

# Developing Guidance on Transitioning Refugee Resettlement to the State of Alaska

## Request for Proposals

### Introduction and Context

The Alaska Office of Refugees (AOR) is soliciting requests for proposals for the Development of Guidance on Transitioning the Federally Funded Refugee Resettlement Program (RRP) to the State of Alaska.

This initiative is integral to ensuring Alaska's compliance with recent federal requirements which direct the transition of RRP administration from a nonprofit agency to state government in order to maintain eligibility for Refugee Social Services (RSS) funding beginning in FY2026. In alignment with Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) [Policy Letter 25-04](#), this project calls for a strategic, well-documented, and client-centered transfer of responsibilities from the Alaska Office for Refugees (AOR) to the Department of Labor and Workforce Development (DOLWD).

The selected vendor will be responsible for developing practical, actionable guidance that prepares DOLWD to effectively assume administration of the Refugee Resettlement Program (RRP) while maintaining high-quality, uninterrupted services for refugee clients. By commissioning this work, AOR seeks to support a seamless and successful transition of refugee services, ensuring that the State of Alaska is well-positioned to serve its refugee communities now and in the future.

### Description of Federal Grant

This initiative is undertaken in alignment with Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) Policy Letter 25-04 and is designed to ensure that Alaska sustains delivery of high-quality, federally compliant services to all ORR-eligible populations during and after the transition to state-led program administration.

Federal grants administered under the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) permit the engagement of contractors and consultants when their services are necessary, reasonable, and directly support the objectives of the funded program (per 45 CFR § 75.403–405, and § 75.327–335). The costs associated with this consultancy are justified as necessary program support to:

- Strengthen the DOLWD’s ability to deliver and oversee RSS-eligible services;
- Enhance program coordination, planning, and compliance;
- Ensure continued access to employability and support services for ORR-eligible clients across Alaska.

All procurement related to this consultancy will be conducted in accordance with 45 CFR Part 75 Subpart D (Procurement Standards), which governs the fair, open, and transparent use of federal funds. The selected vendor must also comply with all applicable federal contract provisions and reporting requirements.

## Grant Details

CFDA#: 93.566

CFDA Number Description: Refugee and Entrant Assistance State/Replacement Designee Administered Programs

Award#: 2501AKRSSS-00

## Funding Restrictions

The administration of this program is based on:

- Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952, as amended (PL.L. 82-414)  
<http://www.uscis.gov/iframe/ilink/docView/SLB/HTML/SLB/act.html>;
- Code of Federal Regulations 45 CFR 400: Refugee Resettlement Program  
[Part 400](#): *Information specific to Refugee Support Services can be found in Subpart I. Information regarding eligible refugee participants is found in Subpart D.*

- **45 CFR Part 75:** The US Department for Health and Human Services is implementing the language in 2 CFR 200 in these codified regulations found [here](#):
  1. *Administrative requirements:* Subparts B through D of this part set forth the uniform administrative requirements for grant and cooperative agreements, including the requirements for HHS awarding agency management of Federal grant programs before the Federal award has been made, and the requirements HHS awarding agencies may impose on non-Federal entities in the Federal award.
  2. *Cost principles:* Subpart E of this part establishes principles for determining the allowable costs incurred by non-Federal entities under Federal awards. The principles are for the purpose of cost determination and are not intended to identify the circumstances or dictate the extent of Federal Government participation in the financing of a particular program or project. The principles are designed to provide that Federal awards bear their fair share of cost recognized under these principles except where restricted or prohibited by statute.
  3. *Single audit requirements and audit follow-up:* Subpart F of this part is issued pursuant to the Single Audit Act Amendments of 1996, (31 U.S.C. 7501-7507). It sets forth standards for obtaining consistency and uniformity among Federal agencies for the audit of non-Federal entities expending Federal awards. These provisions also provide the policies and procedures for HHS awarding agencies and pass-through entities when using the results of these audits.

## Project Overview

The AOR seeks a qualified consultant or team to provide comprehensive guidance for transferring administration of the RRP from the AOR—the current Replacement Designee—to the State of Alaska’s DOLWD.

## Project Objectives

The consultancy will develop a clear, actionable transition roadmap to ensure the State of Alaska's DOLWD has the tools to assume administrative responsibility for the RRP, to maintain high-quality services to refugee clients, and to comply with federal requirements. The project will:

- Analyze and document current program structures, service delivery models, staffing, funding, and partner engagement.
- Recommend program design options for state-run RSS services, including in-house, subcontracted, and hybrid models, identifying the pros and cons of each.
- Advise on staffing requirements, recruitment strategies, fiscal management systems, and establishment of federal compliance practices.
- Develop a thorough plan for data and record transfer, case management system integration, and client confidentiality standards.
- Propose training curricula and technical assistance strategies to equip new state staff for program launch and ongoing operations.
- Foster robust community and stakeholder engagement to ensure service continuity and transparent communication.
- Provide a snapshot of current client caseloads and demographics, recent program performance, and anticipated resource needs.
- Offer a readiness assessment and gap analysis for potential transition to direct Cash and Medical Assistance (CMA) administration.
- Share comparative lessons, sample tools, and statutory frameworks from other states, with an emphasis on North Dakota's recent transition experience.

## Budget

The total budget available for this eight-month consultancy is \$125,000. This amount is intended to cover all consultancy costs, including labor, travel, stakeholder engagement, materials, and indirect costs.

## Scope and Impact

This project is critical for ensuring compliance with upcoming federal funding changes, maintaining essential services for Alaska's refugee communities, and building sustainable capacity for program delivery within state government. The selected consultant(s) will play an essential role in shaping Alaska's approach to welcoming and supporting new Americans.

All recommendations resulting from this work must be adaptable to evolving federal policies, regulations, or budgetary circumstances, ensuring Alaskan refugee services remain responsive and effective amid ongoing changes in federal and state landscapes.

The consultant must maintain strict compliance with confidentiality and data privacy requirements throughout this project, safeguarding all client information and program data in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.

We invite proposals from experienced individuals or teams with deep knowledge of refugee resettlement programs, state government operations, federal grant management, and large-scale program transition planning.

## Scope of Work

### Project Goals

- Develop a detailed and actionable guidance document outlining the transition of RRP administration from the AOR to the State of Alaska's DOWLD as of October 1, 2026. The AOR will have no responsibility for administration of the RRP as of October 1, 2026.
- Ensure compliance with Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) Policy Letter 25-04 and related federal requirements.
- Provide recommendations and a practical roadmap to build internal capacity for future program operations and potential future administration of Cash and Medical Assistance (CMA).

- Minimize service disruption to refugee clients and maintain or improve current performance outcomes throughout and post-transition.

## Deliverables

### Deliverable 1: Comprehensive Assessment and Current Program Analysis

- Detailed description of current RSS program structure, service delivery pathways, referral networks, and stakeholders.
- Staffing models, roles, and workflows currently employed by AOR.
- Current funding and fiscal management overview including budget flows and reporting mechanisms.
- Systems and data management tools currently in use.
- Community and stakeholder mapping and engagement summary.
- Current client demographics, caseloads, and performance data.
- Summary of CMA administration and related readiness assessment.

### Deliverable 2: Transition Options and Recommendations Report

- Recommended program structure options for the State of Alaska (in-house, subcontracting, or hybrid models), including pros and cons.
- Staffing recommendations with sample position descriptions and suggested transition timelines.
- Fiscal and financial management recommendations to meet federal program compliance.
- Data and systems integration plans, including data transfer formats and privacy frameworks.
- Training and technical assistance plan including core curricula and transition support mechanisms.
- Stakeholder communication and outreach strategy with messaging frameworks and templates.
- Gap analysis and readiness assessment specifically targeting CMA transition feasibility.

### Deliverable 3: Transition Timeline and Milestone Plan

- Detailed project timeline capturing all critical federal deadlines (grant submissions, reporting, drawdowns).
- Milestones for staffing hires/training, data transfer, systems onboarding, partner and client notifications, and program handoff.
- Recommendations for parallel operations or phased onboarding steps to mitigate risks.

### Deliverable 4: Final Guidance Document

- Consolidated and user-friendly guidance manual integrating all findings, recommendations, and transition plans.
- Appendices including templates, job descriptions, client progression workflow, sample outreach materials, and state comparison charts.

### Deliverable 5: Lessons Learned and Comparative Analysis

- Compilation of lessons learned and best practices from states that have transitioned RSS (e.g., North Dakota).
- Identification of relevant statutes and administrative actions (e.g., Executive Orders) used by other states to enable transition.
- Recommended statutory or policy frameworks necessary or advisable for Alaska, including a crosswalk with existing Alaska statutes such as AS 23.05.125.

### Milestones and Deadlines

Milestone	Deliverable(s)	Target Completion Date
Project Kickoff and Work Plan Development	-	29 August 2025
Current Program Assessment Complete	Deliverable 1	15 December 2025
Draft Transition Recommendations and Options	Deliverable 2	15 December 2025

Draft Transition Timeline and Milestone Plan	Deliverable 3	6 January 2026
Review of Draft Reports for Deliverables 1-3 by AOR	-	6-13 January 2026
Submission of Final Guidance Document related to Deliverables 1-3	Deliverable 4	20 January 2026
Presentation of Finalized Deliverables 1-3 to AOR and DOLWD	-	20 January 2026
Comparative State Analysis and Statutory Review Report	Deliverable 5	25 February 2026
Provision of ongoing Technical Assistance and Implementation Guidance to DOLWD, as required		21 January – 30 April 2026

## Review and Approval Process

- Draft deliverables submitted by the consultant(s) will be reviewed by the AOR within 5 business days of receipt.
- Feedback will be provided promptly to ensure timely revisions and adherence to project deadlines.
- Final approval will be granted upon AOR's satisfaction that deliverables meet quality standards and project requirements.

## Consultancy Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
Consultant (s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Conduct current program assessments and data gathering.</li> <li>- Analyze and synthesize information into reports.</li> <li>- Engage with AOR, DOLWD, stakeholders and community partners.</li> <li>- Develop recommendations and transition plans.</li> <li>- Draft, revise, and finalize deliverables.</li> <li>- Facilitate knowledge sharing and training planning.</li> <li>- Provide briefings and presentations.</li> </ul>



AOR Project Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provide project oversight and strategic direction.</li> <li>- Facilitate access to necessary data, documents, and personnel.</li> <li>- Review and provide timely feedback on drafts.</li> <li>- Coordinate communications with federal partners as needed.</li> <li>- Support stakeholder engagement efforts.</li> <li>- Approve final deliverables.</li> </ul>
AOR Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provide detailed operational, fiscal, and staffing insights.</li> <li>- Share current workflows, job descriptions, and systems info.</li> <li>- Assist with data and records transfers.</li> <li>- Participate in knowledge transfer activities.</li> <li>- Support continuity of services during transition.</li> </ul>
Community Partners/Stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Inform transition impact and communication strategies.</li> <li>- Provide information and feedback on transition plans, programming and client needs.</li> <li>- Participate as appropriate in stakeholder engagement interviews.</li> </ul>

## Proposal Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- **Budget and Cost-Effectiveness:** Proposals must demonstrate a clear, justified budget that makes efficient use of the available \$125,000, ensuring cost-effectiveness without sacrificing quality or comprehensiveness. Please include estimated hours related to the provision of Technical Assistance and Implementation Guidance expected. Please also include payment terms.
- **Quality and Technical Approach:** Submissions should present a strong, detailed approach to meeting project objectives, including methodologies, deliverables, and strategies that ensure a smooth and compliant transition of the Refugee Resettlement Program.

- **Timeline and Feasibility:** Proposals must outline a realistic and detailed project timeline that aligns with the eight-month consultancy period, including achievable milestones and deadlines for all key tasks.
- **Relevant Experience and Expertise:** Higher consideration will be given to individuals or teams that demonstrate extensive experience with refugee resettlement programs, state government operations, federal grant management, and complex program transition planning. Proposals should provide evidence of past success in similar projects.
- **Compliance with Requirements:** Proposals must directly address all project components and requirements identified in the scope of work, evidencing a comprehensive understanding and ability to meet the assignment's expectations.

Proposals will be reviewed by an external evaluator, with the award going to the submission that offers the best overall value based on demonstrated expertise, quality of approach, cost-effectiveness, and alignment with the AOR's goals for a seamless and compliant transition of the RRP. The AOR will not be part of the RRP after October 1, 2026.

## Project Timeline

- **Proposal Submission Deadline:** 22 August 2025
- **Proposal Review and Selection:** on or before 29 August 2025  
The Alaska Office for Refugees will review all submitted proposals based on the evaluation criteria. During this period, vendors may be contacted for clarifications or interviews as needed.
- **Vendor Notification and Contract Award:** on or before 29 August 2025  
The selected vendor will be notified, and contract finalization will be completed.
- **Project Start Date:** 29 August 2025
- **Project End Date:** 30 April 2026  
See above Milestones and Deadlines Framework for detailed timeline.

## Submission Guidelines

Interested vendors must follow the submission guidelines outlined below:

- Proposal Submission Deadline: All proposals must be submitted no later than 11:59 PM Alaska time, Friday, 22 August 2025
- Proposal Format: Proposals should be submitted as a Microsoft Word document, ensuring the file is easily readable and all required sections are clearly labeled. Please include in your submission the name, title, email, and phone number of the primary contact person for follow-up.
- Submission Method: Email your completed proposal as an attachment to Sara Shinkfield  
AK State Refugee Coordinator  
Phone: 402-650-2515  
Email: [sshinkfield@cssalaska.org](mailto:sshinkfield@cssalaska.org)
- Confirmation of receipt will be provided via email within two (2) business days of submission.
- Written questions will be accepted up to three (3) business days before the proposal submission deadline. Responses to substantive questions may be shared with all potential bidders to ensure transparency.

## Attachments

1. Refugee Support Services (RSS) Transition Planning: Report Development Questions and Requests For Contractor Development of a Transition Plan – Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development (DOLWD)