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Chairman
Fourth District

Katrina Foley
Vice
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Second District

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ORANGE COUNTY REFUGEE SERVICES PLAN
FEDERAL FISCAL YEARs 2024-2026
October 1, 2023 – September 30, 2026

Prepared by:
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Social Services Agency
September 29, 2023
Rev: January 23, 2025

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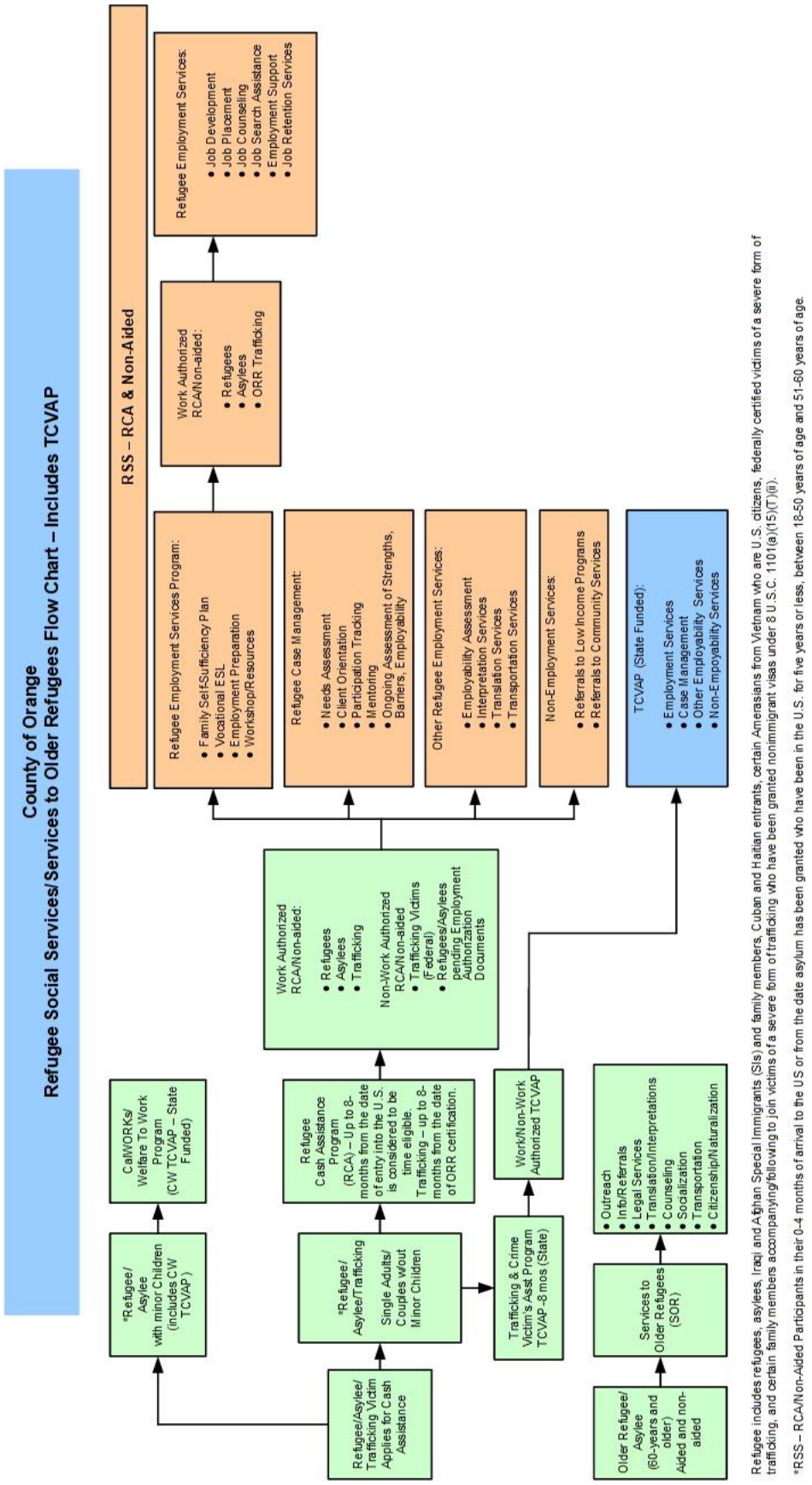
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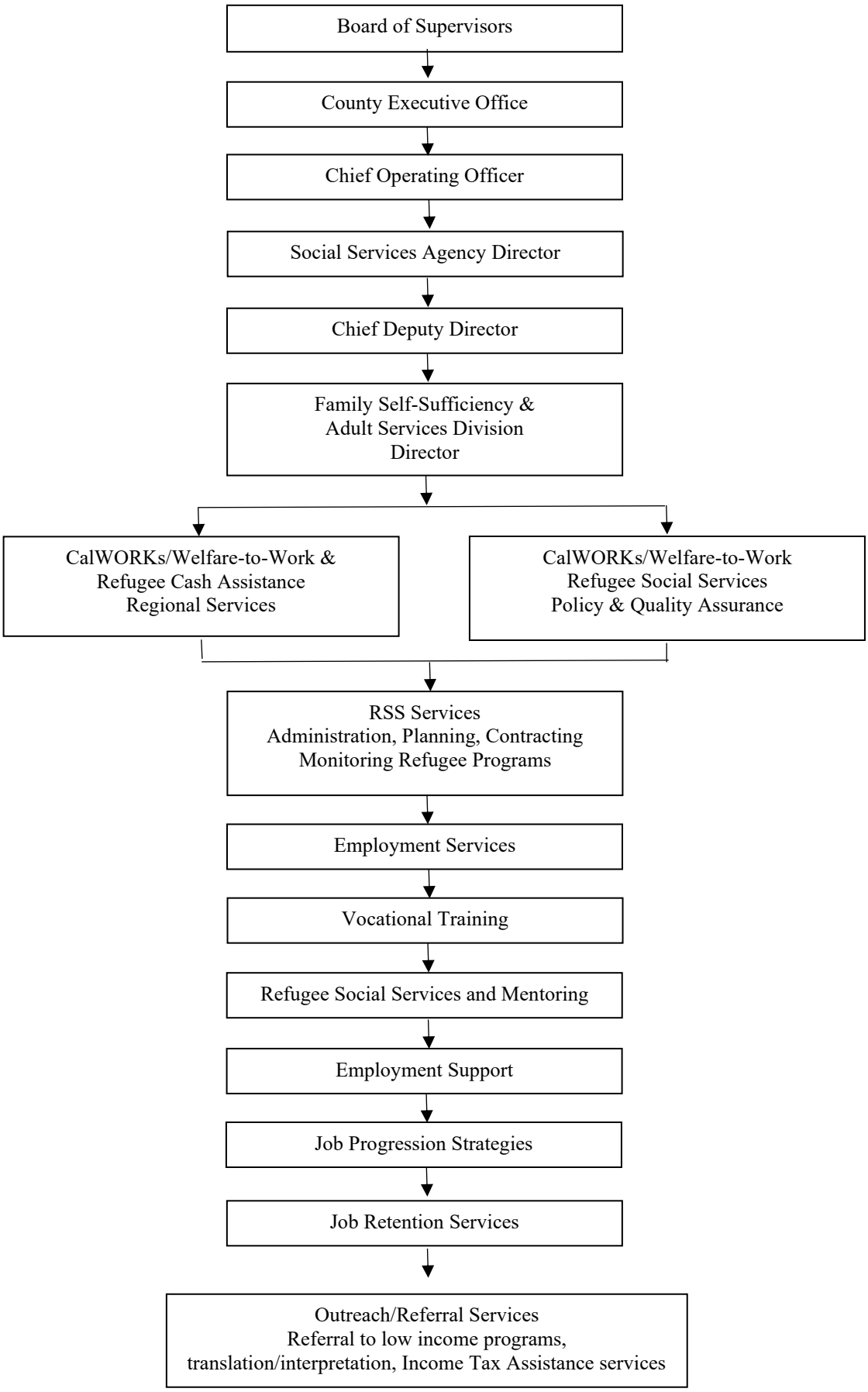
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I. COUNTY REFUGEE PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

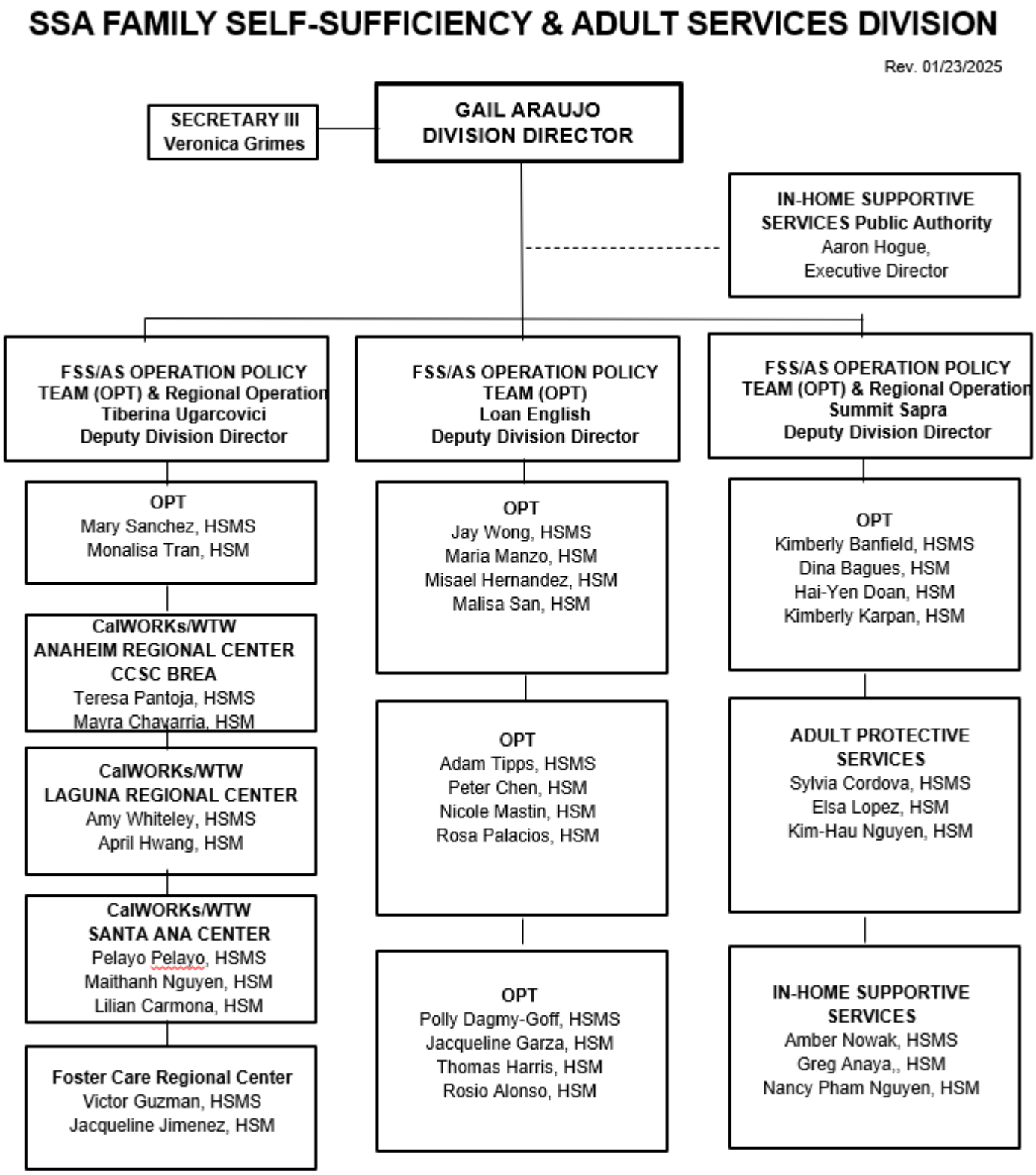
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B. County of Orange Social Services Agency Organization Chart



C. SSA Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services Division Organization Chart



II. DESCRIPTION OF REFUGEE PROGRAM

A. General Program Description

Refugee Social Services (RSS)
The primary intent of the County of Orange (County) RSS program, in accordance with the Refugee Act, is to assist refugees to achieve economic self-sufficiency as quickly as possible after arrival in the United States (U.S.). The County will continue outreach efforts to provide services for refugees who have been in the country within sixty (60) months. The County will also continue to provide RSS in a culturally and linguistically appropriate manner and in accordance with all applicable federal, state, and county laws, amendments, regulations, and guidelines for the next three federal fiscal years. For purposes of this document the term "refugees" also encompasses asylees, Cuban/Haitian Entrants, victims of severe human trafficking, certain Amerasians, and Iraqi/Afghan Special Immigrant Visa holders.

RSS services are delivered through a contract with a refugee service provider. These services will be contingent on the availability of funding.

Employment Services for Aided and Non-Aided Refugees
RSS offers a full range of employment and support services for aided (Refugee Cash Assistance recipients, aid code 01) and non-aided refugees who have resided in the U.S. less than sixty (60) months.

Outreach and Referral for Low Income Programs and Community Resources
The goal of this component is to enhance the refugee family's quality of life by increasing access to services, which are important and necessary for the well-being of the refugee population, to promote financial stability, and to help refugees move toward self-sufficiency. Any client eligible for refugee services is eligible for outreach, referral, supportive services, translation services, and other assessed needs.

Services for Older Refugees
The goal of the Services for Older Refugees (SOR) program is to provide linkages for older refugees to access citizenship and naturalization preparation services. Stakeholder input gathered indicates that these services are important to assist in the prevention of isolation to older adults. Services can include socialization activities, educational classes, case management, and various events. Accessing these services is particularly critical for elderly refugees who may be at risk of losing, or who have already lost, their Supplemental Security Income benefits. Any refugee residing in the County who is sixty years of age or older is eligible for these services.

The provider will conduct ongoing outreach activities to identify and notify older refugees and their families of available services, service locations, and ways to access services. Methods used will include a variety of media, staff presence at ethnic community events and places of worship, community networking, collaboration meetings with other agencies serving this population, referrals from Resettlement Agencies

(RA), community and public agencies, as well as home visits. Services for older refugees may include the following: education about available services; outreach; interpretation and translation services to obtain available services; linkages with local Area Agency on Aging to make mainstream senior programs more linguistically and culturally appropriate; English and civic classes and assistance with citizenship application; and assistance with payment for related expenses.

Afghan Support Services Supplemental Appropriation (ASA) 22-02 and 22-04E (FFY 2202 10.1.21 – 9.30.24)

Services provided to address unmet needs of Afghan newcomers in Orange County (OC). Provide support for emergency/short-term and long-term housing to assist in resettlement stability, self-sufficiency, and community integration. Short-term food assistance provided to cover the period of time between when CalFresh benefits is approved and when there is a lack of housing that would allow for food preparation and cooking. A one-time stipend was provided to eligible newcomers to augment existing resources by assisting with the purchase of basic needs, such as nutrition, transportation, and incidentals, to allow for successful participation in RSS employment-related activities. This allowed their focus to be on gaining successful employment, rather than on meeting day-to-day needs.

Ukrainian Housing and Utility Assistance

Housing Assistance for Ukrainian (HAU) program funds will be used to support the transition of Ukrainian newcomers in Orange County with direct long-term housing, housing support, and utility assistance. Assistance will be provided to Ukrainian and other non-Ukrainian individuals displaced from Ukraine who are eligible to receive Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) housing Additional Ukraine Supplemental Appropriations Act (AUSAA) assistance. Up to six months of assistance may be provided and applicant needs will be assessed and prioritized by immediacy of housing needs and level of instability, according to their household attributes at the time of application and as detailed in Refugee Coordinator Letter No. 23-03 dated June 28, 2023. HAU assistance will be administered as a supportive service in conjunction with case management to allow for help with securing housing, utility assistance to pay for past due/current bills.

Services will be provided by the County's RSS provider's Case Management and Accounting staff, who will be responsible for conducting initial screenings to ascertain eligibility, as well as offering comprehensive case management and financial aid. Payments will be disbursed directly to the third-party vendor or applicant via check or warrant.

Ukraine Refugee Support Services Supplemental Allocation

This funding allocation will be used for RSS activities and services provided to Ukrainian RCA recipients assisted by our contracted RSS provider. RSS includes Employment and Support services for aided RCA recipients, non-aided refugees, and employed refugees in need of services to retain employment or to attain economic independence who have resided in the U.S. less than sixty (60) months, development of a Family Self-Sufficiency plan, outreach and referral assistance for low income programs and community resources which are important for the refugee population and helps provide them with support in terms of moving them forward towards self-sufficiency, as well as individualized case management and support.

B. CalWORKs/Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA) Compliance

The County assures that the provision of activities and services to mandatory RCA recipients and voluntary refugee participants, which is funded by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) as allocated by the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR), will be in accordance with CalWORKs, Welfare-to-Work (WTW) and RCA requirements. The requirements include program participation flow, good cause determination, sanction, and supportive services as specified in the Manual of Policy and Procedures Sections 42-700 and 69-200, respectively, and other applicable CalWORKs and RCA policy guidance issued by CDSS.

The 2024-26 Refugee Services Plan continues to focus on the provision of employment services for individuals with the following immigration and program statuses: (1) refugees; (2) asylees; (3) Cuban and Haitian entrants; (4) Cuban medical professionals and their spouses and children (5) certain Amerasians from Vietnam; (6) victims of severe forms of trafficking who receive certification or an eligibility letter from the ORR and certain other specified family members of trafficking victims; (7) Iraqi and Afghan citizens with Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) status; and (8) certain Humanitarian Parolees. The term "refugee" is used in this three-year services plan to encompass all such eligible persons, including those who were non-aided and have resided in the U.S. for less than sixty (60) months.

C. County Planning Process

The Refuge Services Plan was developed by soliciting input from refugee service providers and members of the Refugee Forum of Orange County. The County Social Services Agency (SSA) holds monthly meetings with the service provider for RSS and participates in quarterly meetings with the Refugee Forum of Orange County.

Participating members and guests of the Refugee Forum of Orange County include Access California Services, CalOptima, City of Anaheim, Global Hope 365, Latino Muslim Unity, OMID Institute, Orange County Health Care Agency, Offices of Assemblywoman Sharon Quirk-Silva and Congressman Lou Correa, Program for Victims of Torture, Sabil-USA, United Nations Association of Orange County, and Uplift Charity.

The planning process is an ongoing and evolutionary process including, but not limited to, meetings with the service provider, data analysis, identification of community resources and collaborative opportunities, as well as discussion of best practices and innovative and proven efficient models of service delivery for the target population.

The RSS provider is involved in numerous activities and services of benefit to the refugee community. These are broad based, with a focus on community integration and access to mainstream services, including but are not limited to: involvement with Ethnic Community-Based Organizations (ECBO) representing refugees from Africa, Middle East, and other nationalities; extensive assistance to victims of human trafficking and persons granted asylum; participation in efforts to promote awareness of mental health issues and services for refugees; and participation in community organizations that aid and advocate for the refugee community.

D. Demographics of the Target Population

Participants in RSS come from different countries, with different education background and English ability. Upon program entry, all participants take a test to determine their English ability or Student Performance Level (SPL). There are up to seven SPL levels, with five being the highest level that would initiate an individual's participation into the program's full range of Employment Services, excluding Vocational English as a Second Language.

For the first trimester of FFY 2022-2023, the largest group of refugees enrolled in RSS-funded employment services in Orange County were from Ukraine (62.8%), followed by Cuba (15.7%), and Afghanistan (10.7%). The remaining 10.7% of enrolled refugees came from other countries.

Among the RCA population receiving RSS employment services, 11.6% were between 18 and 21 years of age, 38.0% were between 22 and 33 years of age, 27.3% were between 34 and 44 years of age, 6.6% were between 45 and 50 years of age, and 16.5% were 51 years of age or older. Of RSS participants, 53.7% were male and 46.3% were female.

Assessment statistics for the above period showed that 26.5% of the RSS participants had a high school diploma, 33.1% graduated from college, 0.8% had a seventh through twelfth grade level education.

RSS participants entered the program with English language skills at a level of 5 and above. Among the RCA population, 38.1% tested at levels 5, 11.4% tested at levels 6, and the remaining 16.7% tested at level 7.

E. Identification of Target Population Needs

Many Orange County refugees have experienced long-term difficulties in assimilating and require refugee-specific services. The refugee population faces unemployment and underemployment issues as RSS participants have either limited or no work experience in the U.S. or are over-qualified for the entry level positions they are offered. Many times, employment offers are for positions that are unrelated to the field of education and/or experience the refugee may have participated in previously. Difficulties obtaining Social Security Numbers, Employment Authorization documents, challenges with finding affordable and stable housing, traumatic mental and physical impairments, as well as unfamiliarity and frustration with navigating public transportation have also had an effect on their ability to obtain and/or retain employment.

Employment services are offered at Orange County's refugee service provider location, Access California Services, with a focus on addressing employment-related and social adjustment topics such as: different cultures in American society, cultural conflicts at the workplace, housing, health care, legal services, vocational training programs, employees' rights, and workplace safety. To leverage and maximize RSS specific funding, refugee families with minor children will be served in the CalWORKs program with access to language and social services available for the refugee population.

F. Labor Market Information

According to the 2021 Orange County Workforce Indicators Report (OCWIR), Orange County's economy and workforce was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. During this time, distance learning, remote work, food and essential goods delivery, entertainment, telehealth, and other virtual services increased exponentially. Nationwide, millions of workers shifted from working in on-site environments to remote work from home, meetings and conferences changed from convention centers to virtual platforms, and many expect that these changes to remain permanent to some extent.

A notable result of the pandemic was the closure of many businesses due to unprecedented shutdowns or restrictions placed on businesses that were not considered essential during the pandemic. These shutdowns and overall fear of the COVID-19 public health emergency resulted in significant job loss with a portion of the population seeking out and obtaining unemployment benefit assistance.

In addition, automation is replacing routine work tasks and computers and coupled with the ability to remote work are changing how people live and produce services. The report indicated five emerging technology industries in Orange County are Cybersecurity, Artificial Intelligence (AI), Computer and Video gaming, Ophthalmics/Vision, and Drones. At the state level, Cybersecurity employment increased more than 43 percent from 2016 to 2021 and is expected to grow by an additional 20.7 percent from 2021 to 2026. County-level Cybersecurity employment is expected to increase by 15.8 percent over the next five years. Additionally, Orange County Community Colleges offer some form of cybersecurity certification or curriculum.

Orange County is emerging a tech hub of sorts with the presence and growth of AI companies specializing in developing technologies for the military and defense sector, developing and improving cloud and physical devices such as smartphones or drones, and language processing applications. Local universities are also active with fueling AI related advancement incorporating it into curriculum, as well as involvement with various research related activities that utilize AI technology. The county is also home to many computer and video game developing companies and experienced significant growth during the pandemic. Nearly every occupation involved with computer and video game development experienced a year-over-year increase in total jobs and median hourly earnings in the county.

The county's high and rising housing costs limits residents' ability to save for the future, pushes entry-level job seekers and young families to relocate to more affordable areas, and accelerates the county's aging population. The increased aging population, in turn, will significantly affect labor force needs, especially by increasing demand for healthcare services. Industries such as Ophthalmics and Ophthalmic goods manufacturing can expect an increased demand which would be able to be supported by the county's strengths in medical device manufacturing, AI, etc. A number of Orange County schools also offer specialized training and residency programs in Ophthalmology.

Over the next four years, the commercial drone industry is anticipated to experience a $100 billion in growth. With advantages that drones can provide, it is anticipated that the industry will continue to expand in Orange County and attract more students, professionals, and employers as new innovations and applications continue to be developed. Orange County educational institutions are offering drone education programs and hosting events for students to explore drone-related job opportunities in public sector areas.

Technological advances that have transformed the workplace have dramatically increased in recent years, leading employers to place significant emphasis on more robust skills requirements for their job openings. As a result, employers have become more flexible about the specific educational requirements for certain jobs and are increasingly emphasizing a potential employee's skillset rather than their credential or degree. Over the past year, county employment growth has been concentrated in the field of Educational and Health Services, Professional and Business Services, and Technology. Several industries saw employment declines, including Restaurants and Hospitality, Manufacturing, Financial Activities, and Other Services.

Although Orange County has seen significant economic growth in a variety of areas in recent years, this growth has not been evenly spread across the county's communities, and other issues still remain that could limit further economic expansion. These include the county's growing skills gap and its chronic shortage of workforce housing. Orange County residents continue to experience difficulties with being able to afford a median priced home in the region, highlighting workforce housing affordability and retention concerns in the region. The housing affordability crisis is a statewide issue and not limited to Orange County. Approximately 26% of California residents can afford a median-priced home, which encourages migration from California to other, less expensive states as well as other counties in the state.

Orange County's RSS training programs include a Vocational English as a Second Language (VESL) component that can assist those with limited work experience in the U.S. RSS participants will be prepared for jobs in occupations that show the fastest growth and compliment their individual skill set(s).

Many refugee and SIV arrivals in the past few years have been educated professionals, specifically in the fields of medicine, translation/interpretation, and engineering. Some professional refugees have experienced difficulties in returning to their occupational fields due to barriers in obtaining credential translation and verification to recertification. RSS staff will be provided with information on other workforce development and education programs, including the County CalWORKs program, WIOA program, adult education, and/or other employment and social service programs to effectively assist these participants.

To increase the refugee's likelihood of securing and retaining employment, thereby promoting self- sufficiency, employment retention services are available to refugees who are placed in part-time or full-time employment.

Through the Services to Older Refugees funding, older refugees who are 60 years of age or older receive assistance to citizenship and naturalization preparation services. The refugee service provider conducts ongoing outreach activities to increase awareness of available services for older refugees and their families. The provider also encourages participants to establish and maintain shared housing arrangements to meet rental expenses.

III. DESCRIPTION OF SERVICE COMPONENTS

A. Refugee Social Services (RSS) Program (RSS funded)

Each Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA) applicant/recipient is referred to the contracted refugee provider to register for employment services unless determined to be exempt. The provider accepts all mandatory referrals from the RCA program and verifies the client's refugee status to ensure eligibility for services and:

- Explain mandatory work registration and participation requirements to RCA participants.
- Administer an English ability assessment test to determine all participants' SPL.
- Conduct an orientation to explain program policies and procedures and participants' rights and responsibilities.
- Assess the participant's job skills, work history, and family needs.
- Assign a case manager to each participant to more accurately assess the participant's or family's strengths, barriers to employment, and potential need for specialized services.
- Develop a Family Self-Sufficiency Plan (FSSP), which is a comprehensive service and employability plan with goals for self-sufficiency for each participant and employable household members.

Participants with a SPL level lower than 4 are enrolled in Vocational English as a Second Language (VESL) classes in concurrent with employment preparation and job counseling. RCA participants may attend VESL classes for a maximum of three months. As determined appropriate by the provider, participants with a SPL level of 4 are referred either to VESL/employment preparation or for the full range of employment services. Participants with a SPL level of 5 are referred for the full range of employment services. Participants enrolled in VESL receive English instruction related to finding, obtaining, and maintaining employment.

Non-Cash participants are encouraged to follow the RCA participants service flow, however, since non-Cash participants participate voluntarily, they may choose not to participate in the full range of services prior to job placement.

Employment services include employment preparation workshops, job counseling and job search assistance, job development and placement, and employment support/job retention services. Participants are required to conduct job search and file job applications with potential employers each week they are not scheduled to participate in other job search activities. The provider evaluates and refers participants for short-term skills training programs offered by adult education, Regional Occupational Programs, and community colleges.

Job development activities include the pursuit of entry-level employment opportunities, as well as focusing on potential job advancement. The service provider provides participants with job leads and information regarding potential employers and prepares participants for both job application completion and job interviews. Preparation may include securing and/or providing any necessary transportation to potential employment sites and interviews. Once a participant is placed in employment, the case manager conducts follow-up contacts to assess the individual's or family's progress toward the goal of self-sufficiency. If the participant is no longer employed, additional job search assistance is provided to find new employment.

The components listed below are operated by the contracted refugee specific employment service provider:

Access California Services.

Employment Services

1. Family Self-Sufficiency Plan/Individual Employment Plan
   This is a comprehensive employability plan that includes a family budget and specific steps that will be taken to ensure success in achieving short- and long-term goals, with a realistic 12-month timeframe for every employable individual/family member over the age of 16. The Family Self-Sufficiency plan also addresses any social barriers that might impede financial self-sufficiency and takes into consideration the needs and barriers of all household members.

2. Employment Workshops
   Employment preparation workshops provide training on how to complete job applications and interview skills. These workshops also address certain employment-related social adjustment topics such as: different cultures in the American society, cultural conflicts at the workplace, housing, health care, legal services, vocational training programs, employee rights and workplace safety.

3. Unsupervised Job Search
   Participants are required to conduct job search and file a minimum of five job applications with potential employers each week in addition to participating in other job search activities. Participants must contact the provider at least once a week to review employment goals and monitor progress.

4. Job Counseling and Job Search Assistance
   Participants receive continuous support and direction to locate job opportunities. Job developers refer participants attending Vocational English as a Second Language (VESL)/Vocational Training (VT) to job interviews, and routinely accompany groups of refugees to job screenings or job fairs to oversee the application process and assist the potential employer or the applicant with interpretation during the interview as needed.

5. Job Development and Placement
   Job developers outreach to mainstream and refugee community employers to identify appropriate job opportunities. Job development activities include the pursuit of entry-level employment opportunities and potential job advancement. The refugee service provider hires bilingual refugees with strong English skills when possible, explores job sharing, car-pooling and staggered shifts for family members, and cluster placements (placing several family members or neighboring refugee participants with one employer) whenever possible to alleviate transportation problems. Participants are provided with job leads and information about the hiring companies and are prepared for job interviews.

6. Employment Support/Job Retention
   Job retention services are available to participants who become employed for up to 12 months from the date employment begins. Retention services may include, but are not limited to:

   a) Provision of individualized or group vocational counseling to assist participants to retain employment, increase earning capacity by identifying opportunities for advancement, learn new skills, upgrade present job skills, find better paying jobs, replace lost jobs, and help part-time

employed participants to secure full-time positions.

b) Referral for VESL and/or VT classes conducted by local educational providers to promote continued education that assists participants to improve English language skills, learn new skills, or upgrade present job skills to increase earning potential.

c) Provision of ongoing support to employees and employers to resolve problems refugees may face at the workplace such as cultural conflicts with co-workers of different ethnic groups.

d) Conducting post-placement follow up by contacting the participants or making home visits to assess the individual or family's progress toward the goal of self-sufficiency.

7. English Language Learning (ELL)
   The curriculum consists of language instruction emphasizing job-related terminology that refugees need to find, obtain, and maintain employment. VESL is provided concurrently with Employment Services at the employment service provider location during normal working hours; local community college districts provide the teachers.

8. Case Management
   Case management activities include:
   - Explaining employment and training requirements.
   - Developing an individual employability plan for every employable individual/family member over the age of 16. The plan includes a budget, specific steps that will be taken, and a realistic timetable.
   - Identifying any employment as well as social barriers that might impede financial self-sufficiency.
   - Providing assistance during follow-up home visits or phone calls to ensure success in reaching the plan goals.
   - Tracking the refugee's participation in the plan activities. Utilize home visits to more accurately assess strengths and barriers to employment.
   - Documenting the activities and information in the case record.

9. Other Employability Services
   Service will address employment related social adjustment topics such as different cultures in American society, cultural conflicts in the workplace, work safety, employee rights, citizenship, and immigration preparation assistance housing, health care and nutrition, and household budgeting. Whenever possible, assign a case manager that speaks the language of the refugee or provide interpretation/translation services. Secure and/or provide necessary transportation to potential employment sites and interviews, explore employer-sponsored carpools, and develop awareness for public transportation.

Non-Employment Services

The goal of this component is to enhance the refugee family's quality of life, to promote financial stability and move toward full self-sufficiency by enhancing access to services. Outreach, referral, and translation services are not subject to the five-year limitation on the use of RSS funds.

1. Outreach - Ongoing recruitment activities are conducted to identify and notify low-income refugee families of available services, service locations and ways to access service providers.

2. Referral for Low Income Programs and Community Resources will be completed as appropriate based on the assessment conducted of each individual or family's needs. For participants enrolled in services or programs outside the service provider's agency, the service provider will monitor by tracking and following the client's progress until the termination of services.
   a) Financial and Support Programs - These include, but are not limited to: financial assistance programs; CalFresh; Medi-Cal; Head Start; Women, Infants & Children (WIC) Program; Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP); Energy Crisis Intervention Program (ECIP); legal services, consumer education programs; childcare providers and payment programs; adult day care programs for families with dependent seniors; low income housing assistance and housing subsidies programs, including first time buyer opportunities; and food assistance programs such as food banks.
   b) Tax Preparation Services - Free self-assistance tax preparation services are available during designated community tax days in partnership with local community service providers. Eligible participants include low-income individuals who are residents of California.
   c) Translation Services – The service provider either directly provides or facilitates interpretation and translation services, as needed, with other agencies providing the appropriate assistance to access medical providers, resolve legal issues, and apply for low-income programs.

B. Services to Older Refugees (SOR) (RSS Funded)

The components listed below are operated by a contracted service provider for non-employment services: Access California Services.

1. Outreach, Information/Referrals and Linkages: The service provider will inform and refer seniors to programs or activities and supportive services with local agencies on aging, and to available healthcare and community resources and programs for seniors.

2. English Language Learner (ELL) Classes: The service provider will provide ELL classes free of charge to help seniors who are applying for naturalization.

3. Citizenship/Naturalization and Legal Services: The service provider will offer a citizenship training curriculum which consists of integrated instruction in American history and civics. Lessons include preparation for the US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) interview, during which applicants must respond appropriately to questions. Other lessons will help seniors develop test-taking skills while familiarizing them with the American history and government topics likely to appear in the citizenship exam. The training will also provide seniors with an understanding of their basic rights and responsibilities as citizens. Seniors will receive assistance with naturalization applications, obtaining fingerprints and photographs, scheduling appointments for the written civic and history test, accommodations for seniors with special needs, and adjustment of their alien status to meet all required qualifications for a green card (permanent residence).

4. Translation and/or Interpretation Services: The service provider will assist in the completion of forms, medical appointments, Social Security Administration offices and other social service agency visits, immigration office interviews, and community events.

5. Group Therapy and Individual Counseling: The service provider will evaluate for and provide seniors with group therapy and individual counselling, opportunities for networking and socialization activities, and host health workshops that provide information and/or activities to make older refugees aware of the biological, psychological, and social changes associated with aging.

6. Transportation Services: The service provider will assess and assist seniors by arranging carpooling or other means to help seniors with transportation to their classes and services, medical appointments, SSA and other social services agency visits, immigration interviews, or events and functions where seniors traditionally congregate and socialize.

IV. BUDGETS

FFY 2022 - 22-03 RSS/RSS Augmentation/ ORSA Carry-Over Allocation

ITEM	AMOUNT
1. Employment Services	$327,193
2. English Language Training	$118,979
3. Case Management Services	$89,235
4. Other (Employment)	$59,490
5. Non-Employment (SOR)	$19,935
SUBTOTAL	$614,832
6. County Administration (15% of Total)	$27,709
TOTAL FFY 2023-24 RSS ALLOCATION	$642,541

FFY 2022 - 22-02 ASA Carry-Over Allocation

ITEM	AMOUNT
1. Employment Services	$245,282
2. English Language Training	$89,193
3. Case Management Services	$66,895
4. Other (Employment)	$44,597
SUBTOTAL	$445,966
5. County Administration (15% of Total)	$91,257
TOTAL FFY 2023-24 ASA ALLOCATION	$537,223

FFY 2022 – 23-04 HAU Allocation

ITEM	AMOUNT
1. Housing/Utility Support	$1,640,530
2. County Administration (15% of total)	$282,000
TOTAL FFY 2023-24 HAU ALLOCATION	$1,922,530

FFY 2023 - 23-06 AUSSA Allocation

ITEM	AMOUNT
1. Employment Services	$233,750
2. English Language Training	$85,000
3. Case Management Services	$63,750
4. Other (Employment)	$42,500
SUBTOTAL	$425,000
5. County Administration (15% of Total)	$75,000
TOTAL FFY 2023-24 AUSAA ALLOCATION	$500,000

FFY 2023 - 23-07 RSS Allocation

ITEM	AMOUNT
1. Employment Services	$513,837
2. English Language Training	$186,850
3. Case Management Services	$140,137
4. Other (Employment)	$93,425
5. Housing	$400,392
SUBTOTAL	$1,334,641
6.County Administration (15% of Total)	$235,525
TOTAL FFY 2023-24 RSS ALLOCATION	$1,570,166

In addition to the funding identified above, the County of Orange Social Services Agency hereby attests that California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) Single Allocation funding will be used to serve refugee CalWORKs clients, especially for supportive services (e.g., childcare, transportation, etc.)

V. ANNUAL SERVICES PLAN

Annual Service Plan

(Instructions/additional details are under each section as applicable.)

ORR-6
OMB Control No. 0970-0036
Expires 12/31/2025

1. State/Grantee:	Orange	2. Fiscal Year:	2023	3. Date:	10/19/2023

4. Previous FFY Report (Program Participants) 45 CFR §§ 400.154 and 400.155	Total FY Unduplicated
a) Employment	429
b) Employability assessment	429
c) On-the-job training	2
d) English language instruction	236
e) Vocational Training	0
f) Skills recertfication	0
g) Day care for children	0
h) Transportation	429
i) Translation and Interpreter Services	429
j) Case management	429
k) EAD assistance	168
l) Information and referral	429
m) Outreach services	208
n) Social adjustment	71
o) Citizenship and naturalization	429
ASA RSS services only	
p) ASA housing	0
q) ASA immigration-related legal assistance	0
5. Total Unduplicated	429

6. Previous FFY report services participation (45 CFR §§ 400.154 and 400.155)	Total Number
a) Report number of service participants at the end of FFY who are 0-12 months since arrival in the US	426
b) Report number of service participants at the end of FFY who are 13-60 months since arrival in the US	3

7. Previous FFY set-aside programs services participation	RSI	SOR	YM	RHP	ARSI S2S	Other
a) Report number of service participants at the end of FFY who are 0-12 months since arrival in the US		12				
b) Report number of service participants at the end of FFY who are 13-60 months since arrival in the US		14				

Plan for upcoming FY 8. Description of State-provided or Contracted Services	9. Grant	10. Contracted Amount by Funding Source	11. Program Participants 0-12 Month	13-60 Month	Total Number	12. Type of Agency and Percent of Funds A. State or County	B. Mutual Assistance Association	C. Refugee Agency	D. Community College	E. Adult Basic Education	F. Non Profit Organization	G. School District	H. Area Agency on Aging	I. Other	J. Total
a. Employment Services	RSS	$275,000	426	3	429						100%				100%
b. English Language Instruction	RSS	$100,000	236	0	236						100%				100%
c. On-the-Job Training	RSS		0	0	0										0%
d. Vocational Training	RSS		0	0	0										0%
e. ASA Housing	RSS				0										0%
f. ASA Immigration-Related Legal	RSS				0										0%
g. Other Services	RSS	$125,000	426	3	429						100%				100%
	RSS-RSI				0										0%
	RSS-SOR	$19,935	12	14	26						100%				100%
	RSS-YM				0										0%
	RSS-RHP				0										0%
	RSS-ARSI S2S														
	Other				0										0%

VI: ANNUAL OUTCOME GOAL PLAN

Annual Outcome Goal Plan
Performance Goals and Actuals

(Instructions/additional details are under each section as applicable.)

AOGP
OMB Control No.
Expires

1. Fiscal Year	2024		
3. State/Grantee:	Orange County	4. Date:	10/19/2023

1. Caseload

	FY 2023 Goal	FY 2023 Actual	FY 2024 Goal
TANF Recipients	0	0	0
RCA Recipients	174	426	179
No Federal Cash Assistance	1	3	1
TOTAL	175	429	180

2. Entered Employment

	FY 2023 Goal		FY 2023 Actual		FY 2024 Goal	
Full Time	25	71%	30	43%	26	70%
Part Time	10	29%	39	57%	11	30%
TOTAL	35	20%	69	16%	37	21%

2a. TANF Recipients Entered Employment

	FY 2023 Goal		FY 2023 Actual		FY 2024 Goal	
Full Time	0	#DIV/0!	0	#DIV/0!	0	#DIV/0!
Part Time	0	#DIV/0!	0	#DIV/0!	0	#DIV/0!
TOTAL	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%

2b. RCA Recipients Entered Employment

	FY 2023 Goal		FY 2023 Actual		FY 2024 Goal	
Full Time	25	71%	30	43%	26	70%
Part Time	10	29%	39	57%	11	30%
TOTAL	35	100%	69	100%	37	100%

2c. No Federal Cash Assistance Entered Employment

	FY 2023 Goal		FY 2023 Actual		FY 2024 Goal	
Full Time	1	100%	0	#DIV/0!	1	100%
Part Time	0	0%	0	#DIV/0!	0	0%
TOTAL	1	3%	0	0%	1	3%

Cash Assistance Recipients Placed in Employment

	FY 2023 Goal	FY 2023 Actual	FY 2024 Goal
TOTAL	35	69	37

3. Federal Cash Assistance Terminations

	FY 2023 Goal		FY 2023 Actual		FY 2024 Goal	
TANF Recipients	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
RCA Recipients	10	100%	28	100%	11	100%
TOTAL	10	29%	28	41%	11	30%

4. Federal Cash Assistance Reductions

	FY 2023 Goal		FY 2023 Actual		FY 2024 Goal	
TANF Recipients	0	#DIV/0!	0	0%	0	0%
RCA Recipients	0	#DIV/0!	5	100%	2	100%
TOTAL	0	0%	5	7%	2	5%

Annual Outcome Goal Plan
Performance Goals and Actuals

(Instructions/additional details are under each section as applicable.)

AOGP
OMB Control No.
Expires

1. Fiscal Year	2024		
3. State/Grantee:	Orange County	4. Date:	10/19/2023

1. Caseload

	FY 2023 Goal	FY 2023 Actual	FY 2024 Goal

5. Entered Full Time Employment Offering Health Benefits

	FY 2023 Goal		FY 2023 Actual		FY 2024 Goal	
TANF Recipients	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
RCA Recipients	7	88%	10	100%	8	89%
Federal Cash Assistance	1	13%	0	0%	1	11%
TOTAL	8	32%	10	33%	9	35%

6. Average Hourly Wage of Refugees Entering Full Time Employment

	FY 2023 Goal	FY 2023 Actual	FY 2024 Goal
Average Hourly Wage	$15.50	$21.20	$16.00

7. 90-Day Retention Rate

	FY 2023 Goal	FY 2023 Actual	FFY 2024 Goal
Percentage	85%	89%	87

7a. 90-Day Retention Rate Calculator

	Unduplicated # of Retentions	Unduplicated # of Entered Employments
TOTAL	59	66

8. Office of Refugee Resettlement Funding

	FY 2023 Actual	FY 2024 Proposed
Social Services Formula Funding	$ 247,500.00	$ 327,100.00
Total Liquidated Funding	$ 247,500.00	$ 327,100.00
Cost per Entered Employment	$ 1,755.32	$ 566,045.39

Agency Point of Contact

In the available fields, enter the name, title, and contact information of the agency staff person best equipped to respond to questions regarding your Annual Outcome Goal Plan submission.

Name:	Jay Wong
Title:	Human Services Manager, Senior
Phone Number:	714-541-7774
Email:	Jay.wong@ssa.ocgov.com

VII: APPENDICES

A. Procurement Process

SSA has an agreement with Access California Services to provide direct Refugee Social Services and Support program to refugees. The provider was selected through the Request for Proposal (RFP) process for Refugee Social Services. Proposals were evaluated by a panel consisted of members who have had experience working with the refugee population or providing employment services. Evaluation criteria included experience, program management, service delivery system, program design, demonstrated ability to provide service, budget summaries, and demonstrated performance.

Provider's staff, and if applicable, partnering agencies (including partners), must possess language ability and cultural sensitivity. Employment services staff must have knowledge of the labor market, and the capability to outreach to employers and the business community. Provider's staff and the instructors employed by local educational providers to provide Vocational English as a Second Language and Vocational Training instruction are given orientation and training on the employment focus of the service delivery.

All contracted staff are also required to attend training annually on the policies and procedures to be utilized to serve persons with limited English proficiency, including the reporting of complaints, as follows: as a part of the orientation for new employees, and twice annually for employees with direct client contact. In addition, the County may require attendance at other training sessions.

B. County Monitoring Process

1. Monitoring Responsibility

RSS program monitoring is conducted by Policy and Quality Assurance and Contract Services staff as follows:

Program: Policy and Quality Assurance, SSA

Fiscal: Administrative Contracts & Procurement Services, SSA

2. Monitoring Process

Orange County will comply with CDSS guidelines regarding requirements on frequency of monitoring, submission of reports, and corrective action related to program deficiencies. The County assures there will be no conflict of interest when monitoring its own service providers.

Frequency**:** Program operations will be monitored through a site visit at a minimum of once each federal fiscal year.

Case Selection: A minimum of 10% of the total caseload (RCA/non-aided) will be selected at random and reviewed. These cases will be selected from the providers' monthly/quarterly client listings. Cases will be reviewed at the time of the on-site visit. Monitoring worksheets will be utilized to record client participation.

Submission of Monitoring Reports: The County will submit a copy of the written monitoring report to CDSS no later than 45 days from the completion date of the review.

Methodology: The following elements will be included as part of an on-going monitoring plan, which applies to services administered by the refugee employment and supportive services provider for RCA and non-aided participants.

- Achievement of Program Goals
  The extent to which program goals are being met, and the effectiveness of services provided will be monitored through monthly/quarterly reports of program outcomes by component as submitted by the provider. Such reports will be compared to the provider's and County's Plan goals and objectives.

- Appropriateness of Fiscal Expenditures
  The appropriateness of fiscal expenditures and accuracy of reported fiscal data will be monitored by checking invoices submitted by the provider.

- Accuracy of Reported Statistical Data
  The accuracy of reported statistical data will be monitored at a minimum of once every twelve months through sample case tracking studies of participants served. Sample cases will be reviewed from the point of Intake/Assessment throughout program participation. The County will review the employment and supportive services provider's files and the documents contained in the case files, such as case narratives and attendance sheets documenting the client's participation and services provided.

- Accuracy of Determination of Refugee/Entrant Status
  The accuracy of refugee, asylee, federally certified human trafficking victim, and certain family members of a trafficking victims who have been granted visas under 8 U.S.C. 1101(a) (15) (T) (ii) status determination will be reviewed by sampling cases at a minimum of once every twelve months.

- Extent to Which Priority Groups Are Served
  The extent to which priority groups are being served will be monitored by reviewing monthly/quarterly reports of program outcomes by component as submitted by the provider.

- Family Self-Sufficiency Plans
  The extent to which Family Self-Sufficiency Plans have been developed for each employable family member will be reviewed by sampling cases at a minimum of once every twelve months at the time of the on-site visit.

  ACL 22-102 was issued to counties on December 23, 2022, expanding both FSSP and data collection and reporting requirements for refugee impacted counties. In order to meet the needs of the new requirements, SSA updated the existing version of the country created FSSP which is completed by contracted RSS provider case management staff. Updates to the FSSP included new fields to record and obtain RSS program person specific information including enrollment/exit dates, English ability and level, initial primary employment goals, alien number, employment information, best hourly wage, 12-month follow information, etc. The new FSSP also requires assessing, identifying needs, and providing referrals to services for each member of the family (including children) in the household if at least one adult is seeing RSS employability services and is required to be completed within 30 days of enrollment in RSS. The new FSSP expansion required SSA to create a new web-based version with cost, development, testing, and implementation by specialized staff from the Orange County Information Technology due to the extensive data fields in the revised FSSP as well due to the need to meet external and internal information sharing security mandates. Several one-

on-one training sessions with RSS contracted provider staff was also necessary due to the multitude of questions surrounding the new data requests and the challenges surrounding assessing and assisting each family member of the household.

3. Corrective Action

Corrective action will be taken when the provider is found to be deficient in program performance. A Corrective Action Plan may include one or more of the following steps:

- Written documentation to provider outlining deficiencies and recommending corrective action as appropriate.
- Meeting with administrator of the provider to discuss deficiencies, corrective actions, and time frames.
- Confirmation correspondence to provider describing the agreed upon corrective actions and time frames.
- Follow-up to verify and document compliance with corrective action plan.
- Corrective action may include fiscal sanctions or project termination/revision.

C. Contracted Service Provider

a. RSS Provider	Access California Services
b. Address Phone number	300 W. Carl Karcher Way Anaheim, CA. 92801 (714) 917-0440
c. Refugee Funding Source and Amounts	ORSA 22-03 RCL 22-11 $23,453 ASA 22-02 Afghan RCL 22-12 $555,220
d. Refugee client type or non-aided	Non-exempt RCA Aided and Non-Aided Refugees, Asylees, Cuban/Haitian entrants, Special Immigrant Visa holders, Afghan and Ukrainian Parolees, Amerasians, and Certified Victims of human trafficking.
e. Types of services by funding source	See 3-year county plan Section III. DESCRIPTION OF SERVICE COMPONENTS
Website	accesscal.org

D. Stakeholder Meetings

Stakeholder meeting	Date	Location
USCIS Refugee Processing Quarterly Stakeholder Engagement	10/06/22	Teams
CRC – OC and San Diego meeting	10/21/22	Teams
Refugee Forum of Los Angeles	11/16/22	Zoom
Monthly meeting with RSS provider Access California	11/16/22	Zoom
USCIS Refugee Processing Quarterly Stakeholder Engagement	12/07/22	Teams
Monthly meeting with RSS provider Access California	12/14/22	Teams
RPB quarterly	12/15/22	Zoom
Monthly meeting with RSS provider Access California	1/18/23	Teams
Refugee Forum of Los Angeles	1/25/23	Zoom
Monthly meeting with RSS provider Access California	2/15/23	Teams

Refugee discussion with Community & Government Relations team	3/8/23	Teams
Quarterly meeting with Uplift Charity and ICNA	2/28/23	Teams
Refugee Forum of Orange County	3/09/23	Zoom
Refugee State Advisory Council	3/09/23	Zoom
USCIS Refugee Processing Quarterly Stakeholder Engagement	3/15/23	Teams
Monthly meeting with RSS provider Access California	3/15/23	Teams
Refugee Forum of Los Angeles	3/22/23	Zoom
County Refugee Coordinators	3/28/23	Zoom
Monthly meeting with RSS provider Access California	4/19/23	Teams
Quarterly meeting with Uplift Charity and ICNA	5/23/23	Teams
Refugee Forum of Los Angeles	5/24/23	Zoom
Orange County Exit Conference	5/30/23	Teams
CRC meeting Regarding CalSAWS Automation	5/31/23	Teams
Good Neighbor Team Task Force	6/07/23	Teams
State Advisory Council (SAC) Quarterly Meeting	6/08/23	Teams
County Refugee Coordinators -Quarterly Meeting	6/27/23	Teams
RSS provider Access Californian Site Review	7/10/23	In Person
Good Neighbor Team Task Force	7/12/23	Zoom
USCIS - Deferred Enforced Departure for Hong Kong	7/13/23	Webex
Monthly meeting with RSS provider Access California	7/19/23	Teams
Refugee Forum of Los Angeles	7/26/23	Zoom
Ukrainian Support Convening	7/27/23	Zoom
Rapid Community Assessments with Refugee Newcomer Populations	7/27/23	Zoom
Housing Assistance for Ukrainian Training	8/02/23	Zoom
Monthly meeting with RSS provider Access California	8/16/23	Teams
Ukrainian Support Convening	8/24/23	Zoom
New Stats workbook training for RSS provider Access	8/29/23	Teams
Orientation for Sponsors of New Arrival	9/06/23	Zoom
Family Reunification Parole Processes for Colombians, Cubans, Salvadorans, Guatemalans, Haitians, and Hondurans	9/08/23	Teams
Refugee and Asylee Service Provider	9/13/23	Zoom
Meeting with CalSAWS project on CalSAWS Enhancement Request (CER) to register RCA clients for Employment Services	9/13/23	Teams
Housing Assistance for Ukrainian training for RSS provider Access California	9/15/23	Teams
CalSAWS WTW Committee Meeting	9/21/23	Teams
Stakeholder consultation on the County Refugee Plan	**Date**	**Location**
World Refugee Planning Meeting	4/20/23	Zoom
Ongoing RFOC meetings as shown above	Quarterly	Zoom
Specific 3yr County Plan request for input email blast	4/21/23	Email
RFOC Attendees/Members: Nahla Kayali, Rida Hamida, Kimberly Banfield, Olena Salko, Sunbul Sidiqi, Massa Al-Moukdad, Nadia Abdalla, Farah Mashnouk, Ameera Basmadji, Metra Aarsalem, Raul Lorenzano, Cassandra Perez, Andrik Ochoa, Aliya Yousufi, Rima Nashashibi.		

E. Racial Impact Equity Assessment

Identification and documentation of racial inequities through qualitative and quantitative measures.
OCSSA's Civil Rights unit documents all inquiries, requests, and complaints via an internal log and Hearing and Inquiry Tracking System (HITS). HITS tracks all entered inquiries which can be measured by running a report to obtain quantitative data. Quality Support Team (QST) staff also document and enter inquiries and customer services related questions into HITS. Inquiries are received via phone calls, voice messages, emails, and mail and are assessed for Civil Rights jurisdiction. If the inquiry is determined to not meet the Civil Rights jurisdiction, the inquiry is followed up with the corresponding program. If an inquiry or complainant notes elements of racial inequities, the Civil Rights investigator completes an investigation which may consist of interviewing OCSSA employees and any other witnesses to the alleged discrimination.

Efforts made towards advancing equitable outcomes for all racial and ethnic groups.
OCSSA employees are mandated to complete a yearly Civil Rights training which consists of the (Civil Rights and Nondiscrimination and Americans with Disabilities Act, Title II Policy, and Procedure D19). Policy and Procedure D19 enforces the requirement to ensure nondiscriminatory administration of public assistance and social services programs. Employees must adhere to the Civil Rights and Nondiscrimination and Americans with Disabilities Act, Title II Policy, and Procedure D19. Employees have access to Policy and Procedure D19 through the internal SharePoint for needed reference at all times.

The Civil Rights unit developed a pronoun flyer and shared it widely with Agency staff in efforts towards advancing diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB) within the Social Services Agency. The Civil Rights unit is in the process of completing a DEIB training for all staff. This training will be mandated to be completed yearly. The Civil Rights unit also connects with neighboring counties on a bi-monthly basis to identify and develop strategies on handling county discrimination issues/concerns.

Methods for identification of success and progress.
Under the guidance of MPP § 21-203.24; All County Letter 18-111, the Civil Rights unit conducts Civil Rights complaint investigations and completes a report of the findings. The findings are then submitted to the California Department of Social Service (CDSS). The findings may result in the Civil Rights unit requesting policy updates and additional employee trainings to assure the discrimination concerns have been mitigated. Further, a Corrective Action Plan (CAP) may be requested and developed, and the outcome is then provided to CDSS.

VIII: REQUIRED ASSURANCES

The County assures that the Refugee Social Services Plan for FFY 2024-2026 was prepared in accordance with the CDSS Refugee Program County Guidelines and in accordance with:

- CDSS' Manual of Policies and Procedures:
  - Refugee Resettlement Program Regulations - Division 69-200
  - Cuban/Haitian Entrant Program – Division 69-300
- Code of Federal Regulations – Title 45 –Public Welfare:
  - Refugee Resettlement Program – 45 CFR PART 400
  - Cuban/Haitian Entrant Program – 45 CFR PART 401
  - Uniform Administrative Requirements – 45 CFR PART 74

IX: COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISOR RESOLUTION

This place is reserved for County Board of Supervisor Resolution

X. REQUIRED COUNTY PLAN ADDENDUMS

1. Continued Impact of COVID-19

With Governor Newsome ending the State of California Public Health Emergency (PHE) on 2/28/23 and President Biden ending the Federal PHE on 5/11/23, a few residual impacts from the pandemic continue to affect day-to-day public benefit administration in terms of business practice flexibilities. To mention a few, applicants and clients continue to have the option and availability to complete telephonic and electronic signatures in lieu of a wet signature as required pre-COVID. Immediate Need (IN) interview requirements continue to be relaxed in that a sworn statement is considered adequate for the purposes of providing the IN payment when verifications do not immediately exist. The applicant is then allowed 10 days to provide the verifications. RCA applicants can be granted temporary good cause and benefits issued on a case-by-case basis if they do not immediately possess immigration documentation but meet all other program eligibility requirements. Eligibility staff can obtain an affidavit from the applicant and approve the application while continuing to assist the applicant in obtaining the required immigration verification documentation such as by requesting a SAVE report, etc. as COVID-19 staffing deficiencies and lack of training on federal, state, and counties continue past the PHEs being lifted.

2. State Strategic Co-Enrollment

SSA and the Orange County Workforce Development Board (OCWDB) support co-enrollment strategies that enable greater efficiencies in service delivery, and the leveraging of resources for maximum benefit to refugee participants and are in planning phase of implementing co-enrollment. Through strategic co-enrollment, Orange County agencies have the ability to build upon aligning, coordinating, and integrating programs, services, and resources, where appropriate, to assist refugees obtain jobs that ensure both long-term economic self-sufficiency, as well as economic security. Orange County is exploring the development and implementation of a strategic co-enrollment policy that will provide the foundation for strategic co-enrollment throughout the WIOA. Key concepts will include:

- Integrated Service Delivery- Will allow for the connection of services to participants that are comprehensive and accessible to the needs of the individual.
- Increased Access- Will support strategies that will coordinate program, services, and resources to help participants in obtaining employment services.
- Partnerships- Will allow for the connection of services with other community organizations in order to leverage services for the maximum benefit to the participant.

Currently, under the RSS program, the RSS provider provide orientation and employment services under RSS funding. Partners within the WIOA MOU, including WIOA Title II Adult Education and Literacy partners, offer adult basic education and high school completion and equivalency services, as well as Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses that result in the attainment of industry-valued credentials in the field of study. WIOA Title II services can be especially beneficial for the English Second Language Learner (ESL) population who possess low English language proficiency and/or basic skills deficient in their native language.

3. Augmentation to FFY 2020 Refugee Support Services Allocations

Augmentation to FFY 2020 RSS allocations for use through 10/1/19 through 9/30/23.

This funding allocation was used for RSS activities and services provided to RCA participants by our contracted RSS provider. RSS included Employment and Support services for aided RCA recipients, non-aided refugees, and employed refugees in need of services to retain employment or to attain economic independence who have

resided in the U.S. less than sixty (60) months, development of a Family Self-Sufficiency plan, outreach and referral assistance for low income programs and community resources which are important for the refugee population and helps provide them with support in terms of moving them forward towards self-sufficiency, as well as individualized case management and support.

4. Afghan Refugee Support Services Supplemental Allocation

This Afghan Refugee Support Services Supplemental Allocation (ASA) for FFY 2022 runs from 10/01/21 – 9/30/24 allows us to address the unmet needs of Afghan newcomers.

With this funding, SSA has been able to provide support for traditional RSS services but also, when necessary, allows us to support emergency/short-term and long-term housing needs for Afghan arrivals as a critical component in resettlement stability, self-sufficiency, and integration. This funding provides us with the flexibility and necessary resources to support capacity planning and coordination efforts for housing, given that a lack of available and affordable housing can create additional barriers to helping refugee populations find and retain employment, achieve self-sufficiency, and fully integrate into their new communities. Additional services and resources we have been able to provide with this funding is referrals for Legal Assistance as requested, short-term food assistance to assist during the timeframe a CalFresh application is pending and when the applicant has housing that will allow them to prepare food and cook. Both County and RSS provider staff continue to focus on connecting Afghans to necessary food assistance programs as soon as possible so that there is no period of time where the individuals do not have food available to them. Extended Case Management and Extended Community Orientation is also available via our RSS provider to eligible individuals and families. We have learned that by surrounding an individual with the resources necessary to integrate in their new environment can and has been beneficial to ease their hearts and minds while they continue to navigate their new life in an unfamiliar country and overall cultural environment.

5. Impact and Adjustments Made as a Result of the Influx of Humanitarian Parolees

In response to the influx in Orange County of Operation Allies Refuge/Operation Allies Welcome, due to the displacement of Afghans, Ukrainians and other non-Ukrainian populations, multiple teams from SSA and Orange County Health Care Agency departments mobilized to rapidly assist with a variety of collaborative efforts ranging from setting up assistance with food, shelter, transportation, and benefit application processes at designated CalWORKs offices in closest proximity to where the majority of humanitarian parolees settled. SSA staff provided guidance to and assisted local Resettlement Agencies (RAs) with coordinating transportation to and from the RSS provider and/or benefits offices, training RAs on online and in-person benefit application processes and required documents and establishing connections with local Social Security offices to find ways to provide benefit program requirement education and to expedite processing of social security numbers.

Challenges experienced included the fast paced resettlement and influx of refugees and that counties, state, and federal level agencies and organizations were not adequately prepared. Still in the midst of a global pandemic, other factors included the lack of staffing, education, inconsistent or incorrect immigration documentation, and policy guidance and processes not set up to address a massive wave of refugee arrivals across the nation which all contributed to overall confusion, frustration, and delays in assistance. Refugees are usually a small part of eligibility staff caseloads and as a result some lacked the experience or may have been unfamiliar with the

refugee resettlement process, needs, and policies. To assist with this, the Refugee Policy and Community and Government Relation teams sent out policy guidance, immigration document samples, responded to case specific scenario questions, and provided ongoing messaging and resources for staff to assist in gaining familiarity with the refugee population and ensure prompt and accurate services were provided as best possible. Lack of housing, high rent prices, landlords unwilling to rent to individuals without stable employment or lack of credit history, unfamiliarity and fear of taking public transportation, and physical or mental disabilities were additional contributing factors.

The community has done a great job in assisting the humanitarian parolee influx in our county and through these unprecedented experiences, SSA has and continues to prepare and improve on past and current procedures. Well established contacts and resources to enable SSA to rapidly and effectively provide assistance to future humanitarian parolee arrivals as well as other non-citizen refugees that may need urgent county benefit assistance.

6. Establishment of Orange County's Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs (OIRA)

Orange County created an Office of Immigration and Refugee Affairs (OIRA) on April 25, 2023, to serve as a central hub for the coordination of services, resources, and advocacy efforts to support Orange County's immigrant and refugee populations.

The office is currently in development but when complete, its vision will be to enable immigrants' and refugees' self-sufficiency and their productive assimilation into the community through partnerships and collaboration with various entities for the provision of needed services, resources and support.

7. Refugee Housing Support Program (RHSP)

The Refugee Housing Support Program (RHSP) is designed to assist refugees and other displaced individuals within the county with housing stability. This program follows the guidelines set forth in Refugee Coordinator Letter No. 24-10, issued on December 9, 2024, and aligns with the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) benefits to support refugees and entrants. The RHSP aims to provide essential housing assistance and related services to individuals in need of stable housing. However, the Afghan and Ukrainian populations, which are generally eligible to receive housing support services through the Afghan Support and Investment Program (ASIP) and the Housing Assistance for Ukrainians (HAU) programs, are ineligible for the RHSP.

Refugees will receive support in securing long-term housing solutions, including assistance with rent payments and security deposits. Eligible households may also receive aid to cover past-due or current utility bills to prevent disconnections. Assistance will be available for up to 12 months, with eligibility reviewed periodically based on household needs and available resources. As part of the program, primary recipients will be required to participate in Refugee Employment Services to improve job readiness and employment prospects.

The program will be administered by the County's designated contracted provider, which will handle the application process, eligibility determination, and service delivery. Funding for the program will be allocated from a portion of the RSS base funds, ensuring the availability of resources for eligible individuals and families.