

## Important MIHP Update- November 21, 2025



### Refugee Systems of Care (RSoC) Newsletter

Good morning,

Below is the November 2025 edition of the Refugee Systems of Care (RSoC) Newsletter. This newsletter features valuable information that may be of interest to all providers. We encourage providers to sign up for this newsletter here and share with others who may be interested: [Refugee Systems of Care - Newsletter Subscription](#).

Thank you,  
MDHHS Maternal Infant Health Program (MIHP)



THE CENTER FOR  
QUALITY FAMILY SUPPORT  
*Your Partner in Excellence*

## Refugee Systems of Care

November 2025



## No One Could Have Imagined

I was really looking forward to writing this month about our team's excitement about what we see as the focus of our work this year. I was excited to share the results of our 2-day retreat in September including the forward-thinking ideas that were developed, the acceptance of a challenge to deepen our practice and work and the commitment to partnering with all of you in a more meaningful way. I really was.

But, when we all woke up on October 3 to the news that the state budget had finally been passed, no one expected the devastating news about the Early Childhood Block Grant that has, for years, funded Great Start Collaboratives and Family Coalitions along with Essential Home Visiting services to families with young children. We know them as Parents as Teachers (PAT) and Healthy Families Michigan (HFM).

I know I'm writing to the choir in sharing my dismay, heartbreak, frustration and anger over this decision. I know you know the importance and value of home visiting and the outcomes that happen for children, families and communities when home visiting is implemented with fidelity. I know you know that a heavy investment now means significant taxpayer savings later. We've all seen the return on investment studies.

And, I know you know that the PAT and HFM programs have demonstrated high quality work, adhering to the standards of both models. We have celebrated the commitment to that fidelity and have been proud of the impacts we've witnessed because of that commitment. To see the gash of this funding cut makes no sense given what our policy makers know about the significance of early childhood home visiting.

We're learning in fits and starts about the ultimate damage this means for programs, staff and the families they have served. We know that some programs had to close the day they learned the news, we know others are planning to close over the next 9-12 months and we know others are losing staff. Some who have been doing this work for decades. It will take some time for the dust to settle.

For now, we mourn the losses. We mourn what was and we mourn what was yet to come. We take time to hold space for sadness and grief.

At the same time, we stand vigilant about any repair that could be possible or opportunities this loss might bring. It is in this vigilance, as well as through our passion and commitment, that this work continues.

In Peace and Action,

Cynthia

## PATCON 2025 Recap

Michigan made a strong impact at the 2025 Parents as Teachers International Conference with many CQFS team members in attendance and three engaging presentations! We also hosted an exhibit booth and shared insights during a poster session.



Our CQFS team members, Cynthia, Kim, Sarah, Kelly, Brenda and special guest Maggie kicked things off and presented a pre-conference session called Flipping the Script with Families. Their all-day session shared information about trauma's effects on brain development and the impact of these effects on adult functioning and parenting. Strength based strategies and tools that considered a trauma informed lens were shared. They also conducted a reflective supervision fishbowl session live to reinforce the importance of reflective supervision. The day was full of conversation, connection, learning and sharing. It even ended in some heartfelt tears from participants.



Stormie and Grace presented a session called Research-Driven Strategies for Supporting Families. They shared the RSoC's project's process of conducting a needs assessment. Key themes that emerged and strategies to improve service delivery to refugee families were highlighted.



## Professional Development



### **Call for Presentations: 2026 Michigan Home Visiting Conference**

We're thrilled to announce the Call for Presentations for the upcoming **Michigan Home Visiting Conference**! Are you ready to share your superpowers and gifts with the Michigan Home Visiting System? We're looking for inspiring presenters to lead engaging, energizing sessions that foster new learning and celebrate the strengths of our community. We especially welcome **multilingual presentations and proposals** that reflect the diversity of families, languages, and lived experiences across Michigan. Let's lift up voices from every corner of our home visiting system!

**Conference Dates:** August 12-14, 2026

**Location:** Grand Traverse Resort, Acme, Michigan

**Theme:** One Mission, Many Voices: Uniting the Michigan Home Visiting Community

**Model Day:** August 12, 2026

Presentation Topics May Include:

- Well-being and resilience
- Building positive relationships
- Recognizing strengths in one another
- Impact of family outcomes

Submit Your Proposal by **December 3, 2025**.

[View and complete the submission application here!](#)

For questions, please contact Corey Starmer via email at [cstarmer@mphi.org](mailto:cstarmer@mphi.org)

## Strengthening Collaborative Partnerships



### Quality Improvement Learning Collaborative

The RSoC team is excited to remind you about an upcoming opportunity! In Spring 2026, we will launch a **Quality Improvement Learning Collaborative (QI LC)** open to all home visiting programs currently serving newcomer families — as well as programs looking to build their capacity to do so. This 6-month initiative is designed to be flexible, supportive, and tailored to where your team is right now. Participants will receive tools, coaching, and structured peer learning to help implement small, meaningful changes that lead to big impacts for newcomer families.

We will be reaching out to teams soon with additional details, including commitment forms, expectations, and next steps. You'll also see more information in upcoming newsletters and email communications. If you have any immediate questions about this opportunity, feel free to reach out to [Grace Weatherbee](#).

## Expanding Resources

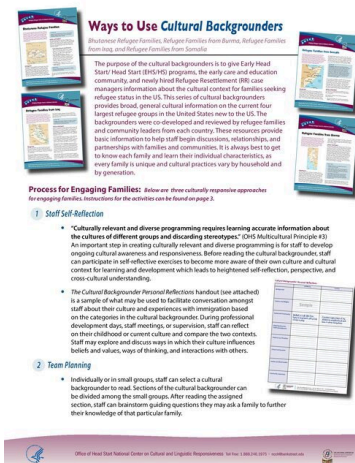
### Highlight: Using Cultural Backgrounders in Home Visiting

Cultural backgrounders are short guides that can help direct service providers like home visitors better understand the histories, traditions, and resettlement experiences of the families they serve. They support culturally responsive practice, strengthen rapport, and offer helpful context for home visiting conversations.

Start here with [Ways to Use Cultural Backgrounders](#) - a quick, practical guide on integrating these resources.

Explore community-specific backgrounders:

- [Afghan Families](#)
- [Afrikaners](#)
- [Bhutanese Refugee Families](#)
- [Refugee Families from Burma](#)
- [Congolese](#)
- [Refugee Families from Iraq](#)
- [Rohingya](#)
- [Somali Families](#)
- [Ukrainian Families](#)



# Celebrating Newcomers



## Feeling Seen, Heard, and Supported

Home visiting is more than checklists and referrals. It's about building trust, creating safe spaces, and offering families a sense of belonging during times of transition. For many newcomers, the relationship with a home visitor becomes one of the first and most meaningful connections they make in a new place.

One parent shared, *"I feel so comfortable, I can trust her. She is like an angel to me, she helps me a lot."* Another reflected, *"I don't talk about my problems with my family, but I feel comfortable talking to [my home visitor] about it."*

These relationships foster the kind of trust that helps families open up, navigate unfamiliar systems, and feel truly seen. As one caregiver put it, *"We've had a good experience and if I'm not comfortable we just talk about it that will be changed right away. They're so professional."*

These voices are a powerful reminder of the role home visitors play in helping families feel safe, respected, and valued. When we build relationships rooted in trust, we don't just deliver services, we build belonging.

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## Share Your Success Stories With Us!

Every day, home visitors across Michigan are creating meaningful, life-changing moments with newcomer and refugee families. These moments — big and small — deserve to be celebrated and uplifted across our statewide Refugee Systems of Care (RSoC) network.

We are gathering short stories that highlight connection, creativity, resilience, and partnership in home visiting. Whether it's a breakthrough in engagement, a family discovering a new strength, or a moment that reminded you why you do this work, we want to hear it.

Your story can inspire others, strengthen peer learning, and shine a light on the incredible work happening across the state. We can't wait to uplift your stories!

[RSoC Success Story Submission Form – Fill out form](#)

# Newcomer Community Collaboratives

## Connect with Your Local Newcomer Community Collaboratives

[Newcomer Community Collaboratives](#) bring together organizations, service providers, and community leaders to support newcomers. They work to improve access to essential services like healthcare, education, employment, and housing, while promoting inclusion and cultural understanding.

If you're a home visiting provider looking for **local resources to support immigrants and refugees**, here's how to connect with your local newcomer collaborative:



### [Mid Michigan - Immigrant Refugee Resource Collaborative](#)

- Contact via their [online contact form](#) for more information
- Ingham & Eaton Counties



### [Southeast Michigan - Southeast Michigan Refugee Collaborative](#)

- Sign up for their [newsletter](#), join the collaborative, or request a meeting
- Macomb, Oakland, Washtenaw, & Wayne Counties



### [Southwest Michigan - Kalamazoo Refugee Resource Collaborative](#)

- Reach out via the [contact page](#) or subscribe to their newsletter on the home page
- Kalamazoo & Calhoun Counties



### [West Michigan - West Michigan Welcome Plan Collaborative](#)

- Subscribe to their [newsletter](#)
- Kent & Ottawa Counties



### [Belong: Northern Michigan Immigrant Inclusion Network](#)

- For more information, contact [Amy Ketner](#).
- Grand Traverse, Emmet, Antrim, Charlevoix, Cheboygan Counties & more

# About RSoC

The **Refugee Systems of Care (RSoC)** project helps build stronger support systems for home visiting programs that serve refugee and newcomer families with young children. The project's goals are to:



- Help more refugee families connect with home visiting services.

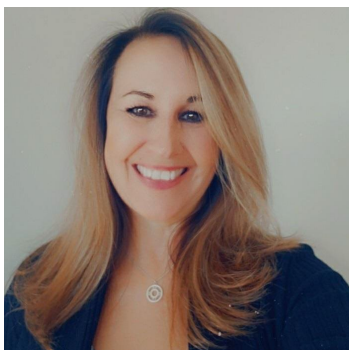


- Support programs in providing high-quality, culturally responsive care.



- Strengthen partnerships between home visiting programs and refugee-serving organizations.

## RSoC Team



**Cynthia Zagar**

Center for Quality Family  
Support Manager



**Eli Wickline**

Refugee Systems of Care  
Project Coordinator



**Grace Weatherbee**

Center for Healthy  
Communities Evaluation Lead



**Jordan Kamal**

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**Stormie Drake**

Refugee Systems of Care  
Project Specialist



**Theresa Floyd**

Center for Quality Family  
Support Project Associate

## Recipients of the Newsletter

If you would like additional people to receive this newsletter, please click on the link below to sign them up.

[RSoc Newsletter Sign Up!](#)



*The Refugee Systems of Care Project is funded by the Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Opportunity.*



MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF  
**LABOR & ECONOMIC  
OPPORTUNITY**

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*The Center for Quality Family Support's mission is to deliver empowering and compassionate support to home visiting providers resulting in high-quality family support services.*

Our communication for the Maternal Infant Health Program has been streamlined to a single email address and phone number. Please forward all email to [MIHP@michigan.gov](mailto:MIHP@michigan.gov). For further assistance, contact the state office @ **1-833-MI4-MIHP (1-833-644-6447)**. Thank you.