



## *Helping refugees and political asylees build new lives here in Maine*

### **AN OVERVIEW OF REFUGEES IN MAINE**

#### **Who is a refugee?**

Any person who is outside their country of origin and unable or unwilling to return there or to avail themselves of its protection, on account of a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular group, or political opinion. *(as defined by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)).*

#### **What does it mean to be a primary refugee?**

A primary refugee is a refugee who arrives directly from a country of asylum or host country (refugee camp) to Maine.

#### **What does it mean to be a secondary migrant?**

A secondary migrant is a person who entered the United States as a refugee and was resettled in one state, but then chose to move to another state. For example, a refugee who was resettled in Chicago, IL, but then chose to move to Portland, Maine, would be considered a secondary migrant when arriving in Maine.

#### **How are refugees screened before entering the United States?**

The United States decides which refugees to resettle within our borders. The State Department oversees the admission of each refugee to the U.S. after they have been granted refugee status following individual interviews by Department of Homeland Security (DHS) officials, have passed extensive

inter-agency security background checks with multiple national security and intelligence agencies, and have passed health screenings. According to national security experts, refugees are the most thoroughly vetted, rigorously screened people to come to the United States. Security screenings involve the State Department, DHS, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Department of Defense, the National Counterterrorism Center, and multiple intelligence agencies. The entire process typically takes 18-24 months, and sometimes longer, before a refugee even steps foot on U.S. soil.

#### **What does it mean to be an asylee?**

An asylee is an individual who has sought protection from fear of persecution by submitting an asylum application to the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) and asking to be granted political asylum to reside in the United States. Asylees enter the U.S. on student or work visas or as undocumented individuals and then petition the U.S. government for asylum.

#### **What is Catholic Charities role in refugee resettlement here in Maine?**

The U.S. government works with the United Nations to provide resettlement opportunities in the United States. Catholic Charities Maine Refugee and Immigration Services (RIS) has held the federal contract in Maine to be the primary provider of resettlement services to refugees since 1975.





## What services does Catholic Charities provide to refugees?

Our RIS program provides case management services, employment services and cultural adjustment services to primary refugees, secondary migrants and granted asylum individuals.

Services we are required to provide to primary refugees include:

- Airport reception
- Assurance of basic needs – housing, food and clothing
- Community, cultural, and employment orientation
- Referral/enrollment for education and vocational training
- Referral for English as a second language tutoring
- Employment support
- Medical and mental health referrals

Services available to primary refugees, asylees, and secondary migrants:

- Limited Case Management
- Employment Services
- Family reunification (AOR)
- Mentorship and American Friends Program
- Referrals to other service providers
- Elder Services
- Employment support

## How can I support refugees locally?

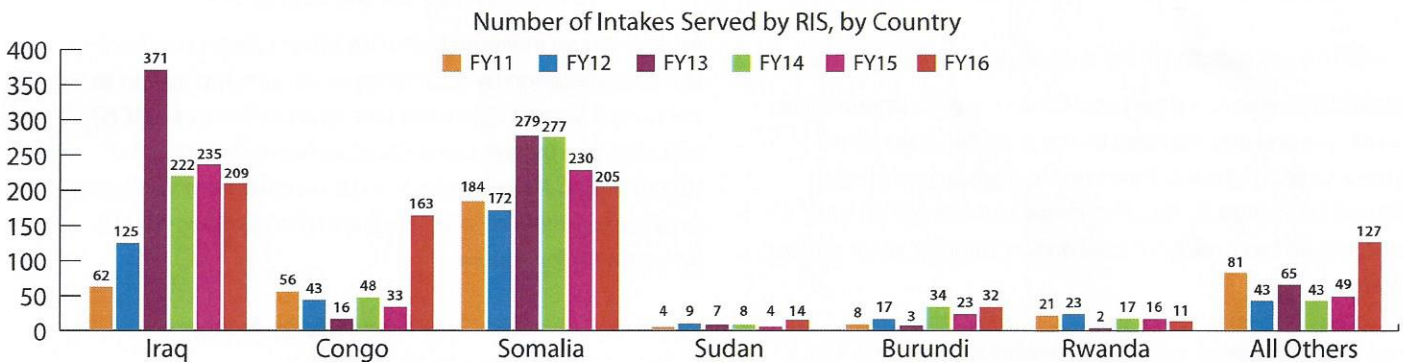
**Volunteer!** Our volunteer and internship opportunities change throughout the year, and require different levels of time-commitment. Some examples of jobs that volunteers help with include:

- Tutor refugees in basic English skills
- Help refugees write resumes and prepare for job interviews
- Accompany refugees to various appointments
- Provide basic office support
- Mentor a refugee families or individuals

**In-Kind Donations!** Help us furnish and supply apartments for newly arriving refugee families. Please refer to our “Wish List” online ([www.ccmaine.org/refugee-immigration-services/support/donate](http://www.ccmaine.org/refugee-immigration-services/support/donate)) for the specific items we need.

**Make a Monetary Gift!** To financially support the work that we do you can make a donation online at [www.ccmaine.org/donate](http://www.ccmaine.org/donate) and chose “Refugee & Immigration” as your gift designation from the drop-down menu or by mailing a check payable to “CCM Refugee & Immigration Services” to the attention of the Development Office, Catholic Charities Maine, P.O. Box 10660, Portland, ME 04104-6060.

**For more information,** please visit the RIS website at [www.RefugeeImmigrationServicesCCM.org](http://www.RefugeeImmigrationServicesCCM.org). In particular, our Frequently Asked Questions page is a great resource for learning more.



“All Others” includes: Afghanistan, Angola, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Bulgaria, Burkina-Faso, Burma, Camaroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Cuba, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Honduras, Iran, Ivory Coast, Kazakhstan, Mali, Russia, Syria, Tanzania, Togo, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, and Vietnam

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