THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL

Finding Employment: Factors Influencing Self-Sufficiency Rates in the Office of Refugee Resettlement's Matching Grant Program

By

Trevor Fleck

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Executive Summary

Gainful employment is a fundamental milestone for refugees to establish economic self-sufficiency. This research explores organizational characteristics, community characteristics, and job seeking best practice strategies which could influence refugee economic self-sufficiency rates under the Office of Refugee Resettlement's (ORR) Matching Grant program. Findings using ORR 2010 data and 2012 survey data of ORR grantees indicate no correlation among organizational characteristics, community characteristics, or job seeking best practice strategies and the rate of refugee employment. Building on these findings, future research should examine the influence of individual refugee characteristics on the rate of refugee employment. Studies of these characteristics should be conducted longitudinally across multiple regions and refugee placement agencies.

Background

Over 73,000 refugees were resettled in the United States in 2010.[1] These refugees flee their countries out of a fear of persecution because of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion.[2] Refugees legally enter the United States in search of freedom, peace, and opportunity.[3] However, unlike other immigrant populations, refugees have little choice in their initial relocation. Newly arrived refugees face challenging circumstances as they strive to integrate into their new communities and become self-sufficient in the midst of the recent nationwide economic downturn. This paper examines factors which may have influenced the rate of refugee economic self-sufficiency in 2010.

Importance of Issue

The Refugee Act of 1980 and Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 identify increasing economic self-sufficiency and reducing welfare dependence as the most important outcomes in refugee resettlement efforts.[4] In 2009, nearly $630 million was appropriated in the Office of Refugee Resettlement's budget for refugee resettlement.[5] It is in the public's interest for refugees to become economically self-sufficient and continue to enhance their economic status. Because of this focus, an emerging body of literature has begun to examine factors that influence refugee self-sufficiency.

Refugee Literature

The majority of refugee literature indicates refugee characteristics – education, household composition, gender, language ability, skills, and age - are the critical factors influencing their economic self-sufficiency.[6] However, an emerging body of literature has also underscored the important role played by placement agencies in the resettlement process.[7] Additionally, several studies have emphasized the importance of the social, political, and economic environment of resettlement locations.[8] These three overarching factors are illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1
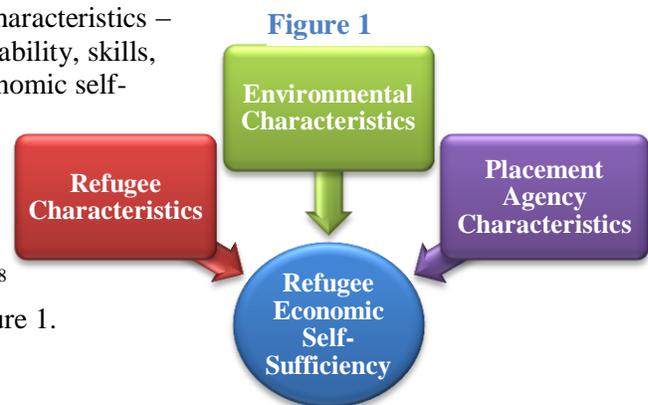
Matching Grant Program

ORR contracts with 11 voluntary agencies or "VOLAGS," who in turn contract with local refugee placement agencies across the United States to provide refugees with housing, language classes, cash assistance, case management, transportation, employment, and other social services to establish self-sufficiency.[9] These local resettlement agencies receive funds from ORR for specialized programs.[10]

One of the largest refugee programs administered by ORR is The Voluntary Agencies Matching Grant program (Matching Grant). This $65.3 million[11] program provides services to employable refugees[12] to become economically self-sufficient[13] within 120 to 180 days of program eligibility. Services required under this program include: case management, employment services, maintenance assistance and cash allowance, and administration.[14] In 2010, the latest calendar year with data broken down by placement agency, the program was administered at 241 placement agency sites across 42 states.[15]

Research Question

The release of ORR's 2010 Matching Grant data marks the first time nationwide data on refugee economic self-sufficiency are available on the local placement agency level. Below are several of the oft-cited refugee placement agency and environmental characteristics that may impact the Matching Grant program refugee self-sufficiency rate and how this study measures them (Table 1).

Table 1: *Key Placement Agency and Environmental Characteristics*		
Variable	**Justification & Direction of Relationship**	**Measure**
Method of English Language Delivery	English proficiency increases chance of employment. Unlike many external language facilities, placement agencies offer refugee-friendly options which increase access to English language education and consequently increase placement rates.[16]	0 = In-house classes; 1 = External classes; 2 = Both internal and external classes
Unemployment	High area unemployment should increase competition for jobs and have a negative impact on refugee job placement.[17] Agencies in areas of low unemployment should have higher placement rates.	Percentage unemployment in the surrounding metro area
Religious Affiliation	Religiously affiliated placement agencies guide clients to religious organizations that provide social support and potential job connections.[18] These agencies should have higher placement rates.	1 = Religiously Affiliated; 0 = Not Religiously Affiliated
Existing Refugee Network	Established communities of refugees serve as a potential support network for incoming refugees and often provide job referrals.[19] Agencies with established refugee populations of a particular ethnicity should have higher placement rates.	1 = Agency in area for 0-3 years; 2 = Agency in area for 4-7 years; 3 = Agency in area for 8+ years
Homogeneity of the Populace	Most refugees come from diverse backgrounds that could potentially make them stand out in homogeneous populations.[20] Agencies in areas of diversity should have higher placement rates.	Percent likelihood two people randomly chosen will have a different racial or ethnic background[21]

This study's research question is:

Does a refugee placement agency's religious affiliation, method of English language delivery, local unemployment percentage, existing refugee network, or homogeneity of the local populace affect its economic self-sufficiency rate reported under the Matching Grant program?

Methodology

The study used a mixed-methods research design. The quantitative component used a multiple linear regression analysis.[22] The 241 local placement agencies nationwide participating in the Matching Grant program in 2010 were chosen as the target population.[23] The qualitative element was based on stakeholder interviews,[24] an extensive literature review,[25] and survey responses from the local placement agencies.

In partnership with RefugeeWorks, the national center for refugee employment, an online survey was distributed to local placement agencies participating in the Matching Grant program.[26] Of the 241 local placement agencies participating in the Matching Grant program in the first quarter of 2010, 102 valid[27] responses (42%) were received. Appendix A lists the survey questions and aggregate responses. The responses were relatively well dispersed across VOLAG, agency size, and geography.[28] Local unemployment and diversity data were then collected based on the 102 valid responses. Finally, independent variables from ORR's Matching Grant 2010 database were added. Appendix B lists the 14 independent variables tested.

Quantitative Analysis

Multiple correlation tests were conducted on the coded survey data. Independent variables were tested against each other to prevent multicollinearity.[29] Because refugee characteristic data were not available, country of origin was used as a proxy independent variable to control for cultural characteristics.[30]

Regression analysis was then performed for each of the independent variables. Self-sufficiency rates for clients reaching 120 days during the 2010 Matching Grant calendar year were used as the dependent variable (Appendix E).[31] The regression models examined the influence of the independent variables on the rate of economic self-sufficiency among refugee clients reaching 120 days.

Qualitative Analysis

Based on stakeholder interviews,[32] several survey questions asked respondents about refugee industry placement, strategies to increase refugee employment, use of short-term vocational training, and other best practices/creative responses to increase refugee employment. These responses were categorized and a prevalence table of employment practices among placement agencies can be found in Appendix C.

Limitations

Refugee characteristic data collected by placement agencies remain dispersed and inaccessible in the aggregate. Data could only be collected on placement agency and environmental characteristics that influence refugee self-sufficiency. Additionally, this study only captures information reported by responding placement agencies creating potential self-selection bias. Lastly, multiple responses received from the same placement agency sometimes varied, making it tough to trust the validity of all responses.[33]

Findings & Recommendations

In general, the survey data show no statistically significant impact of refugee agency or environmental characteristics on refugee self-sufficiency rates after 120 days (Appendix D).[34] There are several potential reasons why no relationship exists between the variables of interest and rate of self-sufficiency.

1) Refugee employment literature emphasizes the influence of individual refugee characteristics - education, household composition, gender, language ability, skills, and age - rather than placement agency and environmental characteristics on short-term self-sufficiency.
2) Local placement agencies participating in the Matching Grant program are required to provide a minimum set of services to incoming refugees. Beyond these fairly comprehensive base requirements, variation of employment assistance practices might be marginal.[35]
3) Self-sufficiency at 120 days may not provide adequate time for placement agencies to influence refugee individual characteristics such as language acquisition, skills, and education.[36]

The surprising absence of significance among refugee agency or environmental characteristics, coupled with interesting qualitative survey feedback, leads to important considerations for placement agencies.

ESL Training

Studies of placement agencies indicate English language training is often outsourced to community colleges or other language training centers that do not offer refugee-friendly English language classroom options including: open enrollment, childcare, flexible classroom hours, and work-focused English instruction.[37] However, offering English language classes at least partially in-house, where refugee-friendly English language instruction is thought to be more readily available, did not impact refugee self-sufficiency rates. Qualitative survey feedback indicates respondents who offer ESL training either completely externally or combined with in-house training frequently used community colleges, churches, and/or non-profit literacy organizations (Appendix C). Such a range of external English language training options might allow placement agency case managers to find the best fit for a refugee's particular situation. Accordingly, refugee placement agencies should consider existing external options before devoting significant recourses to in-house English language training.

Unemployment Rate

Literature reviews and stakeholder interviews indicate high unemployment provides additional challenges for newly arrived refugees who must compete against an over-saturated native workforce familiar with United States work culture. Local employment rates for responding placement agencies ranged from 5.0

percent in Sioux Falls, SD to over 13 percent in Southfield, MI.[38] Despite these gaping ranges, local unemployment rates were not correlated with refugee economic self-sufficiency rates.

Given similar required employment practices by placement agencies, qualitative responses imply refugees with a good work ethic or existing talents might find hard-to-fill or low paying jobs despite economic conditions. Appendix A shows refugees are often placed in hard-to-fill positions with high turnover and low wages. In fact, refugee wages average just $8.50/hour with only half offering any sort of healthcare (Appendix C). In such positions, reliability and work ethic are highly valued; two qualities consistently advertised as prominent among refugee employees.[39] These surprising findings dispel the unemployment rationale often cited by survey respondents as the reason for low self-sufficiency rates. Consequently, VOLAGS should be cautious when basing their refugee allocation decisions on high area unemployment.

Religious Affiliation

Several refugee stakeholders indicated religiously affiliated placement agencies have a more robust network than secular placement agencies which guides clients to religious organizations that provide social support and potential job connections. Nevertheless, findings indicate religious affiliation of placement agencies does not have a major impact on refugee economic self-sufficiency rates.[40] The increasing proportion of refugees with a non-Christian belief system might be one reason for the null finding. The majority of religiously affiliated respondents were Catholic or Lutheran and only two reported a non-Judeo-Christian affiliation (Appendix A). Refugees with a non-Judeo-Christian religious belief system might not be easily plugged into these agency networks.[41] Another possible explanation is that secular placement agencies find other networks that support refugee employment in the same way as religious networks. Because of the limited research on the role of religious affiliation in refugee resettlement, religiously affiliated placement agencies should begin tracking if and how their faith-based networks uniquely support refugee employment.

Existing Refugee Network

The policies of ORR indicate refugees of a particular ethnicity are often placed in existing communities to foster support. Consequently, a placement agency's presence for a longer period of time could indicate a higher number of refugees of a particular ethnic origin. However, years of participation in the Matching Grant program was not correlated with economic self-sufficiency rates. One plausible explanation is that ethnic enclaves have been shown to retard the rates of self-sufficiency by limiting opportunities to learn English and interact with other cultures.[42] While assigning refugees of a particular ethnicity to existing communities may make logistical sense for placement agencies in terms of available translation services and cultural familiarity of agency staff, placement agencies may want to consider focusing less on co-ethnic resettlement if the refugee does not have existing family in the area.

Homogeneity of the Local Populace

Existing literature argues refugees in homogeneous areas often stand out and may suffer discrimination, especially during a job search. Diversity of the local populace ranged from a score of 11 in Concord, NH to a 75 in Dallas, TX measured by the *USA Today* Diversity Index. However, there is no significant correlation between an area's diversity and economic self-sufficiency rate. In areas of low diversity, much of this result might be attributed to previously resettled refugees who "paved the path" for future refugees. Additionally, employers who hire refugees are guaranteed proof of authorization to work as well as follow-up and continued coaching/support from the refugee placement agency.[43] Accordingly, VOLAGS should be cautious when basing their refugee allocation decisions on area diversity.

Employment Best Practices

In addition to refugee agency and environmental characteristics, this study examined the prevalence of certain job seeking best practice strategies. While these strategies were not quantitatively tested, they do highlight self-reported strategies placement agencies can use to increase economic self-sufficiency rates.

Developing relationships with potential and current refugee employers was the most listed best practice (42%).[44] Over 22% of refugee agencies also cited job readiness training workshops including resume building, workplace English training, computer training, and interview preparations as a best practice. Innovative practices like social media advertising, placing highly proficient English speakers first to train future refugee employees, collaboration with local partners and placement agencies, and financial literacy training were all recommended as ways to increase refugee economic self-sufficiency rates (Appendix C).[45] Despite numerous best practices listed by local placement agencies, responses showed sporadic use of best practices (Appendix A). With increasing demands on placement agencies with limited resources, it is critical for placement agencies to increase inter-agency dialogue and partnerships with the local community to leverage resources and understand the particular ways agencies apply best practices.

Summary of Findings

In sum, none of the placement agency and employment characteristics were correlated with refugee economic self-sufficiency rates.[46] These findings are supported by refugee studies that emphasize the importance of individual refugee characteristics over those of the placement agency and environment. However, the findings do hold several important considerations for placement agencies:

1. Consider external English language classroom options
2. VOLAGS should be cautious when basing their refugee allocation decisions on high area unemployment
3. Religiously affiliated placement agencies should begin tracking if and how their faith-based networks uniquely support refugee employment
4. Placement agencies should focus less on existing ethnic communities when allocating refugees who do not have family in the area
5. VOLAGS should be cautious when basing their refugee allocation decisions on area diversity
6. Placement agencies should increase inter-agency dialogue and local partnerships

Recommendations on Future Research

While this study shows that placement agency and environmental characteristics do not impact refugee self-sufficiency rates, the findings illuminate two recommendations for future research.

Conduct Longitudinal Analysis across Agency Locations

This study captures a one-year snapshot of the self-sufficiency rate across placement agencies. Future studies should re-examine factors impacting the self-sufficiency rate over several years and across agency locations. Moreover, a refugee's life does not stop at 120 days after arrival. Studies need to track how refugees use placement agencies and respond to their environment over time. Career advancement, secondary migration, and job retention can only be explored through longitudinal analysis.

Make Available Refugee Demographic Information

The current literature recognizes the complexity of refugee employment and factors that influence refugee economic self-sufficiency rates. However, future research will suffer if the remarkable shortage of data on refugee policy, program, and practice effectiveness continues. Future research should focus on individual refugee characteristics. Such research will require more open access to databases containing refugee-specific characteristics. While this information is gathered by placement agencies, it should be aggregated by ORR and shared with placement agencies and researchers.

[1] U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement. "Fiscal Year 2010 Refugee Arrivals." Retrieved from: http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr/data/fy2010RA.htm

[2] U.S. Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration. "The U.S. Refugee Admissions Process." Retrieved from: http://www.state.gov/j/prm/c26471.htm

[3] In addition to refugees, over time some other groups became eligible for the same benefits and services for which refugees are eligible including asylees (individuals who enter the U.S. without refugee status, but are later determined to meet the definition of refugee), Cuban/Haitian Entrants, Amerasians, victims of a severe form of trafficking, and Iraqi and Afghan Special Immigrants. This study generally uses the term "refugees" to refer to all such groups that qualify for ORR services.

[4] This concern has driven the refugee resettlement funding initiatives (ORR, 2007).

[5] U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement. "Budget, Policy, and Data Analysis." Retrieved from: http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr/about/divisions.htm. The U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement is an office in the Administration of Families & Children in the Department of Health and Human Services.

[6] Potocky-Tripodi, 2003; Halpern, 2008; Kuhlman, 1991; Card, 2005; Chiswick, 1991; Cortez, 2004

[7] Halpern, 2008; Mott, 2010; Beaman, 2011; Birman, Trickett, & Persky, 2004; Hume, 2005

[8] Allen, 2009; Halpern, 2008; Potocky-Tripodi, 2004; Beaman, 2011; Shields & Price, 2011; Chiswick, 1991; Kuhlman, 1991; Potocky, 1996; Yakushko et al., 2008; Hume, 2005

[9] Halpern, 2008

[10] For a full list of programs administered by ORR, please visit their website: http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr/programs/index.htm

[11] U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement, 2012. Under the Matching Grant program, ORR awards $2 for every $1 raised by the agency up to $2,200. Nearly $100,000 million was allocated for the Matching Grant program in 2010. ORR provided $65.3 million in funds for the Matching Grant program matched with $32 million from 9 voluntary placement agencies contracting with ORR.

[12] At least one member of a refugee unit must be deemed employable to qualify for the Matching Grant program per the terms of ORR's 2010 Matching Grant guidelines.

[13] Economic self-sufficiency is defined as earning a total family income at a level that enables a family unit to support itself with receipt of cash assistance grants (45 CFR 400.2). Cases and individuals receiving Food Stamps, Medicaid, etc., without cash payments, are considered self-sufficient.

[14] Refugees eligible for the Matching Grant program must be enrolled within their first 31 days in the United States.

[15] U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement, 2012. "Voluntary Agencies Matching Grant Program FY 2012." Retrieved from: http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr/programs/match_grant_prg.htm

[16] Halpern, 2008; interviews with representatives from LFS Raleigh, World Relief Durham, USCRI Raleigh

[17] Chiswick, 1991; Borjas, 1985; Connor, 2010; Halpern, 2008; Potocky-Tripodi, 2003

[18] Putnam, 2005; Nawyn, 2006; Allen, 2009

[19] Shields & Price, 2011; Chiswick, 1991; Halpern, 2008; Allen, 2009

[20] Shields & Price, 2011; Chiswick, 1991; Halpern, 2008; Allen, 2009

[21] USA Today, 2010. "Census 2010 Data Show Population and Diversity Trends." Retrieved from: http://www.usatoday.com/news/census/index

[22] Regression analysis is a technique that can be used to describe the nature of the statistical relationship between a group of independent variables and a single dependent variable. A p value of 0.05 means that one can be 95 percent confident that the relationship between an independent variable and the dependent variable is statistically significant.

[23] Local placement agencies participating in the Matching Grant program are under contract with the Office of Refugee Resettlement. Each year, several agencies are added or eliminated from the Matching Grant program based on an evaluation of performance and refugee placement needs.

[24] A total of eight phone and in-person interviews were conducted with refugee placement directors in the Raleigh area, experts at ORR, and RefugeeWorks.

[25] The literature search was expanded to include all immigrant employment. Case studies, works solely examining other immigrant populations, and refugee issues not directly related to employment were omitted. Additionally, studies on how refugee employment impacts the job market and availability of jobs for natives were not examined. The literature search reviewed articles published after 1995. The databases used included JSTOR, Google Scholar, Oxford Journals, ISI Web of Science, and SAGE.

[26] The online survey was disseminated by RefugeeWorks to their listserv consisting of over 2,000 refugee contacts. Additionally, the survey was distributed to the 9 VOLAG coordinators participating in the Matching Grant program for dissemination to their local placement agencies.

[27] Several responses were duplicates from the same agency. In the case of duplicates, the response of the Matching Grant Coordinator was chosen. If neither response was from the Matching Grant Coordinator, the higher ranking employee's survey was chosen.

[28] Responses were received from 34 of the 43 states with local placement agencies participating in the Matching Grant program. Of the 9 VOLAGS, the proportion of total responses ranged from 4% to no more than 23%. 66 of the respondents had staff larger than 10 while 36 had staff of 10 or less.

[29] Multicollinearity refers to a situation in which two or more independent variables in a multiple regression model are highly linearly related. A correlation of 0.6 or above indicates high correlation. In such instances, one of the independent variables must be removed to prevent miscalculation of the significance of individual variables.

[30] Data on country of origin were gathered from the online survey disseminated to local placement agencies. Respondents were given a choice of 11 countries based on the Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration's list of the largest refugee populations to resettle in the United States in 2010.

[31] The final regression was run with 88 of the 102 respondents. Placement agencies that had 7 or fewer Matching Grant cases in 2010 were left out to provide a more accurate self-sufficiency rate assessment. Additionally, the number of clients reaching 120 days includes clients from Q4 2009 and excludes clients who started in Q4 2010.

[32] Interviews with representatives from LFS Raleigh, World Relief Durham, USCRI Raleigh, and RefugeeWorks.

[33] Responses varied on questions asking about best practices employed, industries where refugees were recently placed, and short-term vocational training offered. There were no inconsistencies on questions related to agency staff, religious affiliation, or refugee populations served. In the case of duplicates, the response of the Matching Grant Coordinator was chosen. If neither response was from the Matching Grant Coordinator, the higher ranking employee's report was chosen.

[34] Appendix D shows employed adults with full-time jobs is statistically significant to the .05 level. However, a correlation test of this independent variable and the dependent variable resulted in a correlation of just 0.314, well below the .6 threshold.

[35] At a minimum, agencies must provide: housing, language classes, employment services, cash assistance, case management, and transportation. In particular, employment services must include: job development, job counseling, placement assistance, job follow-up, services leading to a job upgrade, subsidized employment up to the 120 day milestone, and long distance employment assistance in rare situations.

[36] As a counterpoint to this logic, other literature containing interviews with refugees depicts the waning influence of the placement agency after the initial 6-12 months of arrival (Mott, 2010; Halpern, 2008; Birman et al., 2004).

[37] Halpern, 2008; Stakeholder interviews with LFS Raleigh and World Relief Durham

[38] Average unemployment for 2010 calendar year

[39] RefugeeWorks. "Hire a Refugee." Retrieved from: http://www.refugeeworks.org/about/hire_a_refugee.html

[40] Of the responding placement agencies, 63% indicated a religious affiliation.

[41] Allen, 2009

[42] Shields & Price, 2011; Chiswick, 1991; Allen, 2009

[43] RefugeeWorks. . "Hire a Refugee." Retrieved from: http://www.refugeeworks.org/about/hire_a_refugee.html

[44] All 126 respondent comments were used for best practice collection.

[45] Employment strategies explicitly listed in the online survey question options were not included in respondent open remarks on best practices to eliminate redundancy.

[46] While country of origin was intended as only a control variable, using the percentage of refugees from each country managed by a particular agency as separate independent variables yielded no correlation between country of origin and economic self-sufficiency rate. While these findings conflict with both the prevailing viewpoint of the literature (Gleeson, 2011; Kuhlman, 1991; Yakushko et al., 2008) and several stakeholder interviews, they do add support to the importance of individual refugee characteristics regardless of country of origin.

Acknowledgements

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Appendix A: Refugee Survey

Refugee Placement Agency Survey

This survey will be used as part of a study at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill examining factors that influence refugee employment placement under the Office of Refugee Resettlement's Matching Grant program. There are 11 questions and the survey should take no more than 3-5 minutes. Results, including recommendations, will be shared with all survey participants. Thank you in advance for taking time to help further refugee resettlement research.

Respondent Information
Your Name
Title
Email Address
Agency Name
Agency Location (city, state)

Survey Questions and Possible Answer Choices	# of Responses	Percent
Question 1 of 11: Please indicate the approximate number of staff, working at least 15 hours/week (paid or unpaid), currently employed at your refugee placement agency.		
○ 1-5	19	19%
○ 6-10	17	17%
○ 11-15	21	20%
○ 16-20	13	13%
○ 21 or more	32	31%
Question 2 of 11: Approximately how many employees spend at least 15 hours/week helping refugees find employment (ex: employment specialists)?		
○ 1-3	64	62%
○ 4-6	32	32%
○ 7 or more	6	4%
Question 3 of 11: Approximately how many of your staff are themselves refugees or asylees?		
○ 1-9	83	81%
○ 10-15	14	14%
○ 16 or more	5	5%
Question 4 of 11: Does your agency offer English classes in-house for refugees or refer/work with an external organization such as a community college or literacy group?		
○ In-house	16	16%
○ External organization (See Appendix C)	48	47%
○ Both in-house and external organizations (See Appendix C)	38	37%

Survey Questions and Possible Answer Choices Cont.	# of Responses	Percent
Question 5 of 11: What are the primary industries where refugees in your agency participating in the Matching Grant program have been most often placed in the past 2 years?		
❑ Agriculture	12	12%
❑ Medical	8	8%
❑ Hospitality	59	58%
❑ Meat Packing	51	50%
❑ Restaurant	57	56%
❑ Retail	32	31%
❑ Housekeeping	76	75%
❑ Construction	14	14%
❑ Self-employed	3	3%
❑ Manufacturing	57	56%
❑ Childcare	7	7%
❑ Transportation/Warehousing	34	33%
❑ Administrative Support	3	3%
❑ Public Administration/Government	2	2%
❑ Mining	0	0%
❑ Landscaping	15	15%
❑ Other (See Appendix C)	6	6%

❑ **Question 6 of 11:** In 2010, what were the top populations served by your agency's Matching Grant program? Please select the country of origin and approximate percentages based on total refugees in your Matching Grant program. If data is not immediately accessible, please use approximate estimations. Please make sure cumulative percentage ranges add up to 100%.

	Did not work with in 2010	Less than 10%	10-25%	26-40%	41-60%	61-100%
Iraq	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Iran	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Palestine	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Bhutan	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Cuba	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Ukraine	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Burma	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Vietnam	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Somalia	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Eritrea	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Dem. Rep. Congo	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Other (See Appendix C)	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑

Survey Questions and Possible Answer Choices Cont.	# of Responses	Percent
Question 7 of 11: From the following strategies to increase refugee employment, which does your agency use regularly? Please mark all that apply.		
❑ Public transportation support	85	83%
❑ Carpooling or hiring a van	64	63%
❑ Day care for clients participating in ESL education	30	29%
❑ Use of family mentor volunteers	62	61%
❑ Subsidized driver's training	25	25%
❑ Certification/re-certification support	22	22%
❑ Computer/internet lessons	37	36%
❑ Translation services for job interviews	72	71%
❑ Advertising refugee availability to prospective employers	42	41%
❑ Job fairs	63	62%
❑ Follow-up with refugee and employer after hiring	96	94%
❑ Job Workshops/Readiness Training	87	85%
❑ Other (see Appendix C)	11	11%
Question 8 of 11: Does your agency offer short-term vocational training assistance for Matching Grant clients?		
❑ Yes	38	37%
❑ No	64	63%
Question 8a of 11 (contingent on answer to question 8): You indicated your agency offers short-term vocational training assistance for Matching Grant clients. Please list the types of short-term vocational training that your agency offers.		
❑ Entry level healthcare (including nursing and phlebotomy)	15	39%
❑ Hospitality training	18	47%
❑ Landscape training	1	3%
❑ Janitorial services training	7	18%
❑ Computer training	8	21%
❑ Other (See Appendix C)	8	21%
Question 9 of 11: What best practices/creative responses has your agency used to improve refugee employment placement given the economy?		
**See Appendix C		

Survey Questions and Possible Answer Choices Cont.	# of Responses	Percent
Question 10 of 11: Is your agency religiously affiliated?		
❑ Yes	64	63%
❑ No	38	37%
Question 10a of 11 (contingent on answer to question 10): You indicated your agency is religiously affiliated. What is your agency's denomination?		
❑ Catholic	23	36%
❑ Lutheran	16	25%
❑ Methodist	0	0%
❑ Baptist	0	0%
❑ Evangelical	11	17%
❑ Islam	2	3%
❑ Judaism	10	16%
❑ Other	2	3%
Question 11 of 11: Approximately how many years has your agency site been participating in the Matching Grant program?		
❑ 0-3 years	11	11%
❑ 4-7 years	21	21%
❑ 8 or more years	70	69%

Appendix B: Variables Tested

Variable	Measure	Source	Justification
Economic Self-Sufficiency Rate **(Dependent Variable)**	Percentage measure of self-sufficiency rate for cases reaching 120 days/total number of cases reaching 120 days	ORR 2010 Matching Grant Data	Economic self-sufficiency within 120 days is the success benchmark for all placement agencies.
Religious Affiliation	1 = yes, 0 = no	Religious affiliation of VOLAG (parent agency) as reported by ORR	Religiously affiliated agencies guide clients to religious organizations that provide social support and potential job connections.
Evangelical Community Network	1 = Evangelical agency, 0 = all other religious agencies and non-religious agencies	Online Survey Data	According to Putnam, evangelical-based organizations are bonders and other religious-based organizations are bridgers. Bridgers are associated with growth. Community ties with bridgers would create a more accepting environment for refugees.
Method of ESL Delivery	0 = In-house classes; 1 = External classes; 2 = Both internal and external classes	Online Survey Data	English proficiency increases chance of employment. Unlike many external language facilities, placement agencies offer refugee-friendly options which increase access to English language education and consequently increase placement rates
Unemployment	Percentage unemployment in the surrounding metro area	US Department of Labor's Metropolitan Statistical Area Data for 2010 Annual Unemployment	High area unemployment should increase competition for jobs and have a negative impact on refugee job placement.
Existing Refugee Network	1 = Agency in area for 0-3 years; 2 = Agency in area for 4-7 years; 3 = Agency in area for 8+ years	Online Survey Data	Established co-ethnic communities of refugees serve as a potential support network for incoming refugees and often provide job referrals.
Homogeneity of the Local Populace	Measured using USA Today diversity index broken down by county which scores populations 0-100 based on the percentage likelihood that two people chosen at random will have a different racial or ethnic background. Based on 2010 census data.	USA Today 2010 Diversity Index	Most refugees come from different backgrounds that are not Judeo-Christian. This could mean different race, ethnicity, dress or some other characteristics that potentially make refugees stand out in homogeneous populations.

Full Time Staff	1 = staff of 11 or more, 0 = staff of 10 or less	Online Survey Data	Larger agencies may have more shared resources and more specialized, robust programs to increase refugee employment.
Job Specialists on Staff Ratio	Number of staff devoting at least 15 hours per week to refugee employment/number of cases	Online Survey Data	Employment specialists focus on increasing refugee employment. A higher ratio of job specialists/cases would mean more resources dedicated to refugee employment.
Refugees on Staff	Number of refugees on staff	Online Survey Data	Former refugees are often able to better relate to the experiences of incoming refugees. This could increase trust, collaboration, and ultimately lead to better agency outcomes.
Country of Origin Majority	At least 61% of a placement agency's refugees in 2010 came from the same country. 1 = yes, 0 = no.	Online Survey Data	Placement agencies can better align their employment efforts based on similar cultural traits if they have a fairly homogeneous incoming refugee clientele.
Short-Term Vocational Training	1 = yes, 0 = no	Online Survey Data	Short-term vocational training is often necessary for refugees to gain the necessary skillsets to obtain a job with a high enough wage to become self-sufficient.
Healthcare Percentage	Percentage of working adults in Matching Grant program with employer-sponsored healthcare within 120 days of job placement	ORR 2010 Matching Grant Data	Healthcare can comprise a large portion of a low-income family's budget. Employer-sponsored healthcare would increase the likelihood that a refugee would be economically self-sufficient.
Full-Time Jobs	Percentage of working adults in Matching Grant program with full-time jobs	ORR 2010 Matching Grant Data	Full-time jobs would increase the likelihood of economic self-sufficiency.

Appendix C: Qualitative Survey Response Inventory

Qualitative Questions and Categorized Answers	# of Responses	Percent
Best practices/creative responses agencies report using to improve refugee employment placement		
Employer Relationships	53	42%
Attracting Talented Job Developers	3	2%
Robust Employment Workshops	28	22%
Collaboration with Local Partners	5	4%
Use of Social Media Advertisement	2	2%
Internship/Temp. Programs	7	6%
Employer Appreciation Event	3	2%
Finding a Employer/Employee "Good	3	2%
Placing Proficient English Speakers	5	4%
Leveraging Refugee Communities	4	3%
Expand Geographic Search	3	2%
Business Networking Groups	1	1%
Collaboration with Other Resettlement Agencies	3	2%
Marketing to Different Industries	5	4%
Financial Literacy Training	1	1%
Employer Advisory Committee	3	2%
Locate Office Closer to Major Businesses	1	1%
Specialized Training	5	4%
Refugee Incentive Pay for Employment by Day 120	1	1%
External organizations used for ESL training		
Non-Profit	37	35%
Community College	52	49%
Church	10	9%
Adult Learning Centers	10	9%
Tutor Volunteers	7	7%
Refugee ESL Center	6	6%
"Other" primary industries where refugees participating in the Matching Grant program have been most often placed in		
Laundry	1	1%
Packaging/Distribution	2	2%
Cleaning	2	2%

Qualitative Questions and Categorized Answers Cont.	# of Responses	Percent
"Other" country of origin for top populations served by agency's Matching Grant program		
Zimbabwe	1	1%
Sri Lanke	1	1%
Syria	1	1%
Ethiopia	12	12%
Uganda	2	2%
Columbia	2	2%
Sudan	11	11%
Cameroon	1	1%
Uzbekistan	3	3%
Afghanistan	4	4%
Burundi	3	3%
Kenya	1	1%
Venezuela	1	1%
Rwanda	2	2%
Liberia	3	3%
Haiti	2	2%
North Korea	1	1%
Tanzania	2	2%
Djibouti	2	2%
El Salvador	2	2%
Nepal	2	2%
"Other" strategies to increase refugee employment		
Volunteer to gain work experience	1	1%
Assistance with hiring paperwork	2	2%
Cold calling	1	1%
Driver's education classes	1	1%
Subsidized work uniforms	1	1%
Contact with business leagues	1	1%
Finance and budgeting workshops	1	1%
"Other" short-term vocational training offered		
Food service training	4	4%
Housekeeping service training	1	1%
Machinest training	1	1%
Tax preparation training	1	1%
Truck driver training	1	1%

Appendix D: Key Variable Regression Results

Regression Results

	Self-Sufficiency Rate		
Adjusted R^2	**0.107**		
Significance of Model	**0.064**		
F	**1.747**		
	B*	**t**	**Sig.**
(Constant)		1.646	0.104
Full Time Staff	-0.160	-1.203	0.233
Number of Job Specialists Divided by Number of Clients Reaching 120 Days	-0.062	-0.465	0.643
# of Refugees/Asylees on Staff	.011	.084	0.933
English Language Classes	-0.152	-1.369	0.175
Country of Origin Majority	0.126	1.095	0.277
Short-term Vocational Training	-0.096	-0.862	0.391
Religious Affiliation	0.129	1.140	0.258
Evangelical	0.192	1.636	0.106
Years in Matching Grant Program	-0.082	-0.769	0.445
Average Full-Time Wage	-0.046	-0.378	0.707
Percentage of Working Adults in Matching Grant Program with Employer-Sponsored Healthcare	0.142	1.075	0.286
Adults in Matching Grant Program with Full-Time Jobs as a Percentage	0.245	2.027	0.046
Metro Area Unemployment Rate	-0.116	-0.821	0.414
Homogeneity of Local Populace using Diversity Index	0.098	0.825	0.412

* Standardized coefficient used for all Beta Values

Appendix E: Self-Sufficiency Frequency

Placement Agency Economic Self-Sufficiency Rates

Y-axis: Number of Placement Agencies (0, 5, 10, 15, 20)

X-axis: Self-Sufficiency Rates (0-12, 13-20, 21-30, 31-40, 41-50, 51-60, 61-70, 71-80, 81-90, 91-100)