

Conference Review of *Statewide Consultation: Post-Resettlement Programs in a Changing Landscape*

Submitted by Chrissie Klinger, Workforce Development Specialist at Penn State

In early October, Loretta Lininger, Workforce Development Specialist for the Workforce Development System Liaison Project, attended the *Statewide Consultation: Post-Resettlement Programs in a Changing Landscape* at Central Penn College, near Harrisburg, PA. The two-day session focused on challenges and opportunities for refugees and their families after their resettlement in the United States. Speakers from a variety of organizations around the state presented on services available for refugees and their families.

One speaker discussed his own personal journey to the United States in 2021. Dr. Mohammad Iqbal presented *Exploring Health Trends Among Recent Afghan Arrivals: Common Conditions and Considerations*. Dr. Iqbal came to the US in 2021 as an Afghan Parolee. He shared his story of how he and his family were put into a US cargo plane carrying a total of 832 refugees out of the country. He said that the floor was so cold that he remembers a U.S. Airmen took off his jacket and gave it to a small child to stay warm.

Dr. Iqbal talked about challenges many refugees face when arriving in the United States. Some of those challenges include the language barrier, adaptation to an unknown culture, un-diagnosed mental health issues, inability to find affordable housing and access services, difficulty navigating the legal system, and loss of a social network. The Workforce Development System Liaison project is available to support programs in working collaboratively with their partners to help individuals like Dr. Iqbal overcome the many challenges they face as new Americans.

In November, Loretta will be participating in Student Support Coordinator networking sessions to share resources and promising practices focused on supporting refugees and new Americans. (SSC networking dates, times, and links can be found in the PD Portal SSC space.) Program administrators can also email Loretta (lm1160@psu.edu) to request customized technical assistance around regional services for immigrants and refugees.