

2015

COALITION *of* REFUGEE SERVICE AGENCIES ANNUAL REPORT



Mission and Vision

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

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

A Message from Our Members

The Coalition of Refugee Service Agencies is a dynamic and growing coalition of organizations committed to ensuring Georgia's success in welcoming refugee and immigrant newcomers and to equipping them to be successful, contributing members of our communities. Member organizations serve thousands of people every year to ensure that the skills and talents of newcomers are cultivated and that people who have overcome war and hardship can fulfill their highest potential and, like so many before us, pursue their American dreams.



We have much
to be **proud** of
in Georgia.

We have much to be proud of in Georgia, where our capital Atlanta is now officially designated as a “Welcoming City,” and where hard-working refugees are positive contributors to our state's economy, driving the creation of new small businesses and increases in homeownership. I invite you to visit one of our partner agencies to meet a refugee family and witness firsthand the work of the CRSA in Georgia.

-JD McCrary, CRSA Chair
Executive Director,
International Rescue Committee Atlanta

Purpose and Method

The CRSA annual report is created yearly to highlight successful programs and initiatives from CRSA's 14 member agencies. In this report are some of the many programs serving refugees and the community at large, as well as highlights of CRSA's collective community impact. This year we also feature additional economic data detailing the positive contributions refugees and immigrants bring to Georgia and Metro Atlanta. Information was collected via a 38 question survey to all 14 member agencies. Agencies responded with FY2015 data to each question where information was available and which pertained to programs at their agency. **Please see the final page for contact information for any questions.**



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Our work would not be possible without the support of private organizations, faith communities and individuals who believe in supporting new Americans. In 2015, CRSA agencies worked with:

112 faith partners

113 schools and universities

114 civic & community groups 272 business partners



VOLUNTEERISM

CRSA agencies engaged **6,180 volunteers** who donated over **155,295** hours of service in 2015.

In one unique program, Somali-American Community Center trains refugees who have been in the US for over five years to be **community mentors**. Mentors are paired with new arrivals to help them adjust to living in the U.S.

CCA's Refugee Camp Immersion Project

Catholic Charities of Atlanta's RCIP educates metro Atlanta students about our culturally rich and diverse refugee population, helping young people understand refugee situations across the globe, resettlement, and the ways that welcoming refugees benefit our communities. RCIP students experience a mock refugee camp and refugee journey simulation. At the end of the program, **99% of participants reported that they learned something new** and **90% reported that they would share something they learned**.

Economic Impact

Of the **millions of dollars brought in annually by CRSA member agencies**, funds predominately go back into Metro Atlanta communities through local spending, with most directed towards local, small businesses.

In 2015, among CRSA agencies responding, **\$535,000 was spent at local businesses**, to purchase items such as groceries, cell phones, and furniture for new arrivals.

Of that, **\$310,000 was spent in the Welcoming City of Clarkston**, which has a refugee and immigrant focused business culture.

Member agencies helped **3,193** refugees become employed, earning an average of \$8.99/hour, well above minimum wage, contributing an estimated **\$4.6 million** in state tax revenue

In 2015, CRSA agencies **rented 607 apartments** in Georgia, most of them in DeKalb County. Among five CRSA agencies responding, **\$2,300,000 was spent on rent and utilities**. Rent and utilities are generally paid for refugee families for the first three-four months, after which they become self-sufficient and pay their own rent and utilities.

Transportation to and from work, cultural orientation and English classes are essential for adjustment to life in the US. In 2015, seven CRSA agencies **spent \$300,000 on MARTA cards** for clients. This does not include what refugees spend on their own transportation costs (MARTA, gasoline, car maintenance). Local gas stations also benefitted from transportation spending. Five CRSA agencies responding spent **\$72,000 on gas** for agency vans to transport clients.

CRSA MEMBER AGENCIES BRING VITAL RESOURCES TO GEORGIA'S WELCOMING COMMUNITIES.

Together, we **employ over 308** people full time.

We retain highly-skilled, well-trained and culturally competent staff.

On average, each CRSA agencies' staff **speak 20 languages and represent 15 countries** of origin.

We bring in **millions in funding to Georgia** every year, including over –

\$16, 197, 605 in federal grants

\$5,391,627 in private and individual donations

\$2,859,198 in corporate donations

\$3,673,464 in fees for service

Community Impact

The CRSA focuses on creating awareness for refugee and immigrant issues. We host the annual New Americans Celebration at the Georgia State Capitol during the legislative session. In 2015, over 200 attendees participated and learned how to engage elected officials at the Capitol. Over 60% of individuals attending were of refugee or immigrant origin and over 80% had never been to the Capitol before.

CRSA welcomed 200 volunteers to the State Capitol at New Americans Celebration

In 2015, we heightened our focus on citizenship for new Americans. In partnership with the City of Atlanta, the City of Clarkston and USCIS, CRSA hosted three USCIS Naturalization Ceremonies throughout the year, welcoming **44 new citizens to Georgia**. All citizens were offered voter registration after their ceremonies.

CRSA member Clarkston Community Center held events **engaging over 40,000 individuals in the community** – bringing refugees together with other community members.

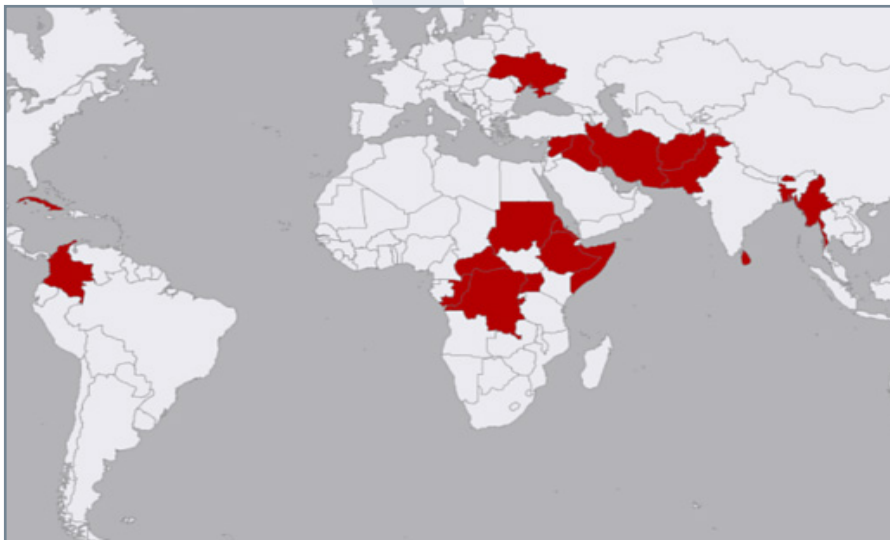
Refugee Resettlement

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

Resettlement in Georgia

In 2015, refugees became new neighbors in the communities of Clarkston, Decatur, Comer, Stone Mountain, Doraville, Marietta, Alpharetta, Savannah, Avondale Estates, Duluth, Kennesaw, Athens, Tucker, Lithonia, Sandy Springs, Woodstock, Snellville, Lawrenceville, Buford, among many others.

Countries Of Origin



Resettlement and Employment

The Match Grant Program assists clients with achieving **economic self-sufficiency through employment** within six months of arrival, without public cash assistance. Its services include case management, job preparation and placement, housing and utility assistance, and a cash allowance.

1,866 people were enrolled in Match Grant, with **87% self-sufficient within 180 days of arrival**.

Refugees 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. **Member agencies assisted more than 1,570 additional refugees in obtaining employment at over 245 employers this year.**



Vocational Counseling for New Americans

New American Pathways' Vocational Counseling program offers assistance to highly skilled refugees (including those who were surgeons, computer programmers, mechanics and graphic designers in their home countries) to find long-term employment in fields of their choice.

- + 21 workshops and 398 participants
- + 64 refugees enrolled during the year with 41 graduating by year's end; all graduates achieved their goals and found jobs in their field
- + Six found scholarships for higher education
- + 48 found advanced job placements



Education is critical for the success of any refugee or immigrant. Education services are one of the key components of many CRSA agencies. These services help refugees and other immigrants find their pathway to success so they may achieve their lifetime goals. Education programs impact every generation of new Americans and make a lasting impact on the future of Georgia's refugee and immigrant communities.

Refugee and Immigrant Youth

Clarkston Community Center, CPACS, Friends of Refugees, Global Village Project, International Rescue Committee, New American Pathways and SACC provided afterschool programs to more than 1,040 students, with a focus on academic enrichment, social development and homework help. Of those students, 391 were served through state Department of Human Services programs.

Summer camps by Clarkston Community Center, Catholic Charities Atlanta and Friends of Refugees served more than 239 refugee students.

New American Pathways, IRC, LSG and Catholic Charities Atlanta provided parent orientation and school-related case management to 217 clients. This includes services such as school orientation and academic monitoring for students, and school support services for parents, such as translation of materials and support at teacher conferences.

Adult Education

English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) is the most well-known form of adult education. In 2015, eight CRSA member agencies offered ESOL programs to 4,535 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 2015. Unique workshops include CCA's series on avoiding scams aimed at refugees and suicide prevention tips, CPACS's advocacy series around this year's White House Summit, and JF&CS's Kroger tours for seniors.

The New American Pathways Parents as Teachers (PAT) program is the only PAT program in the country that exclusively serves refugees. The PAT program focuses on educating refugee parents on noticing their children's first milestones and being their children's first educator. In 2015, the program served 83 families and provided 146 home visits to new parents.

Jewish Family & Career Services is the only provider offering a Department of Human Services program for refugees over 60 years of age. The program provides education about health navigation, transportation, life skills, and more. In 2015, the program offered these intensive services to 20 older refugees. Clarkston Community Center also hosts a program for senior refugees. This program serves 120 senior adults annually through English education, exercise programs and fellowship.

CPACS Home-Based Child Care Program Fosters Entrepreneurship

The CPACS Home-Based Child Care Program provides refugee women the opportunity to be certified childcare providers and entrepreneurs in cities where there is limited access to early learning resources and childcare. Through this grant, CPACS is guiding 26 women through the process of earning their Child Development Associate degree, applying for childcare provider positions, and starting family daycare homes.



Abishkar Chhetri: From Refugee to MIT

Among the now-entering class of 2019 at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) are valedictorians, National Merit Scholars, future leaders and innovators—and the International Rescue Committee’s Abishkar Chhetri. Resettled in 2009 from Nepal and an IRC Youth Futures Program participant, Abishkar has accepted a full scholarship to attend this prestigious university.

The recent valedictorian of Druid Hills High School, Abishkar invested hours in learning English and self-study to overcome the language barrier and considerable cultural adjustment he faced upon arriving in the United States as a refugee at the age of 13. The prospective physics major has not only succeeded in a significant educational accomplishment, he’s taken the most difficult task—navigating an unknown country, language, and host of other variables—and recast it as the cornerstone of his personal perspective on life, noting that “obstacles put on your path ... are only tests of your resilience.” It’s from experience when he says “the possibilities are endless.”

An Afghan Engineer in Georgia

Less than three months after his arrival in the United States, Mohammed, a construction engineer at an American firm in his home country of Afghanistan, got a job at a local manufacturing company. He was delighted to be able to work in his field, and was able to save enough to purchase a vehicle to get himself to and from work. He started out in an entry level position and was quickly **promoted to supervisor**. Mohammed is grateful for the opportunity to resettle in the US and for the help **Lutheran Services of Georgia** gave when he arrived: “Lutheran...helped me find a good job relative to my past work experience in construction. I’m very happy!”

Health Services

Services for refugee and immigrant health are a burgeoning field for service agencies. While many specialty services can still be hard to come by, new and innovative programs are constantly being created by CRSA member agencies to better serve the community. CPACS offers a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC), a community-based, participant-directed organization that serves populations with limited access to health care, particularly those who are low income, uninsured, and limited English proficient. In 2015, the FQHC served over 5,000 patients, most of whom were refugees or immigrants. The FQHC also provided health information in multiple languages to serve their specific population. Catholic Charities and New American Pathways offer long-term health-based case management for refugees and their families facing chronic or ongoing health issues. Case management may include rent support, health care navigation and emotional support, and was offered to 382 individuals in 2015.

Over 5,000
health services
provided
by CPACS.

The Friends of Refugees Embrace program offers pre- and post-natal education for expectant refugee mothers, including workshops, hospital visits and tours, relationship networks with local healthcare organizations and more. The program served 138 women and 184 children in 2015.

Culture Connect offers multiple health care training opportunities for bilingual individuals to grow in the medical field, including “Breaking Boundaries in Healthcare” and “Breaking Boundaries in Mental Health” – training programs which teach interpreters how to work in these fields effectively. They also hold additional workshops to further educate medical interpreters on common procedures for clients.

IRC’s Health and Wellness Department

In 2015, IRC developed a Health and Wellness Department to strengthen access to quality, culturally and linguistically comprehensive health services. As part of this effort all clients receive access to a patient-centered medical home visit through Oakhurst Medical Center. Specially to address the mental health needs of clients, IRC now screens adult refugees for anxiety, depression and Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome; exposure to domestic and sexual violence; and torture. Clients will be referred to local partners and to the IRC’s new partner, the Center for Victims of Torture (CVT), to determine if they meet the U.S. legal definition for survivors of torture. Survivors of torture will have the opportunity to get individual and group counseling from CVT staff, who will be co-located with the IRC in Atlanta.

Services to Women and Girls

Refugee and immigrant women and girls are often underserved in their home communities before arrival. In developing nations, girls are more likely than boys to miss primary education, which leads to increased rates of early marriage and childbirth. Programs centered on women and girls look to bridge these gaps in female empowerment and education and serve this critical population. Two CRSA member agencies offer extensive domestic violence programs for refugees and immigrants fleeing intimate partner violence, including counseling, location of secure housing, and legal assistance. The programs served 290 clients, predominately women, in 2015 and were funded by both Georgia DHS and private funders.

Global Village Project and New American Pathways both provided one-to-one mentorship programs for female refugee youth. Through the Young Women’s Leadership program, New American Pathways provided 21 high-school aged girls with mentorship, college preparation and empowerment services. Of eight seniors in the 2014 program, all eight went on to college. In GVP’s mentorship program, all 37 members of the school’s cohort are matched with a community mentor to better strengthen their ties to the community, experience metro Atlanta culture and improve social skills.

The Women’s Leadership Development Program run by Somali-American Community Center in partnership with CDF: Action focuses on family leadership, especially for women with young children. Women also learn how to lead in their community by hosting a community event. Nine women graduated from the program this year, while ten young women graduated from SACC’s Youth Leadership program.

Economic empowerment programs were common for CRSA agencies. The Latin American Association’s Latina Economic Empowerment Program offers vocational training and access to entrepreneurship opportunities for Hispanic women.

Friends of Refugees’ Sewing Society, made up of refugee women, teaches economic empowerment through creation and selling of one’s own products. In 2015, the society created hygiene products to sell. In July, the program successfully raised over \$18,000 on Kickstarter for their new “Nomi” doll – a hand-crafted doll accompanied by a book detailing one refugee woman’s experience. Funds raised go directly to women creating the dolls for sale.

Immigration and Services to the Community

As refugees and immigrants become more stable and successful in their new communities, they often look to become citizens of the United States in order to be more engaged in their own future and democracy. Many refugees and immigrants also become community leaders who give back to not only their ethnic and religious communities but all of Georgia. These programs help make these dreams possible.

Employment services were provided to **844** clients at Cafe Clarkston.

Six member agencies (Catholic Charities of Atlanta, International Rescue Committee, Latin American Association, Lutheran Services of Georgia, New American Pathways, and World Relief) assisted with applications for citizenship and other immigration related services, such as applying for Green Cards and family reunification in 2015. These agencies served over 1,000 immigration clients, over 160 of which were served under the DHS Cuban-Haitian program.

Culture Connect and Center for Pan-Asian Community Services offer translation services to members of the community, including local businesses and service providers, at affordable cost to help them better provide services to refugee and immigrant communities. On average, these agencies **together provide 1,094 translation services a month in over 30 different languages.**

Café Clarkston, a project of Friends of Refugees, is an employment assistance center and internet café designed especially for our Limited English Proficiency community, served 844 clients through providing employment opportunities, resumes assistance, basic job skills training, and computer skills training.

Freedom on Wheels Through Communicycle at Clarkston Community Center

Communicycle Clarkston, a program of CCC, provides bike access to the Clarkston community through bike safety and maintenance education, as well as refurbishing and redistributing donated bicycles. Communicycle employees also ride into local communities to provide on-site bike maintenance and education. Through the program, CCC serves hundreds of clients per month.

Civic Engagement and Leadership

Center for Pan-Asian Community Services and New American Pathways work to educate new Americans about the opportunity to register as voters after gaining citizenship. Working at festivals, in ethnic community based organizations and at USCIS Naturalization Ceremonies, the two organizations registered 1,553 new American voters in 2015.

The Latin American Association's Latino Youth Leadership Conference is a full-day event, held each fall, centered around motivating Latino youth to finish high school and go on to college. This year, over 1,500 students, parents and teachers from local high schools and middle schools attended.

New American Pathways's Community Engagement Program (CEP) worked with ethnic community-based organizations (ECBOs) to develop their capacity to provide quality services to the refugee and immigrant community. This program provided trainings and networking opportunities to 47 refugee and immigrant leaders on topics such as fundraising and grant writing. CEP served a total of 64 individuals through 27 services in 2015.



ADVOCATE

Join CRSA at our annual New Americans Celebration at the Georgia State Capitol. We invite you to help us make our communities a more welcoming place for new Americans.

CONTACT US

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

MEMBERS AND PARTNERS

Catholic Charities Atlanta
 CDF: A Collective Action Initiative
 Center for Pan Asian Community Services
 Clarkston Community Center
 Culture Connect
 Friends of Refugees
 Global Village Project

International Rescue Committee Atlanta
 Jewish Family & Career Services
 The Latin American Association
 Lutheran Services of Georgia
 New American Pathways
 Somali American Community Center
 World Relief Atlanta



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