



Department of  
Job and Family Services

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

June 1, 2015

Dear Vendor:

This letter is to announce the release of the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) Request for Information (RFI) number JFSR1617178092 for the purpose of obtaining information from government entities or non-profit organizations in Cuyahoga, Franklin, Hamilton, and Summit counties that have the capabilities and capacity to provide Targeted Assistance Formula Grant (TAG-F) 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.

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.jfs.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

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Columbus, Ohio 43215  
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# **Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS)**

## **Request for Information Number JFSR1617178092 for**

### **Refugee Targeted Assistance Service Providers**

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#### **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 Cuyahoga, Franklin, Hamilton, and Summit counties with the capabilities and capacity to provide Targeted Assistance Formula Grant (TAG-F) 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 of helping 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 TAG-F program. ODJFS anticipates awarding sub-recipient agreements to one qualified organization in each of the counties specified above to provide TAG-F services to assist with refugee employment. Accordingly, ODJFS releases this RFI to identify whether multiple qualified organizations provide services in the specified counties, and if there are, to begin a process to determine which of those organizations' efforts could be supported to greatest effect through a TAG-F grant award.

#### **Section II – Project Background**

The Targeted Assistance Formula Grant (TAG-F) helps refugees achieve self-sufficiency by providing services to help them obtain employment within one year's participation in the program. ODJFS is seeking government entities or non-profit organizations in Cuyahoga, Franklin, Hamilton, and Summit counties to provide TAG-F services. ODJFS seeks interested parties wanting to provide employment services to assist eligible refugees in becoming self-sufficient. Interested organizations should be able to offer eligible refugees a range of services that will address the specific unemployment challenges of this population as well as barriers to employment such as language, education, and transferable work skills.

#### **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 a TAG-F 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 use of bilingual/bicultural women on service agency staff to ensure adequate service access by refugee women.

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

- Cash assistance recipients, particularly long-term recipients.
- Unemployed refugees who are not receiving cash assistance.
- Employed refugees in need of services to retain employment or to attain economic independence.

**C. Required Program Services:** Services to be provided under the Targeted Assistance Program Formula Grant are as follows:

1. Employment Services, including, at minimum:

- Development of a family self-sufficiency plan for each assistance group.
- Development of an employability plan for each TAG-F participant.
- World of work and job orientation.
- Job clubs.
- Job workshops.
- Job development.
- Referral to job opportunities.
- Job search.
- Job placement and follow-up.

2. Employability Services, including, at minimum:

- Employment-related case management services, including the determination of appropriate services for referral, and referral to such services and the tracking of the refugee's participation in such services.
- English language training, with an emphasis on English as it relates to obtaining and retaining a job.
  - To avoid interference with employment, English language training must be provided to the fullest extent possible outside normal working hours.
  - English language training must be provided in a concurrent time period with employment or other employment-related services.
  - English language testing must be conducted to determine if the refugee is able to benefit from an available English language training program.
  - Refugees who test at a level above the available level of English language training are exempt from further participation in English language training.
  - Refugees who test at a level below the available level of English language training must participate in English language training.

3. Additional Services

- Employability assessment services, including aptitude and skills testing.
- 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.
- Vocational training which meets the following requirements:
  - not to exceed one year;

- appropriate to local labor market needs and of sufficient quality to meet requirements of local employers;
- provided to the fullest extent possible outside normal working hours to avoid interference with employment.
- 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:
  - the refugee is employed;
  - the training is part of the refugee's individual employability plan;
  - 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;
  - the training is specifically intended to assist refugees in becoming certified in their professions; and
  - if the training is completed, it can realistically be expected to result in such certification.
- Child care, when necessary for participation in an employment or employability service or for the acceptance or retention of employment.
- 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).
- Translation and interpreter services, when necessary in connection with employment or participation in an employment service or employability service.
- Assistance in obtaining employment authorization documents.

#### **D. Reference: Eligible Population**

TAG-F 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:

- Admission as a refugee under section 207 of the INA, 8 U.S.C. 1157;
- An asylee as granted under section 208 of the INA, 8 U.S.C 1158;
- An alien who is a Cuban or Haitian entrant as defined in 45 C.F.R., part 401;
- An Amerasian admitted pursuant to section 584 of Public Law (Pub. L.No.) 100-202, as amended by Pub.L.No 100-461;
- A refugee or asylee as paroled under section 212 (d)(5) of the INA, 8 U.S.C. 1182;
- 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;
- 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;
- 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;
- 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
- A lawful permanent resident, provided the individual previously had held a status as identified in paragraphs (B)(10)(a) to (B)(10)(i) of rule 5101:1-2-40. 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:**

- Responses should be limited to 10 pages in length, including any charts, graphs, or information display tools.
- 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.
- Responses should discuss the organization's ability to address the need for **Cultural Competence** as described in Section III, A., above.
- Responses should discuss the organization's understanding of, and ability to operate a program in alliance with the **Refugee Service Priority and Eligibility Criteria** as described in Section III, B., above.
- 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.
- Responses must contain complete contact information for an organization representative capable of responding to any follow-up inquiries by ODJFS.
- 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](mailto: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: Responses may NOT include ANY trade secret information; the contents of the 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 JFSR1617178092 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
June 1, 2015	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.
June 10, 2015	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
June 12, 2015	ODJFS posts final answers to questions submitted prior to the close of the Q&A
Thursday, June 25, 2015	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 TAG-F 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 TAG-F services for each of the counties 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 counties 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 county.

As a result of responses received to this RFI, a competitive opportunity may be announced for some of the four specified counties, but not for all. A separate decision regarding the need for any further competitive opportunity will be made for each of the four counties identified in Section I. 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, but 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.***