

FY25 Strategic Plan

SOUTHWEST MICHIGAN REGIONAL COMMUNITY COLLABORATIVE

Prepared by:



Kalamazoo
Refugee
Resource
Collaborative

www.kalamazoorefugee.org

2025



INTRODUCTION

Kalamazoo Refugee Resource Collaborative

or KRRC, a 501(c)(3) non-profit, was established in 2015 to support refugees being resettled in Kalamazoo. KRRC now serves as one of the four Regional Community Collaboratives (RCCs) appointed by the Office of Global Michigan to support New Americans throughout the State. KRRC's area of purview is Southwest MI.



Our Vision:

Kalamazoo is a community rich in resources where all people are empowered to be self-determining and to thrive in American Society.

Our Mission:

Kalamazoo Refugee Resource Collaborative creates partnerships to transform the experience of refugees, migrants, and immigrants from a life of uncertainty to a life of freedom, equity, and security.

What We Do:

- Unifying and streamlining the capacity, voice, and effectiveness of partner organizations and community members around a mutually agreed on agenda of protection, care, and welcome.
- Advocating in the Kalamazoo area for the access to resources, protection, and rights for refugees and other immigrant populations who are forcibly displaced and at risk.
- Building excellence and durability in Kalamazoo refugee resettlement and integration processes, solutions, and services through alliances with partner agencies.

INTERNAL STRUCTURE

The decisions and direction of our organization are guided by three stakeholder groups:

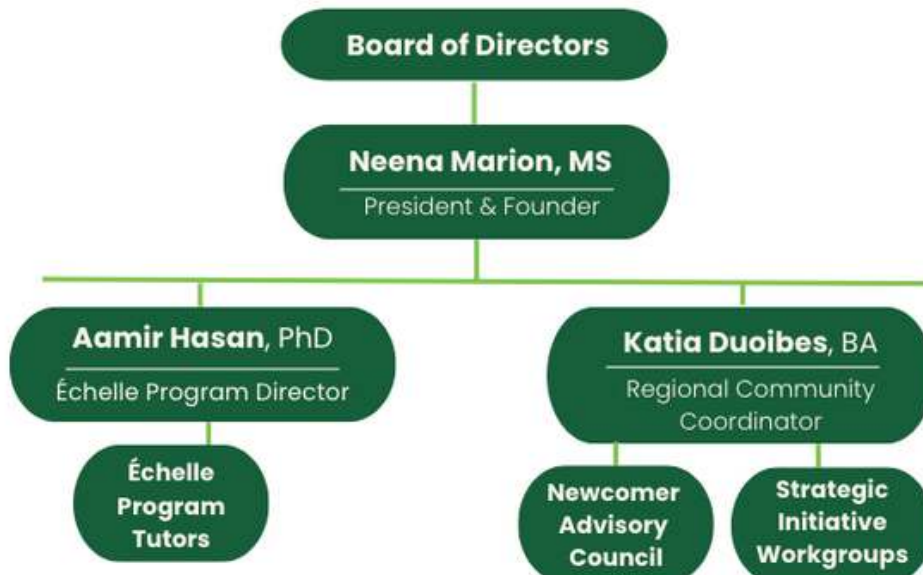
- **Board of Directors:** Voluntary leaders overseeing nonprofit governance and compliance.
- **Newcomer Advisory Council:** Community members with lived experiences as newcomers who advice on and guide direction and projects.
- **Three Strategic Initiative Workgroups:** Collaborating agencies working together to set and act on strategic priorities for our region.
 - *Operations*
 - *Community Engagement*
 - *Advocacy & Visibility*

This structure enables us to work collaboratively with partner agencies, experts, and community leaders, ensuring our organization is responsive to the voiced and evolving needs within the community. By centering and amplifying newcomer voices, we foster inclusivity, adapt our services to be culturally sensitive and linguistically accessible, and empower New Americans to shape programs that reflect their experiences and priorities.

KALAMAZOO REFUGEE RESOURCE COLLABORATIVE

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

SEPT 2023–SEPT 2024



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THREE STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Each of the three KRRC's Strategic Initiative Workgroups (SIGs) have defined the following priorities for the upcoming fiscal year.

OPERATIONS

Strengthening and supporting both existing and novel educational programming within the region.

1. Burma Center
2. Church World Services
3. Kalamazoo RESA
4. Department of Health and Human Services
5. Kalamazoo Public Schools

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Facilitating the expansion of access to specialized services to provide newcomer communities with the tools and information to prosper.

1. Great Start Collaborative
2. Michigan Immigrant Rights Center
3. Bethany Christian Services
4. Church World Services
5. Communities in Schools Kalamazoo
6. Kalamazoo Valley Community College
7. Gryphon Place
8. Reformed Church in America

ADVOCACY & VISIBILITY

Instituting effective communication methodologies with partner organizations, community leaders, and serviced individuals to bolster participation in events and foster collaboration.

1. Immigration Law and Justice Michigan
2. Michigan Immigrant Rights Center
3. Catholic Charities Diocese of Kalamazoo
4. Church World Services
5. Human/Civil Rights Law Center
6. YWCA

SIG Groups meet monthly to discuss progress made towards identified initiatives. Partner agencies represented on the workgroups are listed above **as of 12/1/24**.

1. OPERATIONS

OBJECTIVE 1.1

Expand and strengthen educational initiatives that support employment readiness and advancement. *From non-RCC funding*

- **Initiative 1.1:** Enhance Immersive English & Employment programming by expanding partnerships and outreach to better equip adults with limited English proficiency (LEPs) for the workforce.
- **Initiative 1.1:** Collaborate with statewide partners to bring GED preparation, equivalent diploma programs, and technical training programs to Southwest Michigan, addressing gaps in educational pathways to employment.
- **Initiative 1.1:** Strengthen the Echelle Tutoring Program at Kalamazoo Public Schools (KPS) to support students' academic achievement and long-term career readiness.



Impact Measures

- # of students improving English proficiency (week 1 vs. week 8).
- # attendance rate across all sessions.
- # of partnerships and resource connections established.
- # of students completing GED/technical milestones.
- # of tutors, teachers, and hours contributed.
- # of positive outcomes from post-program surveys.

OBJECTIVE 1.2

Expand equitable access to transportation resources and training.

- **Initiative 1.2:** Provide access to the KRRC Driver Simulator to help newcomer clients obtain driving licenses through culturally and linguistically tailored driver education.
- **Initiative 1.2:** Partner with public transportation agencies to improve awareness and access to transit resources for newcomer communities.
- **Initiative 1.2:** Collaborate with state programs and private entities to assist families in securing reliable vehicles.



Impact Measures

- # of simulator referrals and usage: Clients served, visits, hours
- # of public transit meetings, # of resource referrals
- # of Metro van hours used for client support.
- # of informational videos created and topics covered
- # of partnerships for vehicle assistance

OBJECTIVE 1.3

Develop and implement programming that fosters social connections and promotes psychological wellness within newcomer communities.

- **Initiative 1.3:** Partner with Treetops Collaborative to introduce the Circles of Support program in Southwest Michigan, providing structured spaces for connection and resilience-building.
- **Initiative 1.3:** Organize a two-part young adult leadership retreat in collaboration with local newcomer leaders, empowering participants through mentorship and skill-building opportunities.



Impact Measures

- # circles led
- # of participants
- # of clinical and resource referrals made
- # retreat participants, staff, volunteers.
- # of feedback on outcomes

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2. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

OBJECTIVE 2.1

Enhance online communication channels among regional organizations, leaders, and community members.

- **Initiative 2.1** Strengthen use of online platforms such as the monthly KRRC Newsletter, KRRC website, and enhanced social media presence



Impact Measures

- # of KRRC collaborators (compare FY24 to FY23)
- # of KRRC committee members
- # of newsletters sent, # of engagement clicks and shares
- # of engagement with KRRC website
- # of posts on social media/Facebook, # of followers, # average engagement per post

OBJECTIVE 2.2

Increase community feedback on KRRC's performance and encourage community participation in leadership and internal operations

- **Initiative 2.2:** Host community-led listening sessions to survey needs and viewpoints from diverse local ethnic and linguistic groups.
- **Initiative 2.2:** Expand the Newcomer Advisory Council and promote leadership roles for those with lived experiences.
- **Initiative 2.2:** Launch a community navigator program with staff from diverse backgrounds to provide 1:1 support to ease the resettlement process.



Impact Measures

- # of listening sessions held
- # of linguistic/ethnic background represented
- # of NAC members, # of meetings held
- # NAC community event engagements
- # of navigators, # of clients served

OBJECTIVE 2.3

Supporting events and programming for ethnic and cultural celebratory events in the region.

- **Initiative 2.3:** Provide in-kind donations and promotional support for culture events in the region
- **Initiative 2.3:** Coordinate and conduct community events like World Refugee Day and the annual Refugee Film Festival locally, as well as state-level events such as the Michigan Immigrant Youth Conference.



Impact Measures

- # of in kind donations provided
- # of community cultural events promoted, # of events KRRC staff attends/tables
- # of community culture events led by KRRC
- # of guests, # of vendors for World Refugee Day/Film Festival
- # of students from the region in attendance at MIYC
- # of fiscal sponsors



3. ADVOCACY & VISIBILITY

OBJECTIVE 3.1

Strategize the development of programs that facilitate regional community access to specialized statewide services.

- **Initiative 3.1:** Create and execute community workshops on legal aid and immigration related topics.
- **Initiative 3.1:** Develop a comprehensive internal resource guide for community referrals and collaborations.
- **Initiative 3.1:** Coordinate access for community attendance at resources fairs and conferences across MI.



Impact Measures

- # of attendees
- # of clients connected to services
- # of attorneys recruited
- # of guides and resources distributed to the community
- # of events supported with transport and # of individuals transported

OBJECTIVE 3.2

Establish the Kalamazoo Protection Coalition to proactively safeguard newcomer communities from threats to their well-being.

- **Initiative 3.1:** Develop and deliver educational training to the local community in partnership with expert agencies.
- **Initiative 3.1:** Alert media to emerging human rights abuses impacting newcomer communities and collaborate with local journalists to inform the broader community about relevant activities.
- **Initiative 3.2:** Regular meetings to inform community members, elected leaders, and the public on actions they are empowered to resolve on inequities and injustices in Kalamazoo.



Impact Measures

- # of meetings, # of partner agencies/leaders
- # of trainings, # of participants
- # of articles supported
- # of incidences KRRC made aware of
- # other relevant event participation

OBJECTIVE 3.3

Continue to provide individuals and families with emergency financial supports *from non-RCC funding*

- **Initiative 3.3:** Provide financial support for emergencies such as domestic abuse, unexpected medical expenses, missed rent or utilities, asylum seekers' and parolees' housing and food needs, legal fees, transportation to work, and resources for obtaining driver licenses.



Impact Measures

- # clients connected/referred
- # clients served
- # of dollars given

KALAMAZOO REFUGEE RESOURCE COLLABORATIVE PRESENTS

THURS 20 JUNE **5 - 7PM**

WORLD REFUGEE DAY

FREE ENTRY
ALL ARE WELCOME

- LIVE PERFORMANCES
- HENNA
- FOOD TUCKS
- INFO BOOTHS

COME DRESSED IN CULTURAL ATTIRE

BRONSON PARK

Kalamazoo Refugee Resource Collaborative

ARE YOU PREPARED FOR WINTER?

AN EVENT FOR IMMIGRANTS AND REFUGEES NEW TO MICHIGAN WINTERS

Join us to learn what to expect this winter and how to keep you and your family safe and warm

INTERPRETERS AVAILABLE

- Arabic
- Persian
- Pashto
- French
- Spanish

FREE
Hats, gloves, scarfs, & Children's Winter Gifts

THURSDAY JAN. 9 4-6PM
315 S ROSE ST

WANT TO BECOME A U.S. CITIZEN?

Don't know if you qualify? Come find out! Join us for a workshop where we will provide information on the naturalization process and family reunification.

SEPT 30 2-6PM

2PM: USCIS Presentation

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

KALAMAZOO PUBLIC LIBRARY
315 S ROSE ST
THIRD FLOOR, VAN DEUSEN ROOM

WHAT WILL YOU DO?:

- Learn about pathways to citizenship from USCIS
- Complete USCIS Form N-400 and documentation
- Discuss family reunification options for citizens
- Get 1:1 help from attorneys at no cost

Interpretation Support Available
Dinner Provided

Employment Focused Summer ESL Intensive Course

Boost language skills and confidence through hands-on learning experiences!

5 WEEKS.....5 DAYS A WEEK.....5 HOURS A DAY

FREE

FEATUREING

- ✓ Free Lunch Daily
- ✓ Transportation Support
- ✓ Employment Connections
- ✓ Resume/Interview Workshops
- ✓ Small class size

10AM - 3PM
Monday - Friday
June 12 - July 12

18+ Only
Beginner Level

202 N Rose St, Kalamazoo MI
Arcadia Commons Campus,
Anna Whitten Hall, KVCC.

REFUGEE FILM FESTIVAL

3 Days | 3 Films

Kalamazoo Valley Museum

Showing starts at 12PM each day.
Panel discussion with community voices 2-4PM

Simple as Water, Wandering, SEULS

Resilience Michigan Immigrant YOUTH CONFERENCE

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2024
8:30AM-4:30pm

The Michigan Immigrant Youth Conference aims to attract individuals ages 15-30, to be proactive, to feel celebrated, and to educate one another. This year's conference theme is **RESILIENCE**, advancing despite adversity. With this conference, we want this time for youth to encompass reflection, resting, and resetting the narrative. We hope to create the balance needed to continue living in our resilience.

RESILIENCE is a state of mind, not a permanent form of living. Living up to our family expectations and pushing past societal disadvantages, we have a perspective of hardship and ambition driving our journey to success!

WE ARE RESILIENT!

LOCATION:
Wayne County Community College
Downriver Campus
21000 Northline Rd. Taylor, MI 48180