index.asp

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES ACT (MHSA)

- Contact your local Behavioral Health Services to inquire about upcoming MHSA funded developments to refer refugees that meet the criteria.
- Or visit this website for the list of MHSA developments in your county:

  http://www.calhfa.ca.gov/multifamily/mhsa/projects/index.htm

FAIR HOUSING ACT

- For references on the Fair Housing Act, visit this website:

  https://www.justice.gov/crt/fair-housing-act-2

  http://www.civilrights.org/fairhousing/laws

CalWORKS HOUSING SUPPORTIVE PROGRAM & HOUSING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

- California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) recipients may be eligible for the Housing Support Program (HSP) if they meet HSP's definition of homelessness along with any county criteria.   Housing Support Programs follow Rapid Re-Housing or other evidence-based models.
- Services may include help in identifying housing, housing subsidies, and case management. Counties have the flexibility to shape the program to best serve their community.
- Another option available to eligible CalWORKs recipients is the Housing Assistance Program (HAP), which provides limited temporary or permanent housing support.
- To apply for HSP or HAP please contact your local county welfare department. Information regarding CalWORKs can be found at http://www.cdss.ca.gov/calworks/default.htm.   Additional information regarding HSP can be found at http://www.cdss.ca.gov/calworks/PG3658.htm

LOW INCOME HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (LIHEAP)

- Visit this website to find help to pay rent, utilities, free food banks, clothing banks, and other resources in your county:

  http://www.needhelppayingbills.com/index.html

If you want to share other housing best practices or resources, please email them to RPB@dss.ca.gov or call Heriberto Camarena at 916-654-7250 or Deborah Cramer at 916-654-1246.

LINKS TO AFFORDABLE HOUSING LIST FOR IMPACTED AND NEARBY COUNTIES

ALAMEDA COUNTY	http://www.hcd.ca.gov/financial-assistance/affrdble-housng.html
AMADOR COUNTY	www.stancoha.org/PDF/AmadorCounty.pdf
BUTTE COUNTY	http://www.hcd.ca.gov/financial-assistance/affrdble-housng.html
CALAVERAS COUNTY	www.stancoha.org/PDF/CalaverasCounty.pdf
CONTRA COSTA COUNTY	http://www.co.contra-costa.ca.us/4807/Affordable-Housing
DEL NORTE COUNTY	http://www.hcd.ca.gov/financial-assistance/affrdble-housng.html
EL DORADO COUNTY	http://www.edcgov.us/Government/HumanServices/Housing/Public_Housing_Authority.aspx
FRESNO COUNTY	http://www.affordablehousingportal.org/ProjectsList.aspx?st=6&cn=19
GLENN COUNTY	http://www.affordablehousingportal.org/ProjectsList.aspx?st=6&cn=21
HUMBOLDT COUNTY	http://www.hcd.ca.gov/financial-assistance/affrdble-housng.html

IMPERIAL COUNTY	http://www.hcd.ca.gov/financial-assistance/affrdble-housng.html
INYO COUNTY	http://www.hcd.ca.gov/financial-assistance/affrdble-housng.html
KERN COUNTY	http://www.kernha.org
KINGS COUNTY	http://www.hcd.ca.gov/financial-assistance/affrdble-housng.html
LAKE COUNTY	http://www.affordablehousingportal.org/ProjectsList.aspx?st=6&cn=33
LOS ANGELES COUNTY	http://housing.lacounty.gov
MADERA COUNTY	http://www.affordablehousingportal.org/ProjectsList.aspx?st=6&cn=39
MARIPOSA COUNTY	www.stancoha.org/PDF/MariposaCounty.pdf
MERCED COUNTY	http://www.affordablehousingportal.org/ProjectsList.aspx?st=6&cn=47
MONTERY COUNTY	http://www.monterey.org/Services/Housing/Affordable-Rentals
NAPA COUNTY	http://www.hcd.ca.gov/financial-assistance/affrdble-housng.html
ORANGE COUNTY	http://ochousing.org/special
PLACER COUNTY	https://www.placer.ca.gov - search for affordable apartment inventory list
RIVERSIDE COUNTY	http://www.affordablehousingportal.org/ProjectsList.aspx?st=6&cn=65
SACRAMENTO COUNTY	http://www.sachousingalliance.org/resources/find-affordable-housing
SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY	http://www.hcd.ca.gov/financial-assistance/affrdble-housng.html
SAN DIEGO COUNTY	http://www.sdhc.org/Resources/Affordable-Housing-Guide
SAN FRANCISCO COUNTY	http://sfmohcd.org/affordable-housing-resources-0
SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY	http://www.hcd.ca.gov/financial-assistance/affrdble-housng.html
SAN MATEO COUNTY	http://www.co.sanmateo.ca.us/hsa.dir/rentlist_jan2001.htm
SANTA CLARA COUNTY	http://santaclaraca.gov/government/departments/community-development/housing-comm...
SANTA CRUZ COUNTY	http://www.hcd.ca.gov/financial-assistance/affrdble-housng.html
SOLANO COUNTY	http://www.hcd.ca.gov/financial-assistance/affrdble-housng.html
SONOMA COUNTY	www.sonoma-county.org - search for affordable apartment inventory list
STANISLAUS COUNTY	http://stanislaus.gosection8.com
TULARE COUNTY	http://www.affordablehousingportal.org/ProjectsList.aspx?st=6&cn=107
TOULUMNE COUNTY	www.stancoha.org/PDF/TuolumneCounty.pdf
YOLO COUNTY	www.yolocounty.org/home/showdocument?id=26788