



Recommendations Final Report

CEHKC Immigrants and Refugees (I&R) Task Force

*Presented to CEH Interagency Council (IAC) 4/2/12 and CEH Governing Board 4/25/12 by Mark Okazaki, Task Force Chair, and Rebecca Laszlo, Task Force Program Manager
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1 Purpose/Charter Statement

This task force was chartered to develop recommendations on strategies to increase access to housing and supportive services among immigrants and refugees who are homeless (or at risk of homelessness) as identified through the Committee to End Homelessness' Mid Plan Review process in 2011. The Immigrant and Refugee ("I&R") WorkGroup formed 8/15/2011 and met through 2/27/2012. Recommendations will be routed through the CEH Interagency Council on 4/2/2012 before final approval by the CEH Governing Board and CEH Funders Group.

2 Recommendations

The problems that most often lead to homelessness among King County's immigrant and refugee populations have less to do with disability and more to do with **the need to acquire skills, tools and time necessary to access living wage employment**. Services need to be offered in ways that empower I&R beneficiaries to choose their pathway to success. Policy boards should incorporate a deep I&R perception so they will evaluate and evolve the programs and processes supporting these populations.

With this as the focus, the proposed solutions have less to do with a massive new infusion of resources than the need to make the existing systems work better for I&R beneficiaries, and to provide more equitable and effective access to resources.

We acknowledge that immigrants and refugees are in need (sometimes in desperate need) of the same sorts of resources as are needed by other homeless or at-risk households: subsidized housing and housing supports for those working low wage jobs, benefits like cash assistance to supplement the household income, child care so single parents can work, treatment to overcome trauma and PTSD, navigation to resources best suited for the household's own needs, etc. Investing in I&R strategies are not sufficient to meet the basic needs of households without living wage employment; consider how devastating it is trying to support any family of 6 on \$736 in public assistance, regardless of whether any employable adults in the households possess marketable skills or the ability to navigate the systems available to assist them.

We also realize while immigrants and refugees are new to the US, unfamiliar with resources and systems, and have limited or no English language skills, their households face even more barriers in becoming self-sufficient. Even as we seek those resources needed by all homeless and at-risk households, we can make substantial advances for immigrant and refugee populations by addressing the key problems and solutions offered by the I&R WorkGroup.

The recommendations comprise four distinct themes:

1. Progressive and Supportive English Learning Programs – address the unique foundational barriers/challenges of immigrants and refugees.
2. Policy Boards to Develop an Immigrant and Refugee Lens – eliminate the institutional barriers created when immigrant and refugee issues are dealt with as an afterthought.
3. Cultural Competency in Mainstream Homeless System – enhance the current service delivery system and how to make it more responsive.
4. Efficiency Gains in Existing Resources – improve the current resources so they serve more immigrants and refugees along with other vulnerable populations.

2.1 Progressive and Supportive English Learning Programs

The Challenge: I&R adults need more time and training to acquire enough skills so they can leverage the appropriate resources from multiple systems and prepare themselves for survival, independent living, and living wage employment. The foundational skill most needing enhancement is English proficiency; a pathway is needed to achieve English proficiency at or beyond level 5 (“High Intermediate ESL”). Federal funding cannot meet this challenge due to regulatory restrictions; successful outcomes require state or regional investment. Existing LEP Pathway, an employment-focused program for the limited English Proficient adults on TANF, is necessary but not sufficient because its ESL is time-limited and focused on employment and skills training for adults to exit TANF. ESL programs and strategies that support refugees and immigrants in learning English, from beginner to intermediate levels as well as survival English, needs consideration and investment. We must re-visit already-existing best practices providing ESL services to refugees and immigrants, and extend the ability of I&R adults to stay with their learning for years (not just months).

Recommended Solution:

- * Bridge progressive ESL learning programs coupled with childcare and transportation that enable adult learners to succeed in with their initial survival and daily living in addition to employment needs.
- * Combine ESL with wrap-around supports for: bus, childcare, and flexible scheduling.
- * Include specific programs and strategies for refugee youth and young adults.
- * Include in-the-workplace ESL programs.

Level of Effort and Investment:

- * Substantial effort staffing program management staff, program design, and establishing new partnerships.
- * Substantial investment funding transportation and childcare supports.
- * Substantial investment funding wages (“earn as you learn” and “pay for mentoring”) to lengthen I&R participation.
- * Hard to initiate because we need to recruit long-term owners for the work.
- * It is hoped that some of the refugee youth investment can be self-funded through avoidance of the child welfare or criminal justice systems.
- * It is possible the refugee youth investment can be funded from Families and Education Levy funds.

CEH Role:

- * Identify the best of the existing coalitions able to facilitate progressive and supportive English learning programs and establish a formal partnership with them. Identify and begin links to existing ESL trainings in cooperation with other interested parties.
- * Convene refugee and immigrant providers, schools and colleges to form an initial bridge and start the project.
- * Seek a permanent owner for the project; specifically, recruit the following as co-owners: Seattle Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs and King County Equity & Social Justice Initiative (ESJI).
- * Seek initial and ongoing funding sources.

2.2 Policy Boards to Develop an Immigrant and Refugee Lens

The Challenge: Policy boards and other policy makers need to be more effective evaluating policy decisions and program outcomes by developing and using an “Immigrant & Refugee Lens”. Since 24% of KC residents speak a language other than English at home, deep representation is appropriate.

Recommended Solution:

- * Add Immigrant and Refugee representation to Policy Boards.
- * Establish true partnerships with (and representation from within) ethnically-focused agencies and organizations to provide policy input/development that best serves the I&R community.
- * Monitor relevant issues and evaluate future recommendations.
- * Track changes in tactics and outcomes over time to ensure institutional commitment and accounting of impact from programs or policies that effect I&R populations.

Level of Effort and Investment:

- * Minor effort and major commitment required to incorporate leaders within the I&R community and develop emerging leaders into a deep bench.
- * Minimal investment.

CEH Role:

- * Identify at least 10 policy boards for which to urge representational consideration, seeking at least three (3) I&R representatives on each of these boards.
- * Reform the mainstream homeless system, and lobby other mainstream systems to adopt similar approaches.
- * Monitor rate of ethnically-focused agencies delivering services within the homeless system.

2.3 Cultural Competency in Mainstream Homeless Systems

The Challenge: The mainstream homeless system needs to demonstrate and reward operational improvements that exhibit cultural competence. Cultural competence is “a set of behaviors attributes and policies enabling an agency (or individual) to work effectively in cross cultural situations”, using three guiding principles: Commitment, Accessibility and Relevance.

Recommended Solution:

- * Change scoring system on RFPs to incent and recognize the track record of results delivered by ethnically-focused organizations in the scoring of proposals.
- * Instill Cultural Competence within the mainstream systems.
- * Develop one or two simple strategies to enhance awareness of available resources among I&R households.
- * Support professional development and networking opportunities to culturally-focused front-line staff.
- * Establish productive partnerships between the mainstream homeless system and ethnically-focused services agencies and Mutual Assistance Association (MAA) organizations.

Level of Effort and Investment:

- * Moderate effort to provide program management staff, RFP criteria and awards design, and establishing new partnerships.
- * Moderate investment for monetary awards for operational improvements serving I&R clients and to deliver ongoing cultural competency professional development to agency staff.

CEH Role:

- * Issue RFPs asking respondents for substantive evidence of 1) Commitment, 2) Accessibility, and 3) Relevance.
- * Score RFP applications to provide a bigger point spread for respondents demonstrating cultural competence.
- * Include 1-2 I&R readers on CEH RFP evaluation team to score applications.
- * Initiate formal links to the network of MAAs.

2.4 Efficiency Gains in Homeless and Housing Resources

The Challenge: Enhance the efficiency of existing services and housing resources. Improvements in this area would create increased resources for everyone entering the homeless system, like increasing the available stock of public housing.

Recommended Solution:

- * Support more rapid movement out of Public Housing units and diminishing use of Section 8 as residents are able.
- * Consult to housing development specifications for culturally relevant housing units.
- * Design a pre-application process and resources that help I&R households navigate a smooth passage toward waiting lists and needed supports.
- * Consider shallow subsidies to help stabilize I&R households.
- * Avoid public assistance interruptions when housing location changes to prevent case closure.
- * Monitor issues and develop future recommendations in areas including but not limited to:
 - * Investing more in essential, scarce resources like eviction prevention resources.
 - * Anticipate high rent burden in households and trigger a proactive/preventive response.
 - * Consider policies permitting I&R to build a consistent job history in a profession with living wage potential.
 - * Monitor Regional employment and transportation strategies in alignment with I&R population centers.

Level of Effort and Investment:

- * Moderate effort in amending rent or over-income policies.
- * Moderate investment in new policies and procedures to support new levels of efficiency and service.
- * It is hoped the investments can be self-funded through efficiency savings.

CEH Role:

- * CEH to work with Housing Authorities to work out toolkit of incentives and subsidies.
- * Seattle Office of Housing to seek help from I&R WorkGroup to populate any discussions about housing needs that serve newly arrived and/or low-income I&R populations [initial discussions are pending].
- * Establish true partnerships as measured by selecting ethnically-focused agencies to deliver services via grants, grant sub-contracts, and fee-based services.
- * Bill Block has offered to add CEH should/must language here to supplement this “CEH Role” language to maximize the degree of accountability that comes from putting teeth into the cultural competency recommendation above. The accountabilities likely to include assessment of need and measure % served of the baseline population.

Please see “**Appendix A: Recommendations: Strategies to Increase Access to Housing and Supportive Services for Immigrant & Refugee Households in Unstable Housing Situations**” for detail on each.

3 About Cultural Competency

To make real and lasting change, organizations in our system(s) need to demonstrate their commitment to advance the benefit of their services to I&R populations. Early adopters should be rewarded for their innovations, and reluctant adopters need to be spurred to change.

Having bilingual staff is not sufficient; the key is making operational changes that include greater accountability to I&R clients and continuous adjustments based on lessons learned.

Promising examples of operational practice at agencies might include:

- Convene a focus group with I&R constituents then make operational changes based on what is learned.
- Allow I&R applicants extra time to fill out required paperwork.
- Serve clients in satellite offices near where I&R clients live and work; travel to I&R clients.
- Develop strong and committed partnerships with ethnically-focused partner organizations and/or Mutual Assistance Associations (MAA's).
- Develop prescriptive guidance on "how services are provided". For example, develop an action plan for conducting services, how to listen to clients who utilize diverse communication styles, etc.
- Develop one or two simple strategies to enhance awareness of available resources among I&R households. Provide general information about little-known specialized resources (like Sharia-compliant home acquisition products, for example).
- Design a pre-application process that guides I&R households to get their documents together in advance of needing to enter a waitlist. Provide case managers knowledge of I&R requirements so they can help their clients navigate a smooth passage through to needed resources.

In all aspects of the work, consider three elements at the beginning then continually check your progress along the way:

- Accessibility: "What are the best practices we should consider? Which will we implement?" – make the services accessible to the beneficiaries.
- Relevancy: ditto – adopt best practices to make the services relevant to the beneficiaries
- Commitment: ditto – ensure you've sustained the agency's commitment to cultural competency

Key to improving one's own cultural competence: ***be calm; be curious; don't judge; ask instead of tell.***

TIP: To explore cultural competency assessments and resources the I&R WorkGroup found helpful, please email Gretchen Bruce to request the Cultural Competency Resources document plus two City of Seattle-Human Services Dept documents: 1) Racial Equity-Cultural Competence Policy and Contracting Continuum document and 2) RIY Assessment Tool.

4 Main Scenarios

The I&R WorkGroup identified the main scenarios faced by households struggling for stable housing. SCENARIOS are listed here grouped in highest-to-lowest ranked clusters:

1: Refugee with Limited Education, Placed in Fragile Housing Arrangement	12 Votes
2: Single Mom with No Job Skills	9 Votes

3: Family Reunification, Doubled Up Situation Terminated	6 Votes
4: Head of Household Loses Job, Unable to Find Replacement Job	6 Votes
5: Hidden Mental Health Concerns	5 Votes

6: Family Management Concerns / Homelessness Among Immigrant Youth	2 Votes
7: Living With Family, Offered Unacceptable Housing, Refuses, Family Support Ends	1 Votes
8: Documented, with Employment, Owns House, Recession Hits	0 Votes

Please see "**Appendix B: Common scenarios: Precursors to Homelessness among Immigrant & Refugee Households**" for detail on each.

Caveats about scenarios:

- Because the above scenarios describe precursors to homelessness among I&R households, they omit the scenarios that show a pathway to success, notably: "English Success" and "Upward-bound Employment Success".

- The scenarios only lightly describe cultural parenting issues, homelessness among I&R youth, or the role of domestic violence in I&R housing instability.
- In scenario 1 (“Refugee with Limited Education...”), we added a sub-scenario concerning refugee youth.

5 Existing Resources

The I&R WorkGroup identified that households facing these scenarios need a range of services to respond to the household crisis. RESOURCES tended to be grouped around a series of elements listed below. We identified 56 distinct types of resource available (most very limited in funding, some provided by multiple agencies/entities) grouped in clusters of main type:

Resettlement: Support upon arrival in the US, dealing specifically with immigrant/refugee status
Resource discussed: RRA; Sponsor Assistance; VOLAG 6-month financial obligation; Get I10 Number; Get PRUCOL status;

Housing Support: Finding and settling into housing, long-term rental subsidies, etc.
Resource discussed: Landlord Discounts; Motel Vouchers; Public Housing; Rental assistance; Income verification; Loan Modification;

Income Support: Provides income stream to be used as individual sees fit
Resource discussed: Family Self-Sufficiency; IDA; RCA; Refugee Matching Grant; SSI; TANF; Tenant Trust Account; State Family Assistance

ESL: English language proficiency, literacy, etc.
Resource discussed: Community College ESL; TANF CASAS; ESL Training

Job Training: Job skills training, job search assistance, job experience
Resource discussed: Childcare Assistance; Job Search & Job Placement; LEP Pathway; TANF CJ; TANF Job Search; TANF Vocation Education; Business Development

Eviction Prevention: Response to crisis, short-term rental or utility assistance, etc.
Resource discussed: Eviction Prevention Service / Rental Assistance; TANF Grant

Living Support: Wrap-around services to support daily life, food, medical & mental health services, etc.
Resource discussed: HEN; Hot Meal; Mental Health System;

Child Assist: Child assistance, child development, such as: daycare services, learning experiences, etc.
Child benefits; Child School Enrollment; College scholarships; Child Development; Child After School; Family Counseling; Liaison between Parent and Youth; Parent Education; Parent Homework Support; Youth After School; Youth Case Management; Youth Enrichment; Youth In-School; Youth Mentorship; Youth Summer; Youth Visits to Disadvantaged Populations

Other: Incidentals like naturalization services, financial skills seminars, crisis line calls, etc.
Resource discussed: 2-1-1 Referrals; Credit & Loan Education; Naturalization Services Assistance; Tax Credit Programs; Juvenile Justice Policy Work

Various resources are useful in different phases of the person’s own timeline.

- Initial arrival timeframe - the resettlement period: preparing for arrival and the first few weeks after arrival
- Public assistance time frame
- Skill building time frame
- Struggling for resources – if not self-sustaining
- Naturalization time frame
- Flourishing time frame – the typical activities of a self-sustaining immigrant or refugee are omitted from the below.

Please see “**Appendix C: Existing Resources Usage Timeline**” to get a sense of the approximate timeframe when certain resources become most useful to the beneficiary.

TIP: To receive a fuller description of each resource, please email Gretchen Bruce to request the Existing Resources document. The full document is recommended for use as a front-line service agency reference.

6 Main Barriers Faced by Immigrants and Refugees Seeking Stable Housing

The Task Force identified that there are a number of BARRIERS that cause significant hardship to immigrants and refugees in accessing these resources or making adequate progress in gaining stable housing and employment. These barriers were further refined through 10 community outreach settings, most of which were with actual I&R

clientele of local housing service agencies with the meeting facilitated by a native speaker (no interpreters). Separate focus groups were also held among executive directors and case managers who serve I&R populations.

The barriers to stable housing tend to cluster around the following, with the top cluster providing the most actionable opportunities for improvement:

- Access to ESL Learning Programs is limited or there are gaps
- Immigrant and Refugee representation absent on policy boards and so I&R issues get overlooked
- There is inadequate public housing and people aren't moving out
- Public assistance is lost when housing location changes and the agency (DSHS) isn't aware of the change
- Mainstream agencies lack sufficient cultural competence
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- It's too hard to find out about available resources
- Need for more housing stock that deviates from typical housing standards
- Case Management supports are hard to get
- People have difficulty finding affordable housing. Wait lists for affordable housing are long, difficult to navigate
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- People have difficulty finding employment and building a good job history
- Documentation requirements to access benefits are complex and delay services
- Affordable housing is concentrated in South King County – far from jobs
- Mutual Aid Associations (MAA's)

7 First-person and Front-line Focus Group Feedback

The recommendations were deeply informed by the recent, real first-person and front-line feedback consolidated into **“Appendix D: “I&R Focus Group Feedback”**. Some priorities were amended as a result of these community outreach sessions held with Agency Leaders, Front-Line Service Providers, and with 6 distinct linguistic groups of consumers in their own language, such as the following:

- English proficiency found to be THE foundational barrier to stable housing and living wage employment
- English learning programs need to include transportation, childcare, flexible scheduling, and long eligibility timeframes
- Asks for specific housing cost control strategies (like: deliberate overcrowding or bundling utility fees with rent subsidies)
- Employment opportunities that don't require immediate English proficiency
- English-only or computer-only resources unusable for some
- Stress from past trauma and current housing/employment struggles add to time needed for acculturation

TIP: To receive the full focus group feedback, please email Gretchen Bruce to request the Focus Group Feedback and Suggestions Detail document. The full document is recommended to gain a perspective of how some I&R people perceive the homeless system and related systems.

8 Wrap-Up

THANKS to the Committee to End Homelessness for its demonstrated commitment to strategies that increase access to housing and supportive services among immigrants and refugees in unstable housing situations. Your willingness and ability to adopt an I&R perspective in the work will reap numerous rewards throughout the region.

THANKS to the members of the I&R WorkGroup, each of whom represented a different perspective and brought extensive expertise working with I&R populations to the table. Each member contributed much knowledge, and learned much in return.

“Appendix G General Background” contains some general information about the CEHKC I&R Workgroup, the members of which produced the material in this document.

TIP: To stay in touch with future work, please ask Gretchen Bruce to put you on the distribution list, noting in your email you're specifically interested in immigrant & refugee issues.
Gretchen.Bruce@kingcounty.gov



Appendix A: Recommendations Supplement

Strategies to Increase Access to Housing and Supportive Services for Immigrant & Refugee Households in Unstable Housing Situations

This section contains information to supplement the information in the Recommendations.

Parking lot issue: the unique needs of undocumented immigrants are only indirectly included in this information. The CEHKC Interagency Council (IAC) recommends we keep this issue visible as a parking lot item.

1 Progressive and Supportive English Learning Programs

The ability to speak and read/write sufficiently in English is necessary to emerge from poverty.

The CEHKC I&R WorkGroup advocates the Workforce Development Council and other partners to take action and fund a progressive and holistic approach to ESL training. The recommended strategy is to build bridges and alternate curriculum to guide I&R beneficiaries through ESL learning that builds English proficiency in the areas that serve their initial survival then their daily living needs in addition to employment needs. We also advocate that programs reduce (eliminate) the time limits so the motivated learner can continue as long as is needed to achieve the learner's own speaking and reading goals, even if that lasts 5-7 years.

Alternative tactics could include any or all of the following:

- Combine training offered by private/nonprofit programs (such as those offered by faith-based organizations and literacy organizations) as well as public programs.
- Consider work supports to make ESL learning pay for the learners, and pay peer mentors.
- Remove top barriers to attending ESL by offering free bus fare and childcare, and offering classes at varying times (e.g. after a night shift or after an evening shift).
- Teach Survival English (such as: "how to shop in a supermarket" or "how to read a bus schedule").
- Teach Activities of Daily Living (ADL) English.
- Continue to teach Job Search English like what is offered in LEP Pathway.
- Teach Workplace English Proficiency to go beyond the basics in the workplace.
- Teach Personal English Proficiency to go beyond the basics in ADL.
- Hire instructors to teach English in the workplace (in situ). Identify employers motivated to increase levels of safety in their work environment (Safety English) or to provide better customer service (if their workers interact with the public).
 - With a strong focus on rapid employment for immigrants and refugees, we are placing individuals into jobs before they are proficient in English, thus it's critical to provide English language learning opportunities, and providing these in the workplace could benefit both the refugee and the employer.
- Grant the learner priority over a waiting list to enter the next class level when they are ready to advance.
- Consider offering modular training delivery approaches: produce short, modular English training – viewable on-demand from internet – featuring short video snippets with English subtitles to reinforce written English alongside oral dialog. Example producers of this type of training include: <http://buildingmedia.com/> and http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Khan_Academy. This approach is well-suited for survival English and ADL English focusing on a particular topic (like how to read a bus sign or how to go through a food bank), and for workplace English (customized to a type of workplace, like food distribution or manufacturing).

Other thoughts to consider:

- Encourage learners in ways that build confidence and increase willingness to speak and write English in all settings.
- Build capacity by developing peer mentors. A more proficient adult English learning could pull up a lesser speaker from their own *or another* linguistic group. They already have the empathy for the learner, and

they provide role modeling. There are some advantages of peer mentors helping a different linguistic group – they create intercultural bridges plus they don't fall into their native tongue when teaching.

- Produce a geographical catalog of ESL programs available to I&R, Crisis Line, or case managers when searching for a suitable ESL learning situation.
- Allow some ESL classes to be motivated for purposes other than job search English and workplace English. Some learners are more motivated to learn how to read to their young children – if so, have classes that teach that level of English/literacy.
- Find ways to motivate the learner so they find delight in their own progress.

Responsible parties for evaluating and implementing specific solutions: Workforce Development Council and other partners yet to be identified.

People learn English faster if they have self-confidence and motivation. Learning speed isn't always correlated with previous education levels; the fastest learners of English tend to be those who interact more with English speakers; previous formal education and literacy in another language tends to accelerate English learning.

How much time is needed? People with formal education require 3-5 years to learn English, and perhaps 5-7 years if they have no formal education. Common inhibitors to learning English faster include: older age, more trauma, more stressors, less discretionary time in daily life, lack of transportation, illiteracy, and unfamiliarity with Roman alphabet.

Clearly our region needs to provide adult ESL training in parallel with the learner's need to hold a job, care for a family, and navigate successfully. This is why the recommendation suggests a wider variety of training methods, including in-situ workplace training, training combined with childcare and at different times of day or night, and training that progresses over the course of years not just months.

The above focuses mostly on adult programs, but we've identified a key area of need among refugee youth. Read this next subsection for details:

1.1 Progressive and Supportive English Learning Programs Specific to Refugee Youth

This idea is a sub-set of the main English Learning recommendation that serves a small but significant population: refugee youths (and some immigrant youths) ages 14-20 who arrive in King County from the extreme deprivations of refugee camps or years of running and hiding. The refugee youth or young adults coming from these situations have the most to benefit from their new life in King County, yet might be the least prepared to adapt unless they are given the opportunities to learn what they need to know to achieve success.

It is our recommendation to deliver age-appropriate, culturally-appropriate knowledge/intensive training to support education, future career, and personal leadership.

We are not aware of any programs that exist for this, but it is certainly possible they exist somewhere. It is possible the City of Seattle Human Services Department -- Integrated Job Readiness Training for Immigrant/Refugee Youth and Families RFI currently under evaluation might be a complementary concept (El Centro de la Raza has responded to this RFI).

Perhaps the best initial approach is for CEH to form a new coalition with schools and community colleges to address the unique needs of refugee youths 14-20 who arrive in King County from the extreme deprivations of a refugee camp or years of running and hiding.

Perhaps the CEH Youth and Young Adult Task Force would support this recommendation after vetting it.

2 Policy Boards to Develop an Immigrant and Refugee Lens

It is strongly recommended CEH work toward a new higher standard for representation given the fact that 24% of King County residents speak a language other than English in their homes.

The mainstream homeless system to extend the existing racial equity lens to include and I&R lens, to ensure "policies, programs, and practices are responsive and accessible to all communities; achieves desired results; address/reduce disparities; acknowledge and integrate cultural, class and language differences."

Leadership development could be leveraged to stimulate a larger pool of strong candidates.

3 Cultural Competency in Mainstream Homeless Systems

The Minority Executive Directors Coalition (MEDC) has 'adopted the definition of Cultural Competency from the work of Cross et al., 1989 as "a set of behaviors, attributes and policies enabling an agency (or individual) to work effectively in cross cultural situations". Cultural Competency is further defined through three Guiding [Principles]: **Commitment** (What kind of concrete commitment do you have to your clients), **Accessibility** (language appropriate, case sensitive, location, and representation) and **Relevance** (services and focus is relevant to the needs of the client).' Reference: <http://www.medcofkc.org/cultural-competency/> .

Regarding the recommendation that CEH develop one or two simple strategies to enhance awareness of available resources among I&R households: possibilities for increasing awareness were mentioned in the community outreach focus groups, such as: localizing the Washington Information Network 2-1-1 into other languages, use the Library system to reach I&R people, disseminate information about available resources and services at community events (e.g., fairs), distribute native-language flyers, or provide fresh information to Mutual Assistance Associations.

The new HousingSearchNW.org tool provides a real-time search for housing; maybe this tool will help find housing resources for unusual household sizes, depending on what housing units landlords advertise on the tool.

The Washington Information Network 2-1-1 is not usable by many I&R people until it is available in localized languages such as Vietnamese, Somali, Amharic, Oromo, Tigrigna, Bhutanese, Burmese and other languages.

There exist at least 2 institutions that offer Sharia-compliant home acquisition products in Washington, and almost no one knows of these. They are known as "declining musharaka", AKA Declining Balance Co-ownership.

It is possible the mainstream homeless system could support the efforts of MAA's that provide individualized guidance to I&R families. This strategy would be of particular assistance to I&R people who aren't eligible for case management support.

4 Efficiency Gains in Homeless and Housing Resources

Disclaimer: while existing resources are extensive, they are NOT sufficient to meet the needs of I&R people needing housing and related services. We acknowledge these resources are scarce and spread thin amongst all people accessing the homeless system.

This recommendation points out some significant efficiencies we believe would free us some of the scarce resources to benefit I&R people and other populations too.

Some waiting lists require 12 months of continuous rental history in a particular city, which can sometimes be a barrier of the I&R household doesn't realize they shouldn't move from city to city if they need to maintain their place in a waiting list.

"Shallow subsidies" tend to be small amounts like \$200.

The following detailed notes pertaining to the more rapid movement out of Public Housing and Section 8:

- This recommendation doesn't impact solely I&R populations; it potentially impacts any household living in public housing. The outward movement of public housing residents frees up units for any qualified people on the waiting list.
- KCHA already plans to lift the rent cap, as a financial incentive to move out into other housing.
- When amending rent or over-income policies, projects with multiple fund sources (City, County, State, tax credit, LIPH, Section 8 etc.) could require cooperation across multiple agencies and fund sources with varying requirements.
- Questions we believe would be useful for someone to research and answer:
 - QUESTION: Is there data to show what's holding people back – what are the specific reasons people stay in public housing even after their income levels and stability are sufficient to move into other housing situations?
 - QUESTION: Is there data to show how many people live in public housing with their income at the cap?
 - QUESTION: Who are the people most likely to move out of public housing if the cap is lifted? We would be interested in knowing demographics. We know it wouldn't just be I&R populations.
 - QUESTION: what about eligibility for tax-credit housing? ANSWER: once qualified, the person remains qualified indefinitely.

- ADDITIONAL INFO: See Cheryl Collins for details on current City A&F Plan policies and boilerplate language in current regulatory agreements. Prior regulatory agreements do not include the rent increase requirement.
 - ADDITIONAL INFO: See Cheryl Collins for SHA Housing Choice Voucher program policies. Seattle’s “just cause” eviction ordinance is also a likely factor – unable to ask tenants to move out or evict solely because income has increased after move-in.
- QUESTION: research and perhaps sync up over-income/rent increase policies from different agencies and fund sources. The recommendation mostly affects KCHA and SHA, but would overlap with other funder requirements at jointly-funded projects (such as New Holly, for example), and perhaps housing with Project-Based Section 8 units (if SHA changed policies to eliminate rent caps for over-income tenants in the Housing Choice Voucher program). This will also likely be a point of discussion for the Yesler Terrace redevelopment.
- QUESTION: should we be concerned that some people might under-report their income or intentionally lower their income? ANSWER: NO. Even though it might be tempting for people on the borderline of income to do so, this isn’t a problem we need to design around.
- There are very limited resources or support to encourage households to leave public housing and strike out on their own. Some possible ways to address this issue:
 - Create escrow accounts where part of the resident’s rent is set aside in a separate account that can be used for move-out, rent deposits, training or tools [some programs like that are already in place]
 - Lift cap on rents. Currently people pay 30% of their income for rent only up to a maximum which is near market rent. If that number can be exceeded if their income continues to rise, the market becomes a more attractive alternative. Note: this issue may apply also to tax credit housing in some of the garden communities.
 - Give people who leave public housing a “right of return” (since they only go to the top of the wait list when they need to return, they may need a temporary subsidy to stay where they are until a unit opens up for them).
 - Finance residents’ decision to leave. If a resident is given \$3,000 to pay for market deposits and move-out/in costs, plus \$3,000 if they stay in market housing for a year (coupled with a right of return), then for a \$6,000 investment a unit will have been freed up (the same cost as creating a “unit” with a voucher for a year. If the unit becomes freed up for more than a year, there is a net benefit.
 - Explore time limited shallow subsidies that allow people move to the private market.
 - Invest in employment programs that allow people to better afford market housing (and focus on employment programs where there are actually jobs at the end).
 - Help residents of the garden communities who have small businesses expand their client base beyond other residents of the garden communities (e.g. there are many child care providers in the garden communities, but they tend to look within the garden community for clients, which is getting harder with cuts to child care subsidies).
 - Increase awareness of Shariah-compliant home acquisition financial products.

Regarding the avoidance of public assistance interruptions: DSHS intends to increase efforts ensuring clients know they must report address changes to their case worker to prevent case closure. These efforts include raising awareness at regularly scheduled community meetings with clients and stakeholders, including the statewide Refugee Advisory Council meeting. DSHS will also emphasize the importance of this to our service providers who are under contract to help refugees receive and maintain the services for which they are eligible.

Regarding culturally-appropriate housing needs: The I&R Workgroup gathered a set of 15 promising ideas pertaining to Housing Needs to suit I&R households. The document was provided to Rick Hooper and Cheryl Collins at the Seattle Office of Housing for them to use in any way they see fit. The I&R Workgroup recommends future housing funding rounds prioritize culturally relevant housing units. The homeless system can potentially provide funding to spur system changes such as cash incentives in housing development.



Appendix B: Common Scenarios: Precursors to Homelessness among Immigrant & Refugee Households

Below are a collection of scenarios that the CEHKC Immigrant & Refugee Task Force has identified as common barriers faced by immigrant and refugee households as it relates to finding and keeping housing. The scenarios are arranged according to how often task force members thought that this type of scenario posed a big barrier to households – whether it affects a lot of households, a few households, or hardly any households that participants know. The scenarios identified by the Task Force, and the relative number of votes that each scenario received is as follows:

Scenario	Vote Rank
1: Refugee with Limited Education, Placed in Fragile Housing Arrangement	12 Votes
2: Single Mom with No Job Skills	9 Votes
3: Family Reunification, Doubled Up Situation Terminated	6 Votes
4: Head of Household Loses Job, Unable to Find Replacement Job	6 Votes
5: Hidden Mental Health Concerns	5 Votes
6: Family Management Concerns / Homelessness Among Immigrant Youth	2 Votes
7: Living With Family, Offered Unacceptable Housing, Refuses, Family Support Ends	1 Votes
8: Documented, with Employment, Owns House, Recession Hits	0 Votes

1: Refugee with Limited Education. Placed in Fragile Housing Arrangement 12 Votes

Scenario: Refugee arrives (often after years in refugee camp.) Often: large family, parents and children lack education. (Some families are educated and speak some English, but their skills are not transferrable and/or they require re-certification and there is no funding/time for recertification.)

- Voluntary agencies, using their funds in conjunction with TANF or RCA support, help refugee families with initial settlement, but after three to six months, the voluntary agency support expires. The family is unable to meet a high rent obligation with the remaining TANF or RCA support.
- Family is evicted, often ends up leaving furniture behind, losing deposit and creating bad tenancy record. Participants would benefit through skill building/education so they understand legal issues / consequences (though challenging to do tenant education given language barriers).
- Family has 5 months remaining of \$640 but limited prospects beyond that. (Comment: this is true for the single adult cash grant, but families often qualify for TANF, so time period may be longer.)
- Alternate: Refugee comes as secondary migration, even the initial support is no longer available.
- Modification to the scenario: may find job, but typically low paying (less than \$13/hr), seasonal, long commute: Hospitality (hotel), factory-assembly line, food packaging.
- Sub-Scenario: Concerns about **refugee youth** are based upon this scenario:
 - 1) Youth spent many years in refugee camps;
 - 2) Once in the US, they don't have the required English language skills to succeed at school;
 - 3) Depending on their age, they may not be eligible to attend public schools;
 - 4) There are minimal services and programs to help them in English language acquisition and employment;
 - 5) As a result they are more likely to drop out of school, get discouraged and engage in illegal activities;
 - 6) These combined barriers and lack of access to educational opportunities and poverty, leads to another generation of refugees living in poverty and becoming homeless.

2: Single Mom with No Job Skills 9 Votes

Scenario: Family comes to US with father as primary wage earner. Mom stays at home and does not learn English, is not prepared to become the primary wage earner. Parents separate (various reasons, including domestic violence.)

- Mom is now without resources and without employment skills, turns to homeless system. (Family shelter/transitional housing provider reports seeing more young moms.)
- Mom may be eligible for TANF, but may face 5 year limit, or given 15% cut in TANF, is unable to afford housing.
- Childcare is a problem to allow mom to seek work. Affordable childcare is hard to find. Mom's culture may place high value on her staying at home to care for her children. (Some traditional cultures rely on other family members and their community for support, if available. Many do not have extended family nearby.)

- Multiple barriers to stability: Resources scarce, hard to access: job search, skill building: childcare limited all hard to access. Job search funds have decreased, training programs don't respond to the market and English skills.

3: Family Reunification. Doubled Up Situation Terminated 6 Votes

Scenario: Person (not a refugee) comes to US to reunify with family. Family takes them in.

- Families Double up to provide housing/support to extended family. Can put housing at risk:
 - > Private market lease or housing authority may have rules against additional family members staying long term, but it's hard for the family to say "no".
 - > Many households try to live in small spaces as a way to economize
 - > Doubling up may be considered a normal (even preferred) condition for many cultures. Multi-generational / extended households are the norm. it is a natural response, and doesn't require going into the system for help.
 - > Although stable doubled up situations may not need intervention, unstable doubled up situations need to be addressed.
- Alternate crisis: immigrant comes in with sponsor; sponsor loses job and can no longer support immigrant.
- Comment from emergency shelter provider: the loss of doubled up housing seems to be a very common precursor to emergency shelter use

4: Head of Household Loses Job. Unable to Find Replacement Job 6 Votes

Scenario: Undocumented immigrant comes without family to earn and send money home (alternative: Undocumented dependent immigrant loses supporting relationship (spouse or parent.) Or, the deportation of a family member contributes to income instability.

- New / expanded restrictions requiring employers to provide proof of documentation (example: e-Verify) makes it harder to get a job.
- If individual is able to find a job, but loses it, s/he unable to find replacement because of undocumented status. Becomes homeless
- Undocumented means no access to public housing and certain other government-funded services.
- Undocumented status puts them at higher risk (e.g., fear of mainstream systems, vulnerability to predators/domestic abuse, overcrowded living situations)
- Their children, if born in the US, have access to resources.
- A promising direction is to help people create their own businesses. They must find transferable skills they can market.
- Families with adults who cannot secure employment tend to overcrowd into housing shared with other families.

5: Hidden Mental Health Concerns 5 Votes

Scenario: Many refugees have experienced significant trauma from escaping war, witnessing killing and death, loss of family, much, much more. Trauma causes mental health issues, which can manifest in subtle ways. Individual is unable to retain information, unable to navigate the system, senses of helplessness and defeat, results in no job, no social services and homelessness.

- It's Taboo to discuss mental health in many cultures. Because of this
 - Communities don't discuss it, so agencies don't know how or when to help.
 - People can be culturally isolated.
 - People may not recognize mental health issues in themselves or their family members.
 - People don't discuss it until it's too late.
- Even when trying to provide services, there are systems failures with respect to:
 - There's no "one size fits all" set of tools, and few are culturally inappropriate.
 - Who will explain the side effects of the medicines? And what if the side effects are bad?
 - Interpreters are often untrained in mental health. They can become an intermediary that interferes with the intimate, private discussion. It might be a family member – it might be their own child.
- This pertains to more than mental health issue, but also pertains to:
 - HIV/AIDS
 - TB
 - Domestic Violence
 - Other big issues shrouded in shame or secrecy.

6: Family Management Concerns / Homelessness Among Immigrant Youth 2 Votes

Scenario: Families face many stressors, and family management suffers. (causes: one-parent families, lack of time, no knowledge of how to access resources, lack of English skills, overcrowded living conditions, etc.)

- Family dynamics can be disrupted when children serve as interpreters / navigators for the family. Because the minor can navigate the US system as well or better than their parents, they may assume too much power in the family dynamic.

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- Kids who experienced trauma as refugees may express mental health needs / depression in different ways than adults. Rather than withdrawing, they may act out.
- Teens, in particular, have a hard time establishing identity while straddling two cultures. Acting out can lead to tension in the household, visits by family support workers, and loss of housing.
- Housing can be at risk when kids act out. If kids act out, this can lead to involvement with the juvenile justice system and again that system can be much harder to navigate for immigrant/refugee families.
 - In some extreme cases they can inadvertently get their parent jailed – simply by reporting their parents to authorities if they don't like a punishment they received.
 - Unanticipated consequences could cause the entire family to be evicted.
- Kids could face family rejection (or fear rejection or physical harm) if they think they may be gay.

7: Living With Family. Offered Unacceptable Housing. Refuses. Family Support Ends 1 Votes

Scenario: Family is in temporary housing, gets on housing wait list, after several years is offered housing far from social support community or that otherwise doesn't 'fit' with what they want/need.

- Refuses housing, goes to bottom of permanent housing wait list
- Temporary housing (or opportunity to double up) ends

8: Documented. with Employment. Owns House. Recession Hits 0 Votes

Scenario: Documented immigrant family, owns home. Recession hits and one or both parents loses work/hours, reduction in pay.

- Families who have been working are often reluctant to seek out supportive resources, and also may not know about them.
- This population was particularly susceptible to subprime loans, and so there may be a need for outreach/services related to this.
- Many of the types of jobs that immigrants/refugees do (childcare, home repair) are the types of jobs that suffer the most during a recession. The uncertainty of the economy affects refugees/immigrants more harshly. They have fewer choices and fewer skills.



Appendix C: Existing Resources Usage Timeline

The resources that exist have decreased in funding and duration and are usually appropriate at a specific time. This chart is a timeline showing when might be the typical timeframe that a specific resource might be utilized. These pertain to most (perhaps all) of our immigrant and refugee scenarios.

The timeframes below are chronological. Some of the activities may overlap in time, and in general fall into these phases:

- Initial arrival timeframe - the resettlement period: preparing for arrival and the first few weeks after arrival
- Public assistance time frame
- Skill building time frame
- Struggling for resources – if not self-sustaining
- Naturalization time frame
- Flourishing time frame – the typical activities of a self-sustaining immigrant or refugee are omitted from the below.

Footnotes:

¹ “Refugee” applies to anyone eligible for refugee benefits, which include Asylees, Amerasians, Cuban/Haitian Entrants, Special Immigrant Visa holders, and victims of human trafficking

² These time indications and limits are relative to the person's first arrival into the US.

Time Frame ²	Time Frame Name	Resource Description	Immigrant Eligibility?	Refugee ¹ Eligibility?
Arrival –n days	Before arrival	VOLAG secures house, furniture, any special bedding needed for kids. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It costs approximately \$1500 to set up a small apartment. 	None	Primary resettlement
Arrival +0 days	Day of arrival	VOLAG pickup at the airport, delivery to their new house, serve a warm culturally-appropriate meal, provide safety orientation to teach family about the keys and household machinery, etc. . Usually these are performed by the case manager and a community volunteer. If there is no community volunteer available there could be an interpreter hired.	None	Primary resettlement
Arrival +1 day	First full day after arrival	VOLAG cashes the family's petty cash funding check at bank, gives pocket money to adults, shop for food, apply for social security card, apply for welfare benefits.	None	Primary resettlement

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Time Frame ²	Time Frame Name	Resource Description	Immigrant Eligibility?	Refugee Eligibility? ¹
Arrival +2 or +3 days		<p>Food stamps are ready, medical coupons are ready, health screening is scheduled within the next 7 days for all family members at DPH, kids are enrolled in school, general orientation to understand the family's refugee status requirements (e.g. "you cannot leave the USA"), the 18-25 year olds register for selective services (military registration requirement), employment plan assessment begun.</p> <p>All these activities are done at the VOLAGs offices where there are staff people and internet access for signing up for everything.</p>	None	Primary resettlement
Arrival +9 days (approx.)	Health Screening Day	<p>DPH health screening.</p> <p>Only after their health screening can kids go to their new school.</p>	None	Primary resettlement
Arrival +3 or +10 days	Public Assistance Interview Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public assistance application process begins for TANF or RCA • LEP Pathway explained and referral made to start the process of getting the adults ready to find a job. ESL, Job Search, Employment Plan Assessment • Phone provided • If family is doubled-up landlord must validate rental costs to DSHS in order for the second family to qualify for public assistance. 	None	Primary resettlement
Arrival +10 or +20 days	Public Assistance Start Date	<p>Public assistance begins within 7-10 days after Public Assistance Interview:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TANF *or* RCA period begins 	None	Primary resettlement
Employment +0 days	First Day of [VOLAG client] Employment	<p>The VOLAG will teach the wage earner how to leverage IDA</p> <p>The VOLAG gets paid for the job search portion upon their successful job placement</p> <p>The VOLAG focuses their work with the client to help the client reach economic self-sufficiency.</p>	None?	Primary resettlement

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Time Frame ²	Time Frame Name	Resource Description	Immigrant Eligibility?	Refugee Eligibility? ¹
Arrival +3 months (plus or minus)	Struggling for Resources early on in migration	<p>Person/family asks ethnically-focused housing advocate for assistance.</p> <p>Some families served by VOLAGs lose (or think they've lost VOLAG support.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Some families arrive in secondary migration and have no further VOLAG assistance.</p> <p>NOTE: There may be more refugees in public housing than was previously thought.</p> <p>NOTE: Secondary migration inflow/outflow may be understated, and ORR isn't approving all of the requests made.</p> <p>NOTE: most of the refugees been housed in an appropriate units from day one.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not suitable units for their family size and the income not adjustable with their unit rent which led them to become homeless within 3-4 months after their arrival. 	Yes	Primary resettlement or Secondary migration
Public Assistance +4 Months	Basic English Acquired	Literate young adult may have enough English to begin fruitful job search.		
Public Assistance +6 Months	Basic English Acquired	Literate older working-age adult may have enough English to begin fruitful job search.		
Arrival +6 Months	Resettlement Obligation Ends	Refugee resettlement period complete	None	Primary resettlement
Public Assistance +9 Months		<p>Pre-Literate adult may have enough English to begin fruitful job search.</p> <p>It takes 5-7 years to learn English-based on research. Even if they find a job, they still cannot pull out of poverty.</p>		
Anytime	Struggling for Resources	<p>If person loses their home address they simply must provide mailing address to maintain their public assistance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They may use a DSHS Community Services Office as their mailing address. <p>NOTE: If the person loses their housing then DSHS will give them their highest benefit rate. Some recipients may not realize this fact. EXAMPLE: MHS has seen homeless clients who receive only food stamp, and clients who double up to sharing living cost with another household unexpectedly receive reduce assistance.</p> <p>NOTE: DSHS needs a way to validate their housing situation, but it doesn't have to be from a landlord.</p> <p>NOTE: We need clarification and more information; this is not in the ReWA clients' experience.</p>	None	Primary resettlement

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Time Frame ²	Time Frame Name	Resource Description	Immigrant Eligibility?	Refugee Eligibility? ¹
Anytime	Struggling for Housing Resources	<p>If person seeks housing help from Muslim Housing Services, MHS will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Put the person/family on waiting lists • Fundraise for the family at a local mosque – seeking funds or a sponsor • If they have a vacant housing unit will give it to this family. They usually ask the family to pay a small rental amount on time (sometimes as little as \$5 or \$20 / month) so the family learns the system of paying rent on time. • Teach life skills on how to live in the US • Subsidize rent if agency has funds available. <p>Other agencies may do different things to fulfill the client's request</p>	Yes?	Yes
Anytime	Struggling for non-housing resources	<p>Other (non-housing) services provided by 21st Century Basic Home to the youth at risk that their families housed by Muslim Housing Services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case Management; the 21st Century Case Managers provide culturally appropriate support and crisis intervention services. • MHS has service partnership with 21st Century Basic Home through Highpoint Youth and Family Service program at Highpoint. • Details at: http://21centurybhs.org/home_program.htm • Cultural education and after-school program • MHS office staff resources • Advocacy for the family • Follow-up • MHS never gives up on a family until they are self-sufficient. • If a family previously serve happens to return to need, MHS will give their situation top priority. (This is a rare occurrence). "[The returnees] are our investment". 		
Arrival +1 year	Permanent Resident Status Begins	Transition status from Refugee to Permanent Resident	No?	Yes
Arrival +6 months plus	After Resettlement Ends	<p>If there is no public assistance available to this family after the resettlement period is complete, then World Relief will help supply food if they need it.</p> <p>Note; there is no time limit for the Washington Basic Food program (Food Stamps) portion.</p> <p>Refugees and immigrants can access these benefits as long as they are low-income.</p>		Yes
Arrival +6 months plus	After Resettlement Ends	<p>Even after the resettlement is complete, the VOLAG can provide other help or advice if requested: such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistance with Immigration issues • Assistance forming a new business 		Yes
Arrival +8 months	RCA Ends	Refugee Cash Assistance eligibility complete (households without kids)	0-8 months ² ,	0-8 months ² ,

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Time Frame ²	Time Frame Name	Resource Description	Immigrant Eligibility?	Refugee Eligibility? ¹
Children age out of TANF	TANF Eligibility Ends	when youngest child reaches 18 years old: TANF eligibility complete	0-5 years ² ,	0-5 years ² ,
Arrival +5 Years	TANF Eligibility Ends	limit when TANF eligibility complete (families with kids) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The TANF end date can be extended in certain circumstances. • In certain circumstances TANF can extend indefinitely until youngest child turns 18. 	0-5 years ² ,	0-5 years ² ,
Arrival + 6 Years	Immigrant Needs Public Assistance	Immigrant must be in US at least 5 full years to be eligible for any form of Public Assistance, thus they are first eligible at year 6.	6+ years	N/A



Appendix D: I&R Focus Group Feedback

*CEHKC Immigrant & Refugee Task Force
Summary of all Focus Group Feedback and Other Suggestions
Compiled February 22, 2012*

From January 5 through February 10, 2012 the Immigrant & Refugee WorkGroup of the Committee to End Homelessness (CEHKC) held a series of focus groups among stakeholders of culturally-focused agencies to seek feedback on this work. Separate focus groups were held among executive directors, case managers, and clients. The I&R WorkGroup also sought feedback in meeting settings. This document is a summary of the points made in the detailed notes.

This document allows for a quick read, but a thorough reading of the detailed notes gives a more holistic perspective (TIP: detail focus group notes not provided here; inquiries may be emailed to Gretchen Bruce at CEHKC).

The intent of the focus groups was to discuss the relative importance of barriers facing immigrants and refugees with unstable housing situations and ideas of how to solve them, with people who are personally impacted (beneficiaries of services) and those who work with these populations (case managers and other professionals). The focus groups with immigrants and refugees were held in their native language (not in English; no interpreters), whereas the focus groups with case managers and agency leaders were in English.

Note on the content: We removed some of the IAC and agency leader feedback from these notes so the first-person and front-line feedback is the sole focus.

Focus Groups and Statistics:

Date	# of Participants	Description of Participants
1/5/12	1	Doreen Cato (member of IAC) during CEHKC Legislative Breakfast
1/10/12	17	Kent Cultural Diversity Initiative Group (KCDIG) representing 9 agencies
1/27/12	7	Russians and Ukrainians facing unstable housing who are survivors of domestic violence (DV) . Hosted by ReWA.
1/31/12	13	3 Ethiopians and 10 Eritreans facing unstable housing. Hosted by ReWA.
2/1/12	21	Case Managers who work with I&R populations facing unstable housing
2/3/12	26	Burmese facing unstable housing. Hosted by ReWA.
2/6/12	5	Vietnamese facing unstable housing who are survivors of DV . Hosted by ReWA.
2/6/12	~20	CEH Interagency Council (IAC)
2/9/12	16	Spanish-speaking (mostly Latinos) facing unstable housing. Hosted by El Centro de la Raza.
2/9/12	5	Agency Leaders and Executive Directors who's agencies work with I&R populations facing unstable housing
2/10/12	24	Bhutanese facing unstable housing. Hosted by ReWA.

Seed questions used in the focus groups:

1. What is the biggest challenge when it comes to finding affordable housing? What could be better?
2. What is the biggest challenge when it comes to learning English? What could be better?
3. What is the biggest challenge when it comes to receiving benefits like cash assistance? What could be better?
4. What is the biggest challenge finding employment? What additional services do you think would improve employment opportunities?
5. What is hardest thing about finding the programs you need?
6. What is the biggest challenge when it comes to transportation? What could be better?

Summary of each piece of feedback (extracted from all the focus group meeting notes)

Housing & Homelessness related

Housing is major issue: housing, employment and English language learning seemed to resonate most strongly with focus group participants

- Too little inventory for affordable housing big enough for entire household
- Wish they would be allowed to overcrowd a small apt they can afford
- Need emergency assistance more than once
- Extra Required to “call again in a month”; need help from English-speaker
- Need help with costs for sewer & garbage fees [large cost additional to rent]
- Shared rental with other family members, others move out, rent too high for remaining person(s)
- Issues with Landlords / Tenancy
 - Need rental history, references for landlord
 - Landlords/Property Managers hold stereotypes about I&R households [That “they don’t understand American household maintenance issues, crowding, etc.”]
 - Undocumented status makes it hard to find a landlord who will rent to household [“El Centro has a listing of landlords who have agreed to accept tenants using their tax id number instead of their social security number.”]
 - Improve quality of landlord interactions (carrot and stick). [Need “information regarding rights and resources in housing” “[many] had been exploited by landlords and/or employers as a result of limited facility with the English language”]

English

English is major issue: housing, employment and English language learning seemed to resonate most strongly with focus group participants [“learning English to an appropriate level is the main issue that impedes success in housing and most areas of assimilation in American life”]

- Offer more English classes on weekends and with childcare
- Need more ESL class offerings [“inconvenient scheduling of classes”]
- Dealing with household issues prevents focus on learning English
- It’s hard for older people to learn English
- It’s hard to learn English and work at the same time
- It’s hard to learn English with no friends or family, and low confidence
- It’s hard to practice English, due to feelings of shame. [“sense of fear and embarrassment surrounding communication in English”]
- Help ESL learners build confidence that they can do it. [This is a proposed solution. Teach that English success is essential to success in America as motivation. “When looked at in [the context of hierarchical needs], learning English becomes an abstract goal”]
- Need transportation to ESL classes
- Improve English proficiency of ESL instructors [“lots of classes... are paced at the English proficiency of the instructor, not the participants”.]
- Engage those with stronger English skills to teach new arrivals
- English accelerator: Classroom assistance in native language helping w/ English spelling & translate important words

Employment

Employment is major issue: housing, employment and English language learning seemed to resonate most strongly with focus group participants

- Language barrier is the main challenge to finding employment
- Lacking necessary skills and certification/ credential is barrier to apply for certain jobs
- Receive job trainings in own language
- Would like trainings and certification in a subject area that they are skilled at from their previous country.
- Undocumented status makes it hard to find a job
- Provide refugees with jobs that don’t require English skills and that provide On The Job Training. [“... jobs that don’t require a lot of English proficiency. ... trucking, craft/sewing/weaving, agriculture.” “explore the types of jobs that are done by teams, and as long as one person on the team speaks proficient English then s/he can relay instructions to the rest of the team.”]
- Get that first job. [“If a person can get a job (say as an intern) and keep it for six months, s/he can usually get hired on once demonstrating an ability to do the job”]
- Hard for disabled people to find job
- Hard to find job without computer literacy. [“I don’t use a computer, and it is hard for me to find jobs”]
- Fair employment opportunities
 - Need “information regarding rights and resources in employment”
 - “They can also be very vulnerable to unscrupulous employers”

- “employers hiring people for two weeks to gain a tax break, but laying workers off before the end of two weeks before they have to pay taxes”
- “employers withholding pay from undocumented workers knowing they are unlikely to report the theft for fear of legal involvement”

Transportation

- Receive more transportation assistance, including for graveyard shifts. “[Transportation to the required] ESL class and job search it cost us about \$150 per month”
- “DSHS to provide bus ticket or ORCA Card, especially during rain and snow season”
- “I do not know how to drive”
- More help from bus drivers. [“When I am a bit late for the bus, the door closes on me and the bus driver won’t open and let me in. Every time that happens, I have to wait for another 30 minutes to take another bus”]
- More ESL to learn how to ride the bus. [“I am an older woman, can’t drive or take the bus because I can’t read English.” “I don’t know how to read signs”]
- Jobs and services closer to home. [“It is hard to find the right bus to get on for my appointments. I feel very tired when having to take the bus and miss the bus”]

Other types of Assistance

- Need childcare [“dearth of childcare services”]
- Difficult to read and fill out DSHS forms, need more help. [DSHS cash assistance too low to pay rent and necessities.]
- Needs benefits – perhaps Ineligible for public benefits [UNK why – perhaps past eligibility limit?]
- Single people don’t qualify for cash assistance
- Undocumented status means ineligible for benefits.
- Child support recipients or P/T workers don’t qualify for cash assistance. [“I’m receiving only food stamps, I don’t qualify for cash assistance because I’m getting child support” “I work part-time and only receive food assistance”]

Acculturation

- The time by which refugee households are expected to be on their own and assimilated in the culture and self-sufficient is too short (less than one year in many cases). [VOLAG’s have a contractual responsibility to assure a refugee’s household’s housing stability for their first six months in the country]
- Challenges such as DV, trauma (from escaping war zones, living in refugee camps for years, mental health, etc.) exacerbate fragile housing situations
- Provide advance notice of new cultural arrivals and info about cultural norms to local agencies [When VOLAG starts bringing a certain (new) population in, can local agencies learn about its culture and norms in advance of the first wave of arrival?]
- English accelerator: Classroom assistance in native language helping w/ English spelling & translate important words

Program Design / Service Delivery

- Cultural competence needed [“I experienced prejudice in the system. The case workers are not very nice and understanding of what our needs are. We don’t just come there because we want to, [but] because we are really in need of help”. “I feel looked down upon by [DSHS] workers”. “paucity of culturally competent social service agencies”]
- Program access: Hard to know what programs are available by oneself without help from experts
- Disseminate information about available resources and services at community events (e.g., fairs) and the distribution of native-language flyers.
- Program access: Communication and language barriers with program staff. [“frustration with social service agencies for failing to keep them abreast of the latest rules and regulations. At best, these shortcomings were interpreted as manifestations of incompetence/ignorance. At worst, they were cited as examples of inferential racism.”]
- Program access: too many restrictions by DSHS where to attend the services we need
- Transportation is a problem (see transportation header)
- Reduce levels of anxiety caused by our systems. Help bring people along pathways *they* want to take (rather than set pathways established by the systems). [note: Self-actualization is a protective factor...]
- 2-1-1 Crisis Line unusable without adding Vietnamese DV, Somali, Amharic Oromo Tigrigna, Bhutanese, Burmese and other languages
- Prefer all assistance in cash instead of set asides for food stamps
- Program access: limited to computer literacy. [“Resources not being advertise on the local newspapers and I cannot use the computer at the library.” “I do not know how to use technology so it makes things harder for me to be knowledgeable”]
- Create process and accountability for follow up by any agency (including MAA) back to the referring agency. [Eliminate agency frustration when they refer their client to another agency but never receive subsequent follow-up]
- Improve sources of information in other languages



Appendix E: Specific housing needs beyond the standards for immigrants and refugees

The first ideas listed below are already on track to eventual adoption but could benefit from winnowing down for greater focus and impact. The second ideas listed below are not in any known plans.

Ideas on track for some level of adoption

1	Special standards for households larger than 11 persons.
2	Special standards for more density per bedroom.
3	Eliminate rent caps in Public Housing
4	Housing in safe neighborhoods
5	Housing that actually meets HQS standards
6	Housing people in units with proximity to other resources

Additional ideas

7	Increase emergency shelter options for multi-gender households
8	Special multi-household standards to combine 1-person households
9	Institute low income housing with utilities included in rent
10	Make arrangements such that a landlord will rent to people without employment
11	Community Building around shared culture & values
12	Bilingual landlord liaison
13	Housing with certain amenities
14	Sharia-compliant home acquisition financial products doing business in the state of Washington
15	Institute rent caps in non-Public housing

TIP: To receive the full detail behind these Housing Needs ideas, please email Gretchen Bruce to request the TFG Immigrant and Refugees Housing Needs - List of Ideas document or inquire with Cheryl Collins and Rick Hooper of the Seattle Office of Housing.



Appendix F: References to I&R Workgroup Documents

The workgroup produced a number of major bodies of written work. The documents produced by the I&R Workgroup include “TFG Task Force - 8I&R” in the file names; this phrase stands for “CEHKC 10 Year Plan Mid Plan Review, Task Force Group 8, focused on Immigrant and Refugee”.

Published Documents produced by the workgroup

These can be widely disseminated and may be useful for numerous purposes.

File Name	Contains	Ref. to Final Report
TFG Task Force - 8I&R - Recommendations FINAL REPORT To CEHKC - 2012-04 FINAL	RECOMMENDATIONS to CEH on strategies to increase access to housing and supportive services among immigrants and refugees who are homeless (or at risk of homelessness) as identified through the Committee to End Homelessness' Mid Plan Review process in 2011. This file contains this final report – recommendations, context, and appendices. THIS IS THE MAIN DELIVERABLE of the workgroup.	This is the final report.
TFG Task Force - 8I&R - Existing Resources - 2011-12-09 FINAL	Reference to Existing RESOURCES that serve I&R populations (56 resources in 9 main support types) Resources listed by chronological timeline of usage, and also listed alphabetically by support types Most comprehensive such info known.	Section 5 Appendix C

Internal Documents produced by the workgroup

Most of these documents are suitable for project work on a need-to-know basis, and are considered *internal* documents. They are not suitable for broad dissemination. Some of these documents were included in the final recommendations report appendix, but exist also as standalone documents.

File Name	Contains	Ref. to Final Report
TFG Task Force - 8I&R - Cultural Competency Resources-03-14-2012-FINAL	CULTURAL COMPETENCY resources: survey of regional-suited resources and approaches.	Section 3
TFG Task Force - 8I&R - Existing Resources and Gaps - 11-08-11 - ADDL DETAILS	The EXISTING RESOURCES AND GAPS is a complementary companion to the Existing Resources document. This document provides some additional insights that go beyond the list of resources in that other main document.	Section 5 Appendix C

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File Name	Contains	Ref. to Final Report
TFG Task Force - 8I&R - Focus Group Feedback and Suggestions Detail	Actual detail from all the community outreach meetings (FOCUS GROUP documents). The detail document particularly gives the reader insights into the struggles faced by immigrants and refugees struggling for stable housing (includes lots of insights into employment struggles too).	Section 7 Appendix D
TFG Task Force - 8I&R - Focus Group Feedback and Suggestions Summary	Summary notes from all the community outreach meetings (FOCUS GROUP documents).	Section 7 Appendix D
TFG Task Force - 8I&R - Immigrant and Refugees Housing Needs - List of Ideas	HOUSING NEEDS: 15 ideas for housing that better meets specific cultural needs of different populations.	Appendix E
TFG Task Force - 8I&R - Parking Lot	PARKING LOT contains miscellaneous issues discussed (along with some decisions made) that don't fall within the main deliverables produced. It is worth scanning this document occasionally over time.	N/A Complementary Doc
TFG Task Force - 8I&R - Recommendations to Solve Barriers Detail FINAL	Main barriers that cause significant hardship to immigrants and refugees in accessing resources or making adequate progress in gaining stable housing and employment, clustered into 13 categories, then RECOMMENDATIONS TO SOLVE BARRIERS: Detailed *internal* document defining promising approaches to overcome main barriers.	Section 2 Section 6 Appendix A
TFG Task Force - 8I&R - Scenarios - Backgrounder and Context - 10-28-11 DETAIL	SCENARIOS – BACKGROUNDER AND CONTEXT is a complementary companion to the Scenarios document. This document provides some additional insights into real-life scenarios, including timelines. CAVEATS: This is NOT scrubbed, and not politically correct. It is uncertain if reading this document provides any useful information. It is available as a research tool in case desired.	Section 4 Appendix B
TFG Task Force - 8I&R - Scenarios with Importance - 2011-10-28 FINAL	Main SCENARIOS faced by households struggling for stable housing (8 main scenarios). Included are examples of why each is important.	Section 4 Appendix B

Useful documents provided from other sources

There were a number of documents that provided very valuable input to the I&R Workgroup, and that may continue as useful resources to continuing work in this area. Gretchen Bruce from the CEHKC has copies of these documents as they exist in April 2012; requests for these can go to Gretchen or to the organizations that produced them might have more updated versions.

File Name	Contains
2-IAC Mtg Summ 2010-09-13-BySomeireh	ReWA insights into I&R barriers, presented by Someireh Amirfaiz to the CEH IAC in September 2010. From CEHKC.
10YP Frequent Acronyms	Acronyms glossary with respect to the King County Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness (10YP). From CEHKC.
City of Seattle-Human Services Dept-RACIAL EQUITY-CULTURAL COMPETENCE POLICY AND CONTRACTING CONTINUUMfinal	Racial equity lens in policy and contracting. Produced by City of Seattle, Human Services Department.
City of Seattle-Human Services Dept-RIY Assessment Tool	Cultural Competency Self Assessment tool. Produced by City of Seattle, Human Services Department.
Coordinated Entry Flow Chart 1_9_12	Family Homelessness Coordinated Entry Flow Chart. Produced by Catholic Community Services Coordinated Entry and Assessment project team.
Copy of MAA list orgs	List of Mutual Aid Associations, known to be out of date and needing updating. Useful starting place for developing formal relationships with MAA's. List located by DSHS Office of Refugee and Immigrant Affairs.

CEHKC Immigrants & Refugees Workgroup

File Name	Contains
DCHS - Immigrant and Refugee Report	The extent of immigrant and refugee homelessness is unknown. The best information we have is this DCHS Immigrants and Refugees Report "Department of Community and Human Services: Improving DCHS' Service Provision to Immigrants and Refugees". This 11-page internal document provides an overview of immigrant and refugee demographics in King County, the common service needs of these populations, and how DCHS can improve its service delivery to these diverse communities.
DCHS- King County Refugee Services Flowchart	Diagram that illustrates the major players in the refugee service system in King County.
Refugee Cash Assistance-History-from Vicki Asakura	Historical information about Refugee Cash Assistance programs and the resettlement process. Illustrates the fact that refugee supports have greatly decreased over the years. Produced by Vicki Asakura.
KCHA Occupancy Standards	King County Housing Authority (KCHA) bedroom standards. Produced by KCHA.



Appendix G: General Background

About the Immigrant & Refugee WorkGroup and its Members and Affiliations

The Committee to End Homelessness in King County (CEHKC) is a broad coalition working together to implement the Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness in King County. The CEHKC convened the I&R WorkGroup, meeting at least monthly from August 2011 through February 2012. Its recommendations will be presented to the CEHKC Interagency Council on April 2, 2012.

TIP: IAC notes will be posted at <http://www.cehkc.org/committees/committeelC.aspx>.

Task Force Name: Immigrants and Refugees WorkGroup

Chair: Mark Okazaki, Neighborhood House

Program Manager: Rebecca Laszlo, Community Volunteer

CEHKC Sponsorship: Bill Block and Gretchen Bruce

Mark Okazaki	Neighborhood House
Bill Block	CEHKC
Cheryl Collins	Seattle Office of Housing
Dwight Mizoguchi	City of Seattle, HSD
Estela Ortega	El Centro de la Raza
Gillian Parke	CCS / Sacred Heart Shelter
Greg Hope	Refugee Resettlement Office
Gretchen Bruce	CEHKC
Israel Vela	Kent School District
Lydia Assefa-Dawson	KCHA, Resident Services
Manuela Ginnett	Multi-Service Center

Margaret Kae	Consumer representative
Marge Morrison	Wellspring Family Services
Mohamed Aden	Muslim Housing Services
Ngy Hul	Refugee Federation Service Center
Paul Fitzgerald	Sea Mar Community Health Centrs
Rebecca Laszlo	Community Volunteer
Robin Corak	Multi-Service Center
Shukri Olow	SHA, High Point
Someireh Amirfaiz	Refugee Women's Alliance
Tom Medina	DSHS, ORIA

About the Process and Outreach Results

CEH chartered the task force (AKA workgroup) to produce a number of items identified from the 10YP Mid Plan Review process in spring 2011.

CEH formed a representative body of experts leading organizations working with immigrant and refugee populations seeking stable housing situations, representing:

- Government agencies and Housing Authorities
- Mainstream service providers and ethnically-focused service providers
- A refugee resettlement agency and a district school system
- A consumer representative and a community volunteer
- CEHKC staff

The Task Force (AKA workgroup) convened August 2011 through February 2012. We met once a month for 7 months, with numerous 1:1 work sessions in between the meetings.

The first body of work was to identify common SCENARIOS for how and why immigrant and refugee households become homeless.

Next, the workgroup identified that households facing these scenarios need a range of services to respond to the household crisis. RESOURCES tended to be grouped around a series of elements.

CEHKC Immigrants & Refugees Workgroup

After extensive discussion, the workgroup identified that there are a number of BARRIERS that cause significant hardship to immigrants and refugees in accessing these resources or making adequate progress in gaining stable housing and employment.

The workgroup identified several promising HOUSING ideas, including design and policy elements that may be specific to I&R populations.

The workgroup developed some prioritized RECOMMENDATIONS. Some priorities were amended as a result of COMMUNITY OUTREACH SESSIONS held with Agency Leaders, Front-Line Service Providers, and with 6 distinct linguistic groups of consumers in their own language.

Possible Future Activities by the Workgroup

We have documented many other promising solutions to barriers, any of which might accelerate the start of any future planning effort undertaken by others. Gretchen Bruce will maintain access to these materials.

It is likely members of our task force group will carry the work forward to some of the regional coalitions, such as:

- Refugee Forum, • Tri-County Refugee Planning Committee, • ERIC (Eastside Refugee and Immigrant Coalition), • VOLAG quarterly ad hoc meeting, • MEDC (Minority Executive Directors Coalition of King County), • Asian Pacific Directors Coalition, • South King County Forum on Homelessness, • Refugee Advisory Council, • Catholic Community Services Coordinated Entry and Assessment project staff, • SKCCH (Seattle/King County Coalition on Homelessness).

The workgroup may reconvene in 3-6 months (May/June else August/September 2012) to discuss what's happening and any course corrections or actions we might want to initiate.

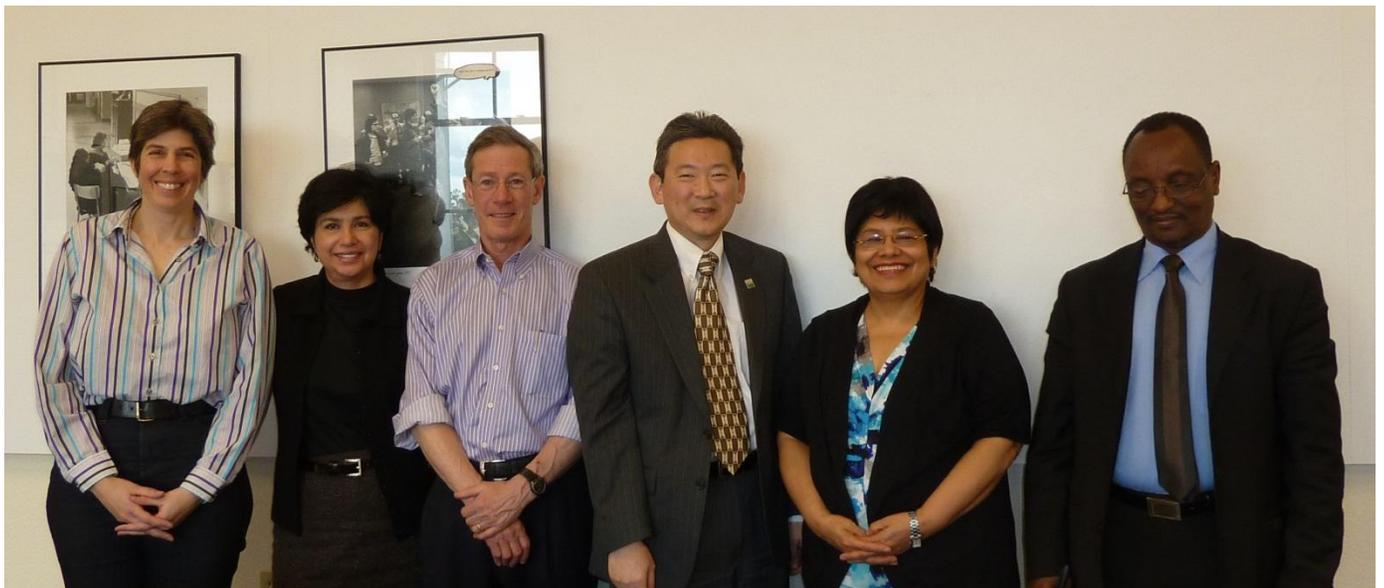
Staying Informed

TIP: To stay in touch with future work, please ask Gretchen Bruce to put you on the distribution list, noting in your email you're specifically interested in immigrant & refugee issues.

Gretchen.Bruce@kingcounty.gov



PICTURED ABOVE, Left to Right: Bill Block, Manuela Ginnett, Greg Hope, Cheryl Collins, Tom Medina, Dwight Mizoguchi, Rebecca Laszlo, Shukri Olow, Lydia Assefa-Dawson, Gretchen Bruce, Mark Okazaki.



PICTURED ABOVE, Left to Right: Rebecca Laszlo, Someireh Amirfaiz, Bill Block, Mark Okazaki, Estela Ortega, Mohamed Aden

NOT PICTURED: Gillian Parke, Israel Vela, Margaret Kae, Marge Morrison, Ngy Hul, Paul Fitzpatrick, Robin Corak.