



Coalition of Refugee Service Agencies 2014 Annual Report



A Message from Our Members and Partners

Our Mission

Our mission is: To engage a broad coalition to highlight the cultural, social and economic contributions of refugees and immigrants in Georgia

Vision: We envision a future where every person who calls Georgia home is valued, respected, and able to build a successful life.

Georgia has a tremendously successful 35 year history of hospitality towards the world's most persecuted people. Refugees are human beings who have faced and survived the worst atrocities. Yet the refugees we are privileged to work with have maintained their human dignity and commitment to succeeding despite seemingly insurmountable challenges. Refugees are a model of resilience we should all emulate.

What would you or your family do facing the unimaginable terror of persecution? Would you want to find a welcoming community to restart your life? A helping hand to these heroes is what the members of the CRSA offer every day. As this report outlines our member organizations assist survivors of forced migration rebuild their lives as quickly as possible and provides them with the intensive financial and social service assistance needed to quickly regain self-sufficiency. Please let us know if you have any questions and thank you for your support.

-J.D. McCrary, CRSA Chair

Executive Director, International Rescue Committee Atlanta

Connect with CRSA

Community Update

On October 1, 2014, CRSA member agencies Refugee Resettlement and Immigration Services of Atlanta (RRISA) and Refugee Family Services (RFS) completed a merger to become New American Pathways. This merger will allow the single organization to offer a more complete continuum of service to new Americans and to better serve the community as a whole.

Join the Conversation



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Contact Us

If you would like to learn more about CRSA or any of our partners, please contact New American Pathways' Stephanie Ali – s.ali@newamericanpathways.org.

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Members & Partners

Catholic Charities Atlanta (CCA)
CDF: A Collective Action Initiative
Clarkston Community Center (CCC)
Friends of Refugees
The Global Village Project (GVP)
The International Rescue Committee
in Atlanta (IRC)
Jewish Family & Career Services
Latin American Association (LAA)
Lutheran Services of Georgia (LSG)
New American Pathways
Formerly RRISA and RFS
Welcoming America
World Relief Atlanta (WR)



Refugee Resettlement



2,901 refugees
resettled in
Georgia in 2014

The Al Khazraji Family

In August 2013, the three members of the Al Khazraji family arrived from Iraq to be resettled in Savannah, and became the first refugee family to resettle on Wilmington Island – a location that offers great amenities but little in the way of a pre-organized Iraqi community. But with the support of their agency and the community, the Al Khazarjis thrived.

Nadim, their son, shined at his local school and made friends in and out of the ESOL program. Both Samad and his wife Nemat soon found jobs at Kroger, and Samad – a theatre writer and actor in Baghdad, befriended local artists at the famed Savannah City Market. The Al Khazraji family has since learned to read and write in English thanks to Savannah Technical College's ESL classes and now volunteer with LSG to welcome newcomers to the area.

“Refugees bring in richness of cultural diversity and are strong contributing members to the Georgia economy.” Grace Dunbar, Women Watch Afrika, service provider originally from Liberia

The United States Refugee Resettlement Program is a **public/private partnership** between the U.S. federal government and non-profit agencies that provides a legal avenue for individuals fleeing persecution to resettle in the United States. CRSA resettlement partners welcome new arrivals to Georgia and help ensure a smooth transition to their new home. The weeks and months following a refugee's arrival are filled with **essential assistance** from resettlement staff as they help families gain access to health and social services, register for school and English classes, and receive cultural orientations, among many other services.

Refugee Countries of Origin



Resettlement in Georgia

Refugees became new neighbors in the communities of **Clarkston, Decatur, Savannah, Tucker, Roswell, Comer, Smyrna, Buford, Stone Mountain, Avondale Estates, Atlanta, Alpharetta, Woodstock, Gainesville, Athens, Macon, Sandy Springs, Norcross, Kennesaw** and many



82.7% of families were self-sufficient within 180 days of arrival – among the highest rate in the nation

Resettlement & Employment Services

The **Matching Grant** Program assists clients with achieving economic self-sufficiency through employment within six month of arrival. Its services include case management, job preparation and placement, housing and utility assistance, and a cash allowance.

- **1,838** people were enrolled in Matching Grant, with 82.7% of families self-sufficient within 180 days of arrival.

Employment: Clients not participating in Match Grant receive employment support from CRSA member agencies in conjunction with the Office of Refugee Resettlement and the Georgia Department of Human Services.

- CRSA assisted more than **1,180 additional** refugees in obtaining employment at **over 100 unique employers** in 2014.

Extended Case Management includes social adjustment, which assists clients with everything from emergency medical treatment to home management and skills trainings. These services are available for clients up to five years after their arrival. This year, CRSA members provided **3,054 social adjustment services** to clients.

Information & Referral includes helping clients with accessing federal, state, and local community resources, such as childcare, library cards, and driver's licenses. This year, CRSA agencies provided clients with **2,238 information and referral services**.

Economic Impact

"According to the latest census, **Metro Atlanta has the second-fastest growing foreign-born population** in the country, after Baltimore. Our **international community grew** by almost **70%** in the last decade alone. We are going to act like it by embracing the hopes and dreams of people all around the world. We should lead in this space because **inclusion is a part of our DNA** and so many of these individuals have talent that we need." **Mayor Kasim Reed**

CRSA member organizations helped **2,021 new clients become employed**. These new employees earned an **average of \$8.81 per hour**, well above the state minimum wage, and **contributed an estimated \$3.6 million to the Georgia economy** in FY2014 through income, sales, and property taxes.

Refugee Youth Programs



Friends of Refugees, CCC, IRC, RFS, & RRISA provided afterschool programs to more than **557** students, with focus on academic enrichment, social development, and homework help.

Summer camps by RRISA, CCC, RFS, IRC, Friends of Refugees, and CCA served more than **483** refugee students.

RFS, RRISA and CCA provided parent orientation and school-related case management to **439** clients.

CCA Refugee Youth Mentoring Program provided **1 on 1 mentor/mentee relationships** to 10 refugee youth between the ages of 12-17. Each mentor meets with his/her youth for at least 2 hours per week for a minimum of one year.

Dhan Rai's Success Story

Dhan Rai is a refugee from Bhutan, who arrived to the US five years ago. She and her oldest daughter have been involved in the **Parents as Teachers (PAT) Program** at Refugee Family Services since 2011. The program equips refugee parents with the skills and knowledge of childhood development needed to be their child's first and most influential teachers.

Dhan has been receiving in-home parenting instruction from a trained RFS Bhutanese parent educator. Dhan goes with other mothers to the library to learn to read to her children and recently joined a parent leadership council. She is proud of the advances in her children's social, mental, and language skills - and in her own confidence. Dhan now serves on the PAT Advisory Council for New American Pathways.

Adult & Senior Education

English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) is the most well-known form of adult education. In 2014, seven CRSA member agencies **offered ESOL programs to 3,792 individuals**, much of it targeted to those in high need, such as working or single mothers.

CRSA member organizations offered extensive education programming including financial literacy, MARTA orientation, computer literacy, vocational training, and family literacy to thousands of clients in 2014.



Services for Elderly Refugees

Jewish Family & Career Services provided 150 services to **refugees over 60 years of age**. The program provides education about health navigation, transportation, life skills, and more. **CCC** serves **140 seniors** in their seniors program with ESL, healthy living and fellowship opportunities.

Citizenship and Civic Engagement

Five CRSA members (IRC, RRISA, WR, LAA and CCA) assisted with applications for citizenship under various grants, including those for Cuban/Haitian entrants, and provided over **4,100 services**.

Refugee Family Services' Refugee Organizing in Action (ROA) collaborative targets refugee Leaders, providing capacity-strengthening technical assistance to current and emerging Leaders and ethnic community-based organizations to support the delivery of culturally and linguistically appropriate services and promote refugee involvement in decision making processes. Additional projects of the ROA Collaborative promote collaboration and information sharing among all levels of the community through coordinating working groups. In 2014, ROA engaged **103 leaders** representing **28 different communities** and ethnic community-based organizations.

The Latin American Association held information sessions last fall in DeKalb and Gwinnett counties to inform hundreds of individuals about the President's executive actions on immigration. Sessions were presented and facilitated by immigration attorneys, criminal attorneys, tax professionals and consular personnel.

Pasupati Finds a New Home

In the 1990s, Pasupati Regmi and his family were labeled "anti-national" by the government in his home country of Bhutan. Since then, he's had no country to truly call home. His native language was banned and his father was taken in the middle of the night and imprisoned. He and his family left and spent 17 years in a refugee camp in Nepal after fleeing in fear of their lives. In 2008, he came to the US with his family. "I wanted to be American... It was in my blood," he said. Regmi was resettled by RRISA and soon hired by Catholic Charities Atlanta where he still works today. This year, he purchased his first home and became a US citizen. On the day of his naturalization ceremony, he recalled, **"I'm just looking for a day to see that I have a nation that I can be proud of."** **"That is today,"** he said.

Community Engagement



While CRSA member agencies offer a variety of services to clients, this work would not be possible without the support of private organizations who believe in supporting new Americans in their community. In 2014, CRSA agencies worked with:

- * Over **100** faith partners
- * Over **120** school and universities
- * Over **240** civic & community groups
- * Over **200** business partners

Services for Women and Girls

Young Women's Leadership Program & Latina Leadership Institute

The Young Women's Leadership Program (YWLP) of Refugee Family Service and the Latina Leadership Institute of Latin American Association both work to empower high-school aged young women to realize their full potential through economic advancement and positive self-image. YWLP pairs the 20 young women in their program with local female mentors who work with the women throughout the program year to help guide them on issues from college choice to finding positive ways to spend their free time.

Refugee Sewing Society

Created in 2014 by Friends of Refugees, RSS empowered 27 woman entrepreneurs to create and sell a wide variety of items to support their families. One new initiative this year made it possible for the "beginner" sewing class to craft and sell \$10,000 worth of daycare nap blankets for local daycare companies.

Embrace Pregnancy Care

Provided by Friends of Refugees, Embrace provides workshops, hospital visits, labor doula services, postpartum care assistance, relationship networks with local healthcare organizations and more, so that refugee women can have empowered and positive birthing experiences

Volunteer Engagement

One example of our volunteer engagement is Project RISE (Refugee and Immigrant Self-sufficiency through Education). The project is a collaboration among RRISA, Fugees Family, and RFS. This program engages **21 AmeriCorps members** to assist in the education of children and families and to strengthen the Atlanta community. The International Rescue Committee in Atlanta also hosts **2 AmeriCorps members**.

AmeriCorps members serve in:

- Afterschool Classrooms
- Literacy Programs
- Family Support Programs
- Volunteer & Community Outreach
- Curriculum Development
- Adult Education



CRSA engaged over
6,054 volunteers who
donated over
132,394 hours of
service

Community Impact - CRSA

Welcoming Cities

Along with our partner agency Welcoming America, this year the CRSA has focused on making Georgia Communities more welcoming for all people. In October 2013, Atlanta became the 22nd city in the nation to become an **official “Welcoming City”** dedicated to being a warm and welcoming place for all individuals. On March 4th 2014, Clarkston followed suit. The CRSA now holds a place on the Welcoming Atlanta Working Group, which is working to implement the city’s 20 point plan to make Atlanta a more welcoming place for immigrants.

Outreach Events

CRSA has a heavy focus on bringing awareness to refugee and immigrant issues. Every year, the CRSA has two main outreach events: **World Refugee Day** (June 20) and the **New Americans Celebration** at the Georgia Capitol during the legislative session. Both work in collaboration with community organizations and members to bring awareness to refugee issues. Additionally, CRSA member **Clarkston Community Center** held 30 events engaging 1500 individuals in the community – bringing refugees together with non-refugees.

Educational Materials

To better educate the general public about the work of the CRSA and about refugees and immigrants in general, the CRSA produces multiple educational materials. Those materials include: the **CRSA annual report**, **“Refugees in Georgia” fact sheet**, and **individual fact sheets** on members and partners. The CRSA also responds to individual questions from the public and elected officials. CRSA members are willing to speak to groups or individuals about refugee and immigrant issues at their request. Please see page 2 for contact information.

CRSA's Economic Impact

CRSA organizations bring vital resources to Georgia's welcoming communities. Our agencies:

- Employ over 230 people, full time
- Retain highly-skilled, well-trained staff that offer expertise on the cultures we serve. On average, CRSA agencies offer staff that speak **19 languages** and represent an average of **10 countries**
- Bring in millions in funding to Georgia every year, including –

\$13,503,278 in grants

\$3,963,780 in private and individual donations

\$1,934,704 in corporate donations

\$691,501 in fees for service

Which support vital services in Georgia's welcoming communities



CRSA 2013-14 Chair and Welcoming Atlanta Workgroup Member Emily Pelton poses with Atlanta Mayor Kasim Reed.