

Metro Region Resettlement Network
Refugee FOCUS: Family Opportunity through Coordinated and Unduplicated Services
SERVICE REQUIREMENTS
(October 1, 2023 - SEPTEMBER 30, 2024)

BACKGROUND: The Minnesota Department of Human Services Resettlement Programs Office (RPO) uses federal funds to implement regional Resettlement services to support family wellbeing for new to country individuals and families who have been granted Refugee, Asylee, Cuban/Haitian Entrant, Victim of Trafficking, Afghan/Ukrainian Humanitarian Parolee, Afghan/Iraqi SIV, or Amerasian immigration status.

Community based agencies who receive funding from RPO make up regional service networks called “Resettlement Networks.” These networks offer coordinated services to eligible families in five distinct service areas: Immigration, Community orientation, Employment, Family assisters, Family coaches, and health navigation.

In 2021, the STATE received additional federal dollars to provide supplemental support to families receiving TANF to promote early self-sufficiency and enhance coordination across state systems. The relationship-based FOCUS program provides family-centered mentoring over extended timeframe with the following goals:

- Provide whole-family perspectives in goal setting and progress measurement
- Families identify their own goals and are supported to reach benchmarks toward those goals
- Leverage diverse resources through both MFIP program and Resettlement Network Services
- Build relationships with families to support their progress and coordinate/navigate to help prevent barriers and overcome roadblocks to progress.

This program, the Family Opportunity through Coordinated and Unduplicated Services (FOCUS) supports staffing within county systems to provide family mentoring using the “Check and Connect” mentorship framework.

- The “Check” component refers to FOCUS Coordinators systematically monitoring individual progress markers toward goal benchmarks. Progress markers will vary by target Families. A core set of markers will be provided by STATE prior to start of program as part of Check and Connect documentation tools and training.
- The “Connect” component refers to FOCUS Coordinators providing regular, in-person connections with families to discuss progress markers, identify barriers that prevent progress, and provide timely interventions to help resolve challenges, and mentoring individual family ‘members’ progress toward their goals.
- Information about the “Check and Connect” mentorship framework is available at <http://checkandconnect.umn.edu/>.
- The STATE will provide training and tools for funded providers to implement the “Check and Connect” mentorship model.

I. Criteria for services. COUNTY shall:

A. Deliver services to persons, regardless of their language ability with recognition given to the cultural and resettlement adjustment needs, meeting the following eligibility criteria:

1. Granted one of the following legal United States humanitarian protection statuses: Refugee; Asylee; Victim of severe form of trafficking; Amerasian; Cuban/Haitian entrant; Special Immigrant Visa (SIV), certain Ukrainian and Afghan humanitarian parolees and
2. Have had an eligible status for less than three years, and
3. Are enrolled/eligible for TANF (MFIP) Program, and
4. Reside in Minnesota.

B. Establish systems to prioritize families with the highest level to include those who:

1. Are within the first year after arrival,
2. Are receiving cash benefits,
3. Are not connected to other specialized services including families who do not receive reception and placement services through a local resettlement affiliate such as asylees, certified victims of Trafficking, Cuban Haitian entrants, certain Humanitarian parolees, and families who move to Minnesota from other states.

C. Maintain funded services throughout the CONTRACT term

1. Funding supports services throughout the CONTRACT period, regardless of the number of outcomes/outputs achieved.
2. Minimum outcome standards represent the *minimum* threshold of impact anticipated for the funding provided. Outcomes measure the impact of service delivery, which must continue throughout the CONTRACT term even if a minimum threshold is met.

D. Work collaboratively with STATE, and Resettlement Network Providers, to ensure direct feedback from the participants is incorporated into program evaluation and review activities

II. Program policies

A. COUNTY shall, as member of the Metro Resettlement Network:

1. Collaborate with STATE and other Resettlement Network service providers to ensure coordinated services for participants.
 - a. Participate, as requested by Resettlement Programs Office (RPO) in continuous improvement and shared learning activities.
 - b. Provide constructive feedback, and recommendations for network improvement.
 - c. When a need for additional services is identified, all COUNTYS will work to ensure connections are made to appropriate Resettlement Network Provider(s)/MFIP Provider(s).
2. Maintain centralized service documentation, as defined by RPO. Agency shall use the MN Refugee

Information System (MRIS) to track service outputs and outcomes. Information in MRIS will help identify service needs, support coordinated service delivery, and measure changes in family wellbeing over time based on STATE requirements.

3. Offer mobile services, as needed, at network service Hubs.
4. Complete Family Wellbeing Inventories.
 - a. COUNTY must ensure all families complete STATE designed "Family Wellbeing Inventory (FWI)" upon initial point of contact (or request for services). After initial inventory is completed, agency (or consortium partners) will proactively conduct follow up inventories 6 months from the date of the previous inventory.
 - b. Agency will reach out to families to update the inventory every 6 months of program eligibility, or until the family requests to no longer be contacted. This must be determined by the participant and documented by COUNTY in MRIS case notes.

B. As FOCUS service provider, COUNTY shall:

1. Maintain a caseload of 20-25 families at any given time. STATE will work with COUNTY to assess service capacity and caseload throughout the project period to ensure it is "right sized" based on learning throughout program implementation.
2. FOCUS Coordinator and MFIP providers will develop a family goal plan (combination of individual family member's goals) with the family including measurable progress markers and clear benchmarks towards achievement of identified goal(s).
3. Maintain regular, ongoing, remote or in-person connections with the family enrolled in FOCUS program (every 1-2 weeks, depending on the level of assistance needed by the participant). Once a month is the minimum requirement for the families to remain active in the program.
4. Review measurable progress markers for each participant. Progress markers are identified and listed in family's goal plan created jointly by FOCUS Coordinators, MFIP ES/FSS provider(s) and the family. Some examples may include markers such as attendance, grades (for kids), ELL level (youth and adults), or course/training completion (youth and adults), engagement in socialization activities (senior members).
5. Provide support services to participants to address barriers to ongoing participation in FOCUS activities or goal progress.
6. Utilize Check and Connect service model and documentation tools.
7. Initiate regular consultation/communication with MFIP ES/FSS providers per family's needs.
8. Initiate regular coordination with resettlement network service agencies, per family's needs.

C. Outcomes and outputs tracked in Minnesota Refugee Information System (MRIS)

1. At initial contact, COUNTY will search MRIS to see if there is a Family Wellbeing Inventory history in the MRIS system.
2. Record on individual progress toward wellbeing goals over time
 - a. Outputs reported:
 - i. Family Wellbeing inventory completed
 - ii. Family goal plan created
 - iii. Support services provided: One output will be counted per person for each supportive service provided. For example, if a person receives agency help with childcare AND transportation to ensure participation in a vocational training (identified as participant's goal), 2 outputs may be counted. If a 2 parent household receives this same agency help, 4 outputs may be counted (2 types of supportive service x 2 people = 4 outputs).
 - b. Outcomes
 - i. Progress Benchmark Achieved: Progress benchmarks will be defined by the Check & Connect tools supplied by the State. Progress benchmarks will correspond to each individual's goal plan, with different sets of markers for K-12 students, youth ages 15-24, and adults/seniors appropriate to their circumstances. The following are some of the identified potential progress markers including:

BENCHMARK Examples	K-12 Students	Youth 15-24	Adults 25-65
Improved school attendance	X	X	
Improved assignment completion rate	X	X	
Improved grades/GPA	X	X	
Improved ELL level	X	X	X
Obtain GED/Adult Diploma		X	X
Complete the vocational training program		X	X
Earn employer-recognized credential		X	X
Complete resume and cover letter		X	X
Learn how to complete job application forms		X	X
Obtain employment relevant to educational or vocational goals	X	X	X

D. Other deliverables

1. Attendance at Check and Connect training, as requested by State. Participation will be tracked by the STATE and included in an evaluation of CONTRACT performance.
2. Regular consultation with MFIP ES or FSS Providers and other Resettlement Network Providers.
3. Staff participation in workgroups related to program implementation and coordination efforts.
4. Participation in regular (at least quarterly) meetings of Metro Resettlement Network staff to discuss policies and trends, and to network with other funded agencies.

III. Documentation requirements

A. Case Files

1. Minimum requirements:

- a. A legible copy of documents showing eligible immigration status: I-94 document, must be uploaded on MRIS when enrolling the participant for services (does not need to be on the physical file). Note: Copies of any document that is a card format must include front/back reproductions of the card.
- b. An authorization for release of information.
- c. Evidence of COUNTY's activities/involvement in FOCUS program and services supporting participant achieve their educational/vocational/Career goal(s). Use STATE provided Check and Connect tools to log/record progress towards identified benchmark(s)/goal(s) during regular, ongoing, and in-person meetings with each participant (every 1-2 weeks, depending on the level of assistance needed by the participant).
- d. Evidence of regular (at least once a month), ongoing, in-person/virtual meetings communication with MFIP Providers.
- e. Family goal plan with clearly listed benchmarks of progress towards self-sufficiency is in file.
- f. Evidence of participant progress toward their vocational/educational/career goal(s). (Test reports, attendance report, grades, behavioral report, certificates, licenses etc.)
- g. Evidence of any financial support paid by RPO dollars (i.e.: copy of bus cards, gift cards, etc.), including amount of support and the participant's signature of receipt.
- h. The STATE may add or revise this list throughout the CONTRACT term as needed to ensure program compliance and coordinated services.

B. Minnesota Refugee Information System (MRIS)

1. Access requirements

- a. Activation / deactivation of users
 - i. Agency manager/supervisor is responsible for requesting MRIS user activation and deactivation.
 - ii. Request to deactivate users must be submitted no later than the last day of employment with agency or work on contracted services.
 - iii. Any person accessing private data through the MRIS system must have completed a criminal background within 12 months of submitting access request.
- b. Data privacy training
 - i. Annual training completed for all registered users on Handling MN Information Securely.
 - ii. Agency must keep records of all training completed.
 - iii. Training must be completed prior to submitting MRIS access request.

2. Reporting requirements

- a. All program participants must be enrolled in MRIS and active in service area prior to providing services.
- b. All claimed outputs and outcomes shall be entered in the MRIS no later than 15 days after the outcome/output was achieved. After 15 days, there must be pre-approval from RPO to enter these into the MRIS system.
- c. Cases must remain active in FOCUS services until the person has completed defined goals, or choose to exit services.
- d. Service end date must be entered in MRIS when services are no longer being offered.

IV. Evaluation and program monitoring

A. Progress, measures.

1. COUNTY will work with STATE to evaluate progress of FOCUS program implementation as defined in the work plan section of this document.
2. COUNTY will work with STATE to identify and evaluate appropriate progress measures and markers throughout program implementation.

B. Corrective action plan.

1. A corrective action plan, including implementation timelines, may be requested by STATE if the COUNTY is not on track to meet agreed upon progress markers to meet Resettlement Network goals.
2. Further actions including cancellations may be taken by the STATE if the COUNTY fails to implement the corrective action within the specified time, or if the STATE and COUNTY are unable to agree upon appropriate progress markers for moving forward.

C. Ongoing evaluation and review(s) conducted by the STATE

1. Monthly email check in based on monthly program report generated from data entered on MRIS.
2. Annual Program Review: conducted once a year (usually during the 4th quarter of the program year: 10/1 – 9/30).
 - a. Review of casefiles and documentation
 - b. Review of outcomes/outputs
 - c. Review of work plan and program implementation activities
 - d. Discussion of community consultation

- e. Observation of service provision
- f. Review of program participant feedback
- 3. Administrative review areas
 - a. This is an overall review of agency administrative procedures and functioning to ensure agency is in solid standing to implement program services. This may include review of governance structures, HR policies, and other items.
 - b. There should be evidence that agency governance receives updates on CONTRACT implementation.
- 4. Financial review
 - a. This review will include review of financial documentation and processes in compliance with state and federal requirements.
 - b. On-site review of source documentation related to program invoices will be conducted at least once per year.

D. Modification and cancellation of CONTRACT.

- 1. STATE reserves the option to adjust or cancel this CONTRACT if not on track to meet program implantation goals or when significant inconsistencies found are not sufficiently explained or addressed.

V. Other conditions

A. Other responsibilities. COUNTY shall:

- 1. Ensure agency management and staff participate in meetings and trainings sponsored by the STATE, including ongoing program trainings, quarterly contract managers' meetings and collaboration meetings;
- 2. Ensure that staff are trained on STATE's RPO policies and procedures outlined in this CONTRACT; and
- 3. Implement proposed services and interventions described in the COUNTY's approved work plan.

VI. Financial Policies

A. County shall:

- 1. Comply with STATE financial policies;
- 2. Comply with federal policies regarding the use of federal funds;
- 3. Administrative/management FTEs not to exceed 15% of total budgeted FTEs and indirect costs are capped at 10% (subtracting Client Support), with the exception of agency being covered under NICRA (Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement with the Federal Government);

4. Maintain source documentation for all expenses submitted to RPO for reimbursement, and make them available to RPO as requested;
5. Use participant support dollars only to overcome barriers related to family goal plan
 - a. COUNTY must have written protocols to ensure transparent and equitable use of participant support funds.
 - b. Support exceeding \$500 for any participant must be pre-approved by the STATE.
 - c. COUNTY must have documentation in client file of support provided, including amount of support and participant signature verifying receipt of the support.
 - d. Support dollars may *not* be used to pay for rent or deposit expenses, or USCIS fees as per Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) policy.
 - e. Funds should not supplant resources available to participants under DWP or MFIP or other state/county programs such as DEED. Transportation, child care and other employment related support funding (e.g. for driver's education, training, uniforms, tools) should ONLY be used if they are not available under MFIP/DWP/DEED support services.
 - f. Participant support dollars invoiced to CONTRACT must correspond to distribution records within the same CONTRACT year.
6. Inform the STATE in writing within 15 business days of any changes in personnel listed on the approved budget.

FOCUS WORK PLAN

October 1, 2023 – September 30, 2024

Project Activities and Anticipated Outcomes

Year One:

Outputs and Outcomes: Specific Outputs and Outcomes will be tracked during this program in the MRIS database. With a total of 20-25 slots, the agency anticipates the following outputs and outcomes in Years 1, 2 and 3:

Note: The agency will have minimal enrollment during Year 1 due to delayed contract start date and time needed for hiring and training staff and establishing partnerships and onboarding with collaborating MFIP partners. As a result, we expect to have fewer outputs and outcomes in Year 1, although the goal is to maintain a case load of 20-25 slots per FOCUS Coordinator throughout the duration of the contract. There will be a better estimate of the realistic caseload after

completion of Year 1 implementation. The work plan will be reviewed and modified at the end of Year 1 based on the lessons learned during the current year implementation.

Program Activities	Description	Time Line
Family Well Being Inventory (FWI) Completed	75 families/cases	October 1, 2023 – September 30, 2024
FWI Follow-ups	The number depends on how many families complete the initial FWI and which families become eligible for 6 months follow-up during this program year.	Ongoing
Goal Plans Developed	20 families per staff person (this may depend on the time it will take to fully implement the program.	October 1, 2023– September 30, 2024
Support Services Provided	All families enrolled in FOCUS will receive an assessment of needs and support services as identified in the assessment process. Most families will receive and have need for more than one support so the number of support services will depend on the number of active enrolled families and identified needs	October 1, 2023 – September 30, 2024
Participant Achieves Progress Marker (as listed in Goal Plans)	At least 80% of the families enrolled for service achieve at least one benchmarks identified and listed in the goal plan.	October 1, 2023 – September 30, 2024
Collaborative meetings with MFIP providers/families	FOCUS Coordinators meet 100% of the families enrolled for services have at least one meeting per month AND 100% families enrolled meet with FOCUS and MFIP ES provider jointly as many times as agreed by all the three parties.	October 1, 2023 – September 30, 2024
Outreach/training/onboarding activities with MFIP Employment Service Providers and Resettlement Network Service Providers	MFIP providers understand project goals, roles and activities and can implement them with FOCUS Coordinators. Resettlement Network Providers understand project goals, roles and activities, and know how they will collaborate with the FOCUS Program	Ongoing
Program Evaluation	Engage in ongoing meeting with RPO, MFIP providers and Regional Resettlement Networks to discuss program implementation, lessons learned, and reflect on data report (monthly, quarterly and at the year-end)	Ongoing