

Refugee Resettlement. *Questions and Answers*

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops/Migration and Refugee Services



What Does the Gospel Say About Refugees?

1. The Catholic Church in the United States has been helping immigrants and refugees since the founding of this nation. Indeed, it is what the Gospel calls us to do: in Matthew (25:35) Jesus tells his disciples, “I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me.” Source: [Matthew, Chapter 25](#)
2. Refugees are fleeing persecution and violence and have suffered great loss, including loss of their homes, livelihoods, possessions and families. Only 1% of these refugees get resettled. MRS assists with food, clothing, shelter, employment, English as a second language, and orientation to a new community and culture. Source: [MRS](#)
3. MRS works to create “a world where immigrants, refugees, migrants, and people on the move are treated with dignity, respect, welcome and belonging.” Source: [MRS Vision Statement](#)



How Do Refugees Contribute?

1. Refugees must pay back the cost of their travel to America through a loan arrangement with the International Organization for Migration, a U.S. Department of State contractor. Flight costs range from \$1,500-\$9,000. The U.S. is the only resettlement country that requires refugees to pay for their transportation. Source: [MRS](#)
2. The MRS resettlement agency network of over 80 affiliates hire employment specialists to prepare refugees for the job market. 85 percent of refugees get a job and are self-sufficient within six months of arrival. Source: [MRS Refugee Research Blog](#)
3. Refugees find work far earlier in the U.S. than in other countries and start businesses at a quicker pace than the U.S.-born population. Sources: [Chmura Economics & Analytics](#); [MPI](#)



How Do We Help Refugees?

1. Refugee resettlement is a public-private partnership, requiring all nonprofit agencies to generate matching funds through donations. Contributed private resources cover about 35% of resettlement expenses. Sources: [LIRS](#), [Refugee Research Blog](#)
2. To maximize volunteer contributions, MRS launched the Parishes Organized to Welcome Refugees (POWR) initiative. Thousands have offered friendship, warm meals and jobs, underscoring the Gospel’s mandate that every person is to be welcomed by the disciple as if he or she were Christ Himself. Source: [MRS](#)
3. Quite significantly, refugees are helping themselves. A recent U.S. study found that 2.3 million refugees earned a collective \$77.2 billion in household income. They also contributed \$20.9 billion in taxes. Source: [New Economy](#)

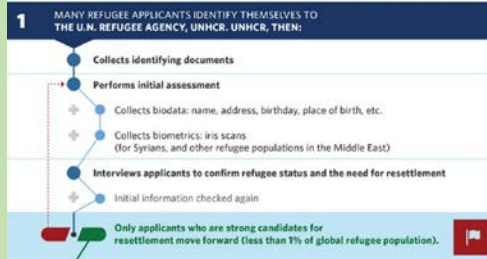


What is the Economic Impact?

1. While refugees here five years or less have a median household income of \$22,000, that figure more than triples in the following decades, growing far faster than other foreign-born groups. By the time a refugee has been in the U.S. at least 25 years, their median household income reaches \$67,000—a full \$14,000 more than the median U.S. income. Source: [New Economy](#)
2. Refugees find work in the U.S. far earlier than in other countries and start businesses at an even quicker pace than the American-born. Google co-founder Sergey Brin came to America as a refugee. The father of Steve Jobs, CEO of Apple, was a Syrian refugee. Sources: [University of Notre Dame](#), [MPI](#), [Center for American Progress](#), [Notable Names Database](#)

THE SCREENING PROCESS

FOR REFUGEE ENTRY INTO THE UNITED STATES



Are Refugees a Security Risk?

1. The most difficult way to enter the United States legally is as a refugee. No other category of traveler to the United States undergoes such a rigorous and detailed screening process. Source: [White House](#)
2. The screening process typically takes 18-24 months and involves numerous federal intelligence and security agencies, including the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of State, the Department of Defense, the National Counterterrorism Center, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Source: [The U.S. Department of State](#)
3. Fewer than 1% of all refugees are even considered for resettlement. Refugees undergo biographic and fingerprint security checks to confirm their identity. They are also extensively interviewed by specially trained officers from U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services.

What Do Other Countries Do?

1. Historically, the U.S. has maintained a resettlement program and has welcomed three million refugees since 1975. While the U.S. has the largest resettlement program, 28 other nations also resettle refugees. During 2015-16, Germany has resettled 456,023 Syrian refugees. The U.S. has resettled 18,007 Syrian refugees. Sources: [UNHCR](#), [Migration Policy Institute](#), [The U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement](#)
2. The lion share of refugees are either internally displaced in war-torn countries or seek safety in host countries. Lebanon, for example, currently hosts over one million refugees fleeing the Syrian conflict, which amounts to about 1 refugee for every 5 people in Lebanon. Source: [Amnesty International](#)
3. The refugee crisis is a global crisis. In addition to providing aid and resettlement, U.S. involvement is key to facilitating the stability of the regions where these crises are occurring.



Are Refugees a Burden?

1. The primary goal of the U.S. refugee resettlement program is to help provide protection to refugees and help them become self-sufficient. Sources: [U.S. Refugee Act](#), [Code of Federal Regulations 45 400.1](#)
2. Within a period of 2-4 months, most refugees manage to find a stable job, send their children to school and pay taxes. One study in Cleveland found that in 2016, refugees generated a total economic impact of \$88.2 million in spending that supported 1,220 jobs in the region. In addition, refugees and refugee service organizations contributed \$4.5 million in taxes to the state, county, and municipal governments. Sources: [Chmura Economics & Analytics](#); [MPI](#)
3. Likewise, between 2002 and 2012 refugees started 38 businesses that employed 141 locals in the Cleveland area. In addition to contributing economically, refugees culturally enrich communities and parishes with new perspectives, histories and cultures. Sources: [Chmura Economics & Analytics](#); [MPI](#)



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