

Journey Home:

Integrative Services for Refugee Housing in Washington

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“The home is the center of life. It is a refuge from the grind of work, the pressure of school, and the menace of the streets.

The home remains the primary basis of life. It is where meals are shared, quiet habits formed, dreams confessed, traditions created.”

Matthew Desmond,
Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City

What does home mean for a refugee?

A person who has been forced to flee their home country and who is unable or unwilling to return to that country because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion; and is unable or unwilling to avail him or herself of the protection of that country, or to return there, for fear of persecution.

1951 United Nations Convention on Refugees
Immigration and Nationality Act Section
101(a)(42) of 1952

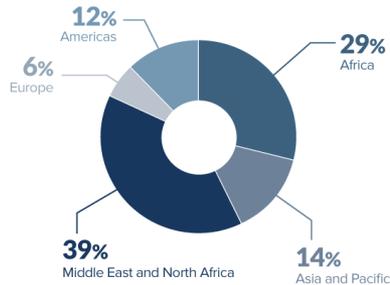


Office of Refugee & Immigrant Assistance

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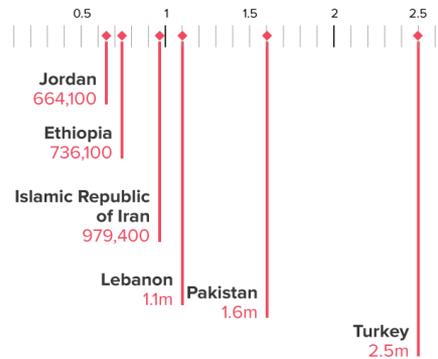
Where the world's displaced people are being hosted



54% of refugees worldwide came from three countries



Top hosting countries



33,972 people
a day forced to flee their homes
because of conflict and persecution

9,700 staff
UNHCR employs 9,700 staff
(figures from December 2015)

126 countries
We work in 126 countries

We are funded almost entirely by
voluntary contributions, with 86 per
cent from governments and the
European Union.

Source: UNHCR / 20 June 2016

The U.S. Refugee Admissions Program

Collaboration with UNHCR

Federally administered program by US Department of State, Bureau of Populations, Refugees, and Migrants

Focuses on refugees with protection vulnerabilities while in refugee hosting countries.

The goal of the program is economic self-sufficiency through employment as soon as possible.

2015 Top Resettlement Countries

United States
Canada
Australia
Norway
United Kingdom

Less than one percent of all refugees will be resettled.

Office of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance

ORIA's mission is to transform the lives of refugees and immigrants by providing resources that support a broad range of services that promote self-sufficiency and integration.

Services include:

- Cash, Food, and Medical Assistance
- Employment and Training Programs
- English Language Programs
- Health Screenings, Mental Health Services and Preventative Health
- Promoting Refugee Integration, Mobility, and Empowerment (PRIME)
- Support services for children, youth, and elders
- Naturalization

Washington State Refugee Arrivals



Top Ten Resettlement States

- Texas
- California
- New York
- Michigan
- Florida
- Arizona
- Ohio
- Georgia
- Pennsylvania
- Washington

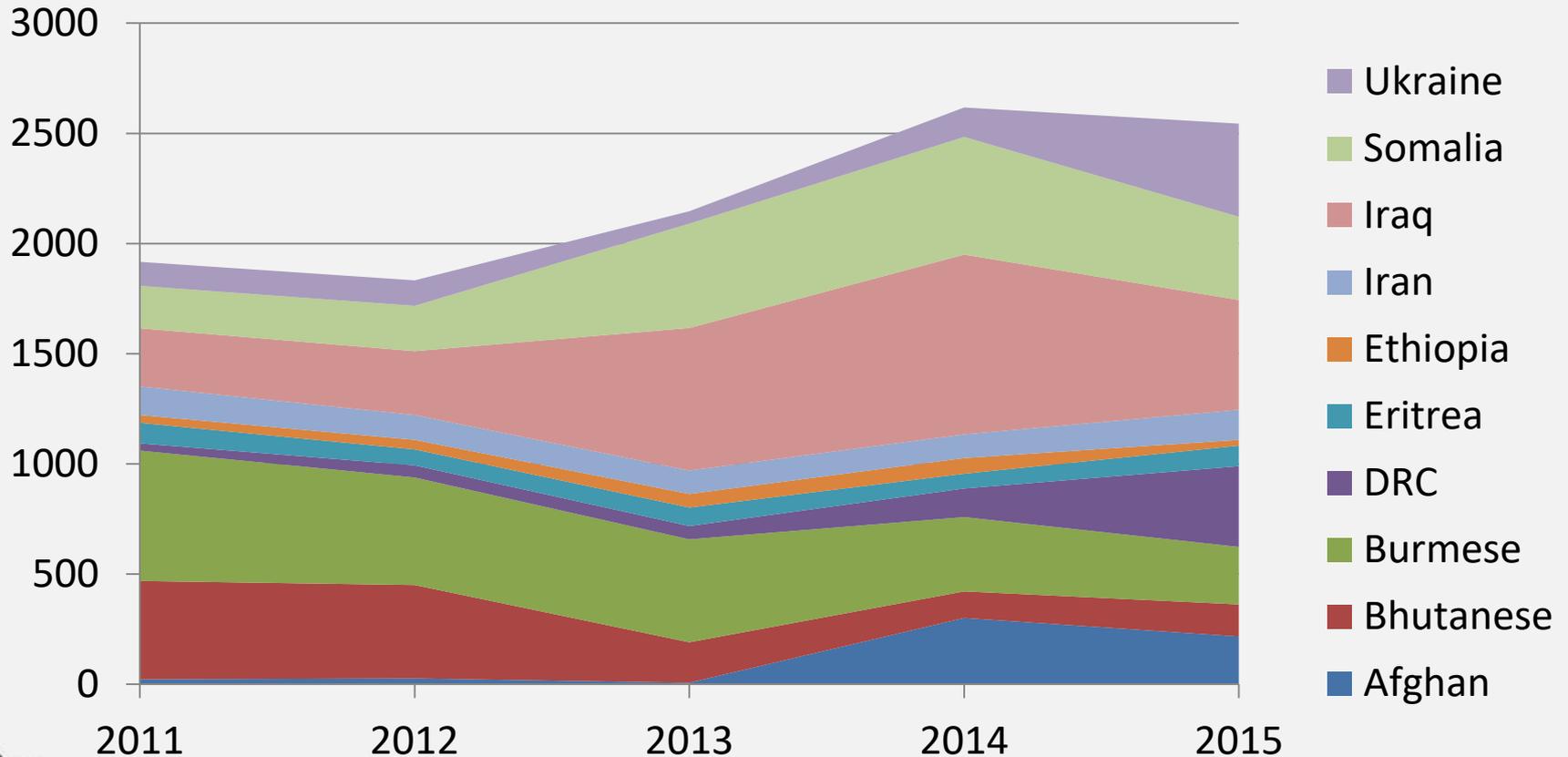
Office of Refugee & Immigrant Assistance



Voluntary Refugee Resettlement Agencies

- Episcopal Migration Ministry
- International Rescue Committee (Seattle, Spokane)
- Jewish Family Services (Seattle, Tacoma)
- Lutheran Community Services Northwest (Tacoma, Vancouver)
- World Relief (Seattle, Spokane, Tri-Cities)

Refugee Arrivals by Country of Origin



Challenge #1: Finding and securing housing

- ✓ No Credit
- ✓ No Work Experience
- ✓ No Income or Resources

Strength #1: Support of local resettlement agency

- ✓ Reception & Placement Program (30 – 90 days)
- ✓ Culturally and linguistically appropriate services
- ✓ Connection/Partnerships with local landlords
- ✓ Few initial monthly expenses

Affiliates provide core services to all refugees during their first **30 to 90 days** in the United States.

Each refugee receives an average of **\$1,125** to start their new life in America.

Challenge #2: Facing the financial cliff

- ✓ Public Assistance insufficient to pay for rent
- ✓ Rent burden
- ✓ Inability to save

Office of Refugee & Immigrant Assistance

Refugees are eligible for
Public Assistance Programs
Administered by DSHS

REFUGEE CASH ASSISTANCE

Single or married adults, no children
Administered by DSHS
Up to 8 Months of Cash
Assistance

MATCHING GRANT

Administered by Some
Resettlement Agencies
4-6 Months Cash Assistance

Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)

Single or married adults with children
Administered by DSHS
Up to five years of Cash
Assistance

Single \$332
Couple \$420

Single - \$200/mo.
+ 6 mos. Rent
Family of 4 - \$480/mo.
+ 6 mos. Rent

Family of 4
\$613

Department of Social
& Health Services



Challenge #2: Facing the financial cliff

- ✓ Public Assistance insufficient to pay for rent
- ✓ Rent burden
- ✓ Inability to save

Asset #2: Resourceful and resilient

- ✓ Have access to case management support
- ✓ Translation services
- ✓ Connected to strong service provider network
- ✓ Pay rent in advance
- ✓ Find employment quickly
- ✓ Strong community connections
- ✓ Community Volunteer/Friendship Partners

Naturalization Services Program

- Application and Interview Assistance
- Civics and English Language Classes

Special Populations Programs

- Refugee Elderly Services
- Refugee School Impact Grant
- Unaccompanied Refugee Minor Program

Health and Mental Health

- Health Screenings
- Refugee Health Promotion Grant
- Refugee Mental Health Grants

PRIME Program

- Comprehensive Case Management
- Workshops on life skills and navigating systems
- Immigration Services

English Language Services (LEP Pathway)

- Levelled English as a Second Language Classes
- Employment Focused
- Intensive ESL with Life Skills Curricula

Employment Services

(LEP Pathway, ORIA-BFET,
Refugees with Special Employment Needs)

- Employment assessments and pre-employment preparation
- Job search and employment placement
- Skills Training
- Volunteer and subsidized Work Experience opportunities

Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services

- Contractors have close ties to ethnic communities
- Employ staff who came to the US as refugees
- Services provided in clients primary language
- Customized to meet the specific needs of each client.

Challenge #3: American Dream vs. Reality

- ✓ Managing expectations
- ✓ Broad array of cultural differences
- ✓ Lack of understanding regarding tenant rights and responsibilities.

Asset #3: Cultural Orientation

- ✓ Hands-on practical learning
- ✓ Customized to meet needs
- ✓ Reviews many different topics
- ✓ Community Volunteer/Friendship Partners

Housing in the United States

Housing in the United States varies greatly depending on your location, specific family considerations, and what is available when you arrive.

Different types of housing include:



Apartment



House



Trailer Home



Room in House or Apartment



Shared Living Situation

Housing can be very expensive. The cost of living may include rent, utilities, food, phone, transportation, childcare, your travel loan, and healthcare. Upon arrival, you will be provided with basic housing, food, clothing, and furniture.

Your new home might look like this:



Responsibilities

Both tenants and landlords have responsibilities for an apartment or house.

As the tenant, you must:

- Pay your rent
- Pay required utilities
- Not damage the apartment
- Be a courteous neighbor
- Not have too many people living in the apartment

Your landlord must:

- Make repairs
- Return your security deposit if there is no damage

Signing a Lease

You will have to sign a lease for your apartment. You should find out:

- How much money is due for rent
- When and where to pay rent
- What utilities you are responsible for
- Who to call if there are problems or if repairs are needed
- The rules of the apartment complex
- What notice is required to terminate the lease



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A Burmese client who was resettled from Malaysia had done assembly work and deliveries. He had no interest or experience in cooking.

His job developer had a good lead on a cooking job and the employer that wanted to meet him. Lee was still hesitant. We suggested he and his wife (who had more English) come together and he could at least see where he might be working. They thought that sounded like a good idea.

The manager was called and invited us to the back of the restaurant for a brief tour. Later she sat down to interview Lee and his wife. They learned that the manager spoke a language they knew. The couple was delighted with all she said to them and how she calmed their fears. We celebrated with lunch at the restaurant.

Lee was offered a job cooking. After working only a week, he had learned more than anyone had ever had. The manager said she had plans to make him her main cook, allowing him a raise. Lee was all smiles when he came to see us after starting his job, he couldn't be happier. He and his wife are now financially self-sufficient and paying all their own financial obligations.

Office of Refugee & Immigrant Assistance



Jai worked along side the US military operations in Afghanistan for years, providing much needed technical computer support for the secure operations our troops needed to conduct their peace building operations. After our military presence began to leave his country, Jai and his wife were threatened with their lives by those who disagreed with his assistance to the American military. Jai was granted resettlement in Spokane last year.

Jai, who is fluent in English, started working at AT&T in an entry level job, but was becoming disillusioned as his IT knowledge and expertise was not being used to its fullest extent. His wife gave birth to their first child and Jai asked his World Relief job developer if there were other, more challenging jobs available in his field? Soon, an opening at Apple Computers in their production plant opened. Jai applied, showed his skills acquired while working with the US military operations in Afghanistan, and was offered a fulltime position earning a much higher rate of pay. Jai and his family are now financially able to provide a bright future for their child here in Spokane.

Resources

Office of Refugee Resettlement:

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr/resource/publications>

Cultural Orientation Resource Exchange:

<http://coresourceexchange.org/for-teaching-co/>



Questions?

Thank you!

Sarah Peterson
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DSHS/ESA/CSD