



# NeighborsUnited

Refugee Collaborative of Boise

## 2023-2025 Neighbors United Refugee Strategic Community Plan



*effective August 2023*

## Table of Contents

Refugee Strategic Community Plan Overview .....	1
Network Overview .....	2
Network Strategic Direction .....	4
Strategic Communications .....	7
Subcommittee Overviews and Action Plans .....	8
Adult Education .....	8
Employment.....	10
Health.....	12
Housing .....	14
Pre K-12 Education.....	16
Community Connections .....	20
Transportation .....	22

# Refugee Strategic Community Plan Overview

The *Neighbors United Refugee Strategic Community Plan* was first developed in 2010. The idea of the plan emerged from a series of community meetings that began in 2008, in response to the national economic recession, and its local impacts. Community members came together to thoughtfully determine how Boise could “meet scarcity with an attitude of abundance,” and collaboratively continue to provide services that make Boise a welcoming place. The Community Plan was seen both locally and nationally as an innovative, effective tool for coordinating and engaging a broad network of people and organizations in common support of refugees, and has set an example many other communities around the country have followed.

While the plan is kept up to date on an ongoing basis, in 2023, the Neighbors United network – now representing more than 100 organizations – embarked on a process to refresh and establish new goals, objectives, and activities aimed to address needs and evolving circumstances, to improve collaboration and knowledge sharing, and to give strategic direction for the ensuing two years.

## Process

In Fall 2022, Neighbors United confirmed that the current self-sufficiency regions remained crucial for effective refugee resettlement, welcoming and belonging. Our seven self-sufficiency areas are:

- Housing
- Health
- Employment
- Pre-K to 12<sup>th</sup> grade education
- Adult education
- Transportation
- Community connections

The network, working through committees supporting each area, met throughout Spring, 2023 to discuss and identify community needs as well as proposed solutions and activities to address those needs. These discussions are translated into this plan. Each self-sufficiency area includes a vision statement, priority focus areas, key background information and priority actions (to be initiated within 6 months).

The network reconvened in May, 2023 to review the draft strategic plan and provide feedback across all self-sufficiency areas. Throughout the summer, final refinements were made, including developing networkwide goals and actions that had been identified by committees and at the May Network Gathering.

The updated 2023 Neighbors United Refugee Strategic Community Plan is intended to guide our efforts for the next 24 months, with regular, ongoing updates to our action tables. The *Neighbors United Refugee Strategic Community Plan* is the result of our broad network's collaboration and hard work, and it illustrates our joint, ongoing commitment to remaining a community of opportunity, welcoming and belonging.





# Our Network



We are a collaborative of individuals, community leaders, organizations and companies who strengthen refugee resettlement resources in the Treasure Valley.



## Community Voices

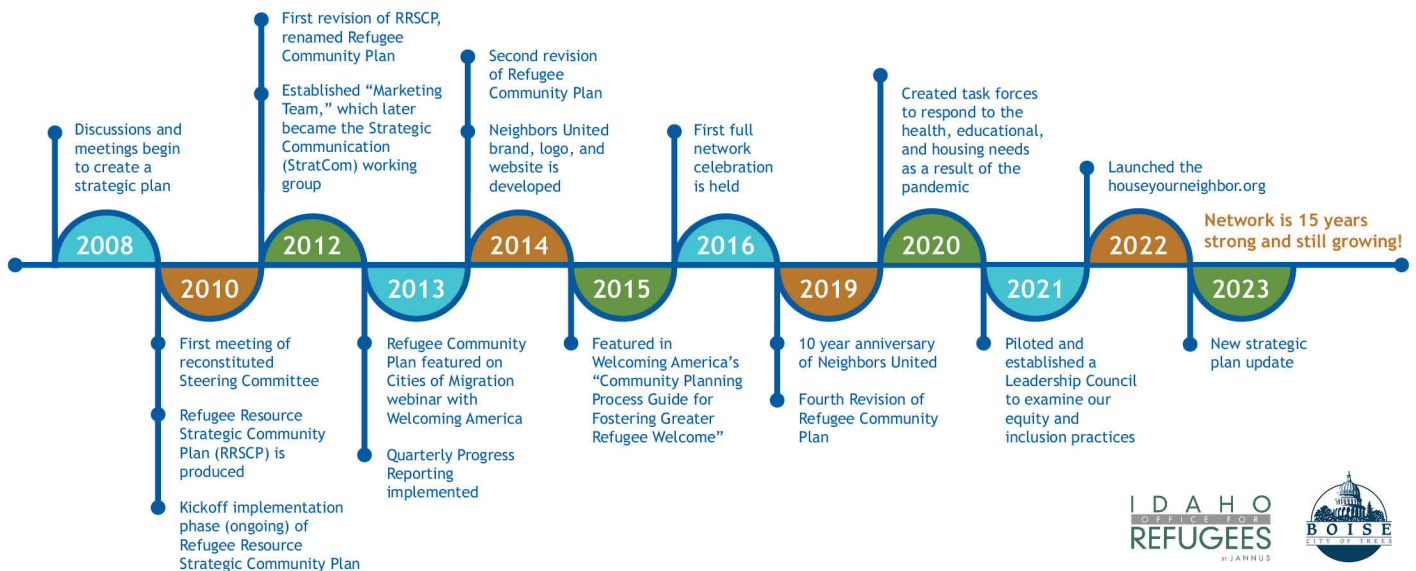
*"Diversity is a strength. Communities that are diverse are more caring and respectful."*

*"Without our refugee community, Boise wouldn't be as rich culturally. I appreciate my neighbors and support refugee-owned small businesses."*

- Neighbors United member

Adult Education      Employment  
Pre-K-12 Education      Health  
Transportation      Housing  
Community Connections

[www.neighborsunitedboise.org](http://www.neighborsunitedboise.org)



IDAHO  
REFUGEES  
BY JANUUS







# Network Strategies



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## Network Focus Areas/Priorities

*Key impacts, activities, or accomplishments we are focused on, 2023-2025.*

- 1 Continue to build and expand involvement from our refugee communities.
- 2 Maintain a strong, informed, communicative network that coordinates effectively across self-sufficiency and other areas to support our refugee neighbors.
- 3 Leverage partnerships with other jurisdictions and populations to strengthen the network.
- 4 Represent the importance of welcoming, belonging and inclusion, and advocate for resettlement.

## Network Members and Sponsors

- Ada County
- Ada County Highway District
- Ada County Sheriff
- Afghan Cultural Center of Idaho
- African Community Development
- Agency for New Americans
- Big Brothers Big Sisters
- Boise Bicycle Project
- Boise City/Ada County Housing Authority
- Boise Community Schools
- Boise Housing and Community Development
- Boise Police Department
- Boise School District
- Boise State Refugee Alliance
- Boise State University
- Boise To Bakavu
- Caldwell School District
- Catholic Charities of Idaho
- Central District Health Department
- Children's Home Society of Idaho
- City of Boise
- City of Meridian
- College of Western Idaho
- Community Action Partnership of Idaho
- Create Common Good
- El Ada Community Action Partnership
- English Language Center
- Family Medicine Residency of Idaho
- Full Circle
- Gates of Hope
- Global Talent
- Glocal Community Partners
- Idaho Alliance for Ukrainian Refugees and Immigrants
- Idaho Department of Health and Welfare
- Idaho Department of Labor
- Idaho Housing and Finance Association
- Idaho Human Rights Commission
- Idaho Immunization Coalition
- Idaho Legal Aid Services
- Idaho State Independent Living Council
- Idaho Transportation Department
- Injury Care EMS
- International Rescue Committee
- Islamic Center of Boise
- Jannus, Inc.
- Jannus Economic Partnership
- Jesse Tree
- Kuna School District
- Leap Charities
- Learning Lab
- One Refugee
- Refugee Speakers Bureau
- Pacific Western Training
- Saint Alphonsus Medical Group
- Saint Alphonsus Regional Medical Center
- Salvation Army
- Sara Skinner Associates
- Solid Creative Media
- St. Luke's Boise Medical Center
- Stoltz Marketing Group
- TANTA, Inc.
- Terry Reilly Health Services
- Tidwell Social Work
- Treasure Valley Family YMCA
- Ukrainian Welcome Center
- United Way of Treasure Valley
- University of Idaho
- Valley Regional Transit
- Valley Ride
- Vallivue School District
- West Ada School District
- Women's and Children's Alliance



# Network Action Plans

<u>Focus Areas</u>	<u>Action Steps</u>
1. Continue to build and expand involvement from our refugee communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider establishing a Refugee Liaison program.</li> <li>• Support committee member and network recruitment that reflects Boise's refugee communities.</li> </ul>
2. Maintain a strong, informed, communicative network that coordinates effectively across self-sufficiency and other areas to support our refugee neighbors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update network operational and orientation guide.</li> <li>• Update brand and communications guidelines, network talking points.</li> <li>• Update strategic plan action tables and report regularly on progress to the network.</li> <li>• Re-establish Co-Chair Forum.</li> </ul>
3. Leverage partnerships with other jurisdictions and populations to strengthen our work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extend invitations to guest members from other jurisdictions to participate in committee meetings.</li> <li>• Identify and meet with other communities' representatives to discuss common issue areas and ways to support and align efforts.</li> <li>• Within Committees, discuss and identify opportunities for resource sharing across jurisdictions and organizations.</li> </ul>
4. Represent the importance of welcoming, belonging and inclusion and advocate for resettlement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the passing and implementation of new City of Boise Tenant Protections.</li> <li>• Support recertification of Boise as a Welcoming City by Welcoming America.</li> </ul>





# Health

## Vision

To collaborate with and empower New Americans by providing an open platform for discussion, acknowledging disparities in care, and promoting dignity, equitable care, and wellness.

## Focus Areas/Priorities

*Key impacts, activities, or accomplishments we are focused on.*

- 1 Leverage Community Liaisons (for all NU committees) and listening sessions to better understand the community's needs
- 2 Increase health education and accessibility
- 3 Educate providers on care for refugees

## Background

- There is a strong desire to connect directly with refugee communities to truly understand their needs.
- Intentional efforts should go into building trust between refugee communities and providers.
- Transportation continues to be a major barrier for refugees accessing health care.
- Behavioral health services are especially difficult for refugees to access.

## Community Voices

*"I don't have a healthcare provider I see regularly because of the language barrier."*

*"It is hard for me to understand what the provider is saying when explaining my medical results because of how complex medical terminology is."*

*"With my English language skills, it is difficult for me to understand the provider unless I have a trusted peer or family member with me to interpret."*

## Population Definition

Individuals with refugee backgrounds and leaders from refugee communities.



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## Subcommittee Members

Herve Mashindora, Co-Chair	Rebecca Lemmons
Collin Elias, Co-Chair	Hannah Habineza
Sarah Mohr	Margaret Mortimer
Jesus Blanco	Travis Buffi
Theresa McLeod	Abby Davids
Slobodanka Hodzic	Jamie Strain
Mark Homco	Katherine Doyon
Jimmy Hallyburton	Susan Manika
Palina Louangketh	Olivia Wargo
Mark Babson	Bryan Lyda
Sara Skinner	Alicia Fong
Jamie Davis	Tony Fisk



## Highlights of Past Work

- Partners collaborated to host vaccine clinics
- Developed messaging and materials to educate refugee communities on COVID-19 and vaccines
- Completed an after-action report on past activities of the committee to identify successes, challenges, and areas for improvement



# Health Action Plans

<u>Focus Areas</u>	<u>Action Steps</u>
1. Increase health education and accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify existing resource maps</li> <li>• Develop a resource map of existing services and supports for various communities.</li> <li>• Identify underserved communities based on resource map results</li> </ul>
2. Leverage Community Liaisons (for all NU committees) and listening sessions to better understand community needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meet with other Neighbors United committees to gauge interest in the Community Liaison program and identify existing liaison resources (CAs, CDH refugee liaisons, etc.) across the network.</li> <li>• Identify funding source(s) for Community Liaison</li> <li>• Identify # of CL's for program, eligibility criteria, objectives, and expectations</li> <li>• Train CL's based on the current community needs</li> <li>• Develop questions for CL's to ask their communities to learn more about the emerging needs</li> </ul>
3. Educate providers on care with refugees (supports and overlaps with Focus Area #2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a work group on provider education/professional development.</li> <li>• Finalize tool and NOFO to complete training for medical providers.</li> <li>• Identify potential co-facilitators and other organizations not currently involved.</li> <li>• Develop training curriculum.</li> <li>• Identify potential providers to pilot a few trainings</li> </ul>



## Vision

To prioritize refugee community feedback in the assessment and reduction of transportation barriers by connecting with individuals and service providers with resources, and working toward centralize resource and transportation hubs to meet needs.

## Focus Areas/Priorities

*Key impacts, activities, or accomplishments we are focused on.*

- 1 Leverage Community Liaisons (and other NU committees) and listening sessions to better understand the community's needs
- 2 Increased education and access to transit
- 3 Creating a transportation resource bundle
- 4 Develop an advisory group comprised of refugees to provide input and feedback
- 5 Secure a transportation vehicle for the community

## Background

- There is limited access to intercity travel and travel from the city center.
- Language and confidence in riders can be barriers to transportation.
- There is a strong need and desire to hear directly from refugee communities on their barriers and experiences with transportation.

## Community Voices

*"Limited public transportation schedules prevent people from getting to/from school/work easily, causing added stress."*

*"People took the time to understand me and my culture."  
- Shadi Ismael, American & Former Refugee from Syria*

## Population Definition

Individuals with refugee backgrounds who require modes of transportation to access various services and resources (health, education, social services, community events, etc.)

## Subcommittee Members

Devin McComas (Co-Lead)	Gabe Finkelstein
Elizabeth Norton (Co-Lead)	Nina Pienaar
Christi Rood	Dane Hoskins
Tessa Gregor	Hunter Levy
Mike Walsh	Meg McCarthy
Timothy Leigh	Miranda Gold
Bryan Lyda	Dave Rader
Chantale Niyonkuru	Lila Klopfenstein
Hailee Lenhart-Wees	Mike Walsh
Zahraa Naser	Melanie Hertling



## Highlights of Past Work

- Safe Routes to School program provides lessons on safe bike-riding.
- College of Western Idaho students have discussed finding and creating user-friendly tools to reduce barriers to transportation access.
- LEAP program at South Junior High collaborates with the City of Boise who provides shuttles for students to the afterschool program.
- Valley Regional Transit launched the VRT OnDemand app that functions like an Uber app for buses, enabling users to book trips and be dropped off at recognizable landmarks.

# Transportation Action Plans

<u>Focus Areas</u>	<u>Action Steps</u>
1. Leverage Community Liaisons, NU committees, and listening sessions to better understand community needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prioritize recruitment of people from the refugee community to serve on a leadership board, advisory committee, or the NU Leadership Council (terms, stipend)</li> <li>• Liaisons with Co-Leads from other NU Committees in re: their self-reported transportation needs</li> </ul>
2. Increased education and access to transit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mobility Training Handbook review (from Hailee/VRT) as a training resource</li> <li>• Quarterly trainings through VRT, identify a location/organization to provide trainings (Hailee/VRT to connect with Hunter/IRC, identify ANA contact to provide training to)</li> <li>• Route planning (ACHD online bike map as a resource)</li> <li>• Show how bicycles can be transported with busses.</li> <li>• Understanding the makeup (e.g., age) of families with refugee backgrounds</li> </ul>
3. Creating a resource bundle/list	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and compile transportation resources (apps, materials, etc.)</li> <li>• Identify ways to make it easier for New Americans to access education/trainings on using bicycles for transportation (think long-term access)</li> <li>• Translate resources, use pictures, apps, and other methods to test the accessibility of the resource list</li> </ul>
4. Develop a Refugee Advisory Group to provide input and feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify refugee community members to provide input on bicycle trainings from BBP</li> <li>• Organize refugee community members to attend Bike Advisory and Pedestrian Advisory Group meetings to give public comment.</li> <li>• Connect with One Refugee (Hunter/IRC)</li> </ul>
5. Secure a transportation vehicle (bus) for the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore potential funding streams.</li> <li>• TBD, pending first action step</li> </ul>





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# Adult Education

## Vision

We envision a Treasure Valley in which all adults have access to educational opportunities that will help them lead successful lives and create stronger communities. We will collaborate with stakeholders to identify and close the gaps in adult education services in the Treasure Valley.

## Focus Areas/Priorities

*Key impacts, activities, or accomplishments we are focused on.*

- 1 Educate subcommittees on the breadth and depth of adult education
- 2 Update the education map
- 3 Westward Services and capacity building

## Highlights of Past Work

- Adult Education Map
- 2013 - 2016 Adult Education ESL conference
- 2018 presentation at the Idaho Office for Refugees Conference
- The Road to College for New Americans (student support presentations hosted by CWI, U of I, and BSU)
- Committee members participated in Healing Encounters, a three-part training addressing Trauma Informed Care, Culturally Responsive Care, and Linguistically Appropriate Care facilitated by Center for Global Health and Healing
- Teaching Tips for the Increasingly Multilingual Classroom workshop, facilitated by BSU and CWI
- Partnership between One Refugee College Bound program and Boise State University has led to pathways to college

## Population Definition

Newly arrived adult refugees and other New Americans ages 18+ who currently reside in the Treasure Valley.

## Subcommittee Members

Trevi Hardy, Co-Chair	Devon Jancin
Sarah Ritter, Co-Chair	Jeanie Levinski
Georgette Siqueiros	Sergio Orozco
Casey Iezzi	Chelsea Jordan
Holly Kimbrell	Gail Shuck
Sara Nord	Stephanie Marlow
Erica Compton	Jennifer Panitch
Rebecca Wilkey	Shauna Sanders
Renee Addington	Keanne McCombes
Tara Weeks	Darci Adams
Andrea Orozco	Liz Fleshman
Kayla Groat	Kristine Livingstone
Estefany Giehm	



## Background

- There are many barriers, such as linguistic, cultural, and systemic, to adult refugee students accessing and navigating educational systems.
- There is a limited understanding by stakeholders of the community's educational resources for refugee background adults.
- Refugee resettlement is expanding to the western part of the valley. Our committee needs to gain an understanding of, offer support to, and network with these educational partners.

## Community Voices

*"Talking with refugees and people I know helping refugees, there has been expressed a great need for language help and finding housing and jobs."*  
- Neighbors United survey respondent

*"I am the product of Idaho kindness. If it wasn't for the kind people who helped me, I never would have made it that far."*  
- Shadi Ismael, American & Former Refugee from Syria

## Adult Education Action Plans

<u>Focus Areas</u>	<u>Action Steps</u>
1. Educate committees on the breadth and depth of adult education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Develop a written overview of the adult education to provide a big picture landscape including on volunteers and funds (grants, private)</li><li>• Schedule designated times to communicate the above with other committees such as assigning a spokesperson to attend other committee meetings</li></ul>
2. Update the education map	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Determine version of education map to use.</li><li>• Gather information to update the education map accordingly.</li><li>• Identify the appropriate groups and disseminate the updated education map.</li><li>• Focus on westward expansion</li></ul>
3. Westward Services & capacity building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Build capacity by networking across the Treasure Valley, focusing on Canyon County and outlying rural communities.</li><li>• Increase digital access for all Idahoans.</li><li>• Monitor when funds become available to support westward expansion and capacity building</li></ul>





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# Pre K-12 Education

## Vision

To interweave local educational entities and community partners who listen to refugee and educator voices for the support, growth and flourishing in education for refugees in the Treasure Valley.

## Focus Areas/Priorities

*Key impacts, activities, or accomplishments we are focused on.*

- 1 Engage parents in their children's education
- 2 Train teachers and prepare schools to support students with refugee backgrounds
- 3 Enhance support for the population of newly arrived students who are 16 to 24 years of age
- 4 Increase access to afterschool and summer programs

## Background

- There are a significant number of refugee families in the Boise and West Ada School Districts.
  - Roughly 1,485 students are refugees.
  - 90+ languages spoken by students.
  - 6,900+ students have a non-English speaking background.
  - 30% of students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch.
  - 6,000+ students receive Special Education services.

## Community Voices

*"The first day of school, I was excited and scared for my brother. He was asking, 'What should I do when I get there?' When we got to the school, there was someone waiting for him outside. She said, 'Hi Blessing! I'll be Blessing's teacher.' The teacher took him to his table and showed him around. He felt like a celebrity! He said, 'My teacher likes me.'"*

- Judith Mwamba, Kindergarten teacher from DRC/Namibia, on her brother's first day of school in Idaho

## Population Definition

Individuals with refugee backgrounds who are students in Pre-Kindergarten to 12th grade and young adults up to 21 years of age.

## Subcommittee Members

Jill Ayabei, Co-Chair	Officer Travis Buffi
Jolene Lincoln, Co-Chair	Chantale Niyonkuru
Sara Nord, Co-Chair	Sara Skinner
Christina Bruce-Bennion	Lindsay Niederklein
Dave Morris	Deborah Ryman
Anna Almerico	Joan Bigelow
Molly Jo Fuentealba	Shannon Carrillo
Jodi Larson-Farrow	Susan Manika
Breanne Fraley	Alejandra Howell
Marie Hattaway	Shani Cummins
Noel Bolduc	Kayla Groat
Meagan Ellis	Darci Adams
Laura Armstrong	Katie Crawford



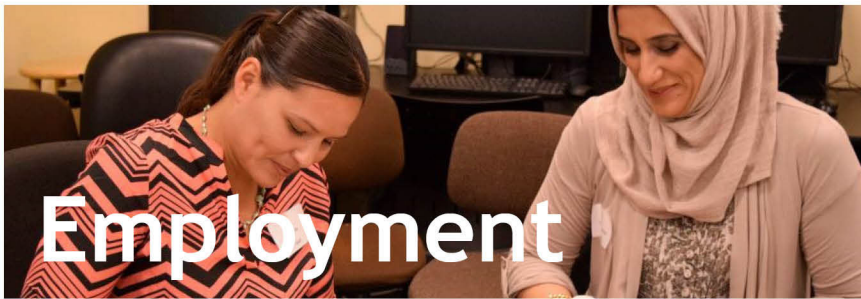
## Highlights of Past Work

- "New Americans in the Classroom" training workshops were provided for teachers across multiple school districts to better understand the experience of resettled students entering the education system and how they can be supported.
- The REACH summer program provided academic support and community connections to refugee youth through volunteer mentors.
- Sara Skinner Associates, Idaho Office for Refugees, Gates of Hope, KA Health Services, and Glocal partnered to host an interactive workshop at the 2023 Idaho Conference on Refugees to teach trauma-informed techniques that can be used with students from various backgrounds.



## Pre-K to 12<sup>th</sup> Grade Action Plans

<u>Focus Areas</u>	<u>Action Steps</u>
1. Engage parents in their children's education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify funding for workshops.</li> <li>• Launch workshops at the English Language Center (ELC), educate parents within 3-4 months of arrival</li> <li>• Leverage ICAN for support</li> </ul>
2. Train teachers and prepare schools to support students with refugee backgrounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide "New Americans in the Classroom" trainings to teachers in multiple school districts</li> </ul>
3. Enhance support for 16-24 y/o population who are newly arrived students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a resource map with the NU Adult Education Committee</li> <li>• Develop a new program or coordinate with an existing program.</li> <li>• Identify gaps and barriers this population is experiencing to understand needs and identify solutions.</li> <li>• Communicate REACH youth summer program to students through schools.</li> <li>• Meet with high school counselors to discuss issues/gaps for this student population</li> </ul>
4. Increase access to afterschool and summer programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify transportation resources for students (IRC has a van to transport clients, use this as a resource?)</li> <li>• Leverage the "Let's Connect" event (dedicated to refugee families) to communicate programs.</li> <li>• Identify a summer reading program.</li> </ul>



# Employment



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## Vision

To collaborate with employers and community partners to create pathways to job security, opportunities for advancement, and welcoming workplaces that empower people from refugee backgrounds to bring their skills and experience into the Idaho workforce.

## Subcommittee Members

Hannah Roche, Co-Chair	Jac Webb
Heather Webster, Co-Chair	Rosette Yanda
Mandy Adamson, Co-Chair	Alejandra Castaneda
Kristen Donovan	Alina Kolodchenko
Jennifer Dempsey	Sara Nord
Jeanie Levinski	Joyce Gagarin
Sadi Ebadi	Zahraa Naser
Kelsey Laven	Trevi Hardy
	Heidi Nash

## Focus Areas/Priorities

*Key impacts, activities, or accomplishments we are focused on.*

- 1 Increase workforce diversity, educate employees and employers
- 2 Identify and centralize employment resources
- 3 Support career advancement

## Background

- There is an increasing need to streamline information that can be accessed by employers and job seekers.
- There are opportunities to educate employers on how to best support employees with refugee backgrounds in their career progression.
- Language barriers remain a consistent challenge between job seekers/employees and employers.

## Community Voices

*"We have a hard working, loyal workforce who reflect the spirit of service and helping that America must embrace." - Neighbors United survey respondent*

*"I learned of Idaho: If you open your heart and have a smile on your face, it can take you far." - Shadi Ismael, American & Former Refugee from Syria*

## Population Definition

Employers, job seekers and employees with refugee backgrounds.



## Highlights of Past Work

- The College of Western Idaho offers English, life, and work-focused programs that are focused on increasing workplace competency (workplace expectations, resumes, job search, digital skills).
- Global Talent hosted a career summit where local mentors facilitated interviews and gave feedback to New American job seekers.
- Global Talent provided a workshop at the 2023 Idaho Conference on Refugees which featured staff, alumni, and local employers in a discussion on ways supervisors, coworkers, and mentors can best support new American professionals who are restarting their careers in Idaho.

# Employment Action Plans

<u>Focus Areas</u>	<u>Action Steps</u>
1. Increase workforce diversity and educate employees and employers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Replicate the employment version of “New Americans in the Classroom” training for employers (training employers on how to better support employees with refugee backgrounds)               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Create new materials and identify existing materials that highlight best practices, including a customizable checklist on how to support refugees in being successful in employment (<i>do this first</i>)</li> <li>◦ Meet with Sara Skinner to learn about her curriculum for “New Americans” training.</li> <li>◦ Provide support in pre-employment/hiring and post-employment.</li> <li>◦ Organize regular employment workshops on recruiting and retaining talent from refugee backgrounds.</li> <li>◦ Link Global Talent, CWI, and other community partners’ resources on the Neighbors United employment resources page, vet links to determine which provides the most useful information for employers.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Create translated materials.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Identify translation services and which language has the highest need for translated materials.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Provide/host digital literacy workshops for employees.</li> <li>• Identify organizations, individuals, and partners and how to approach these groups to broaden reach.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Identifying employers to provide our resources to, ensuring everyone benefits.</li> <li>◦ Create a list of partners who are committed to supporting employees with refugee backgrounds</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
2. Identify and centralize employment resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify existing employment resources.</li> <li>• Determine the centralized location for employment resources to be accessed (selected the Neighbors United website)</li> <li>• Identify and develop training resources on general information (things to consider when applying, hiring, onboarding, and maintaining your job, completing tax forms, ADP, employee benefits, HR department, etc.)</li> <li>• Identify and develop resources for improved language access</li> </ul>
3. Support career advancement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop resources aimed at refugees that empower them to hold discussions on career development with their employers and how to navigate college websites.</li> <li>• Develop an accessible calendar, quarterly newsletter (invite to open house meeting), and/or periodic virtual office hours to interact with employers.</li> <li>• Offer periodic trainings (including trauma informed training) for employers on the current workforce</li> </ul>





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# Community Connections

## Vision

For all individuals with refugee backgrounds to be empowered to utilize their gifts to create and engage in welcome, safe, and thriving communities.

## Focus Areas/Priorities

*Key impacts, activities, or accomplishments we are focused on.*

- 1 Develop a resource hub model, centralize community resources, and create intercultural connections
- 2 Create a list of resources that builds individual capacity, opportunities, and events for successful integration
- 3 Meet communities where they are by connecting people to their communities and events

## Background

- There are opportunities to leverage existing events, gatherings, and resources to strengthen the integration of individuals with refugee backgrounds into their communities.
- Language access remains a barrier in connecting the community.

## Community Voices

*"When we first arrived to Idaho seven years ago, we felt so confused and a little scared. Being connected to our new friends in Boise was so important to feeling safe and solving problems we had no idea how to solve." - Mohammed Issa, Glocal Friends*

## Population Definition

Individuals with refugee backgrounds and new Americans.

## Subcommittee Members

Laura Armstrong, Co-Chair	Tony Fisk
Nick Armstrong, Co-Chair	Sara Nord
Mike Stefancic, Co-Chair	Marie Hattaway
Whitney Alsallum	Emily Williams
	Monique Bosse
	Olivia Wargo



## Highlights of Past Work

- Tidwell hosts regular multicultural community dinners to bring community members together.
- Glocal partnered with the Islamic Center of Boise to host a workshop on improving the understanding of current and historical expressions of social hostility toward refugees and immigrants and on growing empathy through stories from refugees reflecting these types of experiences.
- The Glocal Friend Program matches people from the Treasure Valley with New American families who connect and spend weekly time for three months doing activities such as visiting parks, spending time in each other's homes, grocery shopping, and more.

## Community Connections Action Plans

<u>Focus Areas</u>	<u>Action Steps</u>
1. Develop a resource hub model, centralize community resources, and create intercultural connections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Look for examples around the country as a model.</li> <li>• Identify “hubs” and willing community leaders.</li> <li>• Set metrics for success.</li> <li>• Communicate and gain buy in from service providers</li> <li>• Identify communication channels that various communities are using to be connected to events, news, and other happenings.</li> <li>• Utilize the IOR Events calendar to maximize reach of events communicated</li> </ul>
2. Capacity-building list of resources to build individual capacity, opportunities and events for successful integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interview service providers on additional service needs</li> <li>• Look for a similar list of resources and compare e.g., find help.org (connects people to providers, not events...can we modify the tool instead of creating a new one?), assess pertinence and accessibility.</li> <li>• Identifying gaps in current services</li> </ul>
3. Meet communities where they’re at, connecting the community to events and people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gather feedback on event logistics (getting to and from events)</li> <li>• Gather a full list of events offered to the refugee community.</li> <li>• Survey the refugee community on how they are connecting and how they are learning about events.</li> <li>• Identify “Community Leaders” (what makes someone a community leader?)</li> <li>• Promote and enable the facilitation of community dinners and events.</li> </ul>



# Housing

## Vision

To work collaboratively on helping New Americans secure quality affordable housing options that provide stability and dignity.

## Focus Areas/Priorities

*Key impacts, activities, or accomplishments we are focused on.*

- 1 Address gaps due to increased rental rates and closing emergency funding streams
- 2 Advocate for increased housing capacity and development
- 3 Create communication channels dedicated to sharing housing needs
- 4 Elevate discussions and engagement with landlords and developers

## Background

- Finding housing remains a challenge, particularly for larger families and with connectivity to transportation options.
- Rental requirements such as credit history and cash reserves create additional challenges for refugee families seeking housing.

## Community Voices

*"Stable housing means that you are not living in uncertainty about housing situation. Generally, you have a choice over when to move. Last time when I talked with some of my clients about housing, they mentioned that It may affect mental health, stress levels, relationships, and sleep." - ANA Case Manager*

*"Home is everything." - Jesse Tree clients*

## Population Definition

Newly arrived refugees and families who are seeking permanent, stable housing.



**NeighborsUnited**

Refugee Collaborative of Boise

## Subcommittee Members

Diana Lachiondo, Co-Chair	Michelle Goodale
Joel Ryman, Co-Chair	Jennifer Dempsey
Holly Beech	Mana Mohamed
Evan Stewart	Slobodanka Hodzic
Hanna Suman	April Durrant
Cathy Sandstrom	Megan Remaley
Denise Caruzzi	Tina Polishchuk
Fowzia Adan	Tara Wolfson
Robert Frazier	Jamie Somma
Cassy Bryan	Chad Ward
Michelle Larson	Brooke Bailey
Brie Katz	Scott Crawford



## Highlights of Past Work

- In 2022, 198 families were housed through Agency for New Americans and International Rescue Committee - Boise
- Launched the HouseYourNeighbor.org website to coordinate community support for housing solutions
- Developed the HouseYourNeighbor.org toolkit to equip the community with FAQ's, social posts, email templates, and videos to inform discussions on the housing crisis and solutions
- Created a space to discuss current housing challenges and possible solutions by coordinating housing symposiums



# Housing Action Plan

<u>Focus Areas</u>	<u>Action Steps</u>
1. Address gaps due to increased rental rates and emergency funding stream	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase awareness of the fiscal cliff in the community due to ARPA funds going away</li> <li>• Training resettlement agencies on accessing TANF funds.</li> <li>• Identify other funding resources to fill gaps.</li> <li>• Incentivize early employment.</li> <li>• Use House Your Neighbor toolkit as a resource to address gaps</li> </ul>
2. Advocate for increased housing capacity and development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Request NU network support at rezoning meetings by sharing and encouraging public comments.</li> <li>• Identify additional advocacy opportunities.</li> <li>• Tenant rights protection advocacy</li> </ul>
3. Create communication channels dedicated to sharing housing needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Market the need for 3+ bedroom rentals</li> <li>• Establish a communication channel on WhatsApp.</li> <li>• Develop a list of channel members and define how to use the channel.</li> <li>• Create toolkits for messaging and communications to landlords, renting, etc.</li> <li>• Create a dashboard of relationships developed with faith congregations</li> </ul>