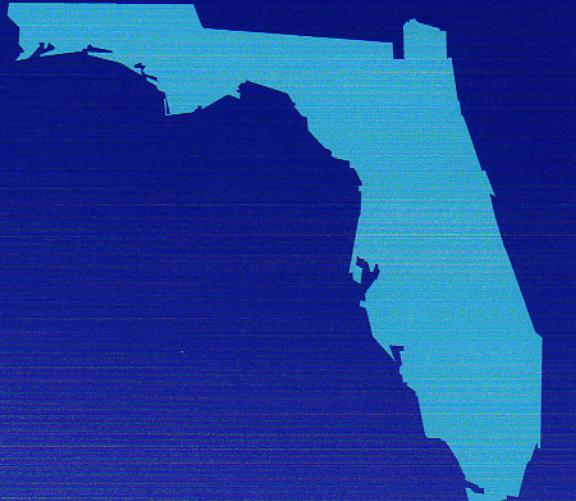




Refugee Programs Administration



*Cuban, Haitian, and Bosnian
Refugees in Florida:
A Report on Survey
Findings*

Cuban, Haitian, and Bosnian Refugees in Florida: A Report on Survey Findings

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December 1999

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This report would not be complete without a few words expressing our thanks to several individuals and organizations. Our appreciation must first be given to all of the individuals who freely participated in this survey and who shared with us their ideas and suggestions on how to improve services to refugees in Florida. We would also like to thank Frank Baptista, Ph.D. and Shelly Pearson of the South Florida Education and Training Center, and Russell Bloom of Lutheran Social Services of North Florida for assisting us in testing and reviewing the preliminary versions of the surveys. Finally, thanks go to Maria Calatayud, Florence Delimon, and Harisa Kapetanovic for providing invaluable assistance in survey development and data analysis. By back-translating the refugee surveys from Spanish, Haitian Creole, and Bosnian/Serbo-Croatian, Maria, Florence, and Harisa helped us to insure the most accurate translations possible.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

In December 1998 Florida's Refugee Services of the Florida Department of Children and Families contracted with the Educational Services Program (ESP) of Florida State University (FSU) to conduct a study of Cuban, Haitian, and Bosnian refugees in Florida. Research on refugees suggests that successful refugee resettlement depends primarily upon economic adaptation, English language proficiency, and ethnic community development. Florida has had a long history of settling refugees, most notably Cubans and Haitians. Cubans have generally been able to quickly adapt to life in Florida, in part due to the support of vibrant ethnic communities (Portes & Clark, 1987; Potocky, 1996). After initially encountering economic hardships and discrimination, Haitians in the 1990s have begun to prosper (Potocky, 1996; Stepick, 1998). Bosnians who have fled the struggle in the former Yugoslavia tend to suffer from serious health problems, but most have begun working shortly after arrival (Center for Applied Linguistics, 1995, 1996).

Methods

Cuban, Haitian, and Bosnian refugees from Duval, Hillsborough, Miami-Dade, and Orange counties, their service providers, and their employers were surveyed to determine problems and obstacles facing refugees, the effects of training received from service providers, refugee satisfaction with provided training and services, employer satisfaction with refugee job performance, and refugee status after receiving services. Samples for each population were drawn from Refugee Services databases. All survey instruments were developed by ESP with assistance from Refugee Services and were field tested in

Miami and Jacksonville. After field testing, refugee surveys were revised and translated into the three languages and mailed to members of each sample. Data collection and analysis of surveys were conducted from June to September 1999.

Results

The findings of this survey are generally consistent with the results of other studies conducted on Cuban, Haitian, and Bosnian refugees. Response rates for the surveys ranged from 15% to 58%; the overall response rate for the refugee survey was 28%. A comparison of key variables between refugee respondents and nonrespondents indicated no significant differences.

Most refugee respondents have been in the United States or Florida for less than one year, and many are married and/or have families. Most have at least some secondary education and have improved their ability to communicate in English since arrival. Even though many refugees have been in Florida for short periods of time, most (73%) are working. Many refugees, however, are experiencing downward occupational mobility; those with skilled or professional backgrounds are not finding jobs in their professions. Although more than half of refugee respondents (55%) held professional and technical positions in their home countries, most are working in low-wage labor (49%) or service (25%) positions now. More than one-third (39%) of refugee respondents were not satisfied with their current job, and more than two-thirds (71%) did not feel that their current job was helping them to meet their goals in life. Refugee respondents also face difficulties meeting basic needs (such as housing, transportation, health care, and child care), difficulty attending English classes, and discrimination. Many also lack adequate knowledge about life in America.

Almost two-thirds of refugee respondents (63%) said that they were generally satisfied with training or services that they have received. Most felt that training or services had helped them communicate in English better (76%) and learn employment-related knowledge (63%). Almost three-fourths (73%), however, felt that training or services had not helped them increase their income. Refugees listed English language training as the most useful service. Additionally, some refugees were not aware of the scope of services available to refugees. Specific suggestions to improve services included providing more services such as English, computer, and vocational training; social, cultural, and work orientation programs; and financial aid for education.

About two-thirds of service provider respondents served Miami-Dade County, and more than half (60%) primarily served Cubans. Service providers generally (86%) felt that most refugees are successfully adapting to their communities, and most providers (88%) said that most refugees have access to ethnic community supports or networks. Providers noted that refugees continue to have difficulties with English, meeting basic needs, and some hardships due to welfare reform. They also reported that many of their clients were receiving public assistance. Providers felt that many refugees have unrealistically high expectations about opportunities and lifestyles in America. Provider recommendations included making ESL programs more flexible to the needs of refugees, focusing services on clients and families, subsidizing services, and extending program eligibility periods.

Employer respondents represented a diverse group of businesses. More than half (52%) had over 100 employees, but almost a third (31%) said that less than 10% of their employees were refugees. Employers generally feel satisfied with the job performance of

refugee employees. Most felt that refugees are hardworking and punctual and have adequate job skills, but lack adequate technical, managerial, and leadership skills. Employers also felt that, while not negatively affecting their current job performance, low English proficiency levels among refugees cause communication difficulties with supervisors, staff, and customers. Employers felt that more training in English could improve communication skills as well as promotion opportunities.

Actions that Refugee Services can consider to improve services include

- increasing the publicity of services available to refugees;
- continuing to assist refugees in meeting basic needs;
- considering subsidizing new services (such as assistance with recertification of foreign degrees, specialized job placement services for women, and immigration assistance);
- continuing to assist refugees with educational needs;
- improving delivery of services through simplifying procedures, focusing on clients, extending program eligibility periods, and collaborating with employers.

INTRODUCTION

For more than 40 years, Florida has been a major point of entry into the United States for refugees worldwide who are seeking asylum from persecution or adverse conditions in their home countries. Most refugees have come during times of crisis, such as during the aftermath of the Cuban Revolution, the Mariel boatlift of 1980, and the refugee crises of the early 1990s. While Florida has successfully resettled refugees from diverse regions of the globe, the majority of refugees have historically come from Cuba and Haiti.

Since 1994, with the exception of 1997, Florida has annually received more than 10,000 Cuban and Haitian entrants, for a total of 89,000 entrants over that period. This is more than twice the total amount of entrants during the previous 10-year period, from 1983 to 1993 (Abdulla, Doak, & Capeless, 1999). Current coast guard data show that Cuban and Haitian interceptions increased from 588 in fiscal year 1997 to 2,356 in 1999 (Refugee Services, 1999). Yet, there have been few comprehensive studies of Cuban and Haitian refugees in Florida in the 1990s. Additionally, Florida received more than 1,000 Bosnian refugees in 1997 and over 2,000 in 1998 (Abdulla, Palin, & Doak, 1997a; Abdulla, Palin, & Doak, 1997b; Abdulla, Doak, & Bellamy, 1998). Little research, however, has been conducted on Bosnian refugees.

Since its creation in the early 1980s, the federally funded Refugee Services program has been the primary governmental agency responsible for refugee resettlement in Florida. Refugee Services depends upon up-to-date information on the conditions of

refugees to fulfill its mission of assisting refugees in acculturation and in gaining economic self-sufficiency.

Purpose

In December 1998 Refugee Services contracted with the Educational Services Program (ESP), to conduct a comprehensive study of Cuban, Haitian, and Bosnian refugees in Florida. The stated objectives of the study are to determine

- problems and obstacles these refugees encounter during resettlement and to suggest ways to solve or cope with these difficulties;
- employment-related effects of training provided to refugees (by service providers);
- refugees' level of satisfaction with training; and
- employers' level of satisfaction with refugees' job performance.

The study consists of three phases: a review of existing studies and relevant literature; a survey of refugees, service providers, and employers; and a follow-up survey of refugees. This report details the survey of Cuban, Haitian, and Bosnian refugees and their service providers and employers in Florida. The report is organized as follows: the remainder of the *Introduction*, which discusses limitations to the study; *Background*, which discusses the history of and factors in refugee resettlement; *Methods*, which explains the methodology used to conduct the surveys; and *Results*, which presents the findings of the surveys and their implications.

Limitations

There are limitations common to survey research that should be noted when examining the results of this study. All data collected was self-reported by participants and was not verified by triangulation. Also, as indicated in the report, random samples were taken from available data on the populations of Cuban, Haitian, and Bosnian refugees in Florida; thus, the results of the study can only be generalizable to other populations to the extent that such groups are represented by the samples in this study. Lastly, the response rates for the survey ranged from 20% to 50%, with an average response rate among refugees of 28%. Similar response rates were obtained in prior studies conducted on these and other refugee populations (Center for Applied Linguistics, 1995, 1996; Institute for Health and Human Services Research, 1998; Schilit, 1991), and the findings of this survey generally agree with the results of such earlier studies. Moreover, a comparison of variables between respondents and nonrespondents (detailed in *Methods*) did not indicate any significant differences.

BACKGROUND

Over the last 15 years, Florida has consistently had one of the highest refugee populations in the country. Most refugees in Florida historically have come from Cuba and Haiti. Refugee resettlement in Florida first began with the Cuban refugee crisis of 1959–60. In response to the crisis, the federal government enacted resettlement programs for Cuban refugees that authorized a variety of services, such as financial assistance, health care, English language training, and vocational education and job placement. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, Cubans, Haitians, and other refugee populations were resettled in Florida. In 1980, Congress passed the Refugee Act, which formalized refugee admittance procedures and authorized federal funding and administrative oversight for states to establish refugee resettlement programs. This act put into law procedures that were already becoming common practice in the public, private, and nonprofit sectors. The Refugee Act is still the foundation of refugee policy in the United States.

Shortly after the Refugee Act was passed, Florida faced perhaps its worst refugee crisis ever—the Mariel boatlift of 1980. During the Mariel period, over 100,000 Cubans and 40,000 Haitians came to Florida. These individuals did not qualify as refugees under the Refugee Act, and a new refugee category, “entrant,” was created, which allowed Mariel Cubans and Haitians to be eligible for limited amounts of refugee services. In the early 1990s, thousands of Cubans and Haitians once again began to travel by boat to Florida. These refugees were housed at Guantanamo Naval Base in Cuba for processing. After the United States’ military intervention in Haiti, most Guantanamo Haitians were

sent back to Haiti. Simultaneously, the United States and Cuba reached an agreement on a new policy and an annual admissions level for Cuban refugees; all Cubans at Guantanamo would be admitted into the United States, but all future Cubans intercepted at sea would be returned to Cuba (Holman, 1996).

Factors in refugee resettlement

Research on determinants of successful refugee resettlement has focused primarily on economic adaptation (employment and income status), English language proficiency, and ethnic community development (Forbes, 1985). Refugees who are working tend to hold low-wage, low-status positions, regardless of their former occupational status (a phenomenon known as “downward occupational mobility”). Armer, Serow, Katsillis, and Louk (1992) cited several factors that influence economic adaptation of refugees in Florida, such as age, gender, country of origin, and household size. Similarly, higher educational levels, greater knowledge of English, and increased levels of time spent in the United States tend to increase the chances of employment. Being functionally proficient in English appears to increase the chances of successful resettlement, yet a greater knowledge of English may not. Refugees who live and work in “ethnic enclaves,”¹ however, tend to have more promising employment prospects and consequently less of a need to rapidly acquire English proficiency. Ethnic enclaves, or ethnic communities, also offer substantial social and cultural support. Changes in governmental policy also affect refugee resettlement. The change to more restrictive welfare policies instituted at the national level appears to have mixed effects for refugees. On the one hand, policy changes place hardships on refugees who are unable to work or

¹Ethnic enclaves are ethnic communities that have a high level of entrepreneurial and economic development (Portes & Bach, 1985).

refugees who are elderly or disabled. On the other hand, such policies may help to discourage welfare dependency. Concern over welfare usage and dependency among refugees has also sparked a debate over privatizing the refugee resettlement system (*Possible Shifting of Refugee Resettlement*, 1996). The “Wilson-Fish” program, a federally funded alternative to public-sector refugee resettlement, has generally shown evidence of increasing the employment levels and self-sufficiency of refugees.

Cubans

Florida has been an international and multiethnic region since the colonial period. Cuban refugees have continuously come to Florida since the great influx resulting from political upheaval in Cuba in 1959. They also came in great numbers during the Mariel period and during the early 1990s. Although an agreement between the United States and Cuba in 1994 normalized the flow, great numbers of Cubans continue to come to Florida as entrants. Research on Cuban refugees has shown them to be generally successful in adapting to life in Florida. For example, although many Mariel Cubans were socioeconomically disadvantaged at the time of their arrival in 1980, Portes and Clark (1987) found that within six years most had found jobs and increased their earnings. However, most were living and working in Cuban ethnic enclaves. A study of 1,005 Guantanamo Cuban arrivals (Refugee Services, 1995) found that 38% worked in semiskilled occupations (most of whom had either a high school or middle school education), while 21% worked in professional positions (80% of whom had a university education). The study also found, however, that 65% of the arrivals had no English proficiency. Finally, Potocky (1996) found that adult Cubans who had arrived in Florida as refugee children had equal or higher economic status than adult Cuban refugees as a

whole or Cubans born in America. Such success is due in part to factors that include a history of favorable admissions and resettlement policies, highly developed Cuban ethnic enclaves in South Florida, and the powerful political influence of Cuban lobbying and advocacy groups. These factors, however, may contribute to lower rates of English proficiency and overall assimilation among Cubans.

Haitians

The history of Haitian refugees in America has been one of difficulty mixed with success. While mostly upper- and middle-class Haitian refugees fleeing the repressive Haitian government of the 1960s were able to resettle rapidly throughout the United States, the more disadvantaged “boat people” of the 1970s and 1980s fleeing similar repressive regimes met with discrimination and prejudice. Political and economic conditions in Haiti have been more promising since the intervention of the United States in 1994 and subsequent efforts to establish a more democratic system. Stepick and Portes (1986) surveyed Haitians who entered Florida during the 1980 Mariel period and found low levels of education, English, employment, and income. For example, more than 33% of Haitian males and over 80% of females were jobless. Since the 1980s, however, there are indications that many Haitians in America have prospered. Potocky (1996) found that between 60% and 72% of Haitians were employed in 1990. Stepick (1998) described the emergence of “second generation” Haitians, many of whom are college educated and becoming established in professional and managerial careers.

Bosnians

As a result of the war in Bosnia in the early 1990s, thousands of Bosnians have applied to the United States for resettlement. Bosnian refugees have experienced many

atrocities resulting from “ethnic cleansing,” including the breakup of ethnically mixed communities and families and the loss of family members and friends. Such experiences have led to a high rate of physical and mental health problems among Bosnians. For example, Weine, Becker, McGlashan, Laub, Lazrove, Vojvoda, and Hyman (1995) found that among a sample of 20 Bosnian refugees, almost two-thirds had post-traumatic stress disorder and more than one-third had depressive disorders. In addition to these difficulties, Bosnians encounter problems in resettlement including low-paying jobs, downward occupational mobility, and difficulty with English. However, most Bosnian refugees surveyed by the Center for Applied Linguistics (1995, 1996) had at least a secondary education and were working.

A review of the literature indicates several important issues for refugee resettlement efforts in Florida. Two major factors that contribute to successful employment for refugees are English proficiency and education. Ethnic community support is also significant, particularly in the absence of adequate English proficiency or education. Specialized services will be essential for refugees who remain dependent upon welfare (such as older and disabled refugees) and for refugee women. Bosnian refugees, and especially Bosnian women, may need health services to help them cope with war atrocities and associated trauma. Lastly, refugees continue to need assistance in learning about life in America through cultural orientation and associated services.

METHODS

Research Objectives

In December 1998 Refugee Services contracted with ESP to conduct a comprehensive study of Cuban, Haitian, and Bosnian refugees in Florida. The following research questions guide this study:

- 1. What problems and obstacles do refugees in Florida encounter during resettlement and what are ways of solving or coping with these difficulties?**
- 2. How does employment-related training that is received from providers under contract to Florida's Refugee Services affect refugees (i.e., how effectively does training help refugees with economic adaptation?)**
- 3. How satisfied are refugees with the training and employment-related services they are receiving?**
- 4. How satisfied are employers with refugees' job performance?**
- 5. How well are refugees faring after receiving services?**

The primary methods used in this study include a literature review and surveys of refugees, service providers, and employers. Cuban, Haitian, and Bosnian refugees from Duval, Hillsborough, Miami-Dade, and Orange counties were surveyed using samples taken from Refugee Services client databases. Cuban, Haitian, and Bosnian refugees are most highly concentrated in these four counties. The entire population of service providers under contract with Refugee Services who provide educational, employment-related, child care, legal, or mental health services in the same four counties were surveyed. Businesses in the four counties who employ refugees were also surveyed using a random sample taken from Refugee Services databases.

Sampling

The refugee population in this study includes all legal Cuban and Haitian refugees and entrants and all Bosnian refugees living in any of the following counties in Florida: Duval, Hillsborough, Miami-Dade, and Orange. No undocumented immigrants or aliens are included in this study. The initial sampling frame of this population was taken from a client database obtained from Refugee Services. The database includes records for 5,045 refugees living in the above-mentioned counties who have received services from providers who were under contract with Refugee Services during December 1998 and January and February 1999. These records include information about each refugee such as name; most recent address, phone, and county of residence; country of origin and immigration status; and employment status (with employer information if employed). The majority (83%) of the Cuban population resided in Miami-Dade County, while most Haitians (73%) and most Bosnians (89%) lived in Orange and Duval counties, respectively. Most Cuban refugees (71%) were listed as employed, but only 39% of Haitians and 21% of Bosnians were.

Refugees living in the above-mentioned counties were surveyed using 3 samples, one for each of the 3 refugee populations, for a total of 1,077 refugees. Sample sizes were calculated based on a standard sample size formula²; each sample ideally would consist of at least 384 individuals to achieve a 5% margin of error (error due to sampling). However, since neither the Haitian nor the Bosnian populations in the four counties in the Refugee Services database totaled 384 persons, all Haitian (n=211) and Bosnian (n=366) refugees were included in the sample. A random sample of Cuban

²n = (P₁)(P₂)z²/t², where P₁ and P₂ represent 50%/50% proportions, z is the standard 95% confidence level z-score of 1.96, and t is the tolerance or margin of error of 5%.

refugees (n=500) was selected from a total population of 4,468 in the database. See Table 1 for more details about the sampling process of Cuban refugees.

Table 1: Sampling Plan for Cuban Refugees and Entrants

COUNTY	TOTAL	PROPORTION	NUMBER IN SAMPLE	SAMPLING FRACTION
Duval	45	0.010	5	1/9
Hillsborough	374	0.084	42	1/11
Miami-Dade	3,703	0.829	414	1/9
Orange	346	0.077	39	1/9
Total	4,468	1.00	500	1/9

The service providers population (N=32) included all service providers from Duval, Hillsborough, Miami-Dade, and Orange counties who provide one or more of the following 5 types of services under contract with Refugee Services: employment, education, mental health, child care, and legal. The employers surveyed in this study consisted of 400 employers randomly sampled from a database of all known employers of refugees in Duval, Hillsborough, Miami-Dade, and Orange counties, i.e., those who currently employ refugees in the refugee sample (approximately 900 employers). Since almost half of the employers have only 1 refugee employee, the sample of employers was stratified by the number of refugee employees working for each employer to insure that multiple-refugee employers were represented. Contact information for service providers and employers was also taken from Refugee Services databases.

Survey Instruments

Stepick and Stepick (1990) noted the difficulties researchers face in surveying immigrant populations, including identifying the population and ensuring random sampling, developing survey instruments that are sensitive to cultural differences, and establishing trust and rapport with respondents. For example, while studying Haitians in

Florida, the authors found that in response to the question “Are you working?” many Haitians considered themselves as “working” only if they were formally employed and worked at least 40 hours a week—individuals who worked part-time, temporary, or who were self-employed would respond “no” (p. 69). The refugee survey instruments described in this section were designed to address these types of difficulties unique to immigrant and refugee populations.

Previous surveys of refugees, providers, and employers in Florida and the United States and other related materials were reviewed in order to develop the survey instruments for this study (Center for Applied Linguistics, 1995, 1996; Institute for Health and Human Services Research, 1998; Schilit, 1991). All surveys—refugee, service provider, and employer—were developed by the ESP project staff with assistance from Dr. Sahira Abdulla, Director of the Research and Evaluation Unit at Refugee Services. All final versions were reviewed and approved by Refugee Services. The refugee survey and associated cover and follow-up letters were translated into Spanish, Haitian Creole, and Serbo-Croatian by professional translators and were back-translated into English by third-party translators to insure that the meanings of the survey materials were conveyed accurately. The following is a brief description of the contents of each survey instrument (see Appendix A for more details):

- *Individual Survey (survey of refugees):* In addition to eliciting demographic information, the refugee survey asked respondents questions about the length of time they had spent in the United States, program participation, English proficiency (in home country and in Florida), participation in training programs (such as language, vocational, or cultural orientation), satisfaction with training,

occupation and employment status (in home country and in Florida), income (in home country and in Florida), and difficulties in working or in attending English training programs. The questionnaire also contained open-ended questions asking respondents to describe difficulties they have faced with working and living in Florida and to discuss other services that would help them with employment.

- *Service Provider Survey:* This survey asked questions about service providers' coverage, main populations served, services offered, how long services typically last, importance of English proficiency for refugees, as well as questions related to refugees' occupation, employment, income, public assistance use, and providers' follow-up after job placement. The questionnaire also contained open-ended items asking for providers' opinions on the most urgent employment-related needs for refugees and about the effects of welfare reform on refugees.
- *Employer Survey:* This survey asked general questions about employers such as type of business, size, amount of refugee employees, satisfaction with placement and referral services provided by service providers, satisfaction with refugee employees' job performance, employer benefits and services offered to refugee employees, and effects of refugee employees' English proficiency and cultural background on job performance. The survey also contains open-ended items requesting respondents' suggestions for other job-related services for refugees.

Refugee, service provider, and employer surveys were field-tested in Miami and Jacksonville during April 1999. Survey instruments were sent to the directors of three

selected service providers who represent each of the three refugee groups (Cubans and Haitians in Miami, Bosnians in Jacksonville). Each agency director was asked to review the three survey instruments. (A formal letter of request was sent by Refugee Services to these individuals). ESP project staff met with directors at the end of April to receive their comments on the survey instruments and to test the translated refugee surveys with 5–10 of their clients during normal orientation and training sessions. After field testing, the survey instruments were revised and expanded. Revisions obtained during the back-translation process were also incorporated at this time.

Table 2: Survey Dissemination Plan

Survey	Refugees	Service Providers	Employers
Date Sent	June 2–4, 1999	June 22, 1999	June 22, 1999
Number Sent	1,077	32	400

Refugee, service provider, and employer surveys were disseminated during June 1999. See Table 2 for a breakdown of survey dissemination. In order to reduce error during the distribution and analysis processes, refugee surveys were color-coded by refugee group: white for Cubans, tan for Haitians, and gray for Bosnians. Refugee surveys were sent to the Cuban and Bosnian samples on June 2 and to Haitians on June 4. Service provider and employer surveys were sent out on June 22. Using names and addresses obtained from the samples taken from Refugee Services databases, members of each sample were sent a survey with a cover letter containing information about the project, confidentiality issues, a date by which to return the surveys, and ESP project staff contact information. Similar information was included in the instructions on the front of each survey instrument. Refugee, service provider, and employer survey recipients were asked to mail their completed surveys by June 30 and July 16, respectively, using the

preaddressed, postage-paid envelopes contained in their packages. Follow-up letters were sent on June 24 to refugee survey recipients and on July 9 to service providers and employers to encourage recipients to complete and return their surveys if they had not already done so, or to contact ESP if they needed more information or materials. Deadlines for returning the surveys were extended to July 20 for refugee survey participants and to July 30 for service provider and employer survey participants.

Analysis

To facilitate the data analysis process, all quantitative data was entered into SPSS computer files corresponding to each survey category—refugees, service providers, and employers. Each survey was examined for completion before being entered, and all files were double-checked for errors. Descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, and multiple response) were run on each SPSS file. Responses to open-ended items were translated into English and were entered into Microsoft Word files. Results of the refugee surveys were also compared by refugee population—Cubans, Haitians, and Bosnians—to identify any important differences among items such as employment status, income, English proficiency, or satisfaction with services. Additionally, results were cross-compared by survey for certain items, e.g., respondents' opinions concerning the importance of English proficiency were compared by refugees, service providers, and employers. Qualitative analysis, including coding and categorizing, was conducted on responses to open-ended items.

RESULTS

Response Rates

The majority of refugee surveys that were returned were received by the deadlines stipulated in the cover letters. Following the initial dissemination of each survey, ESP received a few calls from participants regarding information about the project, corrections to addresses or names, confirming where to send completed surveys. Some participants in the refugee survey called to obtain information about services for refugees; these calls were referred to a refugee service provider in the participant's vicinity along with a request to contact the caller. Alternatively, callers were given an agency number if they wished to make contact. After follow-up letters were sent, ESP received additional calls from participants who either needed more survey materials or who wanted to inform us that they had already sent in their surveys.

Of the total 1,509 surveys disseminated, several were returned as not deliverable by the postal service. Each refugee sample had around 100 surveys returned for this reason. Similarly, many of the surveys sent to members of the service provider and employer samples were returned as not deliverable. As a result, the total number of possible returns was 1,154, which included 398 Cuban refugee surveys, 106 Haitian refugee surveys, 267 Bosnian refugee surveys, 31 service provider surveys, and 352 employer surveys. Of the 1,154 total possible returns, 286 were returned, including 119 Cuban refugee surveys, 21 Haitian refugee surveys, 76 Bosnian refugee surveys, 18 service provider surveys, and 52 employer surveys. These returns yielded an overall response rate of 24.8%. Response rates for each survey are as follows: Cuban refugee survey,

29.9%; Haitian refugee survey, 19.8%; Bosnian refugee survey, 28.5%; service provider survey, 58.0%, and employer survey, 14.8%. See Table 3 for more information about response rates.

Table 3: Survey Responses

Population	Sample Size	Total Possible Returns	Number of Returns Received	Response Rates	
				Overall	
Cuban	500	398	119	29.9%	(28.0%)
Haitian	211	106	21	19.8%	
Bosnian	366	267	76	28.5%	
Service providers	32	31	18	58.0%	
Employers	400	352	52	14.8%	
Total	1,509	1,154	286	24.8%	

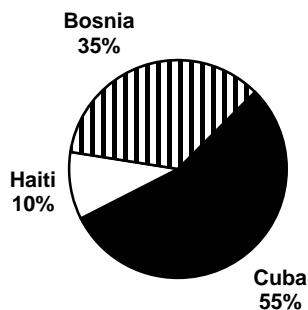
These response rates, while less than ideal, are comparable to or higher than surveys of similar populations (Center for Applied Linguistics, 1996; Institute for Health and Human Services Research, 1998). While there is the possibility of differences between respondents and nonrespondents, a comparison of the responses of refugee respondents with the characteristics of the refugee sample on some key variables suggests no significant differences between the two groups. For example, comparing the employment statuses of respondents against the original sample shows that about two-thirds of both refugee respondents and the refugee sample were employed. Similarly, approximately 59% of refugee sample members entered the United States in 1998 or 1999, while 65% of refugee respondents had entered during the last year. Regarding country of origin, the refugee sample was 45% Cuban, 20% Haitian, and 34% Bosnian, while refugee respondents were 55% Cuban, 10% Haitian, and 35% Bosnian. It is possible that the underrepresentation of Haitians among respondents may be due, however, to the fact that

many refugees relocated without leaving a forwarding address during the 4 months of elapsed time between the drawing of the samples and the dissemination of surveys.

Characteristics of Refugee Respondents

Over 200 individuals from Cuba, Haiti, and Bosnia responded to the refugee survey. Fifty-five percent of respondents were from Cuba, while 35% were from Bosnia and 10% were from Haiti (see Figure 1 below). Overall, respondents were evenly split between males and females. The majority (87%) were between 16 and 47 years of age, and more than half were from 32 to 47 years of age. Most (87%) indicated that they had 9 or more years of schooling.

Figure 1: Refugee Survey Respondents' Country of Origin



Seventy-three percent of refugee respondents said that they were working now. Most had obtained their jobs through help from friends or family (47%) or their sponsoring agency or a refugee employment agency (34%). Eighty-three percent were receiving at least the minimum hourly wage but not more than \$9.00 an hour. About 80% worked 30 or more hours per week, and less than 10% were working more than one job. Most who were employed worked in labor (49%) and service (25%) professions, although more than half (55%) had held professional and technical positions in their home countries.

Many respondents indicated that they received one or more of the following benefits from their employer: vacation pay/annual leave (21%), health insurance (20%), retirement (11%), and sick pay (8%). About 29% said that their employer provided on-the-job training, while about 10% received English language training from their employer. About 9% were receiving assistance from the Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA) program and about 2% were participating in the WAGES program. Seventy percent said that they had been in the middle one-third income level in their home country, and about 53% had owned their own house in their own country.

More than half of respondents had been in Florida or the United States for one year or less (most had come with their families; about two-thirds are married and about two-thirds have children). Eighty percent had started a program for refugees during their first three months in Florida, but slightly less than half said that they had participated in English training, educational, or employment programs for refugees. Most respondents, however, felt that English was important to living and working in Florida; about 88% felt it was either “very important” or “most important.” Many had improved their English skills since coming to Florida. While more than half of the respondents indicated that they could not speak, read, or write English at arrival, only 20% reported having no English speaking ability, 22% reported no reading ability, and 29% reported no writing ability at all now.

The most notable differences between the three refugee groups involve background and education, English proficiency, and employment status and income. Most Cubans and Bosnians had arrived in Florida with their families and had been here for less than a year; however, most Haitians were married men with larger families still in Haiti who

had arrived alone in Florida. Almost half of Haitians had been here for two to five years. While Cubans tended to have at least one year of college and most Bosnians had some secondary education, more than half of the Haitian respondents did not have a secondary education. While all three groups said that their English proficiency levels had improved since their arrival in Florida, improvements appeared to be the greatest among Haitians. Finally, while most refugees who responded are working, most are working in low-wage positions, often with limited or no benefits and limited hours. Cubans also are receiving proportionately more public assistance than Haitians or Bosnians, especially RCA. Moreover, while all three populations are experiencing downward occupational mobility, and many with professional or technical backgrounds are working solely in service and labor industries, Cubans appear to be having the most difficulty finding jobs in their profession. Additionally, Bosnians are employed almost exclusively in labor positions.

There are also some notable differences between male and female refugee respondents. Overall, a slightly higher amount of women responded to the refugee survey. In general, more men than women had a primary or secondary formal education. However, more women completed more than two years of college (22%) or an advanced degree (13%) than men (15% and 10%, respectively), but more men are working now (88%) than women (59%). Thirteen percent of men are earning more than \$9.00 an hour, but less than 3% of women are. Finally, more than a third of female refugee respondents (39%) were working in professional positions in their home countries, while 28% of men were. Among those employed, the majority of both groups were working in service and labor positions in Florida. Other differences were found in relation to responses

regarding training and services received; these responses are discussed in *Research Questions*, found later in this report.

An analysis of the relationships between refugees' level of education and employment and income status indicated some differences. While the bulk of refugees who were working received from \$5.15 to \$9 per hour, only those with at least some secondary schooling and higher were receiving greater than \$11 per hour. Moreover, while refugees with 8 years of schooling or less were employed exclusively in labor and service positions, more than a quarter (28%) of refugees with at least some secondary schooling or higher were employed in professional, technical, clerical, or sales positions. The relationship between educational attainment and whether or not a refugee was currently working did not prove to be significant.

In the following sections, characteristics of respondents to the refugee survey are summarized and reported by country of origin. Please note that in most cases percentages have been rounded. Comparisons between different refugee samples are reported only when notable differences were found. Some items in the survey instruments required multiple responses; as such, the data reported in these cases may exceed the number of respondents. See Appendixes A, B, and C for more information on characteristics of refugee respondents.

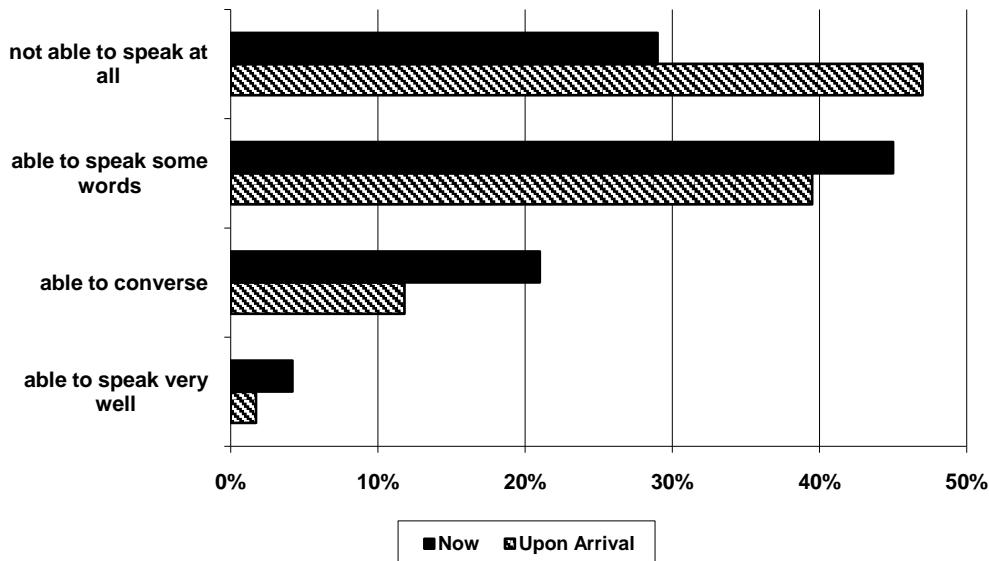
Cubans

Over 100 Cuban refugees responded to the survey. Most had been in the United States and Florida for less than a year, 63% and 66%, respectively. Sixty-three percent were married, 69% had one or more children, and 71% had come with their families. About three-fourths (77%) had entered a program for refugees during their first three

months in Florida. Most Cubans had advanced beyond a secondary level of schooling; 79% said that they had attended school for 13 or more years. About 71% said that they were in the middle one-third income level in their home country. Fifty-seven percent, however, said that they had not owned their own house in Cuba.

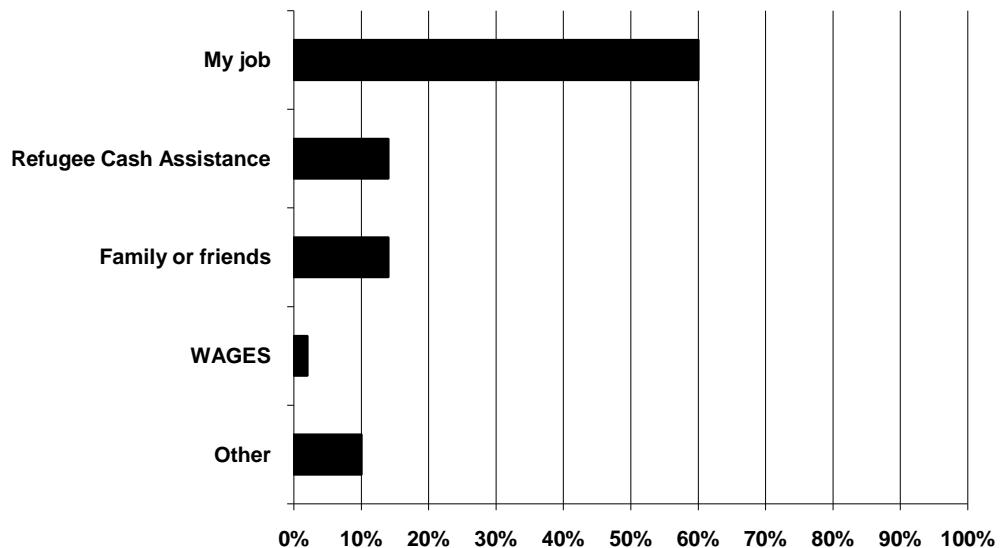
The majority of Cuban respondents indicated that they had improved their English skills since arriving in Florida. Twelve percent indicated that they could carry on a conversation in English when they arrived, while more than 20% said they can do so now (see Figure 2 on the following page). Only 9% could read a newspaper or a magazine when they arrived, but 16% indicated that they could read an English publication now. Finally, while almost half (48%) could not write in English at all when they arrived, almost half said that they could now “write some words” (24%) or “fill out a job application” (24%) in English. Cubans generally felt that it was important to be able to communicate in English: 96% felt it was either “important,” “very important,” or “most important.”

Figure 2: Cuban Refugees' English-Speaking Ability



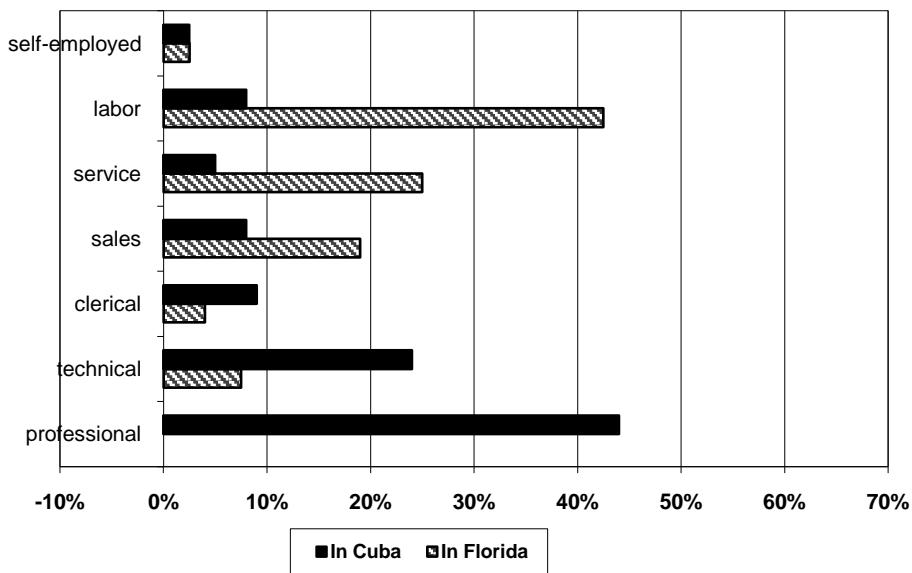
Most Cuban refugees (68%) were working at the time of this study. Sixty-two percent said that they had worked at some point since arriving in Florida. The main source of income for most Cuban refugees was from employment, while some also received income from family or friends, RCA, and WAGES (Figure 3 on the following page). Almost three-fourths (74%) were earning from \$5.15 to \$7.00 per hour with 12% earning less than \$5.15 per hour. Seventy percent worked at least 40 hours a week, with 7% working more than one job. Fifty-four percent had obtained their job with the help of family or friends, while 26% had gotten their jobs through the help of their sponsoring agency or a refugee employment agency. About half received one or more of the following benefits from their employer: sick pay (8%), vacation pay/annual leave (18%), health insurance (13%), or retirement (10%). Cuban respondents also received on-the-job training (13%) and English language training (9%) from their employers.

Figure 3: Cuban Refugees' Main Sources of Income



Like many other refugee groups, Cuban refugees are experiencing downward occupational mobility when they immigrate to Florida, although most have resided in Florida for less than a year. Few are working in technical, clerical, or professional positions. Forty-three percent worked as laborers, 25% worked in service industries, and 19% worked in sales positions. More than two-thirds (68%), however, were working in professional or technical positions before they came to the United States. See Figure 4 on the following page for more details.

Figure 4: Employment of Cuban Refugees



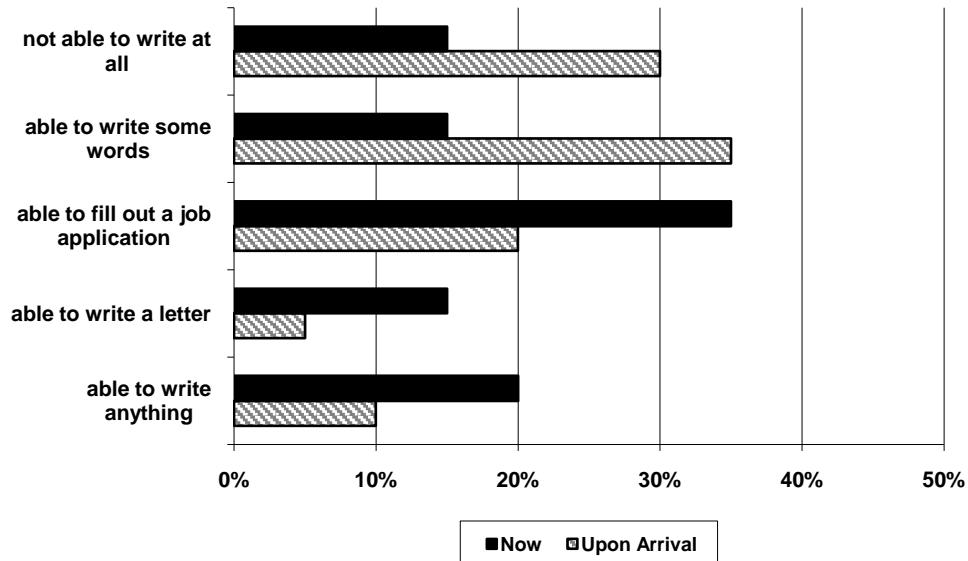
Haitians

Twenty-one Haitian refugees responded to the refugee survey. Two-thirds of respondents were men, and 62% were between the ages of 32 and 47. Haitians tended to have larger families than Cuban and Bosnian respondents. Sixty-five percent were married, and the majority (86%) had children. Among those with children, 72% had at least three children. Most (62%), however, had come to the United States without their families. Forty-three percent had been in Florida from 2 to 5 years, while 29% had been in Florida for only 6 months to 1 year. More than half had entered a refugee program within their first month in Florida; 26% had entered a refugee program during their first six months. The majority (71%) had been homeowners in Haiti, and three-fourths said that they were in the middle one-third income level in Haiti.

Most Haitian respondents had not been educated beyond a secondary or high school level. About half (52%) had 8 or less years of formal schooling, while 27% had between 9 and 12 years. However, Haitian respondents had significantly improved their English

skills since their arrival. Although 60% could not read English or could only read “some words” when they arrived, 55% said that they could read a newspaper or magazine or could read “anything” in English now. Moreover, while 65% could not “write at all” or could only “write some words” in English upon their arrival, 50% said that they could either “fill out a job application” or “write a letter” now, and 20% said that they could write “anything” in English now (see Figure 5 for a breakdown of Haitian respondents writing ability in English). Finally, while 75% said that they could not speak or could only speak some words in English on arrival, half said that they could “have a conversation” or could speak English “perfectly” now. Indeed, Haitians felt strongly that one’s ability to communicate in English was important to adapt to life in Florida. Respondents thought that it was either “very important” (30%) or “most important” (70%).

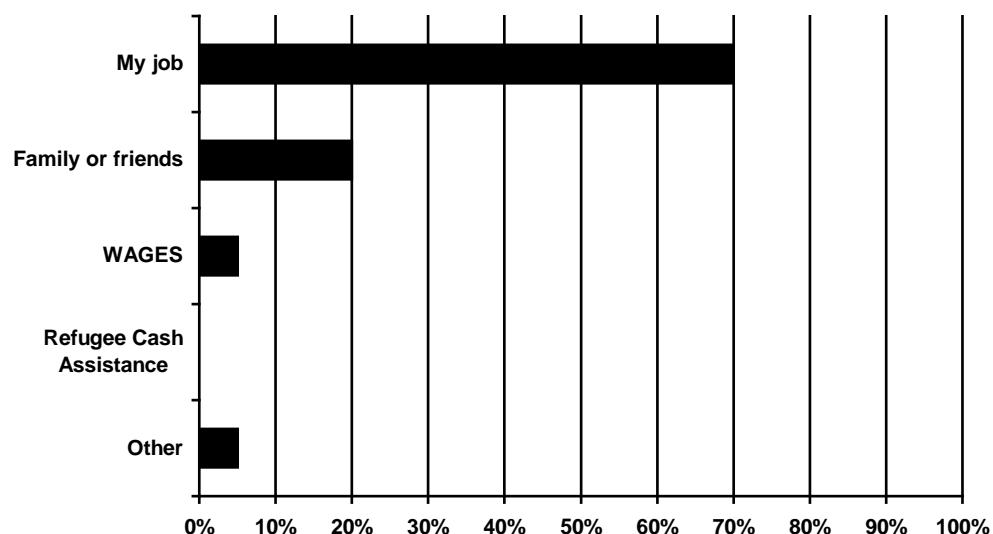
Figure 5: English-Writing Ability of Haitian Respondents



The majority of Haitian respondents (81%) had worked since coming to Florida, and over two-thirds (67%) were working at the time of this study. While most Haitians

obtained their income through working (70%), some received financial assistance from family and friends (20%), and others obtained income from WAGES or other sources (see Figure 6). While two-thirds of Haitians (67%) were working more than one job, less than half (43%) said that they were working 40 or more hours per week. However, most (86%) were working at least 30 hours per week. The majority (86%) were earning between \$5.15 and \$9.00 per hour. More than half (60%) had obtained their jobs through help from friends or family, while about a fifth (20%) had help from a refugee employment provider.

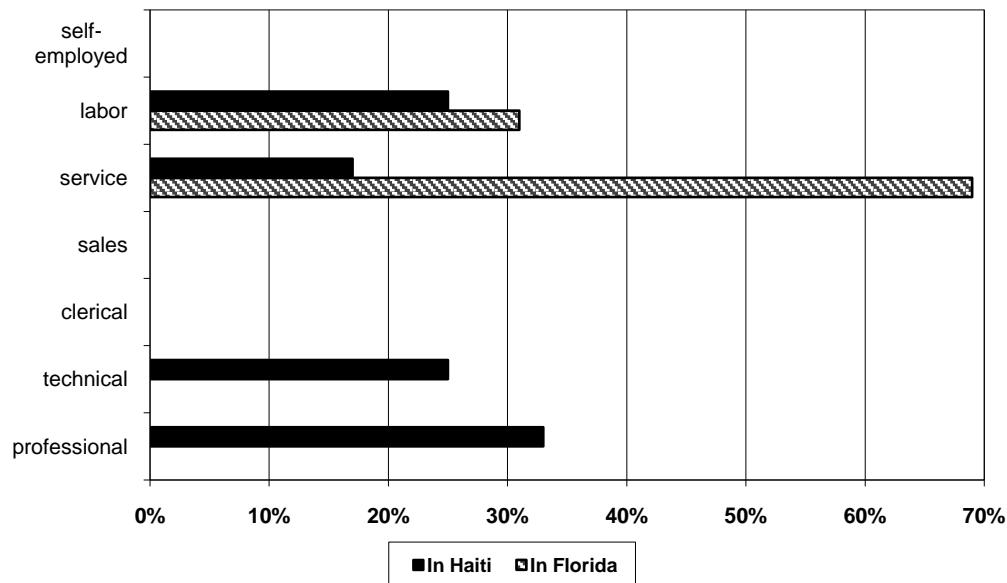
Figure 6: Haitian Refugees' Main Sources of Income



Several Haitian respondents received one or more of the following fringe benefits from their employer: vacation pay/annual leave (43%), health insurance (14%), and retirement (7%). Many Haitian respondents also received training from their employers; 60% received employer-provided on-the-job training and 27% received employer-provided English language training. None of the Haitian respondents, however, reported working in technical or professional positions in Florida. Although more than half (58%) had been working in professional or technical positions in Haiti before they came to the

United States, 69% were now working in service positions, while 31% were working in labor positions. See Figure 7 for more information.

Figure 7: Employment of Haitian Refugees



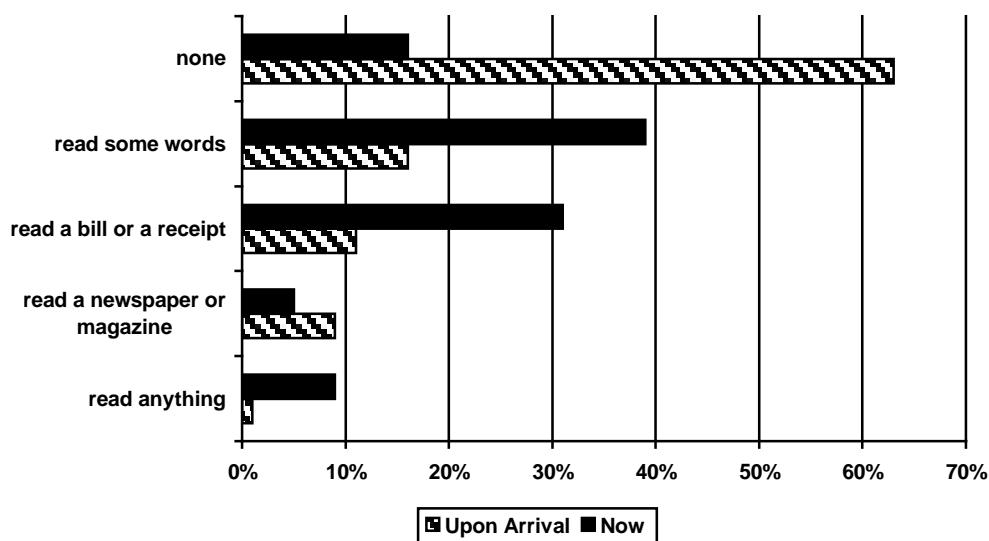
Bosnians

Seventy-six Bosnians responded to the refugee survey. Most (78%) had been in the United States or Florida for less than one year. Eighty percent had entered a program for refugees during their first month in Florida. Seventy-one percent were married, and most (73%) had one or more children. Almost all (92%) had come with their families. Most Bosnians (83%) had 9 or more years of schooling; about a quarter (26%) had 13 or more years. About three-fourths (74%) said that they were in the middle one-third income level in their home country, and 63% had owned a home in Bosnia or the former Yugoslavia.

Bosnians, like Cubans and Haitians, believed that it was important to learn English; 69% felt learning English was “most important” and 23% felt it was “very important.” Bosnians have also improved their English skills since arriving. While 63% indicated

that they could not speak any English when they arrived, only 9% were still unable to speak any English now. Similarly, 63% could not read anything in English when they had arrived, but only 16% were still unable to read English now (see Figure 8). Finally, while most (88%) could not write at all or could only write a few words in English when they arrived, more than a third could either “fill out a job application” (27%), “write a letter” (8%), or “write anything” (3%) in English now.

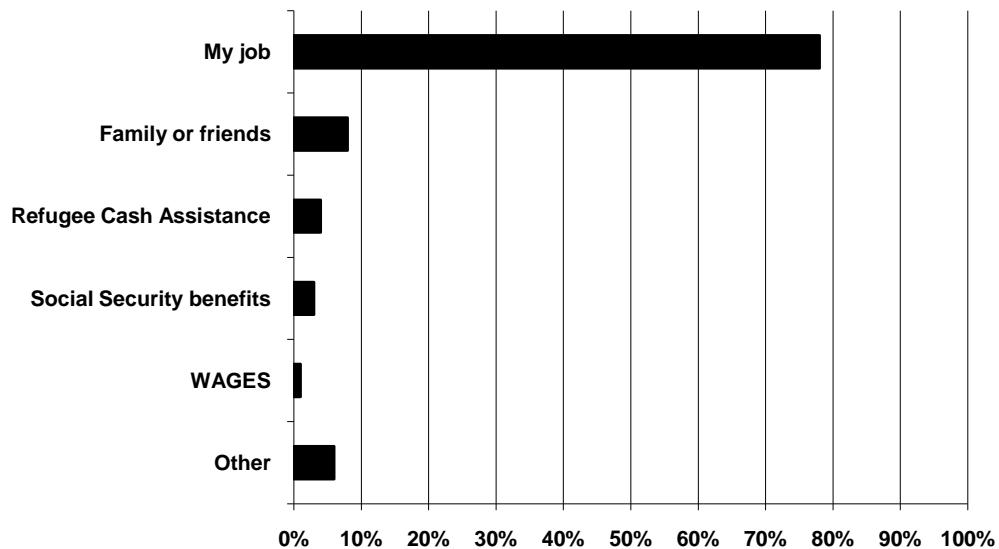
Figure 8: English Literacy of Bosnian Refugees



Eighty-three percent of Bosnian respondents were working at the time of this study. Eighty-eight percent said that they had worked at some point since arriving in Florida. Most relied on employment as their main source of income (see Figure 9). More than half (58%) were earning from \$5.15 to \$7.00 per hour with a quarter (25%) earning from \$7.01 to \$9.00 per hour. Most were working at least half-time; over half (56%) worked at least 40 hours a week, while 23% worked from 30 to 39 hours a week. Only one Bosnian respondent worked more than one job. About a third (34%) had obtained employment with the help of family or friends, while 31% had gotten their jobs through

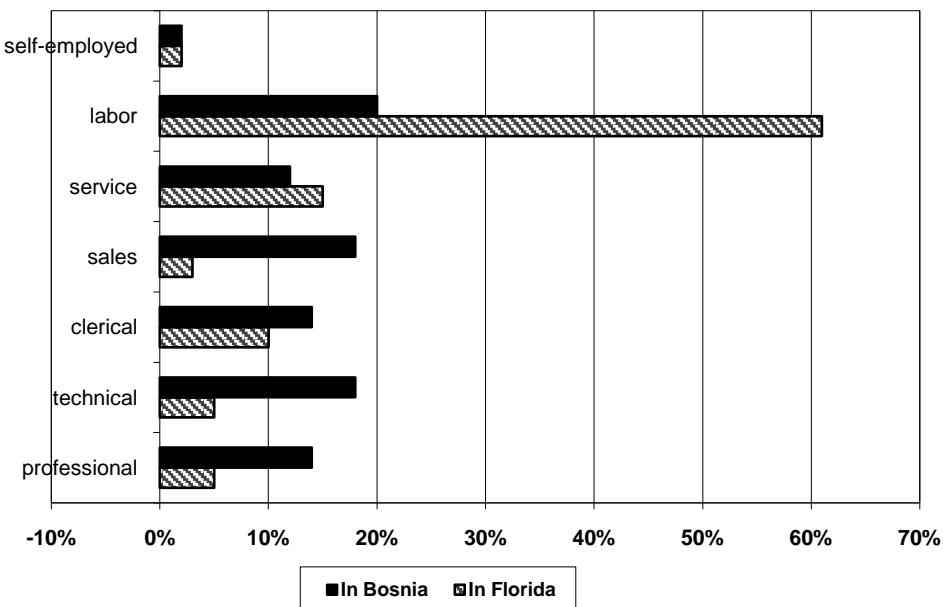
the help of their sponsoring agency. More than two-thirds received one or more of the following benefits from their employer: sick pay (10%), vacation pay/annual leave (20%), health insurance (28%), or retirement (13.5%). Some Bosnian respondents also received on-the-job training (40%) and English language training (6.5%) from their employers.

Figure 9: Bosnian Refugees' Main Sources of Income



Although they do not appear to have suffered downward occupational mobility to quite the same extent as Cubans and Haitians, most Bosnians are not working in high-skill, high-paying positions; 61% were working as laborers in Florida even though only 20% had worked as laborers in Bosnia. Moreover, while almost half (46%) had worked in technical, clerical, or professional positions in Bosnia, only 20% worked in such fields now. See Figure 10 for more details.

Figure 10: Employment of Bosnian Refugees



Characteristics of Service Providers and Employers

Eighteen service providers and 52 employers responded to the survey. The following sections detail characteristics of the respondents and their responses to questions concerning refugee adaptation to life in Florida. Please note again that in most cases percentages have been rounded and that data reported for multiple response questions may exceed the total number of respondents. It should also be noted that in most cases percentages reported in these sections are based on a small number of respondents.

Service Providers

Out of the sample of 31 service providers from Duval, Hillsborough, Miami-Dade, and Orange counties, *only 18 providers* responded to the Service Provider Survey. Almost two-thirds (65%) of respondents served Miami-Dade County, 17% served Hillsborough County, 12% served Orange, and 6% served Duval counties. Sixty percent

of responding organizations mainly served Cubans, while 20% mainly served Bosnians and 10% mainly served Haitians. The remaining 10% primarily served other refugee groups, in addition to serving Cubans, Haitians, or Bosnians. Eighty-two percent of service providers felt that more than 60% of their staff could communicate in the native language of their main refugee client population, while 12% of service providers said that between 21% and 40% of their staff could.

Respondents provided a variety of services. Several organizations offered needs assessments (16%), family self-sufficiency planning (11%), and orientation programs (11%). Service providers were asked to answer certain questions if they offered any of the following services: employment, education (English language training, vocational English language training, vocational education, or adult education), child care, mental health, and legal. Thirteen percent offered employment services, 11% offered educational services (ESL/ESOL, VESL/VESOL, vocational, and adult education), 10% offered child-care services, 9% offered mental health services, and 6% offered legal services. Some providers also offered other services to refugees such as teen pregnancy prevention (1), services for refugees with epilepsy (1), and processing and referral (2).

See Table 4 for more information on services provided by respondents.

Table 4: Types of Training and Services Provided by Refugee Service Providers

Training or Service	Frequency	Percent
English language training (ESL/ESOL)	2	3
vocation English language training (VESL/VESOL)	1	1
vocational education	2	3
adult education (ABE/GED)	3	4
employment services	9	13
needs assessment	11	16
family self-sufficiency planning	8	11
child-care services	7	10
legal services	4	6
mental health services	6	9
orientation programs	8	11
elderly services	3	4
other	6	9

Child-Care Services

Five providers of child-care services responded to questions concerning child-care services for refugees. Four out of the five reported having caseloads of between 1 and 10 refugee clients per day. Three respondents said that between 81% and 100% of applicants receive child-care services, while the remaining two respondents said that 21% to 60% of applicants actually receive services. Three of the five respondents provide child-care services continually for 12 months after the client has found employment, while two other providers do not. Four providers said that they provide child care during the summer months. One provider does not provide post-employment child-care services nor child care during the summer, but does refer clients to another agency.

Three respondents felt that the overall quality of child-care services available to refugees in Florida was “good” or “excellent”; the remaining provider felt it was “poor.”³ Two final open-ended questions asked respondents to (1) discuss difficulties that they have faced in providing child care to refugees and (2) to suggest how the quality of child-care services for refugees in Florida could be improved. Difficulties mentioned included

- language barriers (1),
- transportation (1),
- scheduling conflicts (2),
- unnecessary paperwork (1), and
- lack of documentation necessary for eligibility (1).

³Note that this provider also did not provide post-employment services or services during summer months.

Suggestions for improvement included

- increasing the availability of interpreters (1),
- streamlining procedures (1),
- extending eligibility length to two years instead of one year (1), and
- more assistance to subsidize the cost of accreditation for child care operators (1).

Legal Services

Three respondents who provided legal services answered questions relating to legal services for refugees. Two out of the three reported caseloads of between 1 and 5 refugee clients per day (the remaining provider reported assisting more than 20 refugee clients per day). Two providers felt that between 81% and 100% of applicants received legal assistance, while the remaining provider said that 20% or less of applicants actually receive legal assistance. The three respondents were equally distributed in response to the question “what percentage of your refugee/entrant cases are successfully closed within 6 months?” Responses included 0% to 20%, 21% to 40%, and 81% to 100%. The same responses were given in reference to the percentage of cases taking longer than 6 months to be successfully closed. Immigration was the only type of legal assistance for refugees mentioned by providers. Three respondents described the difficulties they encounter in providing immigration assistance to refugees, including inadequate amounts of paralegal staff (1), processing delays from Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) (1), and lack of documentation (1). Respondents suggested that increased funding to qualified immigration providers could improve the quality of legal services for refugees.

Mental Health Services

All three providers responding to this section of the survey reported assisting more than 20 refugees with mental health concerns per day. One respondent said that between 41% and 60% of refugees referred to them receive services, while the remaining two providers reported that between 61% and 80% and between 81% and 100%, respectively, actually receive services. Types of mental health services provided included counseling (1), crisis intervention (1), case management (1), outpatient services (1), and day and residential treatment (2). Two providers also offered psychiatric evaluation services and recreational, parenting, and mentoring activities, respectively. One provider reported the average length of time a typical refugee client stayed in mental health programs as 1 to 3 months while another reported more than 6 months. One provider also reported from 0% to 20% of their refugee clients as requiring long-term medication (more than one year) for employment-related health needs, while another provider reported between 21% and 40%.

Two of three mental health services providers felt that the services they provided address the needs of their refugee clients. Difficulties faced by mental health service providers included the limited eligibility period of six months and lack of provisions for longer term care (2), and stigmatization of mental health services (1). Providers suggest these ways of improving mental health care services for refugees in Florida: increasing access to mental health services for nonnative English speakers (1), cross-cultural training (1), funding for mental health services past the six-month and five-year limits (1), and increasing the amount of psychiatric facilities available (1).

Education/English Language Training

Those who responded to this section of the survey included providers of English language training (2), vocational English language training (1), adult education (1), and orientation services (2). English language training providers reported that, in general, 60% of refugee students completed Level 1, 40% completed Level 2, 30% completed Level 3, and 30% completed Level 4. Providers did not report completion rates for Levels 5 and 6. Most full-time refugee students typically took 4 months to complete each level and part-time refugee students took 6 months. The vocational English language training provider reported that 21% to 40% of refugee students completed VESL/VESOL programs, while the adult education provider reported that 20% or less of refugee students completed ABE or GED programs. Providers of orientation programs said the average length of such programs was less than 5 hours. The greatest difficulty in providing educational services to refugee students as described by one provider was student retention. To improve the quality of educational services, one provider suggested the creation of a consortium of the school districts that provide educational services to refugees in order to standardize offerings and outcomes.

Employment Services

Employment services providers offered a variety of services (see Table 5). Ten providers offered employability planning, job searching, job development, job placement, job maintenance, and follow-up services, and 8% offered job interviewing services. Three providers offered employability language training, while one provider offered pre-employment skills training and another provider offered translation on the job services. Employment services providers varied in the average amounts of time that they worked

with clients; out of 10 respondents, only 1 said that the time varied from 1 to 2 months, 3 said from 3 to 6 months, 2 estimated from 7 to 9 months, 2 estimated from 10 to 12 months, and 2 others estimated more than 12 months.

Table 5: Services Offered by Employment Services Providers

Service	Frequency
employability planning	10
employability language training (ELT)	3
vocational training	0
job search	10
job development	10
job interviewing	8
job placement	10
job maintenance	10
follow-up	10
other	3

Most providers felt that more than half of their refugee clients are placed in employment; 2 providers reported that from 41% to 60% of their clients are placed in jobs, while 4 providers reported from 61% to 80% and 4 providers reported from 81% to 100%. Most employment services providers (7) felt that refugee clients are placed between 1 and 2 months after their arrival, and all reported that their refugee clients who get jobs are usually placed in employment by their agency. All 10 respondents reported that the average hourly pay of their refugee clients ranged from \$5.15 to \$7.00 per hour. All employment services providers also said that most of these jobs were full time and permanent, and more than half (6) said that such jobs included benefits. Most providers (6) reported that from 41% to 60% of their refugee clients receive some form of public assistance. Eight providers reported that an average of 43% of their refugee clients were receiving cash and medical assistance (RCA/RMA), 7 providers reported that an average of 54% of their clients were in the WAGES program or received food stamps, 5 providers reported that an average of 38% of their refugee clients were receiving Medicaid, 4

providers reported that an average of 4% of their refugee clients were receiving Social Security (SSI/SSDI) benefits, and 3 providers reported that an average of 3% of their refugee clients were receiving other forms of public assistance.

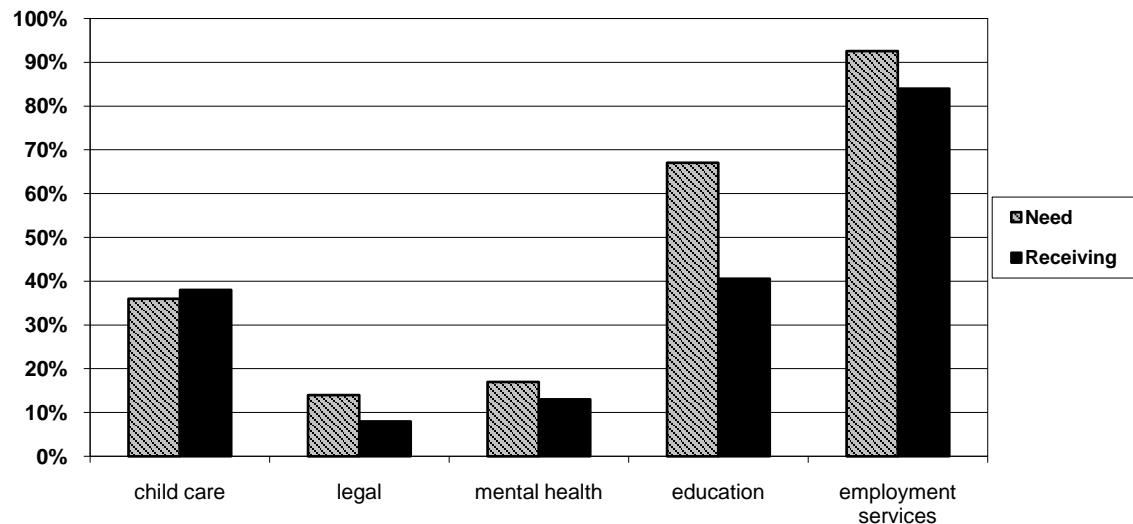
The main categories of jobs obtained by refugees as reported by respondents included service (10), labor (9), sales (4), and technical (4). All employment services providers who responded also felt that refugees were not finding jobs similar to the occupations they had in their home countries, and most respondents (8) said that less than 15% of their refugee clients are placed in professional or clerical positions, while the same number reported placing more than 45% of refugee clients in service or labor positions. Reasons for refugees not finding similar occupations included lack of adequate English communication skills (5), difficulties in recertification in professional fields (4), and lack of a sufficient job history (1).

Employment services providers were asked about follow-up assistance they provide to refugee clients who have been placed in employment. Most (7) continue to provide some sort of follow-up assistance after the state-mandated 90-day period. One respondent provided follow-up assistance for up to one year. Two respondents provided assistance for up to 180 days or six months, while two other respondents provided assistance for 180 days to their WAGES refugee clients. Two other respondents provided assistance for an additional 90 and 30 days, respectively. Most respondents maintained regular contact with clients who had been placed during these periods to determine their adjustment to work (3), as required by WAGES or other public assistance programs (1), to verify employment (1), and to provide “job keeping skills and motivation” (1). Other providers maintained contact with employers to verify employment information such as

salary, hours, benefits, dates, conditions, and performance. Finally, most respondents (7) said that they maintain some form of contact with former refugee clients after the follow-up period has ended.

Some employment services providers also offered orientation programs. Orientation programs varied in length among providers: 5 reported a program duration of 0 to 5 hours, 4 reported 6 to 10 hours, and 1 said 16 to 20 hours. Providers were also asked to indicate what percentage of their refugee clients needed child care, legal, mental health, educational, or employment services, and what percentage were actually receiving such services. According to respondents, many refugee clients were not receiving needed services (see Figure 11). For example, 9 out of 10 providers reported an average of two-thirds (67%) of refugee clients needing educational services, but responding providers (8) reported that on the average only 41% were receiving such services. Similarly, all 10 respondents reported an average of 93% of refugee clients as needing employment services, but responding providers (9) reported that an average of only 84% were receiving such services. Child care was the only service that was reported to be exceeding the level of need. Nine providers reported that an average of 36% of their refugee clients needed child-care services, while responding providers (8) reported that an average of 38% were actually receiving such services.

Figure 11: Service Needs of Refugees as Reported by Employment Services Providers



Needs of Refugees

In the final section of the Service Provider Survey, participants were asked a series of open-ended questions concerning their opinions about difficulties in assisting refugees with English and employment, the effects of welfare reform, employment-related needs of refugees, and other suggestions to improve services to refugees in Florida. Thirteen providers listed a variety of difficulties that they face in helping refugees gain a working knowledge of English. These responses described the difficulties and situations that refugees face on a daily basis. One provider mentioned the following points:

Lack of time to sustain 1 or 2 jobs, take care of the family and attend school. Adequate transportation to get to and from jobs/educational institution. Lack of child-care services available during nonconventional hours/week-ends to enable them to attend school. Lack of after school care available to middle school children. There is no supervision for this age group for almost 7 hours after school.

Lack of time (7), lack of motivation (7), and lack of transportation (4) were the three most often mentioned obstacles among the 13 who responded. Other issues included refugees having special cultural needs that have not been addressed (3), having no interest in learning English (2), and having low skill levels in their own languages (1).

Providers experienced similar problems in attempting to provide employment services to refugees:

[The main difficulties are those that] they encounter when first arrived. It is hard for them to adjust to their new life, surroundings, and most of all the lack of transportation and language.

Language difficulties or lack of English (8) and transportation problems (7) were the most often mentioned among the 12 providers who expressed the difficulties they face in helping refugees find or keep employment. Also mentioned were unrealistic expectations or poor work attitudes (3) and low skill levels and the lack of a work history among refugees (2). One provider noted the following:

One of the main difficulties is the refugee's unrealistic expectations of obtaining a high paying job, near their home in a competitive environment. Many refugees have low skill levels and a lack of work habits.

while another commented that:

. . . many clients work 'off the books' for much higher salaries than we can offer them through legitimate jobs.

Providers were also asked if they felt that welfare reform measures have had significant effects on the economic status, employment status, or general well-being of

refugees. Nine respondents felt that welfare reform had had some impact; 2 respondents felt the effect was positive:

Welfare reform has put pressure on the refugees to obtain employment quickly and to get off public assistance quicker. Community service hours have had a positive impact because it [sic] has given refugees the opportunity to acquire the needed work experience.

The remaining 7 respondents, however, felt that welfare reform had adversely affected refugees. Most reported negative effects on the economic status and general well-being of refugees. The following are samples of some of the comments made by these respondents:

Eligibility limited before they are in a position to become self-sufficient. It affects eligibility for food stamps and general well-being through emotional distress to handle stressful economic conditions and dependency issues.

It makes them more frustrated than before. They have to comply with so many rules and regulations that it makes it hard for them to adapt to their new life.

The most serious impact is the lack of health care available beyond the Medicaid eligibility.

Respondents noted many employment-related needs of refugees and listed several suggestions for improving services. Five respondents felt that there was a serious need for refugees to develop competency in English, but that current ESL-type programs were not adequately meeting this need. Four providers felt that most refugees did not have

access to transportation adequate enough for both employment and education activities. Four providers also saw problems with the jobs that refugees are currently employed in, citing a lack of job opportunities and a lack of jobs that pay more than the minimum wage and have benefits.

Ten providers offered suggestions to improve services. Suggestions for improving services included establishing ESL classes with flexible schedules and volunteering or tutoring components, providing computer training classes in refugees' languages, subsidizing the recertification process for refugees with professional certification in their home country, creating higher-paying job opportunities with benefits for refugees and subsidizing work permits, providing services to refugee families as well as to individuals, and focusing service delivery on consumer/client satisfaction.

Four providers remarked that the eligibility period of 5 years for services and benefits was problematic:

It takes a long period of time to adjust to the US. Many refugees need more than 5 years. Offering services to those that have been in the US longer than 5 years would be beneficial to the refugees and the overall community.

Providers recommended increasing the eligibility period to 7 years and obtaining alternative funding to solve the problem:

Funding from discretionary sources should be available to provide services beyond the 5 year period to those who have not mainstreamed, resettled or achieved self-sufficiency.

Two providers also discussed the need for increased collaboration among providers:

More outreach needs to be developed in a less competitive environment.

Agencies need to be more collaborative with one another. . . .

Services could be improved by creating a consortium of like-service providers within the various regions of the state. We continue to re-invent the wheel, resulting in a loss of productivity and resources. Networking and communication between the counties is vital if we are to replicate exemplary programs. A state conference, a drive-in workshop, or even a distance-learning linkage would facilitate greater sharing of effective practices.

Employers

Many different types of businesses responded to the Employer Survey. Almost a quarter (24%) were in lodging, food, and beverage industries, while 19% were in manufacturing. See Table 6 for more details on employer businesses.

Table 6: Types of Companies That Responded to the Employer Survey

Type of Company	Frequency	Percent
business and professional services	5	8
construction	5	8
educational services	2	3
health and social services	3	5
lodging, food, and beverage	15	24
manufacturing	12	19
retail sales	5	8
transportation/communications/utilities	3	5
wholesale sales	3	5
other	9	14.5

Many employers had large businesses. More than half of all employers (52%) had more than 100 employees. About 25% had less than 25 employees, while over 10% had from 26 to 49 employees. Most did not, however, employ large amounts of refugees. Only 17% said that 80% or more of their employees were refugees, while almost a third (31%) said that less than 10% of their employees were refugees. Most employers said that their refugee employees worked in service (34%) or labor (32%) positions; only 8% worked in professional or technical positions. Fifty-eight percent of employers said that most of their refugee employees were from Cuba, while 32% said Haiti and 7% said Bosnia. Most businesses that were employing refugees had hired them directly (62%), while a little more than a quarter (29%) had refugee employees that had been placed by a service provider. Most employers (72%) said that their refugee employees who were placed were not placed by a particular service provider. Those who had employees placed by a particular provider listed providers including Catholic Social Services (3), Catholic Charities (2), Jobs of Miami (2), Youth Co-op (2), A Job for You (1), City of Hialeah (1), City of Miami (1), Cuban American Agency (1), Lutheran Services (1), and Miami-Dade Community College (1).

Most employers (64%) reported that their refugee employees typically worked from 35 to 40 hours a week. Only 6% reported that most of their refugee employees worked less than 25 hours a week, while 18% said that most of their refugee employees work more than 40 hours a week. Eighty percent said that they offered benefits such as sick or annual leave, health insurance, or retirement to some of their refugee employees. About a third offered vacation pay or annual leave, while 28% offered health insurance, 20% offered sick pay, and 11% offered retirement. About 8% (10 employers) also offered other benefits such as educational or tuition assistance (4), bonus and incentive pay (2), life insurance (2), disability benefits (1), and free meals (1).

Research Questions

1. What problems and obstacles do refugees in Florida encounter during resettlement and what are ways of solving or coping with these difficulties?

A preliminary inquiry of this subject was conducted through an extensive review of existing documents and literature relating to Cubans, Haitians, and Bosnians in Florida, a companion volume to this report. The section of this report entitled *Background* presented an abbreviated version of the findings of the literature review.

Service providers were asked about refugees' adaptation to their communities. The majority of providers (86%) felt that most refugees are successfully adapting to their communities, and most providers (88%) said that most refugees have access to ethnic community supports or networks. Almost half (43%) said that most refugees usually take more than 3 years to adapt to the communities in which they are resettled, while 29% said from 2 to 3 years, 7% said 1 to 2 years, and 21% said from 6 months to 1 year.

Participants in the refugee survey were also asked for their opinions on the greatest difficulties refugees face in trying to work and live in Florida. The three difficulties that respondents listed most often concerned difficulty with English (21%), inadequate salaries (19%), and not working in one's profession (16%). Haitian respondents also rated housing (12.5%) as a significant obstacle. When asked about the most significant difficulties faced in attending English classes, respondents listed lack of free time (30.5%), transportation (19%), and child care (15%) most often (Tables 7 and 8 show responses by each population group).

Table 7: Biggest Difficulties That Refugees Face in Working in the U.S. or Florida

Difficulty	Cubans		Haitians		Bosnians	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
My salary does not meet my needs.	71	20	11	23	34	16
It is difficult to get transportation to and from work.	27	8	5	10	14	7
I have difficulty with English.	77	22	5	10	45	22
After working, I have no free time.	14	4	3	6	18	9
I am not working in my profession.	58	17	7	15	34	16
I am having problems finding an affordable place to live.	27	8	6	13	11	5
It is difficult to find someone to care for my children while I am at work.	12	3	3	6	14	7
It is difficult to find someone to care for my family while I am at work.	3	1	1	2	0	0
I have no job security.	35	10	2	4	20	10
Other.	25	7	5	11	16	8

Table 8: Biggest Difficulties That Refugees Face in Attending English Classes

Difficulty	Cubans		Haitians		Bosnians	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
It is difficult to get transportation to and from English classes.	23	18	8	32	14	17
I have no free time after work.	37	28	4	16	32	38
It is difficult to find someone to care for my children while I am at class.	18	14	3	12	14	17
It is difficult to find someone to care for my family while I am at class.	2	1.5	1	4	0	0
I don't know how to find information about English classes.	15	11.5	1	4	4	5
I don't want to/need to take English classes.	12	9	1	4	3	4
Other.	24	18	7	28	16	19

Nineteen Cubans, 5 Haitians, and 14 Bosnians gave descriptions of the greatest difficulties they face in working and living in Florida. Many of their responses fit under the categories listed in Table 7. Among Cubans, other difficulties related to work were

- unable to find work (6),
- unable to work due to illness (1),
- lack of work experience (1),
- lack of full-time jobs (1),
- discrimination against women (1),
- pregnancy (1), and
- delays in immigration processing and family reunification (1).

Haitians reported difficulties such as

- discrimination (1),
- inability to work or to find work (1), and
- loneliness due to lack of family reunification (1).

Bosnians cited

- illness/inability to work (1),
- lack of jobs due to companies going out of business (1),
- lack of jobs with adequate benefits (1), and
- difficulty adjusting to life in the U.S. (1).

Twenty-one Cubans, 8 Haitians, and 15 Bosnians provided descriptions of difficulties related to attending English classes. Again, many of these difficulties fell under categories listed in Table 8. Among Cubans, difficulties included paying tuition (5), delays before being able to start classes/college (2), illness (1), lack of residency (1), and needing to quit other educational programs in order to attend ESL classes (1). Haitians mentioned having problems with paying tuition (4), having difficulties with studying (1), and needing advanced classes (1), while Bosnians listed lack of ESL in native language (2) and lack of money to attend classes/college (2).

In the final section of the refugee survey, participants were asked to elaborate in describing the main problems they had encountered in living and working in Florida. Eighty-nine Cubans, 20 Haitians, and 56 Bosnians responded to this question. Among Cubans, most respondents again listed difficulties with English (39), general difficulty with finding a job (25), low salaries (19), transportation (16), and housing and cost of living (14) as the main problems that they faced. Other problems for Cubans included

- discrimination (9),
- lack of information about life in America or Florida (8),
- lack of care from a refugee service provider or resettlement agency (8),
- lack of help in obtaining further education (8),

- inability to work due to age, illness, or loss of Medicaid (7),
- lack of adequate child care/day care (6),
- difficulty finding a job in one's profession (6),
- emotional difficulties encountered in separating from family or adapting to a new life (5),
- difficulty getting re-certified for a profession (3), and
- immigration problems (3).

Haitian and Bosnian respondents listed similar difficulties. Haitian respondents listed the following problems:

- low salaries and lack of money to pay bills (13),
- lack of education (5),
- difficulties with immigration and work permits (2),
- discrimination (2),
- transportation (2),
- housing costs (1), and
- inability to work due to illness (1).

Bosnians respondents mentioned the following difficulties:

- English (26),
- transportation (16),
- lack of knowledge about life in America and Florida (10),
- insufficient help from refugee service providers or resettlement agencies (5),
- lack of child care (3),
- limited or no benefits from employment (4),

- lack of time for education (2),
- discrimination (1),
- housing (1),
- low wages (1),
- not working in one's profession (1), and
- inability to work (1).

The following are samples of the responses received for this question:

The English language. Transportation. Finding a job that relates to my field. My diplomas from Cuba are not valid here. There is a lack of programs for refugees who want to study at the University. . . . [Cuban]

I have faced the fact of starting all over again and leaving behind and forgetting all that I have had. . . . [Cuban]

Learning to find my way around to [sic] places. [Cuban]

There are no jobs. Low salaries. Not knowing the language. Rent is very expensive. [Cuban]

Because the money I am paid is too little to support me, with my kids, with my family. [Haitian]

Discrimination: they humiliate us. They call us ‘voudouizan’ [voodoo worshippers], boat people, they put almost all Haitians in the same basket.

[Haitian]

My main problem is: education, I would like to continue [with my education], so that I may live and work in Florida. [Haitian]

Lack of help from the Agency, lack of knowledge about: USA law system, USA culture, climate and life style. Lack of job security and safe neighborhood. [Bosnian]

High cost of child care. [Bosnian]

- 2. How does employment-related training that is received from providers under contract to Florida's Refugee Services affect refugees (i.e., how effectively does training help refugees with economic adaptation?)**
- 3. How satisfied are refugees with the training and employment-related services they are receiving?**

Overall, less than half of refugee respondents (46%) indicated that they had received training from any agency in Florida. More than half of Haitian respondents (58%), however, said that they had received training. Of those refugees who indicated that they had received training, almost half (49%) had received English language training, 20% had received employment services, and 13% had received orientation. Among Haitian respondents, 71% had received English language training and 18% had received vocational English language training. Sixty-four percent of refugee respondents rated English language training as being most useful to them, while 15% rated employment services most useful, and 15% of Haitian respondents rated vocational English language training as most useful. When asked what skills learned in training have been most useful, about half of all refugee respondents (49%) and more than three-fourths of Haitian respondents (76%) selected "learning English," while about a quarter of all refugee respondents (26%) selected "how to get a job" (job searching, resume planning, interview skills). See Table 9 for more information.

Table 9: Most Useful Skills Learned by Refugee Respondents

Skill	Cubans		Haitians		Bosnians	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
learning English	30	44	13	76	22	47
cultural training	7	10	1	6	6	13
how to get a job	20	30	1	6	13	28
on-the-job skills	9	13	1	6	3	6
other	2	3	1	6	3	6

Sixty-three percent of refugee respondents said that they were generally satisfied with the training or services they had received. Overall, most refugee respondents felt that training had helped them communicate in English better (76%) and had helped them learn more about things that might help them with employment (63%). A little more than half of refugee respondents thought that training had helped them in getting a job (54%) or in improving their job skills (53%). Almost three-fourths (73%), however, felt that training had not helped them increase their income. See Table 10 for more details.

Table 10: Employment-Related Effects of Training

Question	Cubans		Haitians		Bosnians	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Has the training provided to you helped you speak, read, or write English better?	65%	35%	93%	7%	82%	18%
Has the training provided to you helped you in getting a job?	50%	50%	61.5%	38.5%	57%	43%
Has the training provided to you helped you improve your job skills?	56%	44%	75%	25%	42%	58%
Has the training provided to you helped you get a higher income?	27%	73%	27%	73%	26.5%	73.5%
Has the training provided to you helped you learn more about other things (such as citizenship or life in the U.S.) that might help you with employment?	50%	50%	92%	8%	69%	31%
Overall, are you satisfied with the training and services provided?	56.5%	43.5%	100%	0%	58%	42%

A comparison between male and female refugee respondents indicated that although two-thirds of female respondents were satisfied with training overall, half felt that training had not helped them gain cultural and social knowledge related to employment, and almost half felt that training had not helped them to improve job skills (48%) or to get a job (49%). Eighty-four percent of women and 62% of men felt that training did not help them increase their income.

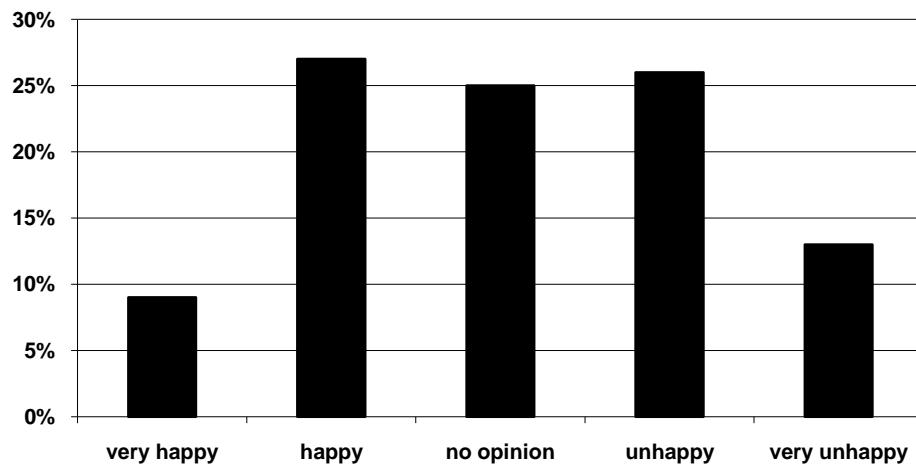
Refugee participants were also asked to describe other ways in which training has helped them. Many respondents described items already mentioned, such as increased English communication skills, job skills, and increased knowledge about life in the U.S. While most respondents found training helpful, one respondent from each population group thought it was not. Other respondents wanted to continue training but could not;

one Cuban respondent said “it has helped in a way, but I cannot continue studying because of my economic situation.”

Service providers were asked a series of questions relating to refugees’ English-speaking ability. More than half (63%) of respondents said that the majority of their refugee clients had no proficiency in English at all when they entered the provider’s program. A quarter of respondents felt that entering refugees were “not proficient” in English while only 13% felt that entering refugees were “somewhat proficient.” Most providers felt that it was “essential” (29%), “very important” (53%), or “important” (12%) for refugees to have a working knowledge of English, yet three-fourths of providers said that most of their refugee clients are not attending English classes.

Refugee respondents appeared to have mixed opinions about the jobs that they currently held. Only about a third (36%) responded either “very happy” (9%) or “happy” (27%) to the question “how happy are you with the job you have?” Over one-third (39%) said that they were either “unhappy” (26%) or “very unhappy” (13%) with their current job situation. Most refugee respondents (71%) did not feel that the job they currently held was helping them meet their goals in life, although 56% of Bosnian respondents did. See Figure 12 for more information.

Figure 12: Refugee Satisfaction with Current Job



Cuban respondents (29) reported reasons for dissatisfaction with their jobs such as

- low pay (11),
- not qualified for a job or not in field/profession (8),
- not enough or infrequent hours (7),
- discrimination or mistreatment at work (5),
- hard work (3),
- limited or no benefits (2),
- lack of English skills (1),
- not in the U.S. long enough (1), and
- general dissatisfaction or indifference to a job (1).

Haitians (8) responded similarly, with reasons for dissatisfaction such as

- low pay (5),
- discrimination, mistreatment, or favoritism at work (2),
- hard work (1),
- limited or no benefits (1),

- wanting more education (1), and
- wanting a better job (1).

Bosnian respondents (25) cited reasons for dissatisfaction such as

- low pay (10),
- lack of English skills (6),
- hard work (4),
- limited or no benefits (3),
- not in field/profession (3),
- “dead-end” job or overqualified/below educational level (4),
- mistreatment at work (2), and
- not enough hours (2).

Three Bosnian respondents, however, stated that they were satisfied with their jobs.

Respondents were also asked to respond to two open-ended questions concerning other employment-related training or services and related suggestions that might be helpful for refugees. These two questions elicited a great deal of responses from participants.

Seventy-one Cubans, 17 Haitians, and 37 Bosnians responded in reference to other services that would be useful for refugees. The top three services requested by Cubans were

- general education/training and vocational training (28),
- more English classes and more intensive and shorter ESL classes (22), and
- computer training (11).

Also requested were

- increasing opportunities for placement in permanent jobs with higher salaries and benefits (11),
- assistance in recertification of professional degrees (8),
- publicizing information about assistance for refugees (4),
- courses in driving (2),
- on-the-job orientation (2),
- bilingual education and employment assistance (2),
- disability accommodations (1),
- child care/day care assistance (1), and
- extending program eligibility (1).

Similar services were requested by Haitians, including

- general training and vocational training (8),
- tuition assistance/financial aid (5), and
- education (English, adult education/GED) (3).

Haitians also requested

- computer training (2),
- transportation assistance (1),
- cultural orientation (1),
- employment services (1), and
- public assistance for refugees unable to work (1).

Lastly, Bosnians asked for

- more English training (12),
- vocational training (5), and
- assistance with finding a job in one's profession (5).

Also requested by Bosnians were

- general training (2),
- computer training (2),
- assistance with education (2),
- assistance in recertification of professional degrees (2),
- bilingual education and employment assistance (2),
- cultural and work orientation (2),
- transportation assistance (1),
- more information about job opportunities (1),
- child care (1), and
- longer periods of service from agencies (1).

Respondents offered several other suggestions for improving services to refugees in Florida. Cuban respondents (75) felt that the following issues were important:

- extending the eligibility period for RCA and Medicaid (13),
- offering more services to assist refugees in learning English (12),
- making sure refugees have access to information about life in the U.S. and Florida (12),
- increasing job opportunities and salaries (9),

- improving methods for placing refugees into jobs in their respective professions (8),
- assistance with educational needs (6),
- offering more technical and professional training (4),
- transportation assistance and driver training (5),
- assisting refugees with immigration problems (4),
- assisting with housing (2),
- improving the administration of services by such means as decreasing paper work (1) and improving staff-client interactions (4), and
- improving employer attitudes (2).

Thirteen Haitian refugees offered other suggestions for improving services such as the following:

- increasing publicity of services (4),⁴
- emphasizing training of refugees (2) and offer short-term, subsidized training (1),
- financial aid for education (1),
- address employer discrimination (1), and
- assist refugees with obtaining work permits (1).

Among Bosnian respondents, 45 individuals offered the following suggestions:

- improving English classes (5), extending the period for ESL instruction (3), and establishing bilingual ESL programs (1);

⁴Four Haitian refugees indicated that they needed general assistance or services and appeared to be unaware of programs available.

- providing health care, especially for mothers who are expectant or have infants (4), reducing housing costs (4), and providing transportation assistance (1);
- addressing discrimination (3), reducing immigration delays (2), and maintaining separate housing for individuals from different nationalities (1);
- providing cultural adjustment and orientation (3) and access to information about topics such as small business development (1), improving credit history (1), children's education (1), and social and recreational activities for refugees (2);
- increasing the capacity and quality of services by increasing agencies and/or caseworkers (3), providing bilingual caseworkers (3), and improving the organization and management of agencies (1); and
- providing more employment services (1), more job opportunities (1), and financial support for newly arrived refugees for 3 to 4 months (1).

Following are some of the comments made by refugees in response to these sections:

You do enough already. More than what anyone would do. Thank you.

[Cuban]

There is no country like this in the whole world, which helps the refugees so much. [Cuban]

In general, the services are good and help us. I think you need to have more training and give us more information about all the benefits and programs for refugees. . . . [Cuban]

Helping to obtain the equivalency of degrees with more reasonable fees or being able to pay for them with credit. [Cuban]

Help should not be taken away so soon. [Cuban]

Free driving lessons. Orientation in advance for the residency papers.

Low rent for refugees that have been here for less than two years.

Permanent Medicare for a year without considering the economic conditions. The help with stamps and Medicare should not be taken away as soon as we start working because the job could be just temporary and later you do not have anybody who could take you to apply again. [Cuban]

My opinion is that the most important thing in this country is to learn English and learn computers. [Cuban]

I believe that the best suggestion to improve services provided to refugees is to emphasize the training of refugees. Today we are living in a developed country. But without strong training/formation, we will always maintain the behavior of a citizen from an underdeveloped country. [Haitian]

Bring in investigators to conduct surveys in companies where we are working so as to diminish the rate of discrimination. [Haitian]

I would like to find an easy way to go to school, so that I may be able to take training courses in a field which would allow me to find a job so that I am able to pay the rent, to eat, and then help my family in Haiti. [Haitian]

Thanks for everything that was given to me. [Bosnian]

A handbook with useful information, such as responsibilities and rights of refugees, how to purchase an apartment, how and when to get employed, what are ways and possibilities of studying English language, how to purchase a car, for how long we can count on government help and what are our responsibilities in that matter. [Bosnian]

There should be more case workers that can speak our language, so we can be helped with doctor visits, job hunting, translation of mail, etc. [Bosnian]

More English knowledge and hunting for job in my profession. [Bosnian]

Possibility of studying English for at least first 6 months. [Bosnian]

4. How satisfied are employers with refugees' job performance?

Employers who responded to the Employer Survey gave a mixed response regarding their satisfaction with refugees job performance. The survey requested participants to describe their satisfaction with refugee job performance by answering 10 items. Each of the 10 items used the following 5-point Likert scale: strongly agree=1, agree=2, no opinion=3, disagree=4, and strongly disagree=5. Ninety-four percent of employers who completed the survey responded to items in this section. Median scores for each item were calculated (see Table 11 for more details). With a median score of 2.00, employers generally felt positive about hiring refugees and agreed that refugees are hardworking, punctual, and generally have adequate job-related skills. However, with several median scores of 4.00, employers disagreed that most of their refugee employees have adequate skills in certain areas, including technical, communicative, and managerial skills. Employers appeared to be less satisfied with refugee job performance in these areas. Employers were neutral regarding refugees' leadership skills, with a median score of 3.00

for that category. Employers also generally agreed that not being able to communicate in English was the main difficulty among refugee employees. Several employers disagreed, however, with the statement that cultural barriers cause problems in the job performance of refugee employees.

Table 11: Employer Satisfaction with Refugee Job Performance

Statement	Mean Score
<i>I generally feel positive about hiring refugees/entrants.</i>	2.00
<i>Most of my employees who are refugees/entrants are hardworking.</i>	2.00
<i>Most of my employees who are refugees/entrants are punctual.</i>	2.00
<i>Most of my employees who are refugees/entrants have adequate technical skills, such as using the computer.</i>	4.00
<i>Most of my employees who are refugees/entrants have adequate communication skills.</i>	4.00
<i>Most of my employees who are refugees/entrants have adequate management skills.</i>	4.00
<i>Most of my employees who are refugees/entrants have adequate leadership skills.</i>	3.00
<i>Generally, most of my employees who are refugees/entrants have adequate job-related skills.</i>	2.00
<i>Not being able to communicate in English is the main difficulty among my employees who are refugees/entrants.</i>	2.00
<i>Cultural barriers cause problems in the job performance of my employees who are refugees/entrants.</i>	4.00

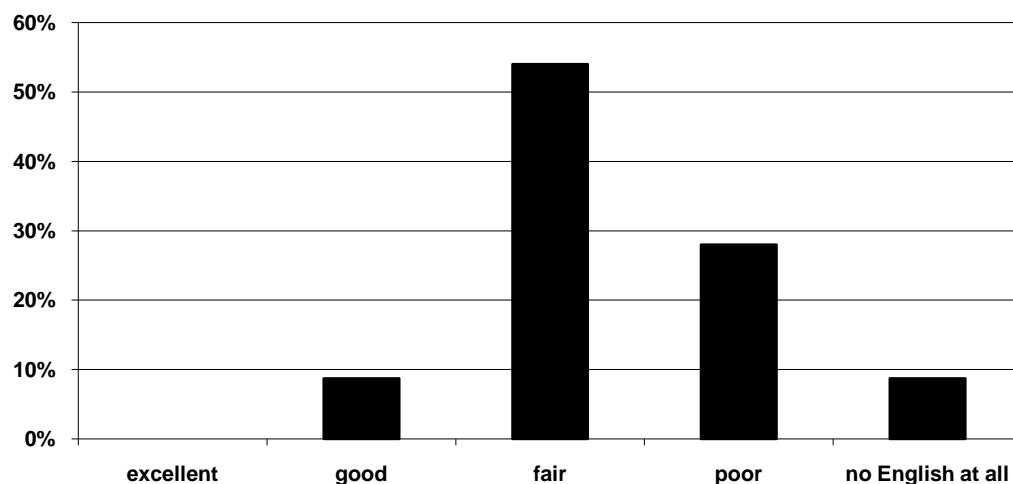
Employers were asked a series of questions relating to their perceptions about refugee employees' job skills and English proficiency. Ninety-eight percent of employers offered some type of on-the-job training, while only 6% offered English language training.⁵ Most employers, however, felt that speaking English (41%), reading in English (20%), or writing in English (14%) were the most essential skills for refugees. Fifteen percent felt that job-related skills (such as typing, telephone, computer, interpersonal, and communication) and 6% felt that knowledge of American culture were the most essential skills for refugees. Four employers also listed skills such as attendance

⁵Only one respondent was currently offering English language training to refugee employees who wanted to participate in the program. Another respondent said they had offered it in the past but had no participation, while a third respondent commented that refugee employees learn some English from other employees.

(1), dedication (1), knowledge and skills related to a particular occupation (1), and willingness to work (1).

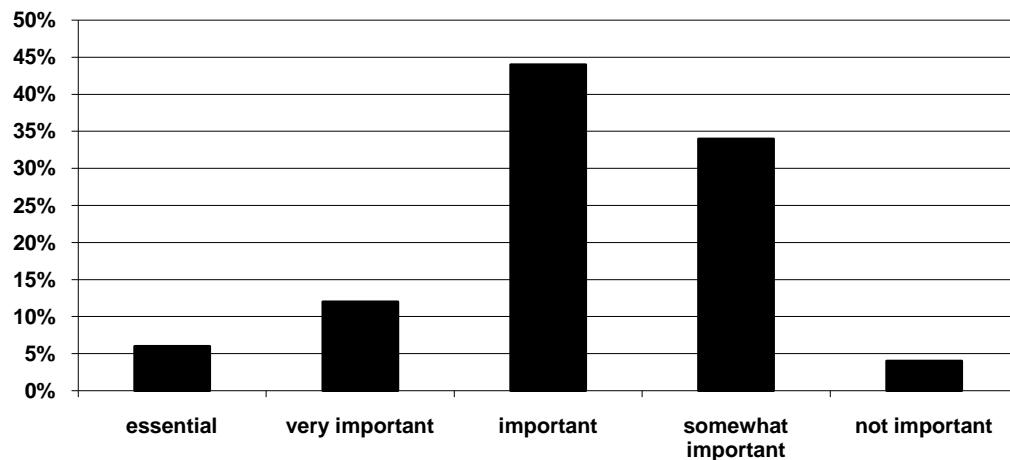
The majority of employers reported moderate levels of English proficiency for their refugee employees. Only 9% described most of their refugee employees as having “good” English communication skills, while more than half (54%) said “fair” and 28% said “poor.” See Figure 13 for more information.

Figure 13: Employer Perception of Refugee Employees’ English Communication Skills



Many employers felt English communication skills were essential for refugees and they felt that most refugee employees did not have high levels of English proficiency. Most employers, however, did not regard having a working knowledge of English as essential for employees of their company. Only 12% of employers felt that having a working knowledge of English was “very important” for employees of their company, while 44% felt it was “important” and 34% felt it was “somewhat important.” See Figure 14 for more details.

Figure 14: Employer Perception on Importance of English Skills for Refugee Employees



Employers were almost equally divided on the effect of English proficiency regarding the job performance of refugee employees. Fifty-six percent said English proficiency levels had not affected the job performance of refugee employees. The remaining 44% (24 respondents) felt it did affect some areas related to job performance, including communication with co-workers and supervisors (10), communication with customers (7), learning job-specific knowledge (4), and promotability (4).

The majority of employers (86%) did not feel that a refugee employee's cultural background affected his or her job performance. Nine respondents, however, reported effects on job performance related to cultural issues. One employer praised the creativity and inventiveness of refugee employees. Four employers maintained that differences between refugees' cultures and the American business culture caused some difficulties for refugee employees. Other issues mentioned by employers included problems with adjusting to fast-paced and constantly changing work environments (1), discriminating among customers (1), and personal hygiene issues (1).

Employers were asked if they thought that refugee employees needed more job training in any areas. Out of 25 respondents, 16 felt that more English language training was needed, especially to help refugees “advance” and “move up” out of minimum wage positions. Seven respondents felt that refugees need more on-the-job training or more job-related and technical training, with 3 specifically mentioning computer literacy training. Finally, 5 respondents noted a lack of employment-seeking skills among refugees and a need for more training in areas such as job searching, resume writing and interviewing skills, information on benefits such as Social Security and paying taxes, work ethics and attitudes, and what employers expect from employees, or, as one respondent put it, training on “how the system works here.” Other employment-related services that employers felt refugees need include knowledge of banking and personal finance (1), education concerning benefits available from employers (2), and child care assistance (1).

The final question on the Employer Survey asked respondents if they had any other suggestions to improve services for refugees. Many of the same comments as mentioned above were offered by the 18 employers who responded to this question. The following are samples of these remarks:

Very happy with the services that are being provided. Keep up the good work.

Refugees should be offered training in how to apply for a job. Such as dress code, never bring children to interview, apply individually not in groups.

Must learn English.

State-prepared work history.

Send more refugees to businesses.

Assistance with transportation until employees obtain their own?

*Need for adequate guidance in having the proper documents for employment
(current and available upon hire, re-admission, datelines, etc.).*

*Free training for calculator, computer software programs, telephone manners,
and basic business skills.*

Train employers how to communicate with refugees.

*Most people who came from other countries are eager to work. They try hard,
and mostly come from great, supportive families. Situations arise where they
cannot continue their job or something happens that throw [sic] them off track.*

I have seen many people succeed and go on to bigger and better things."

5. How well are refugees faring after receiving services?

Although it is difficult to assess the long-term effects of services received by refugees at this point of the study,⁶ some general observations can be made. Most refugees have moderately improved their proficiency in English since arriving in the U.S. or Florida. While almost half of refugee respondents had no English proficiency at all upon arrival, only about a quarter could still not speak, read, or write any English at all. Overall, most refugees are working, and employment services providers report that over half of their refugee clients are placed in employment, usually within one to two months after their arrival. However, only about a third of refugees reported finding their jobs through a service provider or their sponsoring agency. Moreover, most are underemployed in low-

⁶This question will be further investigated in the forthcoming follow-up studies of refugees to be conducted in the fall of 1999 by ESP.

wage, low-skill positions, often not in their field/profession, and many refugees are having difficulty meeting basic needs such as housing or transportation. By contrast, most refugees reported being in the middle one-third income level and about half owned their own house in their own country.

Summary of Findings

The previous sections detailed the findings of the survey of refugees, service providers, and employers. Cuban, Haitian, and Bosnian refugees appear to have many similarities yet also have unique experiences and specific needs. Service providers and employers also point out many unmet needs for refugees. The following sections summarize the findings and highlight some of the trends found for each survey population.

Cubans

- Two-thirds of Cuban refugees have been in the U.S. or Florida for less than a year, and about two-thirds arrived with their families. Most are well educated (almost four-fifths have 13 or more years of schooling).
- More than two-thirds of Cuban refugees are working, but are experiencing downward occupational mobility: 68% held professional or technical positions in Cuba, yet the same percentage are working in labor or service industries in Florida.
- Cuban refugees' English proficiency levels have improved since their arrival in Florida. For example, while 48% could not write anything in English upon their arrival, 48% now have at least some written proficiency in English. Moreover,

while almost half could not speak English upon their arrival, less than 30% are unable to do so now.

- Cuban refugees appear to have problems adapting in the following areas: learning English, insufficient salaries, inability to find work in one's profession and general difficulty finding a job, transportation, housing, and cost-of-living. Many are unable to attend English classes due to lack of free time, transportation problems, and child care.

Haitians

- Two-thirds of Haitian respondents were males. Haitian refugees tend to have larger families than Cuban or Bosnian refugees, but most have come to America without their families. Most have not received beyond a secondary or high school level of education; about half had not received more than 8 years of formal education.
- Although more than two-thirds of Haitian respondents are working, all are working in labor or service positions now, even though more than half had held professional or technical positions in Haiti.
- Haitian refugees have greatly improved their English proficiency levels since coming to Florida. While three-quarters said that they had little English-speaking abilities upon arrival, half said that they could "have a conversation" or could speak English "very well" now.
- Haitian refugees are having the most difficulty with insufficient salaries and general financial difficulties, inability to find work in their professions, housing and cost-of-living, education and training needs, transportation, discrimination,

and obtaining work permits from immigration. Haitians have difficulty attending English classes due to transportation difficulties, difficulty paying for classes, and lack of free time.

Bosnians

- Most Bosnians have been in the U.S. or Florida for less than one year. Almost all had come with their families. Most Bosnians had received at least some secondary schooling.
- More than four-fifths of Bosnians were working, and while almost half had worked in technical, clerical, or professional jobs in Bosnia, only 20% held such positions now.
- Bosnians have also improved their English proficiency levels since arriving in Florida. For example, while more than 60% could not read English upon arrival, less than 20% remain unable to read any English at all now.
- Bosnians face difficulties with English, inability to find work in their professions, insufficient salaries, transportation, lack of knowledge about life in America, inadequate help from service providers, and lack of child care. They have difficulty attending English classes because of lack of free time, difficulty paying for classes, and difficulty with transportation and child care.

Respondents from all three refugee groups were generally satisfied with the training or services that they had received.

1. Refugees felt that training or services had generally helped with increasing their English proficiency and had helped them learn about employment-related cultural knowledge.

2. About half of all refugee respondents felt that training or services had helped them in getting a job and in improving job skills.
3. Almost three-quarters of refugee respondents, however, felt that training or services had not helped them to increase their income.

Refugee respondents were mixed in their responses concerning job satisfaction.

About a third were satisfied and another third were neutral concerning their current jobs, while the final third were unsatisfied. Most refugees did not feel that their current jobs were helping them to reach future goals in life. Reasons for job dissatisfaction included

- insufficient salaries, benefits, or working hours, and physically difficult work;
- not working in one's profession; and
- discrimination.

Refugee respondents had a number of suggestions to address problems and improve services. These suggestions are summarized into the following five categories:

1. *Education and Training:* Provide more ESL training (short-term, long-term, and intensive), general training, education, computer training, and vocational training for specific jobs. Assist in paying for education (financial aid), and assist with or subsidize the process of recertifying degrees and certificates from other countries.
2. *Orientation:* Provide new forms of cultural and employment-related orientation, such as handbooks or workshops about American society and business culture. Increase provisions for temporary assistance for basic needs such as transportation, child care, and housing.

3. *Funded Services*: Extend eligibility periods for funded programs such as ESL, RCA, or Medicaid.
4. *Publicity*: Increase awareness of available services for refugees.
5. *Job Opportunities*: Increase opportunities for higher paying jobs with benefits, and address work-site discrimination.

Service Providers

Almost two-thirds of providers mainly served Miami-Dade County, and 60% of providers mainly served Cubans. Service providers offer a variety of services to refugees, such as child care, legal, mental health, and educational services. Providers of these services offered the following suggestions to improve these specific services:

1. *Child-Care Services*: Simplify procedures for extending eligibility; subsidize the cost of accreditation.
2. *Legal Services*: Increase funding for immigration assistance services to address staff needs and increase coordination with INS.
3. *Mental Health Services*: Increase eligibility period and funding for services, increase access for nonnative English speakers, and provide for more psychiatric facilities.
4. *Educational Services*: Standardize offerings and outcomes by creating a consortium of districts.

Employment status and income of refugee clients as reported by providers of employment services generally coincided with the refugees' responses. Providers of employment services noted that most of their refugee clients who were working received low wages, but often with benefits; most refugee clients, however, were experiencing

downward occupational mobility. They also reported that many of their refugee clients were receiving some sort of public assistance. Most employment services providers offered post-employment follow-up assistance to refugees after the mandated 90-day period. Employment services providers felt that some service needs were not being met; for example, they estimated that about a quarter of their refugee clients were not receiving needed educational services and almost 10% were not receiving needed employment services.

Many of the adaptation problems facing refugees, as reported by refugee respondents, were reported by service providers as well. Providers often offered useful suggestions for addressing these problems.

- *English Proficiency:* There is a great need for refugees to develop English competency, but current ESL programs are not sufficient. Providers felt that this problem is due mainly to a lack of time on the part of refugees, as well as a lack of motivation to learn English, and it is also often due to a low competency in their native languages. Providers recommended creating ESL programs with flexible schedules and/or tutoring components, providing training in native languages (especially computer training), and increasing collaboration among providers.
- *Basic Needs:* Refugees often lack resources to meet basic needs such as housing and transportation. Providers recommended focusing services on clients and families and extending program eligibility periods and/or obtaining alternative funding.

- *Expectations:* Many refugees have high expectations about employment, educational, or sociocultural opportunities, but have low skill levels in English, and insufficient work skills, experience, and history. Providers recommended creating more opportunities for higher paying jobs with benefits, subsidizing the recertification process, and assisting with obtaining work permits.
- *Welfare Reform:* In some cases welfare reform has had a positive effect in motivating refugees to work, but it appears to also be negatively affecting refugees' economic status and general well-being, although it may be too early to draw conclusions.

Employers

About half of responding employers had businesses with greater than 100 employees and many of the businesses employed refugees, but most employed refugees only in small numbers. Employers, however, were generally satisfied with the job performance of refugees:

1. Most employers agreed that refugees are hardworking and punctual, and have adequate job skills, but that refugee employees lack technical, managerial, and leadership skills.
2. Employers felt that although it is not essential for effective job performance, the low English proficiency levels of refugees causes difficulties in communicating with customers, supervisors, and clients. Combined with lack of technical, managerial, and leadership skills, a lack of sufficient English proficiency also limits opportunities for promotion.

3. Employers agreed that cultural backgrounds generally do not affect job performance of refugees. Some employers, however, felt that differences between American and refugees' business cultures caused some difficulties.

Employers saw a need for additional services or changes to existing ones in the following areas:

- More or improved English language training.
- On-the-job training and technical training (especially in computer literacy).
- More training relating to employment skills and knowledge, including topics such as interviewing, resume development, information on Social Security and taxes, job benefits, and work attitudes and ethics.

Discussion

Refugees, service providers, and employers generally had similar responses concerning issues such as employment and income status, English proficiency, and educational levels of refugees. All three groups felt that it was important for refugees to develop a working knowledge of English as soon as possible upon their arrival (although all three groups also reported refugees having low to moderate levels of English proficiency). Additionally, refugees, providers, and employers noted that most refugees were working in low-paying and low-skill jobs (primarily in labor and service positions), often without benefits, and often not in the professions in which refugees had worked in their home countries.

Some discrepancies were also found between responses made by refugees, providers, and employers. Most refugees did not see themselves as relying upon public assistance, yet service providers reported that almost half of their clients received some form of

public assistance. Moreover, providers said that they place more than half of their refugee clients in employment, yet only 20% to 30% of refugees said that a provider had placed them in their current job, and the majority of employers said that they had hired most refugee employees directly (not through placement). The majority of both refugees and service providers felt that it was important for refugees to have a working knowledge of English, yet three-fourths of providers said that most of their refugee clients are not attending English classes.

Differences by gender and by education were also found among refugees. Most notably, more men than women reported that they were working now, and more men than women were earning more than \$9.00 an hour. Also, more women than men had completed more than two years of college or an advanced degree. In regards to education, only refugees with at least some secondary schooling were earning more than \$11 an hour or were working in professional, technical, clerical, or sales positions.

Conclusions

The findings of this survey reveal a conflicting picture of the status of Cuban, Haitian, and Bosnian refugees in Florida. Although most are finding jobs quickly, usually within a relatively short period after arrival, most are underemployed. Many experience downward occupational mobility upon arrival, working in low-wage labor and service positions not in their profession. Most also have problems meeting basic needs including housing, transportation, health care, and child care. Although Cuban, Haitian, and Bosnian refugees do improve their ability to communicate in English after arriving, they often acquire functional but not fully employable English skills.

Refugee respondents, however, generally felt that services had been helpful to them, especially in improving their ability to communicate in English and in helping them to acquire employment-related knowledge, but less helpful in helping them find jobs, improving their job-related skills, or increasing their income. Employers generally feel satisfied with refugee employees. They see a need, however, for more services and training, especially more training in English. They feel that better English ability would improve other problematic areas such as communication and promotability.

Refugees also have specific needs depending upon their population. While all three groups need further English language training, Haitian refugees, in particular, feel a need for more general training and educational opportunities. Both Cuban and Bosnian refugees feel a need for assistance in recertifying degrees and diplomas in order to have more job opportunities. Both groups also reported having increased economic and personal difficulties when they were turned down for services or when services and assistance were discontinued due to ineligibility or time-limited services. Bosnians appear to be in need of more cultural orientation, especially in relation to business and financial concerns. Finally, Haitians also need assistance with obtaining work permits and feel that discrimination issues have not been fully addressed.

The following four areas are particularly important in improving services to Cuban, Haitian, and Bosnian refugees in Florida:

1. *Increase publicity of services available to refugees.* Several refugee respondents appeared to be unaware of the availability of services. There is either a need for increasing services or a need for outreach and greater publicity. Moreover, providers felt that many needs, including employment and educational services,

were not being met. Publicizing services, however, is particularly difficult since traditional methods of increasing publicity, such as television, radio, or Internet technologies, may not be applicable due to language and cultural differences.

2. *Continue to assist refugees in vulnerable areas and consider subsidizing some services.* Refugees continue to need assistance in several areas. Perhaps most important is the provision of services relating to basic needs such as transportation, housing, health care, or child care. Additionally, since many refugees have come to Florida with professional level skills and backgrounds, it is possible that they could achieve self-sufficiency sooner by being assisted with recertifying foreign degrees and diplomas and by job development services. Moreover, employment services can strive to address the unequal employment and income statuses of women by taking advantage of their higher educational levels in job placement. Finally, some refugees have difficulty obtaining employment mainly because they are lacking appropriate documentation. Continued assistance for these individuals with meeting residency requirements and dealing with immigration difficulties is recommended. Sources for increasing funding to meet staffing needs should also be considered.
3. *Continue to assist with educational needs.* Refugees, employers, and service providers all agreed that one of the most important needs of refugees is English language instruction and that current programs are not adequately meeting this need. Innovative ESL programs with flexible schedules or tutoring should be considered. Refugees themselves often mentioned training as a general need and they often specifically requested vocational, computer, and driver training.

Many refugees, especially Bosnians, requested more cultural and work orientation. Refugees from all three groups and especially Haitians expressed a desire to continue their education and often listed lack of tuition assistance or financial aid as their main barrier.

4. *Improve the delivery of services.* Some refugees experienced difficulties in receiving services: delays, difficulties with provider staff, and inconsistencies in understanding eligibility. Providers should examine means of streamlining paperwork and bureaucratic procedures and should try to be consistent in determining eligibility and allocating services. Moreover, client perspectives should be considered in designing service plans. As one service provider suggested, there should be a greater “focus on client and family.” For example, while most refugees who were working were glad to be employed, many seemed frustrated with having to accept immediate but unsatisfactory employment and not being able to work in their profession or be re-certified, to receive further training, or to work in a position that was related to their future goals. In planning services, therefore, client perspectives such as long-term goals should be considered in combination with supportive services such as assistance with basic needs, financial aid, or training, rather than focusing only on short-term placements. Providers can also consider ways of simplifying procedures in order to conserve resources, meet staffing needs, or extend eligibility periods. Alternative sources for funding or lobbying for increased funding could also be considered. Providers should also increase collaborative networks for sharing information, methods, and techniques for improving services. Finally, refugee

provider organizations should try to involve employers in planning and delivery of refugee services by means of ongoing workshops and conferences and by increasing the availability of resources and information on employing refugees.

This study has wide ranging implications upon the delivery of services to refugees in the state of Florida. It adds to the general research literature on Bosnian, Cuban, and Haitian refugees. It is the first comprehensive statewide study of Cubans and Haitians in Florida since the 1980s, and it is the first ever survey of Bosnian refugees in Florida.

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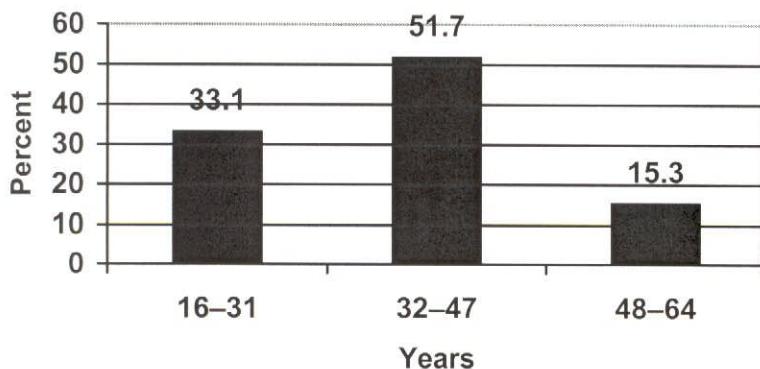
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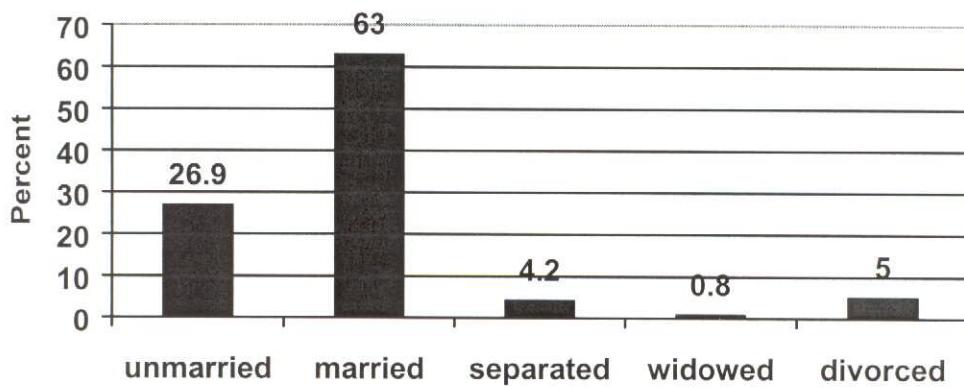
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Appendix A: Characteristics of Cuban Respondents

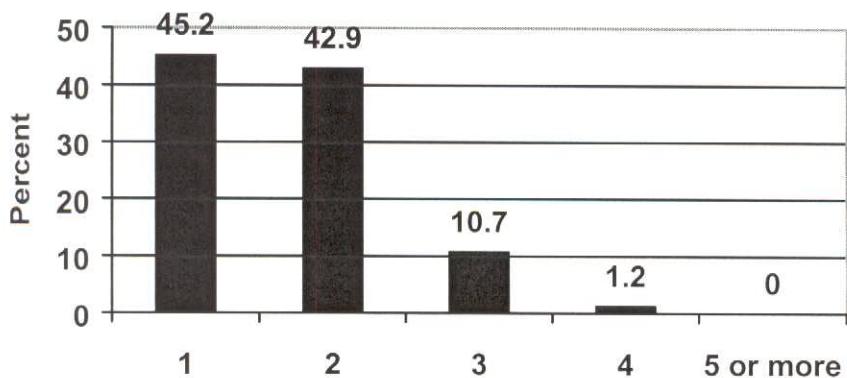
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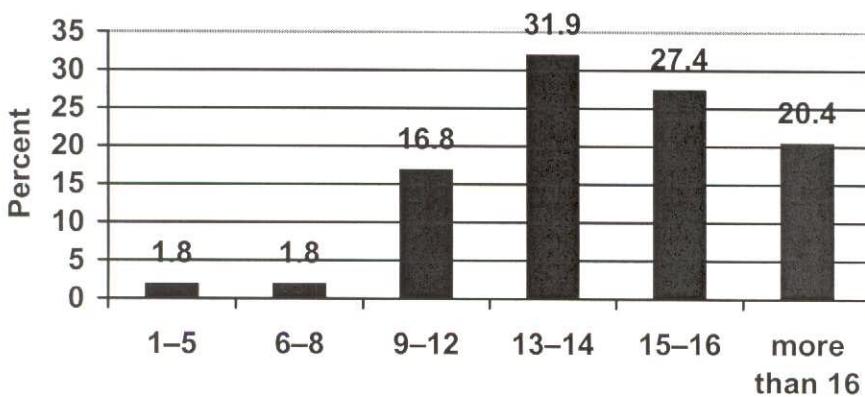
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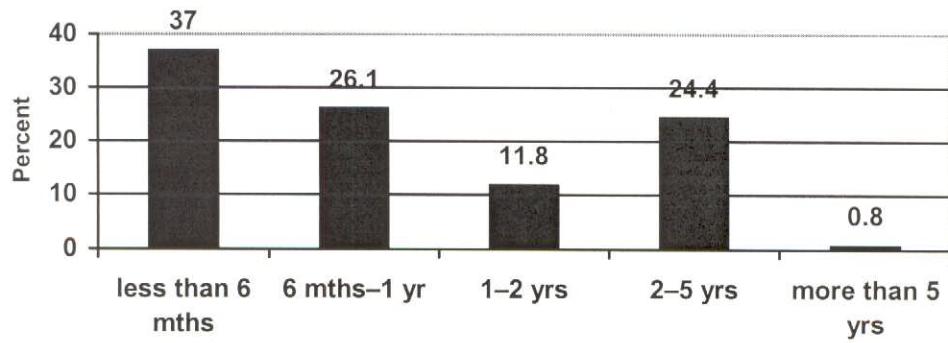
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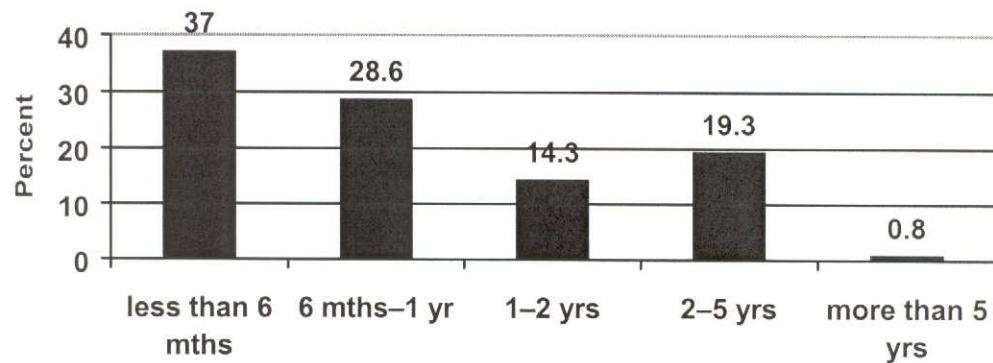
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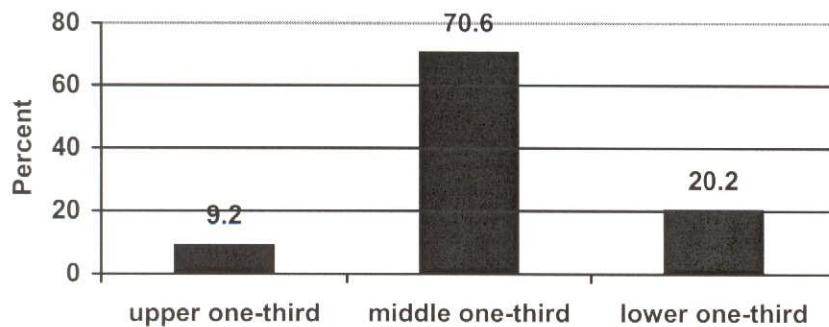
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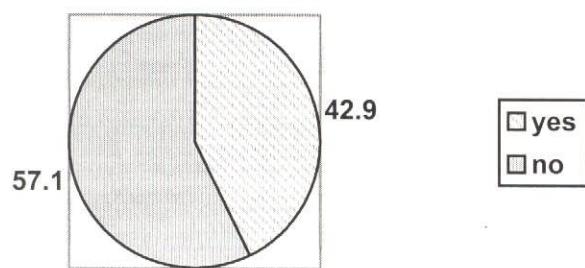
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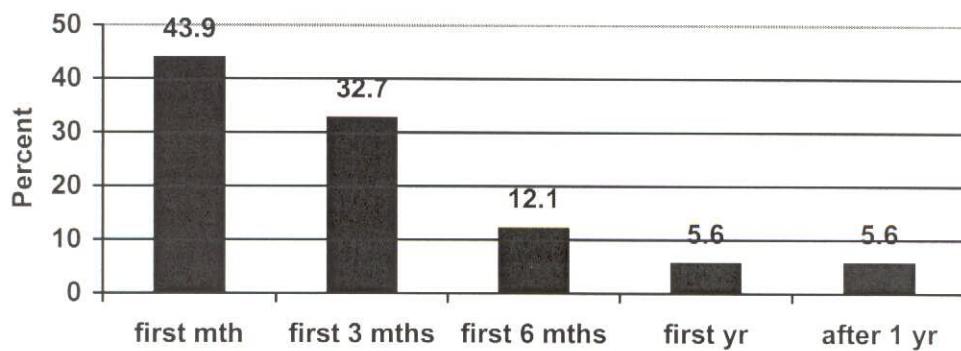
Income Level in Home Country



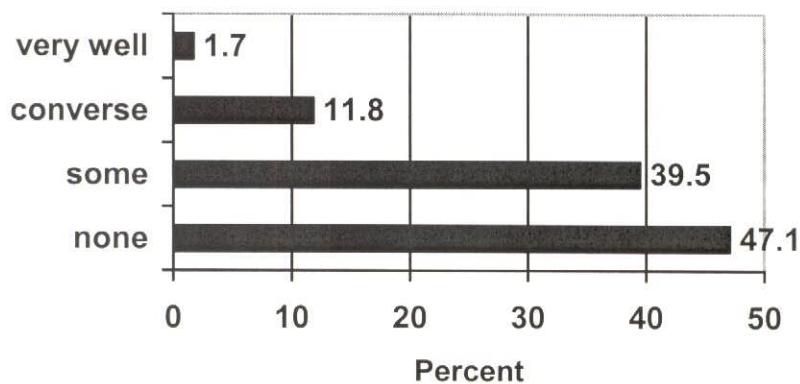
Own House in Home Country



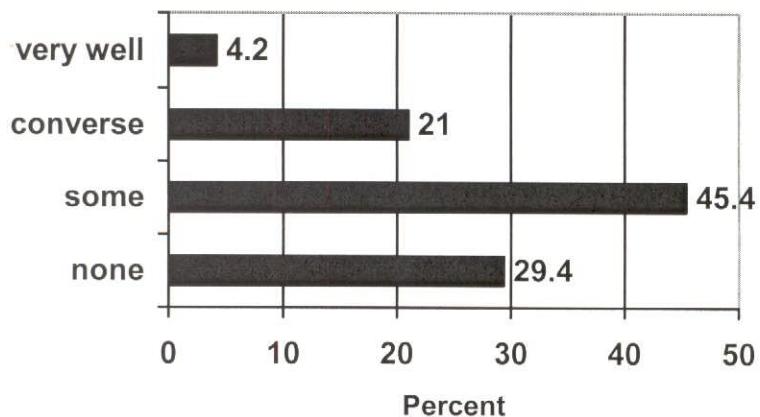
When First Entered Program That Assists Refugees



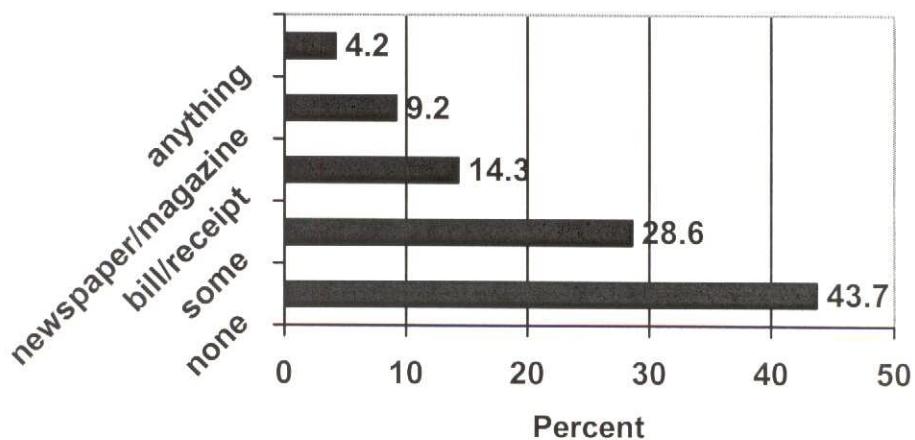
Ability to Speak English Upon Arrival in Florida



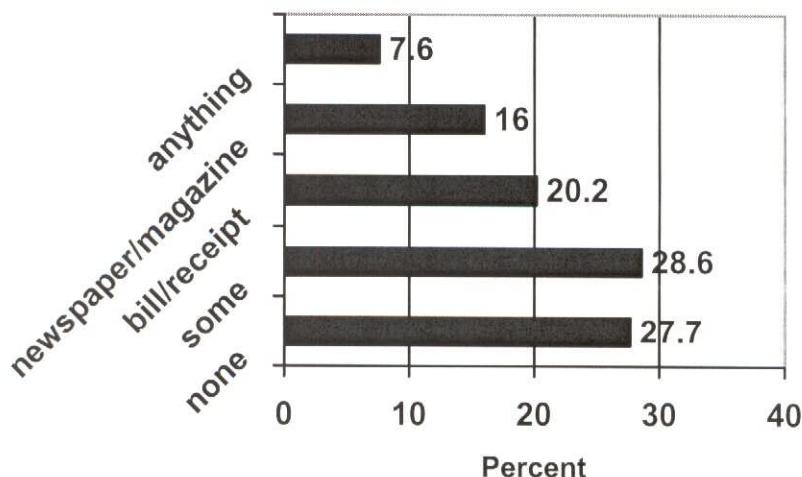
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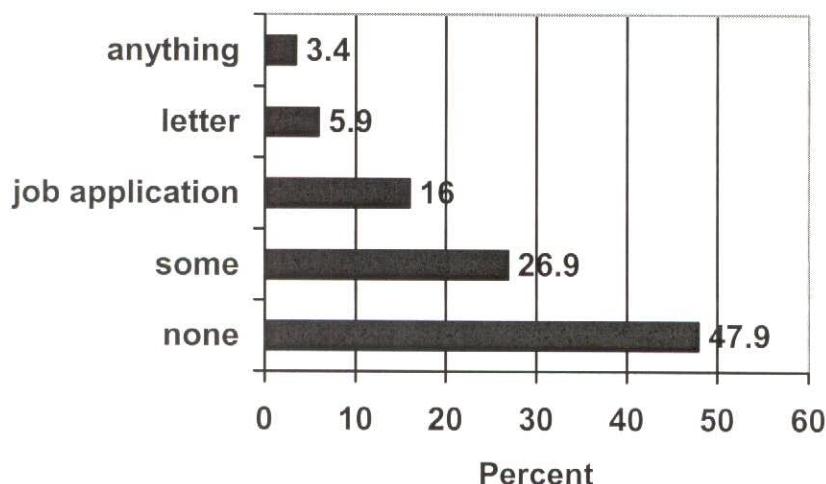
Ability to Read English upon Arrival in Florida



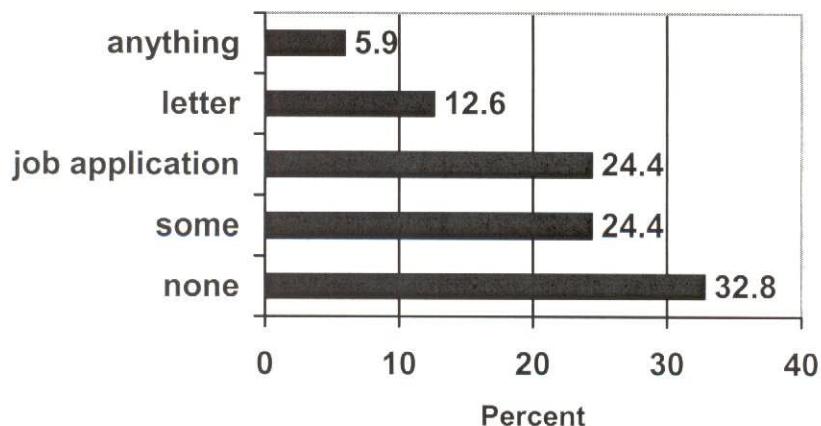
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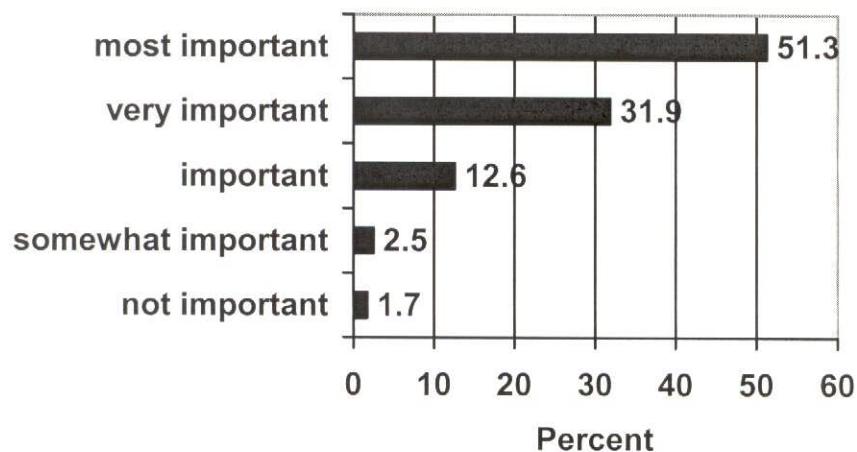
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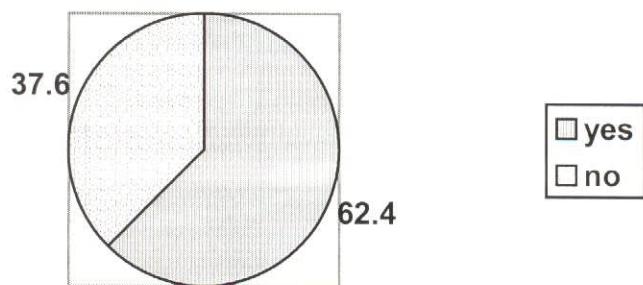
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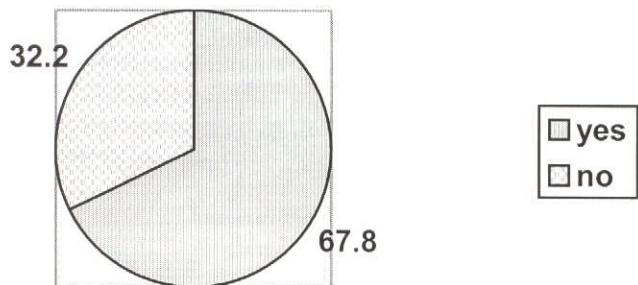
Importance of English



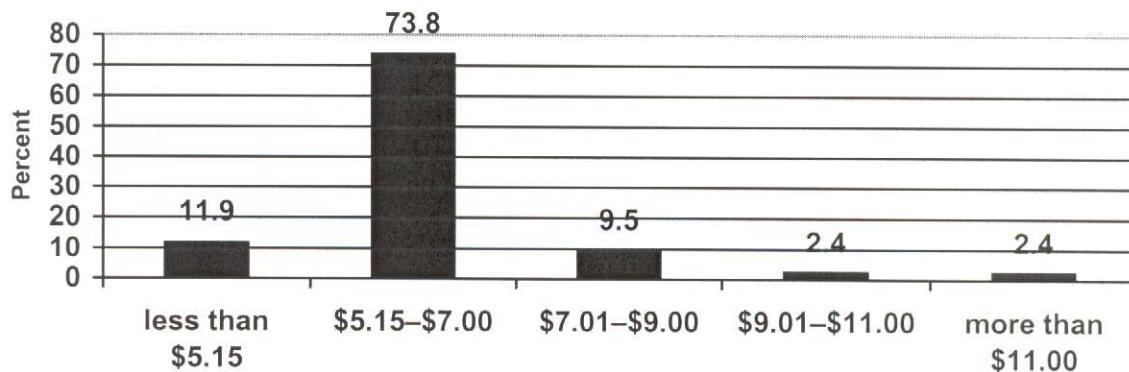
Worked Since Coming to Florida



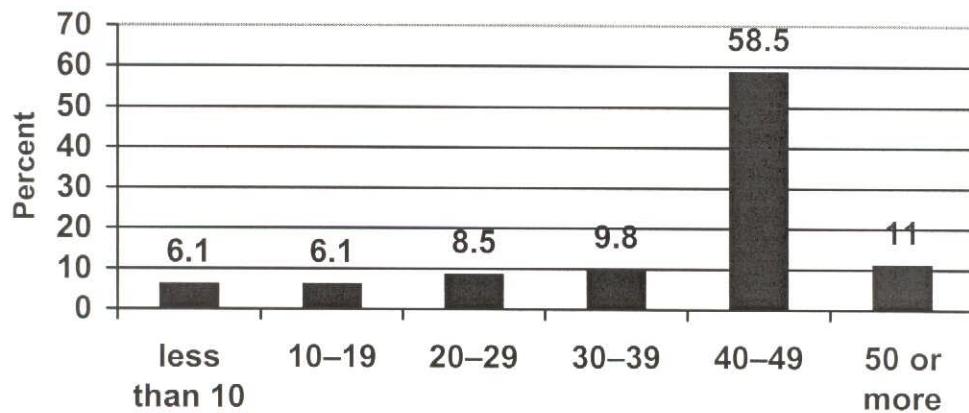
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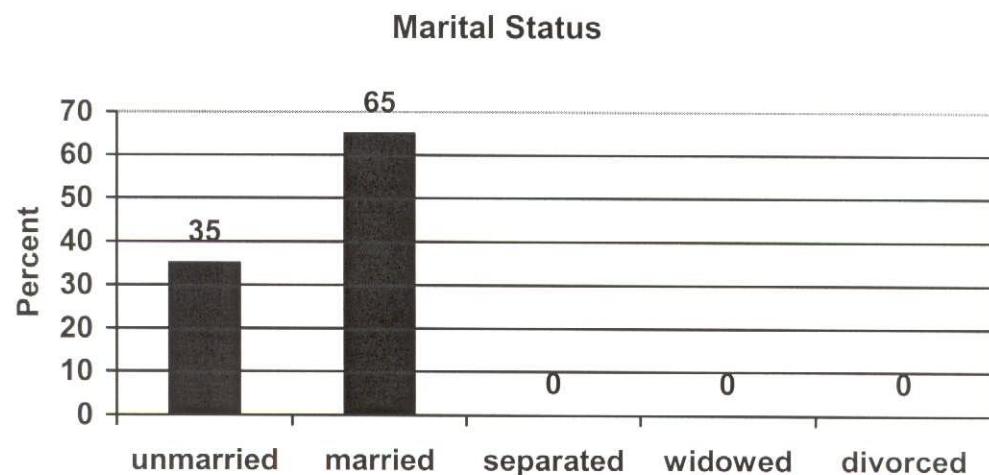
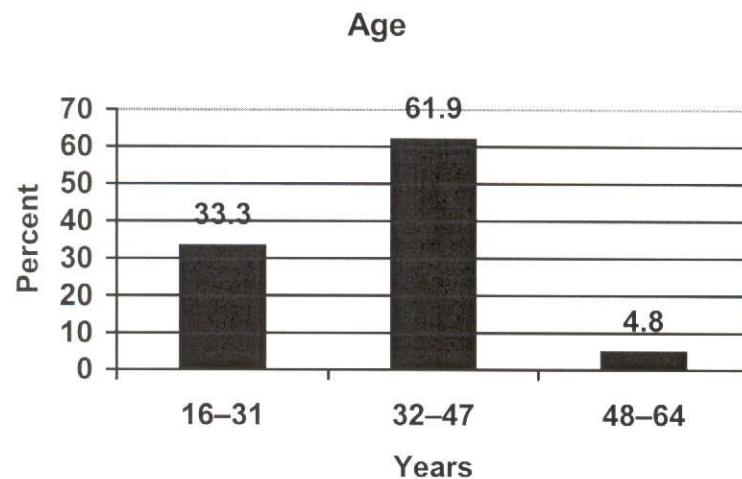
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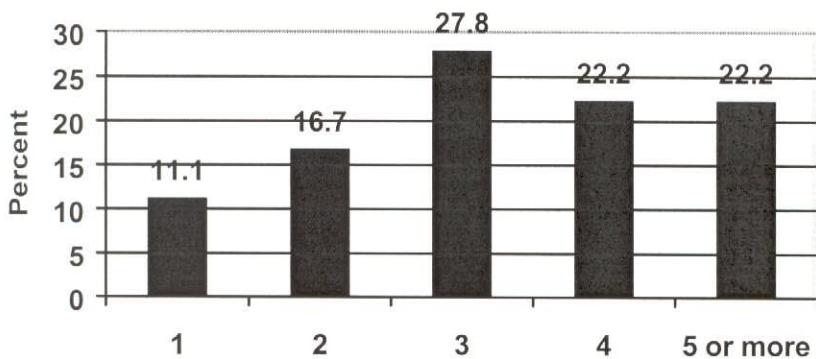
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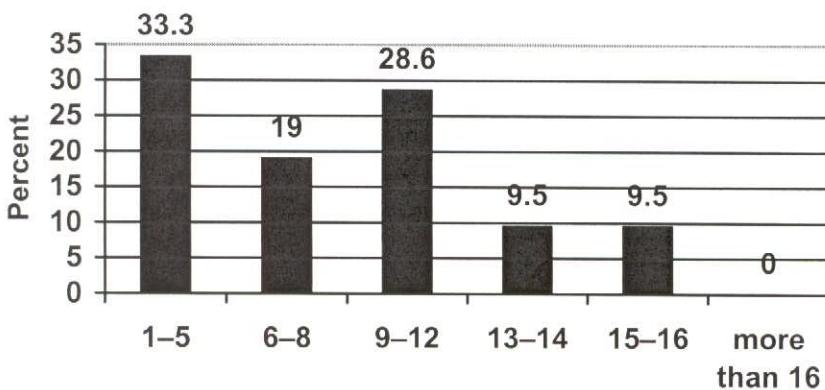
Appendix B: Characteristics of Haitian Respondents



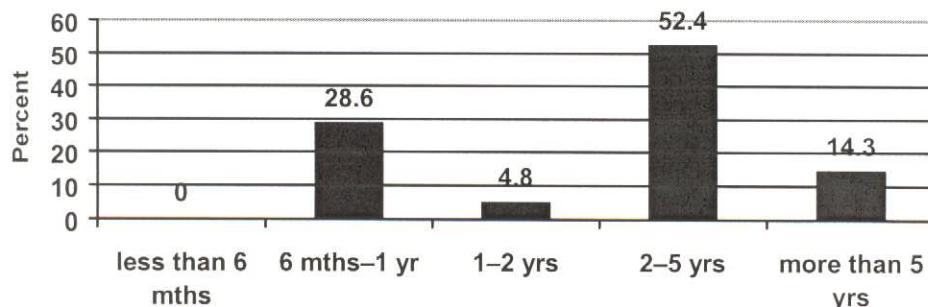
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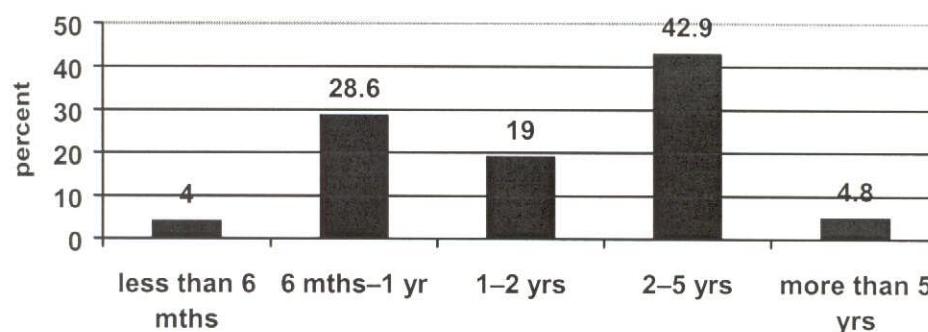
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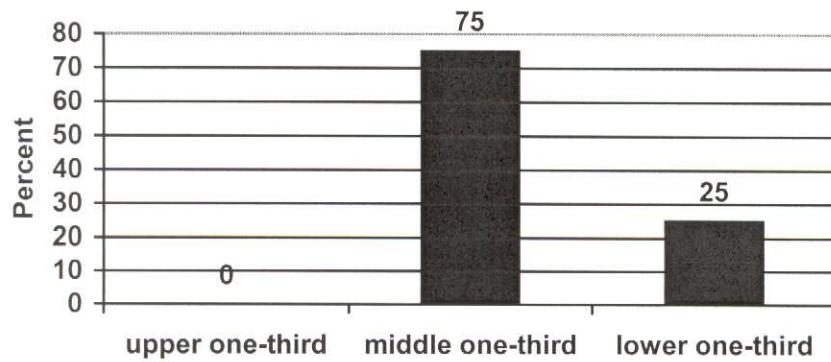
Time in U.S.



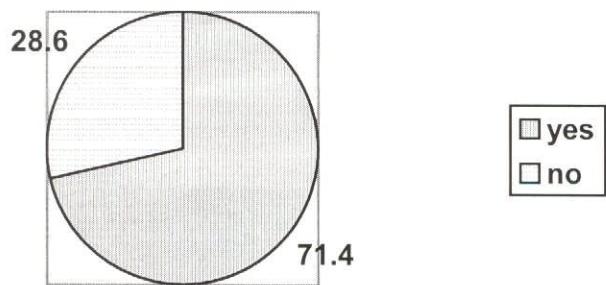
Time in Florida



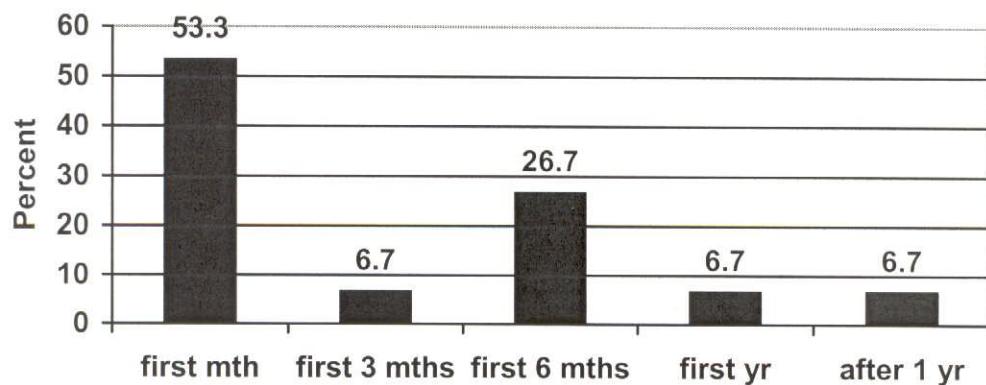
Income Level in Home Country



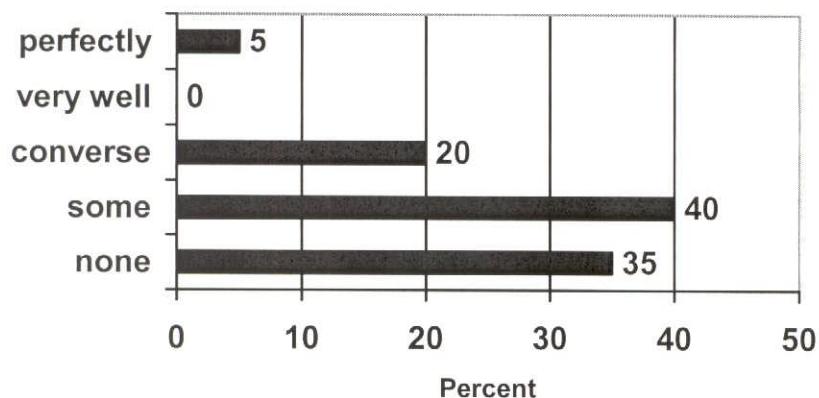
Own House in Home Country



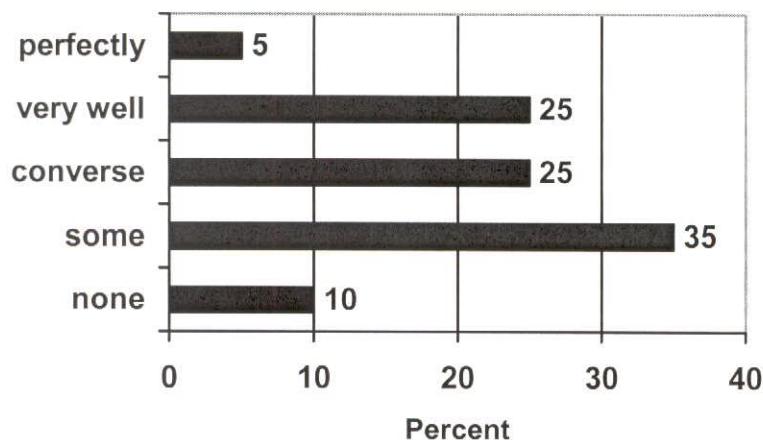
When First Entered Program That Assists Refugees



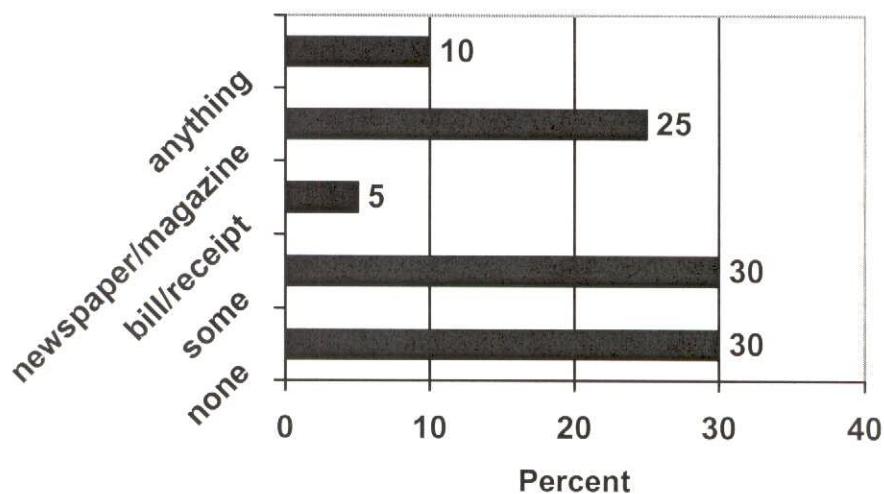
Ability to Speak English Upon Arrival in Florida



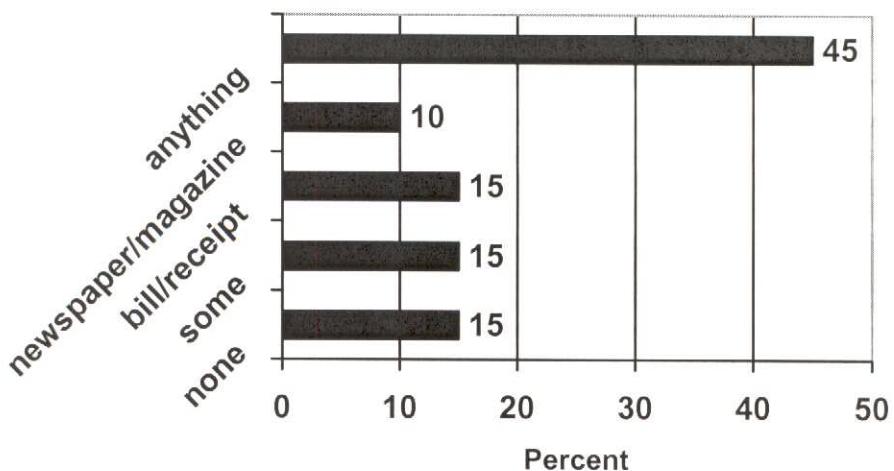
Ability to Speak English Now



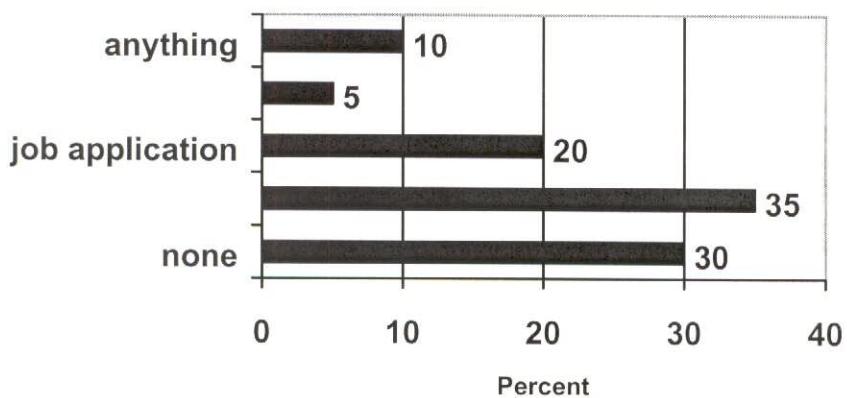
Ability to Read English upon Arrival in Florida



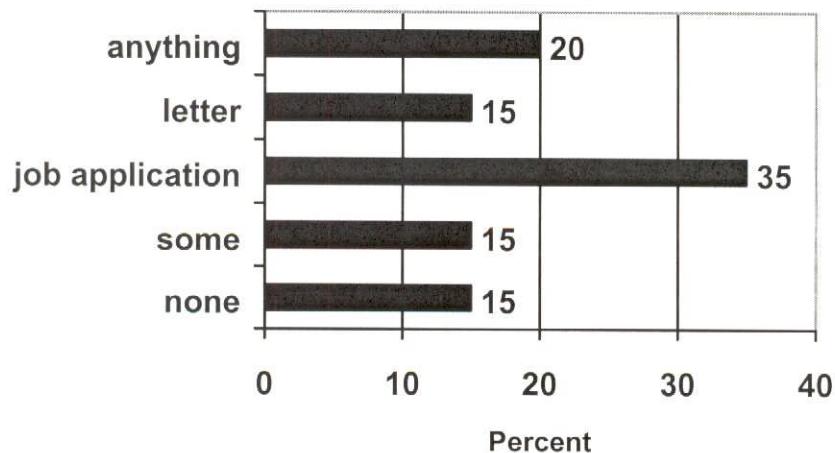
Ability to Read English Now



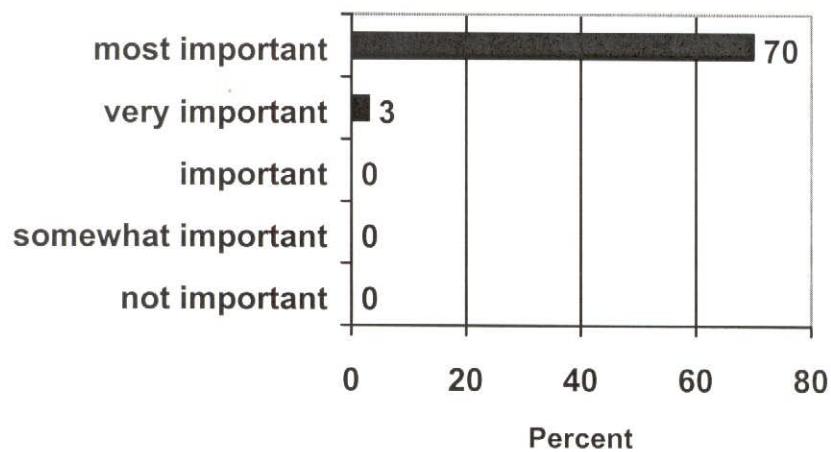
Ability to Write English upon Arrival in Florida



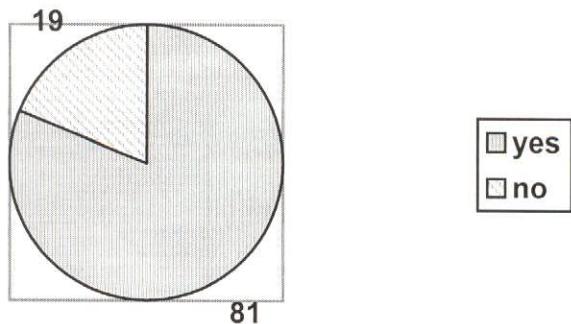
Ability to Write English Now



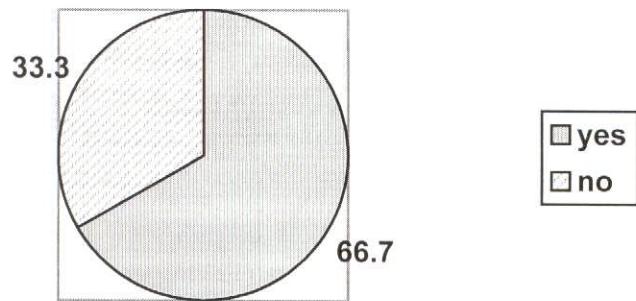
Importance of English



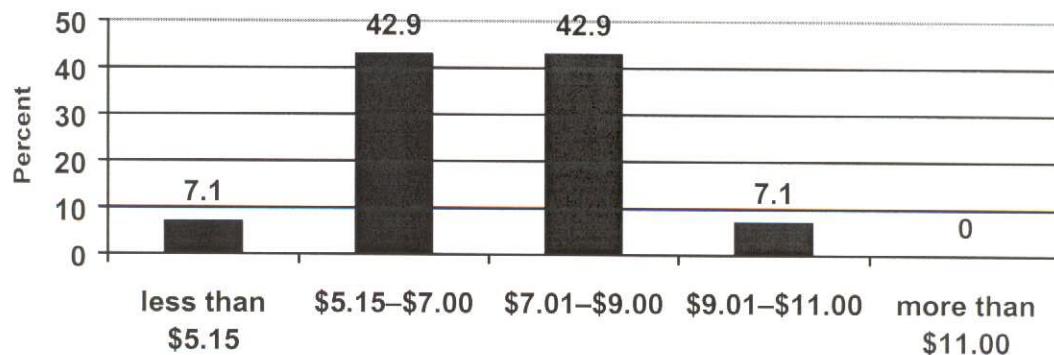
Worked Since Coming to Florida



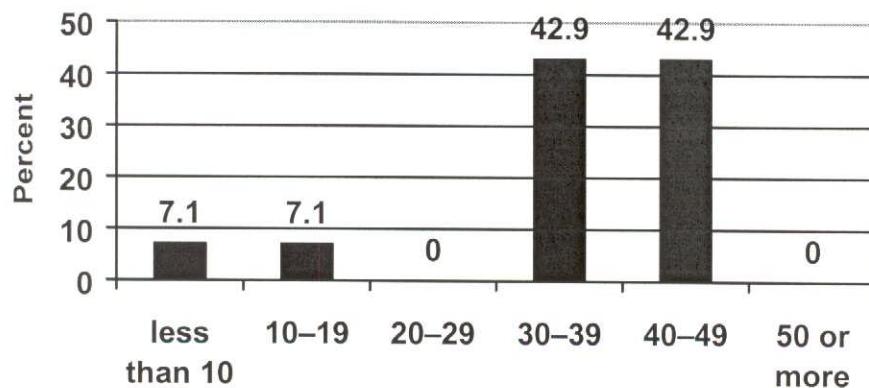
Working Now



Hourly Rate of Pay

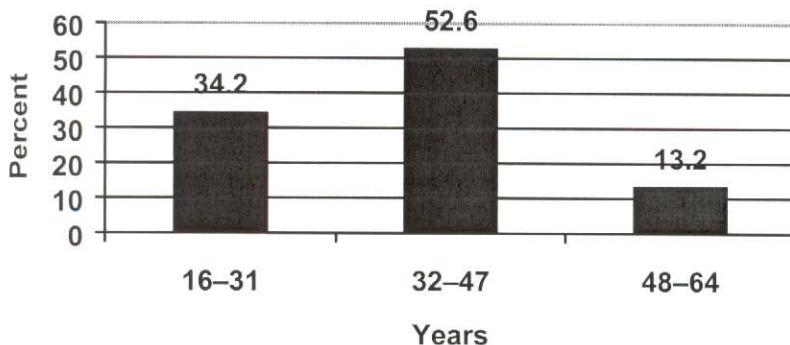


Hours of Work per Week

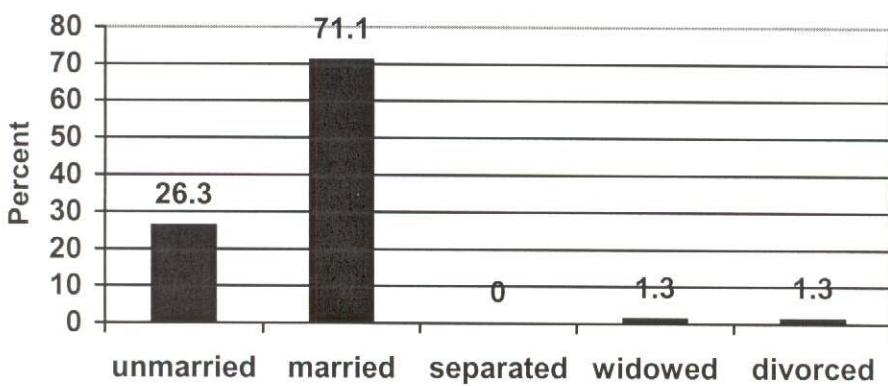


Appendix C: Characteristics of Bosnian Respondents

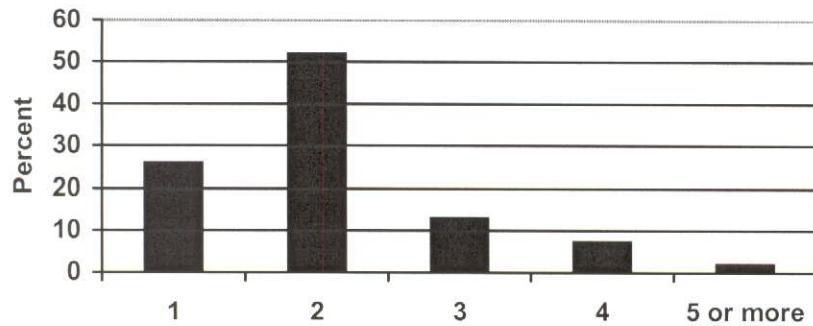
Age



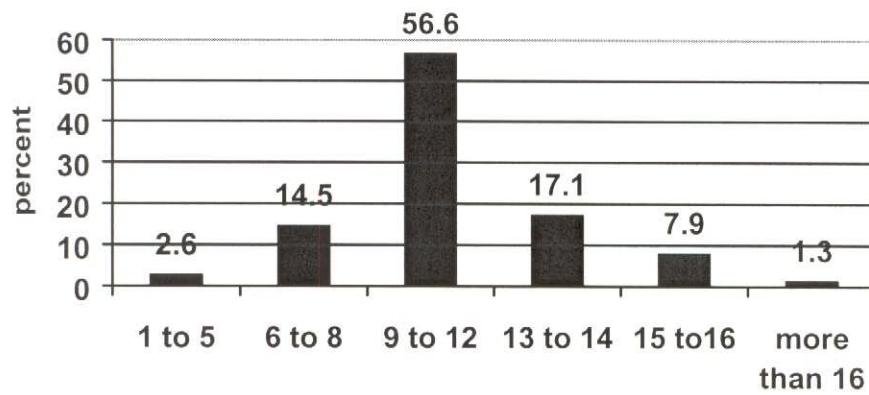
Marital Status



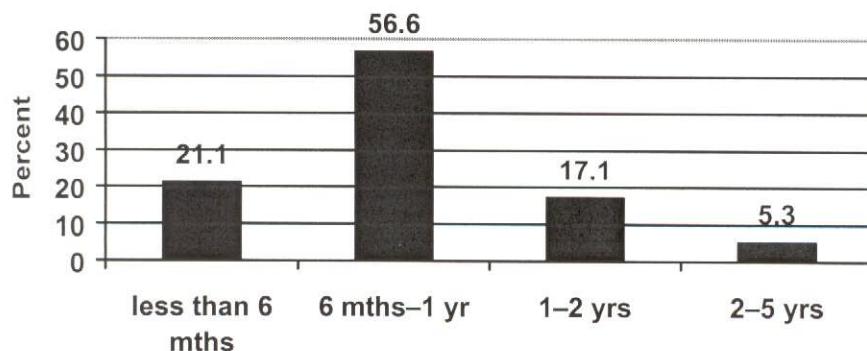
Number of Children



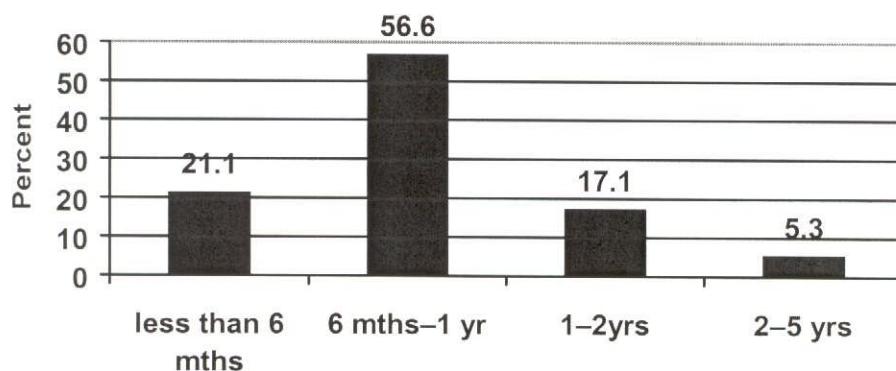
Years of Schooling



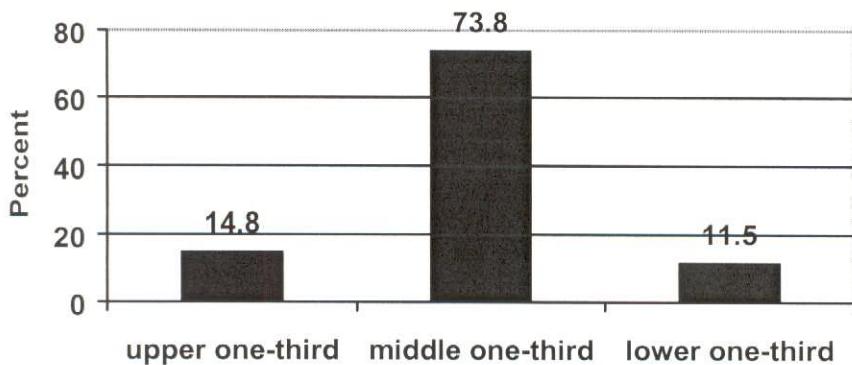
Time in U.S.



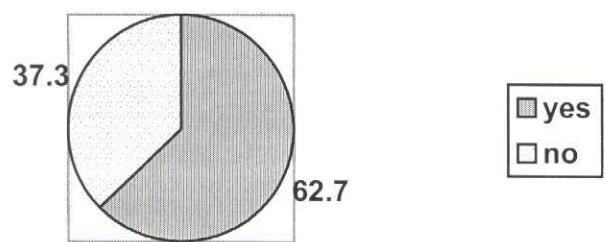
Time in Florida



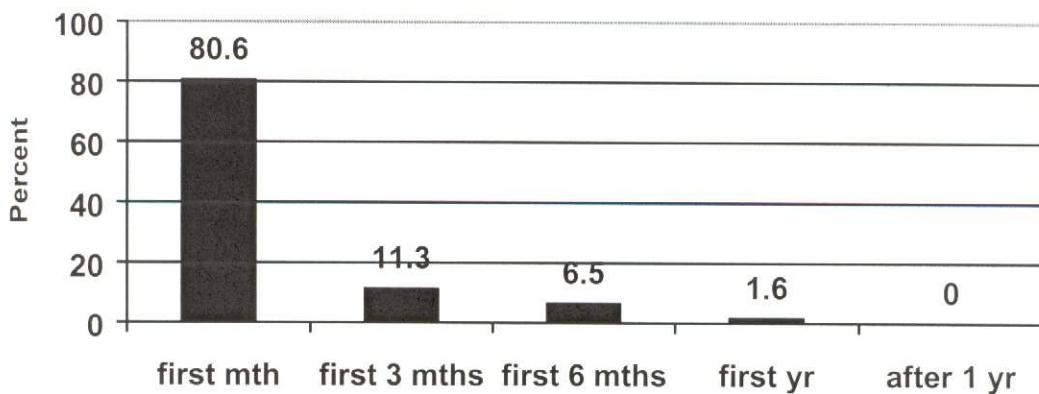
Income Level in Home Country



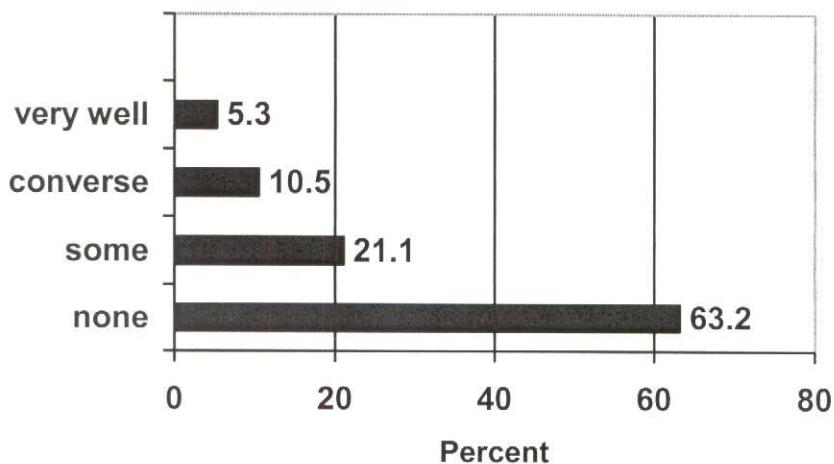
Own House in Home Country



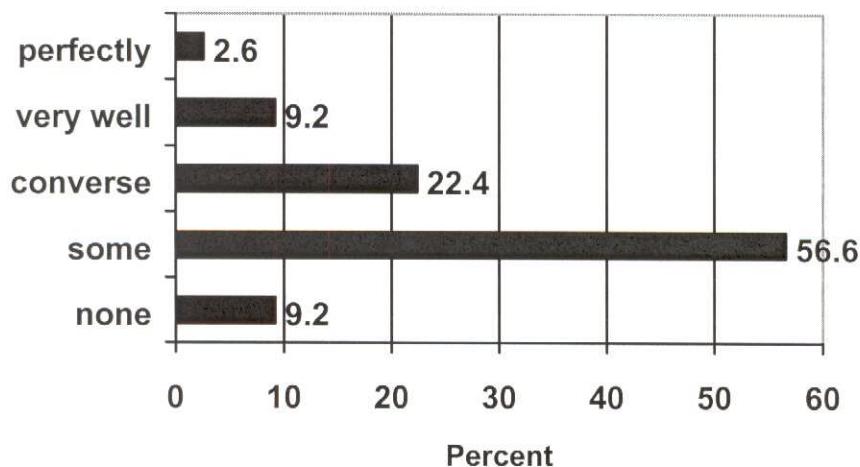
When First Entered Program That Assists Refugees



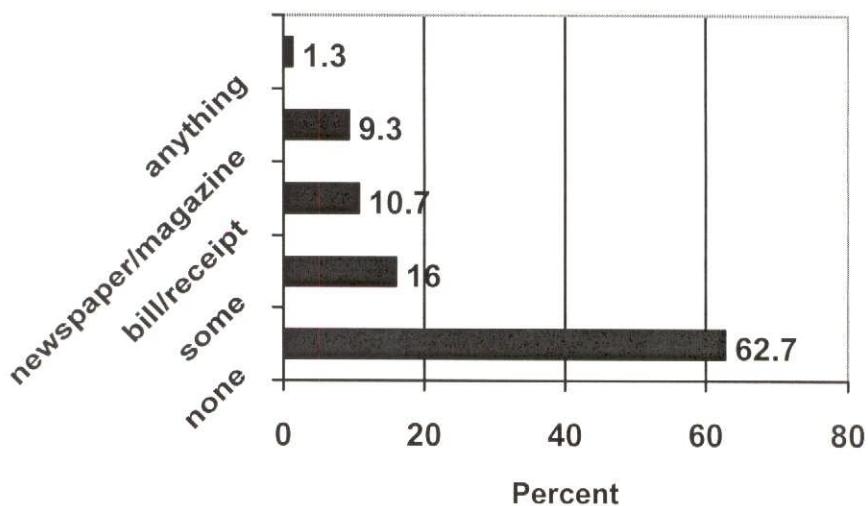
Ability to Speak English upon Arrival in Florida



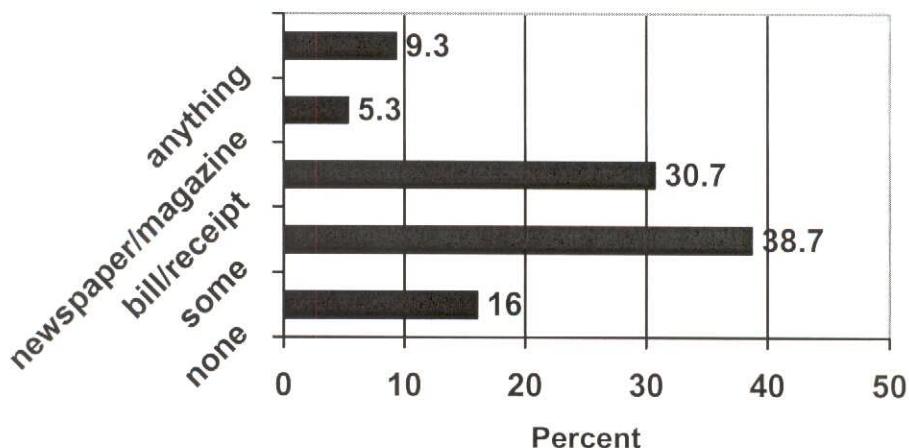
Ability to Speak English Now



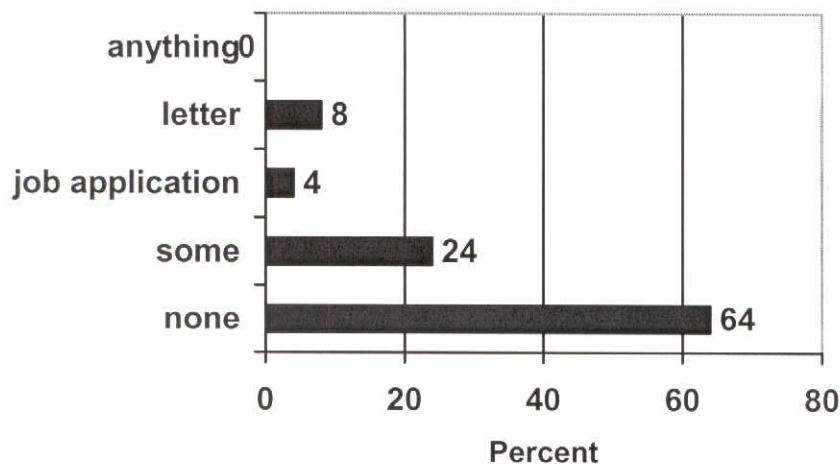
Ability to Read English upon Arrival in Florida



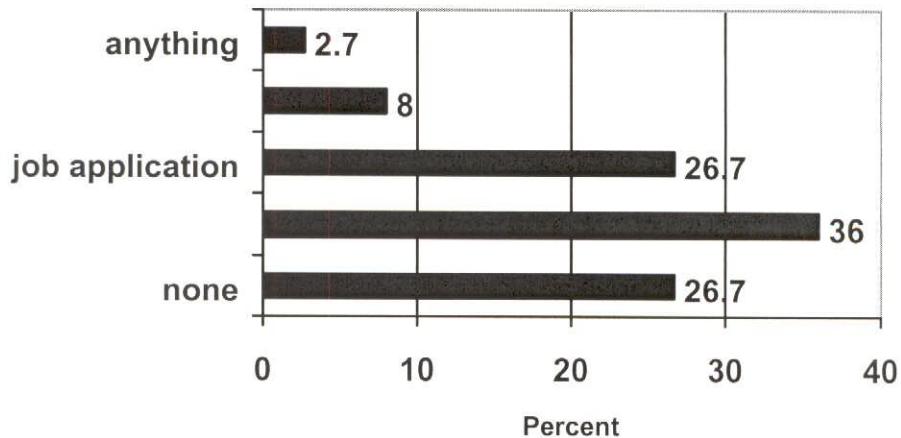
Ability to Read English Now



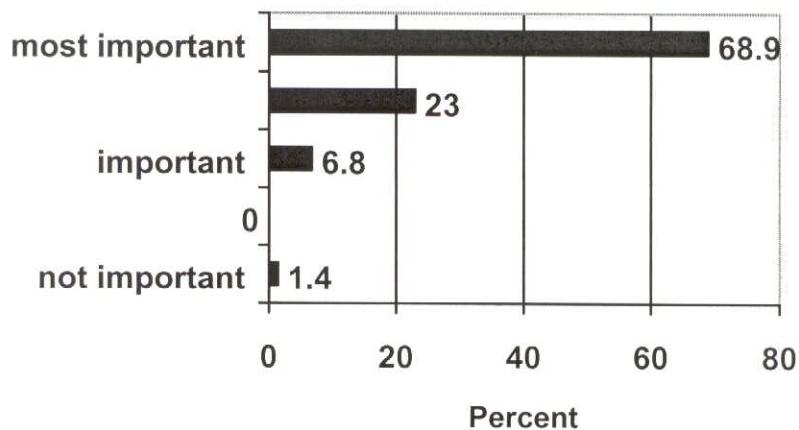
Ability to Write English upon Arrival in Florida



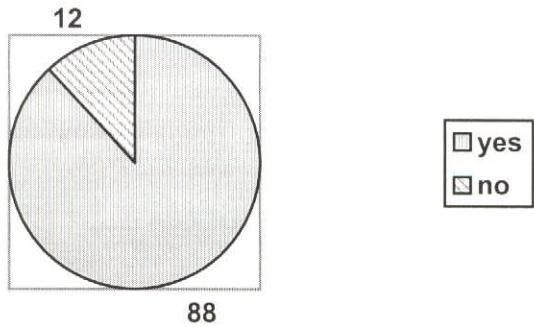
Ability to Write English Now



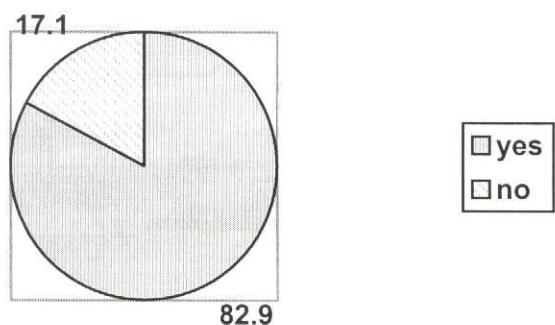
Importance of English



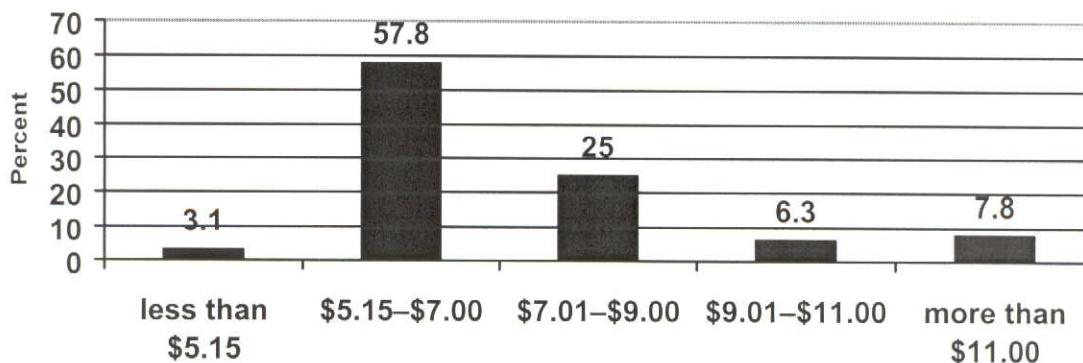
Worked Since Coming to Florida



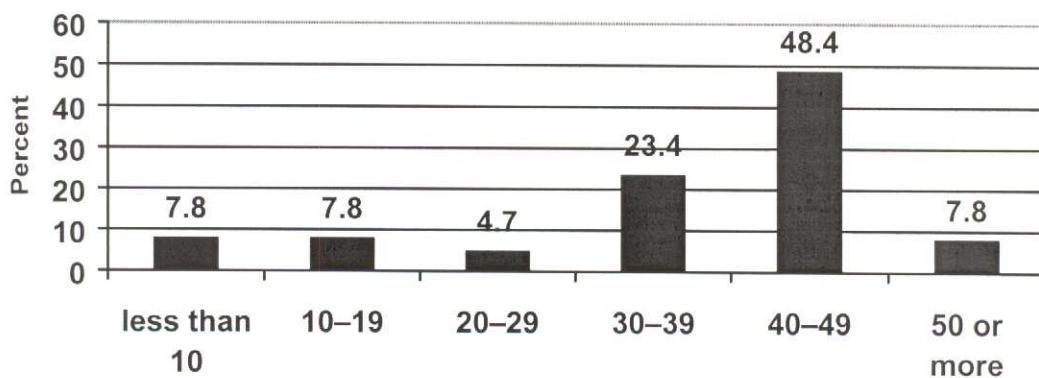
Working Now



Hourly Rate of Pay



Hours of Work per Week



Appendix D: Individual Survey (Survey of Refugees)



Survey of Needs for Florida Refugees

Individual Survey

Would you please complete the following survey? The Refugee Programs Administration would like to find out how to improve refugee services. This state agency funds services for refugees in Florida. Your answers to these questions can help.

Please answer the questions carefully and honestly. If there is a question that you do not want to answer, please skip over it and go to the next question. You will not lose any refugee benefits or be dropped from any programs if you do not complete this survey. Your name will not be recorded and your answers will remain confidential.

When you have answered the questions, please put this survey in the enclosed envelope and mail it. You do not need to add a stamp.

Directions: For each question, please put a check (✓) next to your answer or write your answer on the lines provided.

GENERAL INFORMATION

1. What is your home country? _____

2. What is your age?

- under 16
- 16-31
- 32-47
- 48-64
- 65 or over

3. What is your gender?

- male
- female

4. What is your marital status?

- unmarried
- married
- separated
- widowed
- divorced

5. Do you have children?

- yes
- no

6. If you have children, how many do you have?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 or more

7. How many years of schooling do you have?

- 1–5 (primary school)
- 6–8 (middle school/junior high school)
- 9–12 (secondary school/high school)
- 13–14 (postsecondary/college)
- 15–16 (university)
- more than 16 (advanced degree)

8. How long have you been in the United States?

- less than 6 months
- 6 months–1 year
- 1–2 years
- 2–5 years
- more than 5 years

9. How long have you been in Florida?

- less than 6 months
- 6 months–1 year
- 1–2 years
- 2–5 years
- more than 5 years

10. What was your income level in your home country?

- upper one-third
- middle one-third
- lower one-third

11. Did you own a house in your home country?

- yes
- no

12. Did you come here with your family or by yourself?

- with my family
- by myself

13. When did you first enter a program that assists refugees?

- during my first month in Florida
- during my first three months in Florida
- during my first six months in Florida
- during my first year in Florida
- more than one year after I came to Florida

14. How well did you speak English when you came to Florida?

- I could not speak English at all.
- I could speak some words in English.
- I could have a conversation in English.
- I could speak English very well.
- I could speak English perfectly.

15. How well do you speak English now?

- I cannot speak English at all.
- I can speak some words in English.
- I can have a conversation in English.
- I can speak English very well.
- I can speak English perfectly.

16. How well could you read English when you came to Florida?

- I did not read English at all.
- I could read some words in English.
- I could read a bill or a receipt in English.
- I could read a newspaper or a magazine in English.
- I could read anything in English.

17. How well do you read English now?

- I cannot read English at all.
- I can read some words in English.
- I can read a bill or a receipt in English.
- I can read a newspaper or a magazine in English.
- I can read anything in English.

18. How well could you write English when you came to Florida?

- I could not write English at all.
- I could write some words in English.
- I could fill out a job application in English.
- I could write a letter in English.
- I could write anything in English.

19. How well do you write English now?

- I cannot write English at all.
- I can write some words in English.
- I can fill out a job application in English.
- I can write a letter in English.
- I can write anything in English.

20. In your opinion, how important is the ability to speak, read, or write English for someone who is trying to fit into life in Florida?

- not important
- somewhat important
- important
- very important
- most important

TRAINING

21. Have you received training from any agency in Florida?

- yes
- no

If you have NOT received training from an agency in Florida, please go to question 32.

If you have received training from an agency in Florida, please continue answering questions in this section.

22. If you have received training, what kinds of training have you received? Please check (✓) all that apply.

- English language training (ESL/ESOL)
 - vocational English language training (VESL/VESOL)
 - vocational education
 - Adult Basic Education (ABE), General Equivalency Diploma (GED)
 - employment services (job training, job placement, employment planning, help with preparing a resume, interview skills)
 - orientation (programs that help you deal with issues you might face living in the U.S., such as housing, medical care, employment, financial assistance, and beliefs and customs)
 - other _____
-

23. What kind of training has been the most useful for you? Please check (✓) only one.

- English language training (ESL/ESOL)
 - vocational English language training (VESL/VESOL)
 - vocational education
 - Adult Basic Education (ABE), General Equivalency Diploma (GED)
 - employment services (job training, job placement, employment planning, help with preparing a resume, interview skills)
 - orientation (programs that help you deal with issues you might face living in the U.S., such as housing, medical care, employment, financial assistance, and beliefs and customs)
 - other _____
-

24. From what you learned in training, which skills have been the most useful to you? Please check (✓) as many as apply.

- learning English
 - cultural training (programs that teach you about the beliefs and customs of people in the U.S.)
 - how to get a job (looking for a job, resume planning, interview skills)
 - on-the-job skills (typing, telephone, computer, working with people)
 - other _____
-

25. Has the training provided to you helped you speak, read, or write English better?

- yes
- no

26. Has the training provided to you helped you in getting a job?

- yes
- no

27. Has the training provided to you helped you improve your job skills?

- yes
- no

28. Has the training provided to you helped you get a higher income?

- yes
- no

29. Has the training provided to you helped you learn more about other things (such as citizenship or life in the U.S.) that might help you with employment?

- yes
- no

30. In what other ways, if any, has training helped you?

31. Overall, are you satisfied with the training and services provided to you?

- yes
- no

WORK AND INCOME

32. Have you been working at all since coming to Florida?

- yes
- no

33. Are you working now?

- yes
- no

34. What is your average hourly rate of pay now?

- less than \$5.15
- \$5.15-\$7.00
- \$7.01-\$9.00
- \$9.01-\$11.00
- more than \$11.00

35. What are your main sources of income now? Please check (✓) as many as apply.

- my job
- Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA) program
- Work and Gain Economic Self-Sufficiency (WAGES) program
- Social Security benefits (Social Security Income [SSI] or Social Security Disability Insurance [SSDI])
- family or friends
- other _____

If you are NOT working now, please go to question 47.

If you are working now, please continue answering questions in this section.

36. How many hours do you usually work in a week? Please check (✓) only one.

- less than 10
- 10–19
- 20–29
- 30–39
- 40–49
- 50 or more

37. How did you get this job? Please check (✓) only one.

- My sponsoring agency placed me in this job.
- A refugee employment provider helped me get the job.
- A friend or my family helped me get the job.
- Other _____

38. What kind of work do you do? Please check (✓) only one.

- professional (such as teacher, lawyer, doctor, or businessperson)
- technical (such as computer technician, electrician, or mechanic)
- clerical (such as secretary or clerk)
- sales (such as cashier or salesperson)
- service (such as restaurant worker, janitor, hotel worker, or hospital staff)
- labor (such as construction worker, factory worker, or farmer)
- self-employed (such as tailor, babysitter, or vendor)

**39. What benefits, if any, do you receive from your employer?
Please check (✓) any items that apply.**

- sick pay
- vacation pay/annual leave
- health insurance
- retirement
- none

40. Does your employer provide English language training?

- yes
- no

41. Does your employer provide on-the-job training?

- yes
- no

42. How happy are you with the job you have? Please check (✓) only one.

- very unhappy
- unhappy
- no opinion
- happy
- very happy

43. If you are not happy with your job, please explain why.

44. Do you feel the job you have is helping you meet your goals in life?

- yes
- no

45. What kind of work did you do in your home country? Please check (✓) only one.

- professional (such as teacher, lawyer, doctor, or businessperson)
- technical (such as computer technician, electrician, or mechanic)
- clerical (such as secretary or clerk)
- sales (such as cashier or salesperson)
- service (such as restaurant worker, janitor, hotel worker, or hospital staff)
- labor (such as construction worker, factory worker, or farmer)
- self-employed (such as tailor, babysitter, or vendor)

46. Do you have more than one job?

- yes
- no

47. What are your biggest difficulties with working in the U.S. or Florida? Please check (✓) all that apply.

- My salary does not meet my needs.
- It is difficult to get transportation to and from work.
- I have difficulty with English.
- After working, I have no free time.
- I am not working in my profession.
- I am having problems finding an affordable place to live.
- It is difficult to find someone to care for my children while I am at work.
- It is difficult to find someone to care for my family while I am at work.
- I have no job security.
- Other _____

48. What are your biggest difficulties with taking English classes in Florida? Please check (✓) all that apply.

- It is difficult to get transportation to and from English classes.
- I have no free time after work.
- It is difficult to find someone to care for my children while I am at class.
- It is difficult to find someone to care for my family while I am at class.
- I don't know how to find information about English classes.
- I don't want to/need to take English classes.
- Other _____

YOUR SUGGESTIONS

49. What are the main problems you have had living and working in Florida?

50. What other kinds of employment-related training or services would be helpful for you?

51. Do you have any other suggestions for improving services to refugees in Florida?

Appendix E: Service Provider Survey

Survey of Needs for Florida Refugees

Service Provider Survey

Would you please complete the following survey? This survey is part of a study commissioned by the Refugee Programs Administration of the Florida Department of Children and Families to improve services for refugees/entrants in Florida. Your input is greatly appreciated. Please answer the questions carefully and honestly. All responses will be kept confidential and no names will be recorded.

Due to the variety of services offered to refugees, several questions in this survey deal with specific services that your agency may or may not offer. If a question is not applicable, please skip to the next appropriate question or section.

When you have answered the questions, please mail this survey using the pre-addressed, postage-paid envelope enclosed in this package.

Directions: For each question, please put a check (✓) next to the most appropriate response or write your response on the lines provided.

GENERAL INFORMATION

1. What is the name of your agency (optional)?

2. Which county do you serve?

- Duval
- Hillsborough
- Miami-Dade
- Orange

3. Which refugee/entrant populations do you mostly serve?

- Cubans
 - Haitians
 - Bosnians
 - Other _____
-

4. What percentage of your staff is capable of communicating with the main refugee/entrant population that you serve, using that population's native language?

- 0–10%
- 11–20%
- 21–40%
- 41–60%
- more than 60%

5. How many years of schooling has your average refugee/entrant client had?

- 1–5 (primary school)
- 6–8 (middle school/junior high school)
- 9–12 (secondary school/high school)
- 13–14 (postsecondary/college)
- 15–16 (university)
- more than 16 (advanced degree)

6. What employment-related training and services does your agency provide to refugees/entrants? Please check (✓) all that apply.

- English language training (ESL/ESOL)
- vocational English language training (VESL/VESOL)
- vocational education
- adult education (ABE, GED)
- employment services (job placement, job training, job search, employability planning, employability skills training)
- needs assessments
- family self-sufficiency planning
- childcare services
- legal services
- mental health services
- orientation programs
- elderly services
- other _____

Childcare Services

If you provide childcare services to refugees/entrants, please continue with the following questions. If not, please go to question 15 in the next section.

- 7. How many refugees/entrants do you assist with childcare during the course of one day?**
 1-5
 6-10
 11-20
 more than 20

- 8. What percentage of refugees/entrants that apply for childcare services actually receive them?**
 0-20%
 21-40%
 41-60%
 61-80%
 81-100%

- 9. Do you provide childcare services to refugees/entrants continually for 12 months after they have found employment?**
 yes
 no

- 10. Do you provide childcare services to refugees/entrants during the summer months?**
 yes
 no

- 11. If no, please explain:** _____

12. What are some of the difficulties you face in providing childcare services to refugees/entrants?

13. How would you rate the quality of childcare services available to refugees in Florida?

- poor
- fair
- satisfactory
- good
- excellent

14. In your opinion, how could the quality of childcare services available to refugees/entrants in Florida be improved?

Legal Services

If you provide legal services to refugees/entrants, please continue with the following questions. If not, please go to question 22 in the next section.

15. How many refugees/entrants do you assist with legal problems during the course of one day?

- 1-5
- 6-10
- 11-20
- more than 20

16. What percentage of refugees/entrants that apply for legal aid actually receive assistance?

- 0–20%
- 21–40%
- 41–60%
- 61–80%
- 81–100%

17. What percentage of your refugee/entrant cases are successfully closed within 6 months?

- 0–20%
- 21–40%
- 41–60%
- 61–80%
- 81–100%

18. What percentage of your refugee/entrant cases take more than 6 months to be successfully closed?

- 0–20%
- 21–40%
- 41–60%
- 61–80%
- 81–100%

19. For which main legal issues do you provide refugees/entrants assistance?

- immigration
- employment
- housing
- other _____

20. What are some of the difficulties you face in providing legal assistance to refugees/entrants?

21. In your opinion, how could the quality of childcare services available to refugees/entrants in Florida be improved?

Mental Health Services

If you provide mental health services to refugees/entrants, please continue with the following questions. If not, please go to question 30 in the next section.

22. How many refugees/entrants do you assist with mental health issues during the course of one day?

- 1-5
- 6-10
- 11-20
- more than 20

23. What percentage of refugees/entrants that are referred to your agency receive mental health services?

- 0-20%
- 21-40%
- 41-60%
- 61-80%
- 81-100%

24. What is the average length of time a typical refugee/entrant client may stay in the program?

- Less than 1 month
- 1–3 months
- 3–6 months
- more than 6 months

25. What types of mental health services do you provide?

- counseling
- crisis intervention
- case management
- outpatient services
- day and residential treatment
- other _____

26. What percentage of your clients require long-term medication (more than one year) for employment-related health needs?

- 0–20%
- 21–40%
- 41–60%
- 61–80%
- 81–100%

27. Do you believe that the mental health services you provide are comprehensive enough to address the needs of your refugee/entrant clients?

- yes
- no

28. What are some of the difficulties you face in providing mental health services to refugees/entrants?

29. In your opinion, how could the quality of mental health care services available to refugees/entrants in Florida be improved?

Education/English Language Training

If you are primarily an education/English language training provider, please continue with the following questions. If not, please go to question 39 in the next section.

30. In general, what percentage of refugee/entrant students complete your English language (ESL/ESOL) programs?

Level one	_____ %
Level two	_____ %
Level three	_____ %
Level four	_____ %
Level five	_____ %
Level six	_____ %

31. How long does it take a full-time refugee/entrant student to complete an English language (ESL/ESOL) program?

One level	_____ months
Two levels	_____ months
Three or more levels	_____ months

32. How long does it take a part-time refugee/entrant student to complete an English language (ESL/ESOL) program?

One level	_____ months
Two levels	_____ months
Three or more levels	_____ months

33. What percentage of refugee/entrant students typically complete vocational English language (VESL/VESOL) programs?

- 0–20%
- 21–40%
- 41–60%
- 61–80%
- 81–100%

34. How many occupational completion points (OCPs) are typically completed by refugees/entrants in your vocational education programs?

- 1 OCP
- 2 OCPs
- 3 or more OCPs
- program completion

35. What percentage of refugee/entrant students complete adult education (ABE, GED) programs?

- 0–20%
- 21–40%
- 41–60%
- 61–80%
- 81–100%

36. If you offer refugee orientation programs, what is their average length?

- 0–5 hours
- 6–10 hours
- 11–15 hours
- 16–20 hours
- more than 20 hours

37. What are some of the difficulties you face in providing educational services to refugees/entrants

38. In your opinion, how could the quality of educational services available to refugees/entrants in Florida be improved?

Employment Services

If you are primarily an employment services provider, please continue with the following questions. If not, please go to question 61 in the next section.

39. What types of employment services does your agency offer to refugees/entrants?

- employability planning
- employability language training (ELT)
- vocational training
- job search
- job development
- job interviewing
- job placement
- job maintenance
- follow-up
- other _____

40. What is the average length of time that you work with a refugee/entrant client?

- 1–2 months
- 3–6 months
- 7–9 months
- 10–12 months
- more than 12 months

41. What percentage of your refugee/entrant clients are placed in jobs?

- 0–20%
- 21–40%
- 41–60%
- 61–80%
- 81–100%

42. How long does it usually take for them to be placed, upon their arrival?

- less than 1 month
- 1–3 months
- 4–6 months
- 7–9 months
- more than 9 months

43. How do the refugees/entrants whom you serve usually get jobs?

- We (or another agency) place them.
- They find the job with the help of their family or friends.
- Other _____

44. What types of jobs do they usually get? Please check (✓) up to three.

- professional (teacher, lawyer, doctor, businessperson)
- technical (computer technician, electrician, mechanic)
- clerical (secretary, clerk)
- sales (cashier, salesperson)
- service (restaurant worker, janitor, hotel worker, hospital staff)
- labor (construction worker, factory worker, farmer)
- self-employed (tailor, baby-sitter, vendor)

45. What is their average hourly rate of pay at these jobs?

- less than \$5.15
- \$5.15-\$7.00
- \$7.01-\$9.00
- \$9.01-\$11.00
- more than \$11.00

46. Are most of these jobs full-time (35–40 hours per week) or part-time (less than 35 hours per week)?

- full-time
- part-time

47. Are most of these jobs permanent or temporary?

- permanent
- temporary

48. Do these jobs usually offer benefits (annual leave, sick pay, health or retirement plans)?

- yes
- no

49. Are most refugees/entrants finding jobs similar to the occupations they had in their home countries?

- yes
- no

50. If no, please explain: _____

51. What percentage of refugees/entrants do you place in professional or clerical positions?

- less than 15%
- 16–25%
- 26–35%
- 36–45%
- more than 45%

52. What percentage of refugees/entrants do you place in service or labor positions?

- less than 15%
- 16–25%
- 26–35%
- 36–45%
- more than 45%

53. Do you provide any follow-up assistance after the 90-day period?

- yes
- no

If yes, how long? _____

54. For the follow-up assistance, whom do you contact?

- client
- employer

If client, please explain: _____

If employer, please explain: _____

55. Do you keep in touch with your refugee/entrant clients after the follow-up period has ended?

- yes
- no

56. What percentage of your refugee/entrant clients receive public assistance?

- 0–20%
- 21–40%
- 41–60%
- 61–80%
- 81–100%

57. What forms of public assistance do they use? Please list percentages for any that apply.

- Cash/Medical Assistance (RCA/RMA) _____ %
- WAGES program/food stamps _____ %
- Social Security (SSI/SSDI) _____ %
- Medicaid _____ %
- Other public assistance _____ %

58. If you offer refugee orientation programs, what is their average length?

- 0–5 hours
- 6–10 hours
- 11–15 hours
- 16–20 hours
- more than 20 hours

59. What percentage of your refugee/entrant clients need the following?

- childcare services _____ %
- legal services _____ %
- mental health services _____ %
- education _____ %
- employment services _____ %

60. Of those needing these services, what percentage actually receive them?

- | | |
|---|---------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> childcare services | _____ % |
| <input type="checkbox"/> legal services | _____ % |
| <input type="checkbox"/> mental health services | _____ % |
| <input type="checkbox"/> education | _____ % |
| <input type="checkbox"/> employment services | _____ % |

ADAPTATION

61. What level of English proficiency do the majority of your refugee/entrant clients have when they enter your program?

- very proficient
- proficient
- somewhat proficient
- not proficient
- no English at all

62. Do most of your refugee/entrant clients attend English language classes?

- yes
- no

63. In your opinion, how important is it for refugees/entrants to have a working knowledge of English?

- not important
- somewhat important
- important
- very important
- essential

64. In your opinion, do most refugees/entrants have access to ethnic community supports or networks?

- yes
- no

65. In your opinion, are most refugees/entrants successfully adapting to their communities?

- yes
- no

66. In your opinion, how long do most refugees/entrants usually take to adapt to the communities in which they are resettled?

- less than 6 months
- 6 months to 1 year
- 1-2 years
- 2-3 years
- more than 3 years

YOUR SUGGESTIONS

- 67. In your opinion, what are the main difficulties in helping refugees/entrants gain a working knowledge of English?**

- 68. In your opinion, what are the main difficulties in helping refugees/entrants find or keep employment?**

- 69. Do you think that welfare reform has had significant effects on refugees/entrants' economic status, employment status, or general well-being? If so, what effects?**

70. In your opinion, what are the most urgent employment-related needs for refugees/entrants in Florida?

71. Do you have any other suggestions to improve services to refugees/entrants in Florida?

Appendix F: Employer Survey

Survey of Needs for Florida Refugees

Employer Survey

Would you please complete the following survey? This survey is part of a study commissioned by the Refugee Programs Administration of the Florida Department of Children and Families to improve services for refugees/entrants in Florida.

Please answer the questions carefully and honestly. All responses will be kept confidential and no names will be recorded. When you have answered the questions, please mail this survey using the pre-addressed, postage-paid envelope enclosed in this package.

Directions: For each question, please put a check (✓) next to the most appropriate response or write your response on the lines provided.

GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Which of the following categories best describes your company? Please check (✓) all that apply.

- agriculture
- business and professional services
- construction
- educational services
- finance, insurance, or real estate
- government services
- health and social services
- lodging, food, and beverage
- manufacturing
- retail sales
- transportation/communications/utilities
- wholesale sales
- other _____

2. What types of work do refugees/entrants who are employees in your company usually do? Please check (✓) up to three categories.

- professional (business, administrative, law, medical)
- technical (computer, electrical, mechanical)
- clerical (secretarial, data entry)
- sales (retail, wholesale)
- service (food service, janitorial, health services, hotel and tourism)
- labor (construction, industrial, agricultural)
- other _____

3. How many people does your company employ?

- 1-25
- 26-49
- 50-75
- 76-100
- more than 100

4. What percentage of your employees are refugees/entrants?

- Less than 10%
- 10-19%
- 20-39%
- 40-59%
- 60-79%
- 80% or more

5. What country are most of your employees who are refugees/entrants from?

- Cuba
- Haiti
- Bosnia
- Other _____

6. In general, how did most of your employees who are refugees/entrants start working for you?

- They were placed by a service provider.
- They were hired directly by us.
- Other _____

7. Are most of your employees who are refugees/entrants placed by a particular service provider?

- yes
- no

If yes, what agency? _____

8. How many hours a week do most of your employees who are refugees/entrants work?

- Less than 15
- 15–24
- 25–34
- 35–40
- more than 40

9. Do you offer fringe benefits (sick or annual leave, health insurance, retirement) to any of your employees who are refugees/entrants?

- yes
- no

10. If yes, please indicate which benefits. Please check (✓) all that apply.

- sick pay
- vacation pay/annual leave
- health insurance
- retirement
- other _____

YOUR EXPERIENCE WITH REFUGEE/ENTRANT EMPLOYEES

11. From the following list, please check (✓) the job-related skills and knowledge that you feel are the most essential for refugees/entrants.

- speaking English
- reading English
- writing English
- job-related skills (typing, telephone, computer, interpersonal, and communication)
- knowledge of American culture
- other _____

12. Do you offer on-the-job training to your employees who are refugees/entrants?

- yes
- no

13. Do you offer English language training to your employees who are refugees/entrants?

- yes
- no

If yes, for how long? _____

14. How important is it for an employee of your company to be able to have a working knowledge of English?

- not important
- somewhat important
- important
- very important
- essential

15. How good are the English communication skills of most of your refugee/entrant employees?

- excellent
- good
- fair
- poor
- no English at all

16. Do you feel that not being able to communicate in English has affected the job performance of any of your employees who are refugees/entrants?

- yes
- no

17. If yes, please explain:

18. Do you feel that the cultural background of your employees who are refugees/entrants has affected their job performance?

- yes
- no

19. If yes, please explain (give a specific instance if possible):

20. Please indicate how you feel about the following statements by checking (✓) the answer that best describes your opinion of the statement.

- a. *I generally feel positive about hiring refugees/entrants.*
- strongly agree
 agree
 no opinion
 disagree
 strongly disagree
- b. *Most of my employees who are refugees/entrants are hardworking.*
- strongly agree
 agree
 no opinion
 disagree
 strongly disagree
- c. *Most of my employees who are refugees/entrants are punctual.*
- strongly agree
 agree
 no opinion
 disagree
 strongly disagree
- d. *Most of my employees who are refugees/entrants have adequate technical skills, such as using the computer.*
- strongly agree
 agree
 no opinion
 disagree
 strongly disagree

- e. *Most of my employees who are refugees/entrants have adequate communication skills.*
- strongly agree
 agree
 no opinion
 disagree
 strongly disagree
- f. *Most of my employees who are refugees/entrants have adequate management skills.*
- strongly agree
 agree
 no opinion
 disagree
 strongly disagree
- g. *Most of my employees who are refugees/entrants have adequate leadership skills.*
- strongly agree
 agree
 no opinion
 disagree
 strongly disagree
- h. *Generally, most of my employees who are refugees/entrants have adequate job-related skills.*
- strongly agree
 agree
 no opinion
 disagree
 strongly disagree

- i. *Not being able to communicate in English is the main difficulty among my employees who are refugees/entrants.*
- strongly agree
 agree
 no opinion
 disagree
 strongly disagree
- j. *Cultural barriers cause problems in the job performance of my employees who are refugees/entrants.*
- strongly agree
 agree
 no opinion
 disagree
 strongly disagree

YOUR SUGGESTIONS

21. Do you feel that employees who are refugees/entrants need more job training in any areas?

- yes
 - no

If yes, what areas?

22. Do you feel that employees who are refugees/entrants need employment-related services in any areas?

- yes
 - no

If yes, what areas?

23. Do you have any other suggestions to improve services for refugees/entrants in Florida?
