Refugee Resettlement in Madison/Wisconsin

An Introduction

Becca Schwartz
Jewish Social Services of Madison
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Jewish Social Services

Jewish Social Services supports and empowers Dane County families and individuals who are struggling. While specializing in serving Jewish and immigrant communities, we serve anyone seeking services.

Services Offered

- Case Management for Seniors and Others
- Senior Adult Programs
- Refugee Resettlement
- Chaplaincy
Define Refugee:

An individual who has a well-founded fear of persecution due to race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, *who has fled their country of origin and cannot safely return*. In the context of the United States, all refugees arriving in the U.S. have been vetted and approved prior to arrival in the country.
Define Special Immigrant Visa (SIV):

A special, expedited resettlement process category for Iraqi or Afghan nationals who worked with the US Armed Forces or under Chief of Mission authority, often as a translator or interpreter, and Iraqi nationals who worked for or on behalf of the U.S. Government in Iraq.
Define Asylum Seeker:

A person forced to leave their country and directly seek legal status in the US, rather than abroad. They become asylees when they are granted legal status by the U.S. government.
U.S. Refugee Admissions Program: Overview
U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP)

- UNHCR
- U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration
- U.S. Department of Homeland Security
- U.S. Intelligence Agencies
- 1 of 9 Resettlement Agencies (HIAS, LIRS, IRC, etc)
- Local Resettlement Affiliates (~350 across the US)
- Thousands of private citizens who volunteer to help refugees
Reception and Placement (R&P)

Program objective:

The ultimate objective of any U.S. R&P Program is to assist clients to become **self sufficient** in the **shortest time** possible.
R&P Services

- Procuring and setting up housing
- Arrival services
- Assistance with compliance with US law
- Applying for Social Security cards and various benefits
- Linking to healthcare services
- Cultural orientation
- School and ESL enrollment
- Linking to employment services
Resettlement in Madison/Wisconsin
107 refugees resettled by JSS FY17-present from Afghanistan, Syria, DRC, Iraq, Pakistan, Rwanda, Burundi and CAR.
## Significant Refugee Populations in Wisconsin

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## Total Arrivals in Wisconsin

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### Largest Resettlement Locations
1. Milwaukee – 7,087
2. Fox Valley – 847
3. Madison - 612

http://ireports.wrapsnet.org/Interactive-Reporting/
Specific Challenges

• Being poor in America
• Foreign culture/language
• Disjointed lives
• Sense of financial obligation/responsibility for family overseas
Refugee Education:

• Like any population, levels of education on arrival vary widely, no formal education to PhD

• **Language** is often the first barrier that new arrivals experience

• Next is **income** and the **ability to navigate foreign systems**

• Higher education is especially important for the next generation
What can you do?

• Volunteers needed
  – Interpreters (Swahili, Dari/Farsi, French, Arabic)
  – Community Action for Refugee Arrivals (CARA)
    • Teams agree to collect donations and set-up apartment for one family
  – Open Doors for Refugees
To Learn More:

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