



Statement of

Scott Lloyd

**Director, Office of Refugee Resettlement
Administration for Children and Families
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services**

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Chairman Labrador, Ranking Member Lofgren, and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for inviting me to discuss the Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) responsibilities to help refugees resettle in the United States. My name is Scott Lloyd and I am the Director of the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR). I oversee ORR's programs, which provide refugees, asylees, victims of trafficking, and other populations with support and services to assist them to become integrated members of American society. In my testimony today, I will describe the role that HHS plays in refugee resettlement and upcoming initiatives the office plans to pursue.

Role of the Office of Refugee Resettlement

The Refugee Act of 1980 established ORR, and outlined the United States' commitment to humanitarian relief through resettlement of persons fleeing persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion.

Since the passage of the Refugee Act, over 3.2 million refugees have been given safe haven in the United States, and freedom from persecution and displacement. In addition to refugees, asylees, Cuban and Haitian entrants, special immigrant visa holders, and victims of human trafficking are eligible for ORR services. ORR's mission is to link these populations to resources to help them become successfully assimilated members of American society.

The Departments of Homeland Security, State, and HHS work together to advance America's humanitarian response to refugees through the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program.

In fiscal year (FY) 2016, the United States resettled refugees from 89 countries. The largest number of refugees, approximately 16,000, came from the Democratic Republic of the

Congo. In total, 212,411 individuals were eligible for resettlement services through ORR programs.

ORR carries out its mission to serve refugees through grants and related services, administered by state governments and non-profit organizations, including faith-based groups, and an extensive public-private partnership network.

Through these grants, ORR provides time-limited cash and medical assistance to newly arrived refugees, as well as case management services, English language classes, and employment services – all designed to facilitate refugees' successful transition and assimilation into life in the United States. In addition, ORR funds foster care programs for unaccompanied refugee minors, certain minors granted special immigrant juvenile status, and unaccompanied minor victims of a severe form of trafficking.

To ensure a successful transition for refugees, ORR funds cash and medical assistance for individuals who are determined not eligible for Supplemental Security Income, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, and Medicaid. Through programs administered by states and by voluntary organizations under the Wilson-Fish Programs, ORR provides this assistance to eligible populations for up to eight months after their arrival in the United States.

A portion of new entrants participate in the Voluntary Agency Matching Grant Program rather than the refugee cash assistance program. Through the Matching Grant Program, ORR funds U.S. resettlement agencies to help refugees become employed and self-sufficient within their

first four months in the United States by providing services such as case management, job skill development, job placement and follow-up, and interim housing and cash assistance. Support may be extended up to a total of six months on a case-by-case basis, if deemed necessary.

Participating refugees may not access other public cash assistance if they choose to participate in the Matching Grant Program. This employment-focused case-management model has proven to be effective in helping refugees achieve economic self-sufficiency. In FY 2016, the Matching Grant Program served 34,735 refugees, asylees, entrants, and special immigrant visa holders, and reports economic self-sufficiency rates of approximately 84 percent for refugees at 180 days after arrival. In FY 2017, ORR reduced available enrollment slots to 31,000 due to the reduction in refugee arrivals.

ORR also provides funds to state governments and private non-profit agencies to support social services including English language courses, employment services, case management, social adjustment services, and interpreter services. ORR allocates these funds based on a formula tied to the prior two years of arrival data that accounts for refugees' and other entrants' movements to other states after their initial resettlement.

ORR provides Targeted Assistance grants to states with qualifying counties that have high numbers of refugee arrivals. States are required by statute to pass on to counties that have significant refugee populations at least 95 percent of the funds awarded through these grants. Services provided by this program are generally designed to help refugees secure employment within one year or less of arrival.

ORR programs also support economic development activities. These programs focus on financial literacy, establishing credit, and matched savings in support of housing purchases, educational goals, car purchases essential to employment, and hundreds of business startups that in turn employ thousands. The ORR Individual Development Account program enables refugees to purchase assets that contribute to self-sufficiency.

ORR recognizes that many individuals resettling to the United States, including refugees, are survivors of torture. For this reason, the Survivor of Torture Program provides treatment and services to victims of torture regardless of their immigration status. The program strives to provide culturally competent services and client-centered treatment plans that build upon individual strengths to restore dignity, enhance resilience, and rebuild lives. Given that increasing numbers of recent arrivals are identified as survivors of torture, ORR has made efforts to maximize service capacity and expand access to this program.

Improving Outcome Information

ORR is committed to achieving a culture of excellence throughout its programs. To do this, the program is redoubling its efforts to obtain dependable data on program outcomes and to incorporate evidence-based decision-making. Through partnership-building over the past year, ORR has engaged in an initiative to improve data and research on how refugees are integrating into the United States. In partnership with the ACF Office of Planning Research and Evaluation (OPRE) and HHS Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE), ORR has awarded two research contracts.

The first research contract will oversee the Annual Survey of Refugees for the next two years. The partnership has worked to improve the sampling design and methodology to ensure that ORR has nationally representative data on refugees' first five years in the United States. The second research contract will assess ways to improve the survey as an indicator of refugee successes and challenges.

In addition, ORR is particularly interested in enhancing data collection from our state and local service providers to better assess refugees' success and assimilation in communities post arrival. ORR is working on a number of related data collection initiatives to strengthen program performance reporting and outcomes.

Conclusion

Since my time at ORR, I have had the opportunity to visit numerous resettlement sites in communities throughout the U.S. I have been amazed at the level of dedicated resettlement staff, innovative programs, and the support at the local level on behalf of refugees. I have seen firsthand the impact that ORR services can have on the lives of those we bring to this country – restoring hope for a new beginning. One such story that has stayed with me is of an elderly woman from Afghanistan I met who had the opportunity to start a child care business through the ORR Microenterprise Development – Home-Based Childcare Program. Opening her own business was never in the realm of possibility in her home country. When asked how this program had helped her, she replied, “This program gave me wings to fly.” In my role as ORR Director, I am committed to ensuring all those entering this program have the same opportunities to succeed.

I welcome this Committee's interest in HHS' refugee resettlement programs. Thank you for the opportunity to discuss the critical work we perform in assisting these newcomers to our country to achieve self-sufficiency and assimilation in the United States. I would be happy to answer any questions.