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Dear Governor Herbert:

Thank you for the opportunity to share the Refugee Services Office (RSO) annual report from your Board of Advisors for State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2017, which chronicles the work of more than 30 public employees who assist refugees in the state of Utah. The report highlights the successes and challenges of providing substantial programs to refugees in Utah.

The mission of RSO is to educate and empower refugees in Utah to achieve their dreams through quality services offered in a collaborative, resource-rich environment. RSO envisions a strong integrated community engaged to connect refugees to the family-sustaining employment necessary to succeed in Utah for generations to come. Throughout this year of uncertainty at the federal level regarding the refugee resettlement program, RSO continued to work with numerous community organizations to create and enhance programs that improve refugees’ access to employment necessary to succeed in Utah. With the support and counsel of your Board of Advisors and the Department of Workforce Services, RSO manages federal and state refugee funding and coordinates services for refugees in Utah.

During federal fiscal year 2017, Utah resettled 799 refugees. This was due to changes at the federal level and several executive orders that resulted in halting, restarting, and then halting the resettlement process. In spite of the lower numbers, Utah has remained a welcoming place for newly arriving refugees, as well as those who have long called Utah their new home.

Of the nearly 65,000 refugees who currently call Utah home, approximately 99 percent of the refugees in the state reside in the Salt Lake Valley. With sizable refugee populations from Bhutan, Bosnia, Burma, Burundi, Congo, Chad, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Iraq, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, Togo, Vietnam and the former Soviet Union, among others, the Salt Lake Valley is incredibly diverse. Due to affordable housing constraints, Utah’s resettlement agencies began resettling refugees in Ogden in May 2016. To date, 65 Congolese refugees have been resettled in the Ogden area.

Earlier this year, the Refugee Services Board of Advisors participated in a strategic planning effort that identified the need to conduct asset mapping regarding key services and resources available to refugees. RSO developed a broad asset map and identified several key recommendations for further action. These recommendations were adopted by the Board and currently guide the strategic planning for employment, volunteers and youth. Work is in progress to operationalize Utah’s Refugee Employment Model. This effort will bring together refugee employment providers to build a pathway that will help refugees access higher paying jobs in Utah within the first three to five years following resettlement.
A key accomplishment over the past year, and an example of efforts to improve employment outcomes, has been a short-term warehousing and distribution training program for refugees to access warehousing jobs, in partnership with Salt Lake Community College. Three trainings were held throughout the year resulting in a 34 percent increase in employment and a 23 percent increase in wages for refugees in the program.

Additionally, we are continuing to partner with the Utah Department of Public Safety to ensure that the entire community, both refugee and welcoming communities alike, are safe from violent extremism.

The state of Utah is known nationally as a welcoming place for refugees from around the world, thanks to your leadership and support of Utah’s refugee program. The pages to follow are specific to the various refugee programs administered by RSO. If you have any questions, please contact my office at 801-526-9207.

Thank you for your continued service to the state of Utah.

Jon Pierpont
Chair, Board of Advisors for the Utah Refugee Services Office
The Refugee Services Office (RSO) works in collaboration with the Refugee Services Board of Advisors, who meet on a quarterly basis to provide support and advice to RSO. The Board of Advisors provide a forum for identifying, addressing and recommending solutions to encourage the successful integration of refugees in the state of Utah.

RSO houses the State Refugee Coordinator and serves as the designated state agency to receive and direct money from the U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement. Most of these funds are granted to community service providers and other agencies to deliver vital services for the successful integration of refugees in Utah. RSO is also home to a dedicated refugee employment team, which administers the Family Employment Program and Refugee Cash Assistance program for Utah’s newly arrived refugees. The team works in a collaborative environment to develop employment plans and offers job preparation services to refugee customers. Additionally, RSO assists in the support of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families-funded refugee programs, including case management, housing and other employment programs for Utah’s refugees.

We believe **ALL REFUGEES** should have access to family-sustaining employment opportunities.
Department of Workforce Services

FUNDED SERVICES

The majority of refugee services are federally funded through the U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) and the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program (with the exception of $200,000 provided by the state of Utah). RSO administers approximately $4.3 million from TANF and $8.9 million from ORR for refugee services in Utah. Overall funding levels are broken out by level of service listed below.

### Funding Levels by Service Category

- **AmeriCorps VISTA**: $37,548
- **Case Management**: $2,190,007
- **Elderly Services**: $75,279
- **English as a Second Language (ESL)**: $171,000
- **Health**: $2,772,923
- **Housing**: $845,000
- **Refugee Capacity Building Organizations**: $93,194
- **Skills Training and Employment**: $2,366,723
- **Youth Services**: $3,446,567
Center Goals
The Refugee Center serves two purposes:
1. to foster opportunities for refugees to access family-sustaining employment, and
2. to support refugee communities’ efforts to find appropriate solutions towards integration.

Programming Partners
- English Skills Learning Center
- Head Start
- Microbusiness Connection Center
  - 4H
  - International Rescue Committee
  - Salt Lake Community College
  - Salt Lake County
  - SCORE
  - Spice Kitchen Incubator — International Rescue Committee
  - Utah Small Business Development Center Network
  - Utah State University
  - Utah State University Extension
- Promise South Salt Lake
- Tech Programming
  - Adobe
  - Goldman Sachs
  - Oracle
  - Utah Asian Charitable Foundation
- University of Utah College of Social Work
- University of Utah REFUGES Program
Integration Activities

Community Team

The RSO Community Team supports successful integration for refugees through:

- Capacity Building – Building refugee community resilience that builds self-reliance and facilitates integration
- Crisis Intervention – Providing a safety net to assist refugees in crisis resolution
- Education – Increasing knowledge for refugees to remove barriers towards integration
- Community Connection – Linking refugees to resources that move them towards self-sufficiency

From Jan. 1, 2017 to Sept. 30, 2017, the Community Team served 1,094 refugees, including 744 refugee women and 234 refugee youth, and provided the following support:

- 1,347 unique services, such as interpretation, advocacy, applications, teaching and making appointments.
- 1,324 referrals to available mainstream community resources.
- Hosted two resource fairs and more than 150 workshops focused on economic stability, education, health and life skills.
**English as a Second Language**

Since the beginning of the U.S. Refugee Resettlement Program in 1975, the ability to speak, read and write English are the major indicators for a person’s ability to become self-sufficient and eventually integrate into the greater community. With the growing diversity of refugees being resettled in Utah and the low literacy levels of some of the major groups being resettled, ensuring that all refugees are literate has become an increasing challenge.

English language instruction funding provides English Language Learner (ELL) training for refugees who are enrolled in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Humanitarian Center skills training program, as well as classes in various locations and for different English language skills levels, including work readiness English language classes. These contracts, which are funded by TANF and ORR Refugee Social Services funding, served more than 790 adult refugee students.

**Refugee Capacity Building**

In 2017, RSO began a revised version of grant funding for Refugee Community-Based Organizations (RCBO) focused on program implementation and outcomes. Refugee capacity building funding has been a crucial component in supporting the development, organization and overall integration of Utah’s refugee population. For the majority of refugee organizations, this is the only available funding to support their efforts. These organizations engage primarily with individuals resettled prior to Utah offering two-year extended case management, who often have substantial needs and few resources available to them.

Grants were executed in a reduced timeframe with positive initial results. Between Dec. 1, 2016 and Sep. 30, 2017, 17 community-led programs were funded and developed with more than 626 individuals attending more than 150 sessions, such as life skills, education, English as a second language, health, technology and computers, and parenting. RCBO programs partnered with 41 organizations and were supported by 71 mainstream volunteers. Eighty-nine percent of participants created new relationships with the wider Utah community, 73 percent were connected to additional programs and 59 percent of participants learned of new community resources.
Refugee Leadership Training

The Refugee Leadership Training is a partnership between Salt Lake Community College, RSO and American Express. The goal of this training is to provide refugees in the community an opportunity to develop their leadership skills and connect them to resources that will help benefit their respective communities. This year marked the seventh year the training was offered to refugees. Upon completing the 12-week training, participants received a certificate of completion from Salt Lake Community College. Graduates included 17 men and 21 women representing seven refugee communities. Leadership topics focused on public speaking, assessing community needs, civic responsibility and conflict resolution. This year’s class had the privilege of visiting the Utah State Capitol building and learning about the American legislative process.

Refugee School Impact Grant

RSO administers $253,004 in Refugee School Impact program funding, which is currently allocated to Granite School District and Salt Lake City School District. The central goals of the Refugee School Impact Grant are to strengthen academic performance and facilitate social adjustment of school-aged refugees and other populations served by ORR.

RSO focuses these efforts on 1) college and career readiness, 2) family and community support, and 3) school support services coordination. The grant’s primary objectives include:

- Broad partnerships focused on newly arriving ORR-served youth to ensure coordination for effective planning and successful program implementation while avoiding duplication of services.
  - In 2017, Granite School District partnered with the Utah Refugee Connection to host “Meet the Refugee” community events, highlighting the Somali, Sudanese, Burundi and Bhutanese communities.

- Specialized approaches suited for newly arriving ORR-served populations, such as cultural orientation, parent/teacher meetings and school orientations.
  - In 2017, both school districts provided an extensive two-week school system orientation for new arrival refugee youth and families.

- Programming that supports integration of ORR-served youth into school systems such as ELL, buddy programs, mentoring and group activities.
  - In 2017, Salt Lake School District has focused on providing direct support for refugee high school students through weekly support groups at Highland High school, the highest populated refugee youth high school in the district.

RSO monitors, tracks student progress, facilitates meetings between the school district and the refugee resettlement agencies, and provides support to the school districts.
Services For Older Refugees

ORR has granted the state of Utah $75,000 to fund senior programs. Funding has enabled transportation services from refugees’ homes to the Taylorsville Senior Center by Salt Lake City Aging and Adult Services, which allows them to attend English as a second language classes (provided by Salt Lake County) and participate in other activities at the senior center to help them overcome isolation. RSO is in the process of creating a citizenship class to help older adults pass their citizenship test, which will enable them to keep their social security benefits. RSO is working with Salt Lake County to expand these programs into more senior centers.

From October 2016 through May 2017, Salt Lake City Aging and Adult Services provided 147.5 hours of transportation and 75.5 hours of interpreting services to 19 senior refugees from Sudan and South Sudan. RSO has entered into a contract with Salt Lake County Aging and Adult Services to provide a case manager who will assist refugee seniors.

World Refugee Day

Nearly 5,000 people attended the 2017 World Refugee Day celebration on Saturday, July 15, 2017, at Liberty Park in Salt Lake City. This annual event gives the community the opportunity to share and learn about cultures from around the world. The festival includes a citizenship ceremony, music, dance, soccer and volleyball tournaments, bounce houses, food and children’s activities. Local refugee entrepreneurs command the food tents and global marketplace. Around the World booths allow refugee community organizations to share information about their cultural heritage and engage festival-goers in learning more about their experiences in their countries of origin and in Utah.

Through the generosity of many donors and local organizations, RSO secured $23,282 in grants, sponsorships and booth fees.

The goals of this annual event are to:

1. Foster Refugee Integration — World Refugee Day is an opportunity for the mainstream community to interact and learn about the refugees now living in Utah. It also provides an opportunity to educate the welcoming community about refugees and the value they add to Utah.
2. Celebrate Refugees — World Refugee Day is a celebration of the strength, courage and perseverance of millions of refugees who fled their homes in search of a better life, of freedom from oppression and a future for their children.
WORLD REFUGEES DAY

Event Sponsors:
- American Red Cross
- Burma Humanitarian Mission
- Catholic Community Services
- Cyprus Credit Union
- English Skills Learning Center
- Granite School District
- International Rescue Committee
  - East African Refugee Goat Project of Utah
  - Spice Kitchen Incubator
- Microbusiness Connection Center
- Refugee & Immigrant Center – Asian Association of Utah
- Salt Lake City
- Salt Lake Community College
- The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
- Utah Refugee Connection

Event Partners:
- Arte Primero
- Cache Refugee & Immigrant Connection
- Ensign Peak Services
- Goldman Sachs
- Green Urban Lunch Box
- Help Me Grow Utah
- The Leonardo
- Salt Lake County Library Services
- Salt Lake County Office for New Americans & Refugees
- Utah Department of Public Safety
- Utah Health & Human Rights
- Women of the World
- Youthlinc
Employment Activities

Case Management
Since 2009, TANF and ORR Refugee Social Services have funded two-year case management for all newly arrived refugees. Extended case management is the foundation of refugee services in Utah, connecting refugees to resources that will improve their potential self-sufficiency and integration into the communities in which they live. Beginning in 2017, RSO shifted to an outcomes-based case management assessment, resulting in coordinated service delivery to provide refugees with the tools and resources needed to become economically and financially stable. A new assessment tool was implemented by the two resettlement agencies and two other non-profit organizations in January 2017, which captures refugees’ progress toward seven integration outcomes:

1. Employment
2. Housing
3. Education and Training
4. Health
5. Community and Family Support
6. Language and Cultural Knowledge
7. Life Skills

During Federal FY 2017, 799 individuals were resettled through Catholic Community Services and the International Rescue Committee.

Employment Services
RSO’s team of employment specialists provides assistance to help ensure refugees are successful in their employment. Refugee-focused employment specialists screen and assess applicants, provide employment workshops and services, and support employers in hiring refugees. From July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017, RSO’s employment team helped 1,436 refugee customers with employment services, including helping 689 refugee customers obtain employment with a retention rate of 85 percent. During SFY 2017, RSO served 688 customers as part of the Family Employment Program and Refugee Cash Assistance program. RSO successfully closed 425 cases and achieved a positive closure rate of 93.41 percent. Of these positive closures, 76 percent were due to employment or higher earnings.
Supportive services provided by RSO’s employment team during SFY 2017 include:

- 517 resumes completed
- 567 mock interviews conducted
- 592 job applications completed
- 200+ employment workshops hosted, including job fairs, resume workshops, Job Connections, Application Labs, interview preparation, Steps to Success and employer site tours
- 295 Utah employers engaged in hiring refugees
- 203 services provided to Utah employers

Humanitarian Center

In 2009, the Humanitarian Center Project was created to teach English and provide job training to 150 individuals (75 referred by Workforce Services and 75 referred by Latter-day Saint bishops) for 12 months at a time. A partnership between Workforce Services, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and various local refugee service providers, it is the only program of its kind in the U.S. In Federal FY 2017, 61 participants completed the program and 50 participants found jobs (a 82 percent placement rate).

Refugee Supportive Housing Assistance

Refugee Employment Subsidized Housing

Workforce Services, in partnership with the Housing Authority of the County of Salt Lake, administers the Refugee Employment Subsidized Housing program for single-parent households who are prepared to work. The current five-year contract runs from Feb. 1, 2015, through Jan. 31, 2020. There are 25 refugee households currently enrolled in the program. From Oct. 1, 2016 to Sept. 30, 2017, 48 households have exited the program, 16 of which exited with employment or increased self-sufficiency.
Bud Bailey Case Management
The Bud Bailey Apartment Community has 136 units with 44 units reserved for housing vouchers assigned to refugee families. Currently, there are approximately 80 households with occupants who have refugee or immigrant backgrounds. A contract agreement between RSO and the Housing Authority of the County of Salt Lake supports two case managers who provide case management services to the 44 refugee voucher households. The three areas of focus for the refugee families are:
1. Housing stability
2. Financial capability/self-sufficiency
3. Family services for after-school programs

Targeted Assistance Grant
The Targeted Assistance Grant Program helps refugees obtain employment in a one-year time period in order to achieve self-sufficiency. This grant was awarded to the Refugee and Immigrant Center – Asian Association of Utah to provide this service. Through targeted assistance, 405 individuals received employment case management services, and 308 individuals (71 percent) obtained jobs from July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017.

Additional Coordination and Key Activities
AmeriCorps VISTA
AmeriCorps VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) is the domestic equivalent of the Peace Corps and one of several national service programs administered by the Corporation for National and Community Service. VISTA members commit to:
- Living and serving in some of the nation’s poorest urban and rural areas for a full year
- Subsisting on a living stipend that equates to less than $5.00/hour
- Creating and expanding sustainable programs for local organizations and nonprofits

With passion, commitment and hard work, their programs are designed to bring individuals and communities out of poverty.

RSO houses the Utah Refugee VISTA Project, which is made up of 13 members at seven organizations assisting the refugee communities in Utah in building their capacity to become self-sufficient. Many of RSO’s VISTA members have completed their year of service and continue to work with refugees in Utah. The VISTA Project strives to assist refugees in three ways:
1. Integration — Involving and incorporating resettled refugees as equals into the welcoming community.
2. Education — Bringing both refugees and the welcoming community members together to learn from each other and work together.
3. Assistance — Developing programs to assist refugees in the process of integrating into their new home.
Refugee Services Fund
At the end of SFY 2017, the Refugee Services Fund had a balance of $65,212.17. From July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017, RSO received $47,266.47 in donations and sponsorships to the fund and expended $11,342.43 to support refugees.

Funds were utilized for:

- Rental assistance — $2,097.22
- Youth services — $410.90
- Girls Volleyball Program — $433.58
- Women’s services — $272.24
- Sewing project — $660.80
- Refugee Voices — $330.02
STRATEGIC PLANNING

The Governor’s Board of Advisors requested that RSO conduct asset mapping on refugee services in Utah. This information was presented to the Board in March 2017, including recommendations that were adopted by the Board.

Several subcommittees were formed to dive more deeply into the areas of employment, volunteers and youth.

REFUGEE ASSET MAPPING
MULTIPLE SERVICES
Employment Recommendations:

- Bring all refugee providers together who offer employment to identify where there is overlap and develop a better, clear, coordinated system.
- Enhance job training and build clear pathways for refugees to move from low-paying jobs into job training and higher-wage paying jobs.
- Continue to build pathways to moderate-income jobs.
- Continue to provide services for under-employed refugees.

The subcommittee, led by Paul Moody with LDS Church Humanitarian Services, is working to create Utah’s employment path (see figure below). Based on this path, the desired outcome is for refugees to earn a livable wage with health benefits within five years of arrival. While there are many barriers and no two cases are the same, the subcommittee is working to find a solution that best fits the majority of refugees.

THE UTAH PATH TO EMPLOYMENT

ARRIVING
- Limited or no English
- Few or underused job skills
- Limited financial resources

ELL Assessment and Long-Term Plan

HIGH EDUCATION/SKILLS
- 1-2 years to THRIVING

SOME EDUCATION/SKILLS
- 3-5 years to THRIVING

LITTLE OR NO EDUCATION/SKILLS
- 3+ years to THRIVING

THRIVING
- Livable wage (<35% for housing)
- Career ladder job
- Home ownership

Housing and Transportation Support
Financial Literacy
Mentorship
Strategic Initial Job Placements
On-the-Job Training and Apprenticeships
Tuition Supported Living-Wage Skill Training
Industry Specific ELL-to-Vocation Classes
Long-Term Career Planning
ELL Assessment and Long-Term Plan
Volunteer Recommendations:

- Help volunteers understand all the opportunities that exist for volunteers’ effort to make a good match with their time and talents.
- Find service opportunities that match with one-time volunteers and their interests.

The subcommittee, led by Fatima Dirie with the Salt Lake City Mayor’s Office, is working to streamline efforts by key refugee providers who utilize volunteers routinely and ultimately make the process of screening and matching volunteers much easier on the volunteer. The desired outcomes include better informed volunteers who are more empathetic through their work with refugees, communities who are thriving through their joint partnership with helping refugees integrate, a simpler process to engage and enroll volunteers, and refugees integrating faster and better through volunteer mentorship.

Youth Recommendations:

- Identify services for at-risk youth related to prevention, English Language Learner (ELL) pathways, employment and job training.

The subcommittee, led by Dr. Martin Bates, superintendent of Granite School District, is working to identify a high school and college pathway for refugee students who arrive aged 14-18.

Additional work on asset mapping and strategic planning will continue with the guidance of the Board’s strategic planning subcommittee, the Board as a whole, and the participation of refugee service providers and partners to build stronger, more efficient, outcomes-driven services and systems to support refugee success in Utah. For more information on the full asset mapping done, please visit refugee.utah.gov.
In November 2015, in response to heightened security concerns surrounding terrorism worldwide, Governor Herbert directed the Utah Department of Public Safety to conduct a review of the federal screening process for refugees and security procedures related to refugee resettlement in Utah. This process led to a partnership between RSO and Public Safety, with a Public Safety officer assigned as a refugee liaison to work with local law enforcement, resettlement agencies and other organizations as a resource for and to build relationships with Utah’s refugee community. This is a unique partnership in Utah and nationally.

Between February 2017 and November 2017, the efforts of Public Safety have resulted in:
- 500+ newly resettled refugee contacts
- 34 U.S. law orientation classes at Catholic Community Services and International Rescue Committee
- 3 youth dialogue presentations
- 9 community civic dialogues
- 2,000+ refugee contacts at community events
- 4 local law enforcement coordination meetings
- 7 cases opened or referred to local law enforcement of potential refugee victimization
- 4 classes for refugee community leaders on the criminal justice system, rights/freedoms, and improving relations between law enforcement
- 500+ Public Safety and Highway Patrol officers trained in refugee awareness and outreach
- Training program development for refugee leaders and police, in partnership with RSO and refugee community leaders
- Development of training videos for law enforcement, in partnership with RSO

Youth Coordination
RSO’s goal for refugee youth is to ensure they all have access to the same opportunities regardless of the resettlement agency with which they arrive, their age upon arrival in the U.S., and in which school district they are enrolled. The Refugee Youth Services Coordinator provides collaboration, support and coordination to ensure that refugee youth feel supported and are able to access these services equitably. Additionally, RSO’s youth coordinator works to maintain partner engagement, collaborate with appropriate state agencies, advise applicable committees, organizations and boards on refugee youth issues, and implement innovative programming.
2017 Youth Highlights:

- 15 at-risk refugee youth were connected to mentors through the Know Your Neighbor Volunteer Program, a partnership between RSO and Salt Lake City.
- RSO hosted the first ever Refugee Youth Job Fair on April 22, 2017. More than 100 youth participated in the job fair with 20 employers. Job interviews were held on-site during the fair, and 20 youth job seekers were offered jobs that same day.
- RSO coordinated the second annual refugee girls volleyball league. 65 refugee girls participated, culminating in a tournament held in conjunction with World Refugee Day.
- Three new refugee Girl Scout troops were started through collaboration between RSO, Sunnyvale Neighborhood Center and Bud Bailey Apartments.
- 50 refugee youth completed the Salt Lake County Youth Summer Internship Program.
- 275 youth attended the 7th annual Refugee Youth Conference on October 17, 2017. Organized by RSO, the conference encouraged refugee youth to pursue post-secondary education or certification programs.
- Refugee youth representatives met bi-monthly with educational equity staff from Salt Lake School District, Granite School District and Canyons School District to identify needs, and discuss and coordinate the best ways to support refugee youth.
- A new website — uen.org/advocacy — was launched to support educators and parents of refugee youth. The site, developed in collaboration between RSO, International Rescue Committee, Catholic Community Services and the Utah State Board of Education, includes online trainings and case studies about who refugee youth are, their needs, and integration ideas for teachers and community members.
SUCCESS STORIES

ABDI

Following Abdi’s participation in RSO’s Refugee Youth Summer Internship Program, he shared the following with RSO’s youth coordinator:

"I would like to share some awesome news with you. First, I am doing great, academics are on point, health is good, and I am in a happy state of mind right now. Second, I recently applied for an internship in Washington, D.C. to intern for a Utah Senator & Congressman/Women. This past week, I had an interview with Congressman Jason Chaffetz and Chris Stewart’s offices. On Friday afternoon, I received an offer from both offices. I accepted an internship with Chris Stewart’s office! I am excited for this wonderful opportunity.

"Lastly, I want to say THANK YOU! You have no idea how much working at CJS [Criminal Justice Services] meant to me. I experienced and learned while participating in the Refugee Youth Summer Internship Program and you all have accepted me as one of your own. I seriously cannot thank you enough. I wanted to share this news with you because if I didn’t get the chance to meet you, I wouldn’t be doing what I am doing.

"Once again, thank you for changing my life!"

JOSEPH

Joseph, a 16-year-old male student from Iraq, began the 20-week Intro to Programming course in 2016 at the Utah Refugee Education and Training Center. He excelled during this course and was placed in the adult-level web development course. During this nine-month course he was one of the top students and became proficient in HTML, CSS and JavaScript. Over the summer of 2017, RSO placed him in a paid summer internship using his programming skills for a video game design company. He completed his internship with high reviews and a letter of recommendation from the management.

Currently, Joseph is furthering his programming education as a student in another adult-level JAVA programming course, which will enable him to complete the Oracle JAVA Certification before he finishes high school. Throughout this time he has made many connections with professional programmers, as well as a professional mentor. Through his experience with RSO and these programming classes, Joseph will be well prepared for his college education and career in information technology.
SUCCESS STORIES CONTINUED

JANE

Jane came to the United States as a refugee with another relative at the age of 15. She had previously lost both parents during the civil war in her home country. She attended high school in Utah and then met a man from her native country online and they married shortly after. Jane started experiencing domestic violence within the first week they lived together. Her relatives disowned her because she did not want to leave him and she did not know where to go or whom to turn to. The violence and abuse became worse and more often over time. After their first child was born, her husband stopped working as he was struggling with addiction. She became the sole provider for the family. Her husband became extremely paranoid and abusive as he insisted that Jane was being unfaithful to him.

Jane and her son arrived at the Utah Refugee Education and Training Center in crisis, nervous and scared due to continued threats from the husband that he would kill them both. RSO staff helped her get a protective order and referred her to the domestic violence shelter. After Jane moved into the shelter, RSO connected her to Legal Aid Services who helped her with the custody of her son. Jane requested to be transferred to a shelter in a different city as she was experiencing a lot of pressure from her community. She was transferred to a women’s shelter and the RSO Employment Team helped her find another good paying job. In addition, RSO helped register her son in school and day care. RSO staff remained in touch and upon her successful exit from the shelter, helped Jane find an apartment, furniture and other household items. Jane commented that prior to coming to RSO she had lost all hope for life but, with RSO’s help, she has become self-sufficient, confident and optimistic about the days to come.

MICHAEL

For 16 years, Michael, his wife and five children lived in the Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya. Life was dangerous and the family often had little or no food. After eight years of waiting to be resettled, they finally moved to Utah in November 2016. Michael immediately started integrating by learning and taking several classes offered at the Utah Refugee Education and Training Center, including English, driver’s education, warehouse and distribution training, refugee leadership training, and basic and advanced computer classes. In spite of all the difficulties associated with adjusting to a new home and community, Michael always sported the biggest smile and became recognized for his joyous and heartwarming morning greetings. With RSO’s help, Michael received an offer to work for Grand America as a banquet attendant. By July 2017, only eight months after coming to the United States, Michael was promoted to a supervisor over 18 staff. Michael is expecting another son, loves working for Grand America and is grateful and proud to call Utah his home.
SUCCESS STORIES CONTINUED

PREM

Prem, a refugee from Bhutan, lived in a refugee camp for more than 18 years and eventually resettled in New York. Prem, his wife and two children decided to move to Salt Lake City for a better life and to be closer to their family. Prem was in desperate need of work to feed and care for his family. The RSO employment team assisted him with creating a resume, filling out online applications, taking him to on-site tours, connecting him with employers for interviews, and signing up for the warehouse and distribution training class at the Utah Refugee Education and Training Center. In less than a month, Prem was offered two jobs: one for $15.00 per hour and another position he negotiated for $15.70 per hour — an increase in wage from his $13.00 per hour job in New York.

ALI

Ali, an accomplished mechanical engineer from Iraq with more than 15 years of experience working on international projects, came to Salt Lake City in 2008 as a refugee. He completed his Master’s Degree in Mechanical Engineering in 2015 from the University of Utah. For more than a year, Ali kept applying for jobs but was unable to find employment in his field of study. Ali felt frustrated, sad and disappointed; and, no matter what he did or what school he attended in order to make a better life for himself and his family, he would never be able to break the cycle of entry-level jobs. He contemplated leaving Utah to find a job in another state, but he loved Utah so much that he wanted to give it one last try. Ali was referred to RSO in August of 2016 for assistance in obtaining an engineering position. RSO staff conducted a career assessment and provided Ali with resume guidance, soft-skills training and interview preparation training. RSO connected Ali with employers and, by September 2016, Ali started working as a mechanical engineer. Unfortunately, Ali was let go a short time later because he was missing a specific skill and the company did not have time to train him. Ali returned to RSO and immediately started looking for new opportunities. An employer offered to hire Ali in production for a few months while engineering jobs became available. Ali started working as a production operator trainee in December 2016. With RSO’s continued help, Ali secured a new position at the same company as a manufacturing engineer contractor. Two months later, Ali was promoted as a senior process engineer. He went from $13.00 per hour to $36.00 per hour within seven months. His next goal is to get his professional engineering license and continue to progress in his career. Ali commented that his experience with RSO changed his entire life for the better and he is proud to call Utah his home.
CONCLUSION

The Refugee Services Office remains committed to providing the highest quality and best practices of services for refugees who now call Utah home. The work remains for both newly arrived refugees and individuals who have lived in Utah for five, 10, 15 or more years. As part of Workforce Services, the Refugee Services Office will continue to develop, fund and support services that allow refugees to become self-sufficient, integrated members of the Utah community.

Visit 
refugee.utah.gov

to learn more about the 
Refugee Services Office.

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Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities by calling 801-526-9240. Individuals with speech or hearing impairments may call the Relay Utah by dialing 711. Spanish Relay Utah: 1-888-346-3162.