

## Afghan Refugee Partnership Grant Activities

### Purpose

The purpose of the Afghan Refugee Partnership Grant is to ensure that refugee students and their families are provided with access to summer programs and community mentoring to address the unique barriers faced by these students and families and enable them to more successfully engage with their new schools and communities. More specifically, the purposes of the grant are:

1. To increase opportunities for refugee students and their families to participate in activities, both recreational and educational, that promote social English language acquisition and development and aid in the process of acculturation, including intergenerational learning.
2. To increase availability of and access to social emotional supports for refugee students and their families.
3. To increase availability of and access to school readiness activities, supports and resources for students and their families.
4. To increase access to and opportunities for career exploration and college and career readiness that address the unique barriers faced by refugee students, including but not limited to insufficient access to financial aid, lack of available course history data for education obtained outside of the U.S. public education system, and secondary credit accrual.

### Recipients

Ethiopian Community Development Council and U.S. Committees for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI).

### Activities

#### Ethiopian Community Development Council

The Ethiopian Community Development Council (ECDC) will receive \$100,000 to deliver group summer (May through September) youth academic enrichment, linguistically and culturally appropriate recreational activities, and other group mental wellness programming for newly arrived refugee families in southern Vermont, who face high risk of social isolation, compounded by recent forced displacement from Afghanistan. A fulltime Summer Coordinator and contracted Volunteer Coordinator will implement the program from the Multicultural Community Center in downtown Brattleboro.

- Weekly computer, keyboarding, and internet instruction; community computer access whenever the MCC is open.
- Twice-weekly cross-cultural cooking and sewing classes.
- Weekly pot-luck meals.
- Youth and family instruction/tutoring - 800 hours total (delivered by 4 instructors)
- Twice-monthly excursions to Vermont-based historical sites, State Parks, nature preserves for recreation and cultural orientation.
- Weekly group discussions on integration.



- ECDC will host twice-weekly case management 'office hours' at the MCC and encourage and facilitate refugees' creative (structured) use of the space for cross-cultural integration.

### **U.S. Committees for Refugees and Immigrants**

The U.S. Committees for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI) will use its \$100,000 to provide two support programs to Afghan students and families. In Summer 2022 USCRI Vermont will be expanding mentoring opportunities to Afghan youth and young adults age 13-20 through its Crossroads Mentoring Program. Launched in 2015, Crossroads is dedicated to the empowerment of refugee, Afghan, and New American youth through one-to-one mentoring that offers culturally and linguistically appropriate personal guidance, academic support, acculturation activities, English language learning opportunities, job and career path guidance, post-secondary education options, and mentoring peer supports over a program year. Additional activities include field trips and specialized cultural and social skills workshops with interpretation for match-related meetings with the families of mentees.

USCRI will also use ESSER funding for the new Afghan Women's and Children's Empowerment Initiative and will provide specialized, culturally appropriate activities for Afghan and refugee women and children to help them integrate and thrive in their new communities while cultivating important new life skills. Specific summer activities will include:

- Specialized ELL classes.
- Employment development workshops.
- Partnering with Vermont Works for Women and visits with potential employers.
- Digital and financial literacy classes.
- Women's Mental Health and Wellness support group.
- Interpretation support for driving classes and a summer women's driving school.
- Recreational and learning activities for mothers and children to include childcare; transportation; swimming lessons; gardening; sewing classes; children's activities and field trips; cultural cooking group classes, and ELL sessions for the women in a field trip daily format.