

Vermont Refugee Mobility: Overcoming Challenges to Obtaining Driver's Licenses and Accessing CarShare Vermont

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Problem Definition

Refugee populations in Vermont are faced with major challenges on the path to achieving the level of mobility enjoyed by most residents. For Burlington, the influx of refugees has been a challenge for the community to meet all of their needs, from helping residents achieve fluency, to education, to transportation. Over roughly the past 30 years, more than 5,000 refugees have come to the area from many countries, including Vietnam, Bosnia, and Somalia (Bose, 2011). Creating sufficient mobility for these new residents is a challenge, but it is an important component of improving the economic situation of these populations.

Currently, refugees face many barriers to car ownership and there are specific challenges with the various alternative modes of transportation. According to a 2011 Transportation Research Center (TRC) report titled "Transportation, Equity, and Communities at Risk: Refugee Population and Transportation Accessibility in Vermont," one of the key challenges facing refugees in Vermont is the lack of transportation access. The study indicates that access to viable transportation options is sorely lacking in Vermont, which is a significant barrier to acclimation (Bose, 2011).

In Burlington, a car is the most common means of transportation, with 74 percent of commuters driving alone or carpooling to work (*Moving Forward Together*, 2011). There are, however, many barriers to car ownership for refugees, which creates a major limiting factor for mobility due to this mode's dominance in the area. One of the most significant challenges to driving and car ownership many refugees face is passing the driver's license exam, which involves overcoming language barriers and sufficient training.

The language barrier is a large part of the problem of refugee mobility. Even in the Burlington schools, only 52 percent of refugee students who have been in the school system for 7 years are now considered fluent in English (Walsh, 2012). Additionally, many refugees have found that there is not frequently available or affordable training for driving, and language barriers further complicate access to the information (Bose, 2011, p.27). There are many options for those who are unable to drive or do not own a car in the Greater Burlington area, including car-sharing, public transit, and active transportation, but they are not without inadequacies.

One transportation option is CarShare Vermont, a non-profit organization in Burlington, VT, which aims to increase mobility for local residents while decreasing car ownership. The stated mission is "to provide an affordable, convenient, and reliable alternative to private car ownership that enhances the environmental, economic and social well-being of our region and planet." The organization envisions turning Burlington into a community where car ownership is not a necessity (*Our mission & vision*, n.d.). This is an especially ambitious goal given that the state overall has more vehicles than licensed drivers (Sears & Glitman, 2011).

CarShare Vermont has already assessed its ability to serve refugees, and it has identified several critical barriers to this task. The organization already operates MobilityShare, a program that

aims to increase accessibility by assisting low-income individuals with the expense of car-sharing (*MobilityShare*, n.d.). However, MobilityShare addresses only the financial challenge for low-income refugees; other barriers to serving refugee populations include an inability to insure the drivers due to short driving history, age, or lack of license. The organization also needs to be able to contact and communicate with drivers at any time, which is complicated by the language barrier. The organization has found that many refugees seek car ownership and perhaps would benefit from education around other mobility options (Bourdon & Taylor, n.d.).

The Burlington area is also served by the Chittenden County Transit Association (CCTA). This organization seeks to make public transit accessible and convenient and provides a variety of services, such as fixed routes, paratransit, and commuter shuttles (*About CCTA*, n.d.). The bus is by far the dominant mode of transportation for refugees, with nearly 60 percent using this mode. Reviews of the service by refugees were mixed with 42 percent somewhat satisfied, 28 percent somewhat dissatisfied, and less than 20 percent very satisfied or dissatisfied. Where the bus service was found most lacking was for weekend and evening service, where nearly 85 percent of refugees found the service was poor or needs improvement (Bose, 2011, 37-39).

Local Motion is another local organization promoting alternative mobility options. This non-profit promotes active transportation options, such as walking and biking, and works to improve their accessibility and safety (*Who We Are*, n.d.). This advocacy may allow a higher level of safe and convenient walking and biking in the Burlington area for refugees. The City of Burlington Department of Public Works also plays a major role, managing 11 miles of bike lanes and 150 miles of sidewalk (*Planning Pedestrian & Bicycle Improvements*, n.d.). Mayor Weinberger recently touted the rebuilding of the waterfront bike path, while announcing the soon to be released “‘roadmap’ for making Burlington a nationally-recognized leader for walking and biking” (Weinberger, 2013). Despite these initiatives, a recent study in Vermont found that the likelihood that an individual will bike commute was impacted greatly by temperature and precipitation (Flynn et al., 2012). Beyond seasonal and weather concerns, biking or walking is also limited by distance, time, and individual ability. For each type of needed service or destination, refugees estimated each would take over 30 minutes from 28 to 33 percent of the time, showing a large portion of long trips that may be more difficult to replace with biking or walking (Bose, 2011). Biking and walking may be ideal options for some refugees, but there are many limiting factors that may require reliance on other modes as well.

Additionally, Vermont refugees have a strong preference for driving as their mode of transportation. Over 83 percent of those surveyed chose this mode, with only 11 percent choosing the bus (Bose, 2011, 38). Therefore, it makes sense to look at mobility options that include obtaining a driver’s license, as this would open up access to other options for transportation such as CarShare, purchasing a car, or an informal sharing of a vehicle among a group. Overall, refugees are faced with a difficult path to car ownership or even car-sharing, with several barriers to overcome to access this transportation mode. The large majority of refugees who would prefer to drive (over 80 percent) compared to the much lower actual car use (23 percent), demonstrates a need that is not effectively being met. There are other mobility options, including transit, biking and walking, but each of these has limitations, which are reflected in the refugees’ strong preference for driving.

Status Quo/Inaction

The Vermont Student Assistance Corporation (VSAC) offers a non-degree grant through their Career and Educational Outreach Department. These non-degree grants can be used to help refugees obtain their driver's license by providing the financial support to sign up for the training courses. The Vermont Department of Education, Driver Education Division, has driver education courses at high schools according to their website (dmv.vermont.gov/drivers/newdrivers). The downside to obtaining one of these grants is that they are only available on a first come first served basis each July 1st and the money is limited. For example, as of March 2013, they have no funds available until July.

The State of Vermont, Department of Mental Health also has awarded a grant titled "Implementation of Chittenden Regional Plan for Vermont's Youth in Transition Grant." This is a large comprehensive award, which is primarily intended to expand access and engagement of services and support for Chittenden County young adults (ages 16-21) who are experiencing emotional disturbance. The program aims to enhance their self-sufficiency and successes as they enter adulthood. This information was obtained from their 2009 grant document titled "Youth in Transition Regional Plan" (<http://www.youth-in-transition-grant.com/uploads/chittendenfinal.pdf>). A small portion of funds includes money to help young people obtain their licenses, and it specifically states in their 2012 progress report that they worked with the Vermont Refugee Resettlement Program (VRRP) to engage with young refugees, and that would continue to be a specific aim. The downsides to this program are that obtaining licensure for refugee youth is not a formalized program, it is not specific to the refugee population, and it is only available to youth with a diagnosed emotional disturbance.

Another relevant program is run by Spectrum, a nationally recognized leader in serving homeless youths. Spectrum offers an extensive range of crucial services for youth in Chittenden County; they are a collaborator with the "Youth in Transition" program and also help youth in many other areas. Their programming is available throughout Chittenden County and specifically includes young adults from multicultural backgrounds, including young adult immigrants and refugees (www.spectrumvt.org/). They have a volunteer, Bill West, who currently runs an informal program to help at-risk youth obtain their driver's license. It is mainly a study group, and he works with the youth on preparation for the learners permit and license testing. The downsides to this program are that it is only taught in English, and because it is volunteer-based, its long-term existence is not secure.

VRRP is also included among the options, even though they have no specific, formalized driver license assistance program at this time. They are included because they work with all of the groups above to address language barriers and help to provide interpreters where they can. They also have a strong network and many partnerships throughout the community which is an invaluable resource. It is certainly a strong downside that they do not have a formalized driver's license training program at this time.

Summary of Status Quo

Options	Pros	Cons
VSAC	· Non-Degree Grants	· Limited funds · Not available often
State of Vermont-Mental Health Grant Award “Youth in Transition”	· Part of the grant includes money to help young people obtain licensure · Work with VT Refugee Resettlement Program	· No formalized program · Not specific to refugees · Only available to youth who have emotional disturbances
Spectrum	· Volunteer Bill West runs an informal program to help youth obtain their driver’s license	· This is on a volunteer basis and could be discontinued at any time · Taught in English only
VT Refugee Resettlement Program (VRRP)	· They address the language barrier. · Strong network among nonprofits in Chittenden County	· No formalized program

Public Sector- DMV Language Assistance for Driver’s License Testing

Refugees with limited English proficiency face major language barriers when trying to secure a driver’s license. Typically, states require those who are seeking a driver’s license for the first time to pass both a written/knowledge test and a driving test; for refugees with limited English proficiency, passing these tests can be challenging, if not impossible, without language assistance. The type and level of assistance provided by the state agencies that conduct driver’s license testing (usually the department of motor vehicles (DMV)) varies greatly across the country. Types of possible DMV assistance most relevant to overcoming language barriers include: 1) providing driver manuals that are translated into languages besides English; 2) offering the written/knowledge test in languages besides English; 3) allowing the use of an interpreter when taking the written/knowledge test, if it is not offered in the person’s native language; and 4) allowing the use of an interpreter when taking the driving test.

To assess current practices and trends across the United States, a survey on DMV language assistance was conducted. The survey, which included questions on the four types of assistance mentioned above, was issued to almost all fifty states. (For a few states, electronic submission was impossible; also, at the beginning, the researcher chose to call a few states instead of emailing.) Via email, phone, or review of website content, at least one data point was obtained for 45 states; complete data sets were obtained for 41 states. Tables 1 and 2 in Appendix A provide a summary of DMV responses and the full set of DMV responses, respectively.

The first type of language assistance, providing translated driving manuals, is intended to increase the effectiveness of refugees’ efforts to study for the knowledge and driving tests. Two-thirds (30) of all states have translated their driving manual into a language besides English; although in 22 states, it is available in only one other language, usually Spanish. A small number of states (4), have

made the manual available in four or more languages, California leads the country with the manual in nine languages. Enabling refugees to study driving information in their native languages should substantially increase comprehension, making this option highly effective at helping refugees pass the knowledge and driving tests. However, the costs of translating large manuals into a wide variety of languages may be prohibitively expensive. Using the rough estimate of twenty cents per word (an estimate retrieved from www.clarktranslations.com/price_list.htm), translating a forty-page manual with 32,000 words into one language could cost over \$6,000. While it is likely that bulk discounts would be available from some translation vendors to achieve cost savings, it remains clear that start-up expenses for this option would require substantial public investment. Furthermore, manuals require periodic updating, so lower but ongoing translation costs are involved. Despite the cost, an advantage is that the process of getting and disseminating translated manuals is relatively simple.

The next type of assistance, offering the knowledge test in other languages, was even more common than translated manuals. Taking the written/knowledge test in one's native language helps refugees demonstrate their actual driving knowledge, thus enhancing their ability to pass the test. Thirty-three states offered the knowledge test in at least one language besides English; several respondents took the initiative to indicate that these languages were available via computerized tests. Notably, 10 states provide testing in 4 to 9 other languages, and 7 states offer tests in 10 or more languages, with California again setting the bar with 31 languages. Since this option helps refugees demonstrate their actual knowledge and avoid failing due to limited English proficiency, it is another highly effective alternative. However, even though the scale of translation costs should be smaller than for driver manuals, the implementation cost may still be relatively high. For states that have or are planning to transition to all computerized testing, the cost of setting up their tests in a wide variety of languages may be a manageable addition to the overall cost of implementing a computerized system. Likewise, the administrative challenge of implementing foreign language testing should not be too great in the context of integrating language options into a comprehensive computerized system for all testing.

Aside from offering the knowledge test in other languages in a written or computerized format, some states permit the use of an interpreter when taking the test. This was allowed by 29 states; several took the initiative to indicate that an interpreter would only be permitted if the written or computerized test was not available in the person's native language. Like the translated test option, by helping refugees demonstrate their actual driving knowledge, allowing an interpreter is a highly effective way of enhancing the ability of refugees to pass the knowledge test. It should be noted that although use of a translator would be unnecessary if the translated test is available, it may be very challenging or impossible to ensure that the written/computerized test is available in all needed languages. Therefore, permitting use of a translator when a translated test is unavailable is important to ensure that all refugees have the opportunity to succeed; it is unfair to accommodate some refugees' language needs and not others. This option may be very low cost if the person taking the test and not the DMV is not responsible for paying the interpreter. Furthermore, implementation feasibility is relatively high; the DMV will need to develop a simple protocol for determining the legitimacy of interpreters' qualifications.

In contrast to the other types of language assistance, a relatively small number of states (12) permitted the use of an interpreter during the driving test. This option should help refugees

demonstrate their actual driving skills, thus helping them to avoid failing the driving test. However, because only limited English proficiency is needed to successfully take the driving test, this option is not as effective or important as the other forms of language assistance described here. As with permitting interpreters for the knowledge test, this option is both low cost and has high implementation feasibility.

If an interpreter is allowed during the knowledge or driving test, an important consideration is the degree to which refugees can access a professional, legally permissible interpreter. The original survey also included the question of whether the DMV is responsible for providing an interpreter when requested by a refugee, or conversely, if the refugee is responsible for arranging his/her own interpreter. Upon receiving numerous unclear responses to this question (such as this being considered on a case-by-case basis or requiring the refugee to arrange interpreter services from a specific state list of approved interpreters), it was determined that the question was not specific enough and would be dropped from the analysis. However, based on the varied responses obtained, it seems that there is a role for nonprofit refugee support agencies (like VRRP) to assist refugees in arranging an interpreter who meets the requirements of the DMV. This point was made by a refugee advocate at the Massachusetts nonprofit, Chelsea Collaborative, who was quoted in a 2011 article about the state's prohibition on the use of interpreters for the written test (Sacchetti, 2011).

According to the article (Sacchetti, 2011), in Massachusetts the written test is available in 26 languages besides English, but this does not include the languages of some recent refugees, such as Somali Bantu. Since interpreters are not permitted, many refugees who have found the language barrier to be insurmountable have traveled to Arizona, which does not have a residency requirement and allows them to use an interpreter or skip the test by earning a certificate from a state-approved private driving school with instructors who speak their language. The refugees then returned home and exchanged their Arizona licenses for Massachusetts ones. Doing so is against the law, and the article reported that State Police were investigating hundreds of refugees who had converted Arizona driver licenses and had already suspended the licenses of 124 individuals. This situation represents a perceived conflict between ensuring public safety on the roads and making driving an accessible option for refugees. Some public safety advocates, such as the Coalition for a Secure Driver's License, argue that permitting interpreters risks fraud and passing individuals who do not actually have sufficient driving knowledge (Sacchetti, 2011). However, this risk could be ameliorated by only allowing the use of interpreters whose legitimacy has been approved by state government. Furthermore, there is an important equity issue at stake here; it is unfair to offer testing in the languages of some refugees and not others. While offering translated tests in the native languages of all refugees in a given state may be infeasible, states should 1) make the investment to offer testing in the most common languages of refugees, especially recent refugees; and 2) permit interpreters for at least those refugees who cannot be accommodated with translated knowledge tests.

Non-Profit Alternatives

When refugees first arrive in the United States, there is a linear trajectory of transportation options that move from walking, to public transit, to car ownership, which is seemingly tied to a refugee's increased levels of familiarity and establishment within the new culture. Car ownership is often seen as an important part of the immigration and acculturation process. Driving is not simply

about convenience and efficiency, but is an integral component for attaining the “American way of life.” That is, without the ability to drive, their employment capabilities are reduced and their outreach radius is drastically narrowed. This issue is significantly mitigated by effective public transportation; however, too often, public transit systems are inadequate. Within the public sector, the DMV can play a useful role by implementing many systems and programs to assist refugees with the barriers to attaining the privilege to drive a motor vehicle. However, some states have found this issue better addressed through the non-profit sector because of certain inherent advantages over a public-sector effort. Namely, flexibility in starting/stopping programs, private grant eligibility, and limited liability advantages are factors that facilitate effective action more than the bureaucratic and rigid organizational structures of many public sector organizations.

In Vermont, and more specifically, Chittenden County, service providers have been implementing ad-hoc efforts to address this particular transportation issue with their refugee clients. These arrangements include simply driving the refugees to required destinations such as work, the grocery store, services, etc. In addition, many service organizations have been providing informal driver training in preparation for the written exam, the driving exam, and for the required driving hours. This ad hoc approach can be formalized in the region through non-profit efforts, as has been done with effective programs in California, Georgia, New York, and Arizona.

One such non-profit from Orange County, CA demonstrates this inherent advantage and has proven effective in addressing refugee barriers to driving. In the 1980’s, a large Vietnamese populace immigrated to Westminster, CA in what is known as “Little Saigon.” It was immediately apparent that systems were not in place to help refugees obtain licenses or insurance. Michael Vo Duc Minh, a Vietnamese immigrant himself, established two organizations. The first was Little Saigon Traffic School, which provided Vietnamese speaking driving instructors and taught all of the DMV required courses. In addition, the course incorporated American driving culture classes to help refugees better understand the local nuances of the highway. The second organization was Little Saigon Registration Service, which provided the Vietnamese population with the required automobile insurance that no other company was willing to provide. Since then, the school has incorporated additional languages and has developed partnerships with the California Department of Motor Vehicles, whereby they can issue the driving tests from their facility. On the whole, this example demonstrates one effective non-profit sector effort to mitigate the barriers to independent refugee transportation.

Another effective non-profit sector effort in combating the barriers to refugee mobility is the Refugee Organizing in Action Collaborative (ROA) in Atlanta, Georgia. This non-profit provides direct culturally and linguistically appropriate services, and works to promote refugee representation and participation in decision-making bodies and other actions that impact refugee access to quality services. One simple, yet effective, initiative that this organization took was to develop a comprehensive “Refugee Guide to Getting a Georgia License.” This guide lays out the sequence of events associated with attaining one’s license. Moreover, it provides all of the available programs – public, private, and non-profit – aimed at aiding refugees with specific portions of this process. For instance, there are public services for taking the written test in other languages; there are private-sector driving schools that tailor their curriculum for refugees; and there are non-profit training courses that help refugees adapt to the American driving culture. In short, this organization networks all of the

available resources and compiles them into one comprehensive, easy-to-read guide for refugees looking to obtain their driver's license.

Another example is the Multicultural Association of Medical Interpreters (MAMI), which was founded in 1998 as a non-profit patient advocacy agency, providing patients with limited English proficiency better access to care. MAMI has consistently responded to communication needs created by the many refugees in the State of New York. As previously noted, the culture and language barriers prevent many refugees from getting a driver's license, which severely limits job options. Under the MAMI program "Refugees Drive to Succeed," they teach a content-based driving course for individuals with English as a second language. The course teaches foundational driving skills and rules of the road. MAMI provides written translations of key DMV terminology, and helps facilitate throughout the whole process, from interpreting a class on the learner's permit to escorting students to the road test. The program provides driver's education for up to 30 refugees and includes a six-month tracking component to assess the success of refugees to get jobs and move off public assistance. This program is made possible by a grant from the Community Foundation of Herkimer and Oneida Counties, Inc. In the end, the goal is for the students to prepare to get their learner's permit and ultimately a driver's license, which will aid in attaining a job.

The last example is the Tucson International Alliance of Refugee Communities (TIARC), which has been assisting refugees with obtaining their drivers licenses in the State of Arizona since 1997. This non-profit understands that owning a car is essential for some refugee families; some jobs require an inconvenient or long commute and/or a driver's license. Many buses do not run late at night, and biking alone after dark can be dangerous. The TIARC provides driver's education specifically to refugees at a rate of \$285, which is substantially lower than others programs because of volunteers, donations and grants that would not be available to public-sector organizations. This program covers the basics of driver's education, including traffic regulations related to pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers; basic vocabulary related to traffic and driving; basic car parts and how they function; and driving practice. The instructors pick up students at their homes for driving lessons. Students who complete the class at TIARC receive their driver's license upon completion of the course.

It is clear that the public sector can pass policies allowing services, such as interpreters, to help refugees demonstrate their actual driving knowledge and skills and pass the tests; however, the funding for such services is typically quite limited in the public sector. Therefore, the non-profit sector has a justified stake in aiding this population in this mobility process. From the four examples above, several programs and services have been demonstrated to be effective. Namely, these were 1) the Little Saigon Driving School from CA that developed a school and an insurance organization specifically for refugees; 2) the Refugee Organizing in Action Collaborative (ROA) from Georgia that developed a comprehensive tutorial that provides the network of programs available to help refugees; 3) the Multicultural Association of Medical Interpreters from New York that provides classes for the refugees in preparation for the written test and driving exam; 4) and the Tucson International Alliance of Refugee Communities from Arizona, which teaches a formalized course of instruction for refugees, whereby they actually take the written and driving tests at their facility with the appropriate interpreters. On the whole, each example from around the country provides a small component to addressing the dilemma of substantially increasing refugee mobility in Chittenden County, Vermont.

Scorecard of Alternatives for Enhancing Vermont Refugee Mobility			Color key: green=favorable yellow=neutral/medium red=unfavorable			
	Options	Objective	Effectiveness	Implementation Cost	Sustainment Cost	Implementation Feasibility
Status Quo / Inaction	VSAC	Provide grants to individuals for drivers ed training to help people pass driver license testing	Low	Low	High	High
			Does not specifically target refugees; limited funds available	Low cost to start-up	Paying per person; no economy of scale	Simple to administer
	"Youth in Transition"	Offers drivers ed classes to at-risk youths to help them pass driver license testing	Low	Low	Low	Medium
			Only serves at-risk youths; does not specifically target or serve refugees broadly	Low cost to start-up; teaching only in English	Low cost to administer	Offering a course is easy; but teaching multi-lingual classes is challenging
	Spectrum	Offer volunteer-taught drivers ed classes to at-risk youth	Low	Low	Low	Medium
Only serves at-risk youths; does not specifically target or serve refugees broadly			Low cost to start-up	Low cost to administer	Offering a course is easy; but teaching multi-lingual classes is challenging	
VT Refugee Resettlement	Helps refugees find and access resources/ training to prepare for drivers license testing	Low	Low	Low	High	
		Useful, but does not directly provide education/ training	Low cost to administer; advising only	Low cost to administer; advising only	Easy to make informal referrals; staff already in place	
Public Sector	Driver Manual Translated into Other Languages	Increase the effectiveness of refugees' efforts to study for the knowledge and driving tests	High	High	Medium	High
			Studying in one's native language should substantially increase comprehension	Initial translation costs may be several to over ten thousand	Manuals need to be updated and re-translated periodically	Getting and disseminating translated manuals is relatively simple
	Knowledge Test Translated into Other Languages	Help refugees demonstrate their actual driving knowledge, enhancing their ability to pass the written test	High	High	Medium	Medium
			Helps refugees demonstrate actual knowledge and avoid failing due to limited English	Cost of translating tests may be high; also the grading cost, unless done electronically	Tests need to be updated periodically; if electronic, may have subscription fee	Need to arrange for grading or set up of new electronic system
	Use of Interpreter Permitted for Knowledge Test	Help refugees demonstrate their actual driving knowledge, enhancing their ability to pass the written test	High	Low	Low	High
High, when test is not available in the person's language			Low, if refugee is the payer	Low, if refugee is the payer	Simple protocol for determining legitimacy of interpreters	
Use of Interpreter Permitted for Driving Test	Help refugees demonstrate their actual driving skills, enhancing their ability to pass the driving test	Medium	Low	Low	High	
	Nonprofit Refugee Driving School	Organization for refugee licensing; classes, training, testing, and services	High	High	High	Low
			Organization for entirety of process is highly effective	Program development and training is very costly	Building and staffing costs very costly	Not feasible due to relatively small Refugee populace
	Refugee Insurance Agency	Private insurance agency for refugee populace	High	High	High	Low
			Targeted insurance highly effective for this populace	Agency development is very costly	Staffing costs and liability are high	Not feasible due to relatively small refugee populace
	Driver License Guide for Refugees	Step-by-step guide to licensing process and service networks	Medium	Low	Low	High
			Tutorial is effective for information; does not provide	Costs are guide development and printing	Sustainment costs are printing and editing	Highly feasible due to small Refugee populace
	Nonprofit Drivers Ed Course for Refugees	Classes in native language on American driving culture, DMV terminology, and test preparation	High	Medium	Low	High
			Classes are highly effective with appropriate interpreters	Costs are curriculum development and staff training	Costs are part-time staff; most likely volunteer	Highly feasible due to existence of VRRP
	DMV-Nonprofit Partnership	Refugees eligible to take written and driving test at nonprofit location with DMV personnel and interpreter	High	Low	Medium	Low
			Highly effective due to convenience and service	Costs include staff efforts to develop partnership	Costs are DMV personnel at Refugee Resettlement Program	Low feasibility due to unlikely DMV staffing capabilities and

Recommendations

The status quo is not sufficient to meet the mobility needs of the refugee population in Chittenden County. The only formalized programs are funded by time-limited grants (renewal is not guaranteed) that only serve a small portion of the refugee population. From our research and analysis, we suggest that VRRP secure funding (state, federal, or private) to help facilitate implementation of the recommendations that follow by raising awareness among refugees, as they are the information gateway for the refugee population in Vermont.

From this investigation, we have identified several options within the public and non-profit sectors that can effectively address aspects of the refugee mobility issue occurring in Vermont. Namely, from the public sector, the following alternatives sufficiently meet our evaluation criteria and are recommended for consideration in Vermont: providing driver manuals that are translated into languages besides English; offering the written/knowledge test in languages besides English; and allowing the use of an interpreter when taking the written/knowledge test, if it is not offered in the person's native language. From the non-profit sector, several options have been identified from other states that would also be effective in the State of Vermont. The following are expected to be most effective: the "Comprehensive Refugee Guide for a Driver's License" from the Refugee Organizing in Action Collaborative (ROA) in Georgia; and the "Nonprofit Drivers Education Course for Refugees" from the Tucson International Alliance of Refugee Communities in Arizona.

On the whole, these recommendations to VRRP and the Vermont Department of Motor Vehicles, as well as the suggested non-profit options (whether implemented through these organizations or others), should effectively increase refugee mobility in Chittenden County. Furthermore, the impact may be enhanced through achieving synergy among a combination of options. For example, a particularly effective combination of alternatives is joining a comprehensive refugee guide for getting a driver license with translated driver manuals, translated knowledge tests, and offering a nonprofit-run driver's education course for refugees. Each of these options addresses a different aspect of the challenges refugees face in learning to drive safely and obtaining a driver's license; success is facilitated by knocking down the language barrier for the most important components of getting a license - understanding the overall process, specific requirements and helpful resources (the easy-to-read guide); studying written instruction materials (the manuals); receiving quality instruction and behind-the-wheel practice (the drivers' ed course); and demonstrating actual knowledge to pass the written/knowledge test (translated tests and use of interpreter).

Refugees face many challenges to becoming self-sufficient and providing for their families, achieving a higher quality of life, and maximizing their potential in their new homeland. Implementing policies and programs that help refugees increase their mobility by becoming safe drivers is an important way to help make their success possible.

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Appendix A

Table 1. Summary of DMV Responses				
		Number of States	Out of Total Data Points	Percentage #/data pts
# of States w/ Driver Manual Translated into Languages Besides English		30	45	67%
	<i># of States w/ Manual in 1 Other Language</i>	22	45	49%
	<i># of States w/ Manual in 2-3 Other Languages</i>	4	45	9%
	<i># of States w/ Manual in 4+ Other Languages</i>	4	45	9%
# of States w/ Written /Knowledge Test Translated into Languages Besides English		33	43	77%
	<i># of States w/ Written Test in 1 Other Language</i>	8	43	19%
	<i># of States w/ Written Test in 2-3 Other Languages</i>	7	43	16%
	<i># of States w/ Written Test in 4-9 Other Languages</i>	10	43	23%
	<i># of States w/ Written Test in 10+ Other Languages</i>	7	43	16%
# of States Where an Interpreter is Permitted for the Written Test		29	42	69%
# of States Where an Interpreter is Permitted for the Driving Test		12	43	28%

Table 2. State Policies Concerning Language Assistance in Driver Licensing Testing

State	Translated Driver Manual	# of Languages	Non-English Languages of Manual	Translated Written Test	# of Languages	Non-English Languages of Written Test	Interpreters Permitted for Written Test	Interpreters Permitted for Driving Test	Survey sent /asked?	Response received?
AK	no	0	n/a	no	0	n/a	Yes	No	yes	yes
AL	data not obtained	n/a	data not obtained	data not obtained	n/a	data not obtained	data not obtained	data not obtained	yes	no
AR	yes	1	Spanish	data not obtained	n/a	data not obtained	data not obtained	data not obtained	yes	no
AZ	yes	1	Spanish	yes	1	Spanish	Yes	No	yes	yes
CA	yes	9	Spanish, Armenian, Chinese, Farsi, Korean, Punjabi, Russian, Tagalog, Vietnamese	yes	31	Amharic, Arabic, Armenian, Cambodian, Chinese, Croatian, French, German, Greek, Hebrew, Hindi, Hmong, Hungarian, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Laotian, Persian/Farsi, Polish, Portuguese, Punjabi, Romanian, Russian, Samoan, Spanish, Tagalog/Filipino, Thai, Tongan, Turkish, and Vietnamese. Also, the test is available in audio in: Armenian, Chinese/Mandarin, Hindi, Hmong, Japanese, Korean, Portuguese, Punjabi, Russian, Spanish, and Vietnamese	yes	no	no	n/a
CO	yes	1	Spanish	data not obtained	n/a	data not obtained	data not obtained	no	yes	n/a
CT	yes	1	Spanish	yes	20	Albanian, Arabic, Bosnian, Cambodian, Chinese, Farsi, French, German, Greek, Hebrew, Italian, Korean, Lithuanian, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Somalian, Spanish, Turkish and Vietnamese.	No	No	yes	yes
DE	yes	4	Chinese, Haitian Creole, Korean, Spanish	yes	3	Haitian Creole, Korean, Spanish	yes	no	yes	yes
FL	yes	1	Spanish	yes	2	Spanish and French Creole	yes	yes	yes	yes
GA	data not obtained	n/a	data not obtained	data not obtained	n/a	data not obtained	data not obtained	data not obtained	yes	no
HI	no	0	n/a	no	0	n/a	no	No	yes	yes
IA	yes	6	Albanian, Cambodian, Bosnian, Vietnamese, Laotian, Spanish	yes	1	Spanish	yes	No	yes	yes
ID	yes	1	Spanish	yes	9	Arabic, Chinese, Farsi, French, Korean, Russian, Serbo-Croatian, Spanish, Vietnamese	yes	yes	yes	yes
IL	yes	2	Spanish, Polish	yes	4	Spanish, Polish, Korean, Chinese	yes	yes	yes	yes
IN	no	0	n/a	yes	2	Spanish and Japanese	No	No	yes	yes
KS	no	0	n/a	no	0	n/a	No	No	yes	yes

State	Translated Driver Manual	# of Languages	Non-English Languages of Manual	Translated Written Test	# of Languages	Non-English Languages of Written Test	Interpreters Permitted for Written Test	Interpreters Permitted for Driving Test	Survey sent /asked?	Response received?
KY	no	0	n/a: but maybe will have 6 in the near future (Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, Somalian, Spanish)	yes	22	Albanian, Croatian, Laotian, Somali, Arabic, French, Persian, Spanish, Bosnian, German, Polish, Thai, Burmese, Indian (Hindi), Rumanian, Turkish, Cambodian, Japanese, Russian, Vietnamese, Chinese, Korean	yes	No	yes	yes
LA	no	0	n/a	no	0	n/a	Yes	Yes	yes	yes
MA	yes	1	Spanish	yes	26	Albanian, Arabic, Armenian, Chinese, Czech, Farsi (Iranian), Finnish, French, German, Greek, Hebrew, Hindi, Hungarian, Italian, Japanese, Khmer, Korean, Lao, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Spanish, Turkish, Urdu, Vietnamese (learner's permit exam)	no	yes	yes	yes
MD	yes	1	Spanish	yes	1	Spanish	yes	yes	yes	yes
ME	yes	1	Spanish	no	0	n/a: but will soon have electronic testing and have French, Spanish and maybe others	yes	no	yes	yes
MI	no	0	n/a	yes	14	Albanian, Arabic, Burmese, French, Greek, Hindi, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, and Slavic.	yes	Yes	yes	yes
MN	yes	1	Spanish	yes	5	Hmong, Vietnamese, Somali, Spanish and Russian (available via computerized test at some stations)	data not obtained	no	no	n/a
MO	no	0	n/a	yes	11	Bosnian; Chinese; French; German; Greek; Italian; Japanese;Korean; Russian; Spanish and Vietnamese.	yes	no	yes	yes
MS	data not obtained	n/a	data not obtained	data not obtained	n/a	data not obtained	data not obtained	data not obtained	yes	no
MT	data not obtained	n/a	data not obtained	data not obtained	n/a	data not obtained	data not obtained	data not obtained	yes	no
NC	yes	1	Spanish	yes	8	Spanish, Japanese, Chinese, Korean, Arabic, German, Russian, Vietnamese (available on electronic testers)	yes	No	yes	yes
ND	no	0	n/a	yes	9	Arabic, Spanish, Serbo-Croatian, Somali, Russian, Vietnamese, Swahili, Nepali, Turkish.	No	No	yes	yes
NE	yes	1	Spanish	yes	1	Spanish	No	No	yes	yes
NH	no	0	n/a	no	0	n/a: but it will be available in Spanish and French in the near future	Yes	No	yes	yes
NJ	yes	1	Spanish	yes	9	Arabic, Chinese, French, Spanish, Korean, Polish, Portuguese, Russian and Japanese.	Yes	Yes	yes	yes
NM	yes	1	Spanish	yes	1	Spanish	no	no	yes	yes
NV	yes	1	Spanish	no	0	n/a	No	No	yes	yes

State	Translated Driver Manual	# of Languages	Non-English Languages of Manual	Translated Written Test	# of Languages	Non-English Languages of Written Test	Interpreters Permitted for Written Test	Interpreters Permitted for Driving Test	Survey sent /asked?	Response received?
NY	yes	1	Spanish	yes	11	Albanian, Arabic, Bosnian, Chinese, French, Greek Italian, Japanese, Korean, Polish, Russian, Spanish.	yes	data not obtained	no	n/a
OH	yes	2	Spanish, Somali	yes	6	Spanish, Somalis, French, Japanese, Chinese, Russian	Yes	No	yes	yes
OK	no	0	n/a	no	0	n/a	No	No	yes	yes
OR	yes	1	Spanish	yes	5	Spanish, Russian, Korean, Vietnamese, Japanese (also have audio version in these languages)	Yes	no	yes	yes
PA	yes	1	Spanish	yes	1	Spanish	yes	yes	yes	yes
RI	yes	1	Spanish	yes	2	Spanish and Portuguese	No	No	yes	yes
SC	no	0	n/a	yes	3	French, Spanish and German	no	no	yes	yes
SD	no	0	n/a	no	0	n/a	Yes	No	yes	yes
TN	yes	1	Spanish	yes	3	Spanish, Korean, Japanese (on an automated testing device)	no	no	yes	yes
TX	yes	1	Spanish	yes	1	Spanish	yes	yes	yes	yes
UT	data not obtained	n/a	data not obtained	data not obtained	n/a	data not obtained	data not obtained	data not obtained	yes	no
VA	yes	1	Spanish	yes	1	Spanish	yes	no	yes	yes
VT	no	0	n/a	yes	4	Spanish, French, Bosnian, Vietnamese	Yes	no	yes	yes
WA	yes	6	Spanish, Chinese, Korean, Russian, Vietnamese, Japanese	yes	n/a	data not provided in response /could not find on website	yes	no	yes	yes
WI	yes	2	Spanish, Hmong	yes	7	Spanish, Russian, Somali, Hmong, Chinese, Serbo-Croatian and Polish	yes	no	yes	yes
WV	yes	2	Spanish, Japanese	yes	2	The test/answer list is read to the applicant in Spanish or Japanese but the answers are written in English on the test.	yes	yes	yes	yes
WY	no	0	n/a	no	0	n/a	Yes	Yes	yes	yes