

Refugee Capacity Building Grant Report 2023-24



refugee.utah.gov

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**WORKFORCE
SERVICES
REFUGEE SERVICES**

Equal Opportunity Employer/Program

Auxiliary aids (accommodations) and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities by calling 801-526-9240.
Individuals with speech or hearing impairments may call the Relay Utah by dialing 711. Spanish Relay Utah: 1-888-346-3162.

Cover photo:Sudanese Community in Utah REFUGES Program. Learn more about the program in the Success Stories section of this report.

RCBO GRANT OVERVIEW

GRANT PURPOSE

The Refugee Community-Based Organization (RCBO) Capacity Building Grant funds refugee-led organizations to provide programming that enhances the local refugee community's integration into the United States¹. The grant measures outcomes in three categories:

1. Building organizational capacity
2. Providing educational programs, and
3. Facilitating social integration.

The objective of this structure is to better allow refugee communities to actively participate in their own integration.

GRANT HISTORY

The RCBO Grant was developed in 2010 with the goal of enabling the development, organization, and integration of Utah's refugee population. Early on, the grant enabled the Refugee Services Office (RSO) to support the creation of more than 25 RCBOs, assisting with the development of bylaws, articles of incorporation, and non-profit status for groups of newly-arrived refugees in Utah. This initial focus on the formation and governance of organizations paved the way for the grant's current purpose of program development and coordination.

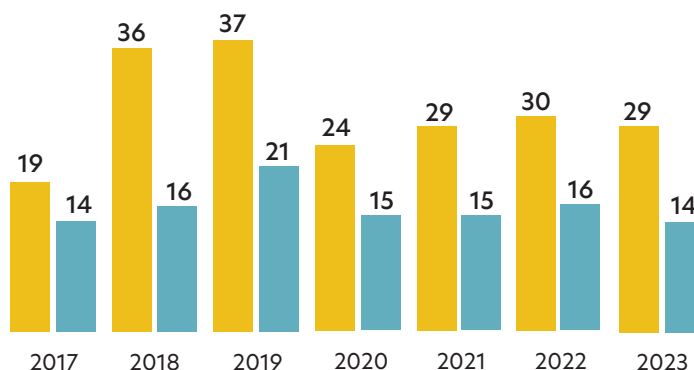
WHY FUND COMMUNITIES DIRECTLY

1. To provide funding to small, refugee-led organizations that often don't qualify for other funding sources due to lack of grant management experience.
2. To generate bottom-up social innovation, allowing refugees to find solutions to their communities' specific problems.
3. To extend the reach of RSO to individuals and communities that generally don't engage in our general programming or case management services.

Funded Organizations Over Time

• Programs

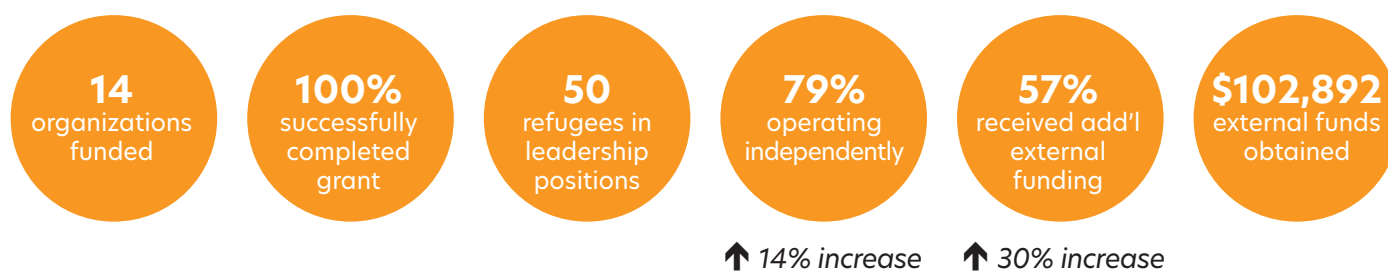
• Organizations



¹ Aspen Institute, Measuring Community Capacity, version 3/96 pg. 11, (University of Utah Study).

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

The key measure of organization capacity is the ability to successfully manage grants and administer programs independently. Developing capacity in this area is critical to create organizational infrastructure necessary to be accountable to founders and effectively meet the organization's goals.



GRANT MANAGEMENT

- **100%** of organizations successfully completed the grant
- **86%** exceeded grant expectations
- **29** total programs
- **8.7** months average program length
- **100%** of organizations received grant management training

Success Story

"Maria is a single mother with two teenagers. She was having a hard time talking to them and worried that they might make bad choices. Maria joined our parents' program, where she learned to communicate better with her kids. The workshops taught her how to listen, talk openly with them, and help them stay in school. After completing the program, Maria's relationship with her teenagers improved. They now have conversations about the future, and both kids are doing well in school, with plans to go to college. Maria feels confident in guiding them."

—United for a Bright Future



Success Story

"One client and his spouse were both seeking jobs. I first worked with them to create professional resumes, and I assisted them with applying for several job openings. To prepare them for the interviews, I conducted a two-hour session focused on interview techniques. Both clients successfully passed their interviews and were offered jobs with an hourly wage of \$19. To accommodate their family needs, the wife was assigned a morning shift, while the husband was assigned a night shift."

—Refugee Support Services

REFUGEE LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

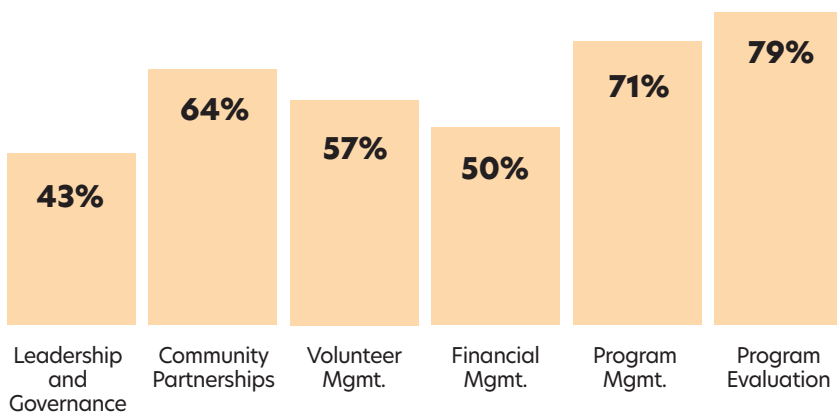
- **79%** of organizations were operating independently at the end of the grant year
- **50** refugees served in one or more leadership positions, including:
 - Facilitating trainings
 - Managing programs
 - Managing the grant

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY ASSESSMENT TOOL (OCAT)

RSO's OCAT is designed to track organizational development over time and direct each organization toward targeted and incremental focal points and goals.

OCAT Results

% Organizations Improved in Each Category

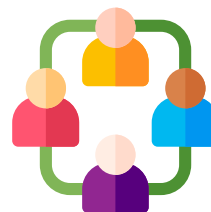


"I was unaware that there is a transcript evaluation and process to get credential for my further education. Through this program, I have connected and received my transcript evaluation. I can now continue my higher education."

—Community Building Services

"This workshop gave us invaluable insights into the U.S. school system, empowering us to better understand how class levels are determined for our students. As a result, we now feel more confident advocating for appropriate placements and ensuring our children receive the education they deserve. This experience has been a crucial step in helping families engage with schools more effectively and support their students' academic journeys."

—Somali Bajuni Community



EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

Programs are successfully implemented with strong, measurable learning outcomes. These refugee-led programs focus on building the skills necessary for both increasing employment potential and overall integration.



29
total
programs

1
new
program

918
program
sessions

1,219
total
participants

10
participants
granted
citizenship

427
youth
participants

↑ 21% increase

EMPLOYMENT (103 PARTICIPANTS)

- Employment Skills and Referrals (73 participants)
 - **43** participants got a new job or a promotion
 - **33%** average wage increase post program
 - **\$19.31** average placement wage
- Computer Literacy for Employment (18 participants)
 - **19** participated in computer literacy programs geared towards online job applications

LANGUAGE SKILLS (20 PARTICIPANTS)

- English for Citizenship and Immigration (20 participants)
 - **10** participants granted citizenship

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT (427 PARTICIPANTS)

- College Preparedness (80 participants)
 - **26** youth applied for college
 - **16** youth applied for scholarships
 - **64** scholarship applications submitted

- **86%** know how to independently apply for federal financial aid
- **47** youth participated in an ACT prep program

- Academic Skills (231 participants)
 - **93%** reported academic improvements
 - **75%** complete their homework more often
 - **100%** of students in STEM programs were interested in continuing STEM education
- Youth Empowerment (116 participants)
 - **79%** of participants reported increased confidence
 - **93%** report that they could be a leader to their peers

LIFE SKILLS (783 PARTICIPANTS)

Life skills programming facilitates comprehensive integration by addressing skills and cultural expectations.

- Financial Literacy (72 participants)
 - **23** participants learned how to obtain and use a credit card

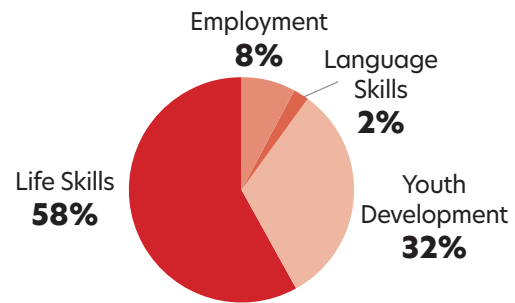
- Health and Nutrition (204 participants)
 - **30** participants reported increased well-being after participating in the program
 - Participants noted improvements in many areas, including:
 - ✓ Nutrition
 - ✓ Weight loss
 - ✓ Diabetes management
 - ✓ Breast cancer prevention
- Domestic Violence Prevention (66 participants)
 - **68** participants increased their knowledge of domestic violence prevention
 - **93%** of participants learned about new domestic violence prevention resources
- Other Life Skills (441 participants)



SPOTLIGHT ON YOUTH AND FAMILY PROGRAMS

- **427** youth participated in youth development programs (21% increase from prior year)
- Programs provided support in areas such as: college preparation, academic skills, and youth empowerment. Highlights include:
 - **44%** of students in the ACT prep program increased their score by at least 10% on a pre/post test
 - **16** youth applied for scholarships (33% increase from the prior year)
 - **26** youth applied for college, submitting an average of 2.7 applications each
 - **5** youth received a coding certification
 - **12** youth engaged in volunteer services in the community
- Programs helped youth build social skills while providing academic support and enrichment.
 - "This program has led me to interact with peers I otherwise wouldn't have talked to, but now our families know each other. I am now interested in the coding community, on and offline." —Sudanese Community in Utah
- "Sensei always put school first and always checked on our progress. He made my parents... always check on my grades. Now my mom always asks me to bring to Sensei any problem I have at school. I am sure she will continue to do that next year, too." — United Africans of Utah
- 112 adults participated in parenting programs:
 - **100%** report a better understanding of the local educational system
- Parenting programs helped parents better support their children:
 - "We learned a lot about the importance of positive parenting, and parent-child relationship." —Community Building Services

PARTICIPANT BREAKDOWN



Success Story

"Etho is from the Congo and has been attending our program since she came to the USA. [At first] she couldn't speak English and didn't know much about the system and culture but she worked hard and graduated last year... Now she is attending Salt Lake Community College on a scholarship... We are so proud of her." —Umoja Generation



SOCIAL INTEGRATION

Social integration supports individuals and communities in building interconnectedness and gaining connections to the systems and pathways to navigate life in their new home.

103
organizational
partnerships

121
total
volunteers

2,356
volunteer
hours

178
referrals to
DWS

791
home
visits

7
cultural
events

↑ 13% increase

Community Connection

- **1,219** individuals served
- **121** volunteers
- **2,356** volunteer hours
- **918** program events
- **791** home visits

Building Relationships

- **98%** of participants got to know people from other communities
- **99%** of participants would recommend their program to others
- **99%** of participants reported deeper relationships with others

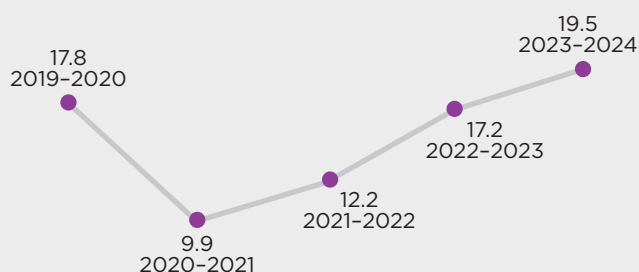
Connection to Resources

- **103** organizational partnerships developed
- **303** referrals made to local services
 - **58%** to DWS programs and services

Volunteer Participation

Average Hours Contributed per Volunteer

Volunteer support is integral to the success of RCBO programs. In 2023-24, volunteers contributed 19.5 hours on average, an increase of 13% over the prior grant year. This exceeds the pre-COVID average of 17.8 hours per volunteer in grant year 2019-2020.





Success Story

"One senior attendee was able to obtain citizenship due to participation in the workshops. The programs helped the attendees to understand the requirements and to be prompt in response to requests related to the application."

—Women of Action



Success Stories

"Abdi came to Utah five years ago. He loves soccer. He could not find anywhere to play because most places asked for money...we reached out to him and found a team for him. He finished high school and didn't want to attend college, but after some of our workshops, he decided to participate in the local community college."

—United Africans of Utah



"I know how to take care of my family and where to go if [help] is needed."

—United African Women of Hope

"From translating for me to helping me understand local customs and assisting me in finding a job, your guidance and generosity have been a beacon of light in my life."

—Joseph, Banyamulenge Community



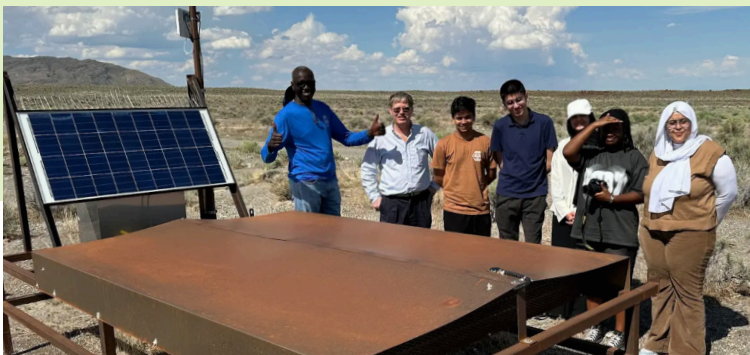
SUCCESS STORIES

Lina and Neriman are siblings who arrived in Utah from Iraq 11 years ago. Since then, both have participated in the REFUGES after-school program, which focuses on STEM learning and has provided them with opportunities to engage in scientific research. They recently participated in an NSF-funded project where they assembled cosmic ray detectors used by physicists to study elusive particles. Earlier this year, Lina and Neriman showcased their research on cosmic ray detection at the Granite School District STEM fair. Their project, which explored whether the moon affects cosmic ray particle detection, originating from their experiences in the afterschool program. Their work earned them recognition and a spot in the University of Utah Science and Engineering Fair, where they presented their findings to a diverse audience, including university professors and students across various STEM disciplines.

Inspired by their research journey and the opportunity to present their work, Lina and Neriman decided to pursue a more extensive research experience this summer. They are now collaborating with a research professor from the Department of Physics and Astronomy at the University of Utah to investigate further how the moon and sun impact cosmic ray detection.

They aim to create a research poster and present it at the upcoming summer research symposium in early August, alongside undergraduate students conducting similar research. Their achievements underscore the REFUGES program's commitment to fostering a passion for STEM education, and we look forward to supporting Lina and Neriman as they continue to explore the world of scientific research.

—Sudanese Community in Utah



Emmanuel had worked on the manufacturing line as a production worker for 4 years. After attending community workshops and one-on-one dialogues that promote career improvement, he decided to take management training at his workplace and now he got promoted to a management position with a high pay.

—Best of Africa





This parenting class has led to a great change in my relationship with my children. Before I joined this class, I had a difficult time getting my kids to listen to me without constant yelling and bribing. I felt exhausted, and I did not know how to navigate through our issues anymore without always fighting. When I heard about this class, my main goal was to find a better way to communicate with my kids and make my home more peaceful.

During the class, I learned about setting boundaries and having logical consequences for my children. I started giving my kids choices instead of telling them what to do, they felt like they had options. I would give them options to clean up now or in 30 minutes, so they knew they needed to do their chores, but they had a choice when to do so. While it took some time, I saw that my kids were more willing to cooperate over time.

Another thing I learned to value was my calm and clear voice rather than raising my voice when I got frustrated. It took time but practicing and prioritizing my calm voice helped keep my children calm when I spoke to them. This class also helped me learn the importance of self-care, it was important for me to take time to myself, and this helped with my stress levels and I became a more patient person.

By the end of the classes, my home life changed a lot, my kids started listening more and we did not argue as much. I wasn't yelling anymore as well. I am proud of the progress I have made. The way my home changed created a healthy environment with my family.

—United South Sudanese People's Association

Khadijo is a mother of six children. She has been a stay-at-home mother for several years and never attended school. She was not able to read, write, or speak in English. She has been coming to ESL classes regularly for the last three years. She never missed a single class. Khadijo can now read, write, and communicate in basic English. About three months ago, she applied for a job at Walmart and was successfully hired. She is currently working full-time and contributing to her family's income.

—Somali Community Services Of Utah



Abdelkarim... purchased his first home after participating in the financial literacy program. He learned essential skills in budgeting, credit management, and saving strategies. With guidance on how to improve his credit score, Abdelkarim was able to qualify for a mortgage. His journey to homeownership stands as a testament to how financial education can transform lives by providing the tools needed for major financial decisions.

—Massalit Community



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