

assimilation due to the long-term impacts of circumstances such as lengthy stays in refugee camps, torture, starvation, prolonged malnutrition, or other trauma prior to their arrival in the U.S. In addition, some refugees are from environments and cultural backgrounds that are so distinct from the way of life in the United States that their ability to assimilate successfully is a greater challenge than that experienced by some other refugee populations. Finally, older refugees, refugees with disabilities and/or chronic illnesses, and youth who are not enrolled in school and have little or no family support structure encounter additional difficulties in integrating into the American workforce and American society. These refugees also may experience long-term difficulties in employment and assimilation.

Legislative Authority

This program is authorized by section 412(c)(1)(A) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA), as amended, (8 U.S.C. 1522(c)(1)(A)), which authorizes the Director "to make grants to, and enter into contracts with, public or private nonprofit 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."

Funding Availability

ORR expects to award approximately \$5 million in FY 2003 discretionary social services funds for 10 to 20 projects in amounts ranging from \$200,000 to \$800,000. 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.

Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants for these funds include public and private, nonprofit 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 & Forms" at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ofs/forms.htm>.

Project and Budget Periods

Under this announcement, ORR invites applications for project periods of up to three years. Awards, on a competitive basis, will be for a one-year budget period, although project periods may be for three years.

Applications for continuation grants funded under these awards, beyond the first one-year budget period but within the three-year project period, will be entertained in subsequent years on a noncompetitive basis, subject to availability of funds, satisfactory progress and performance of the grantee, and a determination that continued funding would be in the best interest of the Government.

Program Purpose and Objectives

Projects funded under this announcement will be designed to connect long-term unemployed refugees to the labor force and to provide, through subsidized wages, earned income to refugees and their households. The purpose is to assist these refugees in making a transition to unsubsidized permanent employment and to full integration in their communities.

Refugees eligible to participate in projects funded under this announcement must be at least 18 years of age and must not be enrolled in school on a full-time basis. Refugee participants must also be unemployed, without earned income, employed part-time, or members of families receiving public assistance. Refugees are eligible to participate in this project if they have resided in the U.S. for a minimum of one year and have been residents of their communities for a minimum of three months. Refugees must demonstrate that they have exhausted other types and sources of employment services and that they are continuing to experience long-term unemployment.

ORR anticipates that refugees targeted for these programs would include long-term recipients of public assistance (12 months or more), refugees who face termination from Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) within the 12 month period following enrollment in this project, and refugees who have experienced unusually difficult circumstances in employment and in assimilation. Refugee populations such as older workers, refugees with disabilities, and at-risk youth who are at least 18 years of age, who are not enrolled in school, and who have little

or no family support structure may be included as well.

Subsidized positions may be in either public or private sector organizations. Grantees must establish a network of relationships with appropriate public or private employers to identify and develop suitable subsidized positions. Through written contractual agreements, grantees may use funds to reimburse employers for up to 100 percent of the employment wage (including fringe benefits), for a maximum of nine months. In exchange for the salary subsidy, the employer agrees to provide the refugee employee additional supervisory assistance in learning the job and to retain the refugee employee in this position after the wage subsidy has ended. If insufficient funds are available to continue the position, the employer agrees to assist the refugee employee in securing other employment.

Applicants should identify the types and number of employment positions to be included in their project, including job descriptions, qualifications, salary levels, and benefits. Project participants must be paid an hourly wage equivalent to the prevailing rates of pay for persons employed in similar occupations by the same employer. No wage should be lower than the Federal minimum wage. Refugee employees must be eligible for all benefits available to all other employees at the work site.

Wage subsidies must be used for a net increase in the number of positions within a given organization and may not be used to replace currently funded positions. Refugees employed as a result of this project may not displace employed workers or workers on layoff.

Allowable Activities

Allowable activities may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Placement of long-term unemployed refugees in subsidized positions;
- Placement of long-term unemployed refugees in unsubsidized placements;
- On-the-job training for refugee participants to obtain professional skills at the workplace; *i.e.* core office skills, office protocol, notification of sick leave, time and attendance procedures, etc.;
- Vocational English language training in conjunction with a specific position;
- Technical assistance to employers working with refugee participants;
- On-site mentoring programs between refugees and other employees;
- Provision of support services to refugees which may include: on-site