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DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Administration for Children and Families

[Assistance Listing Number: *93.576*]

Announcement of the Intent to Award a Single-Source Cooperative Agreement to the Welcoming Initiative for Newcomers in San Diego, California

AGENCY: Refugee Program Bureau, Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR), Administration for Children and Families (ACF), Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

ACTION: Notice of Issuance of a Single-Source Cooperative Agreement.

SUMMARY: The ACF, ORR announces the intent to award a single-source cooperative agreement in the amount of up to $3,500,000 to the Welcoming Initiative for Newcomers (WIN) in San Diego, California, for the next phase of the State Capacity and Readiness Initiative. Building on the nationwide baseline assessment and related readiness products completed under WIN's prior cooperative agreement, the proposed project will support an updated assessment of state capacity, support development of training and technical assistance resources, support for pilot implementation and learning, and engagement with states not participating in the pilots. The project will also identify service and capacity gaps and provide recommendations concerning additional grants, contracts, technical assistance, or other resources ORR may need to support a state-centered refugee resettlement model.

DATES: The proposed period of performance is November 1, 2026, through October 31, 2027.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Miro Marinovich, Office of Refugee Resettlement, Administration for Children and Families, 330 C Street, SW., Washington, DC 20201. Telephone: (202) 729- 3638; Email: RBfrontoffice@acf.hhs.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: ORR intends to undertake the next phase of the State Capacity and Readiness Initiative to support implementation of a state-centered refugee resettlement model. Under a prior cooperative agreement, WIN conducted a nationwide baseline assessment of state readiness and capacity and developed related assessment and planning products. The proposed award will build on that foundational work by moving the initiative from baseline assessment to implementation support, pilot learning, and state and local capacity building.

Under the proposed cooperative agreement, WIN will conduct a nationwide assessment of local resettlement partners and identify the support they will need from states, ORR, training and technical assistance providers, and other entities to deliver services effectively. WIN will also update the assessment of state capacity and readiness to reflect current infrastructure, staffing, partnerships, service-delivery capabilities, and implementation needs.

WIN will collaborate with Switchboard, or another ORR-designated training and technical assistance provider, to inform the development and delivery of training, tools, templates, and other resources that strengthen state readiness and implementation capacity. WIN will support ORR's pilot activities by recommending approaches for information collection and pilot assessment, coordinating regular engagement with participating states and partners, documenting implementation experience, and synthesizing findings and lessons learned. WIN will develop a national data dashboard to support capacity planning.

For states not participating in the pilots, WIN will support ORR and ORR regional staff with meeting coordination, agenda development, briefing materials, and other state-engagement activities. WIN will also identify service gaps, capacity limitations, and unmet implementation needs and provide recommendations concerning additional federal assistance that may be needed to support broader implementation of the state-centered model.

Expected project products will include updated state and local capacity findings, analyses of service and support gaps, pilot-learning summaries, recommendations for training and technical assistance resources, state-engagement materials, and recommendations to inform future ORR program and funding decisions.

ORR will be substantially involved in the project by refining the work plan, identifying priority questions, coordinating engagement with pilot and non-pilot states, reviewing assessment tools and project products, and determining how findings will inform implementation and future federal assistance. This level of federal participation supports use of a cooperative agreement.

ORR proposes to issue the single-source cooperative agreement to WIN because WIN was the recipient of the prior cooperative agreement and developed the baseline assessment, readiness products, analytical approaches, and stakeholder relationships upon which the proposed work will directly build. Through that work, WIN acquired detailed knowledge of the initiative’s methodology, findings, implementation context, and state and local capacity needs.

WIN's institutional knowledge and established relationships with state and local refugee-resettlement stakeholders will allow the next phase to begin without requiring ORR and its partners to reconstruct project history, reestablish working relationships, or repeat previously completed engagement and data-gathering activities. Selecting WIN will preserve continuity between the assessment and implementation phases, reduce duplicative start-up activities and information requests, and support timely use of Fiscal Year (FY) 2027 pilot findings in FY 2028 program and resource planning.

The proposed project will strengthen federal, state, and local coordination; provide practical implementation support to states and local resettlement partners; and help ORR target future grants, contracts, and technical assistance toward demonstrated service and capacity needs.

Statutory Authority: Under section 8 U.S.C. 1522(b)(1) of the Refugee Act, ORR is authorized to make grants to and contracts with public or private nonprofit agencies for the initial resettlement of refugees in the United States. This action further advances the intent of 8 U.S.C. 1522(a)(2) by creating mechanisms through which ORR can, to the maximum extent possible, incorporate state recommendations into refugee placement and capacity planning decisions.

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