

ENHANCED SERVICES FOR REFUGEES FROM NAURU AND PAPUA NEW GUINEA

I. INTRODUCTION

In November 2016, the U.S. and Australian governments reached a bilateral agreement to facilitate the resettlement of 1,250 refugees living in Nauru and Papua New Guinea to the U.S. As of April 1, 2022, approximately 1,000 refugees have arrived in the U.S. under this agreement, with the US Government continuing to progress cases, hand down decisions and effect departures for persons in Nauru and Papua New Guinea and temporarily on the Australian mainland.

II. THE PROJECT

The Nauru and Papua New Guinea Program (NRPP) is a project funded by the Australian Government and administered by the U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI) to provide support to refugees admitted in the U.S. from Nauru, Papua New Guinea, and the Australian mainland. The project aims to strengthen the support mechanisms available to refugees from Nauru and Papua New Guinea and improve their ease of integration in the U.S.

III. ELIGIBILITY

All refugees who are resettled from Nauru, Papua New Guinea, and the Australian mainland are eligible for enrollment in the NRPP program regardless of when they arrived in the U.S. Enrollment in the NRPP program will be based on an assessment of needs. Agency staff will conduct a thorough assessment to identify the needs of potential enrollees and develop a service plan with them to address these needs. Refugees can be enrolled in other programs and still be able to access services from the NRPP program. However, the program is not intended to supplant, or duplicate services provided through other programs. Instead, the NRPP will supplement existing services by addressing any gaps. Agency staff will ensure there is no duplication of services. The NRPP program is designed to provide short-term assistance to address needs that are not met through traditional refugee programming. The program has been extended until June 2023. There is no defined time-limit for serving a case through the NRPP and agency staff will close a case enrolled in the program when the short-term goals outlined in the service plan are achieved. Refugees can be enrolled in the NRPP program if they have the following needs:

- Emergent needs requiring assistance with housing, access to health care, and other basic needs;
- Cases that require assistance to promote upward mobility, especially in relation to employment prospects. This includes financial assistance for vocational or other training, acquiring a license to pursue better employment opportunities, etc.

IV. CASE MANAGEMENT AND OTHER SUPPORT

Local resettlement agencies provide short-term support and services to newly arrived refugees and then connect them to ongoing services for longer term support. The NRRP program aims to enhance these efforts by augmenting existing case management and support services with the recruitment of case aides. The case aides will work in partnership with case managers who work in programs clients may be enrolled in and provide mentorship and additional supports that accelerate self-sufficiency. Case aides will be located in the following cities:

- Atlanta, Georgia
- Buffalo, New York
- Chicago, Illinois
- Denver, Colorado
- Fort Worth, Texas
- Houston, Texas
- Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
- Phoenix, Arizona
- Portland, Oregon
- San Diego, California

These locations were selected because they represent cities where the bulk of the cases that have arrived (around 40 percent of the caseload) have been resettled.

The case managers, recruited and hired by local affiliates at each location, will serve enrollees in the immediate placement area and also provide assistance remotely to refugees in the region. The funding made available to the local host affiliate will cover the cost of hiring a full-time case manager, local program oversight, and other administrative costs. USCRI will provide oversight and support for these locations.

In addition to funds available for case management support, local resettlement affiliates will have an opportunity to request funds from USCRI to address emergent needs and/or upward mobility assistance on behalf of refugees. The funds will be used to address crisis and help enhance self-sufficiency and integration. This will include funds to support professional recertification, microcredit, short-term vocational training, and other self-sufficiency programming based on applications submitted on behalf of refugees. Funds are also made available to extend the Reception and Placement service period and complement any ORR services funding for the most vulnerable cases including those with mental health and psychosocial support needs. Included in the extended support are housing and transportation assistance and assistance with emergency needs that pose a barrier to quality of life including medical and psychological assistance. The client assistance funding is not part of funds received by the 10 local affiliates administering the program locally. These funds will be directly administered by USCRI through vendor payment in close coordination with the local affiliate making the request. Funds are available to all eligible refugees regardless of where in the U.S. they are resettled. Assistance amounts will vary based on purpose and need and will be paid directly to vendors to prevent impacting refugees' income eligibility levels for public assistance, if applicable. USCRI and the local affiliate will closely review local public benefits guidelines prior to approval and issuance of such funds.