MS Department of Child Protection Services (MDCPS)
Federal Fiscal Year 2018
Refugee Resettlement State Plan

To
Office of Refugee Resettlement
Administration for Children and Families
United States Department of Health and Human Services

Office of Eligibility
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Jackson, Mississippi 39205
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Refugee Resettlement State Plan-2018
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I. ADMINISTRATION

A. Authority

1. Designates accountable State Agency (§400.5(a)).
   On August 20, 1980, the governor of Mississippi designated the Mississippi Department of Public Welfare, now known as the Mississippi Department of Human Services (MDHS), as the agency to administer funds under the Refugee Act of 1980 (Public Law 96-121). Within MDHS, the Executive Director designated the Division of Family and Children’s Services (DFCS) as the Division directly responsible for administering the program. It was during the 2016 regular legislative session; Governor Phil Bryant signed Senate Bill 2179 into law on May 13, 2016 and created the Mississippi Department of Child Protection Services (MDCPS). According to SB 2179, MDCPS is the state-administered child welfare system which provides service through 84 county offices located in fourteen (14) regions. MDCPS is the agency authorized by state statute to promulgate regulations, policies, and procedures necessary to implement the state’s child welfare system and to ensure the safety, permanency, and well-being for Mississippi’s families and children. MDCPS is responsible for the Title IV-B Subpart 1 (Child Welfare Services), IV-B Subpart 2 (Promoting Safe and Stable Families), Title IV-E (Foster Care and Adoption Assistance), Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA), Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP), and Educational Training Voucher (ETV). Additionally, MDCPS is the state agency responsible for the administration of the Unaccompanied Refugee Minor (URM) Program and the Refugee Medical Assistance (RMA) Program. Mississippi Department of Human Services (MDHS), Division of Field Operations is responsible for the Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA) Program for the Adult Refugees and their family.

2. Designated State Coordinator by title per the requirements of (§400.5(d)).
   Ms. Lorraine Hunter is the designated State Refugee Coordinator. Please see contact information below:

   Lorraine Hunter, State Refugee Coordinator
   Office of Eligibility
   MS Department of Child Protection Services
   P.O. Box 346
   Jackson, MS 39205
   Phone: 601-359-4585
   Email: Lorraine.Hunter@mdcps.ms.gov
3. **Describes if the program is publicly-administered or a public-private partnership (PPP) program.**

The Refugee program is a public-private partnership program. The program is administered through MDCPS, MDHS, and two (2) sub-contracted resettlement agencies located in Mississippi: Catholic Charities of Jackson located at 850 East River Place, Jackson, MS and Catholic Social Services of Biloxi Migration and Refugee Center located at 425B Division Street, Biloxi MS. The State Refugee Coordinator is charged with coordination of public and private resources in the refugee resettlement program.

The refugee resettlement program services are statewide and 100% federally funded by ORR. URM services are provided by Catholic Charities of Jackson through a contractual agreement. Upon arrival within the state, the unaccompanied youth are placed in the legal custody of the state and the physical custody of Catholic Charities of Jackson. Catholic Social Services of Biloxi, MS provide refugee services to adult refugees and their families through a contractual agreement.

**B. Organization**

Jess Dickinson is the Commissioner of the Department of Child Protection Services. MDCPS’s organizational structure consists of Taylor Cheeseman as Chief of Staff; four (4) Deputy Commissioners; a Special Advisor for Grants and Federal Funds; and a Chief Legal Counsel/Director of Procurement, Contracting, and Federal Reporting:

- Deputy Commissioner of Human Resources and Administration
- Deputy Commissioner of Child Welfare
- Deputy Commissioner of Finance
- Deputy Commissioner of Information Technology
- Chief Legal Counsel/Director of Procurement, Contracting, and Federal Reporting
- Special Advisor for Grants and Federal Funds

The organizational structure also consists of the following predominant areas:

- **Administration**
  - Child Safety Support Programs
  - Human Resources
  - Professional Development

- **Child Welfare**
  - Prevention and In-Home Services
  - Field Operations
  - Field Programs
  - Communications
  - Data Analysis

- **Finance**
  - State Funds Management
  - County Funds Management
  - Accounting & Payroll

- **Information Technology**
  - IT Customer Support/ MACWIS Project
  - CCWIS Project
  - Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI)
  - Network/Hardware/ Auxiliary Support
The State Refugee Coordinator is located within MDCPS, Office of Eligibility. The Refugee Coordinator is responsible to the Office Director II; the Office Director II is responsible to the Special Advisor for Grants and Federal Funds; the Special Advisor is responsible to the Chief of Staff. The Chief of Staff is responsible to the Commissioner of MDCPS who is appointed by the Governor as his designee. MDCPS is responsible for providing child welfare services, medical assistance, and adoption assistance.

The Refugee Resettlement Program consists of one full time position; the State Refugee Coordinator. The Refugee Resettlement Program policy, standards, procedures and instructions are provided by State Letters, electronic transmittal, manual and memorandums. In addition, the state’s Refugee Coordinator conducts monitoring and evaluation of the services annually with the social service contracted agencies. The monitoring and evaluation results are shared with ORR when required.

MDHS is responsible for providing Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly known as the food stamp program and cash assistance. As stated, MDHS is also responsible for the Cash Medical Assistance program for adult refugees and their families.

C. Assurances
1. MDCPS assures compliance with all the provisions of Title IV, Chapter 2 of the Act, and official issuances of the Director (§400.5(i) (1)).

2. MDCPS meets all the requirements in Part 400 (§400.5(i) (2)).

3. MDCPS complies with all other applicable Federal statutes and regulations in effect during the time that it is receiving grant funding (§400.5(i) (3)).

4. MDCPS shall amend the Plan to comply with ORR standards, goals and priorities established by the Director, as needed (§400.5(i) (4)).

5. MDCPS assures all provisions of services to all refugees without regard to race, religion, nationality, sex, or political opinion (§400.5(g)).

6. MDCPS assures it shall convene planning meetings of public/private sector at least quarterly, unless exempted by ORR (§400.5(h)).
7. MDCPS uses the same mediation/conciliation procedures as those for TANF if a publicly-administered RCA program (§400.83(a) (2)).

8. MDCPS uses the hearings standards & procedures as set forth in (§400.83(b)).

9. MDCPS provides assurance that the refugee programs and populations are included in the state pandemic influenza emergency plan and other emergency operational plans (SL # 09-30 and SL # 06-10).

II. ASSISTANCE AND SERVICES

A. Describes how the State will coordinate CMA with support services to promote employment and encourage refugee economic self-sufficiency (§400.5(b)).

The resettlement agency assists with completing job applications and serves as interpreters if needed for interviews. The resettlement agency also provides additional assistance on an as needed basis to obtain employment and to help refugees keep their employment.

B. Describes how the State will ensure that language training and employment services are made available to refugees receiving cash assistance, including State efforts to actively encourage refugee registration for employment services (§400.5(c)).

Language training and employability services are provided by the resettlement agency. The resettlement agency assists the refugees and their families by developing a plan for family self-sufficiency and employability. The services include job workshops and job skill development, referrals to job opportunities, job placement and follow-up services. The resettlement agency also coordinates with employers to complete employability assessment services which include aptitude and skills testing. The resettlement agency and employer coordinates on the job training when the employment site is expected to result in full time or permanent employment. Additionally, English language instructions are provided with an emphasis on English as it relates to obtaining and retaining a job.

The resettlement agency offers vocational training including driver's education and welding training, when provided as part of an individual's employability plan. Day care for children and transportation assistance is provided as needed for participants when registered with an employability service. The resettlement agency also provides translation and interpreter services when necessary in connection with employment or participation in an employability service.

C. Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA) 45 CFR Part §400.45

1. TANF Elements:
The State of Mississippi elects the option to provide the publicly Administered Refugee Cash Assistance Program. Mississippi operates its Refugee Cash Assistance Program consistent with the provisions of the TANF program. The provisions consist of:
- Proration of shelter, utilities and similar needs are considered to get a perception of an individual's ability to meet present and ongoing expenses. §400.66(a) (3)
- TANF caseworker determines if refugee is eligible for TANF benefits. If not eligible for TANF, RCA benefits are determined according to the State's requirements. The State determines any other State TANF rules related to financial eligibility and payments §400.66(a) (4)
- Caseworker does not consider resources remaining in the applicant's country of origin §400.66(b)
- Caseworker does not consider sponsor’s income and resources as assessable to the refugee solely because the person is serving as a sponsor §400.66(C)
- State does not consider any cash grant received by the applicant under the Department of State or Department of Justice Reception and Placement Program §400.66 (d)
- State uses date of application as the date RCA begins (not required). Eligibility for both RCA and RMA begins the month of arrival and lasts for eight (8) months §400.66 (e)
- State promptly notifies local resettlement agency whenever refugee apply for RCA §400.68 (a)
- State contacts the applicant’s sponsor or local resettlement agency at time of application for RCA concerning offers of employment, etc. §400.68 (b)
- State stays within prescribed assistance and budget levels in Public - Private programs §400.60

Also, applicants who meet certain criteria are eligible for Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA) and Refugee Medical Assistance (RMA) benefits for an 8-month period. Applicants for these benefits must provide documentation from USCIS to verify their refugee status, and must be included in at least one of the following categories in order to receive benefits below:

- Paroled as a refugee or asylee under § 212 (d) (5) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA)
- Admitted as a refugee under § 207 of the INA
- Granted asylum under § 208 of the INA
- Cuban and Haitian entrants, in accordance with requirements in 45 CFR, part 401
- Admitted for permanent residence, provided the individual previously met one of the statuses identified above.

Financial assistance for refugees through RCA, regardless of family composition will be based on Mississippi's TANF need standards with income taken into consideration on same basis as non-refugee recipients §400.66((a) (1). Refugee household's eligibility is based on the following elements; residency, age/relationship, enumeration, citizenship/alien status and income. Individuals who are eligible for TANF are automatically eligible for Medicaid §400.65(b)
When a refugee requests financial assistance for him/her or for a group of minor children for whom he/she is responsible, the MDHS-EA-900 application must be accepted and registered in the usual manner in the county office. Any refugee family group potentially eligible for TANF, must be tested for TANF or referred for a determination of eligibility for assistance from other programs. Persons age 65 or older, blind or disabled individuals must be referred to the local Social Security office to apply for SSI benefits (if eligible, these persons may receive refugee cash assistance until eligibility for cash assistance under the SSI program is determined, provided the conditions of eligibility for refugee cash assistance continue to be met). Eligibility for SNAP and/or TANF must be determined before a refugee assistance request is processed. If the individual refugee or refugee family is eligible for any of the regular programs administered through Economic Assistance, benefits must be authorized at the local office and no other action will be required.

In some instances, the refugee applicant may be eligible for SNAP, but ineligible for TANF. If so, the SNAP application must be processed as normal by the county office. For processing of the request for Refugee Cash Assistance, the county office must submit a copy of the MDHS-EA-900 application and the 900A, plus copies of all documents verifying refugee status to MDHS State Office/MDHS Policy Unit. The MDHS Policy Unit will review the application to determine eligibility for RCA based on need standard requirements for TANF using the MDHS-EA-323. If approved, the refugee household will be eligible for RCA payments for an eight month period beginning the month of the initial application for benefits in the MDHS local office. The MDHS Policy Unit will submit a money payment request to Budgets and Accounting in State Office for processing and mailing of the RCA payment. MDHS State Operations will notify the applicant household of the approval or denial of the request by regular mail.

Each refugee age 18 or over will have his/her application processed as an individual unless he/she is the parent of minor children. One application will be processed for parents and minor children. A minor child who was born to a refugee family after entry into the United States can be included in the refugee assistance group of the parent although the child is actually a citizen of the United States. RCA payments are determined the same as TANF benefit levels regarding grant maximums based on household size.

Determination of initial and on-going eligibility, are based on income and qualifying deductions as used by Mississippi TANF guidelines. §400.66 (a)(1). The description for both TANF and RCA payments are the same in Mississippi, legal maximums for TANF and RCA; $110.00 for first person, additional $36 for second person, $24.00 addition for third or ongoing persons. §400.66 (a) (2). This consists of:

- 1 Person $110.00
- 2 Persons $146.00
- 3 Persons $170.00
- 4 Persons $194.00
- 5 Persons $218.00

Refugee Cash Assistance is available to refugees under the Refugee Resettlement Program. Refugees cannot receive both Refugee Cash Assistance and TANF benefits. Refugee Cash Assistance is determined based on Mississippi’s TANF standards. A family unit is considered as one or more adults and children, blood related or by law, that reside in the same household. When adults other than spouses reside together, each one will be considered a separate household. A refugee’s income and resources will be considered on the same bases as TANF and payments are the same as Mississippi TANF payment levels.

Refugee households are certified as Simplified Reporting (SR) households. Each refugee household is responsible for reporting changes to the MDHS county office only at application/re-evaluation interviews. These changes should be forwarded to the MDHS Policy Unit as needed. All households would only report a change if it causes the household to meet or exceed 185% of the poverty level. This change should be reported by the 10th of the month following the month of the change. If these changes are below the 185% poverty level, the refugee will only be required to report these changes at his/her next re-evaluation interview.

Although the refugee household is eligible for cash assistance for an eight month period, a regular redetermination of eligibility must be completed on each financial assistance case after six months. Upon determination that the amount of the RCA payment will be changed or that the refugee is no longer eligible for financial assistance, state operations will notify the refugee in writing of this change.

Eligibility factors for RCA consist of the following items listed below:

- **Financial Assistance:** The financial assistance program for refugees is intended to provide temporary assistance when the sponsor is unable to meet all the needs of the refugee until the refugee (1) is able to find employment and become self-supporting or (2) receives financial assistance through the regular TANF or SSI programs. The same criteria for technical eligibility in TANF apply to applicants for refugee assistance, with the exceptions of deprivation and specified degree of relationship. Children in the refugee household do not have to be deprived of a parent or be living with a specified relative in order to receive refugee assistance. Single individuals applying for refugee assistance may be eligible for benefits by meeting all other eligibility factors.

- **Residence:** The refugee/refugee household must reside in the state of Mississippi with the intent to remain here. The child’s residence is determined by the parent or the adult responsible for them.

- **Age Relationship:** Age and relationship may be verified by using the I-94 or other documents in the refugee’s possession which reflect age and relationship and appear reasonable under the circumstances. When the refugee has no written record of any kind to
use as a support document, the refugee's statement regarding family relationship should be accepted unless there is reason to doubt the validity of such a declaration.

- **Financial Need:** All income and resources available to the refugee family group must be considered and measured against the standards for financial need which are applicable to the TANF program. Income and resources that may be available from the refugee's sponsor or sponsoring agency must be considered and documented.

- **Resources:** The resource maximums used in determining eligibility for TANF are used for applicants for refugee assistance. Do not consider against the maximum amount the resources which are not available to the refugee or refugee family group, such as those left in the country from which the refugee[s] came. Also, do not consider the resources of the sponsor available to the refugee/refugee group unless the sponsor has actually given them to the refugee.

- **Income:** The standards used for TANF families in determining financial need based on income are applicable for refugees. Form MDHS-EA-232, TANF Budget Computation Sheet, should be used to determine need based on income. All income which is available to the refugee/refugee group should be included. Eligibility and money payment amount are determined by testing gross income and allowing the appropriate amounts for work expenses and child care when earned income is involved. Other possible income sources include cash contributions from the sponsor and income from the voluntary agency that placed the refugee/refugee group with the sponsor. However, a sponsor's income may not be considered as accessible to the refugee solely because the person is serving as a sponsor. In addition, any cash grant received by the applicant under the Department of State or Department of Justice Reception and Placement programs must not be considered as income for the refugee.

- **Work Requirements:** As a condition for receipt of refugee cash assistance, a non-exempt refugee must be registered for work with the local employment service. Such refugees must apply for, accept, or continue with an appropriate offer of employment or employment related training, and participate in any available and appropriate social service program providing job or language training in the area in which the refugee resides. Refugees who have been approved for food stamp benefits through the MDHS county office may have been already been registered for work. If so, no further action regarding work registration for refugees is required. Refugees are not subject to TANF work requirements.

Mississippi does not have any type of differentials or incentive payments at this time. Refugees who have been approved for SNAP through the MDHS county office may have already registered for work. §400.76 (b)

English Language Instruction – English as a Second Language classes, General Equivalency Diploma classes and Test of English for Foreign Language (TOEFL) preparation are all part of the adult education program. Development classes are offered on a beginner, intermediate and advance level and provided during the day and evening times. All are designed to relate to obtaining and retaining a job to meet requirement §400.55.
For refugees determined ineligible for cash assistance under the TANF Program, the State or its designee must determine eligibility for refugee cash assistance in accordance with § 400.53 and § 400.59.

Eligibility for RCA is limited to those who:

- Are new arrivals who have resided in the U.S. less than the RCA eligibility period determined by the ORR Director in accordance with § 400.211;
- Are ineligible for TANF, SSI, OAA, AB, APTD and AABD programs;
- Meet immigration status and identification requirements in subpart D of this or are the dependent children of and part of the same family until as, individuals who meet the requirements in subpart D, subject to the limitation in § 200.208 with respect to non-refugee children; and
- Are not full-time students in intuitions of higher education, as defined by the ORR Director.

A refugee may be eligible for cash assistance under this subpart during a period to be determined by the ORR Director in accordance with § 400.211. Each individual refugee age 18 or over will have his/her application processed as an individual unless he/she is the parent of minor children. One application will be processed for parents and minor children. A minor child who was born to a refugee family after entry into the United States can be included in the refugee assistance group of the parent although the child is actually a citizen of the United States. RCA payments are determined the same as TANF benefit levels regarding maximums based on household size.

Upon determining the amount of the RCA payment will be changed or if the refugee is no longer eligible for financial assistance, the State Office/State Refugee Coordinator will notify the refugee in writing of this change and to comply with the requirements of the refugee Social Services (RSS) 45 CFR Part §400.140. The MDHS will determine what specific exemptions, if any, are appropriate for the recipients of a time limited RCA program. They are as follows:

- The refugee is responsible for reporting to the MDHS county staff any changes in income, resources, living arrangements, etc., which will change the amount or status of his/her assistance.
- Any changes reported by a refugee must be relayed by the MDHS county office to MDCPS State Office/State Refugee Coordinator. Such changes could include obtaining employment, increased earnings, receipt of other financial assistance, persons moving in or out of the home, or obtaining resources. In accepting the initial application for assistance, the county office is responsible for explaining to the refugee the requirement to report such changes.

2. RCA program administration 45 CFR Part §400.13
The RCA program administration consists of the following below:
• RCA eligibility is done by the MDHS, Division of Field Operations. (SL# 12-13, SL# 13-03).
• RCA benefit distribution is also done by the MDHS, Division of Field Operations (SL# 12-13, SL# 13-03)
• The staff allocated for RCA consists of two (2) MDHS staff workers. One county level staff determines TANF benefits/SNAPS; the additional state level worker determines the RCA benefits.
• The two staff allocated to RCA and TANF benefits are full time state employees.
• MDCPS is not charging an indirect cost rate.

D. Refugee Medical Assistance (RMA) 45 CFR Part §400.90

1. Application and Eligibility Coordination for Determination

All refugees are given the opportunity to apply for medical assistance upon arrival. Refugees who are eligible for Cash Assistance are automatically eligible for eight months of Medicaid coverage. Refugees contact the Resettlement Agency and make the request for RMA. The agency will contact the Refugee Coordinator with the request and provide the necessary documentation to submit to the Division of Medicaid. §400.93 and §400.94.

MDCPS coordinates with the Mississippi Division of Medicaid to provide medical and prescription services to adult refugees and their families once eligible for assistance. The Refugee Medical Assistance (RMA) grant is used to reimburse the Division of Medicaid for services provided.

The State Refugee Coordinator is responsible for coordinating Medicaid reimbursement to the Division of Medicaid twice a year. The reimbursement invoices are submitted by the Division of Medicaid to the Refugee Coordinator in January and July. The reporting periods for reimbursement are January through June and July through December.

Once participants are verified on the invoice by the State Refugee Coordinator, the Division of Medicaid provides an itemized statement to document services and prescriptions during the reporting periods. After the documentation is reviewed the reimbursement is disbursed to the Division of Medicaid.

2. Financial Eligibility standards

The eligibility standards are the same as the TANF requirements for Refugee Medicaid. Refugees are required to report changes in their income and address within ten days of any applicable changes. The refugees receive screenings with their personal providers of choice. Their vision, hearing and physical examinations are covered by Medicaid. Refugee youths immunization shots are also covered by Mississippi Medicaid.

Refugee Medical Assistance is determined by utilizing the previous two semi-annual invoices received from the MS Division of Medicaid. Clients are extracted from the report based on the
individual clients receiving services. An average monthly cost is determined by combining the total amount of reimbursements for each individual client, divided by the months for which services were received. A combined total of all client monthly averages are divided by the number of clients served.

MDCPS provides assurances of compliance with the consideration of income and resources outlined at §400.102.

3. **Continued Coverage of recipients who receive increased earnings from employment (§400.104)**
All refugees are automatically eligible for eight months of Medicaid coverage regardless of changes in income. MDCPS provides assurance of compliance with continued coverage of recipients per requirements at §400.104.

4. **Mandatory services (§400.105)**
MDCPS provides assurance that RMA will cover at least the same services in the same manner and to the same extent as Medicaid.

5. **Additional services (§400.106)**
MDCPS provides no additional services beyond those identified within its state plan for resettlement services.

6. **Describes procedure for identifying newly arrived refugees in need of care and procedure established to monitor any necessary treatment or observation (§400.5(f))**
The process for identifying newly arrived refugees in need of care has not changed. Once the refugee has been identified as needing care, the resettlement agency refers the refugee to the appropriate provider to receive necessary treatment and observation. The resettlement may follow up with the refugee to see if further assistance is needed.

7. **RMA Costs – State should submit a State Plan that mirrors their CMA budget estimate (SL # 13-03).**
MDCPS has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Mississippi Division of Medicaid (DOM) that identifies the service coordination and reimbursement of refugee health care services. The Mississippi DOM is made available to all refugees. Refugees must request and complete an application and meet all requirements by the Division of Medicaid. Mississippi Medicaid health care services cover doctor visits, pharmacy supplies, emergency rooms and hospital stays and various additional services. Once eligibility has been determined, MDCPS coordinates with DOM the provision medical and prescription services to adult refugees and their families. The RMA grant is used to reimburse the Division of Medicaid for services provided.

The State Refugee Coordinator is responsible for coordinating Medicaid reimbursement to the Division of Medicaid twice a year. The reimbursement invoices are submitted to the Refugee
Coordinator in January and July of each year by the Division of Medicaid. Once participants are verified on the invoice, an itemized statement is provided to document services and prescriptions during the report periods; January through June and July through December. At that time the reimbursement is disbursed to the Division of Medicaid.

Mississippi’s refugees are given the opportunity to apply for medical assistance. Refugees who are eligible for Cash Assistance are eligible for eight (8) months of Medicaid coverage. Refugees contact the Resettlement Agency and make the request for RMA. The agency will contact the Refugee Coordinator with the request and provide the necessary documentation to submit to the Division of Medicaid. §400.93 and §400.94.

Refugees are required to report changes in income and address within ten (10) days. The refugees are given the option to select their own medical provider within Medicaid's provider network. Refugee health care services covered through DOM consist of but not limited to: vision, dental, hearing and physical examinations. Refugee youth immunizations are also covered by Mississippi Medicaid.

RMA reimbursement is determined by utilizing the previous two (2) semi-annual invoices received from DOM. Clients were extracted from the report based on the individual clients receiving services. An average monthly cost was determined by combining the total amount of reimbursements for each individual client, divided by the months for which services were received. A combined total of all client monthly averages are divided by the number of clients served.

The administrative cost for RMA is the salary for the State Refugee Coordinator's time utilized on this grant.

E. Refugee Medical Screening Program (RMS) 45 CFR Part §400.107
Mississippi does not have a medical screening program/provider for refugees.

F. Refugee Social Services (RSS) 45 CFR Part §400.140.

1. Refugee Description of Social Services
The resettlement agency in coordination with the Gulf Coast Community College and the Bureau of Marine Resources provides Fishing Vessel Drill Conductor training to refugees as commercial shrimpers and fishermen. A large number of refugees on the coast work in the fishing industry. The resettlement agency also offers the following social services:

- English Language Instruction – English as a Second Language classes, General Equivalency Diploma classes and Test of English for Foreign Language (TOEFL) preparation are all part of the adult education program. Beginning, intermediate and advanced classes are offered in both the day and evening. All are designed to relate to obtaining and retaining a job.
• **Translation and interpreter services** – The contracted agency assists clients with United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) Outreach services. The regular services include English Language Training and Citizenship Preparation classes to help clients prepare for the USCIS test and interview; guidance in compiling the necessary personal documents required by USCIS; taking photographs and photo copying of residency cards and other documents; writing letters; Notary Public services; interpretation and translation services; completing USCIS forms and referral services to providers in the community such as the local immigration attorney and area doctors. Caseworkers also assist refugees in the USCIS office in New Orleans, Louisiana whenever there is a need for interpretation and translation assistance.

• **Information and referral services** – information about services are provided both orally and written in English, Vietnamese and Spanish. The contracted agency also regularly meets with other agencies within the contract area to coordinate services. Resettlement agencies will provide interpreters for all other languages.

• **Emergency services** – will include assessment and short-term counseling to persons or families in a perceived crisis with referral to the appropriate resources.

• **Health related services** - including information, referral to appropriate resources, assistance in scheduling appointments and obtaining services, counseling to individuals or families to help them understand and identify their health needs and maintain or improve their health.

• **Other services** such as child and family strengthening services are provided by staff members to the youth of the Vietnamese community. Workers provide an array of services including reading classes at the local library for the younger children, interpretation if families or youth are involved in the juvenile or family court system and contact with the police department to teach about the dangers of drugs in the community.

2. **Description of Consistency of Services with §400.154 and §400.155.**
   The Resettlement Agency provides citizenship and naturalization preparation services which includes English language training and Civics instruction to prepare refugees for citizenship. They also provide application assistance for adjustment to legal permanent resident status and citizenship status. They assist disabled refugees in obtaining disability waivers from English and Civics requirements for naturalization and provide interpreter services for citizenship interview. The Resettlement Agency assists participants in obtaining Employment Authorization Documents (EADs).

G. **Cuban/Haitian Entrant Program (C/H) 45 CFR Part §401.**
MDCPS is serving Cuban/Haitian entrants and has included them in the plan. MDCPS will continue to apply the same standards and criteria to Cuban/Haitian entrants which are used to determine eligibility for Refugee Cash Assistance, Refugee Medical Assistance and social services for other eligible refugees. MDCPS will continue to follow the guidelines with respect to Title V of
the Refugee Educational Assistance Act of 1980, (Pub. L. No. 96 - 422) and supporting regulations
and directives of the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) at 45 CFR 401.

H. Unaccompanied Refugee Children (URM) 45 CFR Part §400.5(e)

1. Presence of Unaccompanied Refugee Minors (URM) Program
MDCPS receives federal funds from the Office of Refugee Resettlement to operate the URM
Program. This program is 100% federally funded.

2. Administrative Structure and State Oversight - §400.117; §400.120; ORR Statement [1]

III. Program Standards, Administration/Management
The structure and oversight for the URM public–private partnership consists of the following
roles and responsibilities;

State Refugee Coordinator-State Level:

- The State Refugee Coordinator is responsible for monitoring the administration of the
URM Program.
- A monitoring tool has been developed to ensure state and federal standards are
practiced by both Catholic Charities and MDCPS County Workers.
- The State Refugee Coordinator serves as liaison between Catholic Charities and MDCPS
for clarification of URM Program matters to meet ORR compliance.
- The State Refugee Coordinator is responsible for sharing ORR Federal Policy changes
with Catholic Charities and other State staff.
- The State Refugee Coordinator makes sure case records are maintained properly.
- The State Refugee Coordinator promotes an open line of communication with both
Catholic Charities and MDCPS.
- The State Refugee Coordinator provides training in completing ORR reports when
needed. The State Refugee Coordinator is responsible for compiling Federal Reports
from URM Program obtained from Catholic Charities to submit to ORR in a timely
manner.
- The State Refugee Coordinator coordinates and prepares required reports which
include but not limited to Refugee State Plan and ORR-1 submitted annually on August
15, which provides budget estimates for upcoming fiscal year; ORR-6 submitted in
Trimester intervals to report program progress; ORR-3 reports for placement changes
as they occur; and ORR-4 Annual Outcomes Report, submitted annually to ORR.
- The State Refugee Coordinator is also responsible for submitting Reclassification
request from ORR when family circumstances change drastically after arriving in the
United States.
- The State Refugee Coordinator meets monthly face to face or via conference call with
Catholic Charities and MDCPS County Workers to share URM program progress. The
meeting allows all partners to discuss any concerns as well as staff cases when
necessary.
- The State Refugee Coordinator staffs with Catholic Charities’ URM Director, pending
arrivals for new youths, to see if Catholic Charities is a good fit for perspective youth.
Acceptance is determined from personal information submitted by USCCB.
• The State Refugee Coordinator will receive notices of arrival for youths as they have been accepted with a pending date from Catholic Charities.
• The State Refugee Coordinator sets up and keep files for each URM youth.
• The State Refugee Coordinator approves URM youth’s Eligibility and Medicaid.
• The State Refugee Coordinator provides the MDCPS Eligibility Unit with copies of social security cards upon request.
• The State Refugee Coordinator submits paperwork to the Attorney General’s Office to assist the MDCPS County Worker with obtaining Chancery Court Orders for URM youths who wishes to remain in the URM Program until age twenty-one (21).
• The State Refugee Coordinator works with MDCPS Financial Unit to compile information to submit to ORR on the ORR 1 report annually for its submission date of August 15th.
• The State Refugee Coordinator meets annually with MDCPS Procurement Unit to review Catholic Charities budget request, contract and budget modifications when needed.

**MDCPS Worker – County Level:**

• The MDCPS county worker receives notification from Catholic Charities that a youth will be arriving. This may be written or verbal, depending on travel arrangements.
• The MDCPS county worker and Catholic Charities establish a mutual location to meet the youth face to face. The meeting can be at Catholic Charities or at the airport.
• The MDCPS county worker introduces himself/herself to the youth.
• The MDCPS county worker explains and informs the youth of his/her client’s rights and responsibilities. The youth signs and initials the Client’s Rights and Responsibilities form and is given a copy for his/her records.
• The MDCPS county worker contacts the Hinds County Youth Court to request a verbal order to bring the youth into the custody of MDCPS foster care.
• The MDCPS county worker requests a Shelter Hearing to sanction the verbal order and the youth’s initial clothing allowance.
• The MDCPS county worker receives court orders from Youth Court. He/she submits court orders to the MDCPS Eligibility Unit in a timely manner to expedite access to benefits and services.
• The MDCPS county worker is responsible for the URM youth receiving the same range of benefits and services available in foster care cases to other youths in State custody.
• The MDCPS county worker is responsible for acquiring when applicable travel orders, reharing orders and emancipations for youths under age 18.
• The MDCPS county worker contacts the MS Attorney General’s office when the youth turns 19 years and 6 months of age to request a Chancery Order if the youth is to remain in foster care custody until age 21.
• The MDCPS county worker submits all initial custody orders, shelter orders and custody change orders to the MDCPS State Office/Eligibility Unit as well as complete and submit eligibility documentation in the MACWIS system for approval and activation of Medicaid.
• The MDCPS county worker requests allowances when applicable to the youth that include initial allowances, personal allowances, birthday allowances, Christmas allowances, ETV, senior year allowances, Emancipation(Startup), High School Graduation or GED allowances, and College stipends.
- The MDCPS county worker is responsible for payment of clothing and personal allowances.
- The MDCPS county worker is responsible for signing medical treatment (including surgery) and releases, school documentation, and residential treatment for URM youths.
- The MDCPS county worker is responsible for seeing each youth twice a month. One contact must be in the home. The other visit must be outside the home.
- The MDCPS county worker will coordinate all home visits with Catholic Charities to eliminate multiple visits in the home by both agencies.

**Resettlement Agency - Catholic Charities:**
- Catholic Charities' staff provides services for the child and provides the MDCPS county staff with information regarding the child's placement in order to aid in carrying out the child's case plan.
- Catholic Charities' staff informs MDCPS staff/State Refugee Coordinator of new arrival(s).
- Catholic Charities' staff transports youth from the airport to their appointed destination to meet a MDCPS county worker.
- Catholic Charities' staff completes applicable intake information (therapist and case managers).
- Catholic Charities' staff conducts an inventory of the youth's belongings.
- Catholic Charities' staff forwards a copy of arrival documents to the MDCPS Family Protection Worker(s)/State Refugee Coordinator.
- Catholic Charities' staff coordinates and transports youth to medical, dental, vision, and psychological (initial, annual and as needed).
- Catholic Charities' staff provides therapeutic services weekly and as needed to youth with their consent.
- Catholic Charities' staff conducts monthly group and cultural awareness activities.
- Catholic Charities' staff forwards copies of group and therapeutic services results to MDCPS county staff.
- Catholic Charities' staff coordinates applicable school enrollment (regular education, GED, Vocational).
- Catholic Charities' staff provides tutorial services Mondays – Thursdays and as needed.
- Catholic Charities' staff completes applicable immigration paperwork (secure attorneys if needed).
- Catholic Charities' staff determines least restrictive placement for youth based on assessments (group home, foster home, RTC, Independent Living Apartments, confer with MDCPS when applicable.
- Catholic Charities' staff provides immigration, employment counseling and case management to youth and foster families when needed.
- Catholic Charities' staff provides job training and resources for permanent employment.
- Catholic Charities' staff provides exploration for each youth along with registration and ongoing conferences with school officials.
- Catholic Charities' staff submits copies of academic progress to MDCPS staff.
- Catholic Charities' staff plans and implements recreational activities that reflect the youth's cultural heritage.
• Catholic Charities' staff confers with MDCPS staff regarding permanency planning, the Independent Living Program and emancipation.
• Catholic Charities' staff recruits, trains and license foster homes.
• Catholic Charities' staff coordinates all family sessions in the foster homes (inform MDCPS county staff of pertinent issues).
• Catholic Charities' staff provides after hours and weekend on call services to youth and foster families.
• Catholic Charities' staff submits copies for serious incident reports to MDCPS county staff and the State Refugee Coordinator.
• Catholic Charities' staff requests stipends, allowances and retreats on behalf of the youth.
• Catholic Charities' staff determines the youth's best interest through URM staff assessments, conferring with USCCB, ORR and MDCPS.
• Catholic Charities' staff submits the initial placement and changes (ORR 3) and Annual Outcome report (ORR4) to State Refugee Coordinator for approval and submission to ORR.
• Catholic Charities' staff submits the Trimester Report (ORR 6) to the State Refugee Coordinator to submit to ORR.
• Catholic Charities' staff provides the MDCPS county worker(s) and the State Refugee Coordinator with the youths monthly notes for their perspective case files
• Catholic Charities' staff has the youths birth certificates translated.
• Catholic Charities' staff applies for the youths social security cards; send a copy to MDCPS and the State Refugee Coordinator.

State Oversight:
MDCPS submits the ORR 3, Placement Reports, the ORR 4, and Outcomes Reports to the Office of Refugee Resettlement. The ORR 3 is submitted within thirty (30) days of the initial placement to ORR. Catholic Charities completes and submits ORR 3 to the State Refugee Coordinator for review by the twentieth (20th) day of the initial placement.

The State Refugee Coordinator reviews the form for accuracy. If error(s) are found, the ORR 3 is returned to Catholic Charities, to correct and return to the State Refugee Coordinator within three (3) days to submit timely to ORR.

The ORR 4 requires a Baseline Report for youths seventeen (17) and above to be submitted in conjunction with the initial ORR 3 placement report. Catholic Charities follows the same procedures for the ORR 3 submission for the initial ORR 4 report. The ORR 4 and Annual Outcome Report are submitted every twelve (12) months on the anniversary of the Initial Placement to ORR. Catholic Charities completes and submits ORR 4 to the State Refugee Coordinator for review by the twentieth (20th) day of the twelfth (12th) month.

State Refugee Coordinator also reviews all reporting form for accuracy. If error(s) are found, the ORR 3 is returned to Catholic Charities, to correct and return to the State Refugee Coordinator within three (3) days to submit timely to ORR.
Oversight of the fiscal component is provided by the State Refugee Coordinator who collaborates with MDCPS Office of Financial Services for the completion of the ORR-1 and ORR-2 financial reports.

Individual cases of unaccompanied minors placed in therapeutic foster homes, group homes and Independent Living apartments are monitored by the MDCPS County Office. The MDCPS county worker addresses the needs of the child and foster parent. Case Workers are required to make two (2) visits each month with the child and the foster parent. Board payments are made according to the state policy on foster care. Additionally, MDCPS’ State Office staffs, MDCPS' County Office staff and Catholic Charities' staff meet on a monthly basis to discuss policy, status and any request needed for the program.

MDCPS implemented a monitoring tool for annual on-site reviews of the Resettlement Agency. During the on-site review process, the State Refugee Coordinator request a random selection of files from Catholic Charities of Jackson for review. If deficiencies are discovered, a corrective action plan is required to be submitted to MDCPS within 30 days of the notice.

MDCPS assures the following:

- MDCPS assures compliance with all program accountability for all aspects of the program, including fiscal and program reporting.
- MDCPS assures that the URM service providers are licensed according to State requirements.
- MDCPS assures that MDCPS County supervisor and/or contracted agency for URMs confer at least annually with provider agencies.

MDCPS is designated by MISS. CODE ANN. § 43-15-5 (1) to “administer and supervise the licensing and inspection of all private child placing agencies” and “provide for the care of dependent and neglected children in foster family homes or institutions. MDCPS is responsible for setting and developing standards for “single application” (foster, adopt, kinship care) Resource Homes. This includes placing children in suitable foster and adoptive homes approved by licensed child placing agencies in cases where restoration to the biological family is not safe, possible or appropriate, thus creating Resource Families, both temporary and permanent. The URM service providers are licensed according to MDCPS and the Department of Mental Health requirements when there is a therapeutic component to be met.

Catholic Charities license their foster parents. Their group homes are licensed by MDCPS and are required to meet MDCPS licensure standards which are the same as the domestic group homes licensed by MDCPS.
3. Legal Responsibility - §400.115(a) and ORR Statement, III. Program Standards, Legal Considerations

Mississippi's process of establishing legal responsibility begins when the MDCPS county worker is notified of a youths' arrival date. The MDCPS County worker coordinates with Catholic Charities a designated point of contact for the county worker to make physical contact with the youth. The MDCPS county worker contacts the Youth Court to request a verbal order to bring the youth into custody. A shelter hearing is conducted in forty-eight (48) hours for the youth. Legal responsibility is then given to the MDCPS.

Hinds County Youth Court maintains oversight for URM youths until age eighteen (18). If the youth requests to remain in the Refugee Program after his/her eighteenth (18th) birthday, a Chancery Court Order will be requested to keep them in custody up to age twenty-one (21).

4. Eligibility - §400.111; TVPA (2000), Sec. 107 (b) (1) (A); [2] TVPRA 2008, Sec. 235 (d) (4) (A); [3] VAWRA 2013, Sec. 1263; [4] §400.113; §400.116; SL # 09-09; SL # 14-01

MDCPS assures that the State of Mississippi serves all URM-eligible populations.

Mississippi's Unaccompanied Refugee Program will provide services to all eligible populations; Refugees, Asylees, Cuban/Haitian entrants, Victims of Human Trafficking, Special Immigrant Juveniles, U Status Recipients, Unaccompanied Alien Children and Survivors of Torture, Statement of Goals, Priorities, Standards and Guidelines for the Unaccompanied Minor Refugee and Cuban/Haitian Entrant Program, (Federal Register Vol. 52 No. 198, October 14, 1987, Notices 3814, Abbreviated above as "ORR Statement, Trafficking Victims Protection Act (2000), Section 107(b) (4) (A), Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act (2008), Section 235(d) (4) (A) and Violence against Women Reauthorization Act (2013), Section 1263.

Foster care and other placement services end when youth reaches the age (18) eighteen. If the youth desires to remain in custody after age eighteen, the MDCPS County worker must obtain a Chancery Order to allow the extension.

Factors that can trigger eligibility termination: the youth can request termination from the program voluntarily at age eighteen, pending he/she exhibits signs that they can provide self-sufficiently or when a family member is located within the United States, youth can be reunified with them. Mississippi has made provisions for former foster children to return to placement and/or services.

MDCPS does not provide ORR-funded independent living services or education benefits. Independent Living services and the Educational Training Voucher program are funded the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP).
Referrals sources for Unaccompanied Refugees:

- Refugee children are processed through the Department of State’s Reception and Placement (R&P) grant. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) and the Lutheran Immigration Refugee Service (LIRS) are the two lead agencies that place children in the program through the R & P grant.
- ORR receives referrals of other eligible youths from various sources, including:
  1. Divisions of Children Services (DCS)/Unaccompanied Alien Children (UAC) program
  2. States
  3. Legal providers
  4. Service providers for refugees, trafficking victims, etc.

5. Services and Case Review/Planning - §400.115(c); §400.116(a); §400.118; SL # 09-09;
   ORR Statement, III. Program Standards, Legal Considerations and Programmatic
   MDCP assures provisions of benefits and services with the same range as available to other foster children in the state, including the State’s plans under titles IV-B and IV-E of the Social Security Act.

   A child’s permanency plans are reviewed in a court or administrative case review at least every six months. Foster care reviews will satisfy the administrative case review requirement. MDCPS will take reasonable steps, including written notice, to ensure the participation of the child, parents, caregivers, and relevant professional in court or administrative reviews. MDCPS will take reasonable steps to ensure that a court review, which may be called a review, dispositional, or permanency hearing, is held for each child in foster care custody within 12 months of initial placement, and annually thereafter.

   Catholic Charities, the resettlement agency is also involved in the permanency planning of the youth. Catholic Charities assists with reunifying the youth with available permanent connections, in the United States. The county worker notifies and invites Catholic Charities to all scheduled hearings.

   MDCPS assures that the following elements will be addressed in case plans:
   - Family Reunification
   - Placement
   - Health Screening and Treatment
   - Mental Health Needs
   - Social Adjustment
   - Education/Training
   - Career Planning
   - Preparation for Independent Living
   - Preservation of Ethnic and Religious Heritage
The Mississippi Department of Mental Health (MDMH) is responsible for the management of clinical services. MDMH ensures the therapeutic services are being provided as required by their guidelines. Catholic Charities provides both the State and County level offices with monthly progress reports, cultural activities reports and case management activities reports. They also provide the State and County Offices with Serious Incident Reports (SIRs) within 48 hours of each occurrence.

Additionally, MDCPS County level staff develops the ongoing service plans for URM youth. The staff also develops and implements a plan for care and supervision of all youth participants. Case plans are also updated every six months. Progress notes and status of URM youth including last known address of parents and a tracking system is also maintained in the MDCPS County Office.

Individual cases of unaccompanied minors placed in therapeutic foster homes, group homes and Independent Living apartments are also monitored by the MDCPS County Office staff. The county worker addresses the needs of the child as well as care given by foster parent. The MDCPS case workers are required to make two (2) visits each month with the child and the foster parent. Board payments are made according to the state policy on foster care.

Additionally, Catholic Charities maintains a case file on each URM youth. The case plans are included in the case file within 30 days and updated every six months. MDCPS has access to all case files within Catholic Charities.

**Placement Options:**
URM youths are eligible for all foster care services and other support services as provided domestic youth in the custody of MDCPS. The same welfare standards, practices and procedures apply to the refugee youths. These services include foster care board payments, Medicaid and social services.

**Independent Living Program (ILP) services:**
The Independent Living Program (ILP) services are currently provided through a sub-contract. ILP helps adolescents acquire basic life skills in their progress from dependency toward self-sufficiency. Youth are eligible for Independent Living Services based on the following criteria:

- Youth in care, ages 14 until their 21st birthday, are eligible for all Independent Living Services except for criteria placed on the Educational and Training Voucher program;
- Youth who leave custody, ages 18 to their 21st birthday, are eligible for after-care services until their 21st birthday;
- Youth who enroll in post-secondary educational and vocational programs may be eligible based on the criteria detailed in the Educational and Training Voucher (ETV) Program section.
All youth must have the opportunity to participate in independent living preparations, without regard to the youth’s permanent plan. Refusal by the youth to participate is not a valid reason for non-participation. Independent Living Services are mandatory and not optional for all youth in care who are at least 14 years old or less than 21 years old. All youth in care are eligible and appropriate to receive Independent Living Services, based on the child’s best interest. Some services are provided through a contractual agreement to include life skills training, retreats, youth conferences, and other services deemed appropriate.

The MDCPS county case manager updates independent living plans for each youth on a quarterly basis.

6. Interstate Movement - §400.119

The Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) unit works with local offices and other states to adhere to and promote the standards set forth in the Safe and Timely Act of 2006 encouraging timely home studies. Refugees under age 18 are eligible for same ICPC services as other youths in MDCPS custody. ICPC also continues its partnership with the Court Improvement Program for educational training as well as collaborating with judges to work through barriers to permanency. ICPC placements types:

- Placement preliminary to an adoption.
- Placements into foster care, including foster homes, group homes, residential treatment facilities, and institutions.
- Placements with parents and relatives when a parent or relative is not making the placement.
- Placements of adjudicated delinquents in institutions in other states.

Not all placements of children into other states are subject to compliance with the Compact.

Phil Bryant, Governor  
State of Mississippi  
Sept. 19, 2017  
Date