

# Resource Guide for Serving Refugees with Disabilities

United States Committee for Refugees and Immigrants

Assisting Refugees with Disabilities



Prepared by Dawn Blankenship, MSW, Program Officer  
and Nathan Madson, USCRI Intern



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## 1 INTRODUCTION

Letter from USCRI President

Acknowledgments

Introduction



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# U.S. COMMITTEE FOR REFUGEES AND IMMIGRANTS

July 9, 2007

Dear Colleague:

The U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI) is pleased to announce the release of a new *Resource Guide for Serving Refugees with Disabilities*. Among the tens of thousands of refugees resettled each year, many have lived in poorer regions of the world where there is a higher rate of disabilities, and many have fled situations where armed conflict and related injuries are common. Upon arrival in the U.S., they face enormous challenges in understanding and accessing services in a complex health care and social service system.

Funded through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Refugee Resettlement, the Resource Guide is the product of the USCRI newly initiated program: Meeting the Challenge: Assisting Refugees with Disabilities. The Resource Guide was developed in an effort to improve access to services for newly arrived refugees with disabilities. With an increasing number of refugees with disabilities resettled in the U.S., there is a greater need for effective and coordinated care. This guide is written as a how-to for caseworkers and advocates who serve refugees with disabilities.

The U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI) is a non-profit refugee resettlement, immigrant service, and public education organization dedicated to addressing the needs of refugees and immigrants through a network of 35 partner agencies in the United States and through advocacy to improve conditions for refugees worldwide.

We hope this resource guide serves as a useful tool enabling service providers to more effectively assist refugees as they adjust to their new life and become productive citizens.

Should you have any questions or need further information, please contact Dawn Blankenship at the U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (202)347-3507 ext. 3006 or at [dblankenship@uscridc.org](mailto:dblankenship@uscridc.org).

Sincerely,

Lavinia Limon  
President and CEO

**USCRI**  
1717 Massachusetts Avenue NW, 2nd Floor  
Washington, DC 20036-2003  
Tel: (202) 347-3507 • Fax: (202) 347-3418  
[www.refugees.org](http://www.refugees.org) • [uscridc@uscridc.org](mailto:uscridc@uscridc.org)

**USCRI Vermont**  
462 Hegeman Avenue, Ste 101  
Colchester, VT 05446  
Tel: (802) 655-1963 • Fax: (802) 655-4020  
[www.vrrp.org](http://www.vrrp.org) • [vrrp@uscrrvt.org](mailto:vrrp@uscrrvt.org)

**USCRI Albany**  
10 Russell Road  
Albany, NY 12206  
Tel: (518) 459-8812  
Fax: (518) 459-8980

**Overseas Office**  
Phuket, Thailand

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# INTRODUCTION

This resource guide is intended for those serving refugees with disabilities: refugee resettlement staff, Mutual Assistance Agency staff, community advocates and social service providers. Many existing resource guides contain information about disabilities; however, this is one of the first developed specifically with refugees in mind. It was created in an effort to increase understanding and exposure to the various services and programs available for those serving refugees with disabilities. For the sake of brevity and ease of use, the information is general wherever possible. We hope you find the resources and information practical and useful.

The guide is divided into sections: services for adults with disabilities, services for refugee children with disabilities, housing, assistive technology and more. Information included was based on input from focus groups, technical assistance requests, and surveys. Scenarios and stories about refugees with disabilities are included to illustrate individual experiences. The names and details have been altered for confidentiality reasons. To help you locate service in your local area, a web address with a small map are featured in most sections.

Information in this guide includes original work as well as materials contributed with permission by various organizations and agencies. Acknowledgement and references are provided to contributors whenever applicable and any omissions are unintended and will be corrected when brought to our attention. The guide has been a collaborative effort, involving experts from their respective fields to provide input and edit the materials. We greatly appreciate their contribution to this endeavor.

This is a working document; therefore, if you have additional suggestions, input or resources which would add to the guide, please contact Dawn Blankenship at 202-347-3507 ext. 3006 or [dblankenship@uscrdc.org](mailto:dblankenship@uscrdc.org).

Organizations listed in this guide are not endorsed by USCRI but are included for informational purposes. The resource lists of financial resources are not all-inclusive. Any omissions are unintended and regretted. We will strive to keep the information in this guide accurate and up-to-date, but changes may occur without our knowledge. If you find any incorrect information, please bring it to our attention. Please call 202-347-3507 to report changes.

## July 2007

*\*\* Pictured on the front page are an Adult Basic Education class for Deaf refugees and immigrants and an award-winning group of Deaf refugee and immigrant high school students. Student were recognized for their service learning project which raised money to assist Pakistani earthquake survivors.*

