OVERVIEW. The Refugee and Entrant Assistance (REA) Account is administered by the Department of Health and Human Services’ (DHHS) Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR). While ORR was originally established to assist refugees resettled to the U.S. over the past three decades its mandate has grown and the populations it serves have become more varied, their needs more complex, and their numbers more difficult to predict. With the most displaced persons now in recorded history, providing robust funding for these vulnerable populations is critical.

Refugee Council USA (RCUSA) is a coalition of non-governmental organizations committed to protecting and assisting refugees and other forcibly displaced people. Adequate funding for the REA accounts ensures local communities have the resources they need to help refugees integrate and thrive as they rebuild their lives. The U.S. should commit to provide protection to 200,000 refugees in FY18 through resettlement and alternative admissions pathways, with at least 140,000 admitted through the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program. A commitment to admit more refugees must be matched with a level of resettlement funding which ensures that refugees have access to the services and support they need to integrate quickly and successfully upon arrival in welcoming American communities. A detailed description of the REA account and each program area listed below is provided in the pages that follow.

FY 2018 Office of Refugee Resettlement Funding Needs for the Refugee and Entrant Assistance (REA) Account of Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Areas</th>
<th>FY16 Enacted (75,000 refugees)*</th>
<th>FY17 OMB Request (100,000 refugees)</th>
<th>FY17 RCUSA Recommends (110,000 refugees)</th>
<th>FY18 RCUSA Recommends (140,000 refugees)**</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transitional &amp; Medical Services</td>
<td>$490,000,000</td>
<td>$581,357,000</td>
<td>$1,044,530,000</td>
<td>$1,201,290,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Services</td>
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<td>$176,927,000</td>
<td>$423,890,000</td>
<td>$487,370,000</td>
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<td>Refugee Health Promotion</td>
<td>$4,600,000</td>
<td>$4,600,000</td>
<td>$14,000,000</td>
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<td>Targeted Assistance</td>
<td>$47,601,000</td>
<td>$55,601,000</td>
<td>$90,740,000</td>
<td>$104,420,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Replenishment of Reprogrammed Funds</td>
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<td></td>
<td>$66,500,000</td>
<td>$66,500,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Subtotal of Resettlement Services</td>
<td>$697,201,000</td>
<td>$818,485,000</td>
<td>$1,639,660,000</td>
<td>$1,875,680,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Foreign-Born Trafficking Victims</td>
<td>$13,000,000</td>
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<td>$23,000,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Domestic Trafficking Victims</td>
<td>$5,755,000</td>
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<td>Torture Survivor Assistance</td>
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<td>Unaccompanied Children</td>
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<td>$1,226,000,000</td>
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<td>$1,492,875,000</td>
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<td>Contingency Fund[ii]</td>
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<td>$95,000,000</td>
<td>$100,000,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total – All REA Activities</td>
<td>$1,674,691,000</td>
<td>$2,184,485,000</td>
<td>$3,027,660,000</td>
<td>$3,530,555,000</td>
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</table>

*FY16 funding allocations were based upon a presidential determination of 75,000. The PD was increased to 85,000 without a corresponding change in funding levels. The State Department has indicated that the PD for FY17 will be 110,000.
**RCUSA’s FY17 and FY18 funding requests are based on refugee resettlement numbers of 110,000 and 140,000 and an additional 90,000 vulnerable persons that are served by ORR who are not resettled refugees.
# REA Account Descriptions and RCUSA Recommendations for FY18

**Summary.** The Refugee and Entrant Assistance (REA) Account is funded through the appropriations for Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Programs (LHHS). It is administered by the Department of Health and Human Services’ Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR). ORR was originally established in 1980 to assist refugees resettled by U.S. to obtain self-sufficiency. Today, the account has four major components:

- Resettlement services for: refugees and asylees (including unaccompanied refugee minors), Cuban and Haitian Entrants, and Iraqi and Afghan recipients of Special Immigrant Visas (SIVs)
- Special programs for to victims of human trafficking
- Assistance to survivors of torture living in the U.S.
- Care, placement, and post-relief services for unaccompanied children (UCs) who are encountered in the U.S. or present themselves at the U.S. border.

The REA account provides vital services to some of the most vulnerable populations in the United States. Below you will find RCUSA’s recommended funding levels for FY18, as well as a detailed description of the populations served during the last fiscal year for which there is comprehensive data, highlights of critical programming for these populations, and recommendations to strengthen ORR’s fiscal stability.

**Populations Served by ORR.** ORR estimates that it served over 202,000 newly arrived vulnerable individuals in FY15. This included 69,933 resettled refugees. It also includes 7,226 Iraqi and Afghan Special Immigrants who helped U.S. Government efforts during military conflicts in those countries, and 33,726 unaccompanied children from Central America. ORR also served 61,000 Cuban and Haitian Entrants, 21,000 asylees, 2,081 victims of trafficking, and over 6,000 torture survivors. Meanwhile, ORR continued to serve eligible refugees and other entrants who arrived in recent years. The U.S. Department of State has indicated that refugee resettlement arrivals are expected to be 85,000 in FY16 and 110,000 in FY17, in addition to an estimated 113,000 non-refugee arrivals to be served by ORR. Faced with the current global refugee crisis, RCUSA continues to advocate that the U.S. admit refugees at higher levels commensurate with global needs. *Unfortunately, ORR’s budget has not kept pace with its growing mandate, its evolving challenges, or the cost of living increases and inflation.*

RCUSA not only urges Congress to increase crucial capacity that ORR needs to serve more refugee arrivals in FY18, but also to increase capacity for ORR to serve the other populations under its mandate. The number of Cuban Entrants continues to increase, and the number of Iraqi and Afghan SIV recipients more than doubled between FY14 and FY16, continuing to surpass ORR’s yearly projection of needs. The number of unaccompanied children from Central America seeking protection is poised to near or surpass FY14 levels. Arrivals of all these groups are expected to remain high in FY17 and FY18.

**Critical Programming Served by REA Accounts.** The following highlights critical programs within the REA accounts for FY18, but does not include all program activities:

I. **Resettlement Activities**

A. **Transitional and Medical Services (TAMS)**

1. **Matching Grant Program:** The Matching Grant Program, a public-private partnership, is ORR’s most successful program to help refugees quickly achieve self-sufficiency. It empowers refugees and other eligible individuals to become self-sufficient without needing to access federal or state assistance programs. The program leverages public funds with private donations at a 2:1 ratio, requiring nongovernmental agencies to match federal government contributions. A funding level
of $180 million for Matching Grant would increase the number of slots to 60,000 and increase the per capita grant to $3,000 per eligible person, thereby helping newcomers find and keep jobs.

2. **Unaccompanied Refugee Minors (URM):** Unaccompanied refugee minors (URM) arriving through the U.S. Refugee Resettlement Program are being identified in high numbers within the Congolese, Eritrean, and Burmese caseloads. There are likely high numbers among refugees fleeing Syria and Iraq, and there will be additional children arriving through the new Central American Minor (CAM) resettlement program. Also, a subset of unaccompanied children arriving at U.S. borders are eligible for URM status and long-term foster care. They can become part of the URM program if they are judged to be asylees, victims of trafficking or serious crimes, or neglected, abused, or abandoned children. Given the growing number of unaccompanied children in need, RCUSA recommends $157.1 million for URM in FY18.

B. **SOCIAL SERVICES**

1. **Emergency Housing Assistance:** While federally-funded programs administered by local refugee resettlement agencies are highly successful in assisting refugees in securing employment and housing, the temporary assistance they receive upon arrival is often insufficient to cover their housing costs before they attain self-sufficiency. Safe and decent housing is central to successful integration for any newcomer. Providing an additional $57 million to Social Services for housing assistance would help refugees pursue integration.

2. **School Impact Grants:** At least $26 million dollars should be allocated to the highly impactful School Impact Grant program, which provides schools serving refugee children a range of training, resources, and support to help set them and the refugee students they serve up for success.

3. **Intensive Case Management:** The U.S. refugee program resettles refugees who are in urgent need of protection, such as women heads of households, victims of torture, those with significant physical or mental health vulnerabilities, and refugees from protracted refugee situations (e.g., refugees who have been in a camp for five or more years). Such refugees need further support toward integration and self-sufficiency. A funding increase of $15 million for critical case management programs would build on funding now available for this purpose through the Preferred Communities Program.

4. **Community Outreach:** The proposed $10 million in FY18 would fund local programs that increase direct volunteer engagement and cross-cultural exchanges and promote community integration of refugees. There is currently heightened interest in U.S. communities about refugee resettlement; offices report receiving at least double the number of volunteer inquiries than in previous years, and a large increase in speaking and information requests. This grant would establish dedicated staff to liaise with communities about refugee resettlement and harness the widespread support for refugees.

C. **REFUGEE HEALTH PROMOTION:** While needs for medical and mental health services have increased, funding for these services has been stagnant for more than a decade. Refugee Health Promotion should have a funding level of $16 million for 230,000 people served and $20 million for 290,000 people served to help ensure that victims of torture, trafficking, and trauma, refugees with disabilities and chronic illnesses, and those who have had little or no access to medicine can receive needed services. Such funding would also allow local offices to comply with the Affordable Care Act.

II. **Victims of Trafficking:** More funding is needed to combat human trafficking. Since 2002, there has been an increase of over 500% in the number of foreign national victims identified and certified as in need of care. The U.S. must increase education and prevention for at-risk groups, provide services to the increasing number of identified trafficking victims, and extend service periods to allow victims time to recover and attain self-sufficiency. A funding level of $23 million for foreign-born trafficking victims will enable vital education and prevention for at-risk communities and access to comprehensive and specialized services for victims.

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RCUSA Backgrounder for FY2018 ORR Funding Pursuant to REA Account of LHHS – 9.29.2016
III. **Victims of Torture:** The Torture Victims Relief Act (TVRA) authorizes funding for domestic programs that address the physical, psychological, social and legal needs of torture survivors. Yet with an estimated 44% of refugees in the U.S. either primary or secondary survivors of torture, need far exceeds resources. RCUSA strongly supports $23 million for survivors of torture to enable the expansion of current and new sites and to fill nationwide gaps in torture survivor rehabilitation.

IV. **Unaccompanied Children (UACs):** In 2016 arrivals of unaccompanied children reaching the U.S. border have continued to increase and are estimated to potentially reach FY14 levels. Robust funding is necessary to ensure ORR’s ongoing ability to provide holistic, child-centered care for unaccompanied children (UACs) and ensure their safety. RCUSA encourages a funding level of $1.6 billion for UAC services in FY18 ($1.5 billion regular funding and $100 million in contingency funding, as described below). Such funding will also provide those released from ORR custody with community-based, post-release services.

**IMPROVED FISCAL STABILITY**

Over the last several years, continued funding instability, reprogramming, and threats of reprogramming have had destabilizing impacts on programs for refugees, children, and other vulnerable populations in ORR’s care. RCUSA recommends that Congress take two steps in FY18 to improve ORR’s fiscal stability. First, RCUSA supports the replenishment of resettlement funds that were reprogrammed in FY12 to care for unaccompanied children. Second, RCUSA recommends an ORR contingency fund of $100 million for FY18 to prevent the need for future reprogramming.

I. **Replenishment of Reprogrammed Funding:** In FY12, ORR reprogrammed $115 million to unaccompanied children from the Transitional and Medical Services (TAMS), Social Services, and Targeted Assistance programs. While TAMS was replenished, the other two were not, and thus ORR programs are still negatively impacted. Grant cycles continue to be out of sync with state contract protocols and program capacity within a given fiscal year remains uncertain. To correct this ongoing negative impact, RCUSA recommends restoring the $66.5 million lost in FY12, and allocating $38.3 million to Social Services and $28.2 million to Targeted Assistance.

II. **Contingency Fund:** ORR notified Congress in June 2014 that it would reprogram $94 million in ORR resettlement services funds to meet unaccompanied children’s needs. While ORR released the full amount in late September 2014, school impact grants and other important programs suffered long-term harm. These two major shortfalls in three years demonstrate that ORR and the vulnerable populations it serves need stronger financial footing. To avoid future destabilizing reprogramming, RCUSA supports appropriating $100 million in FY18 for an ORR contingency fund that could be used flexibly to meet unforeseen needs of the vulnerable populations it serves. As envisioned by RCUSA, this contingency fund would operate in a manner that is similar to the Department of State’s Emergency Refugee and Migration Assistance (ERMA) account, in that it would serve as a vital “safety valve” allowing ORR to maintain critical services for all within its care – even during times of emergency. As an alternative, we support the Administration’s proposed $95 million contingency fund and potential access to $400 million that was requested in FY17, but we urge that these contingency funds be flexibly available for all populations under ORR’s mandate.

For more information please contact RCUSA at info@rcusa.org or 202-319-2102. http://www.rcusa.org/