



ADMINISTRATION FOR
CHILDREN & FAMILIES

Office of Refugee Resettlement | 330 C Street, S.W., Washington, DC 20201
www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr

FY 16 – REFUGEE SCHOOL IMPACT SOCIAL SERVICES SET-ASIDE

DCL-16-07

Date: June 27, 2016

Dear Colleague,

ORR is changing the method for issuing Refugee School Impact (RSI) awards from a competitive discretionary grant to a set-aside within the annual social services formula grant in fiscal year (FY) 2017. This change will reduce the administrative burden to states and ensure that RSI funding is distributed proportionally to newly arrived school-age populations.

RSI allocations to states will be based on the number of newly arrived populations included in the social services formula allocations, aged 5-18 for the previous two fiscal years. Issuing RSI as a formula award will allow greater flexibility to reflect changes in ORR-served populations. To help states transition, ORR will not adjust the FY 2017 allocation later in the fiscal year based on more recent arrival data. States with more than 50 arrivals aged 5-18 in FY 2014 and FY 2015 qualify for RSI funding (attached table provides the FY 2017 RSI set-aside by state).

The central goal of the RSI program is to strengthen academic performance and facilitate social adjustment of school-age refugees and other populations served by ORR. States must provide services in accordance with 45 CFR 400.155. ORR encourages states to use the following approaches to design services that meet the goals of the RSI program:

- Broad partnerships focused on newly arriving ORR-served youth to ensure coordination for effective planning and successful program implementation while avoiding duplication of services, such as partnerships with state school officials, resettlement agencies, health and mental health providers, and community- and faith-based organizations and other local service providers.
- Culturally and linguistically appropriate materials, such as special curricula or activities, translation services, and interpreter services.
- Flexible scheduling during and outside school hours, such as after-school classes, weekend tutorials, and online assistance.

- Specialized approaches suited for newly arriving ORR-served populations, such as cultural orientation, refugee parents/teacher meetings, and school orientation.
- Programming that supports the integration of ORR-served youth into school systems, such as English as a Second Language (ESL) sessions, mentoring, group activities, and support to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) youth.
- Attention to measurable academic performance, such as high school graduation rates, accomplishment of required course work on a timely basis, and improved academic performance levels.

States must direct RSI funding to localities with fewer resources and a higher concentration of newly arrived ORR-served youth in the local schools.

States must report all RSI activities as part of their ORR-6 submission, including a summary in the narrative section of the report. The summary should include information related to the number of clients served as well as the type and frequency of services provided.

As part of the social services grant, ORR will enhance monitoring to ensure RSI is targeting services to best meet the needs of recently arrived school-aged ORR-served populations. ORR will assess the provision of these services and identify best practices as a basis for future formula funding determinations and set-aside activities.

Please direct any questions about this Dear Colleague Letter to Carl Rubenstein, Director of the Division of Refugee Assistance, at carl.rubenstein@acf.hhs.gov.

Sincerely,

Robert Carey, Director
Office of Refugee Resettlement