



THE IMPACT OF SNAP BENEFITS TERMINATION ON REFUGEES

Presented by: Joe Wiah, Executive Director, ECDC VT

Date: 10/30, 2025



Background

- **Refugee Resettlement Partnership**
- The Department of State Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration partners with 10 domestic resettlement agencies nationwide. The Ethiopian Community Development Council (ECDC) is one of the 10 nationwide.
- **Our Mission**
- ECDC supports refugees and immigrants in achieving dignity, self-sufficiency, and successful community integration.
- **Local Impact**
- As Vermont branch of ECDC, we have resettled over 500 refugees in southern Vermont (Brattleboro, Bennington, and Springfield) since our establishment in 2021.



Goal of Resettlement programs

The goal of the resettlement process is **self-sufficiency** as quickly as possible, preferably within 90 days.

Another goal is for refugees to be fully integrated and contributing members of their new communities.

Our focus during first 90 days is: finding housing, finding jobs, signing refugees up for SNAP, Medicaid, enrolling children into schools, ELL, cultural orientation, showing them how to use public transport systems if there is one etc. Post 90 days, we evaluate each case, enroll those needing more help into specific long-term programs such as RSS, PC-ICM, PC gaps services, RHP, REA etc. Others, we refer them to existing community programs.

We currently serving 270 New Americans in these programs. Each program goal is self- sufficiency.



Year to date arrivals

- Total arrival this year is 206. Those who made Southern Vermont permanent home is 121.
- **Breakdown:**
- **76 refugees** (45 in Brattleboro and 31 in Bennington) representing 29 households.
- **85** refugees' students who have move to various colleges across the country.
- **45** Special Immigrant visa **holders** (16 Springfield, 6 Wilder, 11 Brattleboro and 12 in Bennington). These are refugees who worked with the US Govt including the US military in Afghanistan.
- **Current Nationalities:** Afghanistan, Eritrea, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan, Yemen, Guatemala, Nigeria, El Salvador, Iraq, Syria, Honduras, Venezuela, Colombia, and Ukraine.



Snap Benefit Impact

- All **45** Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) arrivals this year are no longer eligible for 3Square VT assistance. These individuals arrived through alternative pathways, requiring a 3-month federal approval process at \$1,650 pr person to resettle. These funds address essential needs such as Food, housing, and other necessities during benefit application and job search.

Food Insecurity

- As of October, all refugees and SIVs no longer receiving food stamps. This means all **121** refugees who arrived this year if the Green Card requirement comes into effect, plus **45** SIVs a total of **166** will not be eligible according to our records. This list is more than the **32** households (21 in Brattleboro and 11 Bennington) or **68** individuals on the list we received from ESD.
- The above doesn't include those who have arrived after October and those who are expected to arrive the rest of the year.
- **On Tuesday this week**, we welcome a SIV family of 5 in Brattleboro who are not eligible and not on the list, and we expect to welcome another family in Bennington next week. **16** additional individuals are expected to arrive by November 16th and 18th contingent on government reopen. None of these families will receive food stamp assistance.



Impact Cont.

- With limited local support options from Foodbanks who are also operating on limited budget, families mentioned are facing immediate food insecurity.
- Groundworks food bank in Brattleboro is biweekly access only
- Carrying Me Home in Brattleboro is twice weekly access
- **While we are grateful** these resources are in our communities, they differ significantly from preferred food options and lack comprehensive access to culturally appropriate items for refugees.
- I must also mentioned that we are so grateful to the Governor and his administration particularly Tracy Dolan for providing emergency food assistance for the most vulnerable refugee population. From our estimate, this assistance will only last for 3 months and benefit those who were approved for Snap assistance prior to Oct. All refugees and SIVs who arrived after October, are not eligible.



Request for this committee

- Immediately address the barriers preventing Special Immigrant Visa holders from accessing emergency food assistance.
- Create an alternative program for refugees and SIV holders who are deeply impacted and food insecure due to the federal Snap policy change.
- Ensure that no individual who risked their life for American interests goes without basic food assistance due to federal policy changes.



Impact Cont.

I close with the Story of NP



THANK YOU