



# Worcester's Refugee Population and Resources

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## WHO IS A REFUGEE?

According to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), a refugee is: "someone who has been forced to flee his or her country because of persecution, war, or violence. A refugee has a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group. Most likely, they cannot return home or are afraid to do so. War and ethnic, tribal and religious violence are leading causes of refugees fleeing their countries." Each year, by presidential order, the president sets the number of refugees that will enter the US in the coming year.

FY '16: 85,000 refugees set to enter the US      FY '17: 110,000 refugees set to enter the US

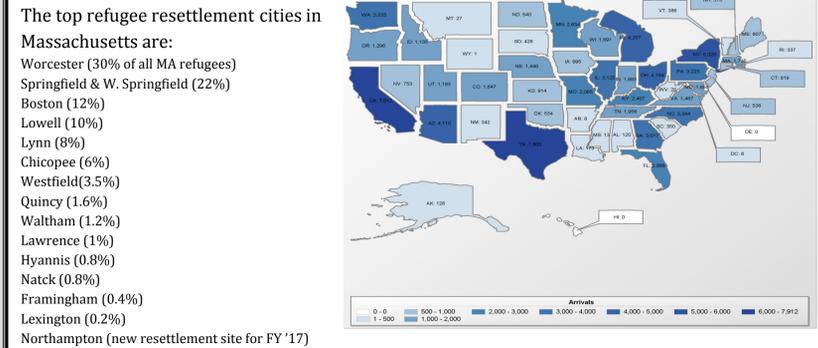
## WHERE ARE REFUGEES ARRIVING FROM?

Fiscal Year 2016 (Oct. 1, 2015 – Sept. 30, 2016)

MASSACHUSETTS ARRIVALS		UNITED STATES ARRIVALS	
Nationality	Individuals	Nationality	Individuals
Afghanistan	36	Afghanistan	2737
Belarus	6	Angola	3
Bhutan	238	Kazakhstan	91
Burma	13	Armenia	55
Burundi	36	Azerbaijan	32
Central African Republic	26	Korea, North	14
China	5	Bangladesh	1
Colombia	5	Kuwait	2
Cuba	1	Belarus	185
Dem. Rep. Congo	340	Kyrgyzstan	40
El Salvador	13	Bhutan	5817
Eritrea	70	Laos	7
Ethiopia	21	Burma	12347
Guatemala	2	Liberia	16
Honduras	2	Burundi	694
Iraq	24	Malaysia	4
Ivory Coast	3	Cambodia	18
Kazakhstan	4	Mali	6
Kyrgyzstan	4	Cameroon	14
Mali	3	Moldova	465
Moldova	36	Central African Republic	401
Pakistan	4	Nepal	33
Republic of South Sudan	5	Chad	2
Russia	29	Nigeria	7
Rwanda	6	China	57
Somalia	261	Pakistan	545
Sri Lanka	1	Colombia	529
Sudan	19	Palestine	50
Syria	146	Congo	16
Uganda	8	Republic of South Sudan	189
Ukraine	76	Croatia	3
Vietnam	2	Russia	462
		Cuba	354
		Rwanda	140
		Dem. Rep. Congo	16370
		Senegal	16
		Egypt	21
		Sierra Leone	3
		El Salvador	364
		Somalia	9020
		Eritrea	1949
		Sri Lanka	91
		Ethiopia	1131
		Sudan	1458
		Gabon	2
		Syria	12587
		Georgia	16
		Tajikistan	17
		Guatemala	8
		Thailand	5
		Guinea	5
		Togo	19
		Honduras	84
		Uganda	65
		India	4
		Ukraine	2543
		Indonesia	7
		Uzbekistan	41
		Iran	3750
		Vietnam	58
		Iraq	9880
		Yemen	26
		Ivory Coast	79
		Zimbabwe	11
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>12,733</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>84,995</b>

## WHERE ARE REFUGEES RESETTLING WITHIN THE UNITED STATES?

In fiscal year 2016, about 2% of all refugees arriving to the US came to Massachusetts



## REFUGEE STAKEHOLDERS IN WORCESTER

**Refugee & Immigrant Assistance Center (RIAC)**

**GOAL:** To promote the educational and socio-economic development in Massachusetts refugee and immigrant communities. Formerly the Somali Women and Children's Association

**RIAC offers:** Refugee Resettlement (up to 200 per year), Community Education and Outreach, Post-Resettlement Case Management

[www.riacboston.org](http://www.riacboston.org)

**Ascentria Care Alliance**

**GOAL:** To break the cycle of poverty, and build thriving communities where everyone has the chance to achieve their full potential, regardless of background or disadvantage.

**Ascentria offers:** Refugee Resettlement (up to 300 per year), ESL (English as a Second Language), Employment Services, Community Education & Outreach, Counseling Services

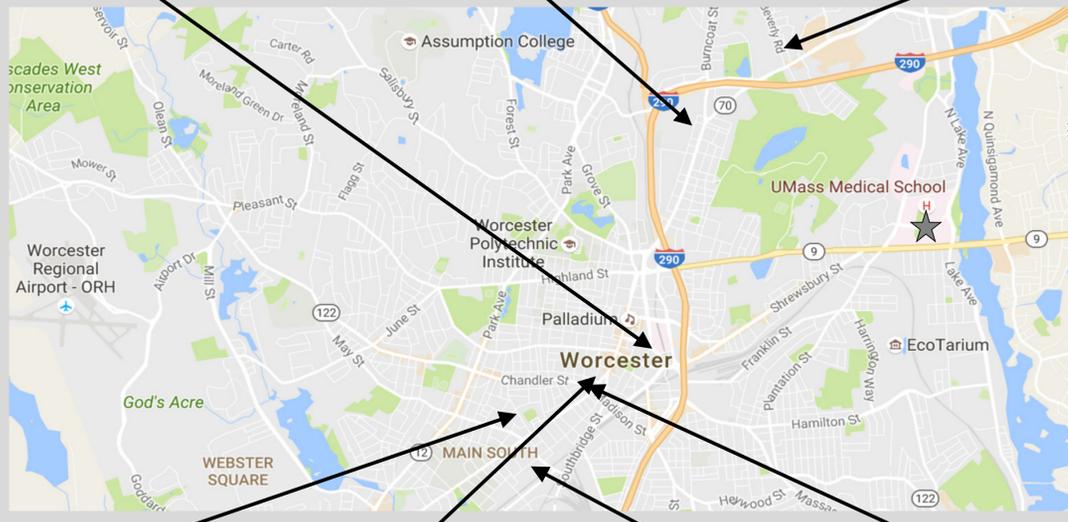
[www.ascentria.org](http://www.ascentria.org)

**Edward M. Kennedy Community Health Center (EMKCHC)**

**GOAL:** To provide accessible, high quality, comprehensive, integrated and compassionate care for all. Established in 1972, in a Worcester Housing project.

**EMKCHC serves:** Over 28,000 patients including refugees that come from 19 different parts of the world. Over 75% of their providers are bilingual.

[www.kennedychc.org](http://www.kennedychc.org)



**Family Health Center of Worcester (FHCW)**

**GOAL:** Improve the health and well-being of all residents in the Worcester area.

**FHCW offers:** Access to affordable health care and social services. FHCW has a team dedicated to refugee care and helping refugee populations access different services.

[www.fhcw.org](http://www.fhcw.org)

**Worcester Refugee Assistance Project (WRAP)**

**GOAL:** Assist newly resettled Burmese refugees in attaining economic independence and learning how to access different services.

**WRAP Offers:** English language assistance, Family mentorship, Health advocacy, Youth development, Transportation

[www.worcesterrefugees.org](http://www.worcesterrefugees.org)

**Catholic Charities of Worcester County (CCWC)**

**GOAL:** Meeting the needs of refugees, the poor, the homeless and the infirm.

**CCWC Offers:** Refugee Resettlement (up to 60 per year), Citizenship classes, Immigration services, ESL and employment services

[www.ccworc.org](http://www.ccworc.org)

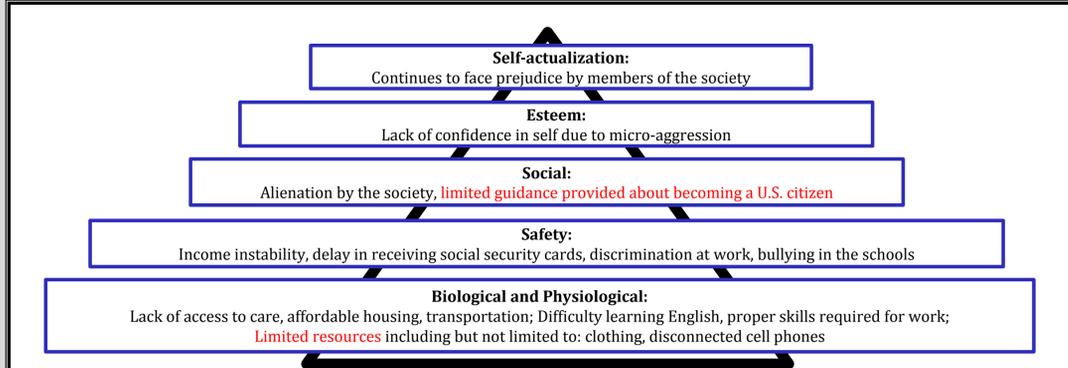
**African Community Education Program (ACE)**

**GOAL:** To help students attain educational goals and social stability. ACE serves children from all African countries who are refugees, recent immigrants, or children of immigrants

**ACE Offers:** Academic support, leadership, cultural expression and community outreach.

[www.acechildren.org](http://www.acechildren.org)

## WHAT ARE SOME COMMON PROBLEMS FACED BY THE REFUGEES?



## HOW CAN WE HELP?

**Refugee Citizenship Project**

**Our Project:** We canvassed 79 WRAP community members to assess interest in and ability to attend citizenship classes, as well as individuals' English literacy level. We performed a total of 5 house visits and 74 phone calls with the help of community-based interpreters who also identify as refugees.

**Goals:**

- Assess community interest in, availability, and barriers to attending citizenship classes
- Assess English language proficiency (reading, writing, speaking)

**Outcomes**

- 35 of 43 (81%) available for weekend class
- 22 of 43 (51%) available for evening class
- 18 of 43 (41%) available for morning class
- 3 (7%) available Sunday only and 3 available Saturday only

**Limitations:**

- Logistics: Transportation; child care
- Communication: Limited and varying English language proficiency

**Future Work:**

- House visits to individuals unable to be contacted by phone
- Promoting ESL class sign up for those with minimal English proficiency
- Begin offering a citizenship classes on weekends with native Karenni and Burmese speakers

**Worcester Refugee Resource Needs Assessment Project**

**Our Project:** To create a comprehensive and functional collaboratory that would allow for information to be disseminated and exchanged

**Goals:**

- Create a needs assessment questionnaire for various stakeholders to assess most used resources and a suitable format for resource collaboratory for the Worcester community
- Administer questionnaire to different stakeholders

**Methods:**

- A pilot of the needs assessment was done by administering the needs assessment questionnaire to representatives from WRAP, EMK and ASCENTRIA for feedback.
- Created a contact directory with stakeholders information including telephone numbers and addresses
- Generated student interest in terms of a student group or part of the Global Health pathway capstone to continue this project

**Outcome:**

- Questionnaire approved for the next steps by representatives in various stakeholder agencies

**Limitation:**

- Time constraints restricted ability to administer questionnaire past the pilot stage

**Future Work:**

- Continue to administer questionnaire to various stakeholders
- Analyze questionnaire data
- Collaborate with a group of graduate students at Clark University and with Worcester Public Library, by sharing questionnaire and contact directory.
- Use information from survey to create Worcester refugee resource collaboratory
- Follow up with student group or Global health pathway students interested in continuing this work

## REFERENCES/ ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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