

development projects for refugees.<sup>1</sup> Applications will be accepted pursuant to the Director's discretionary authority under section 412(c) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) (8 U.S.C. 1522(c)), as amended. Applications will be screened and evaluated as indicated in this program announcement. Awards will be contingent on the outcome of the competition and the availability of funds.

**DATES:** The closing date for submission of applications is 30 days from date of publication in the **Federal Register**. See Part IV of this announcement for more information on submitting applications.

**Announcement Availability:** This program announcement and the application materials are available on the Office of Refugee Resettlement Web site at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr/funding>.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT:** Lisa Campbell, Division of Community Resettlement, Office of Refugee Resettlement, Administration for Children and Families, at (202) 205-4597 or [LCampbell@ACF.HHS.GOV](mailto:LCampbell@ACF.HHS.GOV) or Daphne Weeden, Division of Discretionary Grants, Office of Grants Management, Administration for Children and Families, at (202) 260-5980 or [paqueries-ogm@acf.hhs.gov](mailto:paqueries-ogm@acf.hhs.gov).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** This program announcement consists of four parts:

**Part I:** Background, legislative authority, funding availability, applicant eligibility, project and budget periods, program purpose and scope, client eligibility, allowable activities, and treatment of program income.

**Part II:** General instructions for preparing a full project description.

**Part III:** The Review Process—Intergovernmental review, initial ACF screening, competitive review, and review criteria.

**Part IV:** The Application—Application materials, application submission information, regulations, and reporting.

**Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (Pub. L. 104-13):** Public reporting burden for this collection of information

is estimated to average 25 hours, including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and reviewing the collection of information. The following information collections are included in the program announcement: OMB Approval No. 0970-0139, ACF Uniform Project Description (UPD) which expires 12/31/2003. An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

### Part I: Background

The Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) has supported the field of microenterprise development since 1991 with discretionary grants to various State governments, community economic development agencies, community action and other human service agencies, local mutual assistance associations, and voluntary agencies. Organizations with successful programs have typically been those with a long-term commitment to microenterprise and to its adaptation to the refugee experience. They have committed agency resources to support refugee programs and their work in refugee microenterprise development has been consistent with the overall agency mission. A public or private non-profit agency interested in receiving funding under this announcement must have the organizational capacity to work with refugees who have low incomes, limited English language proficiency, and neither assets nor American business experience. Many newly arrived refugees do not qualify for commercial loans or for admission into mainstream microenterprise development programs for these reasons.

Refugees bring positive attributes to microenterprise development projects, including a diverse and rich array of business ideas, skills, experiences, and ambitions. These characteristics have been largely responsible for the success of the ORR program. During the last ten years, refugees have started or expanded over 800 micro-businesses and over 89 percent of these businesses have survived. ORR grantees have provided over \$3 million in financing to these entrepreneurs and the loan repayment rate is close to 100 percent. Over 4,000 refugees have gained new entrepreneurial skills and knowledge and the additional business income is helping refugee families to achieve economic self-sufficiency. By commonly accepted measures of performance (business survival rates, loan default rates, etc.), the ORR-funded programs

have excelled and frequently led the field in achievement.

Building on the experience of the last ten years, ORR seeks in this announcement to continue support to this field, particularly on behalf of those refugees who, because of language and cultural barriers, are unlikely to gain access to commercial loans or business training through other programs. To be successful in this competition, refugee-serving organizations must demonstrate their agency's capacity to provide the technical expertise necessary to help refugees start or expand businesses. Economic development agencies must show how they will modify their existing programs to serve refugees effectively.

**Legislative Authority:** Section 412(c)(1)(A) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA)(8 U.S.C. 1522(c)(1)(A)) authorizes the Director "to make grants to, and enter into contracts with, public or private non-profit agencies for projects specifically designed—(i) to assist refugees in obtaining the skills which are necessary for economic self-sufficiency, including projects for job training, employment services, day care, professional refresher training, and other recertification services; (ii) to provide training in English where necessary (regardless of whether the refugees are employed or receiving cash or other assistance); and (iii) to provide where specific needs have been shown and recognized by the Director, health (including mental health) services, social services, educational and other services." In addition, section 412(a)(4)(A)(1) of the INA (8 U.S.C. 1522(a)(4)(A)(1)) authorizes the Director to make loans for the purpose of carrying out this section.

**Funding Availability:** ORR expects to make available approximately \$4 million for Microenterprise Development projects for about 15 to 25 awards in amounts ranging from \$100,000 to \$300,000. The award amount range is for planning purposes. Applications with requested amounts that exceed the upper value of the dollar range specified will still be considered for review. No matching or cost sharing by the applicant is required.

**Applicant Eligibility:** Eligible applicants are public and private non-profit agencies. Faith-based and community organizations are eligible to apply for these grants.

Private, non-profit agencies are encouraged to submit with their applications the optional survey located under "Grant Manuals and Forms" at [www.hhs.gov/programs/ofs/forms.htm](http://www.hhs.gov/programs/ofs/forms.htm).

**Project and Budget Periods:** This announcement invites applications for

<sup>1</sup> Eligibility for refugee social services includes: (1) Refugees; (2) asylees; (3) Cuban and Haitian entrants; (4) certain Amerasians from Vietnam who are admitted to the U.S. as immigrants; (5) certain Amerasians from Vietnam, including U.S. citizens; and (6) victims of a severe form of trafficking (see 45 CFR 400.43 and ORR State Letters Number 01-13 as modified by Number 02-01 on trafficking victims). For convenience, the term "refugee" is used in this notice to encompass all such eligible persons. Additional information on eligibility is available at: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr/policy/s101-13.htm> and <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr/policy/s102-01.htm>.