Refugee Resettlement and Public Assistance Presentation

- Information regarding refugee resettlement in Stearns County
- Stearns County role in administering public assistance programs
- Benefit disbursements by program and specific populations
- Fiscal impact of refugee resettlement
- Public health services to newly arrived refugees
- Local refugee resettlement figures
Definition of Refugee

A person who has been forced to flee his/her homeland and is unable to return because she or he has experienced persecution or has a well-founded fear of persecution based on race, religion, nationality, member of a social group or political opinion.
Refugee Status in the U.S.

- “Refugee” is a distinct U.S. immigration status
- Refugee status granted prior to arrival in U.S.
- Work authorized upon arrival
- Path to citizenship (5 years)
- Protected from being forcibly sent back (except in some instances of criminal activity)
Prior to Arrival

• Refugees often stay in protracted situations for an average of 17–20 years in camps
• Less than 1% of refugees are permanently settled anywhere in the world in any given year
• Lack of hope for future
• Unsafe/unhygienic conditions
Refugees in Minnesota

Number of Refugee Arrivals by Initial County Of Resettlement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hennepin</td>
<td>1399</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ramsey</td>
<td>748</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stearns</td>
<td>230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olmsted</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anoka</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dakota</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mower</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rice</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scott</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kandiyohi</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lyon</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ottertail</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freeborn</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Still need to struggle to survive
Public assistance amounts do not cover basic costs of living
Need to prioritize employment right away
Complicated rules’ requirements to navigate
Despite challenges, refugees are resilient, succeed in employment, many manage the stresses well and learn independent navigation of community.
Summary

- Refugees fled horrific and dangerous conditions – usually from war-torn countries
- Refugees mostly come as “secondary” refugees to be reunited and supported by family and friends
- Refugees contribute to the community and have a high rate of employment
- Refugees are eligible residents for public assistance benefits the same as any other lawful resident
The Stearns County Board has a high level of responsibility for eligibility determination for benefits but no authority over benefit design, benefit amount, or eligibility criteria.
Stearns County Administered Public Assistance Programs and Services

Federally Funded Programs:
- Medical Assistance (MA)
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- MN Family Investment Program (MFIP)
- Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA)

State Funded Programs:
- Group Residential Housing Program (GRH)
- General Assistance Program (GA)
- Minnesota Supplemental Assistance Program (MSA)

County Funded Programs:
- Interpreter Services
- Public Health Coordination of Refugee Health Assessments
The Stearns County Board has a high level of responsibility for eligibility determination for benefits but no authority over benefit design, benefit amount, or eligibility criteria.
### Federal Monthly Benefit Disbursements – December 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefit Program Description</th>
<th>Monthly Disbursement</th>
<th>Percentage of All Benefits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Medical Assistance (MA):</strong> MN’s basic Medicaid program for Elderly long-term care, disabled, waivered services</td>
<td>$22,680,421</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP):</strong> Formerly known as food stamps, provides support to help food budget, not intended to meet all household needs</td>
<td>$1,113,778</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP):</strong> Helps families with children meet basic needs, while helping parents move to financial stability</td>
<td>$811,184</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Refugee Cash Assistance Program (RCA):</strong> Newly arrived refugee adults with no minor children (primarily senior or young adults) qualify for funds provided by the Refugee Resettlement Program for a limited 8 months after arrival (to qualify, these adults must be eligible for MFIP or SSI)</td>
<td>$14,752</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: DHS MAXIS Reports-December, 2016
Example of Total State and Federal Monthly Benefits Issued in Stearns

- 90% for Medical Assistance
- 10% for all other programs combined

Medical Assistance
90%
$22,680,421

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GRH</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MFIP</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refugee</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GA</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SNAP</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSA</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All Other Benefit Programs
10%
$2,419,091

GRH: Group Residential Housing; MFIP: MN Family Investment Program; GA: General Assistance; SNAP: Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program; MSA: MN Supplemental Assistance
Source: DHS MAXIS Reports-December, 2016
The Stearns County Board has a high level of responsibility for eligibility determination for benefits but no authority over benefit design, benefit amount, or eligibility criteria.
Medical Assistance

- Center for Medicaid & Medicare Services (CMS)
- Medical Assistance is the assistance for elderly long-term care and disabled, nursing home care, in-home waivered services, medical appointments, procedures and prescriptions.
- This is not Medicare – Medicare is for over 65 and typically retired persons
- Medical Assistance is by far the largest percentage of benefits that we administer on behalf of the Federal and State government
- Affordable Care Act (ACA), 2010 – effectively expanded healthcare for adults and children
Medical Assistance Payment Benefits
Issued in Stearns County – December 2016
(These are not county taxpayer dollars)

- Medical Assistance is 90% of total monthly benefits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Persons</th>
<th>Funding Source</th>
<th>Monthly Average</th>
<th>Benefit Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>211</td>
<td>Fed/State</td>
<td>$7,106</td>
<td>$1,499,366</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,135</td>
<td>Fed/State</td>
<td>$3,504</td>
<td>$3,977,040</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10,086</td>
<td>Fed/State</td>
<td>$1,706</td>
<td>$17,204,015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11,432</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$22,680,421</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total

Source: DHS Reports & Forecasts Division February 2016, FY 2016-2017 Biennium Summary (page 7); DHS MAXIS Reports-December, 2016
Medical Assistance Benefits Issued in Stearns County – 90% Breakdown

- **Health Care Plans, 88.2%**
  - 10,086 persons

- **Waivers, 9.9%**
  - 1,135 persons

- **Facilities, 1.8%**
  - 211 persons

Source: DHS Reports & Forecasts Division February 2016, FY 2016-2017 Biennium Summary (page 7); DHS MAXIS Reports-December, 2016
The Stearns County Board has a high level of responsibility for eligibility determination for benefits but no authority over benefit design, benefit amount, or eligibility criteria.
### All Other Benefits Issued in Stearns County – December 2016

**Source:** DHS MAXIS Reports-December, 2016

- Food support for 11,068 persons is 4.4% of total monthly benefits
- Minnesota Family Investment Program serves 882 families

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefits Program</th>
<th>Persons</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Monthly Average</th>
<th>Benefit Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program</td>
<td>11,068</td>
<td>Federal (USDA)</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>$1,113,778</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MN Family Investment Program</td>
<td>2,928</td>
<td>Federal/State</td>
<td>277</td>
<td>$811,184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Residential Housing</td>
<td>611</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>586</td>
<td>$357,893</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Assistance, Single Adults</td>
<td>434</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>$68,315</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MN Supplemental Aid</td>
<td>553</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>$96</td>
<td>$53,169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refugee Cash Assistance</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>Federal</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>$14,752</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>15,128</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>$2,419,091</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
All Other Public Assistance Programs – 10% of Total Benefits Issued

- **Refugee Cash Assistance**: 0.1% of Total Benefits Issued, 76 persons
- **Group Residential Housing**: 1.4% of Total Benefits Issued, 611 single adults
- **MN Supplemental Aid**: 0.2% of Total Benefits Issued, 553 adults
- **Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program**: 4.4% of Total Benefits Issued, 11,068 persons
- **General Assistance**: 0.3% of Total Benefits Issued, 434 persons
- **MN Family Investment Program**: 3.2% of Total Benefits Issued, 2,928 families

Source: DHS MAXIS Reports-December, 2016
Employment Success 3-Years After Exiting MFIP by Group in Stearns County

Percentage Success

- Stearns County: 74.2% (2015), 74% (2016)
- White: 78.3% (2015), 73.7% (2016)
- African American: 54.3% (2015), 53.2% (2016)
- Somali: 76.8% (2015), 81.3% (2016)

Source: DHS 4214Y MN Family Investment Program Performance Measures by Racial/Ethnic or Immigrant Group within Service Agency – July-September 2016
The Somali population in Stearns county is employed at a very high rate (81.3%).

The only benefit specifically targeted to refugees is the Refugee Cash Assistance Program, which is federally funded by the Refugee Resettlement Program, and is 0.1% of all County benefit disbursements.

There are no county funds budgeted for refugee resettlement programs.

Refugees are eligible to apply for any other financial assistance available to the general public.
County Supported Services

- Interpreter Services (some reimbursed by federal government)
- Public Health Coordination of Refugee Health Assessments
Interpreter Services
Population and Languages

Population

- 92% Native-born
- 5% Foreign-born, naturalized
- 3% Foreign-born, not naturalized

Language Spoken at Home

- 89% English Only
- 11% Other

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey 5-year estimate, 2011-2015 “Saint Cloud MN”
## Application Language

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th># of Applications</th>
<th>Limited English Proficiency</th>
<th>Need Interpreter</th>
<th>% Needing Interpretive Services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>12,360</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somali</td>
<td>705</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>611</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laotian</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oromo</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandarin</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swahili</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hmong</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khmer</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burmese</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASL</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amharic</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cantonese</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korean</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>13,470</td>
<td>261</td>
<td>1,100</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing Data</td>
<td>174</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Applications</td>
<td>13,644</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: DHS 2011/12 Limited English Proficiency Language and Interpreter Data; Data warehouse
Percentage of Participation by Interpreter Service Request

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>English Speaking</th>
<th>Limited English Proficiency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: DHS Reports. Minnesota Family Investment Program & Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program Years 2009-2016
Interpreter Costs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Dollars</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>$205,103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>$260,762</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>$229,526</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>$240,663</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017 Estimated</td>
<td>$191,155</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Public Health Coordination of Refugee Health Assessments

Falls under the mandate of preventing and controlling communicable diseases
Refugee Health Assessments

- While in refugee camps or urban (non-camp) settings, access to health care varies by location.

- Health assessments are required pre-departure
  - Screening for health conditions of public health significance can make a refugee ineligible for travel to the United States
  - Treating infections and illnesses
  - Starting/Completing recommended age-appropriate immunizations

- Once refugee is scheduled for travel to primary location, the resettlement agency notifies MN Dept. of Health (MDH) and local public health (LPH)
  - Additional testing upon arrival for illnesses and diseases
  - Starting/Completing additional, recommended age-appropriate immunizations
Primary and Secondary Refugees

• Primary Refugees – Stearns County is their first location
  • Voluntary Agency (Volag) gets relocation dollars to help settle

• Secondary Refugees – moved to Stearns County from a different U.S. location
Primary and Secondary Refugees

- Refugees receive a federal loan for travel expenses to US to be paid back within 42 months
- Refugees receive a one-time federal grant of $1,125 per person to cover initial expenses in the primary resettlement location that must be used within 90 days of arrival
- Lutheran Social Service of MN receives $1,000 per individual to provide resettlement services
  - These funds are limited to the same 90-day period described above. All resettlement services, including funds, must be used within 90 days of a refugee’s arrival to the United States.
- These benefits are not part of the county budget

Sources: Lutheran Social Service of MN and State Dept. (https://www.state.gov/j/prm/ra/)
Primary Refugee Arrivals to Stearns County

Source: Minnesota Department of Health
**Percent of Primary Refugees Screened in the U.S.**

*Primary refugees are those who initially resettled in MN from overseas. They would be Ineligible for a health screening if moved out of MN, unable to locate, or died before screening.*

Source: Minnesota Department of Health
Health Status of Primary Refugee Arrivals to MN

• Tuberculosis in about 20% of refugees but is not infectious in most cases
  • A few are active cases, as are some in the our native born population. When this occurs, Public Health provides Direct Observed Therapy to assure the infection is eliminated.
• Parasite infections in 13-20% of refugees
  • Easily treated
• Hepatitis B infections in 5-6% of refugees
  • Vaccine preventable
• Syphilis and HIV in less than 1% of refugees
• Some of these services are billed to Medical Assistance for reimbursement

Source: Minnesota Department of Health
This shows the cost to the county tax levy for public health services. This does not take into account costs that are reimbursed by federal government.
Summary

• Very few county taxpayer dollars are used to support the Somali Resettlement in Stearns County

• County services provided to support the Somali Refugee community are mandated services through the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (interpreters) and through the Department of Human Services (coordination of health assessments) to ensure prevention of communicable disease
Questions?

Melissa Huberty
Human Services Administrator
melissa.huberty@co.stearns.mn.us
Frequently Asked Questions and Answers
FAQ: Refugee National Numbers

How are decisions made and by whom concerning refugee numbers and from which foreign country they originate when destined for resettlement in MN?

- Each September, the President consults with Congress and establishes presidential determination for annual refugee arrivals to the United States

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Refugees Allowed in U.S.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>85,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>50,000 (initially set at 110,000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>45,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- NPR reported in June 2016 that refugee and internally displaced persons now number 65+ million people (data collected from UNHCR)

- US Department of State and US Department of Homeland Security decides who gets into the US

Sources: Lutheran Social Service of MN and State Dept. ([https://www.state.gov/j/prm/ra/](https://www.state.gov/j/prm/ra/))
FAQ: Refugee National Numbers

How are decisions made and by whom concerning refugee numbers and from which foreign country they originate when destined for resettlement in MN?

- FACT SHEET: The federal role in immigrant and refugee integration
  www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/07/16/fact-sheet-strengthening-communities-welcoming-all-residents
- US Department of Health and Human Services – Office of Refugee Resettlement
  - Scott Lloyd, Director, Division of Refugee Resettlement
    www.acf.hhs.gov/about/leadership/scott-lloyd
- US Department of State – Bureau of Population, Refugees, & Migration
  www.state.gov/j/ prm/
- US Department of Homeland Security
  - FACT SHEET: The United States Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) Consultation & Worldwide Processing Priorities
FAQ: Refugee Local Numbers

Who is involved in deciding the specific number of refugees assigned to Stearns County, and what kind of metrics are used?

- Nationally, there are nine voluntary agencies that coordinate refugee resettlement through 300+ local organizations.
- National voluntary agencies work with the State Department to develop allocation pools in regards to each city.
  - Allocations to St. Cloud are limited to family-reunification, thus the allocation pool for St. Cloud is a list of refugee individuals who have family living in St. Cloud with whom they would like to reunite. Primary refugee arrivals to St. Cloud are drawn only from this allocation list.

Sources: Lutheran Social Service of MN and State Dept. (https://www.state.gov/j/prm/ra/)
Who is involved in deciding the specific number of refugees assigned to Stearns County, and what kind of metrics are used?

• Annually, the U.S. State Department receives abstracts from the nine voluntary agencies regarding local capacities. These abstracts are evaluated by the State Dept. and are created based on many variables, which may include, but are not limited to:
  • Previous years’ capacities
  • Allocation pools
  • Ability to provide core services
  • Conversations with State Refugee Coordinator and State Refugee Health Coordinator
  • Conversations with representative(s) from local governance, local/county public health, welfare/social services, public education, and public safety

Sources: Lutheran Social Service of MN and State Dept. (https://www.state.gov/j/ prm/ra/)
Is there some kind of balance related to country of origin included in the metric?

- In accordance with Section 207 of the Immigration and Nationality Act, the President is given exclusive rights to provide the allocations for countries of origin for refugee arrivals.
- The FY2018 determination listed these allocations:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Number of Refugees Allocated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>19,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Asia</td>
<td>5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe &amp; Central Asia</td>
<td>2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin America/Caribbean</td>
<td>1,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Near East/South Asia</td>
<td>17,500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Lutheran Social Service of MN and State Dept. (https://www.state.gov/j/prm/ra/)
FAQ: Primary Refugees in Stearns County

How many primary refugees (not including secondary refugees) have been designated to Stearns County?

• Lutheran Social Service of MN – St. Cloud office has settled 1,512 primary refugees since the resettlement program began (FY2010–FY2017)
  • All primary refugee were reunited with family members who already resided here
  • Lutheran Social Service of MN is not aware of any primary refugees settled in St. Cloud prior to FY2010

• Lutheran Social Service of MN resettled the following primary refugees:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fiscal Year</th>
<th>Number of Refugees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>263</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>231</td>
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Sources: Lutheran Social Service of MN
FAQ: Top Five Countries of Origin of Refugees to the U.S.

What are the top five countries of origin of the refugees?

- **FY 2017**: DRC, Iraq, Syria, Somalia, Burma
- **FY 2016**: DRC, Syria, Burma, Iraq, Somalia
- **FY 2015**: Burma, Iraq, Somalia, DRC, Bhutan
- **FY 2014**: Iraq, Burma, Somalia, Bhutan, DRC
- **FY 2013**: Iraq, Burma, Bhutan, Somalia, Cuba

Source: Refugee Admissions Processing Center (www.wrapsnet.org)
FAQ: Fiscal Support to Refugees

Upon arrival in Stearns County, how much fiscal support does each refugee have access to?

- Refugees receive a federal loan for travel expenses to US to be paid back within 42 months
- Refugees receive a one-time federal grant of $1,125 per person to cover initial expenses in the primary resettlement location that must be used within 90 days of arrival
- Refugees can apply for public benefits if they are eligible, the same as other residents
- Refugees may be eligible for Refugee Cash Assistance, as described previously
- Lutheran Social Service of MN receives $1,000 per individual to provide resettlement services
- These benefits are not part of the county budget

Sources: Lutheran Social Service of MN and State Dept. (https://www.state.gov/j/prm/ra/)
FAQ: Dialog Between Stearns Country and Voluntary Agencies

Is there an ongoing dialogue existing between Stearns County and the Voluntary Agencies relative to their Refugee Resettlement initiatives and how they form their abstracts?

• Abstracts are written by the national Voluntary Agencies and submitted to the State Department for consideration
• Local affiliate offices do not write or submit the abstract
• Stearns County participates in quarterly meetings with the local affiliate office, Lutheran Social Service of MN, but does not have a continuing dialogue with any of the VOLAGS (national voluntary agencies)

Sources: Lutheran Social Service of MN
FAQ: Dialog Between Stearns Country and Voluntary Agencies

Is there an ongoing dialogue existing between Stearns County and the Voluntary Agencies relative to their Refugee Resettlement initiatives and how they form their abstracts?

• Other attendees to the local affiliate’s quarterly meetings include State Refugee and State Refugee Health Coordinators, local governance, public health, public education, welfare/social services, public safety, and local non-profits and businesses

• Human Services does not participate in the formulation of, nor have access to, the Lutheran Immigration & Refugee Service (LIRS) abstract

• The refugee resettlement program’s initiatives are federally mandated
  • Lutheran Social Service of MN is reviewed regularly by the State Department, and Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS), and are in compliance.
FAQ: Cost to Stearns County

How much money is specifically targeted for refugee resettlement for Stearns County to administer funds and programs?

• The only benefit specifically targeted to refugees is the Refugee Cash Assistance Program, which is federally funded by the Refugee Resettlement Program, and is 0.1% of all County benefit disbursements

• There are no county or city funds budgeted for refugee resettlement programs

• Refugees are eligible to apply for any other financial assistance available to the general public

• Stearns County does not track refugee status for any financial assistance program other than Refugee Cash Assistance
What is the cost to Stearns County for refugee resettlement related to day care, after school care, and the school lunch program?

- The County receives funds for child care through the MN Child Care Assistance Program, which receives funding from the federal Child Care & Development Block Grant
  - Funds for child care do not run through the Stearns County budget
- 38.2% of K-12 public schools in Stearns County participate in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP)
  - Funds for school lunch do not run through the Stearns County budget

Sources: MN Department of Human Services, Social Security Administration, City of Saint Cloud
FAQ: Cost to Stearns County

What is the cost to Stearns County for refugee resettlement for SSDI, psychotherapy, English speaking translators (needed by police, fire, and rescue)?

• SSDI information (https://www.ssa.gov/disabilityfacts/facts.html)
• Medical Assistance (re: mental health services)
  • Mental Health Rates Study currently being conducted by DHS through Mercer – results to be released soon (https://mn.gov/dhs/partners-and-providers/policies-procedures/adult-mental-health/service-rates-information/)
• City budgets do not itemize interpretation services needed by police, fire, and rescue

Sources: MN Department of Human Services, Social Security Administration, City of Saint Cloud
FAQ: Refugee Housing

Upon arrival to Stearns County, what kind of priority is given to housing for refugee resettlement?

- NONE: Refugees do not receive any preferential treatment in housing placement

For any reason are refugees placed ahead of the line of others already waiting for similar housing?

- Landlords and leasing offices in St. Cloud must abide by the Fair Housing Act, which prohibits any preference, limitation, or discrimination because of race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status, or national origin, or intention to make such preference, limitation, or discrimination

Source: Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity, (www.hud.gov)
FAQ: Refugee Employment

Are refugees allowed federal government subsidy to the employer? How much is this hourly subsidy and how long is the employer benefited?

- Employers do not accrue federal subsidies as a benefit for hiring refugees
- The Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) is a Federal tax credit available to employers for hiring individuals from certain target groups who have consistently faced significant barriers to employment
  - The tax credit employers can claim depends upon the target group of the individual hired, the wages paid to that individual in the first year of employment, and the number of hours that individual worked. There is also a maximum tax credit that can be earned.
  - Target groups include: Veterans, TANF Recipients, SNAP (Food Stamp) Recipients, Designated Community Residents (living in Empowerment Zones or Rural Renewal Counties), Vocational Rehabilitation Referral, Ex-felons, Supplemental Security Income Recipients, Summer Youth Employee (living in Empowerment Zones)

Source: US Department of Labor (https://www.doleta.gov/business/incentives/opptax/)
FAQ: Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA)

While RCA is provided by Voluntary Agency affiliates in eight counties, RCA continues to be county-administered in the seventy nine remaining counties. Given Stearns County is ranked third for SM behind Kandiyohi, why is Stearns County having to pay for program subsidies? Shouldn’t this be voted on by local residents?

• All counties in MN administer federal Refugee Cash Assistance benefits
• Resettlement agencies in eight counties have a special contract with the State Department to administer Refugee Cash Assistance benefits to newly arrived singles and childless couples
• Refugee Cash Assistance is funded through the federal Refugee Resettlement Program, for all counties, including Stearns County. Funds for RCA benefits in Stearns County do not run through the Human Services Department or County budget

Sources: Lutheran Social Service of MN
FAQ: Health Assessments

Refugees are commonly not tested for many foreign borne diseases – HIV, Tuberculosis, etc. Other than obvious potential exposure threats, who is paying for related medical expenses?

• All refugees are routinely screened and treated (pre- and post-arrival)
• Refugees cannot travel if they have a communicable disease

Prior to Arrival:

• Under the Immigration and Nationality Act and the Public Health Service Act, the Secretary of Health and Human Services distributes regulations outlining the requirements for the medical examination of refugees seeking admission into the United States.

https://www.cdc.gov/immigrantrefugeehealth/exams/medical-examination.html

Sources: Center for Disease Control and Prevention, Minnesota Department of Health
Refugees are commonly not tested for many foreign borne diseases – HIV, Tuberculosis, etc. Other than obvious potential exposure threats, who is paying for related medical expenses?

- All refugees are routinely screened and treated (pre- and post-arrival)
- Refugees cannot travel if they have a communicable disease

**Post-Arrival:**

- The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) developed guidelines used by State public health departments for post-arrival medical screening of refugees.
  

- Locally, MN Department of Health and local public health work together to ensure primary and secondary refugees receive necessary post-arrival Refugee Health Screens
  
  [http://www.health.state.mn.us/refugee/](http://www.health.state.mn.us/refugee/)

Sources: Center for Disease Control and Prevention, Minnesota Department of Health
FAQ: Stearns County Follows the Law of the United States

Under what conditions might Stearns County entertain a resolution to specifically prohibit the use of foreign law in administering county services, law enforcement, and county court proceedings?

• Stearns County follows the United States Constitution, federal, and state law