

15H.8 RefugeeRISE AmeriCorps program

FY2022 Annual Report to the General Assembly and the Department of Human Services

The purpose of the RefugeeRISE AmeriCorps program is to provide RefugeeRISE AmeriCorps members with training and support to increase community integration and engagement for diverse refugee communities. Awarded on a competitive basis, RefugeeRISE grants will give support to AmeriCorps programs in Iowa utilizing AmeriCorps funds awarded by the commission, other funds received in the community programs account established pursuant to Iowa Code section 15H.5, or both.

In FY2022, one RefugeeRISE AmeriCorps program was awarded state funding:

Program Sponsor	Program Name	RefugeeRISE State Funding Awarded	Total MSYs Awarded (similar to FTE)
EMBARC	RefugeeRISE AmeriCorps	\$200,000	43.5

The program has reported the following midyear results for the 2021-2022 program year (which will conclude by 11/30/2021). Note that the program’s activities continue to be impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting shifts in the needs of the refugee and immigrant population that they serve. About 40% of all member activities this year are vaccine-related, and thus do not contribute to the previously-approved performance measures. Due to hardships in restarting other programs post pandemic onset, programming has been smaller than previously planned.

Description
<p>Employment and Education Navigators will provide targeted, linguistically and culturally appropriate substantive services (substantive engagement: at least one assessment and two incidences of supportive services) to beneficiaries by providing:</p> <p>1) ongoing outreach to refugee and mainstream community to increase awareness and participation (biweekly outreach efforts); 2) assessments regarding basic needs, language, and employability skills, as relevant (one per participant, pre and post); 3) assistance to the teacher or co-teaching (at least four hours during class cycle); 4) providing feedback on curriculum and training (at least twice, before and after training); and 5) supportive services which include assistance with essential needs (food, shelter, health care, clothing), facilitating mentor/tutor matches (at least 6 hours), and supporting transitions when starting classes or work (contact weekly during the first two weeks of class and after job placement, and bi-weekly until class ends or a month on the job.) As participants face significant barriers, RISE anticipates that participants will need numerous services. RISE estimates that at least 3,000 incidences of supportive services will be provided to the 1,000 unduplicated participants. The duration and dosage for trainings will vary from a minimum 4 hours “drop-in” class to over 60 hours for industry specific training, during a six-month time frame. As the skill level of participants will vary, training must be tailored to the individuals’ specific needs. The goal is that training combined</p>

with supportive services through RISE Navigators, will increase motivation and perseverance to increase attendance and ongoing participation.	
Performance Measure- Output	Results
Number of individuals served	129
Performance Measure- Outcome	Results
Number of individuals with improved job readiness	0

The program had the following final accomplishments for the 2020-2021 AmeriCorps program year:

Performance Measure- Output	Results
Number of individuals served	530
Performance Measure- Outcome	Results
Number of individuals with improved job readiness	13

The program had lower-than-anticipated results for 2020-2021 due to the following reasons:

1) Due to COVID sites that had previously been key partners in job readiness training decided not to host members. 2) Member activities at other sites where job readiness was part of their service were diverted to COVID-19 response. 3) member services were diverted to address immediate needs in the community following the Derecho natural disaster. 4) Multiple organizations, including EMBARC, experienced staff turnover, creating gaps in knowledge on systematically tracking our measures.