



REVIEW OF SERVICES FOR REFUGEES

Social Services Appropriations Subcommittee
Staff: Annette Harris

ISSUE BRIEF

SUMMARY

A refugee is someone who has been forcibly displaced because of persecution due to race, religion, political opinion, nationality, or membership in a particular social group. Refugees constitute a special class of immigrant that are brought to the United States by the government due to special humanitarian concern. In fiscal year 2017, the U.S. received 53,716 refugees with 799 of those coming to Utah. There are multiple organizations and agencies working to provide services to refugees in Utah including 2 resettlement agencies, the Department of Workforce Services, the Department of Health and various community-based non-profits. Refugees are eligible for all poverty-related services provided by DWS in Utah if they meet the eligibility requirements. For refugee program specific expenditures, a total of \$8,784,472 was spent in FY 17 with 99% of that coming from federal funds. For Refugee expenditures in other programs that are also open to other Utah populations, expenditures were \$15,833,363 for FY 17 with 97% coming from federal funds. This brief is for background information only and no legislative action is required.

REFUGEE DESIGNATION AND ARRIVAL TRENDS

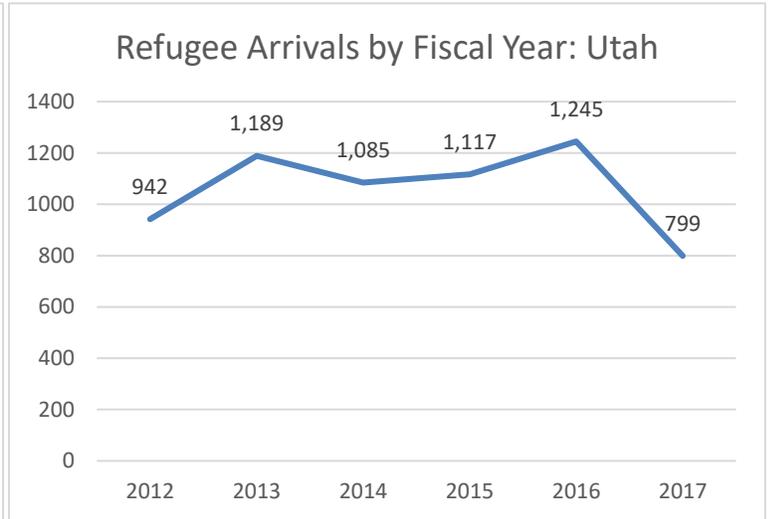
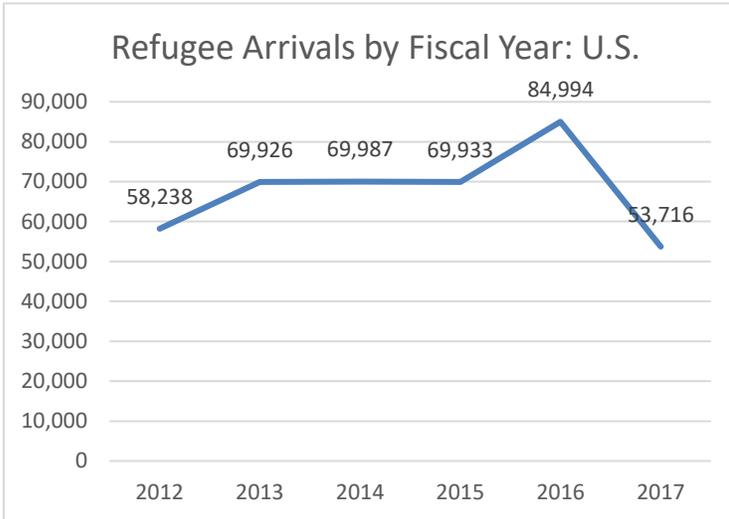
The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees oversees refugees worldwide and determines who qualifies as a refugee. The UNHCR in Article 1(A)2 of the 1951 Refugee Convention says that the term “refugee” shall apply to any person who:

“...owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of their nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail themselves of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of their former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, unwilling to return to it.”

At the end of 2015, the UNHCR estimated there were 20 million refugees worldwide. Refugees are brought to the United States by the U.S. Department of State, after security background checks are completed and up to the number set as a ceiling by the White House every year. Refugees are issued a visa called an I-94 proving their status and all refugees can legally work upon arrival to the U.S. Refugees are eligible for a green card proving their permanent residency after 1 year of arrival and may apply for citizenship after five years of arrival. Refugees are distinct from asylum seekers, who come to the country before adjudication and Internally Displaced Persons, who remain in their country of origin.

Refugee Arrival Trends in the U.S. and Utah

The graphs below show that refugee arrival trends in Utah have reflected national trends, including a steep decline in numbers between FY 2016 and 2017 in response to immigration policy changes. Refugees living in Utah come from 29 countries and represent 53 different languages spoken. Currently, the largest number of refugees in Utah come from Myanmar, Iraq, Somalia, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. The Department of Workforce Services estimates that approximately 60,000 refugees and their children live in Utah with 99 percent of them living in the Salt Lake Valley. In 2016, one resettlement agency—Catholic Community Services— began resettling a small number of Congolese refugees in Ogden.



REFUGEE SERVICES IN UTAH

The majority of refugee services are federally funded through the U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) and the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. Utah provides 2 years of case management services to refugees in the state, from their date of arrival.

Case Management/Resettlement Services

Since 2009, Utah has provided 2-year case management (from date of arrival) for all newly arrived refugees through funding from the U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) and the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program.

In the U.S., there are 9 national voluntary agencies with affiliate offices located throughout the country. The Department of State contracts directly with these agencies to provide initial resettlement services which include reception and placement, orientations, job placement, health screenings, school enrollment, and assistance with DWS applications for service. The Department of State provides a one-time grant of \$1,800 per refugee to help with these services. There are 2 of these agencies in Utah.

1. International Rescue Committee (IRC)
2. Catholic Community Services (CCS)

Both IRC and CCS provide case management for the full 2 years. There are a number of agencies that provide auxiliary support to the resettlement services provided by CCS and IRC. These organizations operate with funding from private contributions, grants, and contracts. The main ones are:

1. The Refugee and Immigrant Center—Asian Association of Utah (RIC-AAU): which provides extended case management services, mental health services, ESL, neighborhood centers, and interpreting services.
2. Utah Health and Human Rights—Provides mental health services and some additional case management for refugees that have been victims of torture.
3. Utah Refugee Education and Training Center—A partnership with SLCC, USU and DWS and other private partners with a goal of fostering opportunities for refugees to access employment and support refugee integration. This partnership offers employment services including short-term trainings, ESLC, basic computer and tech training, business development support and education.
4. LDS Charities (DI and Humanitarian Center)—These organizations provide work training and job placement services for resettled refugees in Utah, as well as in-kind donations of furniture and clothing. Refugees enrolled in the program earn a wage while taking English class.

Which poverty-related services are offered through the state and are available to refugees?

There are no poverty related services offered through the state that refugees cannot access, according to the Department of Workforce Services. DWS staff determine eligibility of a refugee for services based on documentation from the State Department (like the I-94). Services offered to refugees through DWS include:

- Cash assistance through the Family Employment Program (FEP)
- Food Stamps
- Medical assistance including:
 - Health screening within 30 days of arrival
 - Medicaid
 - Refugee Medicaid for 8 months after arrival for those that qualify for other Medicaid programs
- Childcare assistance
- Employment services
- Capacity building assistance for refugee community organizations

TOTAL EXPENDITURES FOR REFUGEE SPECIFIC SERVICES

Table 1 below details expenditures for programs under the refugee program at DWS. Table 2 includes expenditures for Utah’s refugee population on other program funds provided by DWS that refugees may be eligible for along with other Utah citizens such as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Medicaid and the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF). In addition to the services listed below, there is some additional funding to states from the Office of Refugee Resettlement to assist with services for refugees. For example, ORR funding pays for refugee cash and medical assistance for the first 8 months from arrival if the refugee is not eligible for Medicaid or TANF. Funding from the Office of Refugee Resettlement is limited to services for refugees who have been in the United States under five years.

Table 1: Refugee Specific Programs

Refugee Program	FY 2017 Expenditures	%	Federal Funds	General Fund	Dedicated Credits
Health Screening	\$1,327,538	15.1%	\$1,327,538		
Unaccompanied Minors	\$2,669,369	30.4%	\$2,669,369		
Social Services	\$1,200,963	13.7%	\$1,185,963		\$15,000
Refugee Medical Assistance	\$1,328,308	15.1%	\$1,328,308		
Administration	\$1,072,604	12.2%	\$1,072,604		
Targeted (Employment) Assistance Grant	\$482,315	5.5%	\$482,315		
Refugee Cash Assistance	\$546,225	6.2%	\$546,225		
School Impact Award	\$45,928	0.5%	\$45,928		
Capacity Building	\$50,045	0.6%		\$50,045	
Targeted Grant Pre-Literacy Training	\$41,084	0.5%	\$41,084		
World Refugee Day	\$3,197	0.0%	\$114		\$3,083
Refugee Services Fund (Fund 2265)	\$8,688	0.1%			\$8,688
Refugee Vista Grant	\$6,427	0.1%	\$6,427		

eREP Operational Refugee Program Costs	\$1,781	0.0%	\$1,781		
Totals	\$8,784,472	100%	\$8,707,656	\$50,045	\$26,771

Table 2: Refugee Expenditures in Other DWS Programs

Program	Refugee Counts	FY 2017 Benefit Amounts	General Fund	Federal Funds	Restricted Fund
Child Care and Development Fund	335	\$2,357,097	\$48,556	\$2,308,541	
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families	461	\$1,699,757		\$1,699,757	
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program	3,478	\$11,390,626		\$11,390,626	
General Assistance Program	57	\$115,927	\$115,927		
Unemployment Insurance	96	\$269,956			\$269,956
Refugee Cash Assistance	374	**			
Refugee Medical Assistance	405	**			
Other Medical Assistance	2,933	Unavailable†			
Total Benefit Amounts		\$15,833,363	\$164,483	\$15,398,924	\$269,956

†DWS does not have this expenditure data ** FY 2017 expenditure amounts are shown in the Refugee Program Expenses table above

Note: "Refugee Counts" are program specific and should not be summed because a refugee may be enrolled in one or more programs at a time.