



**Kentucky
Humanitarian Assistance
Scholarship Program**

Toolkit to Support Displaced Students in Kentucky



September 2023

This report was produced by the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE), the Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority (KHEAA), the National Association of System Heads (NASH), the Institute of International Education (IIE), the Presidents' Alliance on Higher Education and Immigration, and the Community Sponsorship Hub (CSH).



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Introduction

WELCOME LETTER FROM PRESIDENT THOMPSON

September 1, 2023

Dear Colleagues,

In summer of 2022, the state of Kentucky made history when it piloted the Kentucky Humanitarian Assistance Scholarship (KHAS), the nation’s first statewide scholarship for displaced individuals, who have been relocated to the state within the last five years.

Through this pilot program, Kentucky has demonstrated its leadership to the nation in supporting the inclusion of displaced persons in higher education. Several other states and higher education systems have indicated that our model in Kentucky is something they are interested in learning from and adapting for their own contexts.

Therefore, this toolkit also presents Kentucky as a case study from which other states can learn. I am proud to showcase Kentucky’s tremendous efforts to support displaced students, co-led by various actors, from members of the Community of Practice (CoP), to representatives of Kentucky’s refugee support organizations, many of whom are featured throughout this toolkit.

This toolkit would not have been possible without the experts and practitioners who work with refugee populations in Kentucky and nationally, who lent their time and insight..

Most importantly, I would like to acknowledge the displaced students who strive to follow their dreams right here in Kentucky and make the Bluegrass State their home.

Sincerely,

Dr. Aaron Thompson
President, Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education

ABOUT THIS TOOLKIT AND HOW TO USE IT

Charged to implement this groundbreaking pilot program, the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE) and the Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority (KHEAA) partnered with the National Association of System Heads (NASH), the Institute of International Education (IIE), the Presidents’ Alliance on Higher Education and Immigration, and the Community Sponsorship Hub (CSH) to launch a Community of Practice (CoP) and convene monthly to connect CPE, KHEAA staff, and institutions to relevant subject matter experts and resources. You can find [recordings of each session here](#), organized by date and session topic.

This toolkit consolidates content from CoP workshops in an accessible, multimedia format, allowing readers to easily reference each session. We aim to uplift advice from experts and practitioners who work with displaced populations in Kentucky and nationally, who lent their time and insight to members of the CoP. We also attempted to include voices of CoP members and scholarship recipients themselves throughout the toolkit.

This toolkit has five main sections and offers guidance on:

1. Resettlement in Kentucky and how the scholarship operates.
2. Who scholarship recipients are and how membership in various immigration categories affects access to higher education.
3. How to create and expand welcoming campuses and foster a sense of belonging.
4. How to support students with their career goals and prepare for the workforce.
5. How to sustain and mobilize support for displaced students through ethical storytelling.

Feel free to pick and choose specific sections based on what is relevant for your specific role, department, and institution. Each section will indicate the various audiences who might find it useful. However, remember that inter-departmental coordination is key to supporting displaced students, so be sure to direct colleagues from other departments to sections that might be relevant to them.

List of Acronyms

CBP - United States Customs and Border Protection

CoP - Community of Practice

CPE - Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education

DHS - Department of Homeland Security

EAD - Employment Authorization Document

FSA - Federal Student Aid

IELTS - the International English Language Testing System

IHE - Institution of Higher Education

KHAS - Kentucky Humanitarian Assistance Scholarship

KHEAA - Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority

LPR - Lawful Permanent Resident

OET - Occupational English Test

SIV - Special Immigrant Visa

TOEFL - Test of English as a Foreign Language

TPS - Temporary Protected Status

USCIS - United States Citizenship and Immigration Services

USRAP - United States Refugee Admissions Program

Background and Function of the Kentucky Humanitarian Assistance Scholarship

This section provides background on the Kentucky Humanitarian Assistance Scholarship (KHAS), including how ‘displaced student’ is defined, why the scholarship matters, and the purpose of the Community of Practice (CoP). It also provides information about the organizations supporting the CoP and an overview of refugee resettlement in Kentucky.

The section draws from the September 2022 Launch of the Community of Practice (view the recording [here](#)) and the October 2022 Scholarship Operations meeting (view the recording [here](#)), which featured the following speakers: Aaron Thompson, President, Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education; Nancy Zimpher, Director, NASH Power of Systems; Lee Nimocks, Senior Vice President and Chief of Staff, Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE); Becky Gilpatrick, Kentucky Higher Education Administration Authority; Mary Karam McKey, Head, Corporate and Foundation Programs + Student Emergency Initiatives, IIE; Erin Howard, Associate Dean of Global Learning, Bluegrass Community and Technical College; and John Sunnygard, Associate Provost for Global Learning and International Affairs at Western Kentucky University (WKU).

INTENDED AUDIENCES

- Institutions of Higher Education (IHE) administering the KHAS.
- Any higher education system, institution, or policymaker thinking about how to implement a scholarship program for displaced students in their state or community.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

- Connect with the refugee resettlement agency and other immigrant-serving organizations in your area to learn more about the demographics, profiles, and needs of potential students, as well as how to reach them.
- In addition to cross-campus engagement, arrange regular meetings between on-campus stakeholders, including the financial aid office, international student services, and any other individuals on campus engaged in scholarship administration, awarding and/or supporting displaced students.
- Reach out to KYHASCOP@iie.org to connect with any of the organizations supporting the CoP. We have different areas of expertise and can all be reached at this central email. We will connect you with the resources or information you need, or provide direct support.

ABOUT THE PILOT PROJECT

In 2022, the Kentucky General Assembly provided \$10 million in funding for the Kentucky Innovative Scholarship Pilot Project (KISPP). Through the state budget bill, House Bill 1, the legislature directed the Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE) and the Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority (KHEAA) to establish a pilot program supported with this funding appropriated to provide college access and promote undergraduate student success for displaced students and for students participating in international exchange programs.

THE KENTUCKY STATE CAPITOL BUILDING, FRANKFORT, KY



Photo Credit: [Peter Fitzgerald](#), 2012 (License: CC-SA 2.5)

DEFINITION OF DISPLACED STUDENT

For the purpose of the KHAS Pilot, a “displaced student” is defined as a traditional or non-traditional aged student who is a foreign national and who has received U.S. asylum (asylee), submitted a U.S. asylum application (asylum-seeker), is a resettled refugee, or is in the U.S. under Temporary Protected Status (TPS), humanitarian parole, or through a Special Immigrant Visa (SIV).¹



Photo: Adult English as a Second Language (ESL) class. Photo Credit: Kentucky Refugee Ministries.

¹ Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education. 2023. “Supporting Displaced Students and International Exchange Opportunities.” <https://cpe.ky.gov/ourwork/internationalstudents.html>

WHY THE HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE SCHOLARSHIP MATTERS

The United Nations estimates that in 2022, there were more than 108 million forcibly displaced persons globally, including more than 35 million refugees and five million asylum seekers.² Only six percent of the global refugee population has access to higher education, in contrast to more than 40 percent of the global average population.³

Given the historic dimensions of the global displacement crisis, KHEAA and CPE dedicated the scholarship pilot program to Kentucky’s humanitarian effort to provide post-secondary opportunities for displaced students and provide greater social and economic mobility for these populations in the state of Kentucky.

Kentucky’s Humanitarian Assistance Scholarship Program has benefited students from countries across the globe



As shown in the above map⁴, this scholarship has benefited students whose education has been disrupted by conflicts and crises occurring in every corner of the globe, from Venezuela to Afghanistan. The program will benefit Kentucky through innovation, cultural exchange, and workforce development.

² United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). 2023. Figures at a glance. <https://www.unhcr.org/us/about-unhcr/who-we-are/figures-glance>
³ Michaela Martin & Manal Stulgaitis. 2022. Refugees’ Access to Higher Education in their Host Countries: Overcoming the ‘super-disadvantage.’ UNHCR & UNESCO. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000381505>
⁴ Credit: Council on Postsecondary Education, 2023

“The scholarship and higher education have had a profoundly positive impact on my life, empowering me with the knowledge, skills and experiences that have shaped my professional and personal growth. I am immensely grateful and committed to utilizing my education to make a positive impact in my community and beyond.”

**- Husna Ahmadi, Afghanistan
Sophomore, University of Kentucky**

Photo Credit: Council on Postsecondary Education, 2023

“The scholarship and higher education have made a positive impact in my life. They have helped me elevate my status from a refugee with few hopes and resources to aspiring to be a changemaker in my community. I hope to give back as much as I can to Bowling Green and the great state of Kentucky for all the support, aid and assistance I have received from them.”

**- Issa Mtetebawa, Democratic Republic of Congo
Junior, Western Kentucky University**

Photo Credit: Council on Postsecondary Education, 2023

DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDING

The majority of funding was distributed to Kentucky’s eight public institutions, based on the proportion of total undergraduate student enrollment at each institution. Another portion of funding was distributed to Kentucky’s community and technical colleges through the Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS) and a dedicated portion was made available for private, non-profit higher education institutions in Kentucky.¹

PURPOSE OF COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

As stated on the CPE website, public and private institutions participating in the KHAS Pilot were required to join a Community of Practice (CoP), which was intended to provide:

“A forum to share and scale proven practices...professional development for faculty and other campus practitioners serving Displaced Student populations, and...resources to help leverage other state, federal or private resources.”²

The CoP is also intended to foster coordination, both across departments and between Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs) and community partners. At the launch of the CoP in September 2022, CPE President Dr. Aaron Thompson emphasized:

“Leaving institutions to work in isolation is inefficient, limits their success and creates redundancies. This statewide network will ensure a range of voices are included in the conversation and work in tandem to accelerate progress.”

Charged to facilitate the CoP, the National Association of System Heads (NASH), the Institute of International Education (IIE), the Presidents’ Alliance on Higher Education and Immigration, and the Community Sponsorship Hub (CSH) convened for monthly workshops to connect institutions to relevant subject matter experts and resources in both Kentucky and at the national level.

In order to ensure that the CoP is grounded in locally determined priorities, IIE distributed a survey in August 2022 to gauge interest and identify the most critical needs of the institutions implementing this scholarship. The following topics of interest emerged from this survey in order of priority: 1) recruitment; 2) student support services for displaced persons; 3) understanding immigration policies; 4) financial aid; and 5) scholarship operations. The sessions, training, and this toolkit were informed by these topics of interest.

¹ For questions related to funding for your specific institution, please go through the scholarship administration contact in your Financial Aid office to reach out to KHEAA.

² Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education. 2023. “Supporting Displaced Students and International Exchange Opportunities.” <https://cpe.ky.gov/ourwork/internationalstudents.html>



“Leaving institutions to work in isolation is inefficient, limits their success and creates redundancies. This statewide network will ensure a range of voices are included in the conversation and work in tandem to accelerate progress.”

-Dr. Aaron Thompson, CPE President

OVERVIEW OF ORGANIZATIONS SUPPORTING THE COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

The following organizations were selected to co-lead the CoP with CPE and KHEAA because of their diverse and complementary areas of expertise at the intersection of higher education, immigration, and refugee resettlement. Below is an overview of each organization:

The National Association of System Heads (NASH) is the association of chief executives of public college and university systems in the United States. Systemness, or the idea that the whole can be more than the sum of its parts, is the fundamental concept that drives NASH’s work. Leveraging the power of systemness, [NASH created the Refugee Resettlement Initiative \(RRI\)](#) to promote the inclusion of refugees and displaced communities at public higher education systems and institutions across the U.S. The RRI does this by raising awareness of the new role that university systems and institutions can play as co-sponsors and sponsors of refugee students and families; providing technical and coordination support in the form of training programs for campus leaders, and convenings of statewide actors supporting refugee resettlement; and advocating for this work with the federal, state, and private sectors, as well as within and across systems.

The Institute of International Education’s mission is to help people and organizations leverage the power of international education to thrive in today’s interconnected world. IIE develops and implements many of the world’s most prestigious and innovative scholarship and training programs, including working globally to support refugees and displaced people to access higher education. We work in partnership with a range of funders and sponsors to design and lead initiatives, both in person and virtual, to identify and place refugees and displaced people in higher education programs as well as support them during their degree programs in a holistic manner. IIE also leads the [PEER platform](#), an on-line resource of global scholarship opportunities for refugee and displaced people.

The Community Sponsorship Hub was founded in 2021 to grow the role of local communities in the protection and welcome of forcibly displaced people, making it possible for people to sponsor regardless of where they are in the United States. We do this by generating and advancing bold, smart policies, and by connecting partners at the national and local levels with the knowledge and financial resources they need to ensure that sponsors and those they are welcoming are set up for success. In 2023, the U.S. Department of State, in coordination with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, launched the Welcome Corps, empowering everyday Americans to welcome refugees arriving through the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP). Community Sponsorship Hub is proud to lead the consortium of organizations implementing the [Welcome Corps](#) and the [Welcome Corps on Campus](#), a new opportunity for higher education institutions and on-campus sponsors to provide academic and community support to refugee students from around the world.

The Presidents’ Alliance on Higher Education and Immigration is a consortium of 550 college and university presidents and chancellors focused on the intersection of immigration and higher education. Presidents’ Alliance refugee student initiatives mobilizes higher education institutions for the implementation of university sponsorship of refugee students, provides resources, expertise, and technical assistance to institutions enrolling and supporting displaced and refugee students, and advocates for inclusive and equitable federal, state, and campus policies that support access to academic and immigration pathways for refugee and displaced students. The Alliance tracks state policies, consolidates effective practices, and shares research and narratives that recognize the contributions of refugee students, scholars, staff, and alumni in U.S. communities and on campuses on the [Higher Ed Immigration Portal](#).

REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT IN KENTUCKY (AS OF SEPTEMBER 2022)

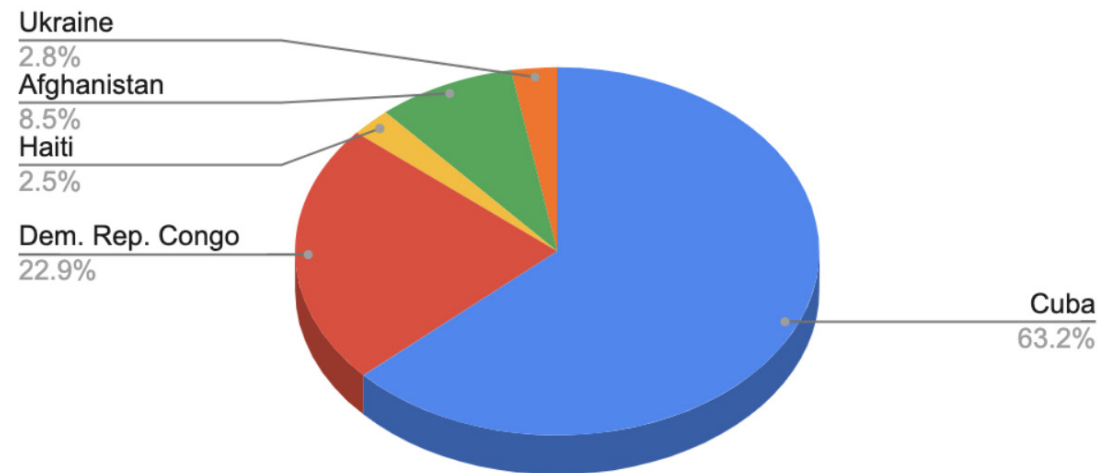
Background Information

- In 2022, Kentucky was #4 in the nation in refugee resettlement, in terms of the number of refugees resettled to the state.
- In the state of Kentucky, the country of origin most represented among refugees resettled through the [United States Refugee Admissions Program](#) over the last several years is the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It is starting to diversify, though, with individuals coming from Burma, Syria, and Afghanistan.
- As of 2022, there were at least [1,100 resettled refugees, parolees, and asylees who were potentially eligible](#) for the KHAS.³

The Kentucky Office for Refugees is the state-designated refugee coordinator’s office. They are housed within Catholic Charities of Louisville and manage funding from the federal [Office of Refugee Resettlement \(ORR\)](#), distributing it to all the refugee resettlement agencies within Kentucky, as well as some other partners who serve refugees. As shown in the map below, five areas of Kentucky are participating in the refugee resettlement program.

³ Note: the actual number of potentially eligible individuals was likely much higher, as this estimate did not count immigration statuses that do not register with resettlement agencies; namely asylum seekers and TPS holders.

Top Five ORR-eligible Nationalities in Kentucky



	Nationality	Number of Migrants ▼
1	Cuba	11288
2	Dem. Rep. Congo	4088
3	Afghanistan	1525
4	Ukraine	505
5	Haiti	445

Note: These numbers include ORR populations initially resettled in Kentucky or those who moved to Kentucky after initial resettlement in another state. Please note that these numbers do not include TPS Holders or asylum seekers.

Source: Kentucky Office for Refugees

RESOURCES

- Kentucky Humanitarian Assistance Scholarship Information (FAQs, contacts, background): <https://cpe.ky.gov/ourwork/internationalstudents.html>
- More information on refugees in Kentucky, from Kentucky Office for Refugees: <https://www.kentuckyrefugees.org/refugees-in-kentucky/>
- Deaton, Rayleigh. July 28, 2023. "Displaced Student Finds Educational Refuge in Kentucky." *Kentucky Lantern*. <https://kentucky Lantern.com/2023/07/28/displaced-students-find-educational-refuge-in-kentucky/>

Who Are Kentucky's Displaced Students and How to Recruit Them?

This section presents a summary of learnings from two Community of Practice (CoP) workshops. One workshop featured Trinh Tran, Senior Staff Attorney from the International Refugee Assistance Project (IRAP), who presented on the various types of immigration statuses displaced students can hold, and explained how to determine eligibility for the scholarship. Another workshop featured Maria Koerner, Assistant Director of the Kentucky Office for Refugees (KOR), who presented strategies to recruit prospective students for the scholarship. Three fictional case studies are presented throughout this section to illustrate how various immigration statuses might play out in real world contexts of higher education.

INTENDED AUDIENCES

- Admissions Officers
- Registrars
- Financial Aid Office

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

- Educate yourself about the various immigration statuses, documents and eligibility for programs.
- Make scholarship criteria clear and target prospective students accordingly.
- Connect with local refugee resettlement agencies or other immigrant serving organizations.
- Form partnerships between 2-year and 4-year institutions to promote transfer opportunities.



Photo Credit: Kentucky Refugee Ministries.



STATUSES AND ELIGIBILITY FOR FINANCIAL AID AND IN-STATE TUITION

With the expansion of immigration pathways for displaced persons in the U.S., and emerging state legislation on access to in-state tuition for non-citizens, it can be challenging for students and staff to understand what services they are eligible for. Below is a collection of resources that can help college and university staff, in both Kentucky and across the U.S., understand the eligibility of displaced students for higher education admissions, federal financial aid, and in-state tuition, based on legal status.

- Federal Financial Aid** - As shown on the next page in **Table 1**, there are certain eligible non-citizens who are considered eligible for federal financial aid. See [Federal Student Aid \(FSA\)](#) for more information, and use the following resources to support certain populations in applying for federal student aid:
 - NASFAA: [Tip Sheet for Financial Aid Administrators Working with Refugee and Asylee Students](#)
 - Switchboard Toolkit: Accessing Federal Student Aid for Refugee Youth and Adults: [Resources and Tips for Successful Application Processing](#)
 - For Afghan arrivals, see the [Dear Colleague Letter](#) from FSA and related [FAQs](#)
 - There is special guidance for Ukrainians in the [FSA Handbook](#)

- In-State Tuition** - A growing number of states have implemented statewide policies expanding access to in-state tuition to non-citizens. As shown in the [Refugee Advocacy Lab's](#) comprehensive list of access to in-state tuition by state and also in **Table 1**, displaced student eligibility for in-state tuition in Kentucky varies widely depending on the particular displacement category.¹

¹ For information about access to in-state tuition for undocumented students across all fifty states, there is also state-by-state data on the [Higher Ed Immigration Portal](#), which classifies the State of Kentucky as accessible “in terms of inclusive in-state tuition and state financial aid policies for undocumented students.” Learn more here: <https://www.higheredimmigrationportal.org/state/kentucky/>

TABLE 1. STATUSES & ELIGIBILITY FOR FEDERAL FINANCIAL AID & IN-STATE TUITION IN KENTUCKY

STATUS	Origin / Journey	Documents	Clear Path to Citizenship?	Access to Federal Financial Aid?	Access to In-State Tuition in Kentucky? ¹
Refugee	Resettled in the U.S. via the US Refugee Admissions Program (U.S.RAP)	I-94, Social Security Number (SSN), Employment Authorization Document (EAD)	Yes	Yes	Eligible upon establishing domicile and residency. ²
Parolee	Temporary status- mostly Afghans, Ukrainians, Venezuelans, Cubans, Nicaraguans, Haitians	Foreign passport with Customs and Border Protection (CBP) PAROLED stamp; EAD with C11 parolee category; I-94	No	Varies	Typically do not qualify for in-state tuition.
Asylee	Approved or granted asylum in the U.S.	Form I-94 with a stamp or notation of “asylum granted indefinitely” or with an admission class of “AY”; U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) Approval Letter.	Yes	Yes	Eligible upon establishing domicile and residency in Kentucky. ³
Asylum-seeker	Applied for asylum upon arrival in the US and still awaiting approval	Receipt of asylum application, EAD with C8 asylum-pending category	Varies	No	Typically do not qualify for in-state tuition.
Temporary Protected Status (TPS) holder	The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) may designate a foreign country for TPS due to conditions in the country that temporarily prevent the country's nationals from returning safely. USCIS may grant TPS to eligible nationals of certain countries, who are already in the US.	Approval notice with an I-94, Arrival/Departure Record, EAD with A12 TPS category	No	No	Typically do not qualify for in-state tuition.

Sources: Refugee Advocacy Lab, 2022 In-State Tuition Tracker; Presidents’ Alliance on Higher Education and Immigration.

¹ The Refugee Advocacy Lab. November 17, 2022. Resource: in-state tuition tracker. https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1RPMRcuB0BaYQCpKBr2M1RG_VIQgDnx_K1zwuc_H_tuc/edit#gid=0
² Section 8 of 13 Ky. Admin. Regs. 2:045. <https://apps.legislature.ky.gov/law/kar/titles/013/002/045/#xml=https://apps.legislature.ky.gov/LRCSiteSessionSearch/dtSearch/dtisapi6.dll?cmd=getpdfhits&u=e095139&DocId=42579&Index=E%3a%5cProduction%5cDTSearch%5cDTSearchIndex%5cKY%5fAdministrative%5fReg&HitCount=6&hits=607+608+609+8fb+8fc+8fd+&SearchForm=&.pdf>
³ Section 8 of 13 Ky. Admin. Regs. 2:045. <https://apps.legislature.ky.gov/law/kar/titles/013/002/045/#xml=https://apps.legislature.ky.gov/LRCSiteSessionSearch/dtSearch/dtisapi6.dll?cmd=getpdfhits&u=e095139&DocId=42579&Index=E%3a%5cProduction%5cDTSearch%5cDTSearchIndex%5cKY%5fAdministrative%5fReg&HitCount=6&hits=607+608+609+8fb+8fc+8fd+&SearchForm=&.pdf>

As shown in the table, in-state tuition is available to resettled refugees, SIVs, and asylees after they establish domicile and residency. Typically, in-state tuition is inaccessible to those with temporary statuses (e.g., TPS holders, parolees, and asylum seekers) in the state. For the purposes of the KHAS pilot, however, all KHAS recipients, including those with temporary statuses, have been granted in-state resident rates (learn more [here](#)).

Next, the complexities of status and eligibility for financial aid and in-state tuition are illustrated through a fictional case study about two sisters from Ukraine with humanitarian parole in Kentucky.

CASE STUDY 1: PAROLEES AND ACCESS TO FINANCIAL AID AND IN-STATE TUITION

Tasha is 21 and fled Ukraine in June of 2022 to come to the U.S. on the Ukrainian Humanitarian Parole program. Tasha had just completed her bachelor's in finance in Ukraine. Tasha's sister, Olena, was also able to leave Ukraine and arrived in September 2022. She came with refugee status. Olena is 18 and finished high school in June 2022. Both sisters have an intermediate level of English and want to improve their language skills quickly so that they can continue their studies in the U.S. and be ready to enter a career. They are now in Louisville, Kentucky with their mother and are living with their uncle who has been in Kentucky since 2010.

Tips and Considerations:

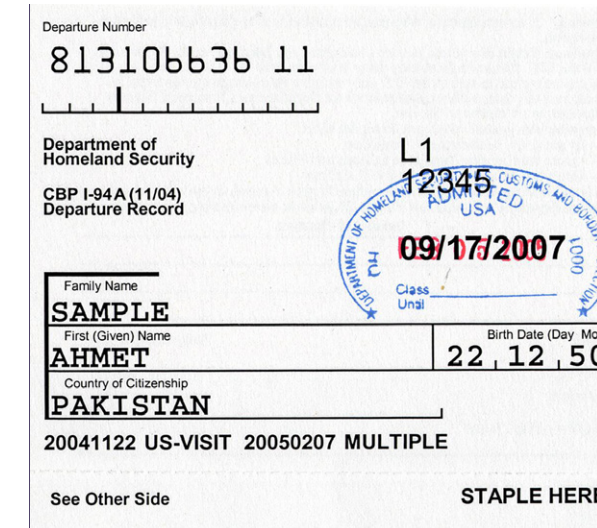
- Check [FSA guidance](#) for eligible non-citizens.
- Completing a degree in a home country impacts eligibility for aid.
- See Table 1 (above) to see if Kentucky offers in-state tuition for this population.
- Peruse the Refugee Advocacy Lab 2022 [In-State Tuition Tracker](#) for information about in-state tuition policies for displaced populations in other states.

DOCUMENTATION

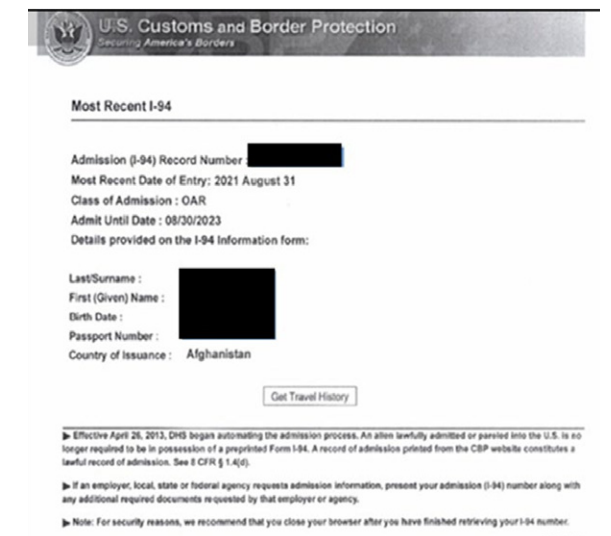
On the next page are examples of documentation that each population may have to indicate their status. Note that every case is different and a student may present a valid other form of documentation.

Refugees - Refugees will have an I-94 (see below photo), social security card, and Employment Authorization Document (EAD) that can serve as and should be accepted as identification. Eventually, they may also have a state ID and, after one year of arrival, they may apply for a Permanent Resident Card (Green Card).

EXAMPLES OF I-94 DOCUMENTS

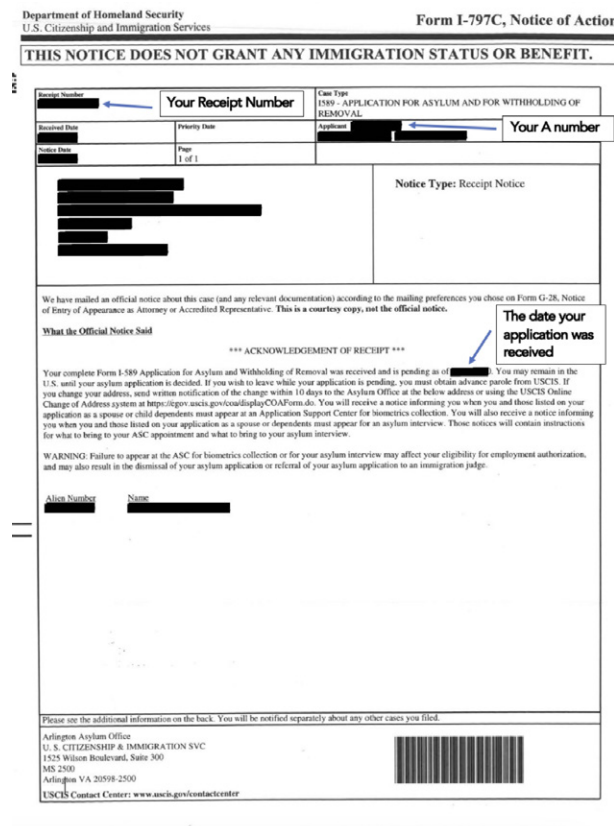
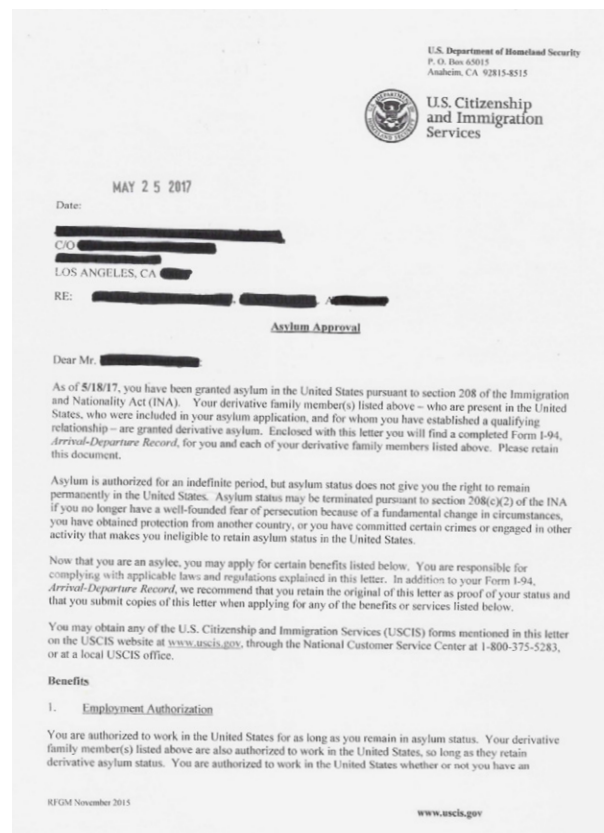


Parolees - Those granted humanitarian parole may have a foreign passport with CBP PAROLED stamp and/or parole COA notation; EAD with C11 parolee category; Electronic Form I-94 with OAR, PAR or DT COA.



Asylees - Those who have been granted asylum may have a form I-94 with a stamp or notation of "asylum granted indefinitely" or with an admission class of "AY"; and, USCIS Approval Letter.

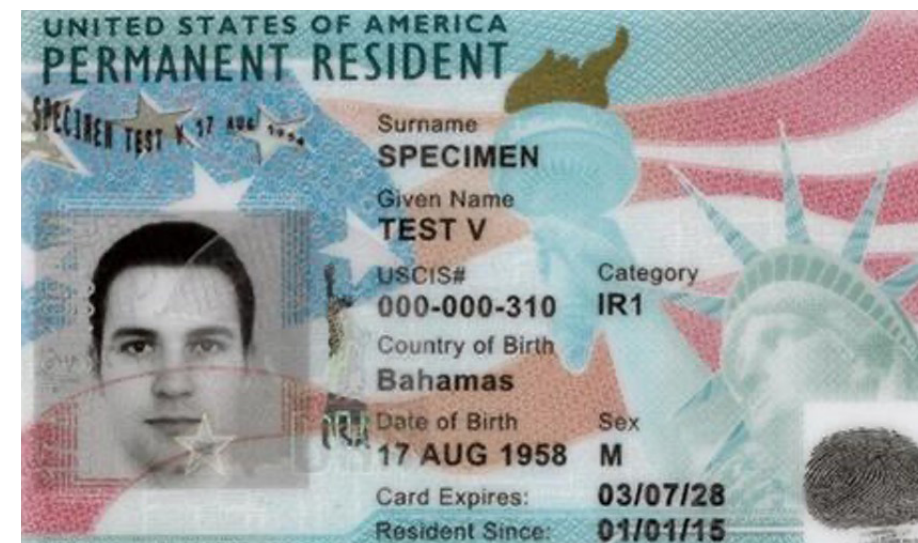
Asylum-Seeker - Once an individual applies for asylum, they will receive a receipt of asylum application or have an EAD with C8 asylum-pending category.



Temporary Protected Status (TPS holders) - Once approved, a TPS holder will receive an approval notice with an I-94, Arrival/Departure Record. Countries with TPS Designation can be found [here](#).

EMPLOYMENT AUTHORIZATION DOCUMENTATION (EADS) AND PERMANENT RESIDENT CARDS (GREEN CARDS)

- EADS include a “category” and you can look up what immigration status that “category” is associated with [here](#).
- A lawful permanent resident (LPR) or “green card” recipient will also include a “category” that indicates their “Immigrant Class of Admissions” and you can determine those [here](#).



CASE STUDY 2: A FAMILY WITH BOTH PENDING ASYLUM AND APPROVED ASYLUM CASES

A father, Alphonse, and son, Innocent, from Rwanda arrive at your office, excited about the KHAS program and hoping they can both continue their education at your institution. They both have excellent English skills and have an envelope of documentation that they are eager to show you. The packet includes a receipt of asylum applications, Form I-589, for Innocent and an electronic copy of I-94 with notation of “asylum granted indefinitely” on it for Alphonse. They also show you transcripts and diploma for Alphonse for his engineering degree from University of Kigali.

Tips and Considerations:

- Note what these documents tell you about their immigration status - one is an asylee and one is an asylum-seeker.
- Completing a degree in a home country impacts eligibility for aid.
- Check Table 1 (page 21) to see if Kentucky offers in-state tuition for these populations, or the Refugee Advocacy Lab [In-State Tuition Tracker](#) for in-state tuition policies elsewhere.
- Consider what additional supports your campus has to support these students.

Our next case study sheds light on the precarity of TPS, with guiding questions for supporting holders of this transient status.

CASE STUDY 3: TPS AND HOW TO NAVIGATE “FLUID” OR CHANGE IN STATUS

In 2006, Samy, age 7, and her family fled the economic hardships and political unrest in Venezuela, entering the U.S. on a valid tourist visa. Samy was able to attend college paying out of pocket and scrapping together community-based scholarships to cover costs. She was also able to work, as DACA provided her access to an employment authorization card.

As conditions in Venezuela worsened, Samy’s cousins, aunts, uncles, and grown siblings joined her and her family in Kentucky, entering the U.S. at various times starting in 2019 before the pandemic. Some of her family members had hoped to travel when the pandemic hit but were delayed until after July 2021. Her cousin Sasha entered in 2019 and was able to benefit from TPS; however, her cousin Marcos entered in July 2021. In order to qualify for TPS, Venezuela residents must have entered the U.S. on or before March 8, 2021 and maintain continuous presence in the U.S.

Sasha was elated to learn about the scholarship on your campus. While TPS grants individuals access to Employment Authorization Cards, she is not eligible for federal financial aid. She enrolled at a local community college, needing support with translating her high school diploma from Spanish to English and enrolling in English language learner courses. She wants to study Computer Information Technology and is eager to improve her language skills so she can obtain an internship. She is nervous though, as Venezuelan TPS work permits are set to expire on Sept 9, 2023. She is concerned she won’t qualify for internships.

Marcos was not able to benefit from TPS due to his arrival date to the United States. He is hoping to apply for asylum, but his case has not been accepted yet. Samy knows that the community college can help both Marcos and Sasha. They arrive at your office seeking more information about opportunities for them both.

Tips and Considerations:

- In one family, there are multiple statuses. What is your approach to providing high quality services and options for each family member?
- Displaced students often have very real concerns beyond academics, such as not being considered for internships due to an EAD’s expiration date. Are there legal or career services available on campus that can support students?
- Marcos is waiting to see if his asylum application is accepted. He is not yet even considered “pending asylum.” How do you advise him? Are there services on campus for undocumented students?

Check the Kentucky page on [the Higher Ed Immigration Portal](#) to learn about in-state tuition policies for undocumented, including DACA, and refugee students.

Now that you are well-versed in the different types of immigration statuses & documentation displaced students may present to you, the following steps can help you to recruit & identify displaced students in your local community, those already on your campus, or in other parts of the country.

BEST PRACTICES TO IDENTIFY AND RECRUIT DISPLACED STUDENTS

Identifying & Recruiting Students in Your Community

Identification and recruitment of prospective students in your community might not be straightforward. Here are some ways you can identify and recruit displaced students for possible admission to your institution:

- Connect with the refugee resettlement agency and other immigrant-serving organizations in your area. Check out the [Every Campus A Refuge Map Tool](#) to find agencies and organizations near your university or college.
- Share information in spaces off-campus (faith groups, ethnic groups, friends, family, etc.).
- Cast a wide net! Seek out ethnic-based organizations, faith-based groups, legal services, employers, and adult ESL classes that are in your area, including at community colleges.
- Connect to local libraries offering citizenship, ESL, and other classes for immigrants.

Identifying and Supporting Students On Your Campus

Displaced students already enrolled at your institution may need support with financing their studies, connecting with tutors and mentors, or getting acclimated to an American university or college. Here are some steps you can take to identify displaced students who are potentially already on your campus:

- Start by investigating whether any students have self-identified as refugees (e.g., through the Common App) or have applied for the FAFSA as eligible non-citizens.
- Check [which countries](#) are eligible for Temporary Protected Status (TPS). Work with your Office of Enrollment to see which students came from these countries.
- Engage as many departments, staff, faculty, and students as possible! Make sure all potential champions know about opportunities for displaced students and understand who this opportunity is for. Here are some examples:
 - Deans’ Offices, Student Affairs, Offices for Scholarships and Financial Aid can advertise this scholarship in their newsletters and outreach to students.
 - Student advisors and counselors have personal relationships with students, and can pass along information about scholarship, mentorship, or internship opportunities to interested students
- Place flyers strategically in places where students frequent (e.g., student clubs, affinity groups, gyms, cafeteria).
- Craft messaging that speaks directly to students you are looking for - e.g., “Are you an individual who came to Kentucky in the last five years as a refugee?” Be specific to help students understand that this is an opportunity meant for them.
- Enlist currently identified students as champions. Ask for their help with refining the messaging - what spoke to them when they heard about the scholarship? Are they willing to tap their own networks and spread the word through their communities (friends, family, places of worship, ethnic groups)?

SUPPORTING TRANSFER STUDENTS

It is common for displaced students to start out in two-year degree programs. Here are some ways two-year institutions and four-year institutions can work together support displaced students seeking to transfer:

- Collaboration between the 2-year and 4-year transfer advisor at the intended receiving institution to develop a holistic transfer pathway supporting the student as both an individual and as a student.
- To ensure inclusive messaging around transfer, check out the Presidents' Alliance's [Transfer Guide for Undocumented and Refugee Students](#).
- Foster a transfer receptive culture on the 4-year campus by providing opportunities for students to connect with other transfer students, especially opportunities for students to connect who have shared lived experiences.
- Improve your transfer processes through improvement science. Learn more about CPE, Western Kentucky University, and Southcentral Kentucky Community & Technical College's experiences and lessons learned through the NASH Improvement Community on Transfer Success [here](#).
- If you are interested in improving transfer processes between your institutions (i.e. pairing a 2-year and a 4-year institution), please reach out to KYHASCoP@iie.org for a referral to a transfer success expert.



COMMUNITY SCHOLARSHIP INFORMATION SESSION AT WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY



Photo Credit: Western Kentucky University, 2022

NATIONAL RECRUITMENT

For those institutions in areas with smaller displaced populations, here are some resources you can use to recruit students from across the country:

- Make announcements through online databases such as IIE's [Platform for Education in Emergencies Response](#) (IIE PEER) or reach out to [USAHello](#) to advertise your scholarship.
- Look to youth mentorship and college readiness programs around the country, such as the Office of Refugee Resettlement's (ORR) [Youth Mentoring](#) program, [Girl Forward](#), and [PAIR](#).

RESOURCES

- [How to look up the I-94](#)
- [United States Citizenship and Immigration Services](#)
- [IIE's Platform for Education in Emergencies Response](#)
- [USA Hello Scholarships for Immigrants and Refugees](#)

Being a Welcoming Campus and Fostering Belonging

This section presents a summary of learnings from our Community of Practice (CoP) workshop in October 2022, which featured the following speakers: Kathleen Herbst, Program Coordinator at Every Campus A Refuge; Pam DeLargey, Professor of Practice, School of Politics and Global Studies and Executive Director of Education for Humanity at Arizona State University; Troy Campbell, Associate Director, Dean of Students Tempe at Arizona State University; John Sunnnygard, Associate Provost for Global Learning and International Affairs at Western Kentucky University (WKU); and Mariia, a recipient of the Kentucky Humanitarian Assistance Scholarship at WKU.

Each speaker shared holistic approaches for building welcoming and inclusive campuses in Kentucky and the U.S. more broadly. [View the workshop recording here.](#)

INTENDED AUDIENCES FOR THIS SECTION:

- Student Affairs
- Admissions
- Academic Advisors
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Offices

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

- Create an inclusive admissions process for prospective students
- Remember that not all students are starting in the same place
- Ensure students can access academic support and succeed on campus
- Foster a sense of community and belonging
- Establish safe spaces for students

INCLUSIVE ADMISSIONS

Welcoming displaced students begins with making the admissions process accessible and inclusive:

- **Be clear** - Begin by explicitly outlining what displaced applicants can expect of the admission, financial aid, transfer, and other college processes. This can take place online on the admissions webpage, on social media, in recruitment materials, information sessions, and in any other applicant-facing materials. Identify and publicize trusted and trained allies on campus who can assist displaced applicants in navigating the application process.



- **Diversify tours teams** - Have a team of tour guides or student ambassadors that include a diversity of students, including those with refugee or displacement backgrounds when possible, that can give tours or have one-on-one meetings with prospective students. Additionally, train tour teams and ambassadors on how to speak with audiences of prospective students who have experienced displacement. Not only is it comforting for students to meet peers with similar backgrounds, but prospective displaced students may need additional information and context on campus norms and resources that their non-displaced peers may not.

PROMISING PRACTICE EXAMPLE: THE UNIVERSITY OF LOUISVILLE

The University of Louisville has “Diversity Student Ambassadors” as part of their admissions team. When Kentucky Refugee Ministries brings groups of prospective refugee students for a tour, one of the Diversity Student Ambassadors conducts the tour. Ambassadors are able to explain aspects of the college experience that may be new or unfamiliar to refugee students.

- Have a dedicated point person on the admissions team who is familiar with the documents of displaced applicants and, when possible, staff that speak multiple languages to interpret documents as needed.
- Conduct intentional outreach about applications to your institution through immigrant-serving community partners, such as local refugee resettlement agencies and other immigrant serving organizations. Share materials and offer to host a group of prospective students on campus, or offer to give an informational session at a community event.
- Parent and family engagement - Colleges should engage parents in these events —by providing workshops tailored to parents in various languages— and keep them involved throughout the college preparation and transfer process.

PROMISING PRACTICE EXAMPLE: BLUEGRASS COMMUNITY & TECHNICAL COLLEGE

Bluegrass Community & Technical College’s Latino Leadership and College Experience Camp (LLCEC) is an intensive two-year and four-year college preparation and leadership development summer program for Latinx, immigrant, refugee, and English as a Second Language high school students. Students are able to visit with representatives from major colleges and universities in Kentucky. Parents attend orientation workshops, which helps to increase their awareness of college resources, and they receive their own at-home curriculum they can follow while their children are at camp.

ACADEMIC SUPPORT

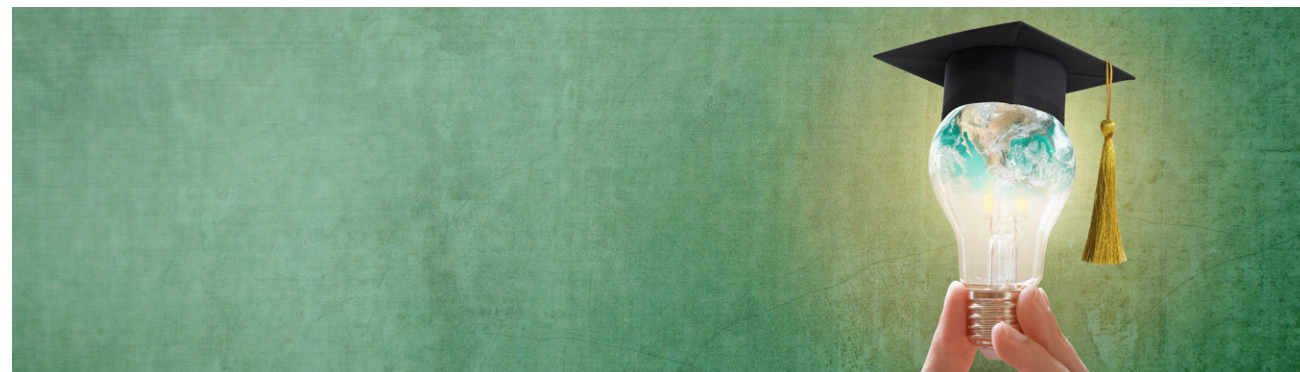
In order to ensure students can access academic support to succeed on campus, universities and colleges should provide:

- **ESL Programs** - If needed, be sure students know where and how to access support with academic English. When ESL support or classes are not available, consider partnering with another institution or community college, or a local library or other English learning provider.
- **Academic Advisors** to support displaced students in understanding class selection, requirements, and creating a career pathway.
- **Supervisors** that work to have 1-2 advisors focus their energy on supporting displaced students. Not all students are starting in the same place!
- **Full wrap around support** by engaging your disability resource center. Are there any additional note taking supports or strategies available? Can students get additional time taking tests, if needed?

FOSTERING COMMUNITY AND BELONGING

Colleges and universities can leverage the campus ecosystem to support students socially and to foster belonging in the following ways:

- Take time to understand the unique and diverse needs and assets of displaced students, in contrast to international students.
- Be mindful of the rich diversity and “wide experiences of exile” across displaced student groups.
- Don’t assume that your campus’ experience with prior displaced student populations will apply in the same way to new populations.
- Support displaced students from an asset-based perspective - consider the strengths, skills, and rich experiences and worldviews they bring.



“Resources that we assign to displaced students have to be different, with more emphasis on ESL, transportation, housing, and financial support.”

- Veena Sallan, Community of Practice Member and Vice President of Academic Affairs/Chief Academic Officer, Owensboro Community and Technical College

MAPPING AND CREATIVELY LEVERAGING YOUR ECOSYSTEM

Here are some steps you can take to creatively leverage your campus ecosystem:

- **Identify** existing services, energy, and networks of support on your campus. Where is the desire to support? Where do people have the capacity to support?
- **Gather** an [inter-departmental task force](#) to identify what might be missing and where the barriers are.
- **Identify and lean on** community partners for support.
- **Tailor or strategically combine** existing procedures and services on your campus for the unique and diverse needs of displaced students.

PROMISING PRACTICE EXAMPLE: WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY’S RESILIENT REFUGEE PROGRAM

After Bowling Green was hit by a tornado in 2021, Western Kentucky University (WKU) took the above steps to support Afghan evacuees and other displaced students struggling to get their lives started.

First, John Sunnnygard, Community of Practice member and Associate Provost for Global Learning and International Affairs at Western Kentucky University (WKU), and others at WKU gathered an inter-departmental task force to identify the barriers and how to address them. As John Sunnnygard advises, “It’s all about building bridges, and tearing down walls.”

WKU then tailored and strategically combined two of its programs. WKU took the [International Pathway to Academic Success \(IPAS\)](#) (taught for non-native students to write in academic English) and the [Global Learning Ambassadors Program](#) to create the Resilient Refugee Program, a peer-to-peer navigator program that matches student peers with incoming refugee students, accompanying them to advising and financial aid appointments to make sure they ask the right questions and walk them through the complexities of the system.

To ensure the program was tailored to displaced students, WKU leaned on community partners Refuge Bowling Green and the International Center - two community organizations with more than 35 years of working with refugees in Bowling Green.



NAVIGATOR TRAINING FOR WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY'S RESILIENT REFUGEE PROGRAM

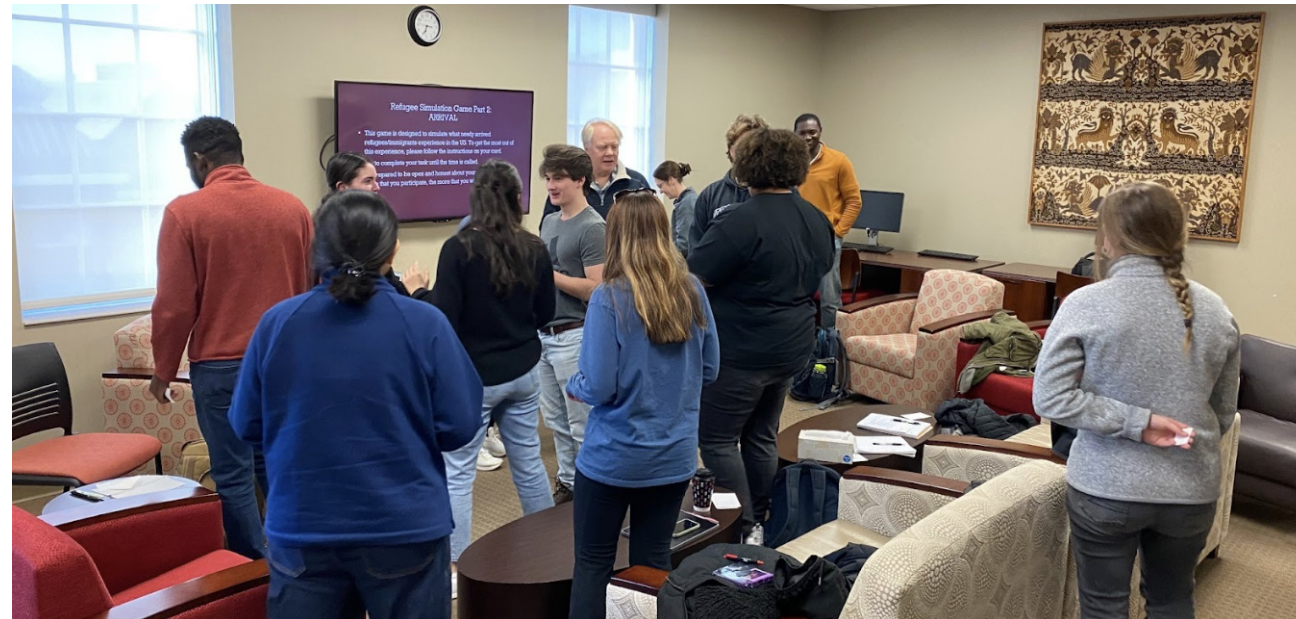


Photo Credit: Western Kentucky University, 2022

ENGAGING STUDENT LEADERS AND VOLUNTEERS

As shown above, WKU's Resilient Refugee Program engages students as peer mentors or volunteers. As John Sunnygard says, "students want to hear from other students." Here are some ways you can engage students to support their peers experiencing displacement:

- Share your mission with students in different programs, courses, athletic teams, and student organizations. Ask them to volunteer to provide support.
- Ask student volunteers what they are interested in and leverage those interests for volunteer work or to create their own passion projects.

Opportunities for mutual exchange - Kathleen Herbst, Program Coordinator at Every Campus A Refuge (ECAR) adds that there is a mutual exchange that occurs between peers. Peer mentors have tips to share about the local area and also [grow their understanding of the global context](#).

Furthermore, [engaging international students or displaced students](#) themselves as peer mentors can give them an opportunity to give back and fosters a sense of connection. Take it from Mariia, a WKU Global Learning Ambassador and Kentucky Innovative Scholarship Pilot Project (KISPP) recipient:

STUDENT EXPERIENCE

"When I arrived at WKU in January 2022, I was an exchange student from Ukraine. After the war broke out, I became a displaced student. I have asked for help many times from Global Learning Ambassadors, and I have become great friends with them. Now, as a Global Learning Ambassador myself, I've helped many new international students.

I've noticed for myself, ever since the war broke out, that when a lot of small things pile up, from buying books or a SIM card to going to the doctor, everything becomes very difficult to deal with. Having someone your age who you can freely talk to is very, very helpful.

Global Learning Ambassadors lead passion projects and cultural events with the broader community of Bowling Green. These events are very important because they help students express themselves and their culture. Last semester, we had a [Global Fest](#), where students could dance or sing. In difficult times, it is important to remember who you are, and to be able to share that with other people. I love being a Global Ambassador and I'm very happy that my university has these opportunities."

- Mariia, WKU Global Learning Ambassador and Kentucky Innovative Scholarship Pilot Project recipient, originally from Ukraine

"Supporting displaced students is all about building bridges and tearing down walls."

- John Sunnygard, Community of Practice Member & Associate Provost for Global Learning and International Affairs at Western Kentucky University

Now that you have a foundation in fostering belonging, illuminated through examples of best practices at Kentucky institutions and through the lived experience of a KISPP scholarship recipient, **Table 2** (on the next page) can spur additional ideas for creating inclusive spaces and services for displaced students.

By ensuring inclusive policies and spaces for displaced students, your campus might experience what Dr. Pamela DeLargey, Arizona State University's Executive Director of Education for Humanity, calls "collateral benefits." In other words, other populations on your campus may feel the impact of these changes for the better.

TABLE 2. ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITIES TO BUILD INCLUSIVE CAMPUSES

<p>Dining Services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer halal food and dining services that stay open late at night and early in the morning during Ramadan. • Provide spaces and opportunities for students to cook their own food. • Organize cultural food markets.
<p>Residence Halls</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure access to gender-specific halls and bathrooms. • Provide opportunities for private spaces, where feasible – do students want to cook their own food? Have their own bathroom? Have their own space / own kitchen? • Do students want to live with students from their own religious or national background? Work with the student to help them navigate this. • Ensure that Residence Life staff are trauma-informed and practice cultural humility. Connect staff to training as available.
<p>Counseling & Mental Health Services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect counselors to training to increase cultural competence and humility. • Ensure that counseling services are trauma-informed and sensitized to contexts of displacement. • Offer interpretation services as needed and possible.
<p>Supporting Students at Commuter Colleges</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create spaces to gather, with warm meals - this can be important for providing commuter students with a sense of community. • Connect students with student clubs and activities. • Hold cultural events where students can share their food, dance, and traditions from their countries of origin.
<p>General Practices for Working with Displaced Persons</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remember that there is a power dynamic in any kind of volunteer work. Prioritize agency, confidentiality, and privacy of the individual you are working with. • See the student’s full humanity beyond their displacement status. Avoid questions that can be re-traumatizing, including, “what caused you to be a refugee?” • Maintain a policy of not photographing displaced persons without their express permission, and do not share photos, names, or other identifying information publicly (such as on social media) with express permission.

“By making policies, procedures, and programs more inclusive for displaced students, you may find that other populations on campuses are impacted for the better.”

- Pamela DeLargey, Executive Director of Education for Humanity, Arizona State University

EDUCATE AND TRAIN YOUR CAMPUS

There are a number of ways your campus can further build capacity and develop ecosystems of support to help displaced students not only survive but thrive as they continue their studies and make Kentucky their home:

1. Forge partnerships with local refugee resettlement agencies or other refugee- and immigrant-serving organizations to offer training or conversations about refugee experiences to staff, faculty, and students.
2. Pursue Psychological First Aid (PFA) training, which helps campus leaders develop useful trauma-informed communication and care skills for supporting students who have experienced forced-displacement and associated trauma. Learn more about PFA with resources from [Presidents’ Alliance on Higher Education and Immigration](#) and the [International Rescue Committee](#).
3. Host a “training-of-trainers” program, in partnership with [Every Campus A Refuge \(ECAR\)](#) and the [National Association for System Heads’ \(NASH\) Refugee Resettlement Initiative \(RRI\)](#). ECAR and NASH have partnered to offer a certificate-bearing, train-the-trainer program entitled, “Creating Inclusive Communities Together: Transforming Higher Education Through Refugee Integration,” which equips higher education “champions” with the skills and confidence to take collective action to support displaced populations on their campuses. [Apply here to host this training on your campus.](#)

In April 2023, WKU co-organized a training-of-trainers with ECAR and NASH, with representatives from WKU, the University of Kentucky, Southcentral Community and Technical College, Jefferson Community and Technical College, CPE, and KHEAA – all of whom received certificates of participation (pictured below).



Photo Credit: Western Kentucky University, 2022

“CREATING INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES TOGETHER: TRANSFORMING HIGHER EDUCATION THROUGH REFUGEE INTEGRATION” TRAINING HOSTED AT WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY IN APRIL 2023, PROVIDED BY EVERY CAMPUS A REFUGE (ECAR) AND THE NASH REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT INITIATIVE



Photo Credit: National Association of System Heads, 2023



RESOURCES

Draw upon existing resources on fostering belonging:

- [Every Campus A Refuge & ECAR Chapter Implementation Checklist At-a-Glance](#)
- [Reenvisioning the University Campus: TEDx Talk by Diya Abdo](#)
- [Refugee Welcome Collective: Mobilizing University Resources for Welcome: How to Make Your Campus a Resettlement Campus](#)

Resources to help make your campus trauma-informed & culturally competent:

- Kentucky Office for Refugees’ [Mental Health Toolkit](#)
- New School’s [Global Mental Health Lab](#)
- Switchboard’s Free E-Learning: [“Toxic Stress and Well-Being Among Students Affected by Forced Migration”](#)
- New School Trauma and Global Mental Health Lab and Presidents’ Alliance on Higher Education and Immigration’s [Psychological First Aid brief](#)
- International Rescue Committee’s Training: [Psychological First Aid in Resettlement, Asylum and Integration Settings](#)
- [Cornerstone’s](#) culturally-informed mental health resources
- Request [Personalized Technical Assistance](#) from Switchboard

Education-to-Work: Supporting Career Pathways for Kentucky’s Displaced Students

This section presents a summary of learnings from our CoP Workshop in April 2023, which featured Irene Yates, the Kentucky Office for Refugees Adult Learning and Career Advancement Coordinator; Zak Holochwost, ECE Aid & Market Research Manager, Educational Credential Evaluators, Inc.; Kristina Mielke, Career Counselor, Refugees and Immigrants, Jewish Family & Career Services in Louisville; and Huda Muhammed, Associate Director for New American Cities, Lutheran Immigration & Refugee Services, who presented on the pathway from education to employment for displaced persons, through career laddering and recredentialing strategies, with resources in Kentucky and the U.S. more broadly. View the workshop recording [here](#).

INTENDED AUDIENCES

- Academic and career advisors
- Registrar’s Offices / transfer services

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

- Educate yourself and your staff on the barriers that many displaced students face in accessing work
- Identify pathways for verifying students’ prior academic or professional credentials
- Help students identify a range of career paths that match their interests and needs
- Identify the education pathways for career success that are realistic for students’ financial situations and timelines
- Be a “connector” in building students’ professional networks

CAREER LADDERING AND UPSKILLING

As Irene Yates, the Kentucky Office for Refugees Adult Learning and Career Advancement Coordinator, explains: “the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program is designed to encourage rapid self-sufficiency and early employment, thus discouraging advanced degrees and training that would delay a refugee’s ability to start work. Nevertheless, many displaced individuals aspire to start or continue previously established careers that had been disrupted in their countries of origin as they make Kentucky their new home.”

Here are some common considerations that newly resettled refugees and other displaced persons in Kentucky grapple with when planning their next steps in education and/or work:

1. **Personal goals vs. family pressure** - How can I pursue a career or employment that will allow me to support my family, both in the U.S. and overseas?
2. **Time** - Where do I need to start in my academic journey to achieve my career goals? Will I have to start over, even though I have already completed certain credentials back home? How long will it take for me to get through the prerequisites, like ESL classes? How many classes will it take to achieve my goal?

- 3. **Cost** - How am I going to pay for my education or training? How much will it cost to have my prior credentials evaluated? What would my family say about taking out a loan?
- 4. **Admissions & Documentation Requirements** - What are the admissions and documentation requirements for the program or position I am applying to? How flexible are they if I cannot access my original transcript or only have access to an unofficial transcript?

Below are some tips and strategies that you and your staff can use to help current and prospective students confront these questions and plan their educational and career goals:

- Educate your staff about the populations with whom they are working, so they can better understand the needs and potential barriers that refugee students may be facing.
- Be aware that many students are under significant pressure to financially support their family members still overseas, pushing them toward careers they perceive to be more lucrative.
- Get familiar with the higher education standards and requirements of the countries students come from. Work with international advisors to give career services staff an overview of other higher education systems/requirements.
- Gauge students' familiarity with and expectations of the U.S. higher education system, then provide an overview of the higher education system and explain in simple terms the requirements and steps to pursue certain career paths.
- Work with students to identify their interests and passions, and outline career paths that could help them support themselves and find fulfillment.

Resource: Use the World Education Services (WES) interactive [Career Pathways](#) tool to explore career pathways that displaced individuals may be eligible for in the U.S. – careers in their field of education as well as those aligned with individuals' skills.

- Ensure that students are aware of a range of careers and credential programs to pursue their interests, with the understanding that the career fields in the U.S. are much more varied than in many other countries.

Example: If a student wants to practice medicine, explore other professional pathways adjacent to becoming a doctor, such as nursing or surgical assisting. Work with the student to weigh these opportunities against financial and resource costs of certain programs over others.

- Include family members in this conversation, if possible and with the student's permission. This can ease stress on students and can make family members aware of the range of career paths in desired fields or towards lucrative careers.
- Recognize sensitivity around loans, debt, and the concept of interest throughout conversations about financing education, and that there is variation across families and cultures. Any sort of payment strategy for schooling will require a greater conversation about values, and may need to involve the student's family.

Example: interest is forbidden in Islam because it is seen as an exploitative practice. As such, some Muslims do not take out loans under any circumstances, while others are comfortable with loans; be sure to discuss interest and loans in-depth with students so that they understand their options.

- Designate specific staff or navigators to develop individualized career plans with students, setting achievable goals within specified timeframes.
- Manage students' expectations by making clear that you cannot promise long-term goal achievement, but that you can help put them on the path to achieve their goals.



BE A CONNECTOR AND A RESOURCE

Refugees resettled to the U.S. rarely get to choose where they are placed in the country, and typically do not know anyone who lives in the U.S. prior to resettlement. As such, many displaced students lack the professional and social network in the U.S. that non-displaced students have. Consider how you can help build students' networks, with the goal of increasing their access to potential employers, mentors, examples of professionals they would like to become, etc. This could look like:

- Introducing students to instructors of professional trainings or English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) courses;
- Connecting students with peers and professionals who they can talk to about their majors, interests, and career opportunities, so they can get a sense of the landscape and what they might want to do, while building their network of potential mentors and peers;
- Inviting students to networking events, and/or formally introducing students to potential employers;
- Enlisting staff or volunteers to connect students to prospective internships or employers;
- Calling up local organizations or businesses to see if they are willing to hire refugees to start their careers.
- Sharing local internship opportunities in sectors that interest students, where they can observe and talk to professionals in the field.

Ideally, this is carried about by full time staff, but could be done in coordination with peers, faculty, or professional mentors and partners.

PROMISING PRACTICE EXAMPLE: OWENSBORO COMMUNITY & TECHNICAL COLLEGE WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS

Owensboro Community & Technical College Workforce Solutions provided Basic Welding and Cutting Skills Training for HAS recipients from Congo, Rwanda, Peru, and Afghanistan (pictured below). The students received paired technical training and English as a Second Language lessons. This is a crucial example of how higher education institutions can provide career training for displaced students.



Photo Credit: Owensboro Community & Technical College Workforce Solutions, 2023

CREDENTIAL EVALUATION & RE-CREDENTIALING

Professionals who earned credentials outside the U.S. can seek credential evaluation services from private companies, which compare the academic and professional degrees received outside the U.S. These evaluations can then be used in the college and job application process, to prove individuals' experiences and expertise. Professionals can also re-credential, which is a process of renewing their credentials.

According to Erin Howard, Associate Dean for Global Learning, Bluegrass Technical and Community College (BCTC), "There are many gaps that our prospective students and current students face when it comes to re-credentialing." Experts from our session in April highlighted some of these obstacles:

- **State licensing requirements** in Kentucky typically require displaced individuals to take a Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), the International English Language Testing System (IELTS), or another official Occupational English Test (OET), whereas other states allow for English 101 as proof of English proficiency.
- **Evaluation requirements** - According to Kristina Mielke, Career Counselor for Refugees and Immigrants at Jewish Family and Career Services of Louisville, "Some universities and colleges require evaluations from companies that only accept original transcripts. That's not a reality for most displaced people." Many forced migrants lose track of official documents like transcripts in the process of migration, making it impossible to provide original transcripts. Additionally, if previous institutions have been destroyed by conflict, or if it is unsafe for the displaced individual to reveal their location to authorities in their origin country, requesting official transcripts directly from the institution is not possible.
- **Application fees** for evaluations can be too expensive for displaced applicants. Fee waivers are not always available for evaluation services, or if they are, the process for requesting them can be confusing.
- **Degree evaluation** - For professionals preparing to move to the U.S. from outside the country, sending evaluation materials from overseas is not always successful and can be anxiety-inducing for many. As Zak Holochwost, ECE® Aid & Market Research Manager, states, 'while ECE handles documents with the utmost care every day, after we mail the documents back to the applicant, we have no control over the mail system or how packages are handled after they leave our office. For applicants, this is the part that can make them uncomfortable with sending their one and only original document to us.'
- **Transferring between institutions** - Erin Howard, Associate Dean for Global Learning at BCTC, stresses, "Even granting transfer credit can be time-consuming and demoralizing for individuals trying to level up as fast as they can to complete a degree that can be recognized in the United States."

HERE ARE SOME WAYS TO HELP STUDENTS NAVIGATE THESE CHALLENGES:

- **Connect with your registrar's office** and those who handle transferring and credentials to raise awareness of the barriers many displaced students face, and best practices for easing those barriers.
- **Identify a specific champion** or dedicated team on campus who can help students navigate the process of transferring prior credentials to their new institution.
- Work with or refer students to third-party services such as **ECE® Aid** or **Word Education Services (WES)**, who can help expedite the process of validating prior degrees and certificates at a low cost:
 - ECE® Aid initially launched in August 2016 with the intention of opening the door to education for refugees and asylum seekers. The scope has expanded to include those with TPS, SIVs, and those affected by natural disasters or extreme hardship. Participate in ECE® Aid to help remove a barrier for refugees and others looking to secure an education or find a meaningful career.
 - WES strives to open pathways for individuals with international credentials. Individuals who have been displaced as a result of adverse circumstances in their country and have limited proof of academic achievements may be eligible for an alternative credential assessment through the WES Gateway Program.

YOU CAN ALSO WORK WITH PROSPECTIVE EMPLOYERS:

- When possible, ask employers to test refugee-background applicants or otherwise gauge their knowledge instead of requiring official education history documents.
- Encourage prospective employers to accept unofficial education history documents, such as unofficial transcripts, when official documents are unavailable.
- Encourage prospective employers to accept degrees without translation. While degree translation is essential for certain professions with extensive schooling requirements, it is not always required. Many employers are open to accepting the native version of the degree.

RESOURCES

- **ECE® Aid** - <https://www.ece.org/ECE/ECE-Aid>
- **World Education Services** - <https://www.wes.org/evaluations-and-fees/education/>
- **Upwardly Global** – Upwardly Global is the premier national organization working to support immigrants and refugees with international credentials to restart their careers in the United States. Learn more at: <https://www.upwardlyglobal.org/>
- **ChinUp** – career coaching for professionals from culturally-diverse backgrounds achieve career success. Learn more at: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/chin-up-global/>
- **Article26 Backpack** - The Article 26 Backpack™ empowers young people to plan and structure their higher education, training and career pathways. At its core, Backpack™ provides them with a way to safely store and share with universities, scholarship agencies, and even employers their educational background, employment history, professional achievements and goals. Learn more at: <https://backpack.ucdavis.edu/>
- **Higher Ed Immigration Portal** – The Portal provides information on professional & occupation licensure requirements for immigrants by state. Learn more at <https://www.higheredimmigrationportal.org/states/>

Sustaining and Mobilizing Support for Kentucky’s Displaced Students

This section presents a summary of learnings from our Community of Practice workshop in May 2023, which focused on how to mobilize support for displaced persons through the power of storytelling. Speakers for this workshop included: Basma Alawee, Director of External Affairs, Community Sponsorship Hub; Zakia Anwar, Co-Producer, “From Afghanistan to Arizona” and student, Arizona State University; GianMario Basana, Associate Provost for Global Engagement and Online Learning at DePaul University in Chicago; Grace Oyenubi, journalist, International Multimedia Journalist, Voice of America. View the workshop recording [here](#).

INTENDED AUDIENCES

- IHE staff directly working with displaced students
- Advancement Office/Development

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

- Stories help people to connect with others both at the intellectual and emotional level.
- Personal stories are important to help us continue our work of educating our students, communities, peers, and funders, but they have to be shared in an ethical way that provides agency to those sharing their stories.
- As educators, we have a dual responsibility towards the safety and privacy of our students and the commitments made by trustees and funders.
- Offer media training to displaced students and staff working with displaced students to build their capacity in responding to media requests.

ETHICAL STORYTELLING

Ethical storytelling is an approach to sharing stories in a way that humanizes, honors, and gives power to the person or people the story is about. Ethical storytelling prioritizes people over our own goals, by highlighting their value over our own accomplishments. It’s a way to make space for truth, and to correct misconceptions. As ethical storytellers, we are telling people’s stories, not exploiting them.

Why is ethical storytelling important?

Dominant narratives about refugees and displaced persons can portray them as a monolith, and can overlook the nuances in refugee experiences. How can educators and higher education institutions combat this by practicing ethical storytelling? How can storytelling serve and honor students with experiences of forced displacement?

1. Begin with refugee leadership.

Refugees and people with backgrounds of displacement are experts of their own lived experiences. It is important to allow their perspectives and knowledge to inform and drive the conversation, rather than just using their stories to push a certain agenda. Be open to feedback and listen to their input. You might find that the direction you initially thought a project should take changes as you collaborate. Focus on developing trust and establishing a relationship with the people whose stories you are sharing.

2. Work in respect.

Storytelling can be powerful, but it should not come at the cost of re-traumatizing the storyteller. Provide supportive, empathetic environments for refugees to share what they want about their own experiences, and respect their decisions on what they aren't willing to share about their personal stories. Be aware of safety concerns that may arise from sensitive parts of their displacement experiences. Invite the storyteller into the crafting and editing process, and make sure that the end product is only shared after you've received their consent.

3. Practice authentic messaging.

Refugees are more than just their trauma stories. Create spaces for refugees to share their successes, accomplishments, contributions, and the different parts of their identities. Focus on who they are now rather than only their experiences with displacement. Refugees should not feel like they have to share their trauma story in order to make a change or have the support of their community. Authentic storytelling also means telling their story using their own words. Truth shared in their own words will help fill in the knowledge gaps of your audience. And be mindful of the language and framing of your message, avoiding words and phrases that may perpetuate harmful biases.

4. Create space and opportunities for refugees to contribute.

By practicing ethical storytelling, you will find that trust is built and more people with shared experiences may be inspired to also share their stories or contribute in different ways to their communities. Create opportunities for this to happen. Give refugee storytellers a platform to tell their own stories, bring refugee leadership and input into your decision-making process, and seek out partnerships with refugee-led organizations.

5. Advocate for others to engage in ethical storytelling.

RESOURCES

- Ethical Storytelling: [Resources](#)
- Church World Service: [How to tell stories with human dignity - CWS \(cwsglobal.org\)](#)
- Idealist: [Communication Without Exploitation](#)

Summary and Conclusion

The toolkit is a compilation of workshops led throughout the 2022-2023 Kentucky Humanitarian Assistance Scholarship Community of Practice (CoP). Workshops invited experts and practitioners who assist displaced populations in Kentucky and across the nation to present to the members of the CoP. This toolkit is intended to amplify the guidance provided by these experts, provide best practices for continuing to implement this scholarship in Kentucky, and supply recommendations for others seeking to build similar programs to the Kentucky Humanitarian Assistance Scholarship.

SUMMARY OF TOP RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE TOOLKIT:

Section 1: Who Are Kentucky's Displaced Students and How to Recruit Them?

- Educate yourself about the various immigration statuses, documents and eligibility.
- Make scholarship criteria clear and target prospective students accordingly.
- Connect with local refugee resettlement agencies and other immigrant-serving organizations.
- Put mechanisms in place to identify and support refugee students who are already on your campus.
- Consider opportunities to recruit refugees nationally or internationally by communicating opportunities via established networks and nonprofits with audiences of refugees and other migrants.
- Form partnerships between 2-year and 4-year institutions to promote transfer opportunities.

Being a Welcoming Campus & Fostering Belonging

- Create an inclusive admissions process for prospective students, informed by the barriers that many refugees face during admissions.

- Remember that not all students are starting their higher education journey from the same place, and establish or connect students to the programs (ESL classes, academic advisors, etc.) needed to bridge academic gaps.
- Ensure that students know how to access academic support to succeed on campus, through orientation sessions specific to displaced students, on-campus mentorship or navigation support, or similar programs.
- Foster a sense of community and belonging on campus by: (1) informing yourself of the diverse needs of displaced students, (2) mapping the resources on your campus that could meet those needs, and then (3) clearly and intentionally introducing students to the resources and ensuring they understand how to access them. Throughout this process, educate actors across your campus on how to do this, too.
- Establish safe and inclusive spaces for students.

Education-to-Work: Supporting Career Pathways for Kentucky’s Displaced Students

- Educate yourself and your staff on the barriers that many displaced students face in accessing job opportunities and long-term career paths.
- Identify pathways for verifying students’ prior academic or professional credentials.
- Help students identify a range of career paths that match their interests and needs.
- Identify the education pathways for career success that are realistic for students’ financial situations and timelines.
- Be a “connector” in building students’ professional networks.

Sustaining and Mobilizing Support for Kentucky’s Displaced Students

Sharing stories of displaced students’ successes can garner financial, social, and political support for this program. But, stories must be shared in an ethical way that provides agency to those sharing their stories. As educators, we have a dual responsibility towards the safety and privacy of our students and the commitments made by trustees and funders.

- As is possible and appropriate, share stories of successes of the program to garner financial, social, and political support.
- Educate yourself and your team on how to share stories ethically in a way that provides agency to those sharing their stories.
- Begin the process of telling a story about displaced students with displaced students. Involve affected students in each step of the decision making and development process of sharing stories.
- Practice authentic storytelling, by creating spaces for students to share their successes, accomplishments, contributions, and the different parts of their identities. Focus on who they are now rather than only their experiences with displacement.
- Offer media training to displaced students and staff working with displaced students to build their capacity in responding to media requests.

We hope you found this toolkit useful and inspirational. Already, Kentucky’s leadership has inspired other states like [Missouri](#) and [Rhode Island](#), whose public higher education systems have held statewide convenings and communities of practice of their own, in partnership with other key players in refugee resettlement and integration. We hope Kentucky will continue supporting refugee inclusion in higher education and the workforce, and to continue inspiring other states.

Appendix: Resources

- Ethical Storytelling: [Resources](#)
- Church World Service: [How to tell stories with human dignity - CWS \(cwsqglobal.org\)](#)
- Idealist: [Communication Without Exploitation](#)
- [How to look up the I-94](#)
- [United States Citizenship and Immigration Services](#)
- [IIE’s Platform for Education in Emergencies Response](#)
- [USA Hello Scholarships for Immigrants and Refugees](#)
- ECE® Aid - <https://www.ece.org/ECE/ECE-Aid>
- World Education Services (WES) – Evaluation and fees: <https://www.wes.org/evaluations-and-fees/education/>
- Upwardly Global – Upwardly Global is the premier national organization working to support immigrants and refugees with international credentials to restart their careers in the United States. Upwardly Global is committed to using our knowledge and experience to build the field and shift systems to advance inclusion by supporting employer-change practices. Learn more: <https://www.upwardlyglobal.org/>
- ChinUp – career coaching for professionals from culturally-diverse backgrounds achieve career success. Learn more at: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/chin-up-global/>
- Article26 Backpack - The Article 26 Backpack™ empowers young people to plan and structure their higher education, training and career pathways. The Backpack builds pathways of connection and inclusion for all, especially refugee and at-risk young people. Learn more: <https://backpack.ucdavis.edu/>
- [Welcoming America: Fostering Belonging Individually and Structurally Series](#)
- [Refugee Welcome Collective: Mobilizing University Resources for Welcome: How to Make Your Campus a Resettlement Campus](#)
- [Switchboard: Guide: Measuring Welcoming Communities: A Toolkit for Communities and Those Who Support Them](#)
- [Every Campus A Refuge & ECAR Chapter Implementation Checklist at-a-Glance](#)
- [Revisoning the University Campus: Tedx Talk by Diya Abdo](#)
- Kentucky Office for Refugees [Mental Health Toolkit](#)
- New School [Global Mental Health Lab](#)
- [Free E-Learning: “Toxic Stress and Well-Being Among Students Affected by Forced Migration”](#)
- Request [Personalized Technical Assistance](#) from Switchboard.
- [Cornerstone](#) - mental health resources; education and training
- International Rescue Committee (IRC), [“Psychological First Aid in Resettlement, Asylum, and Integration Settings”](#)
- International Rescue Committee (IRC), [“Empathic Communication in Resettlement, Asylum and Integration Settings”](#)
- [Cultural Orientation Resource Exchange \(CORE\)](#) - free self-paced courses and more, to help anyone deliver effective Cultural Orientation to refugees, SIV holders, Afghan Parolees, and other newcomers
- Switchboard, [“Navigating Identity and Inclusion in Refugee Resettlement”](#)
- Higher Ed Immigration Portal – The Portal provides information on professional & occupation licensure requirements for immigrants by state. Learn more at <https://www.higheredimmigrationportal.org/states/>

