

INFLUX OF REFUGEES: STATE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

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Refugees face structural and cultural barriers associated with higher physical and mental health disparities, poverty, and uncertainty about their rights and legal status.

CHALLENGES

- Community members may not have access to accurate and up to date policy-related information (e.g., misconception on the permanent resident or citizenship process).
- Refugee uncertainty about healthcare benefit qualification (e.g., Federal reductions in Affordable Care Act outreach).
- Refugee reluctance/avoidance of benefit programs for mental and physical health care (e.g., fear of deportation, cultural misunderstandings, service systems biases).
- K-12 personnel may not recognize trauma symptoms in refugee children.
- Lack of cultural competency in organizations serving refugees (e.g. mental and physical health, schools).

POSSIBLE RESPONSES

- Disseminating accurate and objective information by [investing in collaborative, multi-agency and community-based partnerships](#) interacting with refugee families (e.g., faith based groups, grassroots, schools, other immigrant service organizations).
- Providing accurate (multilingual) information using reputable social media sources such as those associated with professional organizations, subject matter experts, and certain celebrities.
- Expanding State healthcare multilingual outreach as Federal healthcare outreach declines,
- Ensuring refugee mental and physical care outreach includes [“no threat of deportation” status communication](#).
- [Use Trauma Informed Care \(TIC\)](#) approaches to recognize and treat trauma in refugee children. For example, recognizing the signs of trauma and mental illness.
- Enforcing culturally conscious services for refugees. Some examples may include: Promoting cultural competency training in schools, community agencies, tailoring culturally responsive mental health services, and requiring cultural competency training in higher education curriculum.
- Cultural conscious programming also includes cultural humility, country of origin political/social climate awareness, developmental, gender, and language needs.

KEY RESOURCES

- [Refugee and asylum policy](#) by The Migration Policy Institute
- What immigrants and refugees need to know about the Affordable Care Act by [SAMHSA](#)
- [Guidelines on trauma informed care for immigrant children](#) by The National Research Center for Children and Families
- Data on the impact of State benefits for immigrant children by [The National Center for Children in Poverty](#)
- Resources to engage immigrants in physical and mental health care by [The Children’s Partnership - California Immigrant Policy Center](#)