

Advocacy Program

At BACI, we believe that to successfully integrate into a new community while maintaining one's own cultural identity, the Burmese refugee and the American communities both need to educate each other and respect each other's cultural norms.

BACI advocates for the Burmese refugee community as well as their individual needs, and hopes to expand the local community's knowledge and understanding of the Burmese population, further enhancing the refugees' integration into the Indianapolis community.

In addition, BACI plans to host and facilitate neighborhood forums for voicing concerns in hopes of furthering cultural understanding between the Burmese refugee and the local Indianapolis community.

BACI Educational Institution

Under its educational institution, BACI has designed and developed several programs:

- Upward College Program for High School Students;
- Upward College Program for Adults;
- College Persistence Program; and
- Civic and Cultural Education Program.

Most Burmese refugee high school graduates are not ready for college, mainly because of cultural and language difficulties.

BACI assists these students with their college academic readiness instruction, mainly emphasizing on language proficiency, both conversational and academic English skills development, and cultural skills and personal enrichment. This unique and rigorous curriculum, designed with input from teachers and current Burmese refugee students facing barriers in education, consists of English, Cultural, College Preparatory, Technology, and Personal Enrichment Courses.

Currently, BACI's Upward College Program for High School Students class runs from 6:00pm-8:00pm, every Monday, Tuesday and Thursday at the Office of Perry Township Trustee building.

BACI is recruiting volunteers and qualified interns to assist these students participating in the above programs. If you would like to know more about our programs, or are interested in other volunteer opportunities, please complete the online volunteer form at BACI website: <http://www.baci-indy.org/volunteer-opportunities> or email us at: volunteer@baci-indy.org.

Employment Program

Approximately 7,000 refugees from Burma have become a growing part of the Indianapolis community in recent years. They are now part of the Hoosier community. They have high potential to contribute not only to their own community development by being self-sufficient, but also to Indiana's long-term economic growth. However, this can only be possible if they have the proper means and access to the right resources.

BACI recognizes and understands that if the Burmese and Chin refugees have access to the right trainings and resources, they could more positively contribute to the community in which they are a part of. Therefore, BACI has established the Employment Program as one of its main programs to effectively tackle this issue. In doing so, we seek and welcome collaboration from employers, training services providers and stakeholders in assisting us as we serve this population. BACI's end goal is enhancing the long-term community growth and economic self-sufficiency of the Burmese refugee population.

With this program, BACI focuses on advocating for and assisting the refugees with their sustainable employability, skilled position placements, and career paths, which will contribute to their long-term community investment. We aim to provide, connect, and refer the refugees to the appropriate resources.

BACI is willing to assist refugees wanting to explore self-employment. BACI with its partners helps refugees acquire licenses and prepare them in exploring their dream business.

Whether you would like to provide training or you are a potential employer who is interested in leveraging a diverse workforce and would like to benefit from such talented and hard-working refugee employees, BACI is willing to work with you and assist your company find the right individual for you.

Please contact us at: employment@baci-indy.org.

BACI Leadership

As an ethnically diverse community, BACI's Board of Directors reflects its original philosophy and efforts to form a Burmese community-based organization that is inclusive of all the different ethnic groups within the Burmese refugees, with individuals from diverse backgrounds intellectually, professionally, and personally, but also with like-minded persons who are passionate about assisting the Burmese and Chin refugees and their community's long-term growth in Indianapolis.

Board of Directors

- Rev. Dr. Stephen Hre Kio** (Chairman) Senior Pastor, Indiana Chin Baptist Church,
Dr. Ro Dinga (Vice Chairman) President, Mizo Society of America/Indiana Branch, Vice chairman of Chin Community of Indiana),
Shing Mang (Secretary) Assistant Secretary, Chin Community of Indiana,
Lian Cin (Treasurer), Former Chairman and Vice Chairman, Indiana Chin Baptist Church,
Rev. Dr. Val Thang, Senior Pastor, North America Matu Christian Church,
Van Tuah Piang, Chairman, Falam Baptist Church of Indiana,
Zapeng Sakhong, Chairman, Chin Evangelical Baptist Church,
Dr. Andrew Ngun Cung Lian, Assistant Director, Center for Constitutional Democracy,
Yaza Swe Bama, Employment Specialist at Exodus,
Amie Dillon, works as Program Associate at Indiana Grantmakers Alliance, a statewide membership association for community, corporate, and private foundations.
Bonnie Kane, Former Teacher and Advocate for Burmese-Americans,
Dr. Fengyi Kuo, Professor at IUPUI,
U Jeru, Teaching Aid at Southport High School,
Lun Kham Pieper, Esq., Attorney at Law,
Nguncer Bualteng, Carpenter Realtors.

Advisors

- Matthew P. Schomburg**, Indiana State Refugee Coordinator and Executive Outreach Director
Leslie Lenkowsky, Clinical Professor of Public Affairs and Philanthropic Studies at Indiana University
David Williams, John S. Hastings Professor of Law and Director, Center for Constitutional Democracy, Indiana University
Carleen Miller, Executive Director, Exodus Refugee Immigration Inc.

Elaisa Vahnje, MPA, Executive Director

Contact:

8544 Bison Lake Dr., Unit G, Indianapolis, IN 46227.

Tel: 317-215-4979(Office); 812-929-7193 (Cell)

Email: velaisa@umail.iu.edu

BACI



Burmese American Community Institute

ADVOCATING • CONNECTING • EDUCATING • SERVING

www.baci-indy.org

Background Information

BACI is an ethnic refugee community based non-profit organization, established to assist the growing Burmese refugee population in the Indianapolis area in tackling the various issues and needs, initially focusing on, but not limited to, Advocacy, Education and Employment for the refugee population in Indianapolis with the following vision, mission and objectives:

Our Vision: Education for all, a stronger community

Our Mission: To build a thriving, self-sufficient, sustainable and integrated Burmese Community in Indianapolis through advocacy, education, and employment

Our Objectives:

- To assist the Burmese refugee community in Indianapolis by building bridges between the refugee communities and community resources in employment, education and other basic services in order to enhance services to refugees
- To create and foster long-term community growth and build a sustainable Burmese community in Indianapolis by expanding services offered and filling in the gap, increasing college enrollment rate for the refugee high school graduates, increasing skilled position job placement, contributing to and be a part of the rich Hoosier community in the long run
- To collaborate with stakeholders in Indianapolis including government, refugee resettlement agencies, educational institutions, churches and other organizations in addressing the needs of the growing Burmese community
- To advocate for the community and individual needs of the Burmese refugees and to expand community knowledge and understanding through media, community forums, meetings, volunteer opportunities etc, further enhancing cultural integration into the Indianapolis community.