

## 15H.8 RefugeeRISE AmeriCorps program

FY2023 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 FY2023, 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	34.92

\*EMBARC has undergone organizational transition and rebranding and is now called Refugee & Immigrant Voices in Action (RIVA)

The program has reported the following midyear results for the 2022-2023 program year (which will conclude by 11/30/2023).

Description	
AmeriCorps members will be supporting a target of 700 clients within the first year who participate in one of the following adult education/job readiness programs: ESL, Digital Literacy, Citizenship, Financial Literacy, Job Training, or Youth Career Awareness/Life Skills. Members will provide targeted, linguistically and culturally appropriate services to beneficiaries by providing: 1) outreach to increase awareness and participation; 2) assessments regarding basic needs and sufficiency/employability skills, as relevant (per person); 3) support to the teacher (ongoing); 4) providing feedback on curriculum and training (ongoing); and 5) supportive wrap around and essential need services and referrals. Beneficiaries will be considered for the measure if they participate in at least 8 hours of work readiness trainings during a 6 month time frame, depending on their needs. Participants who receive support services will be counted as served. As the skill level of participants will vary, training must be tailored to the individuals' specific needs. ("Sound Investments: Building Immigrants Skills to Fuel Economic Growth," Economic Mobility Corporation, 2010) The dose and duration is based on data and evaluation of previous trainings that met outcomes.	
Performance Measure- Output	Results
Number of individuals served	720
Performance Measure- Outcome	Results
Number of individuals with improved job readiness	164

The program had the following final accomplishments for the 2021-2022 AmeriCorps program year:

Performance Measure- Output	Results
Number of individuals served	4040
Performance Measure- Outcome	Results
Number of individuals with improved job readiness	276

The program's output target is to serve 1,000 individuals for the 2021-2022 grant cycle. The RISE AmeriCorps Program members served 4,040 unduplicated individuals in the last grant year, exceeding the target by more than 400%. All individuals served were checked for duplication by zip code, phone number, or date of birth.

The RefugeeRISE AmeriCorps Program proved the intervention to be effective and impactful through a qualitative research evaluation called Ripple Effect Mapping (REM). Due to the barriers and low capacity of clients and host site organizations, the traditional pre-/post assessment did not capture the impact the program made in the communities. The RefugeeRISE AmeriCorps Program quickly adapted and developed a one-time, visual, and user-friendly retrospective but the approval process took time. The retrospective survey was finally implemented in the last quarter of the grant cycle, so it does not encompass all the clients who complete the interventions prior to the survey's development. Moving forward, the RefugeeRISE AmeriCorps Program will train/implement the retrospective survey will be used for the entirety of the program year and capture programmatic impact more effectively.