

Boat People SOS

Loan Hanlon
Program Manager



Mission

Our mission is to empower, organize, and equip Vietnamese individuals and communities in their pursuit of liberty and dignity.

History

- Founded in 1980. BPSOS was based in San Diego, California to conduct many joint rescue-at-sea missions with international organizations. We rescued over 3,000 Vietnamese boat people in the South China Sea.
- In 1990, we moved our headquarter to Northern Virginia to concentrate on advocacy. In response to major shifts in U.S. and international policies toward the Vietnamese boat people, in 1990 we moved our headquarters to Northern Virginia to concentrate on advocacy.
- By 1997, when most people were either repatriated or resettled, we shifted our focus to domestic programs for Vietnamese refugees and immigrants in communities all across the US.
- Resettled 18,000 repatriated boat people to the U.S. through the Resettlement Opportunities for Vietnamese Returnees (ROVR) Program.
- Resettled thousands of former political prisoners through Humanitarian Resettlement (HR) Program.
- Provided refugee protection for high-profile dissidents through Priority One In-Country Refugee Resettlement (P1) Program.
- Post-Katrina, assisted over 4,000 families through Katrina and Rita Relief and Recovery Program, securing them \$16.5 million in aid, placing 850 in homes, and referring 265 to jobs, while building capacity for 12 faith-based and community relief organizations. Hundreds of BPSOS' client families were African-Americans and other non-Vietnamese-Americans.
- Spearhead the investigation and assisted the prosecution of the Daewoosa American Samoa case, the largest trafficking case ever prosecuted by the U.S. government
- Rescued 176 trafficked victims in the W&D Apparel case in Jordan (which was featured in the State Department report).
- Represented and secured compensation for 2,600 mistreated workers in the Esquel Malaysia case.

Program and Services

- Road to Independence through Savings and Education (ROAD) (tax clinics, individual development accounts (IDA), financial education, micro-enterprise, neighborhood support groups, job training and placement, work safety, and interpretation and translation services)
- Health Awareness Program (HAP)
- Healthy Marriage Program
- Human Trafficking Program
- Domestic Violent Program
- Youth Program (after school program)

Characteristics of Population

- Low-income Vietnamese refugees and immigrants
- Unfamiliar with U.S financial systems
- Come from a cash-based society
- Stigma “Nothing is Free”
- Limited English
- Low skills

Why do we create IDA program?

- Build assets for low-income families
- Provide economic literacy and training on setting up a budget, saving account, and basics of money management
- Give low-income families hopes that they can work hard to achieve what they need
- Provide great 1:2 matching rate (receive a matching of \$3,000 per individual or \$6,000 per household)

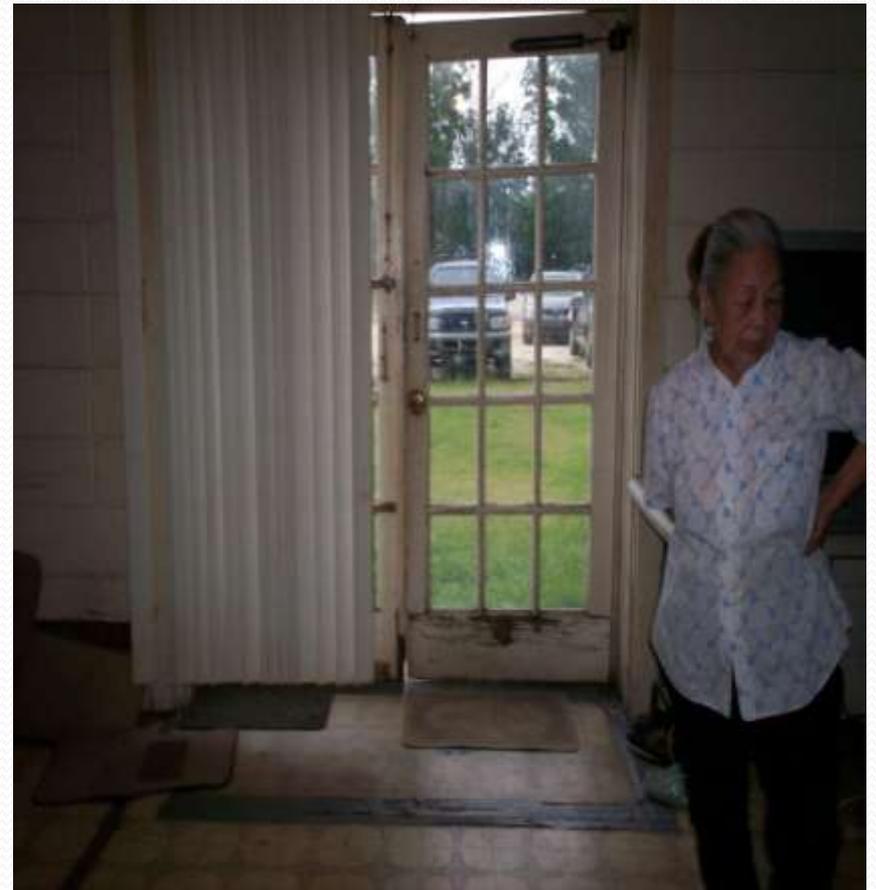
Challenges

- Matching fund
- Participants did not believe in IDA program
- Not being able to purchase a home or business due to job transfer out of state or family emergency
- Lack of personnel due to low operation cost
- Data collection is time consuming
- Educate local banks about IDA program
- Not being able to save money for a short period of time to acquire assets

Success

- Though ORR and OCS grants:
- 218 enrolled into IDA program to establish savings
- 218 enrolled into a series of financial literacy education to learn about U.S financial systems
- 182 exited the IDA program to receive matching
 - 52 purchased their homes
 - 53 purchased their businesses
 - 4 pursued post-secondary education
 - 66 purchased cars to commute to work
 - 7 purchased computer
- Total assets purchased \$5,230,586
- Secured matching fund from Freddie Mac and NeighborWorks up to 91 participants

Previous Living Condition



IDA Purchase



IDA Purchase (cont.)



IDA Purchase (cont.)





Questions

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