

which are so extreme as to justify an allowance above the basic 15%. Or

3. In accordance with section 412(c)(1)(C) of the INA, the State submits to the Director a plan (established by or in consultation with local governments) which the Director determines provides for the maximum appropriate provision of employment-related services for, and the maximum placement of, employable refugees consistent with performance standards established under section 106 of the Job Training Partnership Act.

Refugee social services should be provided in a manner that is culturally and linguistically compatible with a refugee's language and cultural background. In light of the increasingly diverse population of refugees who are resettling in this country, refugee service agencies will need to develop practical ways of providing culturally and linguistically appropriate services to a changing ethnic population. Refugee-specific social services should be provided which are specifically designed to meet refugee needs and are in keeping with the rules and objectives of the refugee program, particularly during a refugee's initial years of resettlement. When planning State refugee services, States are strongly encouraged to take into account the reception and placement (R & P) services provided by local resettlement agencies in order to utilize these resources in the overall program design and to ensure the provision of seamless services to refugees.

In order to provide culturally and linguistically compatible services in as cost-efficient a manner as possible in a time of limited resources, ORR encourages States and counties to promote and give special consideration to the provision of refugee social services through coalitions of refugee service organizations, such as coalitions of MAAs, voluntary resettlement agencies, or a variety of service providers. ORR believes it is essential for refugee-serving organizations to form close partnerships in the provision of services to refugees in order to be able to respond adequately to a changing refugee picture. Coalition-building and consolidation of providers is particularly important in communities with multiple service providers in order to ensure better coordination of services and maximum use of funding for services by minimizing the funds used for multiple administrative overhead costs.

States should also expect to use funds available under this notice to pay for social services which are provided to refugees who participate in alternative

projects. Section 412(e)(7)(A) of the INA provides that:

The Secretary [of HHS] shall develop and implement alternative projects for refugees who have been in the United States less than thirty-six months, under which refugees are provided interim support, medical services, support [social] services, and case management, as needed, in a manner that encourages self-sufficiency, reduces welfare dependency, and fosters greater coordination among the resettlement agencies and service providers.

This provision is generally known as the Wilson/Fish Amendment. The Department has already issued a separate notice in the **Federal Register** with respect to applications for such projects (50 FR 24583, June 11, 1985). The notice on alternative projects does not contain provisions for the allocation of additional social service funds beyond the amounts established in this notice. Therefore a State which may wish to consider carrying out such a project should take note of this in planning its use of social service funds being allocated under the present notice.

Funding to MAAs

ORR no longer provides set-aside funds to refugee mutual assistance associations as a separate component under the social service notice; instead we have folded these funds into the social service formula allocation to States. Elimination of the MAA set-aside, however, does not represent any reduction in ORR's commitment to MAAs as important participants in refugee resettlement. ORR believes that the continued and/or increased utilization of qualified refugee mutual assistance associations in the delivery of social services helps to ensure the provision of culturally and linguistically appropriate services as well as increasing the effectiveness of the overall service system. Therefore, ORR expects States to use MAAs as service providers to the maximum extent possible. ORR strongly encourages States when contracting for services, including employment services, to give consideration to the special strengths of MAAs, whenever contract bidders are otherwise equally qualified, provided that the MAA has the capability to deliver services in a manner that is culturally and linguistically compatible with the background of the target population to be served. ORR also expects States to continue to assist MAAs in seeking other public and/or private funds for the provision of services to refugee clients.

ORR defines MAAs as organizations with the following qualifications:

a. The organization is legally incorporated as a nonprofit organization; and

b. Not less than 51% of the composition of the Board of Directors or governing board of the mutual assistance association is comprised of refugees or former refugees, including both refugee men and women.

State Administration

States are reminded that under current regulations at 45 CFR 400.206 and 400.207, States have the flexibility to charge the following types of administrative costs against their refugee program social service grants, if they so choose: direct and indirect administrative costs incurred for the overall management and operation of the State refugee program, including its coordination, planning, policy and program development, oversight and monitoring, data collection and reporting, and travel. See also State Transmittal No. 88-40.

II. Discussion of Comments Received

We received 8 letters of comment in response to the notice of proposed FY 1995 allocations to States for refugee social services. The comments are summarized below and are followed in each case by the Department's response.

Comment: Six commenters made comments regarding requirements for the set-aside of discretionary funds for services to former political prisoners (FPP) from Vietnam. Four commenters suggested that funds from the set-aside be made available to provide leadership development training opportunities for former political prisoners (FPPs). One of these commenters recommended that training be provided to former political prisoners who arrived in the early 1990's to provide services to newly arrived FPPs in order to expand current programs and to prepare for the closing of funded services. Another commenter suggested training be provided to volunteers such as detainees, lawyers, doctors, and community leaders to form a detainee support group to help FPPs move from dependency to self-sufficiency. Two commenters suggested that funds be made available for the costs of travel to attend FPP conferences and meetings.

A fifth commenter recommended that the notice include an expectation by ORR that agencies receiving FPP awards should participate in a planning process that ensures that other service providers, such as voluntary agencies, have input in the design of proposed services and in a coordinated referral system once an award is made.