



Department of
Job and Family Services

John R. Kasich, Governor
Cynthia C. Dungey, Director

March 3, 2016

Dear Vendor:

This letter is to announce the release of the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) Request for Information (RFI) number JFSR1617178116 for the purpose of identifying government entities or non-profit organizations in six geographic regions (*Central Ohio*: Franklin, Delaware, Fairfield, Licking, Madison, Pickaway, and Union; *Southwestern Ohio*: Hamilton, Butler, Clermont, and Warren; *Northeastern Ohio*: Cuyahoga, Geauga, Lake Lorain, and Medina; *Northern Ohio*: Summit, Portage, Stark, and Carroll; *Western Ohio*: Montgomery, Greene, and Miami; *Northwestern Ohio*: Lucas, Fulton, Ottawa, and Wood) throughout Ohio with the capability and capacity to provide Refugee Social Services Program (RSSP) services to the refugee population in their areas. ODJFS releases this RFI for the purpose of identifying those qualified government or non-profit organizations that would be interested in providing employment services under a sub-recipient grant award in order to assist eligible refugees in becoming self-sufficient. ODJFS has the responsibility to help refugees achieve self-sufficiency by obtaining employment within one year's participation in the program, and, therefore, hopes to identify all such organizations in order to make informed decisions on how to deliver these necessary employment-related services to refugee populations in Ohio.

If your organization is interested in submitting a response for this important project, please obtain the RFI through the ODJFS web site at <http://www.ifs.ohio.gov/rfp/>. In the event of any problems accessing this document or opening the above referenced ODJFS URL, please contact the RFP/RLB Unit at (614) 728-5693.

Responses must be prepared and submitted in strict accordance with the requirements and time frames given in the RFI. Thank you for your attention to this request.

Sincerely,

Jay Easterling
Deputy Director
Contracts and Acquisitions

30 East Broad Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215
jfs.ohio.gov

Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS)

Request for Information Number JFSR-1617178116 for

Refugee Social Services Program Providers

Section I – General Information

The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) releases this Request for Information (RFI) for the purpose of identifying government entities or non-profit organizations in six geographic regions (defined in Section II) throughout Ohio with the capability and capacity to provide Refugee Social Services Program (RSSP) services to the refugee population in their areas. ODJFS releases this RFI for the purpose of identifying those qualified government or non-profit organizations that would be interested in providing employment services under a sub-recipient grant award in order to assist eligible refugees in becoming self-sufficient. ODJFS has the responsibility to help refugees achieve self-sufficiency by obtaining employment within one year's participation in the program, and, therefore, hopes to identify all such organizations in order to make informed decisions on how to deliver these necessary employment-related services to refugee populations in Ohio.

Interested organizations should have the expertise to provide eligible refugees with a range of services that will address the specific unemployment challenges of this population and barriers to their employment such as language, education, and transferable work skills. Such employment services for eligible refugees could potentially be provided under the RSSP program. ODJFS anticipates awarding sub-recipient agreements to one qualified organization in each of the regions specified below in Section II to provide RSSP services to assist with refugee employment. Accordingly, ODJFS releases this RFI to identify whether multiple qualified organizations provide services in the specified regions, and if there are, to begin a process to determine which of those organizations' efforts could be supported to greatest effect through a RSSP grant award.

Section II – Project Background

The RSSP helps refugees achieve self-sufficiency by providing services to help them obtain employment within one year's participation in the program.

ODJFS seeks to fund six regions of the state. To better provide services to the refugee population, ODJFS is looking for providers of employment services to be able to serve several contiguous counties in a geographic region. At a minimum, the providers must be able to provide services to the counties listed in the geographic region they are applying for. ODJFS is seeking one provider for each of the six geographic regions listed below:

1. Central Ohio: Franklin, Delaware, Fairfield, Licking, Madison, Pickaway, and Union
2. Southwestern Ohio: Hamilton, Butler, Clermont, and Warren.
3. Northeastern Ohio: Cuyahoga, Geauga, Lake Lorain, and Medina.
4. Northern Ohio: Summit, Portage, Stark, and Carroll.
5. Western Ohio: Montgomery, Greene, and Miami.
6. Northwestern Ohio: Lucas, Fulton, Ottawa, and Wood.

Interested organizations may suggest serving more than one geographic region, but must demonstrate how it is able to serve each geographic region separately. No other geographic regions will be considered. Each must demonstrate that while it can provide services in each county, it has a physical presence in the metropolitan county of each geographic region. The metro county of each geographic region is underlined above.

Section III – Outline of Needed Services, Specifications, and Assumptions

Organizations that are interested in the possibility of providing refugees with a range of employment-related services under an RSSP award are encouraged to respond to this RFI and to provide ODJFS with information on its capabilities, expertise, organizational history, and current capacity, particularly regarding the following service areas:

A. Cultural Competence: To the maximum extent feasible, all refugee services should be provided in a manner that is culturally and linguistically compatible with a refugee's language and cultural background, and include the availability of bilingual/bicultural women on service agency staff to ensure adequate service access by refugee women.

B. Refugee Service Priority and Eligibility Criteria: RSSP services can be provided to refugees within their first five years of arrival. RSSP services must be provided using the following order of priority:

1. All newly arriving refugees during their first year in the U.S. who apply for services.
2. Refugees who are receiving cash assistance.
3. Unemployed refugees who are not receiving cash assistance.
4. Employed refugees in need of services to retain employment or to attain economic independence.

C. Required Program Services: Services to be provided under RSSP are as follows:

1. Employment Services, including, at minimum all of the following:

- a. Development of a family self-sufficiency plan for each assistance group;
- b. Development of an employability plan for each RSSP participant;
- c. World of work and job orientation;
- d. Job clubs;
- e. Job workshops;
- f. Job development;
- g. Referral to job opportunities;
- h. Job search; and
- i. Job placement and follow-up.

2. Employability Services, including, at minimum all of the following:

- a. Employment-related case management services, including the determination of appropriate services to refer a refugee to, referral to such services and the tracking of the refugee's participation in such services.
- b. English language training, with an emphasis on English as it relates to obtaining and retaining a job.
 1. To avoid interference with employment, English language training must be provided to the fullest extent possible outside normal working hours.
 2. English language training must be provided in a concurrent time period with employment or other employment-related services.
 3. English language testing must be conducted to determine if the refugee is able to benefit from an available English language training program.

4. Refugees who test at a level above the available level of English language training are exempt from further participation in English language training.
5. Refugees who test at a level below the available level of English language training must participate in English language training.

3. Additional Services may include:

- a. Employability assessment services, including aptitude and skills testing.
- b. On the job training, when such training is provided at the employment site and is expected to result in full-time, permanent, unsubsidized employment with the employer who is providing the training.
- c. Vocational training which meets the following requirements:
 1. Not to exceed one year;
 2. Appropriate to local labor market needs and of sufficient quality to meet requirements of local employers; and
 3. Provided to the fullest extent possible outside normal working hours to avoid interference with employment.
- d. Skills recertification services to help refugees qualify to practice their professions in the U.S. The training may consist of full-time attendance in a college or professional training program, provided that:
 1. The refugee is employed;
 2. The training is part of the refugee's individual employability plan;
 3. The training does not exceed one year's duration, including any time enrolled in such program in the U.S. prior to the refugee's application for assistance;
 4. The training is specifically intended to assist refugees in becoming certified in their professions; and
 5. If the training is completed, it can realistically be expected to result in such certification.
- e. Child care, when necessary for participation in an employment or employability service or for the acceptance or retention of employment.
- f. Transportation, when necessary for participation in an employment or employability service or for the acceptance or retention of employment (drivers' education is an allowable service).
- g. Translation and interpreter services, when necessary in connection with employment or participation in an employment service or employability service.
- h. Assistance in obtaining employment authorization documents.

D. Reference: Eligible Population

RSSP services can be provided to refugees within their first five years of arrival. For the purpose of this program "refugee" means an individual with original documentation issued by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) or the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) with one of the following statuses under the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) of 1952:

- a. Admission as a refugee under section 207 of the INA, 8 U.S.C. 1157;
- b. An asylee as granted under section 208 of the INA, 8 U.S.C 1158;
- c. An alien who is a Cuban or Haitian entrant as defined in 45 C.F.R., part 401;
- d. An Amerasian admitted pursuant to section 584 of Public Law Number (Pub. L.No.) 100-202, as amended by Pub.L.No 100-461;
- e. A refugee or asylee as paroled under section 212 (d)(5) of the INA, 8 U.S.C. 1182;
- f. A victim of a severe form of human trafficking, as defined in the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000, 114 Stat.1464, 22 U.S.C. 7102, who has a letter documenting eligibility as such from the ORR;
- g. A family member of a victim of a severe form of human trafficking, as defined by the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2003, Pub. L.No. 108-193;

- h. An alien child issued an interim assistance letter from the ORR pursuant to the William Wilberforce Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2008, 22 U.S.C. 7105;
- i. An Afghan or Iraqi alien admitted in accordance with Pub.L. No. 110-161 of the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2008 and Pub.L. No. 110-181 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008, who was granted a special immigrant visa under section 101(a)(27) of the INA; or
- j. A lawful permanent resident, provided the individual previously held a status as identified in paragraphs (B)(10)(a) to (B)(10)(i) of rule 5101:1-2-40 of the Ohio Administrative Code. The beginning date for eligibility for benefits is based on the entry date in the previous status.

Section IV - Content and Format of Response

General RFI Response Guidelines:

- A. Responses should be limited to 10 pages in length, including any charts, graphs, or information display tools.
- B. Responses should briefly describe the organization, including its history, the services it provides, its relevant community partners and resources, the populations it serves, and its particular experience and qualifications for serving Ohio’s refugee communities.
- C. Responses should discuss the organization’s ability to address the need for **Cultural Competence** as described in Section III, A., above.
- D. Responses should discuss the organization’s understanding of, and ability to operate a program in compliance with the **Refugee Service Priority and Eligibility Criteria** as described in Section III, B., above.
- E. Responses should briefly describe the organization’s current ability to deliver all **Required Program Services** as identified in Section III, C., items 1 – 3, above. Any past refugee service delivery experience of a comparable nature should also be identified.
- F. Responses must contain complete contact information for an organization representative capable of responding to any follow-up inquiries by ODJFS.
- G. Responses should be submitted under cover letter (**not** counted in the 10-page limit) signed by a representative authorized to sign contractual agreements for the organization.

Responses to this RFI are to be submitted electronically (in a secure .PDF document format) to the following e-mail address: ODJFS_RFP_RLB_UNIT@jfs.ohio.gov. Responses are to be received by ODJFS prior to the date indicated in Section VI – Anticipated Timetable.

IMPORTANT: Interested organizations may NOT include ANY trade secret information; the contents of their response to this RFI will be considered public information and will be made available upon request. Responses to this RFI are to contain general descriptions of methods or services that would meet the State’s needs; ODJFS seeks nothing as detailed as the sort of information that might be considered proprietary in nature.

Section V - RFI Clarification Process – Questions and Answers

Interested parties may ask clarifying questions regarding this RFI, using the following Internet process:

- * Access the ODJFS Web Page at <http://jfs.ohio.gov>
- * Select “Doing Business with ODJFS” from the bottom of the page;
- * Select “RFP’s” from the left side column;
- * Select RFP Number JFSR1617178116 from the list of competitive opportunities;
- * Follow the link to the dedicated web page;
- * Select “Submit Inquiry” near the bottom of the web page;

- * Follow instructions there for submitting questions; or, to view posted questions and answers,
- * Select “View Q and A” near the bottom of the web page.

In submitting a question, please provide the contact person’s name, the organization’s name, email address, and business phone number. ODJFS will not respond to questions submitted after 8:00 a.m. on the date the Q&A period closes (as identified in the following section).

Questions will be answered only if they are submitted using this process, and are received before the close of the Q&A period. All ODJFS answers will be posted for reference by all interested parties; answers will be posted on the Internet website dedicated to this RFI and may be accessed by following the instructions provided above.

Questions will only be answered within this forum.

In the event of any technical difficulties with this Q&A process, vendors may seek assistance by contacting the ODJFS, Office of Contracts and Acquisitions, RFP/RLB Unit at PH: (614) 728-5693. This number is provided exclusively to assist with technical difficulties accessing the Q&A process; no content questions will be accepted.

Section VI - Anticipated Timetable

DATE	EVENT/ACTIVITY
March 3, 2016	ODJFS releases the RFI to qualified non-profit or government organizations on the internet; the Q&A period opens. -RFI becomes active -Interested Parties may submit inquiries.
March 22, 2016	Q&A period closes, 8 a.m. (for inquiries for RFI clarification). -No further inquiries will be accepted -ODJFS will provide answers to the inquiries as they come in that will make up the Final Q&A Document
Thursday, April 7, 2016	Deadline for Interested Parties to submit responses to ODJFS (3 p.m.)

Section VII – Results from RFI Effort and Next Steps

In the event that two or more qualified organizations in one county indicate both their interest in providing services as described in this RFI to refugees under a RSSP grant, and provide substantial evidence that their organizations are qualified, ODJFS expects to subsequently announce a competitive opportunity (e.g., a Request for Grant Applications – ‘RFGA’) to select the organization to be awarded the county-specific sub-recipient agreement. In that event, the organizations that responded to this RFI would be notified of that opportunity for the respective county, and would be invited to submit a formal proposal according to detailed instructions that would be provided at that time. Only one organization will be awarded a sub-recipient agreement to provide RSSP services for each of the geographic regions identified in this RFI.

In the event that ODJFS does not receive responses to this RFI from at least two qualified organizations interested in providing these services to the refugee population of one of the regions identified in this document, then ODJFS may, at its sole discretion, enter into a negotiated agreement in order to obtain the necessary employment-related services for refugees in that region.

As a result of responses received to this RFI, a competitive opportunity may be announced for some of the six specified regions, but not for all. A separate decision regarding the need for any further competitive opportunity will be made for each of the six regions identified in Section II, based on the number and quality of responses ODJFS receives to this RFI.

Section VIII – Caveat

This RFI document is a request made by ODJFS for information from organizations that may have expertise applicable to a future ODJFS project or activity; it is NOT a competitive opportunity. This RFI may not be construed as an obligation on the part of ODJFS to enter into any contractual obligations or to offer further competitive opportunities for the purpose of making any contractual obligations. ODJFS may, at its discretion, make decisions regarding program operations based, in part, on responses received from this RFI, and it is under no obligation to use or to respond to any information submitted.

Thank you for your efforts to provide ODJFS with relevant information to assist with this important project.