



**DEPARTMENT OF
HUMAN SERVICES**

RESETTLEMENT PROGRAMS OFFICE

Employment & Career Supports Update
MAWB Operations Committee
1-22-2026

Jessica O'Brien | Employment and Career Supports Program Lead
Parmananda Khatiwoda | Resettlement Network Services Supervisor

Agenda



About Resettlement Programs
Office (RPO)



Employment & Career Supports
(ECS) Program Updates

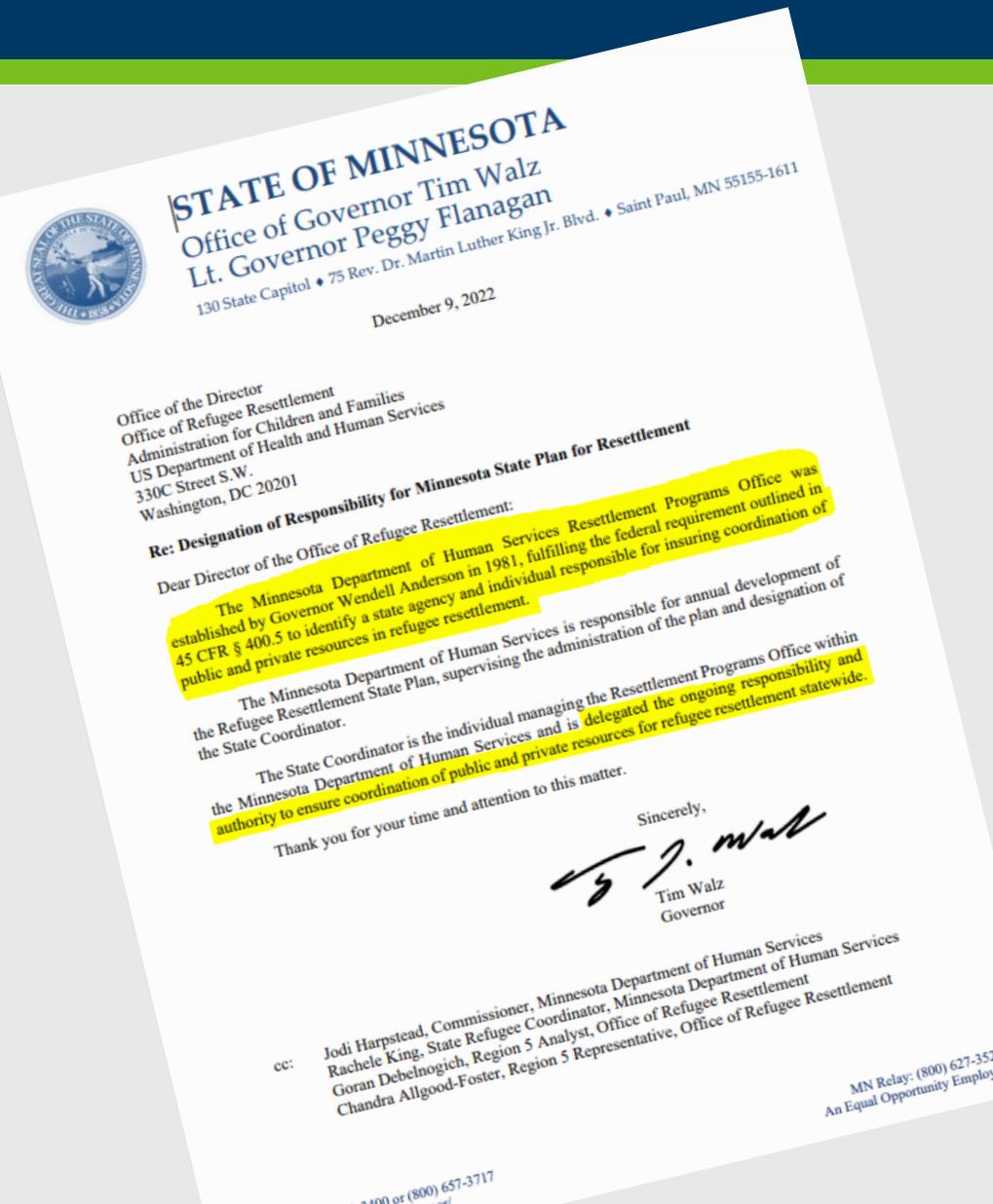


Opportunities for Collaboration



Resources

A Statewide Coordination Role in Resettlement



“The Minnesota Department of Human Services Resettlement Programs Office was established by Governor Wendell Anderson in 1981, fulfilling the federal requirement outlined in 45 CFR § 400.5 to identify a state agency and individual responsible for insuring coordination of public and private resources in refugee resettlement.”

“..the Resettlement Programs Office within the Minnesota Department of Human Services and is delegated the ongoing responsibility and authority to ensure coordination of public and private resources for refugee resettlement statewide.”

Greetings from the RPO Team!



Rachele King
*RPO Director & State Refugee
Coordinator*



Kristine Bjerkaas-Friesen
Resettlement Services Manager



Marissa Hill-Dongre
*Immigration Policy Supervisor, Immigration
Legal & Benefits Policy Unit*



Parmananda Khatiwoda
Resettlement Network Services Supervisor



Will Wilson
Fiscal and Operations Supervisor



William Castellanos
Community Outreach & Engagement Supervisor



Adam Kadogo



Anisa Ali



Arwin Shamal



Asha Osman



Bharath Krishna



Chel Jones



Christy Peterson



Dagim Gameda



Elizabeth Mandelman



Holly Chase



James Nord



Jessica O'Brien



Maria Hernandez



Marina Serdiouk



Pang Yang



Samsam Abdalla



Seble Rumicho



Snezhana Eikum



Tar Paw



Teri Guhl Ray



Tetiana Yevtushenko

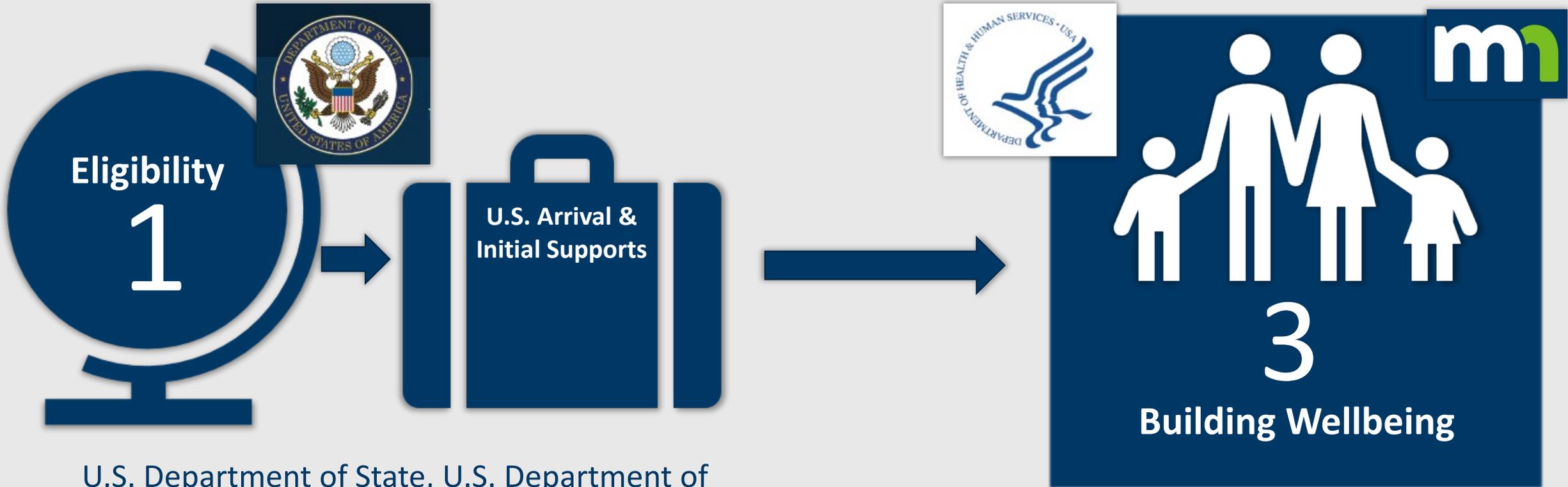


Tricia Wilkinson



Yang Lor

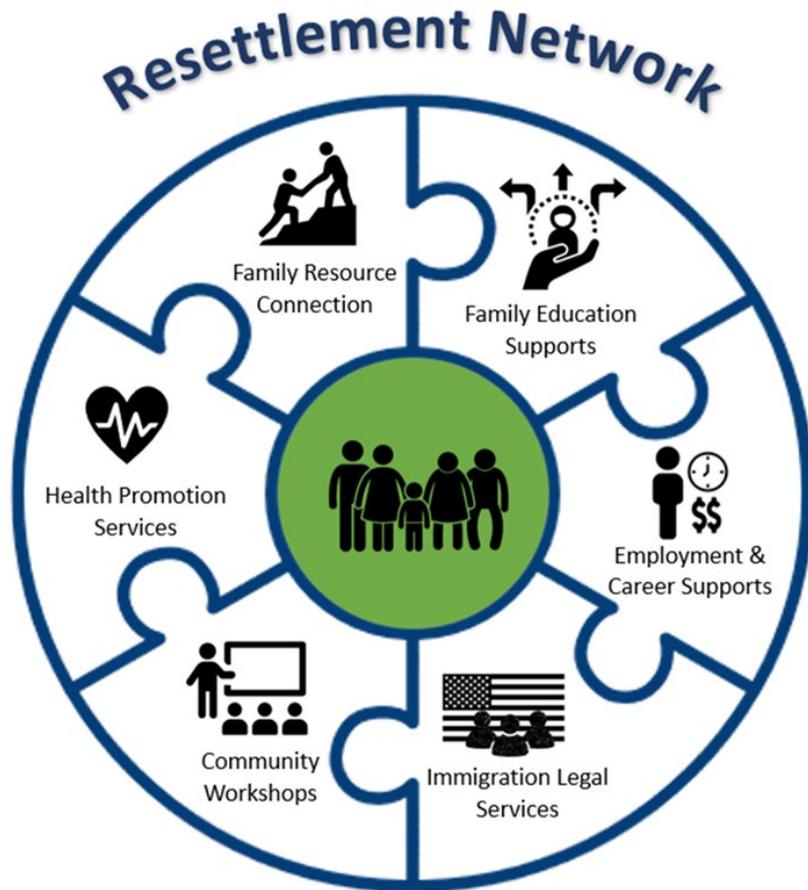
Humanitarian Protection Pathways



U.S. Department of State, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Customs and Border Patrol, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), in partnership with local resettlement affiliates, private groups, and citizens

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, in partnership with states and private organizations

DHS Resettlement Network Services



Family Resource Connections (FRC)

Services focus on assisting households to access and navigate a wide array of community resources to resolve immediate, short-term or longer-term needs.



Family Education Supports (FES)

Long-term mentoring services for parent/family engagement with early childhood and education, K-12 students struggling in school, and youth (aged 15-24) planning for transitions beyond high school.



Employment and Career Supports (ECS)

Services address barriers to work, initial job placement, job upgrades, connections to career pathway programs and other opportunities for economic mobility.



Community Workshops (CW)

Educational workshops to build familiarity with systems and community resources such as employment, public transit, financial literacy, public education, housing, health care, public safety and other topics important for newcomers.



Immigration Legal Services (ILS)

Legal assistance that includes support for work authorization documents, immigration progress toward permanency and U.S. Citizenship.



Health Promotion Services (HPS)

Health Promotion Services (HPS) through community health workers provide individualized support to people with health needs to access services and gain skills in managing health conditions and navigating health systems. HPSs also provide health outreach and education to targeted communities.

How ECS Employment Counselors Work with Job Seekers

- **Diverse Clientele**

- Job seekers with varying English proficiency, ability, education, and skill levels

- **Intensive 1:1 Services**

- Personalized support from ECS Employment Counselors
- Employment assessment, plan, barriers
- Job application & interview preparation assistance
- Economic mobility planning
- Career interest screening & referrals

- **Multilingual and Cultural Supports**

- Employment Counselors speak 22 languages
- Collaboration with Interpreter Agencies & Language Line

- **Job Readiness Supports & Education**

- Gathering work documentation
- Workplace culture education

- **Employer Support & Job Retention**

- Employment orientation
- Cultural brokering in the workplace

Employment and Career Supports (ECS) Statewide Services

- **(19) ECS agencies**
- **Family approach to employment**
 - Ages 16 years and up
- **Connect individuals to employment opportunities up to 5 years**
 - From early employment to economic mobility opportunities
 - Connections to career pathway programs that lead to jobs with higher wages

ECS Program Outcomes:

1. Job Placements
2. Job Upgrade Placements
(increase in status, hours, wages)
3. Career Pathway Job Placements

Opportunities to Collaborate between ECS & LWDA's

- **Educating ECS Employment Counselors about specific workforce programs**

- Youth WIOA (ECS serves 16 yrs and up)
- Adult WIOA programs
- Incumbent Worker program
- Dislocated Worker program

- **Support for newly established ECS committees**

***Innovation & Strategic Planning, Transportation Solutions, Employer Outreach & Engagement*

- Referral processes to support Job Upgrade and Career Pathway connections
- Developing a co-enrollment model for ECS/LWDAs
- **Committee Interest: Mackenzie Schmidt: mackenzie.Schmidt@mnychurches.org**

- **Employer network connections**

[Refugee programs / Minnesota Department of Human Services](https://mn.gov/dhs/people-we-serve/children-and-families/services/refugee-programs)

mn.gov/dhs/people-we-serve/children-and-families/services/refugee-programs

- **Refugee and Immigrant help line**
- Resources in multiple languages
- Resettlement Information
- Program Information
- Training Opportunities
- Service Provider Map and Lists
- Volunteer Opportunities



Minnesota's Immigration Legal Services Hub Initiative

www.lawhelpmn.org/minnesotas-immigration-legal-services-hub-initiative

- Legal clinics
- Outreach Events
- Know your rights resources
- Other MN-specific resources on LawHelpMN site



How can you share the Helpline?

Refugee and Immigrant Helpline



GET HELP:

- Connect with local resources
- Referral to Resettlement Network Services
- Questions answered in
 - Ukrainian
 - Russian
 - Spanish
 - English



Leave a voice message 24/7 in your preferred language to receive a call back during helpline hours.



Email us:
DHS.RPO.Helpline@state.mn.us



For more information, visit
mn.gov/dhs/refugee-programs/
or click on the QR code below.

Say your preferred language and our navigators will connect you to an interpreter.



- [Amharic: Refugee and Immigrant Helpline flyer](#)
- [Arabic: Refugee and Immigrant Helpline flyer](#)
- [Dari: Refugee and Immigrant Helpline flyer](#)
- [English: Refugee and Immigrant Helpline flyer](#)
- [French: Refugee and Immigrant Helpline flyer](#)
- [Karen: Refugee and Immigrant Helpline flyer](#)
- [Oromo: Refugee and Immigrant Helpline flyer](#)
- [Pashto: Refugee and Immigrant Helpline flyer](#)
- [Russian: Refugee and Immigrant Helpline flyer](#)
- [Somali: Refugee and Immigrant Helpline flyer](#)
- [Spanish: Refugee and Immigrant Helpline flyer](#)
- [Swahili: Refugee and Immigrant Helpline flyer](#)
- [Ukrainian: Refugee and Immigrant Helpline flyer](#)

Learning and Engagement Opportunities

mn.gov/dhs/resettlement/partner-training

MN Resettlement Landscape

This session covers the basics of the resettlement landscape in Minnesota and offers a broad overview of the systems and resources that manage and facilitate the entry and integration of new arrivals. The presentation clarifies the legal definition of who is eligible to have refugee status, the populations in Minnesota and the different roles that resettlement agencies, the State of Minnesota and the federal government play in the resettlement process.

Date: Wednesday, Feb. 18, 2026

Time: 3-4 p.m.

Location: Microsoft Teams

Register: [Registration link - MN Resettlement Landscape 2.28.2026](#)

Welcoming Minnesota Forum

The Welcoming Minnesota Forum is a monthly gathering facilitated by the Resettlement Programs Office. The forum was created to welcome and connect new arrivals, organizations, stakeholders, governmental agencies and community leaders to coordinate resources, provide relevant information to prevent fraud and exploitation, identify innovative solutions and promote systemic change to make Minnesota a welcoming state for new immigrants.

Date: Thursday, Feb. 26

Time: 3-4 p.m.

Location: Microsoft Teams

Registration: To get registration details, please email welcomeminnesota.dhs@state.mn.us.

Questions?



Thank You!

Contact us:

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Parmananda Khatiwoda | Resettlement Network Services Supervisor | Parmananda.Khatiwoda@state.mn.us