

Systems for Action

National Coordinating Center

Systems and Services Research to Build a Culture of Health

Systems Alignment for Effective Resettlement

**Engaging Refugee-led Organizations and Refugee Voices
to Advance Health Equity in Refugee Resettlement**

Strategies to Achieve Alignment, Collaboration and Synergy across Delivery and Financing Systems

Research-in-Progress Webinar

January 22, 2025

12-1pm ET

colorado school of
public health

Agenda

Welcome: Systems for Action

Presenters: Maliha Ali, Danielle Agraviador

Commentary: Susannah Lepley

Q&A: Project Team

Presenters



Maliha Ali

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Church World Service
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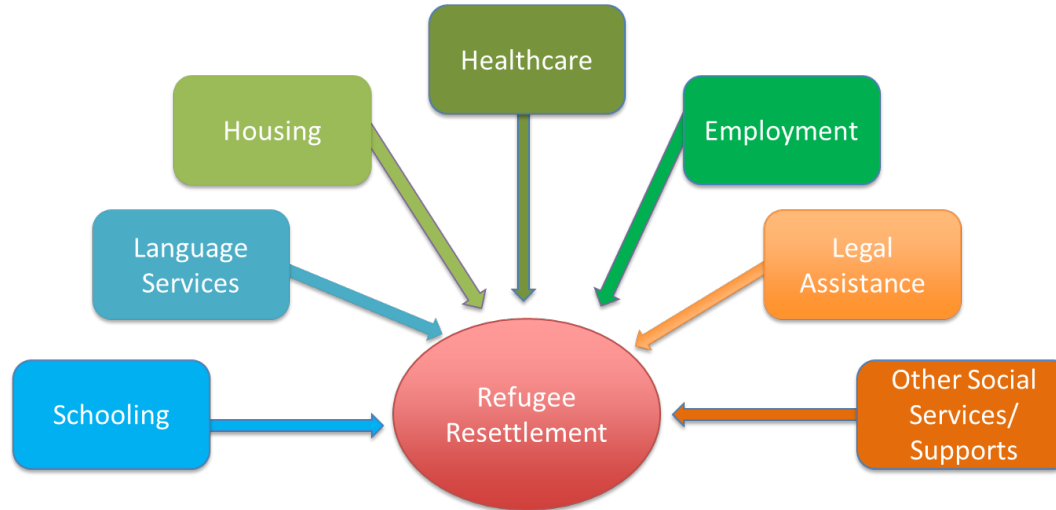
Background: Refugee Resettlement



- US Refugee Admissions Program is the largest refugee resettlement program in the world
- Roughly 500,000 refugees entered the U.S. between 2021 and mid-2023 through emergency initiatives and temporary programs

Background: Refugee resettlement

Medical + Social + Public Health Systems support refugee resettlement.



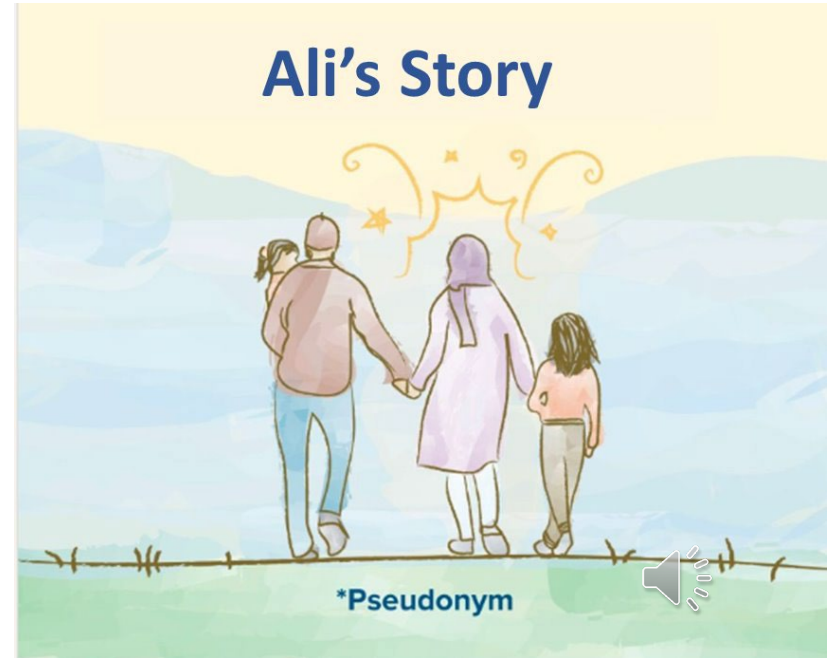
Timely and coordinated resettlement services contribute to social determinants of health vital for refugee well-being and integration.

Structural barriers in refugee resettlement

- Systemic racism and structural barriers in housing, healthcare, employment, and education can impede access to resettlement services.
- Systemic racism exists through systems, laws, policies, practices, beliefs and attitudes that produce, condone, and perpetuate widespread and unfair treatment of people of color.
- Systemic racism is often used interchangeably with structural racism because the structure of laws, policies, and practices serve as scaffolding for systems to function as they do.

Structural barriers in refugee resettlement

- System-level delays in documentation renewals can lead to invalidation of work permits and driver's licenses
- Housing discrimination and stringent procedures to secure stable housing
- Need for cultural and linguistic competence in behavioral health services



Alignment mechanism: Quarterly Community Consultations

Federal agency requirement

- Inform receiving communities and system leaders on anticipated arrivals
- Gauge local capacity
- Coordination and communication among key actors



Opportunities:

- Improving meaningful two-way communication between conveners and system partners to align efforts
- Capacity building for collective impact
- **Look upstream to create sustainable solutions**

Virginia Community Capacity Initiative (VCCI)

Create and assess a novel systems alignment approach to improve the health and well-being of refugees as they resettle and integrate in Virginia

- ❖ Identify existing gaps or strengths of VA's quarterly consultation process, also known as the Virginia Community Capacity Initiative (VCCI)
- ❖ Create a VCCI structural barriers to resettlement working group and associated alignment strategies
- ❖ Engage refugees and refugee-led CBOs with medical, public health, and social systems representation in VCCI

Developing the Alignment Approach

What **does** systems alignment look like in VCCI?



What **could** systems alignment look like in VCCI in a way that addresses structural barriers and includes refugees?

Research

Aim 1: Formative Research

- VCCI meeting observations
- Listening session with Advisory Panel
- Key informant interviews

Advisory Panel

Systems (Office of New Americans, Department of Public Health)

Organizations
(Resettlement Agency, CBOs)

Community/individual
(refugee representatives)

Action

Aim 2: Developing an alignment approach

- Structural barriers working group
- Engaging refugee-led CBOs in shared spaces

Aim 3: Assessing feasibility

Pilot implementation + testing

Role of the Advisory Panel



VA Office of New Americans, State Refugee Resettlement Coordinator



VA Department of Health, State Refugee Health Coordinator



Refugee/Newcomer Representative



Church World Service, VA Director



Refugee/Newcomer Representative



FreshStart Refugee Assistance Center, President/Founder

- Represent different systems (government, public health, social services) and different roles (state agency, resettlement agency, community-based organization, community member/refugee)
- Co-develop systems alignment approach
- Application of Human-Centered Design (HCD) principles

Observations

- Completed 11 quarterly consultation meeting observations
 - 8 in Virginia (virtual - VCCI)
 - 2 in North Carolina (virtual)
 - 1 in Maryland (in-person)
- Developed an observation protocol
 - Operation, structure, function
 - Participant attendance and engagement
 - Capacity for joint action (shared purpose, shared governance, shared data)
 - Structural barriers

Listening Session

- Expertise and lived experiences of advisory panelists
 - Confirm or clarify observations
 - Identify opportunities for improvement
 - Exchange different perspectives

Key Informant Interviews

- Three interviews from VCCI representatives
- Structural barriers to resettlement
 - Existing structure and process in VCCI
 - Opportunities for improvement

Systems alignment

- Capacity for joint action
 - Shared purpose
 - Shared data
 - Shared finance
 - Shared governance
- Participant attendance and engagement
 - Representation from schools, healthcare, public health, resettlement agencies, CBOs
 - Desired attendance from public safety, local government

Engaging refugee voices

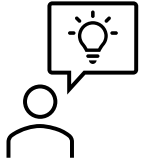
- Refugee voices represented by resettlement agency reports/anecdotes
- Lack of newcomer participation
- 1-2 refugee-led CBOs

Structural barriers to resettlement

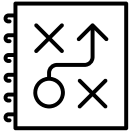
- Social security card delays
- Housing
- Denials/delays for benefits (
- Peer-learning and troubleshooting



Inspiration Phase (Aim 1): Advisory Panel meetings to review formative research findings



Ideation Phase (Aim 2): Identify alignment strategies and solutions based on research findings



Implementation Phase (Aim 3):

- Prototyping: Create/refine VCCI Structural Barriers working group
- Pilot, feasibility assessment, and refinement: Meeting 1, Meeting 2, Meeting 3
- Develop implementation guidance

Using the evidence to achieve systems alignment

- A novel alignment approach with implementation guidance
- Buy-in and commitment to apply the co-developed alignment approach
- Strengthening the voice and authority of refugee representatives
- **Shifting process and sharing power to identify and address structural barriers to refugee resettlement**



Photo from fauxels from Pexels. <https://www.pexels.com/photo/colleagues-shaking-each-other-s-hands-3184291/>

- Braveman PA, Arkin E, Proctor D, Kauh T, Holm N. Systemic and structural racism: definitions, examples, health damages, and approaches to dismantling. Health Aff. 2022;41(2):171-178. doi:10.1377/hlthaff.2021.01394
- Hardeman RR, Kheyfets A, Mantha AB, Cornell A, Crear-Perry J, Graves C, Grobman W, James-Conterelli S, Jones C, Lipscomb B, Ortique C. Developing tools to report racism in maternal health for the CDC Maternal Mortality Review Information Application (MMRIA): findings from the MMRIA Racism & Discrimination Working Group. Maternal and child health journal. 2022 Apr;26(4):661-9.
- Health Equity for Afghan Refugees. Available at: <https://www.air.org/project/health-equity-afghan-refugees-hear-generating-and-using-evidence-align-multisector>



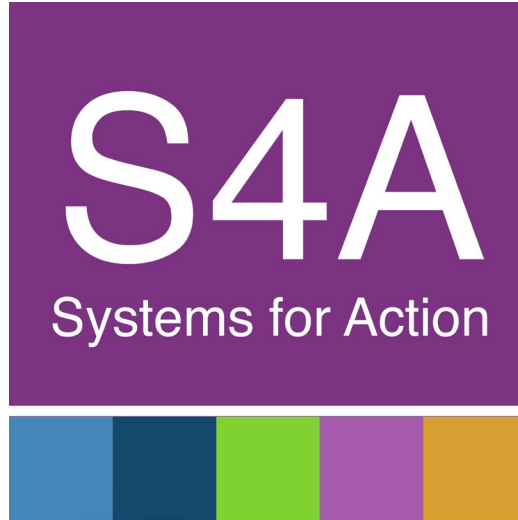
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Project Partner

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Virginia Director

Questions?

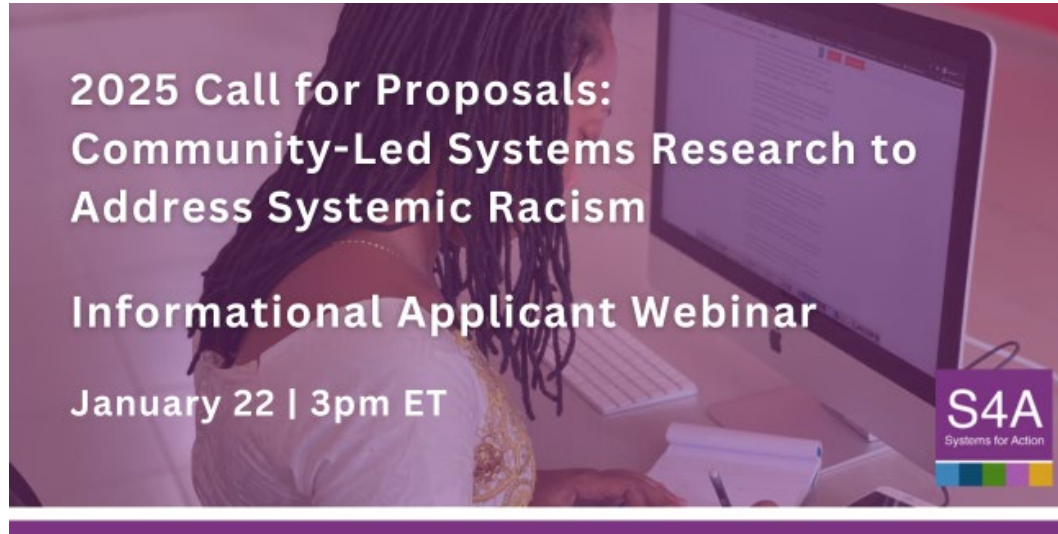


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If you would like to receive a **certificate of completion** for today's ResProg webinar, please complete the survey at the end of the session.

One will be emailed to you.



S4A's [2025 Call for Proposals: Community-Led Systems Research to Address Systemic Racism](#) is now accepting applications!

Upcoming Webinar with Dr. Mariana Chilton



S4A WEBINAR | Feb. 12 at 12pm ET

**Triumphs, Wounds, and Bruises: A Retrospective on
Systems for Action Research for Food Security**

Systems for Action is a National Program Office of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and a collaborative effort of the Colorado School of Public Health, administered by the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus, Aurora, CO.



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