Refugees in Massachusetts; Resettlement and Integration
I. Overview of ORI
II. Key Populations
III. Service Provisions
IV. Resources
V. Questions
Massachusetts Office for Refugees and Immigrants (ORI)

**Mission**: To Promote the full participation of refugees and immigrants in the economic, social, and civic life of Massachusetts.

“*Services across the life-span*”
Primary Activities

- State refugee resettlement planning and implementation
- Collaboration with the MDPH Refugee and Immigrant Health Program (RIHP)
- Management of various interdepartmental service agreements
- Coordination of Statewide Refugee Services
Funding Sources

• 93% Federal Funding
  o Office for Refugee Resettlement (ORR)
  o AmeriCorps
• State Appropriation
  o Citizenship
  o Employment Support Program

Importance: This drives the populations we can serve.
A *refugee* is a person **outside of his or her country** of nationality who is **unable or unwilling to return** 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.
Primary Populations Served (cont.)

- **Asylee** – Same criteria as refugee but applicant is in U.S., whereas refugee applicant applies outside U.S.
- **Cuban/Haitian Entrant** – Includes nationals of Cuba and Haiti granted parole status, or who have applied for asylum
- **Certain Amerasians from Vietnam**
- **Certified Victims of a Severe Form of Trafficking** – Victims of forced commercial sex and forced labor
- **Special immigrant visa** holders from Afghanistan and Iraq
- **Immigrants**
Refugee Resettlement: A Bipartisan Commitment

- Affords rights to refugees of special humanitarian concern into the US
- US Congress enacted refugee legislation in 1948
  - Accommodate incoming and displaced Europeans,
  - Later to receive Cubans fleeing political strife (1960s),
  - Vietnamese (1975)

The United States is part of a bipartisan commitment to incoming populations fleeing significant strife. These laws ensure parity and standardization in refugee service provisions.
Process of Becoming a Refugee

- Becoming a Refugee (Designation)
- Pre-Admission to the US (Refuge)
- Admission to the US (Integration)
MA Refugee Arrivals
2009-2013
Total: 11,155

Refugee Arrivals by Country of Origin

- Iraq: 34%
- Bhutan: 5%
- Somalia: 13%
- Burma: 11%
- Haiti: 3%
- Uganda: 3%
- Congo: 3%
- Eritrea: 3%
Data includes: new overseas refugee arrivals, Cuban/Haitian entrants, certain Amerasians, refugee secondary migrants, asylees, certified victims of trafficking, and special immigrant visas.
Primary Refugee Resettlement Areas

Includes: Western MA
28% of annual arrivals
Includes: Worcester, Fitchburg, Leominster

Includes: Central MA
23% of annual arrivals

Includes: Greater Boston
38% of annual arrivals
Includes: Boston, Brockton, Cambridge, Chelsea, Everett, Framingham, Lynn (11%), Malden, Revere, Salem

Includes: Merrimack Valley
11% of annual arrivals
Includes: Lowell & Lawrence
Includes: Agawam, Amherst, Northampton, Chicopee, Holyoke, Greenfield, Pittsfield, Springfield, W. Springfield, Westfield

Source: MA Office for Refugees and Immigrants, Refugee Resettlement Agency Provider Reports, FFY13
Barriers to Successful Resettlement and Integration

• Limited English proficiency
• History of trauma *
• Substantial medical issues *
• Long stays in refugee camps and lack of exposure to education, technology, etc.
• High cost and unavailability of housing
• Trouble navigating U.S. systems (health, education, other services)
• Lack of transportation in many areas
Barriers to Successful Resettlement and Integration (cont.)

- Anti-Immigrant Sentiment
- Weather, culture, food differences
- Caregiver Burdens
- Access to Services
- Drivers Licenses
Benefits to Successful Resettlement and Integration (cont.)

- **Responsive and local programming:**
  - RSP/ORI Grantees
  - Community Health
  - Bilingual/Bicultural Staff

- **Linguistically appropriate supports: Translation/Interpretation**

- **Inclusion of the whole person:**
  - Family/friends/neighbors circles ties
  - Religious beliefs/ houses of worship
Refugee Service Providers

- Amherst Health Department
- Asian Center of the Merrimack Valley
- Berkshire Community Action Council, Inc.
- Bosnian Community Center for Resource Development
- Cambodian Mutual Assistance Association
- Catholic Charities of Boston
- Catholic Charities of Worcester
- Centro Latino de Chelsea
- City of Boston
- City of Springfield
- Congolese Development Center
- Department of Public Health
- Elder Services of the Merrimack Valley
- Eritrean Community Center
- Ethiopian Community Mutual Assistance Association
- Haitian American Public Health Initiatives
- Immigrants Assistance Center
- International Institute of Boston
- International Institute of Lowell
- Irish International Immigrant Center
• Jewish Family Service of Metrowest
• Jewish Family Services of Western MA
• Jewish Vocational Service
• Lawrence Council on Aging
• Lowell Public Schools
• Lutheran Social Services of New England
• MA Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition
• Massachusetts Alliance for Portuguese Speakers
• Office of Medicaid/MassHealth
• Refugee and Immigrant Assistance Center Boston/Worcester
• Russian Community Association of Massachusetts Lynn/West Springfield
• Somali Development Center
• Southern Sudanese Solidarity Organization
• West Springfield Public Schools
• Westfield Public Schools
Resources

- MA Office for Refugees and Immigrants: www.mass.gov/ori
Resources

• [www.lep.gov](http://www.lep.gov) For information about limited English proficient individuals

• N-LAAN Listserv – [www.probono.net/nlaan](http://www.probono.net/nlaan)

• N-LAAN List of State Language Access Groups

• [www.masslegalservices.org/languageaccess](http://www.masslegalservices.org/languageaccess) for information regarding translation and interpretation access

• How to work with an interpreter (video): http://www.health.medicbd.com/library/video_play/cX_krmqsWJ0/10_Tips_for_Working_with_Language_Interpreters
• www.Mass.gov to search and view language access plans developed by MA State Agencies
• http://minorityhealth.hhs.gov/templates/browse.aspx?lvl=2&lvlID=15 to view the National CLAS Standards Culturally Competent health Providers Training
MA Office for Refugees and Immigrants (ORI)
617-727-7888

Thank You!