

Partnership for Welcome

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OBJECTIVES

To organize and provide streamlined educational information for volunteer hosts with Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services (LIRS) that will help immigrants and refugees assimilate into the United States.

COMMUNITY PARTNER

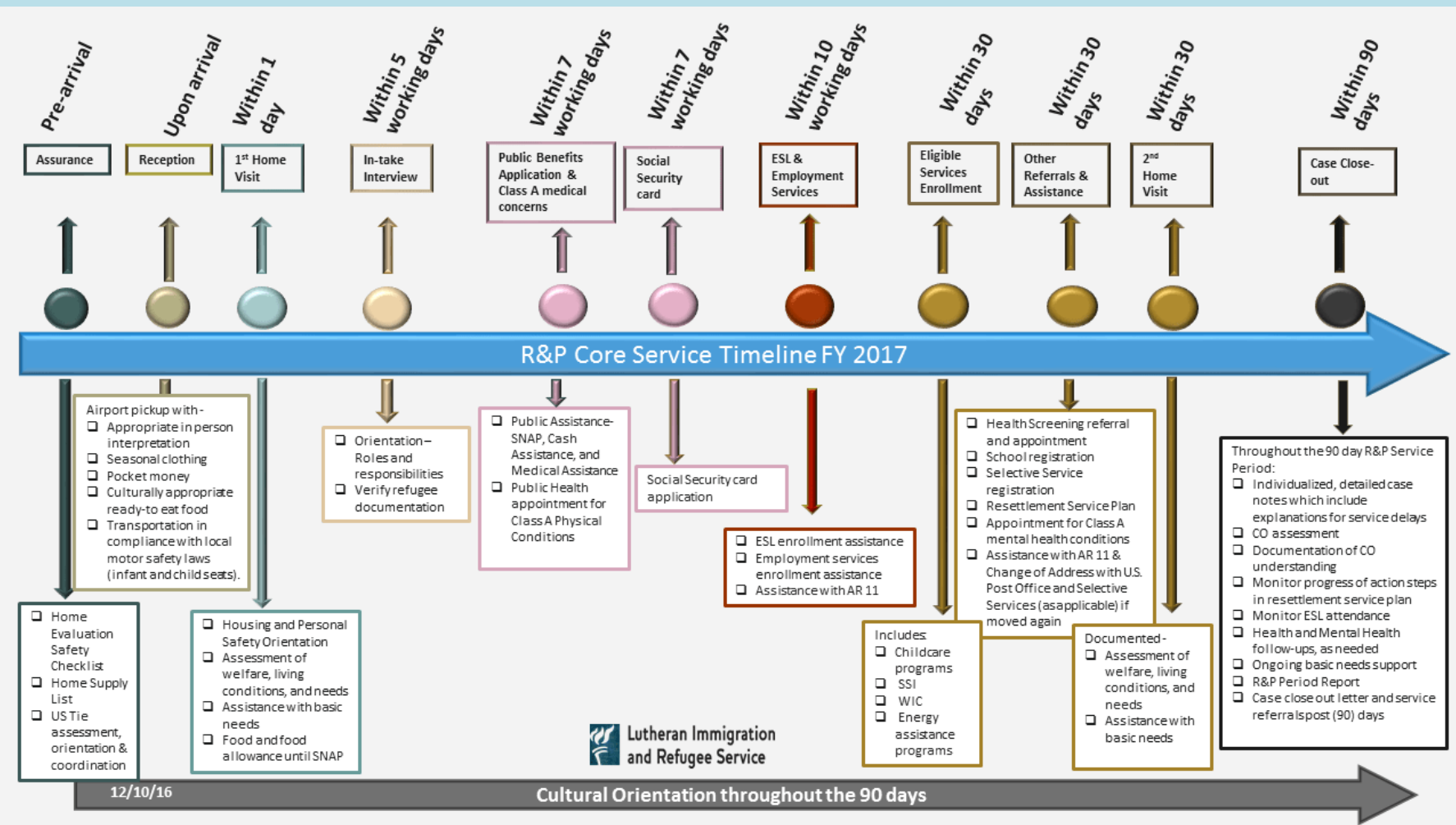
- LIRS is a national, non-profit organization whose mission is to welcome immigrants and refugees into local communities while helping them to gain their independence through employment, education, etc.
- It is the only organization in South Carolina approved by the SC Department of Social Services to administer the Federal Refugee Resettlement Program (RRP).
- In SC, there are two offices, in Columbia and Charleston, and one in Raleigh, NC.¹

BACKGROUND

Assimilation into the United States as an immigrant or refugee is a difficult and confusing process for individuals, families, and their volunteer hosts. Federal, state and community based programs that aid and support immigrants to acculturate into society are more likely to integrate than to marginalize and reject their origin culture or new culture.² There were thin resources for volunteers as they learned how to navigate the immigration process. Additionally, there were limited staff resources that precluded timely and effective orientation for all interested volunteers.

METHODS

- Consulted with Brian Evanger at Lutheran Services Carolinas (LSC) to learn more about the immigration process in the US and the role of volunteers.
- Prioritized educational needs for volunteers and immigrants/refugees, as well as focused learning content into 8 modules.
- Modules were created utilizing PowerPoint and video media provide a comprehensive educational package that are used for volunteer hosts to learn about their role in welcoming immigrants/refugees into the US and helping them assimilate into society.^{3,4}



DELIVERABLES

- Eight educational modules were created that encompassed the following topics: pre-arrival, housing and food, welcome, employment, ESL tutoring, financial assistance, documentation, and health.
- Videos from seasoned volunteers who shared their experience and advice also embedded into modules.
- Transportation was deemed one of the most essential content areas. As such, a more extensive tutorial was created.

OUTCOMES

- LIRS will use deliverables to provide volunteer hosts education on the (a) US immigration process, (b) the resources available through LIRS, (c) their roles and obligations with assisting immigrants/refugees, and (d) roles and responsibilities of immigrants/refugees.
- These modules will serve and impact all immigrants/refugees entering the US through SC under the services and guidance from LIRS.
- Modules will be uploaded to the LSC website.
- These modules allow the immigrants/refugees to receive accurate and thorough information from the volunteer hosts associated with LIRS to ensure they feel welcome, assimilate effectively, and are provided with tools to be successful.

FUTURE RECOMMENDATIONS

- Our modules can provide as a template for other programs such as those in Columbia and Raleigh.
- Future modules could expand into tutorials for emerging priorities, such as employment issues.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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