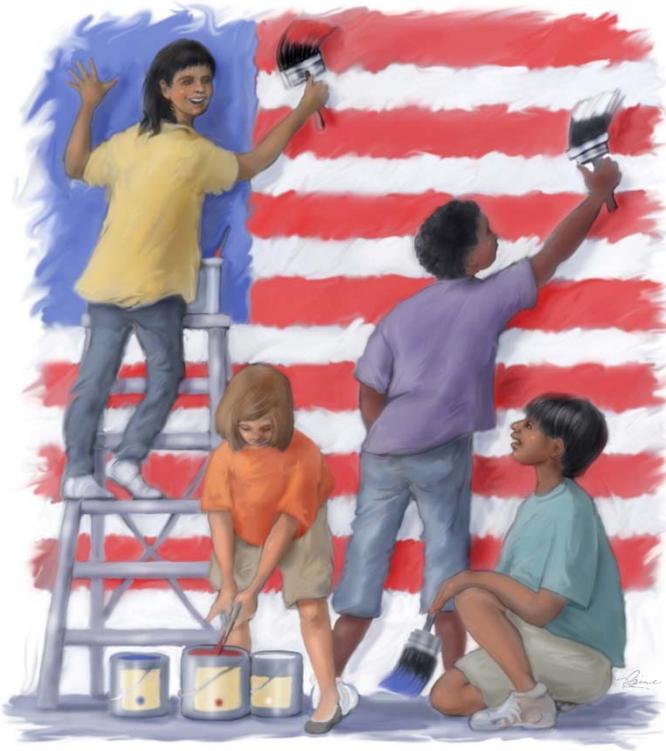




Bridging Refugee Youth & Children's Services



Refugee 101: With a Special Look at Child-Specific Issues

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Welcome!

Thank you for participating in this peer exchange and your interest in this very important topic!

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What is a Refugee?

- A person who is outside of his or her country of origin and can't return due to a well-founded fear of persecution based on race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, and/or political opinion.
- Approximately 20 million around the world
- Survivors of war, violence, loss of family, friends, home
- Most are children



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How do refugees come to the U.S.?



Each fiscal year, the President of the United States authorizes the admission of a certain number of refugees into the country. This determination is based on a consultative process among Congress, the President and various federal agencies.

In recent years, the U.S. has accepted between 50,000 to 75,000 refugees per year.

Less than 1% of refugees around the world are resettled to a third country.

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How do refugees come to the U.S.?

In 1993, Balthazar and his young wife Alphonsine, fled from violence and ethnic tension in their homeland, Burundi. It would be more than a decade of moving between neighboring African countries before their family was resettled in Michigan.

"In Tanzania we were among the first to come to a refugee camp which grew to over 40,000 people. Every family, regardless of their size, had a small tent for shelter and were given a 6 meter plot in front of the tent to grow food. Being in a refugee camp provides some safety but it is also like a prison. There is no leaving to go to the city and it is difficult to improve your life in any way. We stayed in the refugee camp for three years. By this time we had a baby girl and our son was going to school under a tree in the camp."

Today, Balthazar and Alphonsine both work as case managers for the St. Vincent Catholic Charities Refugee Services department, using their own experiences to help incoming refugees adjust and regain control over their lives.



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How do refugees come to the U.S.?

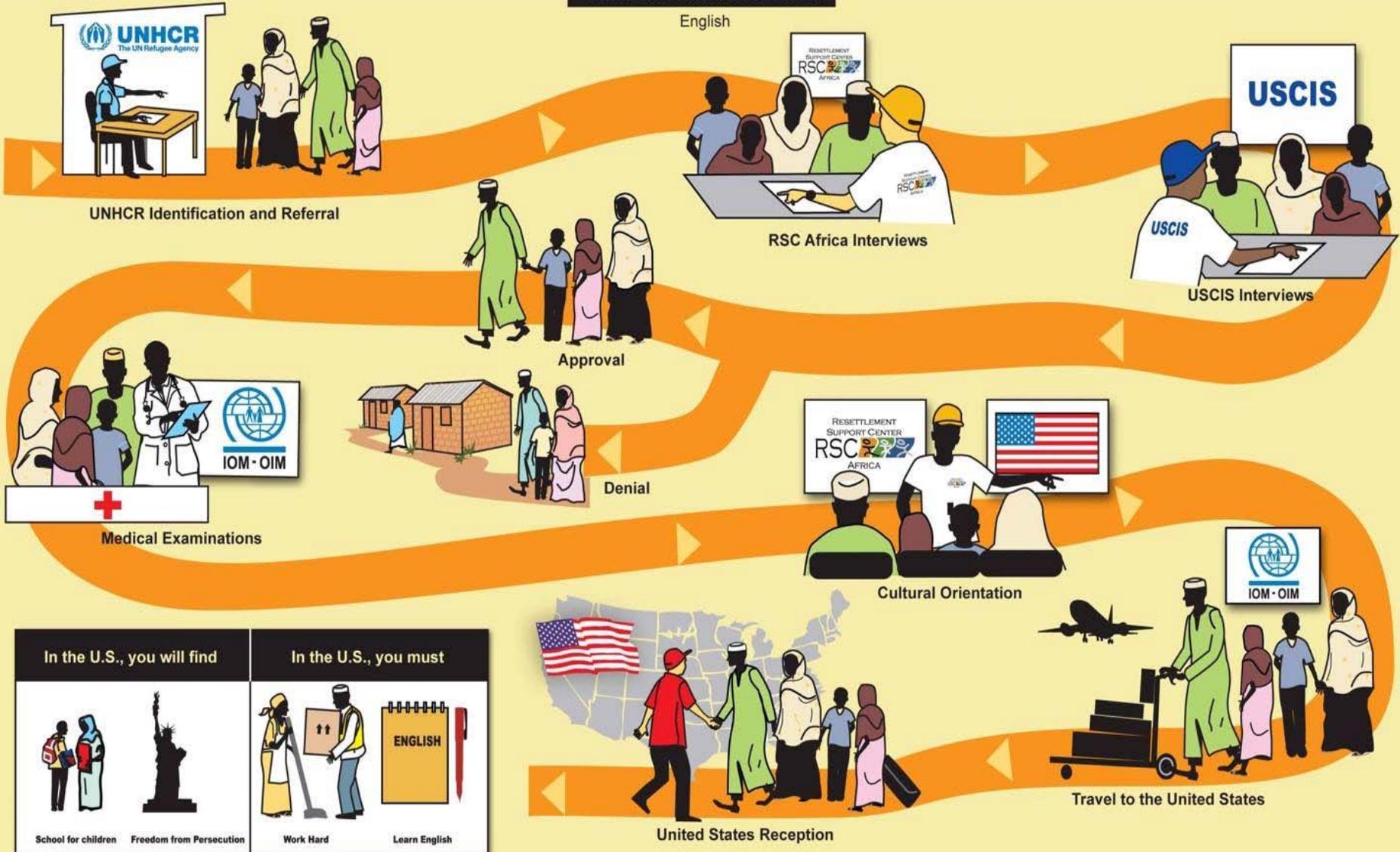


- Refugees come to the U.S. in a very different manner than other immigrants.
- Complicated, multi-step, process that often takes years.

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UNITED STATES REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT PROCESS

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA



For more information, please contact us. E-mail: case@cws-rscnairobi.org

This poster was funded by a grant from the United States Department of State. The opinions, findings, and conclusions stated herein are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the United States Department of State.



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Registration and Refugee Status Determination

- Refugees register with UNHCR
- UNHCR collects biographical information
- UNHCR determines that the person meets the definition of a refugee

Identification of individuals to consider for resettlement

- Refugees are assessed by UNHCR to determine their need for resettlement
- Generally the most vulnerable
- Interviews are conducted to verify identity and background
- Resettlement submission documents prepared
- UNHCR refers the refugee to a resettlement country for consideration

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Security screening

- If the refugee is referred to the U.S. a number of security screenings take place.
- A Resettlement Support Center (RSC) interviews the refugee and collects biographical and background information to initiate security checks.
- Screening is done by the National Counterterrorism Center, Department of Homeland Security, FBI, State Department, and others
- Fingerprints and other biometric data are checked against terrorist and criminal databases
- USCIS reviews the application and interviews the refugee in person. There may be multiple interviews if additional questions arise.
- Refugees undergo a health screening.

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Referral to a Voluntary Agency

- If the refugee passes all of the security screening, the State Department makes a referral to one of nine voluntary agencies (volags) in the U.S.
- The volag determines the resettlement location within the U.S.
- Before departure refugees receive a cultural orientation.

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Refugee Children

Separated children are those separated from both parents, or from their previous legal or customary primary care-giver, but not necessarily from other relatives. These may, therefore, include children accompanied by other adult family members, but they may not.
(Attached Refugee Minors/ARM)

Unaccompanied children are those who have been separated from both parents and other relatives and are not being cared for by an adult who, by law or custom, is responsible for doing so.
(Unaccompanied Refugee Minors/ URM)



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Resettlement of Unaccompanied and Separated Refugee Minors



- Similar process as described for adults and families
- Requires Best Interest Determination and Suitability Assessment as an additional safeguard
- Receive additional services and case monitoring upon arrival

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UNHCR Guidelines on Determining the Best Interest of the Child



Best Interest Determinations (BID)

- Describes the formal process with strict procedural safeguards designed to determine the child's best interests for particularly important decisions affecting the child; (care arrangements in the refugee camp or resettlement options)
- It should facilitate adequate child participation and ensure non-discrimination;
- Involve decision-makers with relevant areas of expertise;
- Balance all relevant factors in order to determine the best interests of the child.



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Best Interest Principle

The Best Interest of the Child is a key guiding principle in the internationally recognized Convention on the Rights of the Child, which guides the work of many international child protection bodies.

The document states:

Article 3 "In all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration."



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When is a BID required?

- Identification of durable solutions (such as resettlement)
- Family reunification when there are concerns
- Temporary care arrangements
- Separation from legal or customary primary caregiver
- Separation of a child from his or her biological parents against their will.



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Who is responsible for conducting BIDs?

- Primarily: State Authorities;
- When State authorities are unavailable or inaccessible or when national child protection systems are not accessible to children of concern;
 - Then UNHCR & partners should (partially or fully) substitute the role of the State
- Whenever possible, UNHCR and Partners should make all reasonable efforts to involve the competent State authorities in its own BID procedures.



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BID Process

- Interviews:
 - Child, family members and other relevant parties
 - Mandatory home visit
- Tracing of family members
- BID report:
 - Standard report template
 - Includes child's views, protection concerns, developmental needs
 - If BID for resettlement, BID includes clear recommendation for durable solution





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BID Panels

- The panel should be multi-disciplinary, gender-balanced and normally composed of 3 to 5 persons with professional expertise in child development and child protection.
- Decisions should be by majority, or qualified majority, depending on the panel's composition. Decisions that define resettlement as the most appropriate solution must be endorsed by UNHCR.
- Panel can also defer decisions for further information/assessment.

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Rebecca

- 11 year old Eritrean girl living in Mai Aini refugee camp, separated from parents
- Came forward and reported sexual abuse by caregiver
- Referred to BID to determine new care arrangement and durable solution
- Recommended for URM





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Purpose & Goals of the Reception & Placement Program (R&P)

Purpose:

"[to ensure] that refugees approved for admission are offered appropriate assistance in their initial resettlement in the United States."

Goals:

"providing refugees with basic necessities and core services during their initial period of resettlement."

"assisting refugees in achieving economic self-sufficiency through employment in coordination with publicly-supported service providers and assistance programs."

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U.S. Government Partners



1. State Department/Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration
 - Develops resettlement policy and overall manager of the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program
 - Responsible for resettlement and initial support to refugees post-arrival through non-governmental organizations (NGOs) (arrival to 3 months post-arrival)
2. Department of Homeland Security/USCIS (Refugee Corps):
 - Determine eligibility for admission to the U.S.
 - Provide adjustment to legal permanent residence (after 1 year), and citizenship (after 5 years)
3. Health and Human Services/Office of Refugee Resettlement
 - Administers cash, medical, and social service programs through state governments and NGOs (arrival to 5 years)
4. Congress
 - Consulted by the President to project annual refugee admissions numbers



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NGOs & Local Partners

1. Resettlement Support Centers (RSC):
 - Under cooperative agreement with DOS/PRM, assist overseas applicants with pre-DHS interview paperwork and post-DHS interview procedures. RSCs operated by either an NGO (i.e. IRC, CWS, IOM)
2. Domestic Resettlement Agencies (RAs/VOLAGS):
 - DOS/PRM manages the U.S. Refugee Resettlement Program through contracts with nine national Resettlement Agencies in the United States
3. Resettlement Agency Affiliates:
 - Under cooperative agreement with DOS/PRM, provide reception and placement support directly to newly arrived refugees
4. State and local governments:
 - Provide cash, medical, employment services, transportation, education through HHS/ORR funding

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R&P Core Services

- Airport Pick-Up
- Food & Clothing
- Intake/ Service Plan
- Home Visits
- Transportation
- Cultural Orientation & Assessment
- Health Screening
- Applications for Social Security Card and Public Assistance
- Assistance in Accessing Employment Services
- Assistance in Accessing ESL
- School Enrollment



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R&P Service Period



"` Reception and Placement period' begins the day the refugee steps foot into the U.S. and is the initial thirty (30)-day period . This can be extended up to ninety (90) days after arrival if additional services still need to be provided."

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Food



Available on arrival:

- Culturally appropriate, ready-to-eat food AND
- One day's worth of additional food supplies and staples (including baby food, as necessary)

Within one day of arrival:

- Food or food allowance equal to food stamp allocation for family unit
- Continued food assistance until receipt of food stamps



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Intake & the Service Plan

- Conduct Intake interview within five working days of arrival
- Develop a service plan (within 10 working days) which lays out a clear plan of action for each refugee (including children) based on assessment of individual needs





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Home Visits

Cases with or without U.S. Ties:

- First visit within 24hrs of arrival; second visit within 30 days of arrival
- Third visit required if the refugee moves within the R&P service period

Home visit reporting:

- Assessment of well-being
- Assessment of living conditions
- Note current or expected needs of the case
- Assistance with basic needs





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Transportation



- Refugees are taught how to use the bus/train
- For no less than 30 days from date of arrival, refugees are provide transportation subsidy

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Cultural Orientation

- Aimed at keeping refugees safe and comfortable in navigating their new communities
- Provides the refugee with the knowledge and skills for the acculturation process during the R&P period and beyond



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Public Benefits

- 1. Social Security Cards**
 - Within 14 working days of arrival
- 2. Selective Service Registration**
 - Within 30 working days of arrival
- 3. Cash and Medical Assistance**
 - Within 7 working days of arrival
- 4. Food Stamps**
 - Within 7 working days of arrival





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Employment Services

Access/enrollment in employment Services within 10 working days (enrollment into the Matching Grant program must take place within 30 days of arrival).

Employment services include:

- job search and placement assistance;
- liaising with employers;
- referrals for job training;
- resume and job application assistance;
- skills and education assessment;
- employment case management



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Education

Adults are enrolled into ESL program within 10 working days of arrival



School-aged children are assisted in registering within 30 days of arrival

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Other ORR Funded Programs

- Preferred communities: address special populations who require intensive case management
- Technical Assistance: provides expertise to local resettlement agency through training, case consultation



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Attached Refugee Minors

- Refugee children who have been **separated** from, and are **traveling without, their biological or legally-adoptive parents.**
- Children who are being resettled through R&P with relative and non-relative caregivers
- Includes children who are traveling to the U.S. to join their biological parents



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Suitability Determination

Purpose: Determining whether a care arrangement is suitable and in line with the child's best interests.

Conducted by the local affiliate of the resettlement agency, the report should include, but need not be limited to:

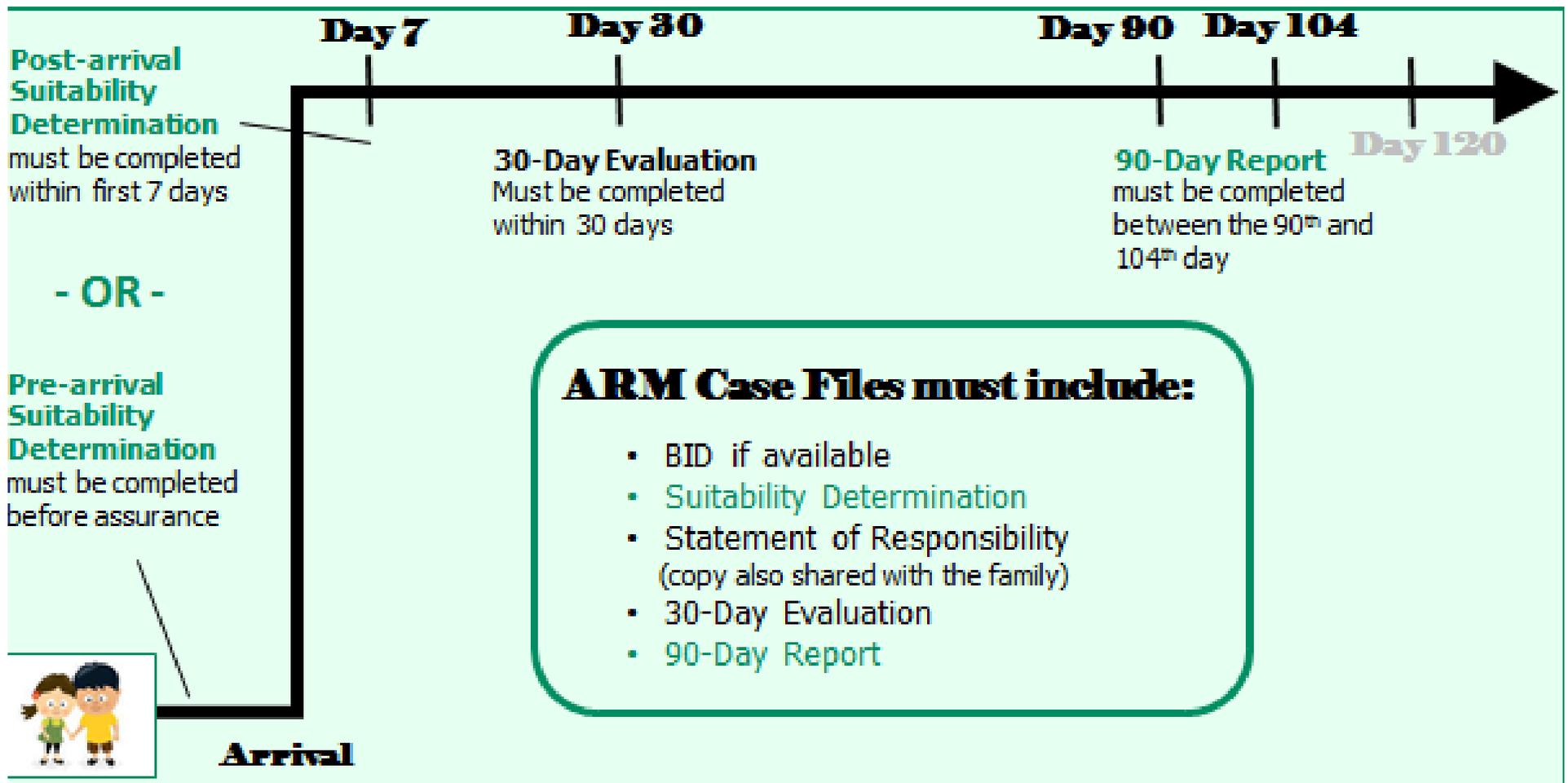
- An assessment of the nature and extent of any **previous relationship** between the child and the family unit prior to the minor's arrival in the country;
- An assessment of the nature and extent of the **current relationship** between the child and others in the family unit;
- An assessment of **whether the family unit is willing and able** to provide ongoing care and supervision of the child, and **how the family plans to provide for the child**;
- An assessment of the family unit's **understanding of and intentions regarding securing legal responsibility** for the child; and
- An assessment of the **requirements of state law**, including whether the family unit must be licensed as a foster care provider or must acquire **legal custody or guardianship** so that the child may legally remain in the household.

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Monitoring of separated children upon arrival in the U.S.





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Guardianship

A court process giving legal responsibility of a child to an adult who is not their biological parent; varies by state

- Suitability determination must include:
 - An assessment of the requirements of state law, including whether the family unit must be licensed as a foster care provider or must acquire legal custody or guardianship so that the child may legally remain in the household.
- Responsibility for **advising, encouraging, and assisting** family in meeting these requirements.

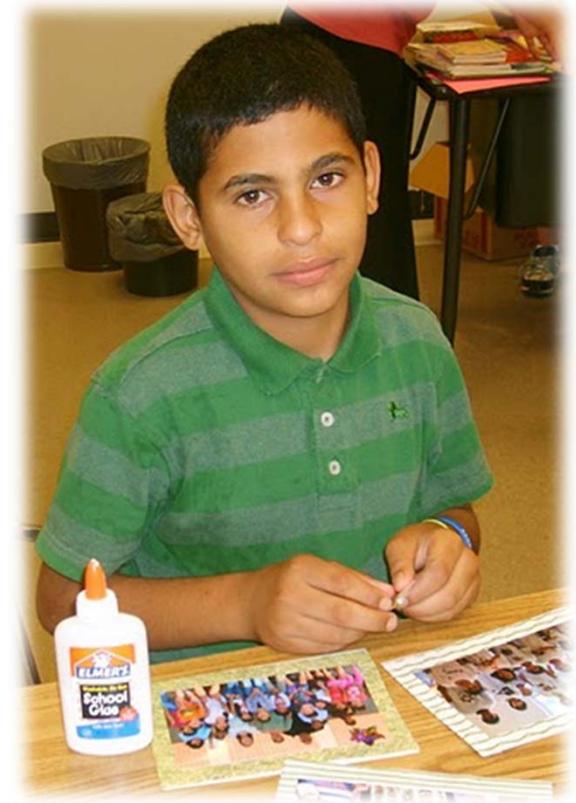
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Farid

- 8 year old Syrian child living with his adult sister and her husband and 4 children in Istanbul, Turkey
- Family identified for resettlement
- Referred to BID to determine whether resettlement with sister's family is best durable solution
- Family tracing
- Recommended for resettlement

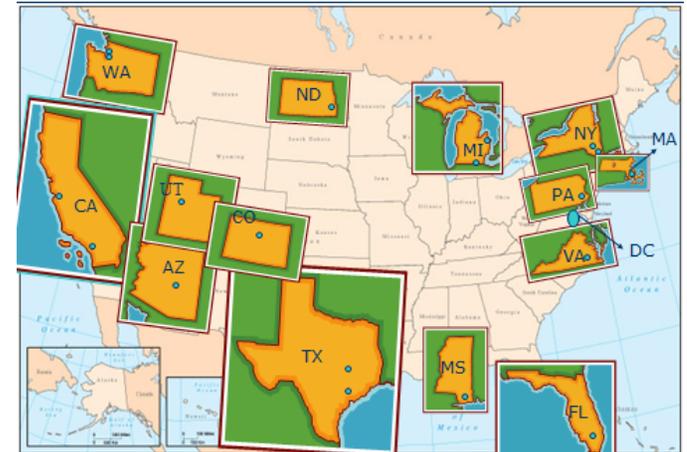


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Unaccompanied Refugee Minor Program



- Federal Foster Care program available to Unaccompanied Refugee Minors and other unaccompanied migrant children
- Traditional and Therapeutic Foster Families
- Group Homes
- Culturally and linguistically sensitive services
- Case management
- Access to Health and Mental Health Services
- Independent Living , vocational training
- Education, tutoring
- Continued Family Reunification efforts

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Questions?



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