

Refugee Resettlement in Rutland - Talking Points
2016.4.14

1. **Why** resettle refugees in **Rutland**?

- i. VRRP/USCRI has received overwhelming offers support from across the state to welcome Syrian and other refugees in their communities.
- ii. VRRP/USCRI has considered which communities offer the best opportunities for refugees and the local community, including infrastructure (schools, public transportation, affordable and available housing, employment opportunities, medical facilities), as well as an engaged community that draws upon strengths for self-improvement.
 1. VRRP/USCRI has over 30 years of professional experience in Vermont giving refugees the tools they need to rebuild their lives and follows federal guidelines.
 2. VRRP/USCRI delivers high quality services that routinely surpass federal standards.
- iii. VRRP/USCRI was invited by the Mayor of Rutland to consider initiating a refugee resettlement program in the City of Rutland.
 1. VRRP/USCRI is currently in the exploratory process to determine the feasibility of resettling refugees in Rutland.
 2. VRRP/USCRI has begun consulting with local stakeholders.
 3. Resettlement in Rutland (or any community) is contingent upon approval from the federal government.
- iv. **Rutland** is undergoing a **revival** and is a work in progress:
<http://www.sevendaysvt.com/vermont/rutland-revival/Content?oid=2295663>
 1. Young adults returning to invest in and energize Rutland
 2. Refugees can bring global perspectives and expertise
 - a. Refugees bring direct knowledge about history and world events (unfiltered by media)
 3. Refugees can synergize energy & momentum with youth
- v. Rutland's sometimes negative reputation is based on a false narrative ("Rutvegas"); but statistics tell another story:
<http://www.sevendaysvt.com/vermont/leaving-rutvegas/Content?oid=2183476>
 1. "There's no statistical truth to the perception that Rutland has greater problems with drugs or crime than Vermont's other urban areas."
 2. Winooski City Manager Katherine 'Deac' Decarreau -- presented at USCIR NNC on how refugees changed Winooski
- vi. Immigrants help improve local economy -- see Nashville as example
<http://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2015/07/us-cities-immigrants-economy/398987/>

2. **Refugee Resettlement 101**

- i. **Humanitarian** program since Geneva Convention signed in 1952
- ii. USCRI provides comprehensive / holistic supports that give refugees the **tools they need to re-build their lives**
 1. USCRI offers Case Management, Employment, English Language Training, Medical Case Management, Refugee Family Strengthening, Community Partnership

2. We are not resettling people into crisis situations; our program is successful because of the **resilience** of those brave enough to rebuild their lives in Vermont and strong **relationships/partnerships** with landlords, employers, schools, medical providers etc.
 - iii. Economics
 1. Refugees quickly become economically self-sufficient, and contribute to the local economy by **paying taxes**, starting businesses, and buying locally
 2. Vermont has an greying population and young adults tend to move away; Vermont needs an increased number of working taxpayers to support aging population
 - iv. Enrichment / Diversity
 1. Refugees can bring **global perspectives** and expertise, and a passion for engagement, learning and hard work!
 - v. **Security**
 1. Refugees complete rigorous health and security screenings prior to being admitted to USA (as is described in this White House video: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2015/11/24/watch-heres-what-refugee-screening-process-looks>)
3. Housing
 - i. 85% of refugees become **economically self-sufficient within 8 months of arrival**, pay the rent on time, and take pride in their homes
 - ii. Former Burlington Police Department Chief Schirling says that crime rates dropped in Burlington's Old North End since refugees moved in
 - iii. In Chittenden Co., USCRI has a network of landlords that are eager to rent to refugees because they know that refugees are **reliable tenants**
 - iv. In Chittenden Co., many former clients purchase houses, and some become landlords
 1. The average cost of homes in Rutland City is less than in state of Vermont and Chittenden County
 - v. Quality of life – Rutland is less densely populated, so residents will have more access to **greenspace** and opportunities for recreation, fishing, gardening, and sports
 4. Employment / Economics
 - i. Refugees are employment-authorized from day one, **pay taxes**, and **contribute to the local economy**
 - ii. More than 82% of refugee cases resettled in Chittenden County are become **economically self-sufficient** within the first 8 months following arrival. Many are employed within a few weeks of arrival.
 - iii. New Americans are more likely to start small businesses / be entrepreneurs
 - iv. Refugees bring skills, expertise, education, and fresh energy!
 - v. Vermont has an greying population and young adults tend to move away; need increased number of working taxpayers to support aging population
 - vi. Rutland's economy:
 - a. January 2016 Unemployment Rate: Rutland City: 4.8%; Rutland Town: 2.6%

- i. Unemployment rates are going up because people who were unable to find work during the recession are finally attempting to find work again (unemployment rate rising slightly is a good thing)

5. Schools / Education

- i. Refugee students bring a passion for learning and **enthusiasm to the classroom!**
- ii. In Chittenden Co., refugees stabilized school-aged populations so that smaller schools do not need to consolidate and lay off teachers; schools can maintain infrastructure
- iii. Refugee adults will work and contribute to the tax base while minor children get an education
- iv. Refugees aspire to continue education