

IMPACT
OF REFUGEES
IN CENTRAL OHIO
2015 REPORT



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Strengthening communities through data, information and knowledge.

City of Columbus

United Way of Central Ohio

Franklin County Commissioners

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Published by: US Together, Community Refugee & Immigration Services,
World Relief Columbus, and the City of Columbus



“A diverse
city is a
strong
city”



“This report
highlights the many
ways, beyond an
obvious economic
impact, immigrants
add to the quality of
life in Columbus and
central Ohio”

Greetings,

The Impact of Refugees in Central Ohio report confirms that the growing new American populations contribute to the cultural richness and enhance the economic growth and development of Columbus. The growth rate of the immigrant/refugee population in Columbus has also posed certain challenges for the city infrastructure in meeting the basic living necessities in a culturally sensitive manner. Some of these challenges include language barriers and education, fair and affordable housing, healthcare and employment. This report helps us to pinpoint these issues in order to better address them.

Columbus has always been an inclusive city. We accept and appreciate those from ALL cultures and backgrounds. It's what makes Columbus the best place to live, work and raise a family.

Sincerely,

Michael B. Coleman, Mayor

Dear friends,

Columbus is a special place because of our people. We live together, we play together, and when challenges occur, we work together to build a community where all men and women, no matter their nationality or country of origin, can be proud to call 'home'.

Families come to America for a better life and to escape oppression and persecution. We must reject fear and prejudice and always remember we live in a nation of immigrants that values inclusion and compassion for all. I encourage all Columbus residents to celebrate the daily positive impact immigration has on our community and help us be the most welcoming city possible.

Sincerely,

Andrew J. Ginther, Columbus City Council, President



“This report underscores their many contributions. Their efforts have helped to make Columbus the great city it is today”

Dear Friends,

Our history has shown that refugees and immigrants from all over the world have made Columbus their home, even before its official founding. This report underscores their many contributions. Their efforts have helped to make Columbus the great city it is today.

Since the early 1990s, Columbus has seen a significant increase in many of the refugees and immigrants coming to our city, often with nothing. Their establishment of small businesses and the creation of opportunities for others have been extraordinary! I have always believed that a direct correlation exists between the arrival of refugees and immigrants and significant contributions to our City’s economic growth. This report confirms what many city and community leaders have already seen.

This report is also a confirmation of the principles on which our City and our country were founded – freedom and opportunity for all. It is also an important resource of information as to the added benefits of welcoming immigrants and refugees.

Immigrants and refugees who fled from persecution and civil strife have sought refuge in many cities, and all these cities, including Columbus, Ohio are better for it. They represent economic growth and progress.

Thank you for this report. I am proud of our City’s New American Initiative, our partners and all of our community organizations and their contributions to this report.

Sincerely,

Eileen Y. Paley,
Member, Columbus City Council



“If we do not act, we shall surely be dragged down the long, dark, and shameful corridors of time reserved for those who possess power without compassion, might without morality and strength without sight”
~ Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Greetings,

As the Executive Director of the Columbus Community Relations Commission, it is an honor for our office to be a collaborative partner of the “Impact of Refugees in Central Ohio” report.

The Columbus Community Relations Commission was established to help bring civic leaders, business leaders, citizens and elected officials together on issues of ethnic, racial and cultural diversity. We are committed to educate, advocate, and embrace the Civil Rights Code to protect the rights and treatment of people in housing employment and public accommodations.

Mayor Michael B. Coleman’s New American Initiative within the Community Relations Commission, was created to ensure that all immigrant and refugees living in Columbus have equal access to city, county and state agency services and programs while improving the quality of life. As we embark on our twelfth year of the New Americans Initiative, we see the positive impact that Columbus’ foreign born community has contributed to the business and residential communities here in the City of Columbus and beyond. We must continue to embrace diversity allowing all people their space to grow, learn and live together.

I extend my sincerest gratitude to all of the refugees that have resettled in Columbus and made it their home.

Sincerely,

Napoleon Bell, II
Executive Director
Community Relations Commission, City of Columbus



“We often hear and tell the stories of struggle, persecution, torture, survival. We often hear and tell the stories about our journey to this country, but this is not the whole story. Our journey continues and stories of our successes should be told too. Once our stories are known and our desire for independence is understood, barriers disappear and our similarities trump any differences.”

“Our community benefits greatly from the many contributions made by refugees”



Dear Friends,

Guided by humanitarian and human rights values, US Together assists refugees and immigrants escaping wars, violence, tyranny, and extreme poverty to find a safe haven in Ohio; facilitates their resettlement and social, civic, and economic integration through client-centered and culturally appropriate services; advocates on their behalf; and helps them build vibrant communities.

We came to this country as refugees more than 20 years ago and have dedicated our lives in this new country to help refugees and immigrants be successful. That task requires navigating cultural norms, social customs, housing, transportation, health care, and many other necessities that are new to refugees. Yet sometimes our greatest hurdle is changing attitudes toward the people we serve. Many have never met someone born in another country. They may not know our plight, our hard work ethic, our family story or our struggle to succeed in our new country.

These stories are inspirational. There are so many to tell like the young woman from Democratic Republic of Congo who made her way here after a life pierced with gender violence. She overcame her personal horrific past and opened her own business within a year of arrival to the U.S. Or how about the story of a refugee from Bhutan who opened the first Nepali restaurant in his new adopted city, or the engineer from Ukraine who went on to create his own IT firm. Or our own story, one that starts as a refugees from the Former Soviet Union who co-founded a non-profit organization helping refugees and immigrants. Our entrepreneurial model is unique, utilizing our interpretive services as additional earned income in several cities, employing the very refugees that we work to resettle.

Not many people fully appreciate the economic impact of new Americans. In Columbus, it is substantial. But collecting the data to prove our point needed more than anecdotal stories. We have heard enough stories to know the numbers would impress. We kept asking ourselves: How can we best communicate our struggle, integration and success?

All of us working in Refugee Resettlement would love to have the research staff to track changes in our refugees' employment and income status. We always wanted to be able to tell you how many refugees have opened their own businesses, and how many of our children go to college, and what professions they choose. We are very proud to say that now we have this information and we are very excited to share it with the world.

Sincerely,

Nadia Kasvin and Tatyana Mindlina

co-founders and directors of US Together, Inc.,

www.ustogether.us, a statewide mutual assistance and resettlement organization from Ohio, dedicated to providing a host of resettlement and integration services for refugees and immigrants from all over the world.

Dear Columbus Community,

It has been my great privilege to work with the Columbus community to resettle over 10,000 refugees here since 2001. Our City is a welcoming place: refugees are welcomed here by many who have compassion for those fleeing persecution. Indeed, as the world-wide refugee crisis grows to numbers not seen since World War II, the need for our country and our community to provide haven for people seeking safety has never been greater.

Those of us who work with refugees know that while refugees benefit greatly from the chance to start their lives over in Columbus, our community benefits greatly from the many contributions made by refugees. Our vibrant refugee community brings us new cultures, positive family and spiritual values and friendship, helping to create a vibrant and sophisticated city. And we've also anecdotally known for years that refugees add economic value to our city, but before doing the research for this report, we lacked solid supporting data. In discussing how we might show the value of refugees to our community, the partners in this project decided to pursue an analysis of the economic benefits refugees bring. This is that report.

I am proud that Columbus has been and continues to be a community that welcomes refugees. Countless faith-based, civic, school groups and individual volunteers do so every day. For many years the Franklin County Commissioners, Mayor, and City Council have been leaders in supporting a spirit of welcome in our city. CRIS is deeply appreciative of the very recent City Council resolution in support of Syrian refugees. It is our hope that with this report we have provided our leaders, and all those who care, a solid basis to demonstrate the powerful positive impact that refugees have on the economy of our City.

Sincerely,

Angela K. Plummer

Executive Director

Community Refugee & Immigration Services



“Through your personal experience, I hope that you discover that our Central Ohio community is truly a Global community, richer in character, strength and integrity by the addition of our fellow New American neighbors”



“Columbus has recognized that refugees enrich the cultural and social fabric of Columbus, Ohio and beyond and have a positive economic impact”

Dear Welcomer,

The 2015 report, *Impact of Refugees on Central Ohio*, recognizes that immigrants and refugees are strong responsible contributors to the Central Ohio socio-economic infrastructure. As a “Welcoming and Receiving Community” to immigrants and refugees, Columbus continues to be rewarded by the addition of new businesses, talent, and cultural riches that refugees create and share within our community.

What makes Columbus a great city in which to live, work, and raise a family? The answer is people. It is the people who live in this city and the progressive leadership of our Mayor, City Council members, County and State Agencies who encourage and support integration and its positive impact.

“Don’t judge a man until you have walked a mile in his shoes” is a common suggestion in our society. As you read the stories of each person profiled in this report, you will learn more about your fellow neighbor who also contribute to the urban renewal of our Central Ohio community. Not only will you learn of the struggles that they have endured, but you also will discover the depth and strength of their will to recover from deep loss. I have tremendous admiration for the refugees who have allowed us to tell their stories in this report. It is but a glimpse of the many thousands of stories of individuals who have come to Central Ohio, driven by an overwhelming desire to survive and prosper. While dedicated to staying true to their family values, these refugees actively seek to integrate, contribute to society, and show their appreciation for being a part of this community.

I feel blessed to have served and worked with the immigrant and refugee community for the past twenty years. As the New American’s Initiative Coordinator for the City of Columbus for almost ten years now, I am grateful for my experience of the generosity, humility and courage of the immigrants and refugees I now know. This report reveals to our community the vast and rich economic, cultural and social contributions that refugees bring to Central Ohio by resettling here and making Columbus their home. It is our history. I am in awe of the dedication, resourcefulness and passion that refugee resettlement agencies demonstrate in their service to refugees. The individuals at these agencies make it their life’s work, purpose and mission to serve those in need of safety.

If we all work actively to “...leave this world a better place than when we found it,” then serving and loving one another is a goal worth achieving.

Lead with your heart,

Guadalupe A. Velasquez
Assistant Director, Community Relations Commission
Coordinator, New Americans Initiative, City of Columbus

Greetings from World Relief Columbus,

There are many myths and misconceptions about refugees. An important fact to remember is that refugees have entered the country legally after having undergone a stringent application and screening process. Also, keep in mind the definition of a refugee is any person who is unable or unwilling to avail themselves of the protection of their country of nationality or habitual residence 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.

We are very excited to present this report to not only dispel some myths and misconceptions about refugees but also to promote the positive impact of refugees in Columbus and Central Ohio

Refugees must apply and compete for jobs the same as any citizen. Refugees often enter economic sectors currently unable to supply adequate numbers of native workers. Refugees and immigrants also create jobs for U.S. workers because they have a high propensity to start new businesses. Refugees have been a major force in contributing to the urban renewal in Columbus, Ohio as well as other major U.S. cities.

Refugees have survived because they have the courage, ingenuity and creativity to have done so. These are qualities which we value in US. The challenge for Columbus is to assist newly arrived refugees to process the experiences of their past and rebuild their lives here. If we do this we will reap the benefits of the qualities and experiences they bring to Cols and US.

Refugees contribute a great deal to this country through the sharing of their talents, skills, cultures and customs. History indicates that some of our most significant contributors to the U.S. have been refugees and immigrants.

Columbus has recognized that refugees enrich the cultural and social fabric of Columbus, Ohio and beyond and have a positive economic impact. This has resulted in increase in overall employment and hence GDP without any significant negative impacts on the employment prospects of the native-born.

Kay Lipovsky
Director of World Relief Columbus
klipovsky@wr.org



“Refugees make up an important segment of our businesses. The Impact of Refugees in Central Ohio Report highlights the diversity of our community and the positive economic impact these businesses are creating in Columbus”

Ariana Ulloa-Olavarrieta
DISTRICT DIRECTOR
Ohio Small Business Development Center
COLUMBUS STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

This report is a testimony that refugees in Columbus and Central Ohio have become a driving force in the creation of small businesses and jobs. As highlighted in this report the refugees' contribution have significant and positive impact in our diverse Columbus communities.

When you look at the numbers in this report, you will certainly be bound to not only appreciate, but also feel inspired by the fact that the refugees defy all odds to create opportunities and achieve great success while revitalizing our neighborhoods.

I know from my experience of working with refugees that they will continue to prevail while remaining grateful to the Columbus's welcoming environment and friendly public policy by the leadership of the City of Columbus, Franklin County and State of Ohio.

Abdikhayr Soofe
City of Columbus, Ohio
New American Initiative Outreach Coordinator





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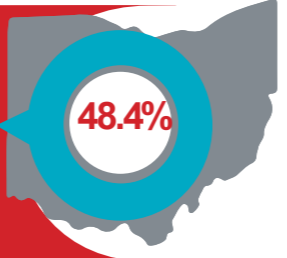
As you read each person's story use this map as your key to discover country of origin


2015 Major findings from the Impact of Refugees in Central Ohio Report

FACTS

Since 1983
 **16,596** Refugees from around the world were resettled in the Columbus metro area—most of them (59.2%) in the past ten years.

20.9 years
 The median age for new refugee arrivals between 2003 and 2014 is lower than the median age of all Franklin County residents (33.9 years).

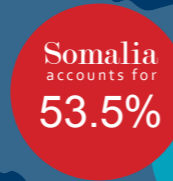
Franklin County has had, by far, the highest number of refugee arrivals in Ohio between 2002 and 2014, accounting for nearly half (48.4%) of all refugees resettled in the state during that period.


The average refugee household size is **4.60**, nearly double the average household size for Franklin County households in general (2.49).


41.8% of refugees age 18 and older are currently enrolled in college or have graduated from college.

43.0% of all Franklin County residents age 18 and older; this suggests that refugees in the community are just as well-educated as the rest of the population.
COMPARED

Households with six or more people account for 29.3% of refugee households, about nine times the share of all Franklin County households with six or more people (3.2%).

Somalia accounts for **53.5%** of refugees resettled in Franklin County since 2002.


ECONOMY

13.6% Employed refugees age 16 and older who are business owners

Is more than double the general Franklin County rate of entrepreneurship (6.5%); indicating that local refugees are more than twice as likely to own a business as the general population.

There are an estimated **873** refugee-owned businesses in the Columbus MSA employing 3,960 workers.

The local refugee community supports an estimated total of **21,273** jobs in the Columbus MSA.

Through entrepreneurship, self-sufficiency, networking, and job skills, local refugees are able to build social capital, which can have a positive impact on the region.

Refugees: \$42,000 | Overall: \$51,460

Franklin County median household income

Total yearly contribution to MSA

Refugee household spending in the Columbus MSA: **\$35.9 MILLION**

The total contribution of refugees in Franklin County: **\$1.6 BILLION**



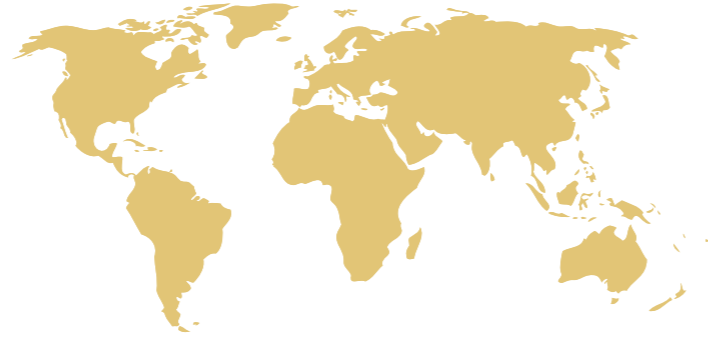
IMPACT



1.1 Background

Of the 10.5 million refugees worldwide, UNHCR considers only about 1% of them for resettlement. The United States has by far the largest resettlement program in the world.

10.5 million



Since 1983, central Ohio has received more than 16,000 refugees from around the world—most of them in the past ten years¹.

There are three local resettlement agencies serving the needs of central Ohio's refugee community: US Together, Community Refugee & Immigration Services (CRIS), and World Relief Columbus.

The three local refugee resettlement agencies commissioned this report in partnership with the City of Columbus Department of Development, Community Relations Commission, and the New Americans Initiative, and with support from HIAS, The Linking Communities project, and the Ohio Development Services Agency's Small Business Development Centers of Ohio program. Community Research Partners (CRP), a nonprofit research center based in Columbus, was asked to conduct the study to better understand the long-run social and economic impacts of the refugee community in central Ohio.

According to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees (UNHCR), refugees are persons who have fled their country of origin to escape a war or due to a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, social status, or politics, and have been awarded special protective status in a country of asylum. Once this official status is attained, there are three options for refugees:

- Voluntary repatriation to their country of origin
- Local integration in their country of asylum
- Resettlement in a third country

Resettlement only occurs as a last resort. Of the 10.5 million refugees worldwide, UNHCR considers only about 1% of them for resettlement. The United States has by far the largest resettlement program in the world, taking in more than half of the world's resettled refugees, according to UNHCR. The U.S. State Department works with international organizations and national voluntary agencies to bring refugees to the United States and match them to a local refugee resettlement agency. These resettlement agencies assist with initial needs such as housing, school registration, medical evaluation, and employment during their first year in the United States, after which time refugees may begin the process of becoming lawful permanent residents.

¹ The Brookings Institution, using data from the Office of Refugee Resettlement, reports that 6,768 refugees were resettled in the eight-county Columbus Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) from 1983 to 2004. According to the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM), between 2005 and 2014 the U.S. State Department resettled 9,828 refugees in the MSA. The combined total number of refugees resettled in the eight-county area between 1983 and 2014 is 16,596.

1.2 Geography

This report focuses on refugees residing in Franklin County, Ohio. While some of the refugee resettlement agencies have operations outside the county, the majority of the refugees they serve live in Franklin County.

Furthermore, according to data from the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM), of the 11,150 refugees resettled in the eight-county Columbus Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA)² between 2002 and 2014, 99.5% of them were placed in cities in Franklin County³.

The economic impact analysis, however, applies to the Columbus MSA. While the direct impacts are based on the refugees and resettlement agencies in Franklin County, the regional multipliers used in the economic impact analysis—as well as the indirect, induced, and total impacts generated—are for the larger eight-county area. For this reason, any discussion of the refugee population refers to Franklin County, whereas any discussion of the greater impact refers to the Columbus MSA.

Use of the MSA as the frame of reference for the economic impact is justified by the fact that MSAs are created to be an economically interdependent unit—primarily on the basis of worker commuting patterns. Thus, a portion of the economic activities created by refugees in Franklin County has an impact on the other seven counties of the MSA, and vice versa.

² All data sources cited in this report, including the regional economic impact multipliers, use the June 2003 definitions for the Columbus MSA. In the context of this report, the Columbus MSA is thus composed of the following eight counties: Delaware, Fairfield, Franklin, Licking, Madison, Morrow, Pickaway, and Union³ Refugee resettlement data from PRM and the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) is limited to the placement or destination city as defined by ZIP code boundaries. As such, county totals are aggregated from all cities with the majority of their population living within the boundaries of Franklin County.

1.3 Format of the Report

The remainder of the report is organized into the following sections:

2.0 Section

Explains the methods used to collect data for this report, as well as the methodology of the economic impact analysis.

3.0 Section

Provides a description of refugee migration patterns in central Ohio, as well as a profile of the local refugee community highlighting their demographic, social, and economic characteristics.

4.0 Section

Describes the ways in which refugees in the community contribute social capital to the region.


5.0 Section

Estimates the total contribution of refugees to the local economy.

6.0 Section

Offers a summary of the findings and conclusions of the report.

The appendix contains the survey, focus group, and interview questions used to collect primary data for this report, as well as a list of secondary data sources. There are also spotlight stories throughout the report that illustrate the personal experiences and successes of select refugees in central Ohio. The three local refugee resettlement agencies were responsible for identifying the fourteen refugees represented here, interviewing them, and telling their stories.



Laos

“Everyone that comes to our door gets the help they need. We like to be able to connect people and services, always looking at what’s best for that particular individual and their family”

Good Comes to You When You Take Care of Others

Bounthanh Phommasathit

Bounthanh Phommasathit may not be a millionaire but the former refugee from Laos has amassed a fortune in good karma. Together with her husband Thomas and two sons Christopher and Alexander, she spent a number of years serving the community and growing the family businesses in home healthcare and job placement. The company opened in 2004, Diversified Health Management, was recently ranked by Columbus CEO Magazine number 5 of its Top 10 Home Care Agencies (2015); an honor recognizing the hard work she and her family have done.

Bounthanh was defined earlier in life by the scars of the Secret War on communism, as her family was displaced by this conflict. “While we were living in the war zone, I was so afraid of the bombings and the gunshots. I remember the sound, the smell, and running to safety, from when I was only a toddler. I grew up with that feeling of insecurity, not knowing when the next bomb would fall. I saw a lot of people dying; I can still see the faces of the dead. When our province was taken by the communists in 1969, we fled to another city where we became refugees in our own country,” she remembers.

In 1975, when the entire region fell into communist rule and the U.S. troops pulled out, people started to leave their countries and apply for resettlement in the nations that were open to taking them. “But first we had to make it into the refugee camp and out of harm’s way. My family took a canoe and crossed a large river into Thailand. Many people died while attempting to make it to the other side. We were lucky we survived. Once we made it safely, we applied for asylum in France, Australia and the United States.” Late in 1979, Bounthanh’s family came to Columbus, Ohio. There, Trinity Lutheran Church sponsored the young family that now included their two toddler sons.

The Phommasathit’s had fled from the cruelty of war to the peace of Bexley. They knew it was time to take advantage of a brand new opportunity and start over. In 1979 they started to work with refugees from their home country a year after they resettled in Columbus. Soon they created the Laotian Mutual Assistance Association, through which hundreds of families were helped as they made their way from a refugee camp in Asia to the Midwest in the United States. While working full time, Bounthanh and her husband were enrolled at Columbus State Community College. Bounthanh received a bachelor’s degree in social work, while her husband attended OSU.

In 1980, Bounthanh secured a job as a social worker at Franklin County Jobs & Family Services. “I was charged with helping refugees resettle in Columbus. Through my regular job and our volunteer work with the Laotian Mutual Assistance Association we were able to help many families find their way and succeed here. We were known and trusted in the community way before we opened DHM Agency,” Bounthanh explains. “We like to work with people. When we worked with refugees on a volunteer basis we realized that a large portion of the needs they had were related to health, wellness, language and cultural barriers; so that’s where we started when we opened DHM in 2004.”

Today, their son Alexander is the company’s CEO, and the agency has grown from 15 to almost 200 home-health patients and is MBE/EDGE certified. DHM has 93 employees and is working on expanding its scope to include transportation, behavioral health, and substance abuse through the Driving Intervention Program. In addition, DHM is working on the creation of licensable home-health software. In 2013, the gross income for DHM was \$1.7 million. But that’s not the end of the story!

In 2006, Bounthanh’s other son, Christopher, established Workline Solutions, Inc. and became its CEO. Workline Solutions is an employment service agency and it employs 150 individuals. In 2014, the gross income for Workline was \$1.5 million. They recruit potential employees from the homeless shelters, the half-way house facilities, this provides the opportunities for the most vulnerable populations and people in the most difficult situations to get hired into the workforce. The companies are projecting an income of at least \$4-5 million per year.

Bhutan

“All I’ve ever wanted is to ‘become a human being,’” says Jhuma Acharya and his eyes well-up with the pain of all the suffering he has endured and has seen others withstand as decades-long refugees”



Finding a Way to the American Dream

Jhuma Acharya

Jhuma’s story begins before he was born, when his Nepalese relatives and a few other families were invited to come and set roots in Bhutan to share their knowledge as builders and architects. The families settled in southern Bhutan but kept their religion, Hinduism, as well as their culture and language. Even though the members of the group received Bhutanese citizenship in the late 1950’s, only thirty years later, in an act of ethnic cleansing, the government revoked it and asked thousands to leave the country and go back to Nepal.

For Jhuma and his family it was too dangerous to stay. One night, he and nineteen other relatives were forced to flee the place that they knew as their country. Nepal did not recognize their former citizens either, and placed some 150,000 people in refugee camps across the country. Jhuma and his entire family were forced to live in one of the shantytowns. He spent 21 years of his life living in deplorable conditions.

Jhuma knew he and his family were condemned to be homeland orphans, unwanted by the two countries where they had deep roots. He understood the future was bleak and decided to step up and help his community get out of the misery two governments had inflicted upon them.

He quickly realized that the education they were offered at the refugee camp did not go beyond 10th grade and the quality was not equal to that received in regular Nepalese schools. He understood the need for his community to receive a proper education. When Jhuma was 14, he volunteered as a teacher in their local school. He taught himself and would then teach others. Eventually he made it as a middle and high school teacher, and was not paid more than two dollars a month.

In neighboring India he graduated in 2000, with honors, with a B.S. in Geology. He went back to the camp and continued his labor as a teacher. He found that anger, frustration, and criminal activity were on the rise in the settlement. It was then he decided he could no longer live under those conditions. Jhuma moved to another city and was able to secure a job in a private school. Within three years he was found illegally out of the boundaries of the refugee camp and was fired with no payment of his last salary. Disappointment took hold again. In 2008 families started to resettle in the United States and began to send messages of encouragement.

In 2011 Jhuma resettled to the United States. He first arrived in Rhode Island, where he lived for one year. A relative encouraged him to move to Columbus, Ohio, and when he went to the office of Community Refugee & Immigration Services (CRIS) to apply for support he was hired as a case manager. His first job in the United States, was to help refugees and immigrants! Everything he had endured and everything he had done throughout his entire life had placed him at that moment and in that office to become a person whose sole purpose is to help others find their way in the incredibly complex and frightening maze that getting acclimated in a new country is.

“Because I’ve been a refugee, I know what it takes and how critical the first months are. Having someone who speaks your language and makes sure you understand what’s going on is very helpful. I always tell my incoming families my story and the challenges I faced,” Jhuma explains. He is also a big proponent of helping his people succeed in America, so he is the Secretary of the new non-profit, Bhutanese Nepali Community of Columbus.

For now, Jhuma is excited to help as many people as he can. He smiles when he realizes that every family member who comes into contact with him finally feels as a human being, and that, to him, is having achieved his American dream.



2.1 Primary Data Collection

Refugee Resettlement Agency Survey

In August 2014, Community Research Partners (CRP) surveyed the three refugee resettlement agencies in order to provide budget and employment data for the economic impact analysis. The survey questions can be found in the appendix on page 26.

Refugee Household Survey

Between January and June 2015, CRP and the three refugee service agencies conducted a separate survey of 351 refugee households in Franklin County in order to provide employment data for the economic impact analysis, as well as to provide demographic, social, and economic data for the refugee migration patterns and the community profile. The survey questions can be found in the appendix on page 27.

In order to determine an appropriate sample size, it was necessary to estimate the number of refugee households in the area. The current population of the refugee community in the Columbus MSA, however, is difficult to estimate. As mentioned in the introduction, there were 16,596 refugees resettled in the MSA between 1983 and 2014. This number however does not take into account the effect of net secondary migration of refugees. Secondary migration refers to the in-migration of refugees resettled elsewhere, and the out-migration of refugees originally resettled in central Ohio who have since left. Unfortunately, this is impossible to measure. Therefore, for the purposes of this report, it is assumed that net secondary migration is zero and the population of the refugee community is estimated to be about 17,000.

Since 1983



16,596

Refugees from around the world were resettled in the Columbus metro area—most of them (59.2%) in the past ten years.

CRP also assumes that, based on Franklin County's share (99.5%) of MSA resettlement activity as reported by the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration since 2002, all refugees in the Columbus MSA currently reside in Franklin County. Finally, using the average family size of refugee arrivals (4.55) from the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS)⁴, the number of refugee households in Franklin County is estimated to be 3,736.

In order to establish a 95% confidence level, the sample size needed to be at least 348. Targets were established based on year of arrival and country of origin in order to ensure the survey was representative of the local refugee population⁵. Representatives from the three refugee resettlement agencies then went out into the community and interviewed householders, later entering responses online using SurveyGizmo, a survey software tool.

In order to provide employment estimates for the economic impact analysis, survey results were weighted by a factor of 10.64, based on the number of refugee households responding to the survey and the total estimated number of refugee households in Franklin County.

⁴According to data from ODJFS, between 2003 and 2014, there were 1,915 refugee families resettled in the Columbus MSA, and 8,711 refugees arriving in families, with an average refugee family size of 4.55. ⁵Based on refugee arrival data from 1983 to 2014 from ORR and PRM, CRP established the following targets for year of arrival: arrivals in 2014 (approximately 10%), arrivals between 2010 and 2013 (approximately 20%), and arrivals before 2010 (approximately 70%). Focusing on the four largest refugee groups in the MSA by country of origin, the following targets were also established: arrivals from Somalia (approximately 35%), arrivals from the former Soviet Union (approximately 15%), arrivals from Bhutan (approximately 10%), and arrivals from Iraq (approximately 10%).

Focus Groups

In September 2014, with the assistance of the three refugee resettlement agencies, CRP convened two focus groups with representatives of the local refugee community in order to gain input on their resettlement experience and to inform the social impact analysis. The focus group questions can be found in the appendix on page 29.

CRP worked with the three agencies to determine how to define participation in each focus group:

Short-term

Short-term refugee population, or foreign-born residents of Franklin County who have come to the United States as refugees or asylees⁶, and have been in the country for three or fewer years.

Long-term

Long-term refugee population, or foreign-born residents of Franklin County who have come to the United States as refugees or asylees, and have been in the country for more than three years.



12-15 PARTICIPANTS



Participants in both focus groups were identified, contacted, and confirmed by the agencies. The short-term and long-term focus groups had 12 and 15 participants respectively in addition to two CRP staff and three interpreters from Community Refugee & Immigration Services (CRIS). In order to protect participant confidentiality, CRP did not gather any demographic or otherwise identifying information about the participants. Several participants in each group chose to share their name, the name of the company they own or for which they work, or their national origin; however, it was also made clear that anyone could remain anonymous if they desired.

Both focus groups were hosted by CRIS in their offices in the Northland area of Columbus. The facilities are located on East Dublin-Granville Road and are accessible by public transportation. Focus groups were conducted in a private meeting room to ensure confidentiality. Focus group discussions were recorded (audio only) for record-keeping reasons. In addition, one CRP staff member took detailed notes during the course of the discussions. The audio tapes and detailed notes will be kept confidential; only the de-identified summaries will be shared. No responses or comments will be attributed to individual focus group participants.

Stakeholder Interviews

In September and October 2014, CRP conducted phone interviews with three key representatives from the local refugee community in order to gain additional insight about the experiences of the community and to inform the social impact analysis.

The interview questions can be found in the appendix on page 31.

⁶Asylees are persons who, like refugees, have fled their country of origin to escape a war or due to a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, social status, or politics. However, unlike refugees, asylees travel to the United States on their own and subsequently apply for and receive a grant of asylum. While asylees do not enter the United States as refugees—and thus are not included in the secondary data on refugees used in this report—they are entitled to the same benefits and services as refugees, and for this reason they were included in the focus groups.

CRP worked with the three refugee resettlement agencies to identify community leaders and stakeholders from within the local refugee community who could speak about overarching issues relevant to the community at large and who could represent input from major sub-groups.

Three interviewees were selected, one from each of the following populations, described in more detail in the following section:

- Bhutanese Nepali refugee community
- Somali refugee community
- Soviet Jewish refugee community

CRP conducted the interviews over the phone, from CRP offices. Interviews were recorded (audio only) for record-keeping reasons. The audio tapes and detailed notes will be kept confidential; only the de-identified summaries will be shared. No responses or comments will be attributed to individual interviewees.

2.2 Economic Impact Analysis

Incorporating the survey data described above, along with regional economic impact multipliers from IMPLAN®, CRP performed an economic impact analysis to estimate the contribution of refugees to the Columbus MSA economy⁷. Economic impacts are measured in terms of both the value of output generated and the number of jobs supported.

Based on a review of similar studies, such as the Economic Impact of Refugees in the Cleveland Area (Chmura Economics & Analytics, 2003), the economic impacts of refugees are generated by the following sources:



These three components constitute the direct economic impact of refugees in the Columbus MSA. The total economic impact, however, also includes the ripple effects from these direct impacts. These ripple effects are categorized as either indirect or induced impacts. Indirect effects arise from purchases from suppliers by direct entities to sustain their economic activity. Induced impacts are generated by the household spending from the wages and business income of owners and employees of both the direct entities and their suppliers. In the context of this report, these would include the following:

⁷This is not the full IMPLAN® model, but a set of I-RIMS multipliers derived by IMPLAN® to replace the Regional Input-Output Modeling System (RIMS-II) multipliers formerly available from the Bureau of Economic Analysis.

⁸It is important to note that the total economic impact includes some degree of double counting. For example, the number of refugees working for the refugee-owned businesses, and the outputs associated with their employment, are unknown and may be counted twice. The household survey did not include a question about the number of refugees employed by refugee-owned businesses.

Indirect impact

local economic activity generated by local companies doing business with the three refugee resettlement agencies, the employers of local refugee workers, and local refugee-owned businesses (i.e., the value of goods and services produced and the jobs supported).

Induced impact

local economic activity generated by the income of local refugee-wage earners and employees of the three refugee service agencies and local refugee-owned businesses (i.e., the value of household consumer spending and the local jobs supported by these expenditures).

This analysis uses region- and industry-specific multipliers. All multipliers used are specifically for the Columbus MSA. Industry-specific direct employment was derived from the refugee household survey.

There are two different types of multipliers used in this analysis:

Type I

multipliers reflect the impacts of all industries but omit households.

Type SAM (Social Accounting Matrix)

multipliers include both industries and households.

The induced impacts are calculated by subtracting the impacts derived from the Type I multipliers from those derived from the Type SAM multipliers.

Furthermore, within each type there are three different multipliers used in this analysis:

Final-demand output multiplier, or the total industry output per \$1 change in expenditures and investments (i.e., final demand)

Final-demand employment multiplier, or the total number of jobs per \$1 million change in expenditures and investments (i.e., final demand)

Direct-effect employment multiplier, or the total number of jobs per 1 job change in the industry initially affected by the change in expenditures and investments (i.e., final-demand industry)

Direct output from the refugee resettlement agencies was taken from the refugee resettlement agency survey. Direct outputs from refugee workers and refugee-owned businesses, however, were calculated using industry-specific direct employment (from the refugee household survey) and Type SAM employment multipliers with the formula below, and then aggregating the industries together.

Direct output =

$$[(\text{Type SAM direct-effect employment multiplier} / \text{Type SAM final-demand output multiplier}) \times \$1 \text{ million} \times \text{direct employment}] / \text{Type SAM final-demand output multiplier}$$

Direct employment was taken from the refugee resettlement agency survey and the refugee household survey.

Indirect output =

Indirect output was calculated using industry-specific direct outputs and Type I final-demand output multipliers with the formula below, and then aggregating the industries together.
 $(\text{Type I final-demand output multiplier} - 1) \times \text{direct output}$

Indirect employment was calculated by using industry-specific direct employment and Type I direct-effect employment multipliers with the formula below, and then aggregating the industries together.

Indirect employment =

$$(\text{Type I direct-effect employment multiplier} - 1) \times \text{direct employment}$$

Induced output was calculated using industry-specific direct output and Type I and Type SAM final-demand output multipliers with the formula below, and then aggregating the industries together.

Induced output =

$$(\text{Type SAM final-demand output multiplier} - \text{Type I final-demand output multiplier}) \times \text{direct output}$$

Indirect employment was calculated by using industry-specific direct employment and Type I and Type SAM direct-effect employment multipliers and aggregating the industries together.

Induced employment =

$$(\text{Type SAM direct-effect employment multiplier} - \text{Type I direct-effect employment multiplier}) \times \text{direct employment}$$

Finally, all of the components were summed together to derive the total economic impact of refugees⁸.



Cuba

“When you come from a different culture and have a different language, and you feel welcomed in a place that you don’t know at all, you feel that commitment to give back. And that’s exactly what I’ve done my entire life. Whether at work or in the community, I’ve always strived to give back”

Witness to Miracles

Maria Klemack

Maria Klemack says that she believes all the struggles she had to endure as an exile, prepared her heart to become a voice for those who cannot speak for themselves. She has worked as a medical interpreter for 13 years at Nationwide Children’s Hospital and as a council member for Grove City City Council for 16 years, and has served as the council president for two years.

In 1961, where Maria’s journey began, she took part in Operation Pedro Pan. It was a desperate move by Cuban parents to send their children to the United States in order to escape the ever growing dictatorship of communist, Fidel Castro. “The escape from Havana was terrifying,” recalls Maria, “with all the machine guns from Batista loyalists, the flyers raining down from the sky, the search lights over Havana.”

Across the waters, Maria and hundreds of children arrived in Florida, where only English was spoken. They were kept in a camp for a time before she was sent to St. Vincent’s Orphanage in Columbus, Ohio. In 1963, she was taken into a foster home by Bill and Dorothy Ryan in Lancaster, Ohio. She was enrolled in Bishop Fenwick High School where she was welcomed by many understanding, compassionate, and generous people who made her feel wanted and loved in a strange land.

As the years went on, Maria never lost the hope that her parents would return to her. She was desperate to reunite with her family. She wrote to both the then President Kennedy and the Pope, begging them to help. Then in 1966, during the Freedom Flights, her wish was granted and her family was whole again. Or at least most of them. Her siblings and her mother were let go, but her father was not allowed to leave as he was a pediatrician. As such, the skills that came with it were valuable to the still reforming country. Five years later the whole family was reunited and they were able to resettle in Grove City in May of 1966.

There, Maria, the oldest of the five children, was able to complete her senior year of high school at Bishop Ready in 1967. Maria married in 1969, while attending Ohio State University, and went on to raise four children, who also served their communities and church. “The reason that I turned out so good and was able to accomplish so much is because of the people of Ohio, it’s because they embraced me. Everybody was good to me and, in turn, I was good to them,” she says.

Much of Maria’s adult life has been marked by other challenges. In 1990 she diagnosed with ovarian cancer. Maria recalls praying to God, saying, “God, if you spare my life; I know that You have something for me to do.” A few years later, she was elected to the Grove City Council.

“Being an exile changed me in a way that prepared me for the future. My father was a pediatrician; I grew up seeing him taking care of children. I remember in Cuba, people coming to my house and bringing gifts for my dad for having saved their son’s lives. I was witness to that and it touched my heart. When I went to Nationwide Children’s Hospital, I realized that this was my calling, being able to help others, to become their voice. I’ve seen so many miracles.” In addition to her daily job, she has also served on numerous boards and has spent her life being a pioneer and a champion for everyone in the community.



Bhutan



"Here, I was welcomed, I got a job, I opened a business, I am on track and soon I will become a U.S. Citizen. Columbus is home now"

A country to Call His Own

Tara Dhungana

For as far back as he could remember Tara Dhungana did not have a country he could call "home." As an exiled Bhutanese he lived fifteen years of his life in a refugee camp in Nepal. Tara grew up knowing that he and people like him were not accepted outside of the government designated area. In this place, thousands like him spent their days in a prison-like setting where time stood still. That feeling of not belonging changed on a very cold winter day in February of 2009, when his plane landed in Columbus, Ohio.

"I was eleven when we left everything behind; not knowing if we never return home. We thought we would be back soon, but instead, we went to a refugee camp. Refugee life is dismal and miserable; you are trapped in the camp that you cannot leave. There were about 22,000 people where I grew up. It felt like we were animals confined to that space and nothing more. You are there, you exist, but there's nothing for you; nothing to look forward to, no plans, no future. There were also six similar camps in Nepal." Tara explains.

Tara attended school at camp from grade sixth until he graduated high school. Desperate to do something with his life, he left the camp and went to the second largest city in Nepal where in order to get a job and further his education, he lied about his situation as a refugee. "I spoke Nepali and looked the same, so I faked being one of them. I was in panic mode all the time. I was suspicious of everyone and feared being sent back to the camp if my secret had been discovered."

Tara obtained his master's degree in business and obtained employment at a school. He was surrounded by Nepalese students and professional colleagues, Tara was always concerned about keeping the appearance of being one of them. "It was very tough. You can lie to the world, but you can't lie to yourself. It hurts you. Then the lying is so complicated... every lie you tell you have to remember, so you end up telling hundreds of lies. You have to make up an entire story. Living with that for a decade was very traumatic for me not able to tell many of my friends in Nepal to this day don't know I'm a refugee. I can't tell them because they'd look down on me. The mainstream Nepalese, view refugees as the lowest of the lowest. Back then, if anyone found out I was living as a Nepalese, I would have been treated as a criminal. None of my friends would have helped me," Tara explains. Fortunately Tara and his family were offered the opportunity for resettlement. They did not know they were coming to Columbus until the day before their flight.

A year later, after struggling to acclimate to the culture, the weather, and the many issues a newly arrived immigrant has to face, Tara was offered a position with Community Refugee and Immigration Services (CRIS), the agency that helped him when he first settled in Columbus. Today, he is the program manager.

"I would not be the man I am today had I not gone through all the difficulties I went through before reaching this point in my life," Tara says. He lives his life to help other people find jobs and become contributing members of society. From his refugee perspective, "I don't want the new refugees to suffer like I did. I just want to find a way to be helpful to them."

In addition to his work with CRIS, in 2011, he opened his a grocery store, and sold it for a large profit in 2014. He recently opened a restaurant in Gahanna, that featuring south Asian food. He is partnering with four other refugees and three Nepalese. "I've never had this opportunity before. So I'm really glad to be able to go for it," Tara believes, most refugees are here to contribute to the economy, "They want to call this country their own because they did not have a country before. I did not belong anywhere; I did not belong to any country of the world until now.



Eritrea

"Thanks to CRIS, I am able to embrace my four children every day and watch them grow into contributing members of society"

The Freedom to Pursue Happiness

Mihret Ketem

Nothing evokes Jefferson's words "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness," than basking in the sunshine of Mihret Ketem's smile when she speaks about her life in the United States.

Mihret struggles as a single mother of four, holding two jobs as a housekeeper at a hotel and as the member of an office cleaning crew. However, for her, life is good because she knows she is free and her children are with her and safe. She believes that in the United States she has the freedom to work hard and find better opportunities for herself and her family.

Mihret's story began when her husband was arrested in Eritrea. She was forced to flee by herself to a refugee camp in neighboring Ethiopia, leaving her four children behind. From there, she was able to secure safe passage to Columbus, Ohio, where she resettled. She found a welcoming home thanks to the efforts of the Community Refugee and Immigration Services Community Refugee and Immigration Services (CRIS) organization, who helped her establish herself in the community, find an apartment and job, as well as providing all the support she needed.

But even as she started her new life, her thoughts and prayers were constantly with her children. By then, almost four years had passed since the last time she saw them. Mihret knew that somehow they had managed to make their way to a refugee camp, only to find out their mother was no longer there. It became her mission to hold them again, to bring them to America.

To help her surpass Mihret enlisted CRIS because of the agency's determined persistence that her family became whole again. She says she owes the agency a great deal, "It's thanks to them that I'm able to embrace my four children every day and to see them grow to become contributing members of society."

It's only been five years since Mihret left the refugee camp, but she feels much has improved in her life. Her daughter is studying to become a nurse while the other three children are finishing school. Mihret looks forward to the day when she can own her own home and dreams of one day when she can start a business of her own selling traditional clothing from Eritrea and maybe even design a clothing line herself. Or perhaps, study cosmetology and open a beauty salon. Whatever the outcome, Mihret looks forward to the opportunity to choose her own path freely.

To Mihret, working hard in exchange for the kind of freedom that United States of America has provided her and her family is a reasonable price for having the opportunity of creating possibility..



This section includes refugee arrival data from 2002 to 2014 from the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) and the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS), as well as current data on the refugee community based on the refugee household survey conducted by Community Research Partners. The survey results offer a unique view of refugees after they have settled in Franklin County, in contrast to data from PRM and ODJFS, which represent the status of refugees when they first arrived in the United States.

3.1 Refugee Migration Patterns

As mentioned, 16,596 refugees were resettled in the Columbus MSA between 1983 and 2014, and of these, 59.2% have arrived in the past 10 years. The PRM data reveal an increase in the number of refugees resettled in Franklin County between 2002 and 2014, as seen in Figure 1. In total, 11,097 refugees have been resettled in the county since 2002.

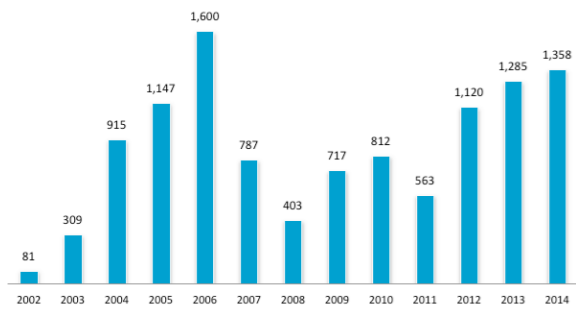


Figure 1. Bar graph showing the number of refugees resettled in Franklin County between 2002 and 2014 by year. Based on data from the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration.

Franklin County has had, by far, the highest number of refugee arrivals in Ohio between 2002 and 2014 (Figure 2), accounting for nearly half (48.4%) of all refugees resettled in the state during that period. By comparison, Cuyahoga County is in a distant second place with a 21.2% share of the state total.

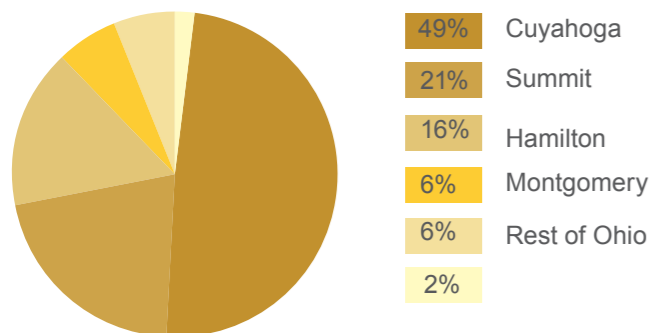


Figure 2. Pie chart showing the refugees resettled in Ohio between 2002 and 2014 by county. Based on data from the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration.

Secondary Migration of Refugees

After initial resettlement, refugees are free to move elsewhere in the United States, a concept referred to as “secondary migration.” While the potential to attract more refugees could be seen as beneficial to the local economy, there may also be some cause for concern for local government and service providers. According to research by UNHCR on refugee resettlement and secondary migration in the United States, the inability to track secondary migration of refugees has implications for funding of refugee services. Federal funding is primarily reflective of the number of refugees initially resettled, and so when refugees move, the resources typically do not follow. This results in the possibility of a greater demand for services with insufficient resources.

Neither federal, state, nor local government agencies track this secondary migration; therefore, the degree of in- and out-migration of refugees is impossible to measure. According to the refugee household survey, 63.0% percent of respondents report having originally resettled in central Ohio, while 37.0% moved to central Ohio in a wave of secondary in-migration. Without data on secondary out-migration, however, we cannot say how many refugees initially resettled to Franklin County remain in the area, nor can we determine the exact number of refugees currently living in the region.

3.2 Refugee Community Profile

Age and Sex

According to data from ODJFS, 51.2% of refugees resettled in Franklin County between 2003 and 2014 were male and 48.8% were female (Figure 3).

Upon arrival, refugees tend to be young; the median age for new refugee arrivals is 20.9 years. According to the 2013 American Community Survey (ACS), the median age of all Franklin County residents is 33.9 years. The population pyramid below presents more details on the age of refugees upon arrival. There is a visible leap in the number of refugees between the ages of 15 and 24; there are also a substantial number of children under the age of 15. Refugees over the age of 24 account for only 37.5% of all refugees.

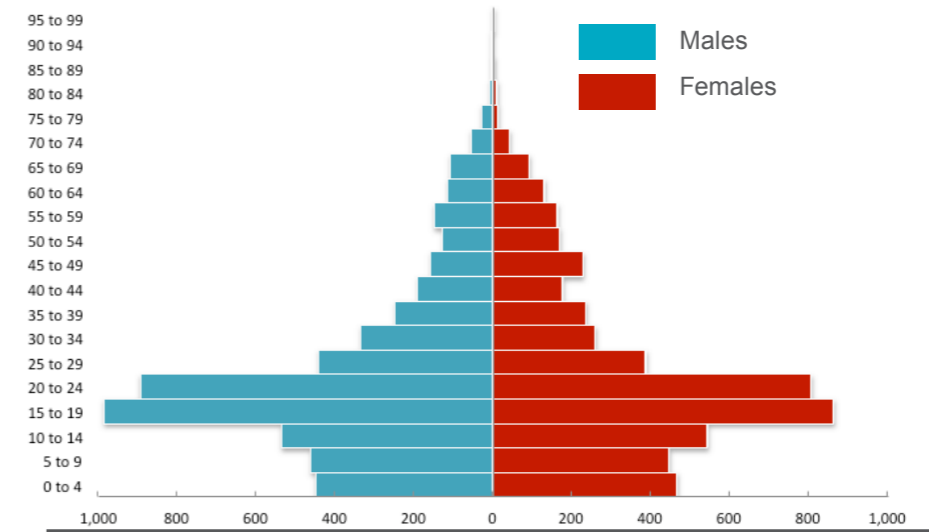


Figure 3. Population pyramid showing the number of refugees arriving in Franklin County between 2003 and 2014 by age upon arrival and sex. Based on data from the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services.

Younger refugees are common throughout the United States. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security reports that in 2013, the median age for refugees was 25 years, whereas the median age of the general population was 35 years.

Reflective of the arrival data from ODJFS, the refugee household survey shows that there is a much higher percentage of refugees under the age of 16 (39.5%) than among all county residents (21.3%), according to the 2013 ACS. Coupled with the share of seniors in the refugee community (8.0%), which more closely mirrors the share of all county residents who are seniors (10.6%), these age groups together represent the non-working-age population. Nearly half of the refugees living in Franklin County are of non-working-age (47.5%), compared to 31.9% of total Franklin County residents. As such, the dependency ratio—that is, the ratio of children and seniors to the working-age population—for refugees (0.906) is nearly double that of the general population (0.468). This indicates that there is a greater economic strain on working-age refugees than on the general working-age population in Franklin County.



Family and Household Size

For refugee families resettled in Franklin County, the average refugee family size upon arrival is 4.55, according to ODJFS. This is higher than the average family size for all Franklin County families (3.19), according to the 2013 ACS.

Similarly, the refugee household survey indicates an average of 4.60 persons per household. This figure is nearly double the average household size for Franklin County households in general (2.49).

Country and Region of Origin

Based on data from PRM, of the 11,097 refugees resettled in Franklin County between 2002 and 2014, the majority come from Sub-Saharan Africa (64.1%, Figure 4).

Most of the refugees from Sub-Saharan Africa come from Somalia, which alone accounts for more than half of the total number of refugees (53.5%, Table 1). The predominately-Muslim refugees began fleeing civil war in Somalia in 1991, and were first resettled in central Ohio around 2000. PRM counts 5,936 Somali refugees resettled in Franklin County; however, the total number of Somalis in central Ohio is much higher, due in part to secondary migration. The population ranges from around 10,000, according to the ACS, to as high as 40,000, based on estimates from local service providers who work with members of the Somali community. The Columbus area reportedly now has the second highest Somali population in the United States, behind Minneapolis–St. Paul.

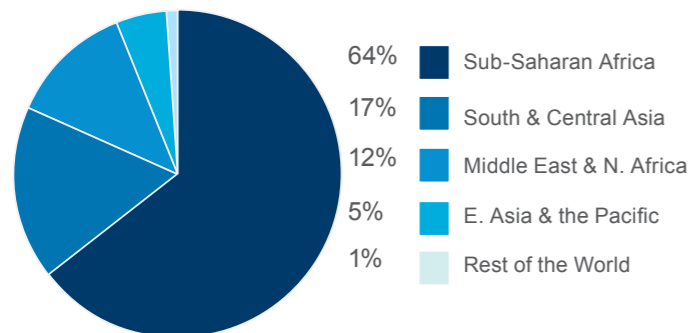


Figure 4. Pie chart showing the refugees resettled in Franklin County between 2002 and 2014 by region of origin. Note that the Rest of the World (*) includes refugees from Europe and Latin America. Based on data from the Bureau of Population,

The second largest group of refugees in Franklin County is the refugee community from Bhutan. Making up 16.8% of the total number of refugees resettled between 2002 and 2014, these refugees are primarily ethnic Nepali—who tend to identify with the Hindu faith—and have been fleeing persecution in the predominately-Buddhist country since in the late 1980s. According to PRM, 1,863 refugees from Bhutan have been resettled in Franklin County since 2002. However, based on estimates from the local refugee resettlement agencies, this only accounts for about one-tenth of the total Nepali community in central Ohio, which may be as high as 15,000. Like the Somalis, most have come through secondary migration. According to community leaders in the local Nepali community, Columbus now has the largest Nepali population in the United States.

Table 1. Top 10 countries of origin for refugees resettled, Franklin County, 2002–2014

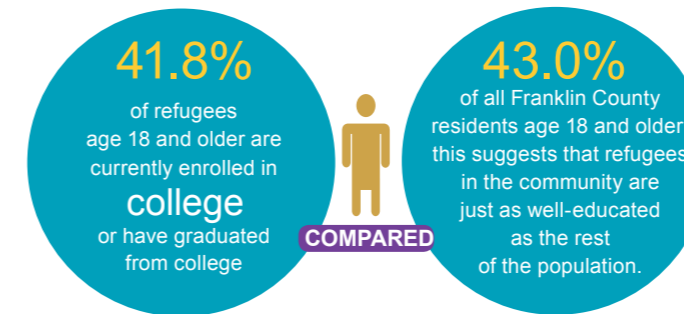
	Country of origin	Refugees resettled	Share of county total
1	Somalia	5,936	53.5%
2	Bhutan	1,863	16.8%
3	Iraq	1,243	11.2%
4	Burma	494	4.5%
5	Ethiopia	278	2.5%
6	Eritrea	260	2.3%
7	Sierra Leone	181	1.6%
8	Democratic Republic of the Congo	146	1.3%
9	Liberia	135	1.2%
10	Iran	108	1.0%

Source: Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration

While not reflected in the current refugee arrival data, the third largest group in central Ohio is likely the refugee community from the former Soviet Union, most of whom arrived before 2002. The majority of these refugees are Jewish. Escaping renewed political and religious persecution during the Cold War, Soviet Jewish refugees began resettling in central Ohio in 1974 and continued through the collapse of the Soviet Union in the 1990s. The total number of Jewish refugees from the former Soviet Union is unknown, however, according to the ACS, there are currently more than 3,000 Franklin County residents who were born in the former Soviet Union, and many of them were likely Jewish refugees.

Educational Attainment

According to the refugee household survey, 41.8% of respondents age 18 and older indicated that they are either currently enrolled in college or have graduated from college. By comparison with data from the 2013 American Community Survey, this is closely aligned with same figure for Franklin County in general (43.0%), suggesting that refugees in the community are just as well-educated as the rest of the population.



Unemployment and Workforce Participation

While local refugees may have the roughly same levels of education as the larger community, the results of the refugee household survey show that refugees in Franklin County experience higher levels of unemployment. The unemployment rate among surveyed refugees age 16 and older was 15.9%, more than three times higher than the 2014 unemployment rate for Franklin County (4.8%), according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

At the same time, according to the refugee household survey, the workforce participation rate among refugees of working age (ages 16 to 64) is 81.8%. This figure, which includes both those who are employed and those who are actively looking for work, is higher than the workforce participation rate for Franklin County as a whole (77.1%), according to the 2013 ACS. This suggests that, while the unemployment rate among refugees is high, out-of-work refugees between the ages of 16 and 64 are less likely to give up trying to find a job than the general working age population in Franklin County.

The local refugee community supports an estimated total of **21,273** jobs in the Columbus MSA.

Employment by Industry and Occupation

Among the survey respondents with jobs, the majority work for employers in one of three major industry sectors: transportation, warehousing, and utilities (28.3%); educational services, health care, and social assistance (20.7%); and retail trade (12.6%).

Refugee jobs, regardless of industry, are distributed across major occupational groups which better describe the set of activities and tasks these employees are paid to perform. One-third of survey respondents with jobs work in white-collar or professional occupations, including management, business, science, and arts jobs. Another 26.8% work in service jobs. By comparison, 41.4% of all Franklin County workers have white-collar jobs, and only 17.7% work in service jobs, according to the 2013 ACS.

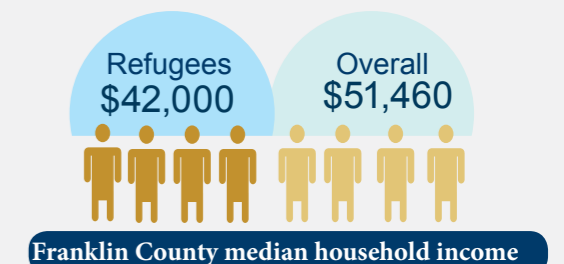
Business Ownership

Among the employed refugees surveyed, age 16 and older, 13.6% own a business. This rate of entrepreneurship is more than double the Franklin County rate in general (6.5%), indicating that local refugees are more than twice as likely to own a business as the general population.

Of the refugee-owned businesses described in the household survey, the majority are in the same three major industry categories mentioned above: educational services, health care, and social assistance (28.2%); transportation, warehousing, and utilities (23.1%); and retail trade (17.2%). Among these businesses, one-third reportedly export goods or services.

Income

The refugee household survey shows a median household income of \$42,000. This is lower than the Franklin County median (\$51,460), according to the 2013 ACS, which is indicative of the higher share of generally low-paying service jobs, and the lower share of generally higher-paying white-collar jobs.



Cuba

"I am a great believer that it is important to look for opportunities for everyone to participate and bring them into the fold, and let their voices be heard and talents utilized"

A Brother to All

José Luis Mas

In 1961 the Cuban Revolution was winding down, leaving in its wake a deeply transformed country. Jose Luis Mas, now known as Joe Mas was twelve when he arrived in the United States. His mother, stepfather, and siblings fled under the guise of a job transfer. His father, a lawyer with a well-established practice in La Habana, stayed behind. He was hopeful that the most antagonistic ideas of the revolution wouldn't take hold in his country and life would return to normal.

As a regional branch president with The First National City Bank of New York, Joe's stepfather was offered a job as an officer in the bank's headquarters, but because he had been cautioned against living in that city he went for a position in Ecuador. The nightmare of revolution seemed to follow them. They immediately requested asylum in the United States, Joe's stepfather took a teller job at a bank in Pensacola, Florida. When Joe and his family arrived at the airport, they were taken to an apartment his stepfather's new employer had rented for the family. There, they discovered the great lengths that had been taken to assist in the transition; the refrigerator had been filled so his parents did not have to go shopping right away and be shocked by the American supermarkets.

"I was never received with anything other than kindness," Joe says as he recalls so many people helping them during those first months in the United States. The generosity shown by others stuck with Joe for the rest of his life.

Since his grandfather had been a court of appeals judge and his father had been a lawyer, Joe decided to follow in their footsteps, and was accepted at Capital University's Law School and moved to Columbus, Ohio. "One of the most difficult things was to figure out how to go to college, how to pay for my studies, and how to choose a school. I had no mentoring... That experience was traumatic to me. It is something I talk about a lot,"

Upon earning his degree, Joe opened his own practice and began a lifelong engagement in community organizations. "I became very involved with every organization, event and group of people I was asked to support. This has given meaning to my life."

In his own practice, Joe works as a trial attorney, primarily representing newly-arrived immigrants and refugees. For decades he has protected those whose lives were already turned upside-down and has served in eighteen community organization boards. "Refugees and exiles experience an overwhelming gratitude for the sense of safety, being welcomed into the United States, and the opportunities and support. People in these situations have gone through great danger and have lost property and employment, even family and friends; so for them, for us, there is such joy and appreciation for everything we've been given here that we want to contribute and give back to the community that gave us so much."

Joe was the first foreign-born Hispanic to run for county-wide office in Franklin County and pursued a seat in the Franklin County Common Pleas Court in 2002, as well as the Franklin County Municipal Court in 2007. In May of 2009, he was appointed by Ohio Secretary of State Jennifer Brunner to serve on the Franklin County Board of Elections. As Executive Director of the Ohio Commission on Hispanic/Latino Affairs, he successfully lobbied the courts and government agencies referencing the applicability of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Later, while in private practice, he was named as Vice-Chair of the Supreme Court Committee on Interpreter Services. He has been honored by the State of Ohio with the Distinguished Hispanic Ohioan award, by the American Bar Association with the Silver Key Award, and by the Ohio NAACP with the Pioneer of the Diversity award.

Iraq



“Every refugee had a dream and an ambition. They came here with their dreams and found a place where they can make them come true”



From Broken Dreams to Restored Hope

Amina Alsidiki

Amina Alsidiki has lived only a few months in Columbus, Ohio, but she's already dreaming big. The Iraqi twenty-something spends her days in front of a camera in her room, working on her You Tube Channel, waiting for the moment she and her family are conferred refugee status.

Amina and her family arrived in Columbus in March of 2015 and immediately applied for asylum. Even though they will be able to request a work authorization before the end of the year, Amina says her family cannot go back to Iraq.

Amina lived the first 19 years of her life in the UAE, then moved with her family to Iraq for four and a half years, before coming to the United States this year.

“When we first came, it was difficult for us to find an apartment and a car. We stayed in my aunt's house until we found them. Then we had to buy new furniture and stuff for our house. Life here is really difficult without a car. Now that we have one, it saves us a lot of time and money. Since I speak English, things are going smoothly for me, but it has been a big challenge for my family to adapt to a new life; especially my brother, who goes to school. He has to study in English now, which is difficult for him. But he's getting used to it. Since we don't have health insurance, and we are not eligible for one yet, a church helped us getting free dental care. Another church gave us free medicine. Also, the mosque helped us in getting free health care,” says Amina of her first experiences with life in the U.S.

For the time being, Amina serves the community. She volunteers at her local library, helping out with activities and programs and also teaches English as a second language to newly arrived immigrants and refugees. She's looking forward to the day she can move forward and take advantage of the many opportunities she sees this country offers.

“In the future, when my asylum case gets discussed and approved, I will do my master's degree in “Library Sciences” and hopefully find a good job. I will continue posting videos to my channel and it will be a second source of income for me,” Amina says and adds that here she feels safe and confident in the future.

Amina says “Every refugee had a dream and an ambition. They came here with their dreams and found a place where they can make them come true.”



Eritrea

"I was not happy with my job situation back in Seattle and was jumping from job to job. One day, my sister gave me a cell phone for my birthday and I ended up breaking it. It costed me a good chunk of money to get it fixed. When I broke it again, I opened up the phone and learned how to fix it," Bisrat recalls with a smile. It took him only destroying four cell phones to get all the expertise he needed to start his business"

A Smart Fix for the Economy

Tesfai Kifle and Bisrat Misghinna

Bisrat Misghinna and Tesfai Kifle have been business partners for the past five years. Bisrat grew up in Eritrea and watched and admired his mother as she ran a travel agency. While Bisrat grew up in Eritrea, Tesfai, was raised in Columbus, Ohio with Eritrean parents.

Tesfai and his family arrived in the United States in 1983, when he was ten months old. They fled Eritrea because the country had been at war for years and was not safe. He and his family spent a period of time in a refugee camp in Sudan until they were sponsored to come to the United States. Even though Tesfai does not remember much of their struggle, his parents never missed an opportunity to tell him how much they sacrificed to come here and how important it was for him to succeed.

Bisrat crossed the border into Sudan by foot at a time when Eritrea was engaged in an armed conflict with Ethiopia. The first time he crossed as a 19-year-old he did it illegally; he was caught, arrested and jailed. Later, he did it again and legally went to Kenya where he was able to secure his legal documents and immigrate to the U.S. in 2006.

Tesfai and Bisrat met in 2010 through a mutual friend when Bisrat relocated from Seattle to Columbus. Bisrat previously helped run his mother's travel agency and was a savvy entrepreneur. Tesfai was ready to make a big change in his life.

Tesfai and Bisrat opened their first Smart Fix, a cell phone and laptop repair shop in the Short North the same year they met. Bisrat came with clientele he had built while working from home and putting the word out through Craig's list and social media.

The pair has had a successful business ever since the very first month and much of their profits have gone to open two additional shops; one at the Polaris Mall and the other in Tuttle Mall. They have also brought on five employees. At the time they opened their business, their niche was pretty unique to Columbus. "the downturn of the economy actually helped us gain more clients since cell phones have been steadily increasing in price, making it harder to simply replace a phone when it's damaged." They also offer a great selection of phones for retail sales. "When they come to our business, they deal directly with the owners and that makes a difference in their minds," Tesfai says. He explains that he always wanted to go into business so he was inspired to do it when he met Bisrat. They have kept their costs to the minimum, reinvesting most of their profit in making sure they have what they need for their customers and that they have employees that are well-trained and happy with their jobs.

Tesfai and Bisrat are true self-made entrepreneurs and feel great pride in the way they service the community. "As immigrants, our parents went through so much hardship. They made sure they instilled in our minds that they brought us here to give us the opportunity to have a better life. That notion truly resonates with us and helps us to keep going and working hard to make something of ourselves. We realize that if our parents could do what they did, there's no reason we cannot fulfill that wish they have for us," Tesfai says.

Somalia

"Money cannot buy happiness. You can have the biggest house, the best car, and still not be happy"



Live, From Columbus, Ohio

Sodow Mohamud

As a child growing up in Somalia, Sowdo loved to listen to the news on the radio. As she got older, she was able to go into town by herself and bring the news back to her mother. Doing this, she realized many want to know what is going on in the world but they don't always have the time to seek information. Upon realizing this, Sowdo was inspired to become a reporter, so she could spread the news to women like her mother through the radio.

Sowdo became the first person in her family to attend high school. This presented her with the unique opportunity to attend a one-month training session at a radio station. Not long after, she landed a job as the only female reporter on a radio sports show. She had the opportunity to do what she loved and was tasked with reporting the news and soccer games. Listeners in Somalia ostracized the idea of having a female reporter and made alarming threats to Sowdo.

Sowdo persevered under the pressure of the public eye and continued to work in spite of the threats. Tragically, she came to a crossroads when two of her colleagues were killed. She knew she had to leave Somalia.

In 2009, she made her way to Kenya and after a few months onward to South Africa where she learned English and made friends. Despite having to move away, she was able to keep her job in the Somali radio station, reporting on events from the relative safety of South Africa. The 2010 World Cup was one of the highlights of that time.

Around this time, things got bad for Somalis. Many shops were robbed or burned down and some shopkeepers were shot and killed. They had become targets for hate crimes. Sowdo knew it was time to move again.

In late fall of 2012, Sowdo arrived in Columbus, Ohio. Upon landing, she was greeted by some of the people whom she would come to know as her first friends in the U.S. With their help, she was able to find housing and employment. One of Sowdo's greatest challenges was transportation. Sowdo spent much of her time waiting at cold bus stops to travel back and forth from her first job at a warehouse. In a brief period of time, her newfound friends were able to teach her how to drive and in about five months, she was able to buy a car.

In her spare time, Sowdo also volunteered at a refugee resettlement agency, aiding people like herself to start over. Because of her strong dedication to help others, she was offered a job as a resettlement caseworker and employment consultant at the agency.

Outside of work, Sowdo enjoys spending time with her friends, traveling to new places, and of course, watching sports.

Sowdo defines success now as just being happy, "Money cannot buy happiness. You can have the biggest house, the best car, and still not be happy." Soon, Sowdo will be getting married and hopes to one day bring her family to the United States. She is looking forward to becoming a U.S. citizen so she can travel back to South Africa and tell everyone that she is from Columbus, Ohio.



This section incorporates information from the focus groups and stakeholder interviews, along with a review of similar studies, to describe the social impact of the local refugee community.

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees (UNHCR) has examined social impacts of refugee populations on countries of asylum. In the *Social and Economic Impact of Large Refugee Populations on Host Developing Countries* (UNHCR, 1997), self-sufficiency, relationship building, and education were identified as social impacts of refugees. The UNHCR report focused on countries of asylum in the developing world; however, these social impacts can be applied to countries of resettlement in the developed world as well. In addition to exploring these three social impacts as they apply to the local refugee community in central Ohio, a fourth social impact has been added which is relevant in the United States: home and business ownership.

Within these social impacts, we examine how and to what extent the local refugee community builds social capital. First introduced in the 19th century, the concept of social capital was refined and popularized in the late 1990s by sociologist Robert Putnam. In his book *Bowling Alone* (2000), Putnam explains that social capital is a way of understanding how networks, relationships, and connections between people enable individuals to succeed and promote collective action, for individual and collective benefit. Evaluating qualitative data on particular groups of people in this way can reveal how the experiences and behavior of those groups influence their success within their own community and the larger community, in this case central Ohio.

According to the Office of Refugee Resettlement, refugee status affords eight months of certain benefits, including medical insurance and financial assistance. After this period, refugee families are eligible for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) benefits. Focus group participants explained that the cash assistance they received was not enough for their families to live on, and that the process of determining eligibility, application, and approval or denial of benefits was burdensome. Navigating the unfamiliar landscape of health insurance was particularly confusing. Partially in response to the insufficiency of benefits, and partially due to cultural values, participants from both the focus groups and interviews described being uncomfortable with governmental assistance, preferring instead to rely on help from friends and family within their community. All three interviewees stressed their personal drive and motivation to establish self-sufficiency. Focus group participants also related that the motivation to become financially independent is a trait among their communities, suggesting that refugee communities, which have experienced great difficulties and life obstacles, tend to display high tenacity and determination to succeed.



4.2 Relationship Building

Putnam also describes how communities build social capital through relationship building. In *Bowling Alone*, he identifies two types of relationships: bonding and bridging. Bonding connections are mutually beneficial interactions within a homogenous community. These are the local networks within refugee communities that enable individuals to improve their social position. In the refugee community, these can be interactions such as making a connection with a relative who owns a business in order to gain employment, or participating in ride-shares, child care, or translation assistance.

Bridging connections are beneficial ties between socially dissimilar groups. In this case, refugees seek to build bridging ties between themselves and the larger central Ohio community. Participants described the efforts made by refugees to integrate as quickly as possible, by getting involved in English language studies, enrolling in higher education or training courses, and ultimately seeking U.S. citizenship. The interviewees described a common scenario within their communities in which individuals seek to assimilate to such a high degree that they can begin to abandon elements of their heritage.

4.3 Education

Interviewees described scenarios in their communities in which highly skilled and educated individuals desire to use their skills in their new country of resettlement, but are hampered by language barriers, few options for skilled positions, non-transferable certifications, and stigma. Furthermore, refugees may lack the required soft skills or an understanding of workplace norms common in the United States. However, once these obstacles are addressed, many local refugees become successful professionals, including physicians and dentists. Many others work toward owning a business. Initially, most find entry-level employment while seeking higher education to improve their qualifications. One of the primary reasons given for choosing to relocate in central Ohio if originally resettled elsewhere was the number and diversity of employment opportunities. Social networks were a key resource in finding employment. The short-term refugee focus group members related how having a friend or knowing someone enabled them to secure employment.

4.4 Home and Business Ownership

Six of the 15 participants in the long-term focus group had started their own business, and all of them described family members or children who had gone on to start businesses themselves. Participants from all groups related how an entrepreneurial spirit was highly valued among their communities, partly due to the desire for self-reliance, as discussed above. One interviewee suggested that most refugees are by nature open to taking risks—such as starting a business—and highly determined to succeed and support their family. Most of the long-term refugees had built bonding social capital by hiring others from the refugee community.

Four of the 15 long-term refugees owned their own home. Others felt that, because of financial limitations, they had to choose between investing in a home and investing in an education, and had chosen education. Somali and Soviet Jewish refugees, in particular, emphasized that education was more critical to success. That being said, many refugees who chose to resettle in central Ohio after initially being placed elsewhere, made their decision based on housing affordability. Participants described how large families and the desire to become financially independent compels refugees to make the change to central Ohio, where rent is cheaper and housing stock is diverse.

Entrepreneurial efforts and home ownership have a positive social impact on the larger community. Home ownership can open up avenues for long-term investments in the community through equity and the stability of ownership. Starting businesses can activate vacant or blighted land, provide employment, contribute to the tax base, and provide needed services. Both home and business ownership create opportunities within and outside of the refugee community, and create the kinds of networks and beneficial relationships that build strong social capital in central Ohio.

4.5 Discussion of Social Impact

Feedback from all groups revealed that refugee populations define success based on both personal and family accomplishments. Many participants shared the achievements of their extended families and children. These achievements included starting families of their own, graduating from higher education, and starting their own businesses. The strong connections made among members of the refugee community, combined with their demonstrated values of self-sufficiency and entrepreneurship, work to create a ripple effect of social capital throughout the community and between generations.



participants in the long-term focus group had started their own business



long-term refugees owned their own home

Home ownership can open up avenues for long-term investments in the community through equity and the stability of ownership.

Refugee populations define success based on both personal and family accomplishments.

B

Bhutan

"In the refugee camp, we were always dependent upon the big agencies – UNHCR, Red Cross – but now, there are more opportunities. Now, I make my own money and manage my own life. We save money; we work hard; we have to build a bright future for our kids because we know what it is like not to have."

From the Ground Up

* Tek Rizal

Tek Rizal was born in Bhutan. At the age of seven he became a refugee and began his education in an Eastern Nepal refugee camp. The camps they were crowded and limited in both resources and opportunities. To further his education in the arts, Tek walked to and from the school nearly every day. He brought his education back with him, volunteering to teach at the schools in the camp. His two brothers took up jobs to support him so he could continue to go to school. In 2008, he graduated from a college in India.

However, since Tek was not a citizen of any country, he couldn't get a job. He was trapped at the camp. "Getting an education as a refugee is getting an education for nothing," he said. Shortly after this realization, Tek applied for resettlement.

In 2009 he married and by 2010 he, his wife, and his mother were finally resettled to the United States. They were moved to where Tek's sister lived, in Oakland, California.

With very little community to go to and so few jobs available, Tek recalls feeling frustrated and depressed. His first job was a sign advertiser for Little Caesars Pizza, "I was frustrated since I was fully educated in my country. I was a graduate. I remember one day, one of my student's from Nepal passed me while I was working, and I felt very embarrassed because of my job."

Tek, upset with the difficulty of life in the U.S., went back to the resettlement agency and requested a ticket to return to Nepal. There, he thought, he could get a better job and be respected for it. He did not want receive food stamps or government assistance.

After speaking with a co-worker, Tek learned that work ethic was valuable and would help him further his career in his new country. The option for opportunity changed his perspective on work. He began working harder, seventeen hours a day to support himself and his family.

Having some connections to people in Columbus, Ohio, he moved his family in 2012. He found that Columbus housed a strong community of Bhutanese Nepali refugees. Once settled, Tek got a job as a driver for the T Marzetti Company and his wife gained employment working on the weekends.

Tek said, "We started working hard, and in two years, we were able to buy a house." Their beautiful home had two large garden plots in the backyard. To his knowledge, most of the Bhutanese Nepali refugees that arrived in the U.S. from 2008 to 2010 have already bought a house, Tek still has his job as a driver for the T Marzetti Company, and his wife works for Thirty-One Gifts. He's an active Bhutanese Nepali community leader and is on the board of the Bhutanese Nepali Community of Columbus (BNCC). He has good relationships with his neighbors and is happy to have a home that he can pass on to his children.

* Photo not available



Iraq

“When we arrived at the airport in Columbus, so many people – community members, the resettlement agency – a big crowd of people, welcomed us. They welcomed my wife, my daughter, and me warmly”

In the Land of Opportunities

Walid Ali

Walid Ali grew up in the northeastern part of Iraq, in the Kurdistan region. As a child, he was well-educated and learned a great deal working with his father in home repairs. He graduated high school, attended a technical school in Iraq, and decided to pursue a career in teaching. In 2001, he graduated from the College of Education program at the University of Baghdad and moved to Yemen to teach English for three years.

In 2004, he moved back to Iraq and married the love of his life. By May, he found work with the United States Army as an interpreter. After six months, however, Walid was forced to quit as the situation in Baghdad grew worse. It was known that interpreters were often targeted by terrorists and gangs. So to protect himself and his then pregnant wife, they moved back to Yemen.

When they arrived in 2005, Walid and his family applied to UNHCR for refugee status, which was thankfully approved. By 2008, UNHCR informed him that the United States had agreed to accept his family into the U.S. Resettlement Program. In May of 2009, Walid, his wife and their young daughter arrived in the U.S. as refugees.

For many, being accepted into the resettlement program is a once in a lifetime chance. The resettlement agency helped us to start our life over,” Walid said. In addition to the programs aide, a local church, Worthington Methodist, lent a hand in not just their finances but also a community with which to connect.

It took a few months, but eventually Walid was able to find work at the Renaissance Hotel in downtown Columbus in the housekeeping department. Walid was glad to be working again. He wanted to be self-sufficient, to be able to pay his rent, bills, and other expenses on his own. He was still on the lookout for bigger opportunities.

In this case, his English skills helped him immensely. CRIS, or the Community Refugee and Immigration Services, the very same resettlement agency that helped him and his family when they first arrived, offered him a job as an employment caseworker for other Iraqis. While at the time it was just part-time, he was eventually able to apply as a full time caseworker.

With encouragement from CRIS, he also applied for a master’s program at OSU. Something he had been planning to do for a while. Once accepted however, he had to switch back to part-time employment to keep up with his studies. By May of 2013 he graduated with a master’s degree in education and began the hunt for a job in that field. However, even as he searched, his thoughts drifted back to those skills he picked up in his younger days. Working with his father and attending technical school had given him impressive construction skills. Why not put them to good use? So, partnering with Sears, he started his own small business in home improvement. With some training from Sears on their particular brand of products, his business took off, doing the hands-on work of installation and other home improvements. Later on, also applying to work with the City of Columbus programs repairing homes, streets and sidewalks throughout the city.

At current, Walid lives with his wife and two daughters, with a third on the way, in Dublin. Happily, they have recently received their U.S. citizenship and Walid continues to run his small business in which he hires community members to work on repairing homes and roads in Franklin County. While he’s considering a master’s degree in program management, he is content with his current job and is hopeful about life and the future for him and his family.



**Democratic Republic
of the Congo**

"I wanted to be independent as a mother and support my baby in Africa"

Taking Chances

Fidia Gateka

Fidia Gateka is a single mother from the Democratic Republic of the Congo who lost her family to an ethnic conflict, one of many in the Congo's history. Fidia herself fled to Kenya and later gave birth to her daughter, Grace.

In June of 2014 she traveled the some eight-thousand miles to the United States, with only a small bag and her child at her side. They moved in with a host family in Columbus, Ohio, who provided Fidia with the opportunity to take English classes every day. A chance she did not pass up, since without it she would be limited to her own small ethnic community. Within a year, she could speak English fluently, which gave her the confidence to seek employment.

However, while she wanted to work, she also desired to continue improving her English and give something back to her homeland. She decided she would import fabric from Africa and sell it to the church and community, this was the plan that she shared with her host family.

Taking six-hundred dollars from her savings, she purchased fifteen large bundles of fabric from the Congo and had them shipped to the US. Within a few months, her new business was successful, selling a third of her supply. As she continued to expand her work, she wished to expand her skills. Sewing is something of a tradition in her family, her mother having passed on the skill to Fidia when she was a girl.

Now, she is starting to learn how to use a sewing machine. In part, she is carrying on the family business, as her mother also sold fabric in the Congo. To Fidia, this is something she's always wanted.

With Fidia, the American dream is alive and with hard work and dedication she will continue to expand her business to greater heights.



5.0 Economic Impact



This section incorporates the data from the refugee resettlement agency survey and the refugee household survey, along with regional multipliers from IMPLAN®, to estimate the contribution of refugees to the Columbus MSA economy. As explained in Section 2.0, the economic impacts of refugees are generated by the refugee resettlement agencies, refugee workers, and refugee-owned businesses. These constitute only the direct economic impact of refugees. In contrast, the total economic impact includes the ripple effects, which are categorized as either indirect or induced impacts. All of these are measured in terms of the value of output generated, as well as the number of jobs supported.

5.1 Refugee Resettlement Agencies

The three refugee resettlement agencies in Franklin County spend money providing services to refugees in the community, as well as on other capital expenditures that benefit local refugees. These expenditures contribute to the direct economic impact of the three agencies. The total annual expenditures of the three agencies were \$6.0 million in 2013 (Table 2). These expenditures include:

⁹The value of direct output does not match the \$6.0 million in total expenditures in part because cash assistance to refugees is excluded from the calculation in order to avoid double-counting in the household income of refugee-wage earners. Total refugee-oriented grants received (\$3.7 million) are also removed from the calculation.

Table 2.
These expenditures include:
Total refugee resettlement agency expenditures, Franklin County, 2013

	Amount	Percentage of total
Wages and salaries	\$2,237,827	37.2%
Purchasing supplies for refugees	\$1,673,770	27.8%
Cash assistance to refugees	\$721,552	12.0%
Refugee-related capital expenditures	\$50,837	0.8%
Other expenses	\$1,337,071	22.2%
Total expenditures	\$6,021,057	100.0%

Source: CRP Refugee Resettlement Agency Survey

In 2013 these agencies employed 78 staff members serving the refugee community. These included 69 full-time and 9 part-time workers.

The economic impact analysis estimates that the expenditures—along with the output of the staff—of the three agencies are responsible for generating a total economic impact of \$3.1 million a year in the Columbus MSA (Table 3). This includes \$1.6 million in direct output⁹, as well as \$0.6 million of indirect output, and \$0.9 million of induced output. The indirect benefits apply to the MSA businesses that provide goods and services to the three agencies, whereas the induced benefits apply to the businesses in the MSA where employees of the three agencies spend their income.

Table 3.
Economic impact of refugee resettlement agencies, Columbus MSA, 2013

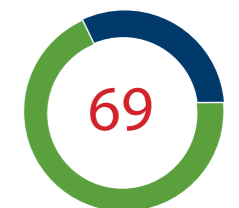
	Direct	Indirect	Induced	Total Impact
Output (millions)	\$1.6	\$0.6	\$0.9	\$3.1
Employment	78	12	16	106

Note: Numbers may not sum due to rounding
Source: Community Research Partners analysis using regional multipliers from IMPLAN®

The expenditures and services produced by the three agencies are estimated to support a total of 106 jobs in the Columbus MSA. This includes the direct employment of the 78 agency staff members, as well as the indirect employment of 12 employees of MSA businesses providing goods and services to the three agencies, and the induced employment of 16 employees of businesses in the MSA where employees of the three agencies spend their income.

The total annual expenditures of the three agencies were **\$6.0 million** in 2013

In 2013 these agencies employed **78** staff members serving the refugee community.



69 Full-time

Three agencies are estimated to support a total **106 jobs** in the Columbus MSA.



Tesfai and Bisrat opened their first Smart Fix, a cell phone and laptop repair shop in the Short North .

5.2 Refugee Workers

Refugees working in central Ohio primarily contribute to the local economy by producing goods and services as part of their employment. This constitutes their direct impact. Based on the weighted results of the refugee household survey, it is estimated that there are 6,685 refugee workers living in Franklin County.

The economic impact analysis estimates that these workers are responsible for generating a total economic impact of more than \$1 billion a year in the Columbus MSA (Table 4). This includes \$599.7 million in direct output, as well as \$385.8 million of indirect output, and \$35.9 million of induced output. The indirect benefits accrue to the local businesses that provide goods and services to their employers, whereas the induced benefits apply to the businesses in the MSA where refugee workers spend their income. The latter, in other words, is essentially refugee household spending.

The economic impact analysis estimates that these workers are responsible for generating a total economic impact of more than **\$1 billion** a year in the Columbus MSA.

Table 4.
Economic impact of refugee workers, Columbus MSA, 2015

	Direct	Indirect	Induced	Total Impact
Output (millions)	\$599.7	\$385.8	\$35.9	\$1,021.4
Employment	6,685	3,158	3,473	13,316

Note: Numbers may not sum due to rounding
Source: Community Research Partners analysis using regional multipliers from IMPLAN®

This economic activity is estimated to support a total of 13,316 jobs in the Columbus MSA. This includes the 6,685 refugee workers in Franklin County, as well as 3,158 indirect and 3,478 induced jobs throughout the MSA.

5.3 Refugee-owned Businesses

Refugee-owned businesses contribute to the local economy by creating local jobs and hiring workers who also contribute to the local economy by producing goods and services. This constitutes their direct impact. As mentioned in Section 3.0, the results of the refugee household survey indicate that refugees in Franklin County are more than twice as likely to start a business as the county population in general. Based on the weighted results of the survey, it is estimated that there are 873 refugee-owned businesses in the Columbus MSA employing 3,960 workers. According to the economic impact analysis, these businesses are responsible for generating a total economic impact of \$605.7 million a year in the Columbus MSA (Table 5). This includes \$354.9 million in direct output, as well as \$232.9 million of indirect output, and \$17.9 million of induced output. The indirect benefits apply to the MSA businesses that provide goods and services to refugee-owned businesses, whereas the induced benefits apply to the businesses in the MSA where employees of the refugee-owned businesses spend their income.

Table 5.
Economic impact of refugee-owned businesses, Columbus MSA, 2015

	Direct	Indirect	Induced	Total Impact
Output (millions)	\$354.9	\$232.9	\$17.9	\$605.7
Employment	3,960	1,927	1,965	7,851

Note: Numbers may not sum due to rounding
Source: Community Research Partners analysis using regional multipliers from IMPLAN®

Local refugee-owned businesses are estimated to support a total of 7,851 jobs in the Columbus MSA. This includes the 3,960 employees of local refugee-owned businesses, as well as 1,927 indirect and 1,965 induced jobs across the MSA.



Local refugee-owned businesses are estimated to support:



Total Jobs



Local Refugees



Indirect or Induced Jobs



5.4 Summary of Economic Impact

The combined economic impact of the three refugee resettlement agencies, the refugee workers, and all of the refugee-owned businesses together comprise the estimate of the total economic impact of refugees in central Ohio. The total contribution of refugees in Franklin County to the MSA economy is estimated to be \$1.6 billion a year (Table 6). Furthermore, the local refugee community supports an estimated total of 21,273 jobs in the Columbus MSA.

The total contribution of refugees in Franklin County to the MSA economy is estimated to be **\$1.6 billion** a year.

Table 6.
Summary of economic impacts of refugees, Columbus MSA, 2015¹⁰

		Direct	Indirect	Induced	Total
Refugee resettlement agencies	Output (millions)	\$1.6	\$0.6	\$0.9	\$3.1
	Employment	78	12	16	106
Refugee workers	Output (millions)	\$599.7	\$385.8	\$35.9	\$1,021.4
	Employment	6,685	3,158	3,473	13,316
Refugee owned businesses	Output (millions)	\$354.9	\$232.9	\$17.9	\$605.7
	Employment	3,960	1,927	1,965	7,851
Total	Output (millions)	\$956.2	\$619.4	\$54.7	\$1,630.3
	Employment	10,723	5,097	5,454	21,273

Note: Total impact includes an unknown amount of overlap in output and employment. Numbers may not sum due to rounding.

Source: Community Research Partners analysis using regional multipliers from IMPLAN®

The table above presents a summary of the estimated economic impacts of the local refugee community on the Columbus MSA economy.

As was noted in Section 2.0, the total economic impact includes some degree of double counting. For example, the number of refugees working for the refugee-owned businesses, and the outputs associated with their employment, are unknown and may be counted twice. Furthermore, it is important to point out that these numbers are based on CRP's best estimate of the current refugee population in Franklin County, which cannot account for any net secondary migration. While net secondary migration is likely positive, which would make the size of the local refugee population—and by extension, the economic impacts—larger than CRP's estimate; the degree to which it is positive is unknown. Lastly, there are other economic factors that this analysis does not take into account, such as the fiscal impact on infrastructure and public services.

Regardless, the evidence suggests that refugees have substantial positive economic benefits to the local economy. While the full extent of this may not be known, as long as refugees keep coming to central Ohio at their current (or greater) rate, the economic impact on the local economy will certainly continue to grow.

¹⁰ The economic impacts of the three refugee resettlement agencies are for 2013.



Ukraine



"I was happy to find a job so quickly and was eager to learn the ins and outs of an American work place"

What Goes Around Comes Around

Dmitriy Kasvin

In 1993 Dmitriy Kasvin came from the Ukraine to the United States as a refugee. In his native country Dmitriy had his own small business using his degree in mechanical engineering. Upon arrival to Portland, Oregon his sister's family sponsor arranged an introduction to a small manufacturing company. Their intention of showing the ambitious then twenty-eight year old Dmitriy how businesses in America run did not fail to impress him. Carroll Sizemore offered Dmitriy a job on the spot. Within less than twelve hours he had his first American job.

At six dollars an hour it didn't seem like much. But he was happy to find a job so quickly and was eager to learn the ins and outs of an American work place. Dmitriy soon integrated, making friends and adapting to the new culture. With his engineer mind set the opportunities to improve his new workplace were endless. His employer supported his ideas with great enthusiasm. Dmitriy soon introduced new systems and processes. He created the business' first computer network while also introducing new technological ideas to make manufacturing processes more efficient.

Within two years, Dmitriy mastered many of the new skills that came with working at this company. As a machinist in the shop and engineer in the office he helped develop many of their new product designs. While this company gave him such a great start to grow and learn, it was obvious by the third year that he was quickly outgrowing the company because of the skills he had gained. With a heavy heart, he went to talk to his employer. By accident, he learned that one of the largest suppliers of the company had an opening that would later lead him into the computer industry. It was another opportunity that he couldn't pass by. To his surprise, the owner of the small business was an honest man who offered to be Dmitriy's reference.

For a seventy-five cent raise and the pursuit of a dream. Dmitriy and his family travelled nearly three-thousand miles to Columbus, Ohio in 1996. The opportunities for growth have never stopped coming. Two years later Dmitriy was hired as a regional network administrator for NCS Healthcare, a company which boasted nearly six-thousand employees at the time. This was a major step up from the small businesses he once knew.

As time went on, Dmitriy consulted at Bank One, Red Capital Group, and other large and small businesses. At one point, he was the senior server engineer representing Dell at Columbus Public Schools, one of the largest networks in town with sixty-five thousand attending schools.

In early 2004, Dmitriy started his own business, DotX Technologies. It's a modest company, which employs seven people and supports technologies for nearly forty small businesses in the United States and Canada. Nearly eight years later he is consulting with the very same company that brought him to Columbus in 1996, the Peerless Saw Company.



Somalia

"It is here where I realized that the old calling to help people through journalism had become a new purpose to help other immigrants and refugees throughout their journey in a new country"

Life Reimagined

Khadra Mohamed

Born and raised in Mogadishu, the capital city of Somalia located in the coastal Banaadir region on the Indian Ocean, Khadra and her seven siblings had a "normal" life. Her father, a police officer, her mother, a homemaker, raised them Muslim and well-educated. As a teen, Khadra dreamed of helping people by becoming a journalist. At her father's request she graduated college with a bachelor's degree in History. A few of her siblings were attending college in the United States. Life was good, until the unthinkable; the outbreak of the 1991 civil war in Somalia. Khadra and her family left everything and fled first to neighboring Kenya and later to the Netherlands, where they were received as refugees. Gone were all the dreams and plans. Gone was life as they knew it. Their new normal was survival.

She was selected a winner for the U.S. Diversity Visa Lottery, Khadra left parents and siblings in Europe and traveled to the United States, where she would be reunited with a brother and a sister. It was 1998 and it was time to relearn everything again.

She first called the outskirts of Washington D.C. home but in a few years found herself making a move to Columbus, Ohio. This is where her life, interrupted so many times in the past, really started again and took flight in ways she could have never imagined. It is in Columbus where she met her husband. It is here where her children were born and are being raised. And it is in Columbus where Khadra went back to college, graduated from OSU with a Masters degree in Social Work. And where she and her sisters opened two businesses that employ dozens of people bringing much needed services to the community.

Khadra Mohamed is the President and CEO of the Center for Somali Women's Advancement, which promotes the smooth integration of new Americans in Ohio by facilitating citizenship and supporting the economic self-sufficiency of Somali and other immigrants. Under Khadra's leadership, the Center initiated various programs that highlight the achievements of immigrants with a special focus on immigrant women who have become citizens and business owners.

Khadra is the organizer of the Annual International Women's Day Celebration; an event held at the Ohio Statehouse Atrium, that showcases immigrant and refugee women's contributions to the Ohio economy. Khadra was elected President of the Federation of African Organizations in Ohio, a coalition that represents diaspora communities from 54 countries in the African continent.

In 2014 Khadra Mohamed was honored with the White House award Champions of Change: Promoting Citizenship in the Workplace. Her passion for people and justice has taken her to recently join local Muslim leaders efforts to curtail the lure of ISIL in recruiting their own children by opening communications with the federal government.

It is hard to grasp what kind of human being it takes to push forward against all odds; struggling with a new culture, a new set of rules, a new language, and a completely new landscape for living, but perhaps the story of Khadra Mohamed will illustrate the journey of loss and how through strength and perseverance one can



Photographer: Randall L. Schieber

6.0

Summary and Conclusions



Over the past few decades, central Ohio has seen a large influx of refugees from around the world—from the former Soviet Union to war-torn Somalia. More than 16,000 refugees have been resettled in the Columbus area since 1983, most of them in the past ten years. Aside from contributing to population growth in general, this growing community of refugees also has a social and economic impact on the region.

Refugees in central Ohio are generally young. They are also entrepreneurial; refugees in the community are more than twice as likely to start a business as the general population. When they are able to start their own businesses, become self-sufficient, form strong relationships within the community, and bring their skills to the local workforce, they can build social capital. The ripple effect of social capital, in turn, can have a positive impact on the region.

The same entrepreneurship, self-sufficiency, networking, and job skills that form the collective social impact of refugees also contribute to their economic impact on the region. Through the goods and services produced by refugee workers, refugee-owned businesses, and refugee resettlement agencies, the local refugee community contributes an estimated \$1.6 billion to the Columbus MSA economy. In addition, they support an estimated 21,273 jobs in the region. All of these suggest refugees bring some positive benefits to central Ohio.

More than **16,000** refugees have been resettled in the Columbus area since 1983, most of them in the past ten years.

At the same time, there are challenges. Many refugees face language barriers, for instance, which may be contributing to the high levels of unemployment in the community. They may also lack an understanding of workplace norms or soft skills common in the United States that may be adversely affecting their chances of being hired. More research could identify barriers faced in an effort to improve job access, and the net impact on central Ohio if these barriers were removed. More research is also needed to learn the extent to which secondary migration is contributing to the size of the refugee community. This would enable community leaders and service providers to better understand the needs of refugees. Through better communication and cultural understanding, central Ohio can fully reap the social and economic benefits of the local refugee community.

Refugee Resettlement Agency Survey Questions

1. All budget-related questions should be answered for the 2013 calendar year if possible. If not, for which year are you answering instead?
2. All budget-related questions should be answered for either your entire agency or for just that portion of your agency devoted to refugee services. If you are answering for the entire organization, approximately what percentage of your operating budget is devoted, directly or indirectly, to refugee services?
3. What was your total operating budget in 2013?
4. What was the average number of employees working at your agency in 2013? How many were full-time, part-time, and seasonal?
5. What percentage of your budget (or dollar amount) was devoted to staff wages and salaries in 2013 (not including benefits)?
6. What percentage of your budget (or dollar amount) was devoted to purchasing supplies or services for refugees in 2013 (including food, clothing, and other services)?
7. What percentage of your budget (or dollar amount) was given to refugees as cash payment in 2013?
8. What are the total dollar values of refugee-oriented grants your organization received in 2013? Please list by granting agency. (If a grant was shared with other organizations, only include the dollar amount used by your organization.)
9. What, if any, was your capital spending in 2013 that was related to refugee services (such as equipment purchases and building purchases or renovations)?
10. How many refugees did your organization serve in 2013? How many refugee households?
11. Please estimate the number of refugees your organization resettled in each of the past 10 years (or as far back as possible). (Also, please note if these are calendar years or fiscal years).
12. In the past 10 years, approximately what percentage of the refugees your organization assisted has left the Columbus area (or their contacts were lost)?
13. After being in the area for at least 2 years, approximately what percentage of the refugees your organization assisted in the past 10 years have joined the labor force (either employed or actively looking for work)?
14. Of those refugees who joined the labor force after being in the area at least 2 years, approximately what percentage are currently employed?
15. Of those refugees who are currently employed after being in the area at least 2 years, what are the average annual earnings?

Refugee Household Survey Questions

1. What year did you (the head of household) arrive in the United States?
2. Were you originally resettled in Columbus? (circle one) Yes No
3. What is your country of origin?
4. For each age group, how many people are living in your household?
 Under 16 _____
 Ages 16–64 _____
 Age 65 and older _____
5. For each age group, how many people living in your household are currently employed?
 Under 16 _____
 Ages 16–64 _____
 Age 65 and older _____
6. For each age group, how many people living in your household are actively looking for work (i.e., unemployed)?
 Under 16 _____
 Ages 16–64 _____
 Age 65 and older _____
7. For each person in the household who is currently employed, in what kind of business or industry does he or she work?
 (use the provided list of industry categories)
 Person 1 _____
 Person 2 _____
 Person 3 _____
 Person 4 _____
 Person 5 _____
8. For each person in the household who is currently employed, what kind of work or job is he or she doing?
 (use the provided list of occupational categories)
 Person 1 _____
 Person 2 _____
 Person 3 _____
 Person 4 _____
 Person 5 _____

9. What was the total income the household received in 2014 in dollars (including, income from employment, investment income, public assistance, and any other formal or informal sources of income)?

\$ _____

How much of your total household income came from public assistance?

10. \$ _____

Does anyone in the household own a business?

11. (circle one; if No, skip to Question 15) Yes No

12. For each business firm owned by a member of the household, what kind of business or industry is this? (use the provided list of industry categories)

Business 1 _____

Business 2 _____

Business 3 _____

Business 4 _____

Business 5 _____

For each business firm, how many total employees (full-time or part-time) are on the payroll?

13. Business 1 _____

Business 2 _____

Business 3 _____

Business 4 _____

Business 5 _____

For each firm, does the business export goods or services?

14. (circle one per business)

Business 1 Yes No

Business 2 Yes No

Business 3 Yes No

Business 4 Yes No

Business 5 Yes No

How many people in the household are over the age of 18? _____

15. How many people in the household over the age of 18 have either graduated from or are currently enrolled in a 2- or

16. 4-year college or university? _____

Supplement

Industry Categories

- A. Construction
- B. Manufacturing
- C. Wholesale trade
- D. Retail trade
- E. Transportation, warehousing, utilities
- F. Information
- G. Finance, insurance, real estate, rental, and leasing services
- H. Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste services
- I. Educational services, health care, and social assistance
- J. Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, food services
- K. Public administration
- L. Other

See detailed list of industries by category:

<http://www.census.gov/people/io/files/Census-2012-Final-Code-List.xls>

Occupational Categories

- A. Management, business, science, and art jobs
- B. Service jobs
- C. Sales and office jobs
- D. Natural resources, construction, and maintenance jobs
- E. Production, transportation, material moving jobs
- F. Other

See detailed list of occupations by category:

http://www.census.gov/people/io/files/2010_OccCodeswithCrosswalkfrom2002-2011nov04.xls

Supplement

Focus Group Questions

Short-term Refugee Population

- By show of hands, how many of you resettled here in central Ohio?
 - o For those who didn't raise their hands, can you tell us what brought you to Columbus?
 - o For those who resettled here, when you first arrived what type of assistance was most helpful to you and your family? (i.e., cash assistance, career training)
- How many of you are currently employed?
 - o [IF ANYONE SAYS YES] What do you do? (i.e., occupation, industry)
 - o [IF ANYONE SAYS NO] For those who did not respond, how many have been employed in Columbus in the past?
- [IF ANYONE SAYS YES] What did you do? (i.e., occupation, industry)
- How many are actively looking for work?
- [IF ANYONE SAYS YES] What are the biggest obstacles you have found to finding a job?
- [IF ANYONE SAYS NO] For those who are neither working nor currently looking for work, what are the challenges you face?
 - o For anyone who has been employed locally, how long did it take you to find a job after you arrived in the U.S.?
- What specific services or opportunities were most helpful in finding a job?
- Has anyone here started their own business?
 - o [IF ANYONE SAYS YES] What type of business?
- Can you talk about any of the resources that were helpful to you in starting your own business?
- How many people do you employ?
- Are your employees primarily refugees as well?
- Does your company export goods or services?
- [IF ANYONE SAYS YES] What opportunities were available to you that helped you build your export business?
 - o [IF ANYONE SAYS NO] Has anyone else tried starting their own business, or has anyone had interest in starting a business but had difficulty or been discouraged?
- [IF ANYONE SAYS YES] What were the obstacles?
- Are there any other topics related to your experience that we have not covered that you would like to discuss?

Long-term Refugee Population

- By show of hands, how many of you originally resettled here in central Ohio?
 - o For those who didn't raise their hands, can you tell us what brought you to Columbus?
 - o For those who started out here, when you first arrived what type of assistance was most helpful to you and your family? (i.e., cash assistance, career training)
- Has anyone here started their own business?
 - o [IF ANYONE SAYS YES] What type of business?
- Can you talk about any of the resources that were helpful to you in starting your own business?
- How many people do you employ?
- Are your employees primarily refugees as well?
- Does your company export goods or services?
- [IF ANYONE SAYS YES] What opportunities were available to you that helped you build your export business?
 - o [IF ANYONE SAYS NO] Has anyone else tried starting their own business, or has anyone had interest in starting a business but had difficulty or been discouraged?
- [IF SOMEONE SAYS YES] What were the obstacles?
- By show of hands, how many of you own your own home?
 - o [IF ANYONE SAYS YES] What opportunities did you have that made the process of buying your home easier?
 - o [IF ANYONE SAYS NO] For those who rent, have any of you looked into buying a home and been discouraged from homeownership?
- [IF ANYONE SAYS YES] What were the obstacles?
- Has anyone here obtained U.S. citizenship?
 - o [IF ANYONE SAYS YES] Can you talk about that process?
 - o [IF ANYONE SAYS NO] Has anyone who wanted to, found it difficult to become a U.S. citizen?
- [IF ANYONE SAYS YES] What are the challenges you've faced?
- Are there any other topics related to your experience that we have not covered that you would like to discuss?

Stakeholder Interview Questions

Bhutanese Nepali Refugee Community

- Would you please state your name, your title, and the organization you represent?
 - o Can you talk a little bit about what you do and what your organization does?
- Can you talk a little bit about your own refugee experience? (i.e., when you came)
 - o [IF THEY DID NOT ORIGINALLY SETTLE IN COLUMBUS]
What brought you to Columbus?
 - o When you first arrived what types of support were most helpful to you and your family?
- Public government support? (i.e., cash assistance, career training)
- Informal/community support?(i.e., employment, financial)
 - o What were the biggest challenges you faced/or continue to face as a refugee?
- What are the biggest challenges you see for the local refugee community at large?
 - o Are there unique challenges faced by the local Nepali community?
 - o How well has the Nepali community integrated into the larger community?
- Which adjustments are generally the easiest? Which are the hardest?
- Can you talk about how you got from being a refugee to where you are now?
(i.e., jobs you worked, education)
 - o How does your experience compare to that of others in the Nepali community?
 - o How would one in the local Nepali community define success for themselves?
- Are there any particular success stories from the local Nepali community that you would like to share?
- Are there any other topics we have not covered that you would like to discuss?

Stakeholder Interview Questions

Somali Refugee Community

- Would you please state your name, your title, and the agency you represent?
 - o Can you talk a little bit about what you do and what your agency does?
- What are the greatest challenges your agency faces in terms of serving the refugee population?
- Can you talk a little bit about your own refugee experience? (i.e., when you came)
 - o [IF THEY DID NOT ORIGINALLY SETTLE IN COLUMBUS]
What brought you to Columbus?
 - o When you first arrived what types of support were most helpful to you and your family?
- Public government support? (i.e., cash assistance, career training)
- Informal/community support?(i.e., employment, financial)
 - o What were the biggest challenges you faced/or continue to face as a refugee?
- What are the biggest challenges you see for the local refugee community at large?
 - o Are there unique challenges faced by the local Somali community?
 - o How well have these refugees integrated into the larger community?
- Which adjustments were generally the easiest? Which were the hardest?
- Can you talk about how you got from being a refugee to where you are now?
(i.e., jobs you worked, education)
 - o How does your experience compare to that of others in the Somali community?
 - o How would one in the local Somali community define success for themselves?
- Are there any particular success stories from the local Somali community that you would like to share?
- Are there any other topics we have not covered that you would like to discuss?

Stakeholder Interview Questions

Soviet Jewish Refugee Community

- Would you please state your name, your title, and the organization you represent?
 - o Can you talk a little bit about what you do and your organization does?
- What are the greatest challenges your organization faces?
- How have refugee services changed over the past 20 years?
- Can you talk a little bit about your own refugee experience? (i.e., when you came)
 - o [IF THEY DID NOT ORIGINALLY SETTLE IN COLUMBUS]
What brought you to Columbus?
 - o When you first arrived what types of support were most helpful to you and your family?
 - Public government support? (i.e., cash assistance, career training)
 - Informal/community support?(i.e., employment, financial)
 - o What were the biggest challenges you faced/or continue to face as a refugee?
 - What are the biggest challenges you see for the local refugee community at large?
 - o Were there unique challenges faced by the refugees from the former Soviet Union?
 - o How well have these refugees integrated into the larger community?
 - Which adjustments were generally the easiest? Which were the hardest?
 - Can you talk about how you got from being a refugee to where you are now?
(i.e., jobs you worked, education)
 - o How does your experience compare to that of other refugees from the former Soviet Union?
 - o How would one in that community define success for themselves?
 - Are there any particular success stories from that community that you would like to share?
 - Are there any other topics we have not covered that you would like to discuss?

Secondary Data Sources

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<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr/resource/annual-orr-reports-to-congress>
- U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics
<http://www.bls.gov/lau/>
- U.S. Department of State; Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM); Refugee Processing Center Interactive Reporting
<http://www.wrapsnet.org/Reports/InteractiveReporting/tabid/393/Default.aspx>

Tariq Tarey is a documentary photographer, skilled in both still photography and video, who specializes in refugee affairs. In July of 2006, Tariq's show, Forlorn in Ohio, which documented the plight of Somali refugees, appeared at the Kiaca Gallery in Columbus. Forlorn in Ohio also traveled to Wright State University, in 2007. Several images from that show are now part of the permanent collection of the Columbus Museum of Art. In recognition to the power of his work to call attention to the plight of refugees, Tariq was honored with the South Side Settlement House's prestigious Arts Freedom Award in 2006. In that year, he also won the Ohio Art Council's Individual Artist Award. In 2008, Tariq was given the Individual Artist Award by the Greater Columbus Arts Council. He directed the documentary, "Emergency Living: Somalia in the Aftermath of Famine." Tariq also directed "Women, War and Resettlement: Nasro's Journey," which was aired on WOSU Public Television in 2012.

Tariq Tarey

Visual Ethnographer
www.tariqtarey.com



Born in San Pedro Sula, Honduras raised in Queens New York, Heidi Amaya and Darsy Amaya expanded their talent, knowledge and expertise founding A Sisters Marketing & Branding.

A Sisters provides a creative and unique way to brand businesses and products, mixing integrated marketing elements like interactive web based media, photography, graphic design, promotion, video production, and event planning.

Heidi and Darsy Amaya are dedicated professionals who help and work with the community.

They continue to support and assist organization and agencies to make a significant impact for social change providing quality work with integrity and excellent customer service.

Darsy Amaya Heidi Amaya

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Ani Palacios is a Peruvian author and journalist who emigrated to the U.S. in 1988. Today, she is editor-in-chief of Contacto Latino and Pukiyari Editores/Publishers. She has won several International Latino Book Awards with her novels "Nos vemos en Purgatorio" (2010), "Plumbago Torres y el sueño americano" (2011) and "99 Amaneceres" (2014). Her latest books are the novel "Noche de Penas" (2014) and a self-help book, "No Strings Attached: Your Journey to Unconditional Loving" (2015). She has done presentations in professional conferences and book fairs. Through Contacto Latino she organizes two international literature contests annually.

Ani Palacios

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CRP is a non-profit research, evaluation, and data center based in Columbus, Ohio, with a mission to strengthen communities through data, information, and knowledge. CRP is a partnership of the City of Columbus, United Way of Central Ohio, The Ohio State University, and the Franklin County Commissioners. CRP is also central Ohio's data intermediary, and a partner in the Urban Institute's National Neighborhood Indicators Partnership. Since its inception, CRP has undertaken hundreds of projects in central Ohio, statewide, and across the country.

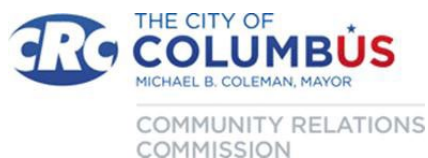
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The local refugee community defines success based on both personal and family accomplishments.

