



# **Housing For The Emerging Markets: New Perspective On Immigration**

Mahnaz K. Eshetu, Executive Director ReWA

# ReWA Refugee Video

## MISSION

ReWA is a non-profit, multi-ethnic organization that promotes inclusion, independence, personal leadership, and strong communities by providing refugee and immigrant women and their families with culturally and linguistically appropriate services. ReWA advocates for social justice, public policy changes, and equal access to services while respecting cultural values and the right to self-determination.

ReWA has helped refugee and immigrant women and families thrive since 1985. Founded by a group of successfully resettled women, ReWA was formerly known as Southeast Asian Women's Alliance (SEAWA). It was established to provide newly arrived women with the services that were not available from other agencies.

ReWA has grown from providing two core services (English as a Second Language and child care services) to offer a continuum of ten vital social services and programs. They are offered in 62 languages by 130 bilingual staff at our ten offices located throughout east, central and south King County.



ReWA's provides 10 culturally-competent social services and programs which helps over 11,000 refugees/immigrants in Seattle-King County find stability annually. In 2014, ReWA's core programs and services effectively provided the following:

- Licensed Behavioral Health: provided individual and family counseling, health-related case management, and support to over 278 clients in their native languages to manage trauma associated with emigration and acculturation.
- Domestic Violence Program: provided 575 survivors of domestic violence and abuse with counseling, case management, legal support, and access to shelters/housing in 15 languages to heal and empower themselves.
- English as a Second Language (ESL): provided 448 individuals with six levels of ESL classes to gain and improve English language skills and eliminate barriers to self-sufficiency.

- Employment Services: provided over 352 individuals with job search workshops; 115 clients acquired work experience and 345 clients obtained employment to help achieve financial stability.
- Housing Assistance Services: provided emergency assistance for rent and utilities bills for eligible refugees and immigrants. Case Managers placed 25 immigrant/refugee clients and their families in permanent housing.
- Family Support: provided 1,220 limited or non-English speaking clients with translation services to access social services; 491 clients obtained housing assistance and case management to avoid homelessness; over 500 clients received transportation assistance; and 846 clients were assisted and connected with Basic Food to attain stability.
- Naturalization Services: helped 111 refugee clients to submit I-485 applications for Green Cards, and 105 clients received Green Cards – a 95% success rate.

- Senior Nutrition and Wellness Program: served over 9,000 nutritious, culturally-appropriate meals to refugee/immigrant seniors to promote community, socialization, and well-being.
- Early Childhood Education: ReWA's licensed, accredited childcare centers offered full-time, dual-language programs for 130 disadvantaged children to prepare for grade school.
- Youth Program: provided 550 minority students with homework help, literacy tutoring, leadership development, job readiness, and enrichment opportunities to improve academic growth, graduate, and prepare for college or employment.

The U.S. accepts a limited number of refugees each year. In 2014 the U.S. allocated these slots to these populations:

Africa: 14,000

East Asia: 14,000

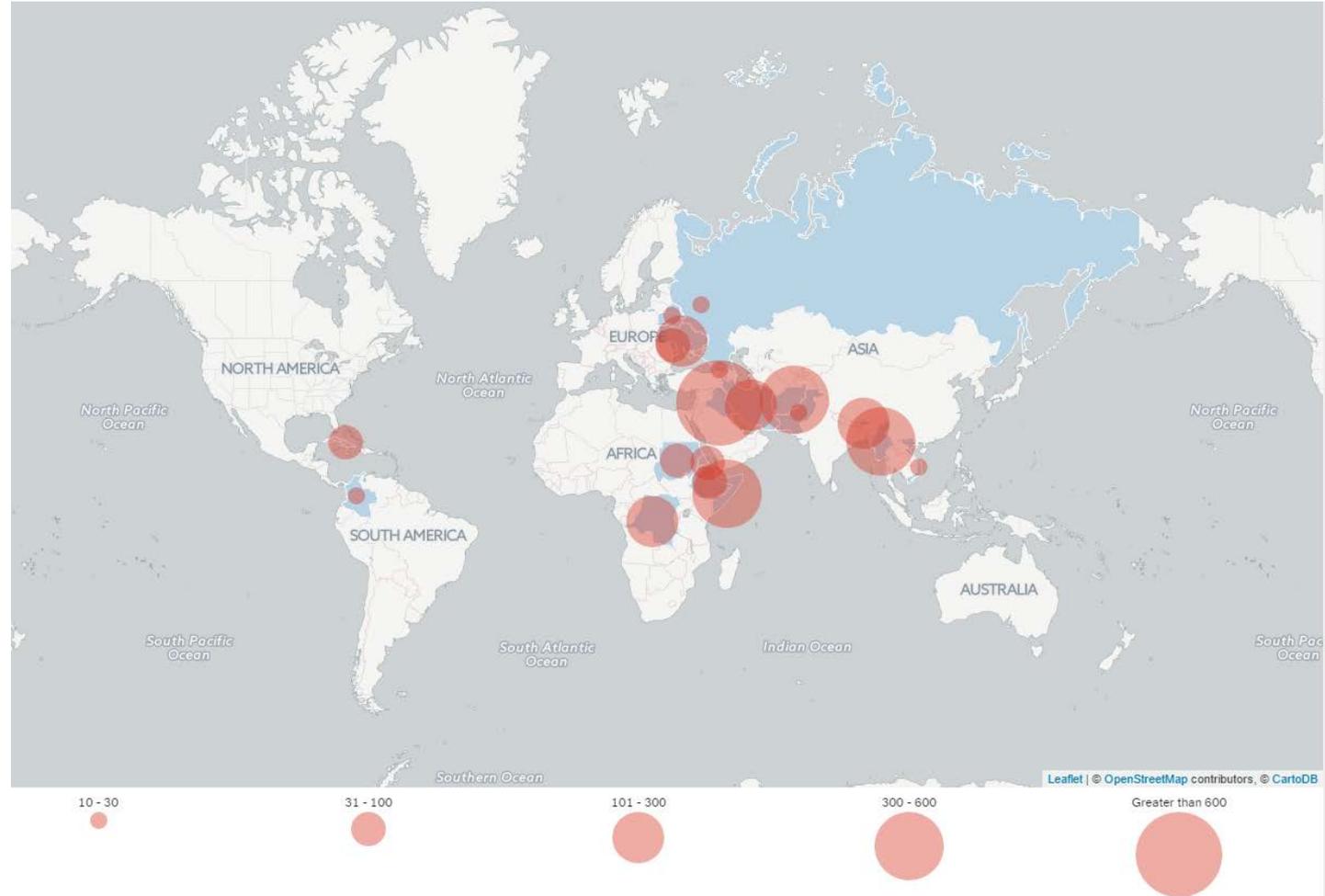
Europe and Central Asia: 1,000

Latin America/Caribbean: 5,000

Near East/South Asia: 34,000

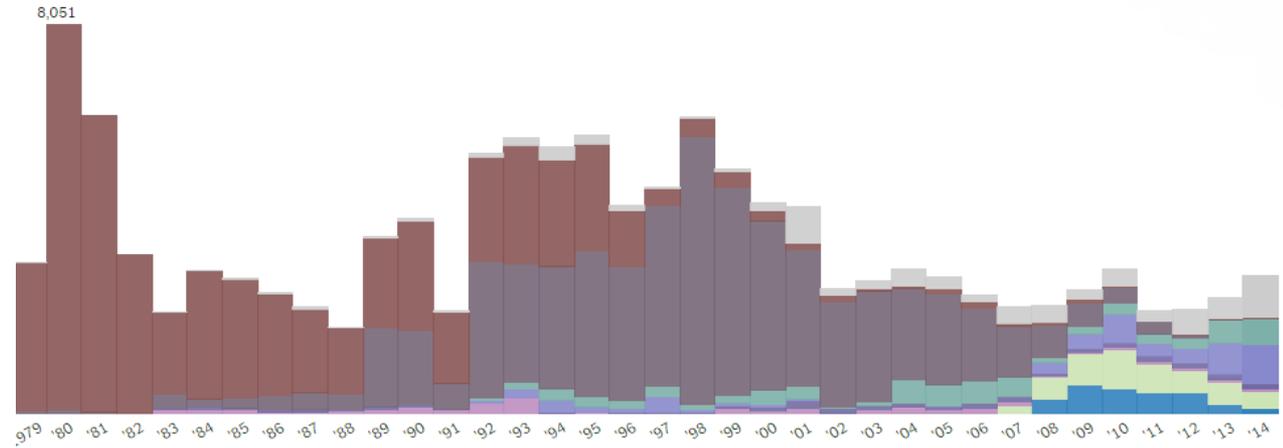
Unallocated Reserve: 2,000

Washington's  
refugees come  
from all over  
the world



# Washington State Refugees By Country 2014

NUMBER OF REFUGEES, BY COUNTRY



**2014**

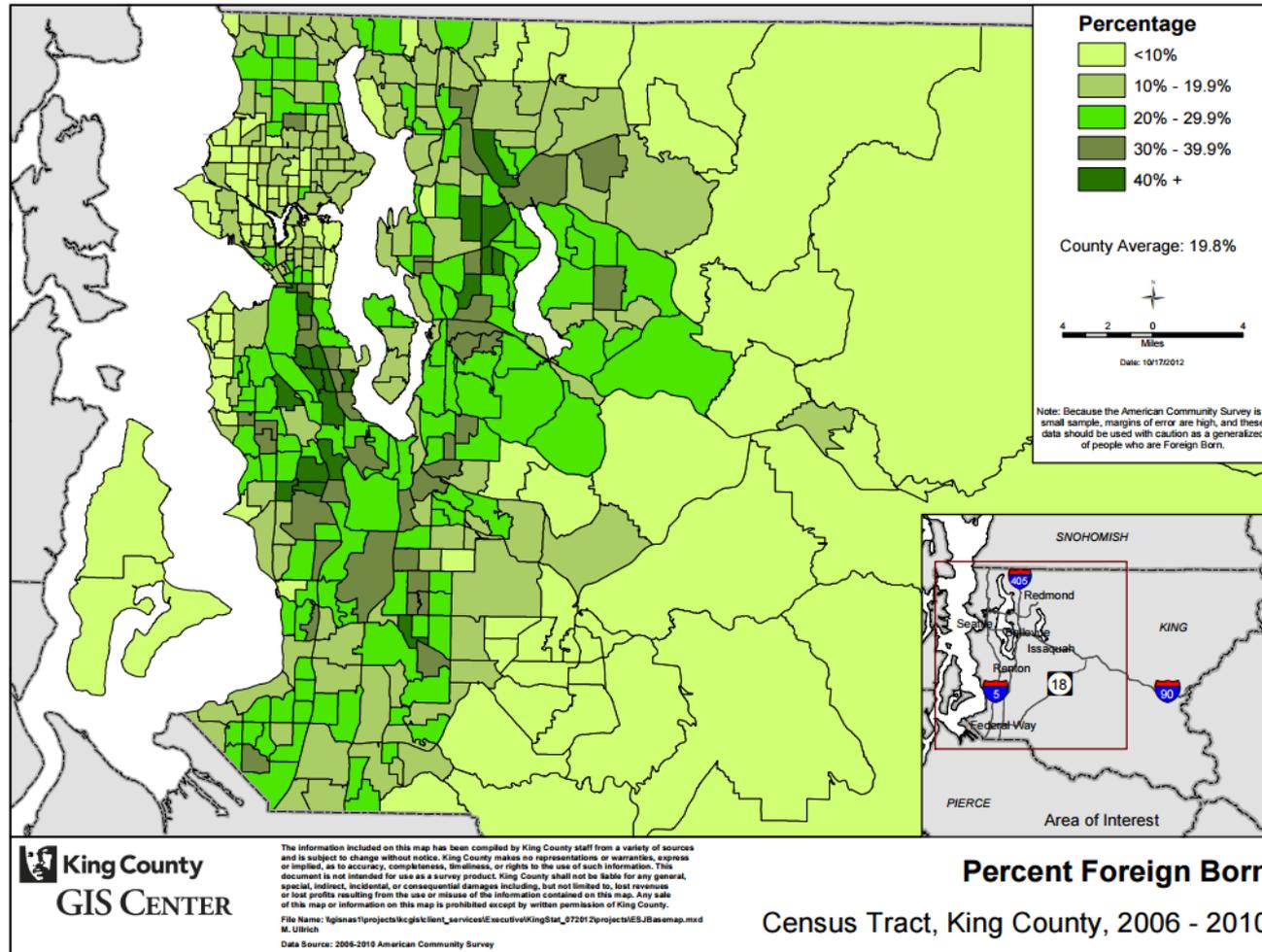
|                     |     |       |
|---------------------|-----|-------|
| Iraq                | 796 | 27.8% |
| Somalia             | 534 | 18.6% |
| Burma               | 334 | 11.7% |
| Bhutan              | 122 | 4.3%  |
| Iran                | 108 | 3.8%  |
| Ethiopia            | 66  | 2.3%  |
| Vietnam             | 17  | 0.6%  |
| Former Soviet Union | 11  | 0.4%  |
| Other               | 878 | 30.6% |

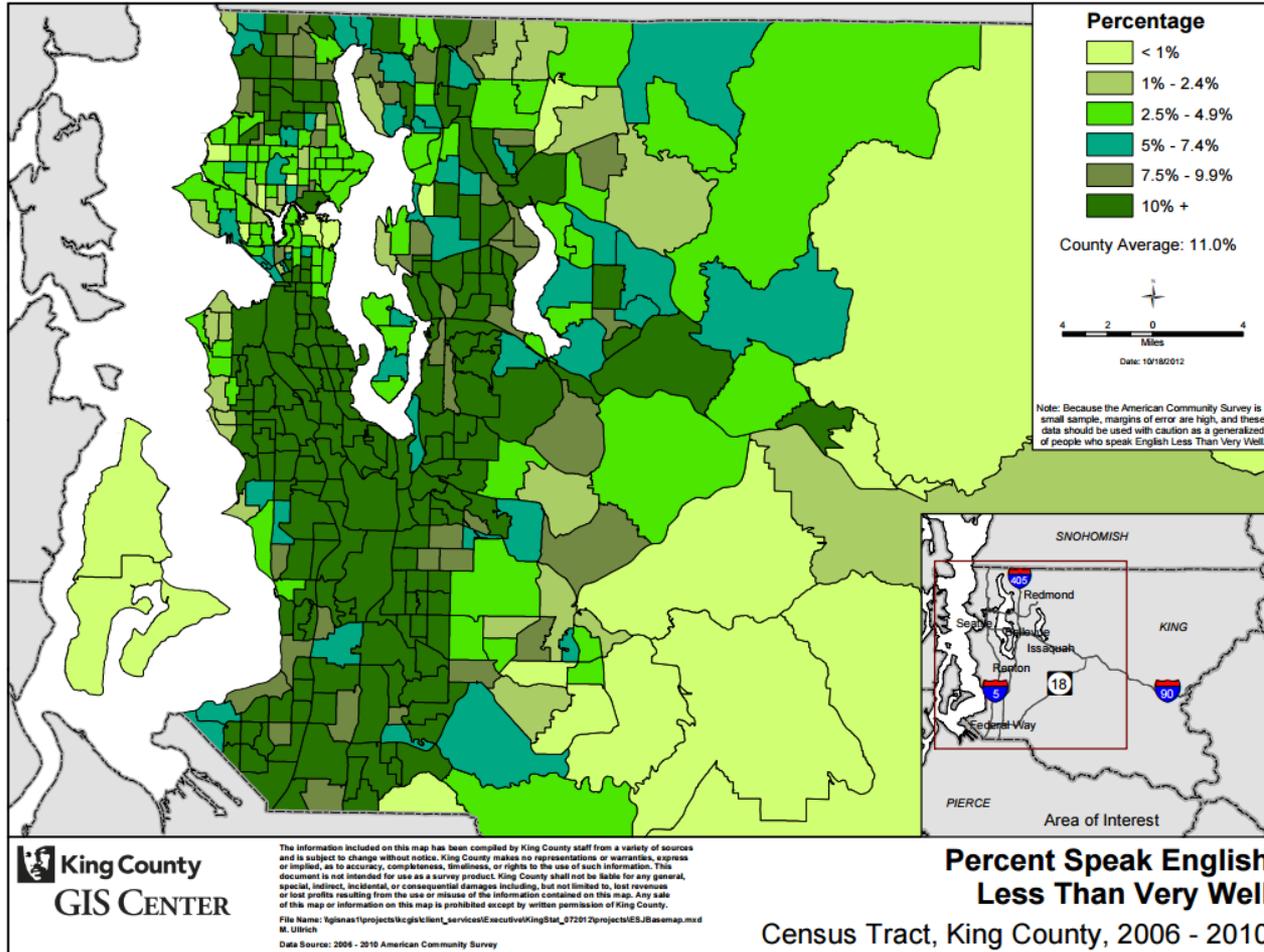
Source: U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement

Contributing to Washington's growth as the 8th largest refugee-receiving state in the country, Seattle is now more diverse than ever with a population that is one-fifth foreign-born.

Source: US Department of State, Worldwide Refugee Admissions Processing System (WRAPS)

King County is 20.3% foreign born, compared to 12.9% for the whole of the United States; Between 2005 and 2009, 42,035 new foreign-born residents moved to King County.





In addition to newly arriving refugees, many immigrants relocate to areas like King County in order to join others from their ethnic group. These new residents often face enormous challenges as they integrate into American society. Their hurdles can include past trauma, language barriers, isolation, poverty, and disability.

A lot of federal assistance focuses on the urban poor but these days there are more and more suburban poor: “Federal aid and resources continue to focus on the urban poor. Cities traditionally get a lion's share of the \$82 billion in federal dollars devoted to the poor. Berube said outdated public policies fail to address the new definition of what it means to be poor in the U.S”

[From "Confronting Suburban Poverty in America" by Elizabeth Kneebone and Alan Berube.](#)

## Barriers to Housing for Refugees

Rising rental costs make securing stable housing an issue of growing concern for low-income residents in Washington state. This concern is especially great for refugees, who encounter multiple more barriers than their American-born counterparts, including:

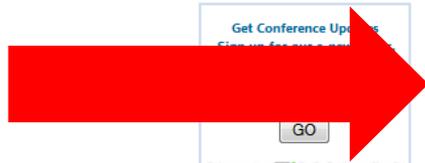
- language barriers
- housing discrimination due to ethnicity and language barriers
- lack of suitably sized properties (our refugee clients have large families with multiple children and need a space to accommodate the entire family)
- well-sized properties for large families are too expensive for these families to afford
- lack of rental history and references
- unemployment and under-employment due to language barriers, lack of work history, lack of transferable skills, lack of technical skills or soft skills

# Housing Washington 2015 Evaluations



## Go Green

Complete your  
evaluation  
online now at  
[wshfc.org/conf](http://wshfc.org/conf)



- HOME
- SPONSORS
  - Why Sponsor?
  - Sponsor Options & Benefits
  - Sponsor & Exhibit Forms
- SPONSOR SHOWCASE OF EXHIBITS
  - Exhibitor Information
- PROGRAM
  - Speaker Biographies
  - Speaker Presentations
- SCHOLARSHIPS
- HOTEL & TRAVEL
- REGISTRATION
- MEDIA
- CONTACT US

Get Conference Updates  
Sign up for our newsletter

GO

Privacy by SafeSubscribe<sup>SM</sup>

Snapshot of Past Conferences



Photo credit: Patrick Dixon Photography, [www.PatrickDixon.net](http://www.PatrickDixon.net)  
*Housing Washington* is a nationally recognized annual conference on affordable housing—a dynamic forum for learning, discussion, networking and collaboration. This event features a lively sponsor showcase, top-notch speakers and program including *Friend of Housing* awards and exciting special events.

### CONFERENCE EVALUATIONS

|                                       |                                    |                                     |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <br>Michele Norris<br>Keynote Address | <br>Johann Hari<br>Keynote Address | <br>Barney Frank<br>Keynote Address |
| Lobby Talks<br>1 - 2 - 3              | Lobby Talks<br>4 - 5 - 6           | Lobby Talks<br>7 - 8 - 9            |
| Focus Sessions<br>T1 - T2 - T3        | Focus Sessions<br>T4 - T5 - T6     | Focus Sessions<br>T7 - T8 - T9      |
| Focus Sessions<br>W1 - W2 - W3        | Focus Sessions<br>W4 - W5 - W6     |                                     |

[View the program ->](#)

Connect. Share. Engage.



HousingWashington



@housingwaconf

#HousingWA 2015