 Proposal for Fellowship Placement • Summer 2020

● **Organization:** IRIS—Integrated Refugee & Immigrant Services

● **Full street address of organization:** 235 Nicoll St. New Haven, CT 06511

● **Website:** www.irisct.org

● **Name and title of person who will be the Fellow’s direct supervisor:**
  Dennis Wilson - Education and Advocacy Coordinator

● **Phone number and e-mail address of proposed direct supervisor:**
  203-562-2095; dwilson@irisct.org

● **Placement dates (8-11 weeks between Tuesday, May 26 and Friday, August 7, 2020):**
  Tuesday, May 26 - Friday, August 14, 2020 (if possible.)

● **Are placement dates flexible? If so, please describe:**
  Yes – Fellow may begin or end placement later or earlier according to the needs of their schedule. It is also possible to have a week or two of vacation during the internship time.

● **Proposed work schedule (placements should be equivalent to full-time and not more than 37.5 hours/week):**
  37.5 hours/week, generally during business hours, M-F

---

**Placement Description**

**Organization description (mission statement, population served):**
The mission of IRIS- Integrated Refugee & Immigrant Services, is to help refugees establish new lives, regain hope, and contribute to the vitality of Connecticut’s communities.
IRIS empowers refugees—people who fled their home countries due to persecution—and immigrants to become self-sufficient and integrate in their new communities. IRIS provides newly arriving refugees with furnished housing, food, clothing, help starting jobs, and case management. IRIS enables refugees to navigate the CT public school system, the American workplace, and the healthcare system. IRIS also offers English-language classes; youth programs; legal assistance to help refugees apply for green cards and citizenship and to reunite with family members; healthcare coordination; and programs to promote emotional wellness. The refugees who’ve come to Connecticut through IRIS are mostly from Afghanistan, Congo (DRC), Syria, Eritrea, Iraq, and Sudan. IRIS recently expanded its immigration legal services to asylum seekers. IRIS also assists non-refugee immigrants with English classes, employment services, housing assistance, and our weekly food pantry. IRIS is now serving newcomers from over 25 countries.

Write a 1-2 sentence summary of the work that the Fellow would be conducting.
The Fellow would work with refugee and immigrant families to facilitate the children’s access to summer programming: the IRIS Summer Learning Program, or other summer educational opportunities. The Fellow would also assist IRIS Education and Youth Services staff with the preparation and implementation of the IRIS Summer Learning Program.

Write a more complete description of the specific project you propose and list the duties/outcomes expected of the Fellow.
The 2019 Fellow’s project would be to facilitate refugee and other immigrant families’ access to summer enrichment programs for youth in New Haven. The Fellow would be working with the IRIS Education and Youth Services Department, which works intensively with newcomer families to improve students’ academic performance and social adjustment to schools. Refugee and other immigrant children learning English and still adjusting to American culture need wrap-around services and year-round support. Summer programming is critical for newcomers’ education and integration into the U.S. school system. The Fellow would work alongside other interns and volunteers assisting in running the daily operation of the Summer Learning Program for 50-100 refugee students with varying levels of English proficiency.
The primary duty of the Fellow will be to help newcomer youth and families access summer enrichment programs. This will include partnering with other youth service agencies to explore and negotiate possibilities for collaboration. Programming will make families aware of the rich array of family-orientated resources in the greater New Haven area. Helping families access these programs will involve working with interpreters to communicate these opportunities and helping parents navigate the process of enrolling their kids. The Fellow may also help organize field trips and acculturation opportunities within the community for children participating in the IRIS Summer Learning Program.
The first phase of the fellowship would focus on reaching out to IRIS client families to determine which type of summer youth enrichment program they will pursue: the IRIS Summer Learning Program, programs offered by their public school system, or other types of summer enrichment opportunities. The Fellow would help the families through the process of pursuing these opportunities: registering for the IRIS summer program, enrolling in the programs offered by their public schools, or applying for other summer enrichment programs.

In addition to this direct-service work with refugee and immigrant families to facilitate access to summer programs, the Fellow would assist the IRIS Education and Youth Services team with the planning and implementation of the IRIS Summer Learning Program (SLP.) SLP is designed to meet the unique academic, linguistic, social, and emotional needs of school-aged refugee youth. The Fellow’s primary role in planning for SLP would be organizing field trips and visitors to engage the students in educational enrichment activities (e.g., art workshops.) The Fellow may also facilitate access to acculturation opportunities within the community for children. During the program, the Fellow would serve as an on-site administrator, whose primary responsibilities would be checking students in, helping families settle in to the program, and managing the distribution of bus passes. At the end of the IRIS Summer Learning Program, the Fellow will be asked to write a reflection piece that assesses how the program functioned: i.e., what worked well, what aspects could be improved, and suggestions for how to do so.

Outcomes for the Fellow’s work will be as follows;
1. Refugee and other immigrant youth (ages 5-17) who want to participate in summer enrichment programs are registered for and begin summer programs.
2. The families of students enrolled in the IRIS Summer Learning Program (SLP) are oriented and have the resources they need to access the program.
3. The Fellow will produce written materials that will serve as a resource for IRIS Education and Youth Services and others who work with immigrant youth to improve their services. By achieving these outcomes, the Fellow will be contributing to the overarching objectives of IRIS Education and Youth Services for refugee and immigrant youth: to improve the level of English-language proficiency, boost academic performance, ensure school attendance, improve cultural adjustment, foster school participation and leadership, and to help parents of refugee and immigrant students become involved in all aspects of their children’s education.

List specific skills/experience required for the project:
● Excellent organizational skills.
• Excellent intercultural communication skills
• Versatility and a willingness to help where help is needed.
• Willingness to take initiative in meeting and developing rapport with refugees.
• Ability to work independently (after extensive training) and manage time effectively.
• Proficiency with google sheets
• Ability to practice creative problem solving.
• Experience working with people from non-Western cultures
• Interest in or knowledge of youth education
• Proficiency in a language spoken by refugee clients (Arabic, Dari, Farsi, Tigrinya, Kiswahili, etc) is a plus, but not a requirement

**Additional requirements (e.g. a car or weekend working hours).**
Having a driver’s license and a car – and the willingness to drive clients to educational events when bus transportation isn’t feasible – is greatly preferred, though not an absolute requirement. On street parking and mileage reimbursement are available. If fellow does not own a car, he/she must be willing to learn to navigate the public bus system with refugees.

**Briefly describe the work that Yale PPSF Fellows have done with your organization in the past and present.**
IRIS has hosted Presidential Public Service Fellows for the past 10 summers, in capacities similar to those described here, with the Education and Youth Services Department. Prior Fellows also assisted IRIS’s Director of Acculturation programs in the implementation of a monthly orientation program for newly arrived refugees, worked directly with the students as a tutor in the summer program or contributed to a research project identifying best practices.