



Refugee Resettlement in Vermont

House Committee on Commerce and Economic Development, February 28, 2023

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The header features a dark purple background with a wavy bottom edge. On the right side, there are several overlapping shapes: a large light purple circle, a smaller light purple circle below it, and a vertical pink rectangle at the top right.

Vermont Refugee Resettlement - mission

The mission of refugee resettlement in Vermont is to promote and provide a safe and welcoming home for refugees and immigrants, and to promote their full participation as self-sufficient individuals and families in the economic, social, and civic life of Vermont.

Vermont refugee resettlement

- ▶ Number of refugees assigned to a state is determined by State Department with input from resettlement agencies and consultation with state government
- ▶ Vermont has two resettlement agencies – USCRI (formerly VRRP) and ECDC.
- ▶ 4 official sites in FFY 2023, Colchester, Rutland, Brattleboro and Bennington
- ▶ 2022 Arrivals – 327 refugees/Afghan Humanitarian Parolees, estimated 50 Ukrainian Humanitarian Parolees

Refugee projections FFY2023

- ▶ ECDC and USCRI have been approved collectively to receive approximately 450 refugees in this year. Not currently on target to receive that many – slow start – will pick up in 3rd and 4th quarter.
- ▶ Arrivals depend in part on overseas refugee program efficiency.
- ▶ Main focus of resettlement activity is employment-related services (job placement, ELL) ultimately leading to economic self sufficiency.

Asylum seekers – others entering without refugee or other approved status

- ▶ Community-based organizations are currently supporting approximately 115 asylum seekers in Vermont
 - The Community Asylum Seekers Project (CASP) in Brattleboro
 - Chittenden Asylum Seekers Assistance Network (CASAN) in Burlington
 - Bridge to Rutland (B2R) in Rutland, Central Vermont Refugee Action Network (CVRAN) in Montpelier
 - Supporting and Helping Asylees and Refugees (SHARe) in Norwich
 - Northeast Kingdom Asylum Seeker Assistance Network (NEKASAN) in St. Johnsbury
 - Randolph Area Asylum Seeker Support (RAASS) in Randolph.

Supporting Asylum-seekers to stay and work in Vermont

- ▶ A typical 'case' requires 2-3 years of support.
- ▶ Currently 30% of that caseload is employed
- ▶ 30% are close to employment
- ▶ Remaining either have not yet filed an asylum claim, do not plan to file an asylum claim or are children.
- ▶ The network's caseload has doubled each year over the past 3 years and in 2022, they assisted a total of about 40 people last year whereas approximately 80 sought help and were unable to be assisted due to limited legal, case management and housing capacity.
- ▶ With additional support, depending on housing availability, the network estimates it could assist 60 cases in 2023 and could accelerate the movement of asylum seekers into the job market with increased legal support.



Employment supports – the need (\$1,000,000 in BAA – FY24 and FY25)

- ❑ Longer term job coaching and development of vocational/career pathways for refugees and other new arrivals (e.g. BDCC in Brattleboro), supports for employment including driver's licenses
- ❑ If we receive the projected number of refugees, there will be a need for more staff to provide direct employment placement services (AALV, ECDC, USCRI). Investing in new relationships in St. Albans as we build a refugee workforce there.
- ❑ Longer term strategies including building relationships with employers, engaging and educating the business community, and creating tools to build employer confidence would assist in helping Vermont's businesses absorb this important new workforce and community.



Investing in Asylum Seeker Assistance Network

- ▶ Asylum seekers are assisted through a hard-working, committed mostly volunteer-based network. More support to them will allow for increased support for asylum seekers to move toward employment – includes some support for housing, legal, and employment placement/assistance
- ▶ Please note, in the event of a large arrival of asylum-seekers into Vermont at one time (eg. 50-100 arriving by bus), a portion of these funds could be redirected to support an emergency operation to meet the short-term needs of the arrivals while making efforts to place them with the Network of Asylum-seeking assistance groups throughout the state.



▶ Community partners receiving funding may include

- ▶ BDCC – Brattleboro Development Credit Union
- ▶ USCRI
- ▶ ECDC
- ▶ AALV
- ▶ CASP – Central Vermont Asylum Seeking Project

Refugee Resettlement Funding

- ▶ Work is primarily funded through State Department and through Department of Health and Human Services
 - ▶ Direct federal funding to resettlement agencies (per capita and some grants)
 - ▶ Federal funding to the Vermont State Refugee Office – Base funding, Afghan specific, Ukrainian specific, set asides (schools, elderly, health, youth).
 - ▶ Base funding is based on 'look back' data. Challenge this year is that our 'refugee' (not Afghan) numbers were low for last two years which impacts the amount we get this year for new refugees who are not Afghans. Could be significant deficit. Federal gov't just announced a supplement, not sure how much we will get or when it will arrive
 - ▶ State funding this current state fiscal year (\$500,000) for 'aid to refugees' – was invested in workforce (work placements, apprenticeships, ELL in the workplace) and housing related subsidies

FFY 23 federal funding (current)

\$ 97,876	Support Services (G99RSF2)
\$ 75,000	Services for Elderly Refugees (G99RSF2)
\$ 95,000	School Impact (G99RSF2)
\$ 65,000	Youth Mentoring (G99RSF2)
\$ 250,000	Health Promotion (G99RSF2)
\$ 603,767	Afghan Support Services (G992218)
	Afghan School Impact (G992210)
	Afghan School Impact (support) (G992218)
	Afghan Youth Mentoring (G992210)
\$ 117,509	Afghan Health Promotion (G992210)
	Afghan Legal Services (G992218)
\$ 63,627	Ukrainian Support Services
\$ 20,300	Ukrainian School Impact
\$ 50,000	Ukrainian Health Promotion

Refugees resettled in Vermont

Refugee Resettlement in Vermont								
Federal Fiscal Year	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
Number of Refugees	21	91	47	23	114	133	235	386
Number of AHPs	0	246	0	0	0	0	0	0
Number of UHPs (estimate)*	30	50	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	51	387	47	23	114	133	235	386