

In Attendance

01/14/16

Name	Organization	Title
Matt Thompson	Vermont Refugee Resettlement Program	Coordinator of Programs
Ashraf Alomator	VRPP	ELL Coordinator
Kristen Rengo	VRPP	Coordinator of Interpretation & Translation Services
DENISE LAMOREUX	AHS- REFUGEE OFFICE	DIRECTOR
Laurie Staurand	VRPP	community Partnership Coord
Tara Kelly	Rutland Area Foodbank (RAFFL)	Executive Director
William Nott	Rutland City Board of Aldermen	President
CHRIS LOURAS	MAYOR	
Anila Oshdzanovic	VRPP	Director
Martha Friedman	Vermont Dept. of Health	Refugee Health Coordinator

Pat M

---

**From:** Amila Merdzanovic <amerdzanovic@uscrvt.org>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 05, 2016 8:31 AM  
**To:** Christopher Louras  
**Cc:** patm@rutlandcity.org  
**Subject:** More developments

Dear Mayor Louras,

I am happy to know you will be coming to our fundraiser this Thursday. It is going to be a fun event!

I wanted to follow up with you on my last e-mail about planning for the resettlement for this fall. We are hard at work collecting data and making connections and the more people we talk to the more we are finding that Rutland is 'ripe' for refugee resettlement. We are still planning to come down on the 14<sup>th</sup> and attend Project Vision meeting. I was hoping you could make the first introduction and I will take it from there or let me know whom I should be in touch with. One other connection I was hoping you could make is with Police and Fire Chiefs.

Also, in the course of today I will be sending you a letter of support which we will submit with our application to the PRM. Could you please sign it and send it to me at your earliest. If you have some time to chat on the phone this week that would be great so I can share more details about the process.

Thank you and I hope to hear from you soon.

Amila

**Amila Merdzanovic, MALD**  
Director



462 Hegeman Ave, Suite 101  
Colchester, VT 05446  
refugees.org/vermont  
p/ 802-654-1700  
f/ 802-655-4020

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Pat M

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**From:** Amila Merdzanovic <amerdzanovic@uscrvt.org>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 28, 2016 4:44 PM  
**To:** Christopher Louras  
**Cc:** patm@rutlandcity.org  
**Subject:** Moving Forward

Dear mayor Louras,

I apologize for a lengthy e-mail.

First let me say how grateful we are for all the donations collected by the community members. Our warehouse is now packed full.

I wanted to share with you some exciting developments in terms of our planning process and the next steps related to resettlement in Rutland. First, I would like to let you know that we have the full support of our executive team in Arlington, VA in moving forward with expanding resettlement to Rutland. Secondly, and equally important, we have the support of the State Refugee Coordinator and the Health Coordinator whom you met back in January. One big development is that we are now looking to 'start' the resettlement with the new FY17 starting October 1<sup>st</sup>. That means, we have a lot of work ahead of us and not a lot of time. The new application to the Department of State PRM office is due in mid-May. If all goes well, we are looking to include resettlement in Rutland with our application. What that requires us to do is meet with community stakeholders beforehand ie. heads of agencies and various social service providers and discuss resettlement. Also, since Rutland would be a new site, we would need letters of support from various groups including your office, school superintendent, DCF district manager, health care providers, employers, landlords, community groups, etc. USCRI would provide us with a template for the letter of support which could be easily adapted for different groups. As the next step, the leadership team from here and Denise would like to come down for a day visit on April 14<sup>th</sup>. The reason we chose that day is because we would like to connect with Project Vision and attend their monthly meeting scheduled for noon that day. We thought that would be a good opportunity for us to reach a wide group of community members. I wanted to ask you if you could facilitate introduction with someone from that group so then I can have a preliminary discussion over the phone.

Since we last met, the team here has been looking at different aspects of resettlement and gathering information around housing, employment, social services, education, etc. Also, as of recently, we started working with a group of community members from Weston, VT who have agreed to assist us with the 'fact finding' process and making connections. As it turns out, one of our English teacher's brothers is a major landlord and an employer in Rutland. Please let me know if you and your team have had an opportunity to discuss more and if you have data and contacts to share with us.

I would like to connect with you over the phone in the next few days and tell you more about how we are moving forward. We are both very busy but hopefully we can find some time to talk before long. I am flexible tomorrow and Wednesday after 12 noon also Thursday between 12-3:00.

I look forward to talking to you soon.

Amila

**From:** Christopher Louras [mailto:mayorlouras@gmail.com]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 08, 2016 5:55 AM

To: Amila Merdzanovic <amerdzanovic@uscrvt.org>  
Subject: Re: Following up

Amila,

Thank you so much for reaching out.

At this time, we are even more committed to working with VRRP than last we spoke.

We have expanded the group of "those who know," and are ready to have those discussions you've requested with potential employers and landlords.

I am hopeful that we can provide you with what you need in a timely manner.

I will be out of town beginning Thursday so the discussions will begin next week.

Again, thank you and we will be in touch.

Chris

On Mon, Mar 7, 2016 at 9:13 PM, Amila Merdzanovic <amerdzanovic@uscrvt.org> wrote:

Dear Mayor Louras,

I hope this e-mail finds you well. The time is flying and we wanted to continue our conversation regarding the possibility of refugee resettlement in Rutland. We appreciated the opportunity couple months ago now to speak with you and your colleagues at length and to see some neighborhoods in Rutland. On our end, we have broached the topic to the appropriate staff at our headquarters and have been encouraged to continue exploring the possibility of Rutland as a resettlement site. To continue the process, we have some questions that we are hoping you could answer for us or, if more appropriate for certain questions, connect us with others who would know the answers (e.g. employers and landlords). If you are still in the quiet stage of this project, we understand and hope that you could at least put forth some statistical information that would help us gain a better understanding.

1. Employment leading to self-sufficiency is a cornerstone of refugee resettlement. **Can you identify and connect us with several local employers that routinely have job openings and would be interested in the possibility of hiring refugees, of varying levels of education and English proficiency, in non-seasonal positions?** We would like to explain our program to them and explore employment prospects for refugees. If you are not ready for that yet, then it would be helpful to have some official labor statistics specific to Rutland or the Rutland area (e.g. annual job openings and rates of growth in the manufacturing, hospitality, retail and service sectors).

2. Securing rental housing before an individual or family arrives requires educating and developing relationships with landlords. **Are you able to recommend several landlords (private or non-profit) who are likely to have affordable, well-maintained two and three bedroom apartments available throughout the year?** We would like to assess the housing situation and make sure housing will be adequate in terms of both quantity and quality.

3. Given the small number of K-12 English language learners enrolled in the public schools, **what system would Rutland schools develop to provide ELL services to students who would arrive in Rutland throughout the academic year?** What information would the schools need from USCRI/VRRP to enable them to do this?

Your responses will help us proceed further in this process and understand how some of the pieces could fall into place.

Please let us know if you have any questions. If you would rather go over these over the phone, I would be happy to talk to you in the course of this week.

We are planning another field trip and perhaps could get a chance to meet with some of the stakeholders in the area.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Amela

--  
Mayor Christopher C. Louras  
City of Rutland, VT  
(802) 770-5366

Pat M

---

**From:** Mayor Christopher Louras <mayorlouras@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 28, 2016 4:56 PM  
**To:** Amila Merdzanovic  
**Cc:** patm@rutlandcity.org  
**Subject:** Re: Destination BTV--VRRP Fundraiser

Amila,  
I would be delighted to attend on the evening of April 7th. Looking forward to seeing you.  
Chris

Sent from my iPhone

On Mar 25, 2016, at 6:13 PM, Amila Merdzanovic <[amerdzanovic@uscrvt.org](mailto:amerdzanovic@uscrvt.org)> wrote:

Dear Mayor Louras,

I am excited to be one of the hosts for Destination BTV, an upcoming event on **Thursday, April 7th, 7pm-9pm at the Burlington Airport.**

The mission of Destination BTV, presented by USCRI/Vermont Refugee Resettlement Program, is "Redefining multicultural integration, fostering a platform for radical success." The goal is to activate and expand community understanding and involvement in blending multicultures, creating an extraordinary place for us all to live.

Please join me on April 7th at the Burlington Airport for this unprecedented event that is sure to make a long lasting impact on our community.

Attached is the invitation with a link to buy tickets.

Best regards,  
Amila

**Amila Merdzanovic, MALD**  
Director

<image001.png>

462 Hegeman Ave, Suite 101  
Colchester, VT 05446  
[refugees.org/vermont](http://refugees.org/vermont)  
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f/ 802-655-4020

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Pat M

---

From: Amila Merdzanovic <amerdzanovic@uscrvt.org>  
Sent: Tuesday, March 08, 2016 5:22 PM  
To: patm@rutlandcity.org  
Subject: FW: Following up

Keeping you in the loop.

Thanks,  
Amila

**Amila Merdzanovic, MALD**  
Director



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---

From: Amila Merdzanovic  
Sent: Tuesday, March 8, 2016 1:02 PM  
To: 'Christopher Louras' <mayorlouras@gmail.com>  
Cc: Matt Thompson <MThompson@uscrvt.org>  
Subject: RE: Following up

Hello there,

Thank you for your reply. We are moving forward with our own research and also look forward to hearing from you and your group. Let's plan to be in touch soon.

Safe travels,  
Amila

**Amila Merdzanovic, MALD**  
Director



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Looking forward to hearing from you.

Amila

--  
Mayor Christopher C. Louras  
City of Rutland, VT  
(802) 770-5366

December 17, 2015  
Site for Rutland map

If possible, overlay of bus route

Northeast School  
Northwest School  
Intermediate/Middle School  
Rutland High School  
CCV – Community College of VT  
Head Start  
Asa Bloomer Building (State Office)  
Social Security (State office)  
City Hall  
BROC – Community Action  
Price Chopper Supermarket  
Walmart  
Rutland Free Library  
Post Office  
RRMC – Rutland Regional Medical Center  
Rutland Food Co-op  
Summer farmers' market  
Winter farmers' market  
Rutland Recreation Department  
Rutland Police Department  
Paramount Theatre  
Transit center  
Jeffords Train Station  
Banks: First Community Bank (Merchants Row)  
Citizens Bank (Merchants Row)  
People's United Bank (Woodstock Ave)  
Key Bank (West St)  
Heritage Family Credit Union  
FQHC – Community Health Center (Stratton Rd)  
Boys and Girls Club of Rutland  
Vermont Adult Learning (Evelyn St)

FYI

LIST for MAP

To Jim & Nate

12/17/15

## REFUGEE

CONTACT DAVE FUCCI: TOPIC LEAD & MOLD ABATEMENT &  
REMEDATION PROGS AND  
3 BR HSG IN DEMAND - COST OF 3 BR RENTAL

\* SCALED MAP

ID CIVIL SURGEONS - SEEM TO BE LOCATED IN BERLINGTON PRIMARILY  
NONE IN RUTLAND (1 ENOSBERG & 1 IN WINDSOR)

ASTHMA RATES IN VT - AMONG HIGHEST IN U.S

U.S RATE IS 9% VT RATE IS 11%

RATES ARE EVEN HIGHER IN THE RUTL. & SPRINGFIELD REGION

1) EMPLOYMENT - SELF-SUFFICIENCY ASAP BUT <sup>L-T</sup> JOB STABILITY VITAL  
GROWTH

TRANSPORTATION

2) HSG - SECTION 8 HSG AVAILABILITY? WAITING LIST

- NEED 3 BR HSG IN DEMAND COST??

3) HEALTH - CIVIL SURGEONS; <sup>high quality</sup> INTERPRETERS (TELEMEDICINE MODEL OK)  
NEED FOR CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE & COMPETENCY

ED - ENG LANG LEARNING (LIMITED FED FUNDS - ECONOMICS OF SCALE)

4-5 hrs

MAYOR'S  
NOTES

Pat M

From: Amila Merdzanovic <amerdzanovic@uscrvt.org>  
Sent: Wednesday, January 13, 2016 4:56 PM  
To: mayorlouras@gmail.com  
Cc: patm@rutlandcity.org  
Subject: Our visit tomorrow

ELU /  
STAT

Dear Mayor Louras,

I left you a voice mail earlier today hoping to connect with you prior to our visit tomorrow. As I mentioned in my previous e-mail, we will be leaving Burlington at 9:00 and hopefully reaching Rutland around 11:00. There is five of us from VRRP coming and Denise Lamoureux and Martha Freedman from the State Office. At our staff meeting this week, I asked staff about what would be important to them to learn about Rutland, services and the community. The following is a thorough but not exhaustive list of services/resources which they identified as important for newly-arriving refugees. In our previous conversation, you touched upon a number of them, but I thought it would be helpful for the others in the group to hear your insights about what Rutland has to offer in regards to this list. Thank you again for hosting the meeting and I look forward to learning more.

- ☒ Affordable housing (availability and avg. rents for 1, 2, or 3 BR apts)
  - ☒ Private market rental housing
  - ☒ Public housing
  - ☒ Section 8 Voucher housing
  - ☒ Located near services and public transportation?
- ☐ Employment opportunities, including but not limited to:
  - ☐ Factories and warehouses
  - ☐ Hotels
  - ☐ Restaurants
  - ☐ Janitorial and maintenance
  - ☐ Retail and customer service
  - ☐ Professional occupations
- ☐ Vermont Department for Children and Families and other State facilities
- ☐ Health care
  - ☐ Medical screenings
  - ☐ Emergency room
  - ☐ Preventive care
  - ☐ Specialists (e.g. developmental disability and mental health service providers)
- ☐ Education
  - ☐ Childcare, Head Start and/or early childhood education programs
  - ☐ Public schools (Pre K-12)
    - What model of English Language Learner (ELL) services currently exists, if any?
  - ☐ After school programs (e.g. Boys & Girls Clubs)
  - ☐ Adult English Language Learner (ELL) services (e.g. Vermont Adult Learning)
  - ☐ Higher and continuing education (e.g. CCV, Castleton)
- ☐ Shopping and personal services
  - ☐ Groceries and household supplies
  - ☐ Banks
- ☐ Facilities available for use for religious services
- ☐ Affordable office space easily accessible by public transit suitable for a refugee resettlement sub-office
- ☐ Community support
  - ☐ General openness to refugee resettlement
  - ☐ Volunteer interest
  - ☐ Faith Community

Health

WVDC  
LNA

CIVIL SURGEON

Interpretation

What model of English Language Learner (ELL) services currently exists, if any?

REC DEPT ↔ FAITH

Rec Dept

THANK  
CU

BUS PASS?

Lead Group

THUS ONE POINT TO OTHER!

model?

English for specific purposes!

STATUS  
TECH  
ADULT LEARNING

VISION -  
REC DEPT -  
CITY HALL

N.E. survivors  
+ Trauma + Torture

TESOL  
English language.

- FAITH COMMUNITY
- RYP
- C.U.

- P.V. Brian Howe Silas

OPINION  
more issues } on solutions

NOT  
WHAT CAN WE DO FOR THEM?

At least with the diversity, cultural richness  
do for the community.

ALBANY ECONOMIC STUDY

- V.C.F. - # -

- BUS PASS.

- MAP SCALE

- RENTS! Vacancy - Lead/mold

- LNA - (RRMC)

Pat M

---

**From:** Amila Merdzanovic <amerdzanovic@uscrvt.org>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 13, 2016 4:56 PM  
**To:** mayoriouras@gmail.com  
**Cc:** patm@rutlandcity.org  
**Subject:** Our visit tomorrow

Dear Mayor Louras,

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Sincere regards,  
Amila

Amila Merdzanovic, MALD  
Director,



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Pat M

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 Sent: Wednesday, January 13, 2016 4:56 PM  
 To: mayorlouras@gmail.com  
 Cc: patm@rutlandcity.org  
 Subject: Our visit tomorrow

*Employment of  
 Eng. Lang.  
 (several) Resources &  
 limited  
 (problem for deeper  
 without resources  
 by state)*

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- ☐ Affordable housing (availability and avg. rents for 1, 2, or 3 BR apts) - *Neighborhoods of Western VT has NEEDS Assessment conducted 4 yrs ago - 2/3 of formerly subsidized hrs for County in Rutland City*
  - ☐ Private market rental housing
  - ☐ Public housing
  - ☐ Section 8 Voucher housing
  - ☒ Located near services and public transportation?
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  - ☐ Retail and customer service
  - ☐ Professional occupations
- ☐ Vermont Department for Children and Families and other State facilities
- ☐ Health care
  - ☐ Medical screenings *cultural knowledge & competency*
  - ☐ Emergency room *Capacity*
  - ☐ Preventive care
  - ☐ Specialists (e.g. developmental disability and mental health service providers) *NEED CIVIL Surgeon*
- ☐ Education
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  - ☐ Volunteer interest
  - ☐ FAITH COMMUNITY
  - ☐ Diversity

*if sufficient  
 ASAP  
 meet  
 on early  
 employment  
 need to live  
 need to be  
 need to be*

*Entrepreneurial Space  
 LNA - to address ag. & pop. of land  
 English for specific purposes*

*(Rutland Profess  
 1/2 Alex was  
 214  
 High quality interpreters  
 (Chinese)  
 TELMEDICINE  
 MORE*

*Visit  
 10/27/13*

*- A lot of resources available in so. VT  
 - Issues expect culture change  
 - need for greater diversity & talent*

Sincere regards,  
Amila

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Pat M

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Sent: Monday, January 11, 2016 4:38 PM  
To: Amila Merdzanovic  
Cc: Lamoureux, Denise; Matt Thompson; patm@rutlandcity.org  
Subject: Re: Meeting, Thursday 01-14  
Attachments: Svc Map VRRP.pdf

Amila and all,  
We've been looking forward to your visit.  
My office at City Hall would be great.  
1 Strongs Avenue, Rutland VT  
Free on street parking on west and north of building (disregard "20 minute limit")  
Or in City Hall parking lot directly to east of building.  
Parking also available across street (west) in Price Chopper lot, but there is a normally un-enforced 3-hr limit in that private lot.  
Lots of metered parking along adjacent streets as well.  
Please find attached a pdf City map with some services/amenities highlighted, along with bus routes.  
If you need us to prepare anything else prior to your arrival that would be helpful, please do not hesitate to ask.  
Regards,  
Chris  
cell 802-342-2468

On Mon, Jan 11, 2016 at 9:28 AM, Amila Merdzanovic <[amerdzanovic@uscrvt.org](mailto:amerdzanovic@uscrvt.org)> wrote:

Good morning Mayor Louras,

Happy New Year!

I am writing to confirm our meeting for this Thursday, 01-14. There will be a team of us coming your way. In addition to the three of us on this e-mail, three other VRRP staff and the State Refugee Health Coordinator will be joining us. We will be leaving Burlington at around 9:00. Should we plan to come to your office?

Look forward to meeting with you Thursday,  
Amila

--  
Mayor Christopher C. Louras  
City of Rutland, VT

770-5360

(TALA)  
Mayor  
Tudor  
ME

new  
Devin

last search of  
info base  
area of

NOT possible  
demand selling

JANUARY 14, 2016

Amila MERDZANOVIC

DIRECTOR, VRAP

MATT THOMPSON

DENISE HAMOUREUX

VT STATE Refugee Coord.

MARTHA ~~FRIEDMAN~~ <sup>FRIEDMAN</sup>

VT Health - Minority Serv

Issues Follow-up

(MOLD)

LEAD identified remediation by

- 3 BR hsg in demand

contact \* DAVID Fucci re:

- cost of 3 BRM Rentals

- RATES OF Asthma in Rut City are high

- SECTION 8 housing available - waiting list?

draw \* Scale by map

\* ID Civil Surgeons

Average client shells:

young - educated, English spk  
professional & prof 8'

middle age - every level but right now  
Eng. seling limited

older - less employed - house  
some advanced

focus  
mean  
employment  
RED of to  
support  
life

employment  
in major cities  
start at entry  
level & need  
to strengthen  
Eng spk

OK  
ACRON Industrial  
business

MAYOR

PAT

Judy

Wm. NOTTE

TAKA ~~Kelly~~ Kelly

Client NEED

Self-sufficiency ASAP

but job stability vital

NOT Pro-active - limited exploration of their  
own areas of interest  
no familiarity with letters -  
no drive

demand selling

Refugees  
325 YL  
in Chittenden

is there a economy of scale  
# of Refugee

100

Real issue

- Employment apps & per client NEED

- Eng as second lang.

Written format - hard to duplicate & duplicate services  
(need office have other funding to support)

100%  
FED FUNDED

NOT AFFECTED by STATE funding - rather grow or diminish

(School Supt)

2

NRBD Civil Surgeons - ID DOES who are  
CIVILS

## SECURITY SCREENING OF REFUGEES ADMITTED TO THE UNITED STATES: A DETAILED, RIGOROUS PROCESS

Resettlement is considered a durable solution for refugees who cannot return to their countries of origin or integrate into the current country that is hosting them. Resettlement to a country like the U.S. presents a life-saving alternative for a very small number of refugees around the world (less than one half of one percent). Refugees seeking resettlement in the United States must pass through a number of steps aimed at ensuring that they will not pose a security risk to the United States.

### —STEP 1

**Refugee Status:** In most cases the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) determines that the individual qualifies as a refugee under international law. **A refugee is someone who has fled from his or her home country and cannot return because he or she has a well-founded fear of persecution based on religion, race, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group.**

### —STEP 2

**Referral to the United States:** A refugee that meets one of the criteria for resettlement in the United States is referred to the U.S. government by UNHCR, a U.S. Embassy, or a trained Non-Governmental Organization.

### —STEP 3

**Resettlement Support Center:** A Resettlement Support Center (RSC), contracted by the U.S. Department of State, compiles the refugee's personal data and background information for the security clearance process and to present to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) for an in-person interview.

### —STEP 4

**Security Clearance Process:** With information collected by the RSC, a number of security checks are conducted. The State Department runs the names of all refugees referred to the United States for resettlement through a standard CLASS (Consular Lookout and Support System) name check. In addition, enhanced interagency security checks were phased in beginning in 2008 and applied to all refugee applicants by 2010.

### —STEP 5

**Security Clearance Process:** Certain refugees undergo an additional security review called a Security Advisory Opinion (SAO). These cases require a positive SAO clearance from a number of U.S. law enforcement and intelligence agencies in order to continue the resettlement process. When required, this step runs concurrently with Step 4.

*\*Note that under limited circumstances, refugee applicants may be interviewed in their home country rather than in a country of asylum.*



U.S. COMMITTEE FOR REFUGEES AND IMMIGRANTS

2231 Crystal Drive, Suite 350 • Arlington, VA 22202 • Tel: (703) 310.1130 • Fax: (703) 769.4241

[www.refugees.org](http://www.refugees.org)

—STEP 6

**Security Clearance Process:** Refugees who meet the minimum age requirement have their fingerprints and photograph taken by a trained U.S. government employee, usually on the same day as their DHS interview. The fingerprints are then checked against various U.S. government databases and information on any matches is reviewed by DHS.

—STEP 7

**In-person Interview:** All refugee applicants are interviewed by an officer from DHS's U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). A trained officer will travel to the country of asylum\* to conduct a detailed, face-to-face interview with each refugee applicant being considered for resettlement. Based on the information in the refugee's case file and on the interview, the DHS officer will determine if the individual qualifies as a refugee and is admissible under U.S. law.

—STEP 8

**DHS Approval:** If the USCIS officer finds that the individual qualifies as a refugee and meets other U.S. admission criteria, the officer will conditionally approve the refugee's application for resettlement and submit it to the U.S. Department of State for final processing. Conditional approvals become final once the results of all security checks (Steps 4, 5, and 6) have been received and cleared.

—STEP 9

**Medical Screening:** All refugee applicants approved for resettlement in the U.S. are required to undergo medical screening conducted by the International Organization for Migration or a physician designated by the U.S. Embassy.

—STEP 10

**Matching Refugees with a Sponsor Agency:** Every refugee is assigned to a Voluntary Agency in the U.S., such as the U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI). USCRI will place refugees with a local partner agency or office that will assist refugees upon their arrival in the U.S.

—STEP 11

**Cultural Orientation:** In addition, refugees approved for resettlement are offered cultural orientation while waiting for final processing, to prepare them for their journey to and initial resettlement in the United States.

—STEP 12

**Security Clearance Process:** Prior to departure to the U.S., a second interagency check is conducted for most refugees to check for any new information. Refugees must clear this check in order to depart to the U.S.

—STEP 13

**Admission to the United States:** Upon arrival at one of five U.S. airports designated as ports of entry for refugee admissions, a Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officer will review the refugee documentation and conduct additional security checks to ensure that the arriving refugee is the same person who was screened and approved for admission to the United States.

Pat M

**From:** Amila Merdzanovic <amerdzanovic@uscrvt.org>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 13, 2016 4:56 PM  
**To:** mayorlouras@gmail.com  
**Cc:** patm@rutlandcity.org  
**Subject:** Our visit tomorrow

Dear Mayor Louras,

I left you a voice mail earlier today hoping to connect with you prior to our visit tomorrow. As I mentioned in my previous e-mail, we will be leaving Burlington at 9:00 and hopefully reaching Rutland around 11:00. There is five of us from VRRP coming and Denise Lamoureux and Martha Freedman from the State Office. At our staff meeting this week, I asked staff about what would be important to them to learn about Rutland, services and the community. The following is a thorough but not exhaustive list of services/resources which they identified as important for newly-arriving refugees. In our previous conversation, you touched upon a number of them, but I thought it would be helpful for the others in the group to hear your insights about what Rutland has to offer in regards to this list. Thank you again for hosting the meeting and I look forward to learning more.

- ☐ Affordable housing (availability and avg. rents for 1, 2, or 3 BR apts)
  - o Private market rental housing
  - o Public housing
  - o Section 8 Voucher housing
  - o Located near services and public transportation?
- ☐ Employment opportunities, including but not limited to:
  - o Factories and warehouses
  - o Hotels
  - o Restaurants
  - o Janitorial and maintenance
  - o Retail and customer service
  - o Professional occupations
- ☐ Vermont Department for Children and Families and other State facilities
- ☐ Health care
  - o Medical screenings
  - o Emergency room
  - o Preventive care
  - o Specialists (e.g. developmental disability and mental health service providers)
- ☐ Education
  - o Childcare, Head Start and/or early childhood education programs
  - o Public schools (Pre K-12)
    - What model of English Language Learner (ELL) services currently exists, if any?
  - o After school programs (e.g. Boys & Girls Clubs)
  - o Adult English Language Learner (ELL) services (e.g. Vermont Adult Learning)
  - o Higher and continuing education (e.g. CCV, Castleton)
- ☐ Shopping and personal services
  - o Groceries and household supplies
  - o Banks
- ☐ Facilities available for use for religious services
- ☐ Affordable office space easily accessible by public transit suitable for a refugee resettlement sub-office
- ☐ Community support
  - o General openness to refugee resettlement
  - o Volunteer interest
  - o Faith Community

**Pat M**

---

**From:** Derby, Diane (Leahy) <Diane\_Derby@leahy.senate.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 26, 2016 7:06 PM  
**To:** Christopher Louras; Amila Merdzanovic  
**Cc:** patm@rutlandcity.org  
**Subject:** Great news coverage

Of your event today. Nice work!

WPTZ:  
<http://www.wptz.com/news/rutland-to-accept-up-to-100-syrian-refugees/39220296>

WCAX:  
<http://www.wcax.com/story/31818005/rutland-to-welcome-syrian-refugees>

VPR:  
<http://digital.vpr.net/#stream/0>



**REGISTRATION NOW OPEN FOR  
20th ANNUAL WOMEN'S ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY CONFERENCE**  
Visit [leahy.senate.gov](http://leahy.senate.gov) to learn more

*Diane Derby  
Field Representative  
Office of Senator Patrick Leahy  
802-229-0569 (office)  
802-223-4275 (cell)*

**Pat M**

---

**From:** Twigg, George <George.Twigg@mail.house.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 26, 2016 3:58 PM  
**To:** Chris Louras (mayorlouras@gmail.com); Pat M  
**Cc:** Furnari, Shannon  
**Subject:** FW: Leahy, Sanders and Welch Joint Statement On Rutland Vermont Welcoming 100 Syrian Refugees

Mayor and Pat – wanted you to see this.

Best,  
George



**NEWS FROM THE VERMONT DELEGATION**  
**SENATOR LEAHY, SENATOR SANDERS, and CONGRESSMAN WELCH**

**Leahy, Sanders and Welch**  
**Joint Statement On Rutland Vermont Welcoming 100 Syrian Refugees**  
**Tuesday, April 26, 2016**

“We are proud that the State of Vermont and the City of Rutland are welcoming civilian refugees who have fled the relentless violence in Syria, sometimes with just the clothes on their backs. We appreciate the leadership of Mayor Louras and Rutland’s business and community leaders who are not only doing the right thing by helping those in need but also making it clear that it is good for the region to welcome hardworking newcomers into the community. Struggling families, fleeing peril and motivated to start their lives anew, always have and always will enrich America and contribute immeasurably to our state.”

#####

**Pat M**

---

**From:** Christopher Louras <mayorlouras@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 26, 2016 10:28 AM  
**To:** Mark Foley  
**Cc:** patm@rutlandcity.org  
**Subject:** Press Release attached  
**Attachments:** Press Release.pdf

--  
Mayor Christopher C. Louras  
City of Rutland, VT  
(802) 770-5366

**Pat M**

---

**From:** Derby, Diane (Leahy) <Diane\_Derby@leahy.senate.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 26, 2016 11:00 AM  
**To:** patm@rutlandcity.org  
**Cc:** Alexander, Katie (Leahy)  
**Subject:** Hi Pat - Got the press release

Many thanks, and please keep me posted on how it goes. I am on the road and just narrowly missed being in an accident. Snow in late April - just not right!

**Pat M**

---

**From:** Christopher Louras <mayorlouras@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 26, 2016 10:26 AM  
**To:** Scott Coriell; Derby, Diane (Leahy); george.twigg@mail.house.gov;  
phil.scott@vermont.gov; Weinstein, David (Sanders); patm@rutlandcity.org  
**Subject:** Press Release Attached  
**Attachments:** Press Release.pdf

--

Mayor Christopher C. Louras  
City of Rutland, VT  
(802) 770-5366

**Pat M**

---

**From:** Christopher Louras <mayorlouras@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 21, 2016 10:15 AM  
**To:** patm@rutlandcity.org  
**Subject:** Fwd: call  
**Attachments:** People we should invite.docx

----- Forwarded message -----

**From:** Costello, Steve <Steve.Costello@greenmountainpower.com>  
**Date:** Thu, Apr 21, 2016 at 9:55 AM  
**Subject:** call  
**To:** Chris Louras <mayorlouras@gmail.com>

Steve Costello  
802-793-4031  
www.greenmountainpower.com  
Have you signed up for autopay and paperless billing?

--  
Mayor Christopher C. Louras  
City of Rutland, VT  
(802) 770-5366

**Pat M**

---

**From:** Amila Merdzanovic <amerdzanovic@uscrvt.org>  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 14, 2016 5:56 PM  
**To:** Christopher Louras  
**Cc:** patm@rutlandcity.org  
**Subject:** FW: Rutland  
**Attachments:** REVISED\_Refugee Resettlement in Rutland Talking Points-2016 04 14.doc

Hi Mayor,

I hope the Project VISION meeting went well.

I want to let you know that Adam Sancic reached out to me and we have a meeting set up for Monday at 1:00 at his office in Middlebury. Matt and Kristen will be coming with me. I did not let Denise know nor has he copied her. I also got an e-mail from Joanne Calvin, very unprofessional I must say, asking me to make sure she is included in the list of invitees for the bigger meeting.

I want to share with you the concern my HQ has about holding a public forum. If we open it up to anybody and everybody, all sorts of people will come out of woodwork. Anti-immigrant, anti-anything. They suggest that the forum be invite only but make it as wide as possible. Work with faith leaders, United Way, etc... Perhaps, we could go back to the Congregational Church and continue the conversation there.

Attached are the talking points we put together. You can pick and choose which parts you share with which audience(s) but overall they are strength based! Both in terms of what Rutland has to offer and what refugee resettlement brings/could bring to the community.

What a day! Hope tomorrow is a more positive day for all of us.

Best,  
Amila

**Amila Merdzanovic, MALD**  
Director



462 Hegeman Ave, Suite 101  
Colchester, VT 05446  
refugees.org/vermont  
p/ 802-654-1700  
f/ 802-655-4020

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**From:** Amila Merdzanovic  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 14, 2016 10:40 AM  
**To:** mayorlouras@gmail.com  
**Subject:** Fwd: Rutland

Please see below! Denise and Martha have breached our agreement, yet again! I know Diane Derby spoke to Denise yesterday but clearly, that has made no difference. As you can see below, I explained what our plan was and they took it

upon themselves to forward my e-mail to Adam Sancic and Christine Johnson! Could we please connect today and figure out the plan. The meeting with stakeholders needs to happen ASAP and the public forum and press conference soon after! If not all on the same day! I am asking the team here to clear out their schedules for most evenings next week!

Amila

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** "Sancic, Adam" <Adam.Sancic@vermont.gov>  
**Date:** April 14, 2016 at 10:27:35 AM EDT  
**To:** "Lamoureux, Denise" <Denise.Lamoureux@vermont.gov>, Amila Merdzanovic <amerdzanovic@uscrvt.org>, "Friedman, Martha" <Martha.Friedman@vermont.gov>  
**Cc:** "Johnson, Christine M." <Christine.M.Johnson@vermont.gov>  
**Subject:** RE: Rutland

I would also include Erin Oalican Reach Up/TANF Program Director, and Deb Hall, Director at the Homeless Prevention Center. My guess is that DOL and Vocational Rehabilitation will also be part of the conversation, considering the potential impact this could have on their programs.

**From:** Lamoureux, Denise  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 14, 2016 9:56 AM  
**To:** Amila Merdzanovic <amerdzanovic@uscrvt.org>; Friedman, Martha <Martha.Friedman@vermont.gov>  
**Cc:** Sancic, Adam <Adam.Sancic@vermont.gov>; Johnson, Christine M. <Christine.M.Johnson@vermont.gov>  
**Subject:** RE: Rutland

Hi Amila,

Please add Adam Sancic, the Rutland Field District Director for the Agency of Human Services. The Rutland Economic Services Director Richard Giddings and Health Department district director Joanne Calvi should also be invited.

Thank you,

*Denise Lamoureux*  
Director, State Refugee Office  
**PLEASE NOTE MY NEW ADDRESS AND PHONE NUMBER, EFFECTIVE 02/29/16:**  
Vermont Agency of Human Services  
Office of the Secretary  
Center Building  
280 State Drive  
Waterbury, VT 05671-1000  
(802) 241-0429 or (802) 652-4192  
[Denise.Lamoureux@vermont.gov](mailto:Denise.Lamoureux@vermont.gov)

**From:** Amila Merdzanovic [<mailto:amerdzanovic@uscrvt.org>]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 13, 2016 9:03 PM

**To:** Friedman, Martha <Martha.Friedman@vermont.gov>  
**Cc:** Lamoureux, Denise <Denise.Lamoureux@vermont.gov>  
**Subject:** Re: Rutland

Hi Martha,

I do not have the list, Mayor Louras is helping us compile it! The plan is for him to call the meeting on our behalf! The Mayor spoke w/ CEO of Rutland Regional who was very supportive and has agreed to help us identify providers. It would be great if your partner could suggest who, she thinks, should be invited and we'll add them to the master list! Once it is created. I am going to push that the meeting take place next week. Time is of essence!

I will keep you posted,  
Amila

Sent from my iPhone

On Apr 13, 2016, at 10:27 AM, Friedman, Martha <Martha.Friedman@vermont.gov> wrote:

Hi Amila,

Would it be possible to see the list you have already developed to determine who we want to add? I will discuss who is appropriate with my partner in Rutland but I think it would cut down on work if we could see who is already there so we aren't duplicative.

Thanks,  
Martha

**Martha Friedman, MPH**  
Refugee Health and Health Equity Coordinator  
Vermont Department of Health  
108 Cherry St.  
Burlington, VT 05402  
802-863-7344

---

**From:** Amila Merdzanovic [<mailto:amerdzanovic@uscrvt.org>]  
**Sent:** Monday, April 11, 2016 2:09 PM  
**To:** Lamoureux, Denise; Friedman, Martha  
**Subject:** RE: Rutland

Hi Denise and Martha,

Please send me your contacts and I will include them in our master list.

Thank you,  
Amila

**Amila Merdzanovic, MALD**  
Director

<image001.png>

462 Hegeman Ave, Suite 101

Colchester, VT 05446  
[refugees.org/vermont](http://refugees.org/vermont)  
p/ 802-654-1700  
f/ 802-655-4020

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**From:** Lamoureux, Denise [<mailto:Denise.Lamoureux@vermont.gov>]  
**Sent:** Monday, April 11, 2016 1:40 PM  
**To:** Amila Merdzanovic <[amerdzanovic@uscrvt.org](mailto:amerdzanovic@uscrvt.org)>; Friedman, Martha <[Martha.Friedman@vermont.gov](mailto:Martha.Friedman@vermont.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: Rutland

Amila,

Can you send us the list of people you invite so that we can add our contacts and see you will attend?

Thanks,

*Denise Lamoureux*  
Director, Refugee Office and State Refugee Coordinator  
**PLEASE NOTE MY NEW ADDRESS AND PHONE NUMBER, EFFECTIVE 02/29/16:**  
Vermont Agency of Human Services  
Office of the Secretary  
Center Building  
280 State Drive  
Waterbury, VT 05671-1000  
(802) 241-0429 or (802) 652-4192  
[Denise.Lamoureux@vermont.gov](mailto:Denise.Lamoureux@vermont.gov)

**From:** Amila Merdzanovic [<mailto:amerdzanovic@uscrvt.org>]  
**Sent:** Sunday, April 10, 2016 4:40 PM  
**To:** Lamoureux, Denise <[Denise.Lamoureux@vermont.gov](mailto:Denise.Lamoureux@vermont.gov)>; Friedman, Martha <[Martha.Friedman@vermont.gov](mailto:Martha.Friedman@vermont.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: Rutland  
**Importance:** High

Hello ladies,

I am writing to let you know that we will not be going to Project VISION meeting on the 14<sup>th</sup>. They have a packed agenda and could not give us more than 15 minutes which, as we all agreed, was not enough to even introduce our selves and explain what each does. However, we had a very productive meeting with Mayor Louras on Friday who, at a short notice, came up to the office and worked with us on identifying the main stakeholders in the area. The plan is to pull together a separate meeting before the end of April, most likely in the evening, and invite all the major players. Stay tuned.

He did share with me that the Governor's office called him after getting a frantic call from DOL inquiring about the plan to resettle '100 Syrians in the next month' in Rutland. Again, I cannot emphasize enough the importance of not sharing the information even if it is confidentially. Please respect our process, you will have plenty of opportunity to

share and take action once we have met with the stakeholders. At that point we can and will share it widely. It will not serve any one of us well if the community in Rutland learned about it through the grapevine and not directly from us. The above example shows that what people hear and how they interpret it is two different things.

Thank you and I will keep you posted!

Amila

**From:** Lamoureux, Denise [<mailto:Denise.Lamoureux@vermont.gov>]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 30, 2016 4:43 PM  
**To:** Amila Merdzanovic <[amerdzanovic@uscrvt.org](mailto:amerdzanovic@uscrvt.org)>  
**Subject:** Rutland  
**Importance:** High

Hi Amila,

Could you send me the date, time and location of the Project Vision meeting in April, as well as any other information you have (agenda, who attends, etc.)?

Thank you,

*Denise Lamoureux*  
Director, State Refugee Office  
**PLEASE NOTE MY NEW ADDRESS AND PHONE NUMBER, EFFECTIVE 02/29/16:**  
Vermont Agency of Human Services  
Office of the Secretary  
Center Building  
280 State Drive  
Waterbury, VT 05671-1000  
(802) 241-0429 or (802) 652-4192  
[Denise.Lamoureux@vermont.gov](mailto:Denise.Lamoureux@vermont.gov)

## 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

**Pat M**

---

**From:** Amila Merdzanovic <amerdzanovic@uscrvt.org>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 12, 2016 4:24 PM  
**To:** Christopher Louras  
**Cc:** patm@rutlandcity.org  
**Subject:** Letter of Support  
**Attachments:** VRRP\_Sample Letter of Support.doc

**Importance:** High

It was great to talk to you today and hear about the progress you have made. Thank you for reaching out to your contacts at the hospital and the college and for continuing to build the momentum. Attached, please find the LoS to be shared with heads of agencies/programs and community partners in the area which we will submit with our application on May 5th.

I want to confirm that I am ready to come down to Middlebury and meet with Adam Sancic to discuss his concerns around the potential impact on the Reach Up program.

We will be in touch soon.  
Amila

**Amila Merdzanovic, MALD**  
Director



462 Hegeman Ave, Suite 101  
Colchester, VT 05446  
refugees.org/vermont  
p/ 802-654-1700  
f/ 802-655-4020

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Letterhead

Date

Ms. Anne C. Richard  
Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C. St. NW #5805  
Washington, D.C. 20520

*Re: Letter of Support for USCRI's proposal to establish a new Reception and Placement  
Program in \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_.*

Dear Ms. Richard,

I am writing in support of the U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants'/Vermont Refugee Resettlement Program application to establish a Reception and Placement program site in Rutland in partnership with AGENCY.

Rutland is a welcoming community and an ideal place for resettling refugees. Rutland city and the surrounding area offers ample employment and safe housing. [add background on community/resources].

[This paragraph should include information about working relationship with USCRI/VRRP and the author, including collaboration/planned collaboration].

We look forward to welcoming refugee newcomers to \_\_\_\_\_.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Name  
Title  
Agency

**Pat M**

---

**From:** Amila Merdzanovic <amerdzanovic@uscrvt.org>  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 07, 2016 4:33 PM  
**To:** Christopher Louras  
**Cc:** patm@rutlandcity.org  
**Subject:** FW: Apr 14th Project VISION meeting

I am a bit frantic, running around getting ready for tonight. I heard your voice mail and yes, I suspected it was Denise. As an FYI, please see the message below from Diane Derby at Senator Leahy's office. This is great!

Thank you and see you tonight!

Amila

**Amila Merdzanovic, MALD**  
Director



462 Hegeman Ave, Suite 101  
Colchester, VT 05446  
refugees.org/vermont  
p/ 802-654-1700  
f/ 802-655-4020

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**From:** Derby, Diane (Leahy) [mailto:Diane\_Derby@leahy.senate.gov]  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 7, 2016 3:17 PM  
**To:** Amila Merdzanovic <amerdzanovic@uscrvt.org>; Ash, Kate (Leahy) <Kate\_Ash@leahy.senate.gov>  
**Subject:** Apr 14th Project VISION meeting

Hi Amila:

By way of email, I want to introduce you to Kate Ash, who handles education, housing and human services for Senator Leahy in Vermont (and please forgive me if you have already met!). I will be away next week but Kate has kindly offered to attend the Project VISION meeting in Rutland. I understand you are on the agenda to discuss potential plans – very exciting! Mayor Louras suggested our office might want to attend.

Hope all is well, and I will see you at the RISPNet meeting later this month.

Best,  
Diane

*Diane Derby*  
Field Representative  
Office of Senator Patrick Leahy  
802-229-0569 (office)  
802-223-4275 (cell)

**Pat M**

---

**From:** Amila Merdzanovic <amerdzanovic@uscrvt.org>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 05, 2016 8:31 AM  
**To:** Christopher Louras  
**Cc:** patm@rutlandcity.org  
**Subject:** More developments

Dear Mayor Louras,

I am happy to know you will be coming to our fundraiser this Thursday. It is going to be a fun event!

I wanted to follow up with you on my last e-mail about planning for the resettlement for this fall. We are hard at work collecting data and making connections and the more people we talk to the more we are finding that Rutland is 'ripe' for refugee resettlement. We are still planning to come down on the 14<sup>th</sup> and attend Project Vision meeting. I was hoping you could make the first introduction and I will take it from there or let me know whom I should be in touch with. One other connection I was hoping you could make is with Police and Fire Chiefs.

Also, in the course of today I will be sending you a letter of support which we will submit with our application to the PRM. Could you please sign it and send it to me at your earliest. If you have some time to chat on the phone this week that would be great so I can share more details about the process.

Thank you and I hope to hear from you soon.

Amila

**Amila Merdzanovic, MALD**  
Director



462 Hegeman Ave, Suite 101  
Colchester, VT 05446  
[refugees.org/vermont](http://refugees.org/vermont)  
p/ 802-654-1700  
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**Pat M**

---

**From:** Amila Merdzanovic <amerdzanovic@uscrvt.org>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 28, 2016 4:44 PM  
**To:** Christopher Louras  
**Cc:** patm@rutlandcity.org  
**Subject:** Moving Forward

Dear mayor Louras,

I apologize for a lengthy e-mail.

First let me say how grateful we are for all the donations collected by the community members. Our warehouse is now packed full.

I wanted to share with you some exciting developments in terms of our planning process and the next steps related to resettlement in Rutland. First, I would like to let you know that we have the full support of our executive team in Arlington, VA in moving forward with expanding resettlement to Rutland. Secondly, and equally important, we have the support of the State Refugee Coordinator and the Health Coordinator whom you met back in January. One big development is that we are now looking to 'start' the resettlement with the new FY17 starting October 1<sup>st</sup>. That means, we have a lot of work ahead of us and not a lot of time. The new application to the Department of State PRM office is due in mid-May. If all goes well, we are looking to include resettlement in Rutland with our application. What that requires us to do is meet with community stakeholders beforehand ie. heads of agencies and various social service providers and discuss resettlement. Also, since Rutland would be a new site, we would need letters of support from various groups including your office, school superintendent, DCF district manager, health care providers, employers, landlords, community groups, etc. USCRI would provide us with a template for the letter of support which could be easily adapted for different groups. As the next step, the leadership team from here and Denise would like to come down for a day visit on **April 14<sup>th</sup>**. The reason we chose that day is because we would like to connect with Project Vision and attend their monthly meeting scheduled for noon that day. We thought that would be a good opportunity for us to reach a wide group of community members. I wanted to ask you if you could facilitate introduction with someone from that group so then I can have a preliminary discussion over the phone.

Since we last met, the team here has been looking at different aspects of resettlement and gathering information around housing, employment, social services, education, etc. Also, as of recently, we started working with a group of community members from Weston, VT who have agreed to assist us with the 'fact finding' process and making connections. As it turns out, one of our English teacher's brothers is a major landlord and an employer in Rutland. Please let me know if you and your team have had an opportunity to discuss more and if you have data and contacts to share with us.

I would like to connect with you over the phone in the next few days and tell you more about how we are moving forward. We are both very busy but hopefully we can find some time to talk before long. I am flexible tomorrow and Wednesday after 12 noon also Thursday between 12-3:00.

I look forward to talking to you soon.

Amila

**From:** Christopher Louras [mailto:mayorlouras@gmail.com]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 08, 2016 5:55 AM

To: Amila Merdzanovic <amerdzanovic@uscrvt.org>

Subject: Re: Following up

Amila,

Thank you so much for reaching out.

At this time, we are even more committed to working with VRRP than last we spoke.

We have expanded the group of "those who know," and are ready to have those discussions you've requested with potential employers and landlords.

I am hopeful that we can provide you with what you need in a timely manner.

I will be out of town beginning Thursday so the discussions will begin next week.

Again, thank you and we will be in touch.

Chris

On Mon, Mar 7, 2016 at 9:13 PM, Amila Merdzanovic <amerdzanovic@uscrvt.org> wrote:

Dear Mayor Louras,

I hope this e-mail finds you well. The time is flying and we wanted to continue our conversation regarding the possibility of refugee resettlement in Rutland. We appreciated the opportunity couple months ago now to speak with you and your colleagues at length and to see some neighborhoods in Rutland. On our end, we have broached the topic to the appropriate staff at our headquarters and have been encouraged to continue exploring the possibility of Rutland as a resettlement site. To continue the process, we have some questions that we are hoping you could answer for us or, if more appropriate for certain questions, connect us with others who would know the answers (e.g. employers and landlords). If you are still in the quiet stage of this project, we understand and hope that you could at least put forth some statistical information that would help us gain a better understanding.

1. Employment leading to self-sufficiency is a cornerstone of refugee resettlement. **Can you identify and connect us with several local employers that routinely have job openings and would be interested in the possibility of hiring refugees, of varying levels of education and English proficiency, in non-seasonal positions?** We would like to explain our program to them and explore employment prospects for refugees. If you are not ready for that yet, then it would be helpful to have some official labor statistics specific to Rutland or the Rutland area (e.g. annual job openings and rates of growth in the manufacturing, hospitality, retail and service sectors).
2. Securing rental housing before an individual or family arrives requires educating and developing relationships with landlords. **Are you able to recommend several landlords (private or non-profit) who are likely to have affordable, well-maintained two and three bedroom apartments available throughout the year?** We would like to assess the housing situation and make sure housing will be adequate in terms of both quantity and quality.
3. Given the small number of K-12 English language learners enrolled in the public schools, **what system would Rutland schools develop to provide ELL services to students who would arrive in Rutland throughout the academic year?** What information would the schools need from USCRI/VRRP to enable them to do this?

Your responses will help us proceed further in this process and understand how some of the pieces could fall into place.

Please let us know if you have any questions. If you would rather go over these over the phone, I would be happy to talk to you in the course of this week.

We are planning another field trip and perhaps could get a chance to meet with some of the stakeholders in the area.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Amila

--

Mayor Christopher C. Louras  
City of Rutland, VT  
(802) 770-5366

**Pat M**

---

**From:** Amila Merdzanovic <amerdzanovic@uscrvt.org>  
**Sent:** Friday, March 25, 2016 6:14 PM  
**To:** Christopher Louras  
**Cc:** patm@rutlandcity.org  
**Subject:** Destination BTV--VRRP Fundraiser  
**Attachments:** Destination BTV Invite.pdf

Dear Mayor Louras,

I am excited to be one of the hosts for Destination BTV, an upcoming event on **Thursday, April 7th, 7pm-9pm at the Burlington Airport.**

The mission of Destination BTV, presented by USCRI/Vermont Refugee Resettlement Program, is "Redefining multicultural integration, fostering a platform for radical success." The goal is to activate and expand community understanding and involvement in blending multicultures, creating an extraordinary place for us all to live.

Please join me on April 7th at the Burlington Airport for this unprecedented event that is sure to make a long lasting impact on our community.

Attached is the invitation with a link to buy tickets.

Best regards,  
Amila

Amila Merdzanovic, MALD  
Director



462 Hegeman Ave, Suite 101  
Colchester, VT 05446  
refugees.org/vermont  
p/ 802-654-1700  
f/ 802-655-4020

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**Pat M**

---

**From:** Amila Merdzanovic <amerdzanovic@uscrvt.org>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 08, 2016 5:22 PM  
**To:** patm@rutlandcity.org  
**Subject:** FW: Following up

Keeping you in the loop.

Thanks,  
Amila

**Amila Merdzanovic, MALD**  
Director



462 Hegeman Ave, Suite 101  
Colchester, VT 05446  
refugees.org/vermont  
p/ 802-654-1700  
f/ 802-655-4020

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**From:** Amila Merdzanovic  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 8, 2016 1:02 PM  
**To:** 'Christopher Louras' <mayorlouras@gmail.com>  
**Cc:** Matt Thompson <MThompson@uscrvt.org>  
**Subject:** RE: Following up

Hello there,

Thank you for your reply. We are moving forward with our own research and also look forward to hearing from you and your group. Let's plan to be in touch soon.

Safe travels,  
Amila

**Amila Merdzanovic, MALD**  
Director



462 Hegeman Ave, Suite 101  
Colchester, VT 05446  
refugees.org/vermont  
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**From:** Christopher Louras [<mailto:mayorlouras@gmail.com>]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 8, 2016 5:55 AM  
**To:** Amila Merdzanovic <[amerdzanovic@uscrvt.org](mailto:amerdzanovic@uscrvt.org)>  
**Subject:** Re: Following up

Amila,

Thank you so much for reaching out.

At this time, we are even more committed to working with VRRP than last we spoke.

We have expanded the group of "those who know," and are ready to have those discussions you've requested with potential employers and landlords.

I am hopeful that we can provide you with what you need in a timely manner.

I will be out of town beginning Thursday so the discussions will begin next week.

Again, thank you and we will be in touch.

Chris

On Mon, Mar 7, 2016 at 9:13 PM, Amila Merdzanovic <[amerdzanovic@uscrvt.org](mailto:amerdzanovic@uscrvt.org)> wrote:

Dear Mayor Louras,

I hope this e-mail finds you well. The time is flying and we wanted to continue our conversation regarding the possibility of refugee resettlement in Rutland. We appreciated the opportunity couple months ago now to speak with you and your colleagues at length and to see some neighborhoods in Rutland. On our end, we have broached the topic to the appropriate staff at our headquarters and have been encouraged to continue exploring the possibility of Rutland as a resettlement site. To continue the process, we have some questions that we are hoping you could answer for us or, if more appropriate for certain questions, connect us with others who would know the answers (e.g. employers and landlords). If you are still in the quiet stage of this project, we understand and hope that you could at least put forth some statistical information that would help us gain a better understanding.

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2. Securing rental housing before an individual or family arrives requires educating and developing relationships with landlords. **Are you able to recommend several landlords (private or non-profit) who are likely to have affordable, well-maintained two and three bedroom apartments available throughout the year?** We would like to assess the housing situation and make sure housing will be adequate in terms of both quantity and quality.

3. Given the small number of K-12 English language learners enrolled in the public schools, **what system would Rutland schools develop to provide ELL services to students who would arrive in Rutland throughout the academic year?** What information would the schools need from USCRI/VRRP to enable them to do this?

Your responses will help us proceed further in this process and understand how some of the pieces could fall into place.

Please let us know if you have any questions. If you would rather go over these over the phone, I would be happy to talk to you in the course of this week.

We are planning another field trip and perhaps could get a chance to meet with some of the stakeholders in the area.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Amila

--  
Mayor Christopher C. Louras  
City of Rutland, VT  
(802) 770-5366



Christopher Louras &lt;mayorlouras@gmail.com&gt;

## RE: Rutland Abstract and financials

Amila Merdzanovic &lt;amerdzanovic@uscrvt.org&gt;

Thu, Jul 21, 2016 at 1:35 PM

To: Melinda Humphrey &lt;melindahumphrey@comcast.net&gt;, Stacie Blake &lt;sblake@uscrdc.org&gt;

Cc: William Nottle &lt;willnottle@gmail.com&gt;, Christopher Louras &lt;mayorlouras@gmail.com&gt;

Dear Melinda,

It is nice to hear from you. Attached, please find a copy of the FY 2017 USCRI Affiliate Abstract for Rutland as well as the copy of the State Refugee Office letter to PRM. This is the same document, Stacie and I disseminated at the BOA meeting back in April to each board member in hard-copy. The State Refugee Coordinator has also shared it with a number of stakeholders we met with as part of the consultation process. The financials can be accessed on the USCRI web-site <http://refugees.org/about/financials/>

Please let me know if I can be of further assistance.

Best regards,

Amila

Amila Merdzanovic, MALD  
Director

462 Hegeman Ave, Suite 101  
Colchester, VT 05446  
[refugees.org/vermont](http://refugees.org/vermont)  
p/ 802-654-1700  
f/ 802-655-4020

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-----Original Message-----

From: Melinda Humphrey [mailto:[melindahumphrey@comcast.net](mailto:melindahumphrey@comcast.net)]

Sent: Thursday, July 21, 2016 11:35 AM

To: Stacie Blake &lt;sblake@uscrdc.org&gt;

Cc: Amila Merdzanovic &lt;amerdzanovic@uscrvt.org&gt;

Subject: Re: Rutland Abstract and financials

Great, thank you!

Sent from my iPhone

&gt; On Jul 21, 2016, at 11:07 AM, Stacie Blake &lt;sblake@uscrdc.org&gt; wrote:

&gt;

&gt; Hi Melinda-short answer yes.

&gt; I don't have access where I am but either Amila or I will send them ASAP.

&gt; Thank you.

&gt; Stacie

&gt;

&gt; -----Original Message-----

> From: Melinda Humphrey [mailto:[melindahumphrey@comcast.net](mailto:melindahumphrey@comcast.net)]

&gt; Sent: Thursday, July 21, 2016 10:35 AM

&gt; To: Stacie Blake &lt;sblake@uscrdc.org&gt;

&gt; Subject: Rutland Abstract and financials


8/8/2016


Obtained via VT Public Records Law by Judicial Watch, Inc.

>  
> Hi Ms Blake,  
> Could you please forward me the documents (abstract and financials) you provided at the May meeting? I'm out of town on vacation- I scanned myself a copy before I left but neglected to get both sides of the pages! Thanks for your help.  
>  
> Alderman Melinda Humphrey  
>  
> Sent from my iPhone

---

2 attachments

 **USCRI Rutland - FY 2017.pdf**  
47K

 **PRM R&P VT input FFY2017.pdf**  
45K

## Attachment E: FY 2017 USCRI Affiliate/Sub-Office Abstracts

National Agency	USCRI	Affiliate Code	TBD
Office State	Vermont	Office City	Rutland
Office Name	USCRI Vermont /Vermont Refugee Resettlement Program		
Office Address	TBD		
<b>JOINT SITE</b>		<b>SUB-OFFICE</b>	
If joint site, with which agency or agencies?	N/A	Sub-office	N/A
		Administering affiliate	USCRI Vermont
<b>R&amp;P PROGRAM AFFILIATE STAFFING</b>			
	R&P FTE paid by R&P	R&P FTE paid by other (not including volunteers)	Total Client/FTE Ratio
FY 2016	N/A	N/A	N/A
FY 2017	1	0.5	67/1

<b>CASELOAD STATISTICS (number of individuals)</b>	FY 2015 Actual Arrivals					N/A
	FY 2016 Acknowledged Capacity					N/A
	FY 2016 Anticipated Arrivals					N/A
<b>PROPOSED FY 2017</b>	<b>AF</b>	<b>EA</b>	<b>ECA</b>	<b>LAC</b>	<b>NE/SA</b>	<b>Total</b>
U.S. Tie Capacity	0	0	0	0	0	0
No U.S. Tie Capacity	0	0	0	0	100	100
Total Capacity	0	0	0	0	100	100

FY 2015 R&P PERIOD REPORT OUTCOMES			
Total R&P Period Reports Submitted for FY 2015		N/A	
R&P Period Employment	N/A	R&P Period Out-Migration	N/A
R&P Period Basic Needs and Core Services Provided	N/A	R&P Period Household Income Exceeds Expenses	N/A

RECENT R&P MONITORING OUTCOMES			
Date of most recent PRM monitoring visit:	N/A	Compliance Rating	N/A
Date of most recent Resettlement Agency headquarters monitoring visit (R&P):	N/A	Compliance Rating	N/A

RECENT AND PROPOSED CASELOAD	
Nationalities served FY 2015–FY 2016	N/A
Proposed nationalities FY 2017	Syrian
Languages available on staff to support the proposed caseload	Arabic
Languages available from within the	Arabic

## Attachment E: FY 2017 USCRI Affiliate/Sub-Office Abstracts

community of resettlement to support the proposed caseload	
Other language resources used	Language line is available if needed.

## SITE RATIONALE

Number of other affiliates present	0
Local overall unemployment rate	4.2%
Available jobs for refugees	Customer service, food service, health care, hospitality, maintenance, manufacturing, office/accounting, packaging, retail, temporary agencies, warehouses, etc.
Average starting wage for refugees	USCRI Vermont reports for Chittenden County average starting wages of \$10.40 per hour with 90% of positions being full time and 93% of these offering benefits; USCRI Vermont expects similar wages and rates in Rutland.
Average monthly rent and availability (Note whether Always, Frequently, Sometimes, or Never Available)	1-Bedroom: \$550 Available: Always 2-Bedroom: \$650 Available: Always 3-Bedroom: \$900 Available: Always

## GRIEVANCE AND PROTECTION FROM SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE (PSEA) POLICY

Indicate whether you have a grievance policy.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Indicate whether you have incorporated the IASC's six core principles for PSEA in your organization's code of conduct for all staff and volunteers.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

**1. Health Care Access and Refugees with Special Needs:** USCRI Vermont has consulted with health providers in Rutland to discuss the implementation of culturally and linguistically appropriate services for clients with special medical or mental health needs with the understanding that it will take time to develop comprehensive systems. Community Health Centers of the Rutland Region confirmed their commitment to serve new refugees as a provider of Refugee Health Screenings, and as a primary care provider for health and some mental health needs. Rutland Mental Health Services (RMHS), the state designated mental health/developmental disabilities services provider in Rutland County, currently has limited capacity for providing culturally and linguistically appropriate services. However, the RMHS Chief Executive Officer confirmed that RMHS will work to effectively respond to refugee clients' needs. RMHS already has several staff with experience in international mental health and trauma-informed care, including a licensed clinical social worker. USCRI Vermont will continue to liaise with RMHS to increase capacity for serving refugees with severe mental health conditions or developmental disabilities. USCRI Vermont is unable to serve families of nine or more members due to a lack of large and affordable apartment units in Rutland.

**2. Community Engagement:** Since January 2016, USCRI Vermont has engaged with community organizations, businesses, religious groups, and government officials to provide information about refugee resettlement and the establishment of a resettlement program in Rutland. In March, USCRI Vermont organized a public presentation on resettlement and volunteer opportunities at Grace Church in Rutland. The meeting was attended by 50 people

## Attachment E: FY 2017 USCRI Affiliate/Sub-Office Abstracts

and as a result USCRI Vermont in Colchester received a large donation of household goods from the church. In April, the Mayor of Rutland publicly announced his support for a refugee resettlement program in Rutland. Since then, USCRI Vermont assisted in the production of six positive media stories about refugees in print, television, and radio. In May 2016, USCRI Vermont presented at a public event at the Universalist Church in Rutland attended by 170 people and focused on volunteer support and opportunities in preparation for resettlement. USCRI Vermont also organized and led a full day of consultations with representatives from city government, Agency of Human Services, Department of Health, NeighborWorks of Western Vermont, Rutland Regional Hospital, Community Health Centers of the Rutland Region, Rutland Mental Health Services, and Rutland Free Clinic. Discussions included the proposed plan to expand resettlement into Rutland, community capacity, housing, social integration, and USCRI Vermont services. USCRI Vermont currently has a list of 100 volunteers who have expressed interest in supporting resettlement activities in Rutland. In FY 2016 and 2017, USCRI Vermont will continue to develop community and volunteer support in Rutland and surrounding towns through two major educational/fundraising events and ten statewide presentations, with the goals of developing five positive media stories about resettlement in Rutland, ten new relationships built with local/state representatives, fifty volunteers recruited, and an increase in cash and in-kind donations.

3. **Financial Resources:** Additional resources, combined with revenues from USCRI Vermont's in-house fee for service program, will be used to provide direct client support, purchase furnishings, household goods, for office supplies, and equipment.

Projected Contributions to the R&P Program						
Type of Donor	FY 2015 Actual Cash	FY 2015 Actual In-kind Value	FY 2016 Estimated Cash	FY 2016 Estimated In-kind Value	FY 2017 Projected Cash	FY 2017 Projected In-kind Value
Foundations/ Corporations					\$5,000	\$30,000
Faith-based/ Community-based Organizations					\$3,000	\$2,000
Fees for Service						
Individuals					\$1,000	\$15,000
Volunteer Hours/Miles						\$5,000
State/County/Local Government: [SOURCE]						
Headquarters						
Affiliate/Sub-office						
Other:						
<b>TOTALS</b>					\$9,000	\$52,000
<b>TOTALS PER CAPITA</b>					\$90	\$520



State of Vermont  
Agency of Human Services  
Office of the Secretary  
Center Building  
280 State Drive  
Waterbury, VT 05671-1000  
[www.ahs.vermont.gov](http://www.ahs.vermont.gov)

State Refugee Office

[phone] 802-241-0429  
[fax] 802-241-0454

June 15, 2016

Barbara Day  
Chief, Domestic Resettlement, Refugee Admissions  
Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration  
U.S. Department of State  
Washington, D.C. 20520

Re: USCRI Reception and Placement Plan for fiscal year 2017

Dear Ms. Day:

Vermont recognizes the positive contribution and impact that refugees make to our communities in multiple ways and wishes to continue to uphold its tradition of meaningful contribution to this humanitarian effort.

We are pleased to support the USCRI's resettlement plans, including the proposed new site of Rutland. To that effect, the State is submitting an application to ORR for a discretionary targeted assistance grant for the expansion of the program and count on this funding to supplement the decreasing social services allocations of the past few years.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment and for the Department of State's continued support for the refugee program.

Sincerely,

Denise Lamoureux  
Director, Refugee Office/State Refugee Coordinator

Copy: AHS

8/8/2016

Gmail - FW: For a rapidly deteriorating city, welcoming these refugees proved to be a great move.



Christopher Louras <mayorlouras@gmail.com>

---

**FW: For a rapidly deteriorating city, welcoming these refugees proved to be a great move.**

---

Stacie Blake <sblake@uscridc.org>

Mon, Jul 11, 2016 at 11:58 AM

To: Amila Merdzanovic <amerdzanovic@uscrtv.org>, Christopher Louras <mayorlouras@gmail.com>

-----Original Message-----

From: Anna Crosslin [mailto:crosslina@iistl.org]

Sent: Saturday, July 9, 2016 10:14 PM

To: Stacie Blake <sblake@uscridc.org>; Lavinia Limon <llimon@uscridc.org>

Subject: For a rapidly deteriorating city, welcoming these refugees proved to be a great move.

Another story.

[http://www.upworthy.com/for-a-rapidly-deteriorating-city-welcoming-these-refugees-proved-to-be-a-great-move?c=sr1&sr\\_source=lift\\_facebook](http://www.upworthy.com/for-a-rapidly-deteriorating-city-welcoming-these-refugees-proved-to-be-a-great-move?c=sr1&sr_source=lift_facebook)

Sent from my iPhone



Christopher Louras &lt;mayorlouras@gmail.com&gt;

---

**Re: Refugee Resettlement Office**

---

Amila Merdzanovic &lt;amerdzanovic@uscrvt.org&gt;

Sun, Jul 10, 2016 at 9:33 PM

To: Tom Huebner &lt;thuebner@rrmc.org&gt;, Liam Muller &lt;rector@trinitychurchrutland.org&gt;

Cc: "Costello, Steve (Steve.Costello@greenmountainpower.com)" &lt;Steve.Costello@greenmountainpower.com&gt;, Chris Louras &lt;mayorlouras@gmail.com&gt;

Hello Mr. Huebner,

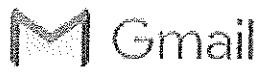
Thank you for hosting our meeting the other day and for the introduction.

Mr. Muller, would you have time this week to talk over the phone? Tuesday and Wednesday after 330 would work well for me. Also, Friday after 1:30 is pretty flexible. Please let me know what works for you.

Thank you,  
Amila

**From:** Tom Huebner [mailto:thuebner@rrmc.org]**Sent:** Wednesday, June 29, 2016 1:30 PM**To:** Amila Merdzanovic <amerdzanovic@uscrvt.org>; Liam Muller <rector@trinitychurchrutland.org>**Cc:** Costello, Steve (Steve.Costello@greenmountainpower.com) <Steve.Costello@greenmountainpower.com>; Chris Louras <mayorlouras@gmail.com>**Subject:** Re: Refugee Resettlement Office

[Quoted text hidden]



Christopher Louras <mayorlouras@gmail.com>

---

## Rutland some day!

---

Amila Merdzanovic <amerdzanovic@uscrvt.org>

Sun, Jul 10, 2016 at 10:23 PM

To: Chris Louras <mayorlouras@gmail.com>, "Costello, Steve (Steve.Costello@greenmountainpower.com)" <Steve.Costello@greenmountainpower.com>

<http://www.ohio.com/news/local/new-study-lauds-benefits-of-immigration-in-akron-1.696102>



Christopher Louras &lt;mayorlouras@gmail.com&gt;

---

**Write up including Rutland Mayor quote and video link**

---

Stacie Blake &lt;sblake@uscidc.org&gt;

Wed, Jun 29, 2016 at 1:24 PM

To: Christopher Louras &lt;mayorlouras@gmail.com&gt;, Amila Merdzanovic &lt;amerdzanovic@uscrvt.org&gt;

FYI-

I did share the link with Gordon at Rutland Herald.

USCRI attended an event at the United States Institute of Peace where Ambassador Samantha Power spoke about the global refugee crisis. She had many important, powerful statistics to share as well as arguments striking down the two main arguments against resettling refugees, security and employment/ financial support. She noted that 1 in 3 refugees is in a protracted situation, and the median length of these protracted situation is 26 years, as opposed to 9 years in 1993. In Lebanon, 1 in 5 people is a refugee (this would be the U.S. equivalent of taking in 64 million refugees), and there are more Syrian refugee children attending school than there are Lebanese children, and this number of Syrian refugee children is only 50% of the refugee children in Lebanon. She emphasized that the media and rhetoric emphasizes what could/ would happen if we do admit more refugees, but not many people discuss what will happen if we do not allow them in. Finally, she discussed the June 30<sup>th</sup> White House private sector call to action and the September Obama refugee summit. We are pleased to note that right at the end of her speech she specifically cited Rutland, Vermont accepting 100 Syrian refugees and quoted the Mayor **"as much as I want to say it's for compassionate reasons, I realize that there is not a vibrant growing successful community in the country right now that is not embracing new Americans"**. Please feel free to watch the entire address <http://www.usip.org/events/the-global-refugee-crisis-overcoming-fears-and-spurring-action>

Dawn Cutler  
Advocacy Intern



2231 Crystal Drive, Suite 350  
Arlington, VA 22202  
[refugees.org](http://refugees.org)  
p/ 703-310-1130 x3054  
f/ 703-769-4241

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Christopher Louras &lt;mayorlouras@gmail.com&gt;

---

**Sen. Leahy's statement on World Refugee Day**

---

Amila Merdzanovic &lt;amerdzanovic@uscrvt.org&gt;

Tue, Jun 21, 2016 at 1:26 PM

To: "Derby, Diane (Leahy)" &lt;Diane\_Derby@leahy.senate.gov&gt;

Cc: Stacie Blake &lt;sblake@uscrdc.org&gt;, Christopher Louras &lt;mayorlouras@gmail.com&gt;

Thank you so much!

Amila

Amila Merdzanovic, MALD

Director



462 Hegeman Ave, Suite 101

Colchester, VT 05446

[refugees.org/vermont](http://refugees.org/vermont)

p/ 802-654-1700

f/ 802-655-4020

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**From:** Derby, Diane (Leahy) [mailto:Diane\_Derby@leahy.senate.gov]**Sent:** Tuesday, June 21, 2016 10:36 AM**To:** Amila Merdzanovic <amerdzanovic@uscrvt.org>**Cc:** Stacie Blake <sblake@uscrdc.org>; Christopher Louras <mayorlouras@gmail.com>**Subject:** Sen. Leahy's statement on World Refugee Day

[Quoted text hidden]



Christopher Louras &lt;mayorlouras@gmail.com&gt;

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petition

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Stacie Blake &lt;sblake@uscrdc.org&gt;

Fri, Jun 17, 2016 at 4:09 PM

To: Christopher Louras &lt;mayorlouras@gmail.com&gt;, William Notte &lt;willnotte@gmail.com&gt;, Amila Merdzanovic &lt;amerdzanovic@uscrvt.org&gt;

FYI-I just spoke to Rutland Herald and shared the Texas case below.

This week, a federal judge ruled in favor of refugee resettlement and America's largest evangelical denomination sounded a welcoming tone toward refugees. Earlier this month, advocacy efforts helped derail an anti-refugee proposal in South Carolina.

In Dallas on Thursday, a judge ruled that Texas cannot block the resettling of refugees, who are carefully screened before being approved for resettlement in the U.S.

In St. Louis on Wednesday, the Southern Baptist Convention passed its first refugee-focused resolution in more than 30 years. Among other things, the resolution "affirm[s] that refugees are people loved by God, made in His image, and that Christian love should be extended to them as special objects of God's mercy in a world that has displaced them from their homeland."

**Stacie Blake**

Director of Government and Community Relations



2231 Crystal Drive, Suite 350  
Arlington, VA 22202  
refugees.org  
p/ 703-310-1166  
c/ 727-215-8318



Christopher Louras &lt;mayorlouras@gmail.com&gt;

---

## Handout PDFs

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Christopher Louras <mayorlouras@gmail.com>  
To: Christopher Louras <mayorlouras@gmail.com>

Fri, Jun 17, 2016 at 8:02 AM

[Quoted text hidden]

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### 2 attachments

 **US Resettlement Program Security Screening 5.23.16.pdf**  
2775K

 **USCRI Refugees.pdf**  
3113K



Christopher Louras &lt;mayorlouras@gmail.com&gt;

---

**FW: videos of Syrian refugees**

---

**Amila Merdzanovic** <amerdzanovic@uscrvt.org>  
To: Christopher Louras <mayorlouras@gmail.com>

Wed, Jun 15, 2016 at 6:52 PM

You might have seen these.

A

**Amila Merdzanovic, MALD**

Director



462 Hegeman Ave, Suite 101

Colchester, VT 05446

[refugees.org/vermont](http://refugees.org/vermont)

p/ 802-654-1700

f/ 802-655-4020

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**From:** Stacie Blake

**Sent:** Thursday, June 9, 2016 5:01 PM

**To:** Amila Merdzanovic <amerdzanovic@uscrvt.org>; Laurie Stavrand <LStavrand@uscrvt.org>

**Subject:** videos of Syrian refugees

<http://dcrally4refugees.org/>

nice collection of short videos on Syrian refugees.



Christopher Louras <mayorlouras@gmail.com>

## Refugee employment


Christopher Louras <mayorlouras@gmail.com>

Fri, Jun 3, 2016 at 9:20 AM

To: Christopher Louras <mayorlouras@gmail.com>, Pat M <patm@rutlandcity.org>

<http://www.economics.cornell.edu/sites/default/files/files/events/peri%20paper.pdf>

Sent from my iPad

 peri paper.pdf  
884K



Christopher Louras <mayorlouras@gmail.com>

---

## Refugee economic activity

---

Christopher Louras <mayorlouras@gmail.com>

Fri, Jun 3, 2016 at 9:12 AM

To: Christopher Louras <mayorlouras@gmail.com>, Pat M <patm@rutlandcity.org>

<http://www.hias.org/sites/default/files/clevelandrefugeeeconomic-impact.pdf>

Sent from my iPad



clevelandrefugeeeconomic-impact.pdf

1021K



Christopher Louras <mayorlouras@gmail.com>

---

## Refugee crime study

Christopher Louras <mayorlouras@gmail.com>


Fri, Jun 3, 2016 at 8:41 AM

To: Christopher Louras <mayorlouras@gmail.com>, Pat M <patm@rutlandcity.org>

<http://www.clsrn.econ.ubc.ca/workingpapers/CLSRN%20Working%20Paper%20no.%20135%20-%20Zhang.pdf#page29>

Sent from my iPad

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 CLSRN Working Paper no. 135 - Zhang.pdf  
4433K



Christopher Louras <mayorlouras@gmail.com>

---

## Refugee crime rate

Christopher Louras <mayorlouras@gmail.com>

Fri, Jun 3, 2016 at 6:37 AM

To: Christopher Louras <mayorlouras@gmail.com>, Pat M <patm@rutlandcity.org>

<http://www.clsm.econ.ubc.ca/workingpapers/CLSRN%20Working%20Paper%20no.%20135%20-%20Zhang.pdf>

Sent from my iPad



CLSRN Working Paper no. 135 - Zhang.pdf

4433K



Christopher Louras <mayorlouras@gmail.com>

---

## US Chamber commerce refugee

Christopher Louras <mayorlouras@gmail.com>


Fri, Jun 3, 2016 at 6:05 AM

To: Christopher Louras <mayorlouras@gmail.com>, Pat M. <patm@rutlandcity.org>

[https://www.uschamber.com/sites/default/files/021719\\_open\\_for\\_business\\_final.pdf](https://www.uschamber.com/sites/default/files/021719_open_for_business_final.pdf)

Sent from my iPad

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 021719\_open\_for\_business\_final.pdf  
1286K

8/8/2016

Obtained via VT Public Records Law by Judicial Watch, Inc.



Christopher Louras <mayorlouras@gmail.com>

---

## Us chamber myths facts

---

Christopher Louras <mayorlouras@gmail.com>

Fri, Jun 3, 2016 at 6:06 AM

To: Christopher Louras <mayorlouras@gmail.com>, Pat M <patm@rutlandcity.org>

<https://www.uschamber.com/sites/default/files/legacy/issues/immigration/files/14484immigrationmythfacts.pdf>

Sent from my iPad



**14484immigrationmythfacts.pdf**  
678K



Christopher Louras &lt;mayorlouras@gmail.com&gt;

---

**Testimony re: security vetting****Stacie Blake** <sblake@uscrdc.org>

Wed, May 25, 2016 at 9:25 AM

To: Chris Louras &lt;mayorlouras@gmail.com&gt;, "willnotte@gmail.com" &lt;willnotte@gmail.com&gt;

Cc: Amila Merdzanovic &lt;amerdzanovic@uscrvt.org&gt;

Just sharing these resources.

**Stacie Blake**

Director of Government and Community Relations



2231 Crystal Drive, Suite 350  
Arlington, VA 22202  
refugees.org  
p/ 703-310-1166  
c/ 727-215-8318

---

**3 attachments****richard-statement-house-judiciary-11-19-15.pdf**

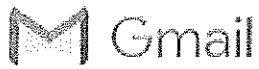
168K

**Syrian Refugees - Testimony & Resources.docx**

27K

**Testimony of Leon Rodriguez (Crisis of Confidence Hearing).pdf**

129K



Christopher Louras <mayorlouras@gmail.com>

---

## Testimony re: security vetting

---

willnotte@gmail.com <willnotte@gmail.com>

Wed, May 25, 2016 at 4:29 PM

To: Stacie Blake <sblake@uscidc.org>

Cc: Amila Merdzanovic <amerdzanovic@uscrvt.org>, Chris Louras <mayorlouras@gmail.com>

Hello all,

Just to confirm we will have law enforcement at the meeting: four police officers. The meeting starts at 5:30 and the officers will be here by 5:15.

William

Sent from my iPhone

[Quoted text hidden]



Christopher Louras <mayorlouras@gmail.com>

---

## James Simpson at New Hampshire NSAS - YouTube

---

Christopher Louras <mayorlouras@gmail.com>

Wed, May 25, 2016 at 7:16 AM

To: Stacie Blake <sblake@uscridc.org>

Cc: Amila Merdzanovic <amerdzanovic@uscrvt.org>

Indeed.

From the article in the Rutland Herald, sounds like he just plain left the rails.

He threw down with the whole UN-sponsored conspiracy theory.

I paid the \$2.99 for the Kindle edition of his book to get educated.

Wow...just wow.

Sent from my iPad

[Quoted text hidden]



Christopher Louras &lt;mayorlouras@gmail.com&gt;

## RE: Rutland Welcomes

Amila Merdzanovic &lt;amerdzanovic@uscrvt.org&gt;

Tue, May 24, 2016 at 6:18 PM

To: Jennie Gartner &lt;JennieLG@aol.com&gt;

Cc: Laurie Stavrand &lt;LStavrand@uscrvt.org&gt;, Christopher Louras &lt;mayorlouras@gmail.com&gt;

Dear Jennie,

Thank you for your note and for getting the education and outreach committee organized. Education and outreach (both ways) will be the key to successful refugee resettlement in Rutland. It is very encouraging to see all the support and enthusiasm coming from so many different groups. Mayor Louras and I had a brief conversation yesterday and he shared that another volunteer was hoping to meet with me tomorrow. Perhaps we could all gather somewhere for a quick meet and greet. I have a very brief window of time when I would be available to meet as I have two other meetings, in addition to 5:30 Board of Alderman. The ideal time for me would be 3:30-4:00; could you propose a place, perhaps a coffee shop near City Hall?

In terms of volunteer training and education, we have a process and I would like to connect you with Laurie Stavrand (copied here), Community Partnership Coordinator at VRRP who will be happy to connect with you and share more information. Both her and I will be in DC next week at a conference so be on the lookout for a message from her the week of June 6th. Attached, please find two documents which could answer some questions folks might have in terms of security vetting, we've heard this one the most, and Syrian culture, history, etc. Word of caution, the 'backgrounder' is a snapshot of a 7000 year old civilization comprised of diverse cultural, linguistic, and religious groups so, as you can imagine, there are many nuances which are not reflected here. The best learning will happen once people are here and are ready to share.

Please let me know if you are available to meet tomorrow and please suggest a place.

Thank you and I look forward to meeting you tomorrow.

Amila

Amila Merdzanovic, MALD  
Director

462 Hegeman Ave, Suite 101  
Colchester, VT 05446  
refugees.org/vermont  
p/ 802-654-1700  
f/ 802-655-4020

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-----Original Message-----

From: Jennie Gartner [mailto:JennieLG@aol.com]

Sent: Sunday, May 22, 2016 9:34 PM

To: Amila Merdzanovic &lt;amerdzanovic@uscrvt.org&gt;

Subject: Rutland Welcomes

Hello Ms. Merdzanovic,

My name is Jennie Gartner and I am co-chair of the Education and Outreach Committee of Rutland Welcomes. We are currently working on securing and training volunteers to do outreach in the Rutland community at different public events this summer. The first one at which we will have a presence is the Vermont Farmers' Market on June 25.

Accordingly, we would love to have your insight and advice, as well materials you may have that we could use both to educate ourselves and members of the Rutland community. We have a volunteer designing some informational flyers we hope to provide for people, but were thinking that you may have some things already available in addition?


If you would have time to meet with members of the committee on Wednesday before the public meeting, we would greatly appreciate it. Even a half an hour of your time would be very valuable to us.


I look forward to hearing from you. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,  
Jennie Gartner

---

**2 attachments**

 **US Resettlement Program Security Screening 5.23.16.pdf**  
2775K

 **CAL+Backgrounder+08+-+Syrians+FINAL.PDF**  
1233K



Christopher Louras &lt;mayorlouras@gmail.com&gt;

---

**Contact with other cities-refugee resettlement**

---

Stacie Blake &lt;sblake@uscrdc.org&gt;

Mon, May 23, 2016 at 12:47 PM

To: "willnotte@gmail.com" &lt;willnotte@gmail.com&gt;

Cc: Chris Louras &lt;mayorlouras@gmail.com&gt;, Amila Merdzanovic &lt;amerdzanovic@uscrvt.org&gt;

Alderman Notte

The two cities with the most Syrians resettled to date are Dearborn, MI and St. Louis, MS.

I have spoken with our resettlement colleagues and they have provided the following contact information for you. They have let the Mayors know that you may be reaching out.

Please let me know if I can be of further assistance.

Stacie Blake

**Dearborn:**

Beverly E. Hurley

Executive Assistant to Mayor John O'Reilly

Dearborn Administrative Center

16901 Michigan Avenue, Suite 20

Dearborn, MI 48126-2967

Phone: (313) 943-2300

Fax: (313) 943-3070

Email: babbas@ci.dearborn.mi.us

Ronald Haddad

Chief of Police

City of Dearborn

16099 Michigan Ave, Dearborn, MI 48126

Office: (313) 943-2235

Fax: (313) 943-3057

Email: rhaddad@ci.dearborn.mi.us

**Detroit-neighboring city**

Fayrouz Saad | Director of Immigrant Affairs

City of Detroit - Mayor's Office

2 Woodward Ave | Detroit, MI 48226

8/8/2016

Obtained via VTC Public Records Law by LegalMentor Inc.

W: 313-224-9979

Michael E. Duggan, Mayor

\*\*\*\*\*

St. Louis:

Maggie Crane

Mayor Francis Slay's press secretary

Crane, Maggie [cranem@stlouis-mo.gov](mailto:cranem@stlouis-mo.gov)

*St. Louis Board of Alderman*

Megan Green ([greenm@stlouis-mo.gov](mailto:greenm@stlouis-mo.gov)) District 15

Christine Ingrassia ([ingrassiac@stlouis-mo.gov](mailto:ingrassiac@stlouis-mo.gov)) 6<sup>th</sup> Ward, (314) 622-3287

**Stacie Blake**

Director of Government and Community Relations



2231 Crystal Drive, Suite 350

Arlington, VA 22202

[refugees.org](http://refugees.org)

p/ 703-310-1166

c/ 727-215-8318



Christopher Louras &lt;mayorlouras@gmail.com&gt;

---

**USCIS contact****Stacie Blake** <sblake@uscridc.org>

Mon, May 23, 2016 at 12:13 PM

To: "willnotte@gmail.com" &lt;willnotte@gmail.com&gt;

Cc: Chris Louras &lt;mayorlouras@gmail.com&gt;, Amila Merdzanovic &lt;amerdzanovic@uscivt.org&gt;

This is the recommendation from Senator Leahy's office for a USCIS representative.

Bart Beeson, Community Relations Officer

USCIS -- Vermont Service Center

Barton.A.Beeson@uscis.dhs.gov

vsccommunityengagement@uscis.dhs.gov

Best,

Stacie

**Stacie Blake**

Director of Government and Community Relations



2231 Crystal Drive, Suite 350

Arlington, VA 22202

refugees.org

p/ 703-310-1166

c/ 727-215-8318



Christopher Louras &lt;mayorlouras@gmail.com&gt;

---

**Rutland Meeting Info**

---

**Stacie Blake** <sblake@uscrdc.org>

Mon, May 23, 2016 at 10:45 AM

To: "willnotte@gmail.com" &lt;willnotte@gmail.com&gt;

Cc: Amila Merdzanovic &lt;amerdzanovic@uscrvt.org&gt;, Chris Louras &lt;mayorlouras@gmail.com&gt;

Good morning Alderman Notte,

Thank you for this note. I am looking forward to meeting you and the other members of the Board on Wednesday.

As a follow up to your questions...

I spoke with Senator Leahy's staff this morning and we will work together to provide contact information or advice as to the right person to talk about national security and the vetting process for refugees that falls within that scope. Given the short time frame, this may not happen for Wednesday but I see you are prepared to host other meetings as needed.

I am in contact with three resettlement sites who have already resettled Syrians in other states this morning and hope to have contact information for mayors and/or councilmembers/alderman within the next couple of days.

Attached to this email please find our handout regarding the process for refugee background and security screening. I will bring 100 hard copies with me to the meeting.

See you Wednesday!

Sincerely,

Stacie Blake

---

**From:** William Notte <willnotte@gmail.com>**Date:** May 21, 2016 at 8:36:19 PM EDT**To:** amerdzanovic@uscrvt.org**Cc:** "mayorlouras@rutlandcity.com" <mayorlouras@gmail.com>**Subject:** Rutland Meeting Info and Some Questions

Dear Amila,

The Rutland City Board of Aldermen Committee of the Whole meeting on refugee resettlement in Rutland is scheduled for this coming Wednesday, May 25 at 5:30pm. This meeting will not take place at City Hall. We wanted a space that could accommodate more people so our meeting will be held at the Godnick Senior Center (1 Deer Street, Rutland, VT 05701).

As we previously discussed, city aldermen will be the first to ask questions, but as long as time remains I do plan to allow members of the public to also ask questions.

While I am very grateful for the opportunity to have you and your staff in to answer questions—and for someone taking the time to fly in from Washington DC to talk to us—I also have to be realistic and plan for future meetings. In regards to that necessity I do have a pair of questions for you.

Some members of the Board of Aldermen (and well as of the general public) would vastly prefer if we could question someone directly involved in national security, from either Homeland Security or the F.B.I. about the vetting process. To this end, could you please share contact information with me for someone in one of these organizations I could reach out to that has pertinent information on refugee vetting? I certainly do not expect someone in that position to drop everything and fly up a city of 16,000 residents, but it would go a long way toward defusing some concerns if I could arrange a conversation via live stream.

Additionally, would you be able to supply me with a list of municipalities in the U.S. that have already taken in Syrian refugees? I'd use the information to reach out to some mayors and aldermen/selectmen to arrange some conference calls. This would also go a long way towards easing concerns and fears here.

Thank you for your time and attention in regards to this. While there is a small minority in Rutland who will never welcome these refugees (I assume this is true in all communities), I believe a series of meetings such as detailed above, starting with Wednesday's, will help answer many questions, and ease the concerns of the vast majority of locals who are worried about refugee resettlement in the area.

Best wishes,

William Notte

President, Rutland City Board of Aldermen

willnotte@gmail.com

802-779-6369

Stacie Blake  
Director of Government and Community Relations



2231 Crystal Drive, Suite 350  
Arlington, VA 22202  
refugees.org  
p/ 703-310-1166  
c/ 727-215-8318



**US Resettlement Program Security Screening 5.23.16.pdf**  
2775K



Christopher Louras &lt;mayorlouras@gmail.com&gt;

---

**cultural orientation**

---

Christopher Louras &lt;mayorlouras@gmail.com&gt;

Sat, May 21, 2016 at 8:11 AM

To: Christopher Louras &lt;mayorlouras@gmail.com&gt;, Iourizal &lt;lourizal@comcast.net&gt;

Board Members,

In anticipation of your meeting with USCRI/VRRP staff this week, please find the attached document which outlines the cultural orientation/educational process that will be adhered to by each refugee whom is resettled into the city. This will not only prepare you all for the meeting, but will be of great value as you answer constituent questions about how these new Americans gain an understanding of our societies norms and culture.

<http://coresourceexchange.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Making-Your-Way-Reception-and-Placement-Curriculum.pdf>

Mayor Christopher C. Louras

City of Rutland, VT

(802) 770-5366



Christopher Louras &lt;mayorlouras@gmail.com&gt;

---

**Cultural orientation**

---

Amila Merdzanovic <amerdzanovic@uscrvt.org>  
To: Christopher Louras <mayorlouras@gmail.com>

Fri, May 20, 2016 at 5:55 PM

Hello Chris,

Please find attached the curriculum, developed by the PRM, of all the topics covered in cultural orientation delivered in the first 90 days of arrival. Please let me know if I can answer any questions.

Have a great weekend.

Amila

<http://coresourceexchange.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Making-Your-Way-Reception-and-Placement-Curriculum.pdf>

**Amila Merdzanovic, MALD**

Director



462 Hegeman Ave, Suite 101

Colchester, VT 05446

[refugees.org/vermont](http://refugees.org/vermont)

p/ 802-654-1700

f/ 802-655-4020

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Christopher Louras &lt;mayorlouras@gmail.com&gt;

## VRRP Meeting Follow up and Next Steps

Amila Merdzanovic &lt;amerdzanovic@uscrvt.org&gt;

Fri, May 20, 2016 at 3:36 PM

To: Ludy Biddle <lbiddle@nwwvt.org>, Deborah Hall <deborah@hpcvt.org>, Elizabeth Kulas <ekulas@housingrutland.org>, Christopher Louras <mayorlouras@gmail.com>, Kevin Loso <kloso@rhavt.org>, "Sancic, Adam" <Adam.Sancic@vermont.gov>

Cc: "Denise.Lamoureux@vermont.gov" <Denise.Lamoureux@vermont.gov>, Laurie Stavrand <LStavrand@uscrvt.org>, Matt Thompson <MThompson@uscrvt.org>, Mukiza Noel <MNoel@uscrvt.org>, Kristen Rengo <KRengo@uscrvt.org>

Dear community partners,

Thank you so much for taking the time to meet with us last Thursday to discuss housing capacity/needs/challenges and strengths as we plan for the expansion of refugee resettlement to Rutland (pending Department of State approval). My team and I appreciated your insights about housing situation in Rutland. As you can imagine, we are learning a whole lot and are starting to form a better idea about the capacity in Rutland, not only in terms of housing but also, employment, health, social services, and community support.

This week, USCRI submitted our FY17 Reception and Placement plan to the Department of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM) and there will be an opportunity for the State to provide their recommendations by the end of June. Dept of State should be getting back to us in July with the final decision. I am pleased to let you know that we received many letters of support including from Governor Shumlin, our congressional delegation, and the State Refugee Coordinator. My staff and I are preparing for the next phase of our work which is connecting with various service providers and community groups in Rutland.

Attached, please find the minutes from our meeting and the PPT presentation giving an overview of refugee resettlement both globally and locally. Also attached is a resource guide giving a brief overview of Syrian history, culture, conditions in countries of first asylum and implications for resettlement.

Please, do not hesitate to reach out to me if you have any questions or comments. I will be in touch with you as soon as we get a word from the feds.

Sincere regards,

Amila

Amila Merdzanovic, MALD

Director



8/8/2016

Obtained via VT Public Records Law by Judicial Watch, Inc.  
Email - VRRP Meeting Follow up and Next Steps

462 Hegeman Ave, Suite 101

Colchester, VT 05446


refugees.org/vermont


p/ 802-654-1700


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### 3 attachments

 **VRRP Consultation Meeting\_Housing.pdf**  
165K

 **VRRP Refugee Resettlement Overview.pdf**  
2116K

 **CAL+Backgrounder+08+-+Syrians+FINAL.PDF**  
1233K



Christopher Louras <mayorlouras@gmail.com>

## LEAHY JOINS SENATE COLLEAGUES CALLING ON PRESIDENT TO FULFILL COMMITMENT TO RESETTLE 10,000 SYRIAN REFUGEES IN AMERICA

Amila Merdzanovic <amerdzanovic@uscrvt.org>

Thu, May 19, 2016 at 2:41 PM

To: "Derby, Diane (Leahy)" <Diane\_Derby@leahy.senate.gov>, "Denise.Lamoureux@vermont.gov"

<Denise.Lamoureux@vermont.gov>, Christopher Louras <mayorlouras@gmail.com>

Thank you so much for the continued support!

Best regards,

Amila

Amila Merdzanovic, MALD

Director



462 Hegeman Ave, Suite 101

Colchester, VT 05446

refugees.org/vermont

p/ 802-654-1700

f/ 802-655-4020

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From: Derby, Diane (Leahy) [mailto:Diane\_Derby@leahy.senate.gov]

Sent: Thursday, May 19, 2016 2:17 PM

To: Amila Merdzanovic <amerdzanovic@uscrvt.org>; Denise.Lamoureux@vermont.gov; Christopher Louras <mayorlouras@gmail.com>

Subject: LEAHY JOINS SENATE COLLEAGUES CALLING ON PRESIDENT TO FULFILL COMMITMENT TO RESETTLE 10,000 SYRIAN REFUGEES IN AMERICA

[Quoted text hidden]



Christopher Louras <mayorlouras@gmail.com>

## LEAHY JOINS SENATE COLLEAGUES CALLING ON PRESIDENT TO FULFILL COMMITMENT TO RESETTLE 10,000 SYRIAN REFUGEES IN AMERICA

Derby, Diane (Leahy) <Diane\_Derby@leahy.senate.gov>

Thu, May 19, 2016 at 2:17 PM

To: Amila Merdzanovic <amerdzanovic@uscrvt.org>, "Denise.Lamoureux@vermont.gov"

<Denise.Lamoureux@vermont.gov>, Christopher Louras <mayorlouras@gmail.com>

Hi:

Just wanted to share this letter with you. Please feel free to share as you see fit. I'm in DC this week but feel free to call me on cell with any questions – 802-223-4275.

Thanks,

Diane

Full text of the senators' letter:

May 18, 2016

President Barack Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We write to express our strong support for resettling Syrian refugees in the United States and to urge your Administration to make every effort to meet your commitment to accept at least 10,000 Syrian refugees in fiscal year 2016.

The international community's response to the Syrian refugee crisis has been uneven. Some countries have welcomed these refugees. For example, Canada admitted **26,859 Syrian refugees between November 4, 2015 and May 1, 2016**. Other nations, including ours, can and should do much more. We urge your Administration to devote the necessary resources to expeditiously and safely resettle refugees from Syria.

The Syrian conflict has now entered its sixth year. The war has led to hundreds of thousands of fatalities, more than a million injured, and more than half of Syria's entire population being displaced. In some areas children have starved to death. A United Nations report last year noted that because there are fewer safe places in Syria with each passing day, even everyday decisions like whether to go out to buy bread can take on life-or-death significance.

The recent bombing of a hospital in Aleppo, which killed many, including children and one of the city's last pediatricians, is tragically just one of countless examples of horror in this brutal conflict which has led to the worst refugee crisis since World War II. More than 4.8 million Syrians are now registered as refugees, including more than 2.5 million children.

Last September you announced a plan to resettle at least 10,000 Syrian refugees in the United States during fiscal year 2016. We appreciate your recent affirmation that "we can hit those marks before the end of the year."

Nonetheless, we are deeply concerned about the slow pace of admissions for Syrian refugees in the first seven months of the fiscal year. During this timeframe only 1,736 Syrian refugees were admitted to the United States. By contrast, more than 6,000 refugees have been admitted from Burma, more than 5,000 refugees have been admitted from both the Democratic Republic of Congo and Somalia, and more than 4,000 refugees have been admitted from Iraq. To fulfill the commitment you announced last year, at least 8,264 Syrian refugees would need to be admitted during the remaining five months of the fiscal year. We would appreciate an update on specific measures your Administration plans to take to fulfill its stated commitment to resettle the additional Syrian refugees by the end of September 2016.

Refugees are the most carefully vetted of all travelers to the United States, and the United States' screening and interview process takes place before a refugee even arrives in America. All applicants are finger printed and subjected to repeated biometric checks, several layers of biographical and background screening, medical checks, and lengthy in-person interviews by specially-trained officers at the Department of Homeland Security who scrutinize the applicant's explanation of individual circumstances to assess whether the applicant meets statutory requirements to qualify as a refugee and to establish that he or she does not present security concerns to the United States. No refugees are admitted until after successful completion of this stringent security screening regime. Before final acceptance and permission to travel is granted, the applicant must clear security checks by the FBI, the National Counterterrorism Center, the Department of Defense, and the Department of State.

In addition to undergoing the standard rigorous checks completed for all refugees, an "enhanced review" program has been created specifically for the Syrian refugee population. All applications receive a specialized review prior to the interview and are repeatedly checked against law enforcement and intelligence community holdings that are regularly updated and enhanced to ensure they include the most updated and accurate information possible. We fully support your administration's efforts to continue to strengthen security checks for refugees with the latest technology and information.

In December 2015, the Senate received a letter from 20 Republican and Democratic national-security leaders, including former CIA Director Michael Hayden, former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, and former CIA Director David Petraeus. They argue that accepting Syrian refugees is in our national interest:

Refugees are victims, not perpetrators, of terrorism. Categorically refusing to take them only feeds the narrative of ISIS that there is a war between Islam and the West, that Muslims are not welcome in the United States and Europe, and that the ISIS caliphate is their true home. We must make clear that the United States rejects this worldview by continuing to offer refuge to the world's most vulnerable people, regardless of their religion or nationality.

The President of HIAS, the global refugee protection agency of the American Jewish community, noted in congressional testimony last November that while the Syrian refugee crisis is the largest refugee crisis of his lifetime, the United States is resettling far fewer refugees than in 1980, when we resettled over 200,000 Indochinese refugees, or in 1993 and 1994, when our nation resettled well over 110,000 refugees each year. He also provided a reminder of how the United States has successfully overcome the challenge of accepting refugees from nations with which we are in conflict. For example, he observed, between the fall of Saigon and 1997, we rescued 883,317 refugees who fled the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, a country with which we had been in a state of undeclared war that claimed more than 58,000 American lives.

In successfully resettling refugees from conflict zones around the world for decades the United States has not been dissuaded by fear and we should not be now. We strongly support the Administration's commitment to resettle Syrian refugees and ask you to update us on how your commitment will be met by the end of the fiscal year.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

RICHARD J. DURBIN

United State Senator

AMY KLOBUCHAR

United State Senator

DIANNE FEINSTEIN

United State Senator

BENJAMIN CARDIN

United State Senator

MAZIE HIRONO

United State Senator

JEANNE SHAHEEN

United State Senator

AL FRANKEN

United State Senator

TIM KAINE

United State Senator

RON WYDEN

United State Senator

CHRIS COONS

United State Senator

SHERROD BROWN

United State Senator

PATRICK LEAHY

United State Senator

JACK REED

United State Senator

EDWARD MARKEY

United State Senator

ELIZABETH WARREN

United State Senator

SHELDON WHITEHOUSE

United State Senator

KIRSTEN GILLIBRAND

United State Senator

CORY BOOKER

United State Senator

PATTY MURRAY

United State Senator

MARIA CANTWELL

United State Senator

BARBARA BOXER

United State Senator

BERNIE SANDERS

United State Senator

CHRISTOPHER S. MURPHY

United State Senator

ROBERT MENENDEZ

United State Senator

JEFF MERKLEY

United State Senator

BRIAN SCHATZ

United States Senator

BARBARA MIKULSKI

United States Senator

cc: *Secretary of State John Kerry*


*Secretary of Homeland Security Jeh Johnson*

-30-

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 **Syrian refugee resettlement letter 051816 final.pdf**  
2496K



Christopher Louras &lt;mayorlouras@gmail.com&gt;

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## VRRP Meeting Follow up and Next Steps

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Deborah Hall &lt;deborah@hpcvt.org&gt;

Fri, May 20, 2016 at 3:57 PM

To: Amila Merdzanovic <amerdzanovic@uscrvt.org>, Ludy Biddle <lbiddle@nwwvt.org>, Elizabeth Kulas <ekulas@housingrutland.org>, Christopher Louras <mayorlouras@gmail.com>, Kevin Loso <kloso@rhvt.org>, "Sancic, Adam" <Adam.Sancic@vermont.gov>  
Cc: "Denise.Lamoureux@vermont.gov" <Denise.Lamoureux@vermont.gov>, Laurie Stavrand <LStavrand@uscrvt.org>, Matt Thompson <MThompson@uscrvt.org>, Mukiza Noel <MNoel@uscrvt.org>, Kristen Rengo <KRengo@uscrvt.org>

Thank you Amila,

It was a pleasure meeting you all last Thursday and I look forward to working with your team. If there is anything that you need from me in the meantime please don't hesitate to contact me. My agency works with most local landlords and housing agencies.

Before we place a household the housing must pass inspection either through the VT State Housing Authority (depending on the subsidy) or VT OEO Housing Habitability Standards conducted by my housing specialists. I'm sure you have what you need but we are willing to share.

Be well.

Deborah G. Hall

Executive Director

802-775-9286 Ext. 202

802-775-7436 (fax)

[www.hpcvt.org](http://www.hpcvt.org)

[www.facebook.com/homelesspreventioncenter](https://www.facebook.com/homelesspreventioncenter)



Homeless Prevention Center

56 Howe St – Patch Place, Building A, Box 7

Rutland, VT 05701

*"Preventing homelessness one person and one family at a time"*

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Christopher Louras &lt;mayorlouras@gmail.com&gt;

---

## VRRP Meeting Follow up and Next Steps

---

Amila Merdzanovic &lt;amerdzanovic@uscrvt.org&gt;

Fri, May 20, 2016 at 3:36 PM

To: Ludy Biddle <lbiddle@nwwvt.org>, Deborah Hall <deborah@hpcvt.org>, Elizabeth Kulas <ekulas@housingrutland.org>, Christopher Louras <mayorlouras@gmail.com>, Kevin Loso <kloso@rhvt.org>, "Sancic, Adam" <Adam.Sancic@vermont.gov>

Cc: "Denise.Lamoureux@vermont.gov" <Denise.Lamoureux@vermont.gov>, Laurie Stavrand <LStavrand@uscrvt.org>, Matt Thompson <MThompson@uscrvt.org>, Mukiza Noel <MNoel@uscrvt.org>, Kristen Rengo <KRengo@uscrvt.org>

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Attached, please find the minutes from our meeting and the PPT presentation giving an overview of refugee resettlement both globally and locally. Also attached is a resource guide giving a brief overview of Syrian history, culture, conditions in countries of first asylum and implications for resettlement.

Please, do not hesitate to reach out to me if you have any questions or comments. I will be in touch with you as soon as we get a word from the feds.

Sincere regards,

Amila

Amila Merdzanovic, MALD

Director



8/8/2016

Obtained via VT Public Records Law by Judicial Watch, Inc.  
Gmail - VRRP Meeting Follow up and Next Steps

462 Hegeman Ave, Suite 101

Colchester, VT 05446

refugees.org/vermont


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3 attachments

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2116K

 CAL+Backgrounder+08+-+Syrians+FINAL.PDF  
1233K



Christopher Louras &lt;mayorlouras@gmail.com&gt;

## R&P Annual Consultation Meeting Minutes

Amila Merdzanovic &lt;amerdzanovic@uscrvt.org&gt;

Wed, May 18, 2016 at 2:44 PM

To: Sandrine Kibuey <skibuey@cvoeo.org>, "Sancic, Adam" <Adam.Sancic@vermont.gov>, Lisa Falcone <lisaf@unitedwaycc.org>, ashley packer <ashley67822@yahoo.com>, "Joshua Demers (jdemers@vtadultlearning.org)" <jdemers@vtadultlearning.org>, "martha.friedman@vermont.gov" <martha.friedman@vermont.gov>, "Johnson, Christine M." <Christine.M.Johnson@vermont.gov>, "Leisa Pollander (LPollander@saraholbrookcc.org)" <LPollander@saraholbrookcc.org>, Beth Truzansky <btruzansky@buildingbrightfutures.org>, "Ray Coffey (rscoffey@winooski.vt.org)" <rscoffey@winooski.vt.org>, "Kelley Goulette (Kelley\_Goulette@sanders.senate.gov)" <Kelley\_Goulette@sanders.senate.gov>, "Shannon Furnari (shannon.furnari@mail.house.gov)" <shannon.furnari@mail.house.gov>, Christopher Louras <mayorlouras@gmail.com>, Anne Lezak <alezak@mercyconnections.org>, Miriam Ehtesham-Cating <mcating@bsdvt.org>, "marga.bozik@champlainhousingtrust.org" <marga.bozik@champlainhousingtrust.org>, "Thato Ratsebe (tratsebe@aalv-vt.org)" <tratsebe@aalv-vt.org>, "Jane Helmstetter (jane.helmstetter@state.vt.us)" <jane.helmstetter@state.vt.us>, "erin.carmichael@vermont.gov" <erin.carmichael@vermont.gov>, Susan Comerford <susan.comerford@uvm.edu> Cc: "Lamoureux, Denise (Denise.Lamoureux@vermont.gov)" <Denise.Lamoureux@vermont.gov>, "Yacouba Jacob Bogre (jbogre@aalv-vt.org)" <jbogre@aalv-vt.org>, "Hal Colston (hal@partnershipvt.org)" <hal@partnershipvt.org>, Stacie Blake <sblake@uscrdc.org>, Serban Popescu <spopescu@uscrdc.org>, USCRI VT Staff <USCRIVTStaff@uscrvt.org>

Dear community partners,

Thank you for your participation in the annual consultation meeting in Chittenden County that took place on May 3<sup>rd</sup>. Please know, I appreciated your input and your contributions to great discussions we had. In total, more than eighty community partners attended the meetings. I will present the findings of all six meetings at the **RISPNet meeting on June 9<sup>th</sup>, 9:30-11:30** at the Fletcher Free Library.

This week, USCRI will submit our FY17 Reception and Placement plan to the Department of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM).

Attached, please find the minutes and the PPT I presented at the meeting.

Please, do not hesitate to reach out to me if you have any questions or comments.

Sincere regards,

Amila

Amila Merdzanovic, MALD

Director

8/8/2016



462 Hegeman Ave, Suite 101

Colchester, VT 05446

refugees.org/vermont

p/ 802-654-1700

f/ 802-655-4020

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**2 attachments**



**Refugee Resettlement Overview\_2016.pdf**  
1799K



**VRRP Annual Consultation Meeting Minutes.pdf**  
405K

## **USCRI/Vermont Refugee Resettlement Program**

### **Annual Consultations with Stakeholders**

**May 3, 2016**

**St. Michael's College, Tarrant Center, Hall of Fame Conference Room  
Colchester, Vermont**

#### **Attendees:**

1. Amila Merdzanovic, Director of USCRI/VRRP
2. Hal Cohen, Vermont Agency of Human Services
3. Denise Lamoureux, State Refugee Coordinator
4. Suzy Comerford, PhD, UVM
5. Stacie Blake, USCRI Director of Government Relations
6. Lisa Falcone, United Way Northwest VT
7. Yacouba J. Bogre, Executive Director of AALV
8. Sita Luitel, Reach Up Case Manager
9. Kristen Rengo, Coordination of Interpreting and Translating USCRI/VRRP
10. Martha Friedman, VT Department of Health
11. Shannon Furnari, Rep. Welch's Office, Case Manager
12. Kelley Goulette, Senator Bernie Sanders, Constituent Services Coordinator
13. Matt Thompson, Coordinator of Programs USCRI/VRRP
14. Anne Lizak, Mercy Connections
15. Laurie Stavrand, Community Partnership Coordinator USCRI/VRRP
16. Ashraf Alamatouri, English Language Coordinator USCRI/VRRP
17. Sandrine Kibuey (CVOEO)
18. Adnan Sancic, AHS
19. Ashley Oakley, note-taker
20. Josh Demers, VAL
21. Christine Johnson, AHS
22. Leisa Pollander, Sara Holbrook
23. Beth Truzansky, Building Bright Futures
24. Ray Coffey, City of Winooski
25. Christopher Louras, Mayor of City of Rutland
26. Miriam Ehtesham-Cating, BSD
27. Margaret Bozik, CHT
28. Thato Ratsebe, AALV
29. Jane Helmstetter, AHS
30. Erin Carmichael, AHS-DVHA

#### **Welcome - Amila Merdzanovic, Director of USCRI/VRRP**

Overview of the Annual Consultation: This meeting (the Annual Consultation) is the first in a series of six meetings this week. Today's meeting is with heads of agencies and programs and the other sessions are topical.

- PRM requires quarterly meetings with community partners which, for us are RISPNet meetings that take place every six weeks, and once a year annual

consultations are conducted in preparation for the new FY Reception and Placement proposal to the US Department of State, Bureau of Populations Refugees and Migration (PRM).

- This meeting is an opportunity to speak about perspectives in services, challenges, gaps, and ways to move forward.
- The application for the new FY17 is due May 20th. VRRP will forward application to USCRI this Friday, May 6th and USCRI will forward all affiliate applications to PRM. The state will also have an opportunity to weigh in.

These meetings give us an opportunity to talk about the year in review: successes, challenges and solutions together as we begin the new fiscal year.

### Introduction - Hal Cohen

Good morning everyone. Thank you for the great work and all the stakeholders here in the work that you do in resettling refugees. It was a very proud moment, I lose track in this job, but about a month ago I was at a meeting with governor Peter Shumlin. That day it had been announced that a number of governments were going to close their borders, close their States to refugees. They weren't going to allow Syrian refugees into their State. But, our governor said we are going to do the right thing, the moral thing, and accept refugees with open arms. In Vermont we are going to open up our borders. For me, it was a very moving and proud moment. When we look at America we are all the foremothers and forefathers of immigrants. Both of my grandparents were refugees from Eastern Europe. If America hadn't opened its arms to my family, perhaps I wouldn't be here today. Resettling refugees, opening up our arms and our hearts to people is a very important thing. The state of Vermont is committed to that, we have many programs that support that – the Refugee office lead by Denise who is totally committed to this work and does a fantastic job. Our resettlement work also cuts across many departments, we know every refugee that comes to Vermont through the VT department of health will get a medical exam, will receive preventative care, a home and in our other programs like department of children and families, immigrants right off the back will be involved in reach up program, 3 squares, eligible women who are pregnant or with children can join WIC program, so all refugees who come to this state get the services that all Vermonters get and it's quite a number of important services to give refugees a really good start. When a family struggles we are there – we offer developmental services, mental health services, all of these programs are there to assist refugees. Our goal is to resettle people quickly and to get them to the place where they are self-sufficient. We know the refugees who come to our state are extremely hard working, they come and see this as a tremendous opportunity, they don't want to be on public assistance they want to be contributing members of the State. Part of our work is to provide feedback, we serve as a voice in the community – so getting input from stakeholders is very important, and this is really important work. Vermont gains from diversity – new ideas, delicious food (laughs) a real commitment to

wanting to make our county and our State a great place. So again thank you all for your work.

Amila: We are very proud of our relationship with community partners and stakeholders in this meeting and in Vermont and the future of refugee resettlement in our State.

### **Introduction – Denise Lamoureux**

Welcome everyone. I am going to be brief - we are here to listen. I want to listen to you and hear how to address challenges together. This morning I just thought about how lucky we are in Chittenden County. Since Gov. Shumlin mentioned that the government will be accepting Syrians to VT, yesterday afternoon I got an email from people in the NEK, people from all around the State, people want to be involved in this. In Chittenden County we have been doing this for a long time – if we look at Burlington and Winooski you see we increase our quality of life by having a more diverse population, we make our community more able to deal with a diverse world that's interconnected. But, it's teamwork and it takes a lot of hard work – it takes effort. It didn't happen overnight, it's a long-term project, there's the intense and urgent resettlement that VRRP/USCRI does so well – it's a miracle. They do it; they always find apartments despite 1%. They have great ESL programs that does wonders with the little donations we have. They have this great volunteer program, and recognize that almost all of them at VRRP are former refugees. We have such a great relationship and cooperation.

I'm so grateful to have an ethnic based organization, I remember when we didn't have AALV and I can't think of continuing this project without them. Then of course we have our partners and stakeholders that meet at RISPNet to discuss what they are doing for the population - it's amazing. Every time I leave this meeting it reminds me why I love my job so much. I have hundreds of people around me that support me. This is integration; this is a long-term process, not just a short-term process. We know it takes a long time.

I just want to mention one success in ending that you are a part of as community stakeholders. I see more and more New American faces in your organizations and that is a big success that will help you have great outcomes. And frankly, it's a great example for us in the State of Vermont to follow - integrating and having people from those communities who will serve as leaders in the future. Thank you.

### **Facilitator**

Thank you, I want to say we are all rooted in deep values. I also wanted to share a story with you, I'm teaching a number of courses at the social work department with refugees. Today I was reading some service learning journals, one student was working with a young woman and she doesn't need to look over her shoulder in fear anymore and she can build a new life. Sometimes when we are embedded in

struggles we forget what a gift it is to have a home where you don't have to look over your shoulders.

#### Ground Rules:

We are here as colleagues to help inform each other  
So if anyone speaks to long I might give you a high sign to move on  
We want to build our understanding and to use all the wits we have  
I'd like to start with introductions and I'm going to go to my right.

#### VRRP Year in Review – Amila

This year I want to start differently, between 250,00-300,000 Syrians have been killed since 2001. Half of Syrians population pre-war of 20,000,000 have been displaced. 4 million are in the neighboring countries, and hundreds of thousands have made it to Europe. Last year this time the number was set at 70,000. Throughout the summer and fall we all witnessed images like that, and images worse. So our federal government decided to raise the overall projection to 80,000 to accommodate, and so we raised our numbers to 350.

As Denise was referencing earlier, what we experienced has been an outpour of consistent support, communities around Vermont wanting to support, wanting to engage refugees being resettled in Vermont. Laurie and I travelled 2,000 miles in the past months. One of the most exciting developments is that in talking to different communities, 5 different communities offered to resettle refugees. We go by very strict criteria the federal government makes us look at housing availability (safe and sanitary), availability of employment, transportation other support services, school health, social services, and obviously community support. The first time we met with Rutland's Mayor Chris Louras was in December last year. We had a 2-hour meeting asking how can this work? So between Dec. and now we decided that Rutland was right and ready for refugee resettlement. So the next step is that USCRI is going to hold meetings with stakeholders in Rutland next week and submit an application to PRM to resettle refugees in Chittenden County and to expand to Rutland. The decision is with PRM, we have no reason to believe they will not support our application, but we will hear back by June.

2015, we came closest to the ceiling set for that year, in VT we were behind, The U.S number was set at 85,000 and VT 350; for 2017 the overall projection there is a push to admit 100,000 refugees in the U.S and in VT we are looking to propose 350 in CC and 100 in Rutland so a total of 450 individuals in 2017.

VRRP provides wrap around services: volunteer support, interpretation and translation, employment services, language services, case management. The most intense core services are provided in the first 90 days, we find housing, children are registered in school everyone gets a health assessment and so forth.

The employment services are provided up to one year in the U.S and then the AALV provides services up to 5 years. ELL classes are available up to 5 years in the U.S. Wilson Fish, federally funded provides traditional cash assistance up to 8 months in the U.S. and intensive case management up to 1 year in the U.S. Then there is matching grant which is accelerated employment program, singles or families with children then cash assistance can go up to 5 months.

**TANF/Reach Up**

- Agency of human services, department for children and families
- Families with children, 60 month cumulative maximum (might be able to reapply)

**Refugee family strengthening**

- Health and human services
- Relationship skills and case management

**Community engagement program**

- Various funding streams

**FY15 Arrival Groups (312) TOTAL NUMBER 325**

We will be very busy with arrivals for FY16. Groups through April  
Age groups breakdown, minors in last three years consistently on average we resettle 100 minors, 200 workers consistently for years, and about 100 total elderly since 2008.

**Question:**

Why is 65+ considered elderly and not 60? There are different program definitions for what age is considered elderly. For instance, ReachUp when they reach 60 they would be exempt.

Then resettlement by town through this FY through end of April. 41 apartments in total were rented. Last year we rented 42 apartments, but we resettled 170 people. It reflects that families join (reunification) and share apartments. Cost of housing is expensive, it goes without saying. Winooski is more expensive than Burlington on this chart.

**Question:**

We are seeing a big stratification of apartments being built in Winooski and in a small city those numbers make a big difference. So we say as development continues how can we make housing affordable?

**Employment:**

88% of all employable adults were considered self-sufficient at 8 months. Self sufficiency is defined differently by different programs, income exceeding

expenses, for Wilson Fish there is a formula that the state uses: income exceeds state standards, the average wage keeps going up, the minimum wage was set at 9.60 this year, retention is at 95% so after 90 days 95% are still employed and health benefits offered which is very high.

Question:

Do the health benefits reflect a change in where people are working? It reflects also VT Health Connect.

Our typical case is a family of 5, so if we have one employable (and often there is just one employable in the family) renting a 3 bedroom apartment, making 10\$ an hour and working full time, that is the State formula for ReachUp standards for a family of six to be considered self-sufficient.

**ELL Program:**

ELL Program continues to flourish – I cannot say enough about Ashraf and what he's been able to achieve. We serve 625 individuals through our classes. 8 are volunteers; we have 15 teachers in total. And then we have 36 tutors and teacher's assistants. Tutors work with individuals one on one in their homes.

**In Kind Donations:**

This is the time and the classroom space – when I saw the figure I thought Ashraf was playing with me. 89% of clients pass the assessment. We have a few new English for specific purposes classes that have been added. Our newest is Pathway to Higher Education, which is a partnership with VSAC.

**Community Partnership Program**

We matched 25 families with family friends. We match mentors and mentees. We have different events throughout the year, some of you have come out throughout the year to various events, most recently Destination BTV.

**Community Engagement:**

The list on the right is all the communities that have reached out to us since last fall, 5 asked us to resettle refugees: Waitsfield/Warren, Woodstock, Brattleboro, Bennington and Middlebury – who said they can do it better than Rutland and asked why can't we do it?

As an anecdote, we received over two-dozen calls from Vermonters offering their summer homes in the lakes and valleys.

**Interpretation Services:** (Kristen Rengo)

One of the great things about refugee resettlement is that we have people who speak many different languages; we have many interpreters. The program has been in existence for about a dozen years in VT. Historically, interpreters were either available over the phone or in person, but now we will also have an option to provide audio visual interpretation – similar to Skype. We will be working with the larger USCRI network to fulfill demand because we have so many different language groups. So the goal is if we cannot find an interpreter in VT we can reach out to one of our partner offices to help us to fill that need. The really good thing about this program is that it's a social enterprise; our interpreters are professional and well trained.

This curriculum is recognized by the national council for health care and so ethical conduct and confidentiality will be maintained. MY UL Software, the program for AV is called Blue Jeans, its really easy, one click connectivity, one email you click on the link and then magic will happen. It will work on any device on your iPod, Android device, whatever you want no special license required. It meets HIPA requirements. You can be on a home visit, in your office, wherever and you can get an interpreter on your iPad. It is secure and each session will have it's own unique ID number. Any questions please let me know; I can come to you and provide training.

Amila: I will close with this, the total number of this year to be resettled 85k. By FY17 100k it looks like it will be set at. The new group for us again is Syrians and the projected arrivals are 350 Chittenden County and 100 individuals for Rutland starting in October.

Video.

### **AALV Presentation:**

#### **History:**

- 13 full time employees.
- AALV was formed in 1999 as a small community based organization.
- The organization in 2000 became a non-profit.
- Expanded services in 2008.
- Served 356 unduplicated clients as of last year – they have different needs: employment, health care, immigration services, case management and referrals.

#### **AALV Core Services:**

- Case management
- Work force development,
- Behavioral health education,
- Interpretation and immigration services

**Employment:**

- 180 clients placed in various jobs.
- Referral services to other agencies 207 successful referrals.

**Workforce development program:**

- PCA funded by United Way of CC – calendar year 2015, 45 graduates now fully employed. This year we received a grant from the Dpt. of Labor to provide the same services.
- Home based childcare program we had 10 successfully trained. Budgeting (125) and parenting (48) in partnership with Opportunity Credit Union and Connecting Cultures. Our New Farm program continues to grow strong, funded mainly through private grants and donations right now.

**Preventative Health Education:**

- Reached 85 youth ages between 10-20 with teenage pregnancy and HIV/STI prevention. We also reached 100 individuals with peer outreach education.

**Immigration Services:**

- 172 applications, 165 naturalized.
- Adjustment of status services also offered.
- Citizenship: includes education for individuals with limited English proficiency and immigration legal assistance.

**Interpreter Services:**

- 52 interpreters and 27 different languages including dialects.
- Recruitment and selection of interpreters.

Thank You.

**State Refugee Office – Denise Lamoureux**

Hand out provided.

Just so you see the work that is not provided by VRRP or AALV. I think it's important to see the work our community partners are doing – that you all are doing.

I outlined a few of the things I am doing at the State Refugee Office and that Martha is doing. On the back I have community service providers that provide specialized services, mainly from grants from my office, but also from mental health services, Burlington and Winooski school districts and also special work force development programs – Champlain Valley Department on Aging and all the State services and benefits that are so important as Secretary Cohen has

mentioned. We don't want to forget all of you and your contributions to this project.

### Question Period (Strengths):

Okay, now for the fun part – so a good social worker always starts with strengths, strengths of the refugee program. So we have about 50 minutes to talk about strengths from your own vantage point.

- Well looking around the table, we can see the willingness that's pretty phenomenal.
- What I hear from new Americans in Winooski is the sense of community that they feel and what I hear in conjunction is this sense of small communities in Vermont. So when leaders from small communities go to regional or national meetings they see how great Vermont is because of that.
- I think the fact Vermont has been doing this for a while; we have worked out the kinks. We have those relationships in place. So for Rutland, the work has been done, the map has been put down. It might not be as heavy of a lift.
- The way resettlement is framed too – it's a value. We see it as a strategic advantage, not to say there aren't complexities to it but I think Vermont communities see that this is going to strengthen them.
- The intentional coming together that Denise and Amila have fostered has been incredible to directly connect with other providers. It has really expanded our ability to appreciate what is in the community and to make those connections.
- The ability to just call Howard Center or the Dept. of Health and get answers right away and not have to wait 7 days. The relationships have really been incredible
- I think the agencies we have here in Chittenden County have a more diverse work force, which makes our work easier and better – I can say at King Street center and United Way it's making a big difference.
- I think it broadens everyone's outlook on life, makes us think more about the services we are providing and how we look at individuals. Most people came here from somewhere else, whether its Africa or New Jersey, we are people with different backgrounds and I think that the complexity that is added to our community throughout the years, it has been along haul, we have been exposed to many different people and it has added to the fabric of the state in a wonderful way.
- The focus on valuing diversity has helped schools and school districts value diversity and bring the issue of equity to the forefront of their mission. The strength of a relatively friendly and accessible network of support, a relatively quick learning process to learn who to call if you have a question.
- The positive leadership in both Winooski and Burlington, I cannot imagine doing resettlement without that support so we are lucky.
- Our communication is very strong, so w/e happens in November our commitment is there and will stay the same

- The dedication of individual staff members, we all know the environment of nonprofits with funding, the dedication is amazing to give so much of their time and their talents, serving without looking back, without saying I'm not making 50,000 year. Having that heart. I second that.
- The business community and the value add of increasing our workforce, our shrinking workforce this is the growth in our community and its very important.

#### Question Period (Challenges):

What are some of the challenges that we need to handle together?

- Mayor Louras--From Rutland, what I'm going to talk about is intertwined. What Rutland has seen over the last week has been an overwhelming demonstration of support. There is a group called "Rutland Welcomes" that within 24 hours is just shy of 900 individuals growing from 50. They have scheduled their first meeting next week. The challenge, we need to ensure that the energy that Rutland has and the passion doesn't abate. My guess is the way to address that is to build that volunteer capacity and meet them where they are. When we've got hundreds and hundreds of people that is different than 30 volunteers. How do we effectively and efficiently marshal and take advantage of those resources in the community who want to play a positive role and aren't formal stakeholders?

#### Proposed Solutions:

- o Information is key. Knowledge is key. I believe it depends on how you well you organize them; have them be culturally trained, teach them the cultural traits they will be exposed to. Without information, it's very difficult. Training comes first.
- o For us the hard work starts now, the announcement was made last week. So next week we will go down to Rutland and meet with different groups. So between now and October we will be reaching out to those groups, the citizens of Rutland and the surrounding area - starting the conversation, I couldn't agree more that education is the key, laying the groundwork so to speak.
- o It might be interesting for this group here to mentor people there in similar positions. We have offers, the city manager of Winooski has offered to go down to Rutland and Laurie already has a running list of volunteers.
- o 900 is great, but what we wish we could do better is not only preparing the folks who are coming here but preparing the community that's receiving them.

Question: How do you prepare the broader community for the change?

- o That's learning we are still trying to do in Burlington and Winooski - and there's still work to do in the broader community.

- One of the issues we deal with is cultural competency. This is about understanding the unique cultures people are bringing. So between someone who is Bhutanese to Burmese the different trauma they embody that effects their communication styles together. We tend to group all refugee groups together without recognizing these cultural differences, we ignore the nuances - this can be intimidating and lead to burnout.
- Related to migration, one of the biggest things we see is the mobility and then the issues of continuity of learning and living for children. So we estimate 30-35% mobility. So if you think about a 3<sup>rd</sup> grade class, 5 of those kids move in and out each year of 15 kids. So the challenge for those kids moving districts and for the teachers – this is something to be strategized to make that mobility a little more seamless?
- Question: Why are people moving?
  - Housing is the biggest reason

#### Challenges Continued:

- I see a service gap. We offer a preschool class called Headstart because of the income level of the families most are available for childcare subsidies who work 2-3 jobs but their work schedule does not align with childcare hours. So we have 2-3 families who are looking at this childcare bill in order to stay in the workforce. This is a childcare issue for third shift families' not just refugees, so parents are keeping kids at home because they can't afford childcare so it's a safety issue also.
- We have so many New Americans that can't take our classes because they don't have access to childcare so having on-site childcare like VNA has done is very important so people can take advantage of our programs.
- One of the challenges I am seeing more in a positive light is our inability to have hard conversations that need to continually happen about racism and not to be shy to have these conversations. We know this is happening globally, locally the incident that happened very unfortunate, a woman being pointed at for wearing a hijab. We need to have these conversations at individual levels, but also at service levels and to work as advocates for the people we serve in the larger community.

#### Question: Have there been RISPNET trainings around race and bias in particular?

- No. It has been difficult to find someone who is trained and qualified to do that. It is very important.
- One thing for us as a city, we are trying to do a better job at is engagement: from getting people out to meetings, to having an interpreter on site to being involved in those conversations. It's an area we are really trying to unwind

and do better. I'd love to see us moving towards a means of having non-citizen voting and decision making. For them to not have a voice in that decision making process seems like a huge risk. I know Burlington made an effort but I'd love to see us move in that direction more soon.

Question: Is out migration a challenge for Chittenden County?

- Out migration is not an issue for VT. What we see is much more in-migration.
- Last year we had negative migration – 25 to be exact. But generally it's 25- 30 more than more in than out. Compared to other states our out an in migration is practically nil. Our tracking system is very limited; we don't track it at the state level. We just know when other states claim their names as migrants in their states.

**Challenges Continued:**

- People viewing refugees in education as a uniform group, in language learning too they think all immigrant and refugee youth need a certain kind of educational service when really it's a continuum. Viewing people in this monolithic way is a disadvantage, so to make programs that address that instead of this unified way is a challenge. Naming multiple generations is a strength, but things that happen across generations lose their ability to communicate with their elders so managing and addressing expectations at multiple levels. Engaging parents in the broader community is a sacred mission and vitally important. But, it's hard work to do it in a way that's fully integrated and equitable rather than something separate with interpreters challenges me everyday.

**Stacie Blake, Closing Comments:**

It is such a privilege, to be in this conversation one time a year. You can hear it differently than when you are in the throws of it. So I feel compelled to share observations of this conversation. People keep saying we are lucky, you are in no way lucky, what you have chosen is intentional. None of it is luck. It is on purpose, so I'm applauding people in this room for being welcoming on purpose.

The other thing I'm noticing about this convo on challenges, 3<sup>rd</sup> shift childcare, non-resident voting, childcare in general, I want you to understand how finely tuned those challenges are compared to challenges in other communities. You aren't saying immigrants are taking our jobs, we had to hire a new teacher, you are saying you want to do even better. The level of expectation here is so high, which is why you have net positive migration even though the rents are crazy high. I want to give you that. And that you would even float the idea about having a convo or training on racism is absolutely needed, but that you would float it in

this room is both basic and high level critical thinking about how we do better and a lot of communities can't have that convo because they are busy perceiving the other things they perceive as challenges.

You know I'm going to applaud my colleague Amila and the rest of my colleagues in this room. The last thing I'll add when you saw those employment numbers for example, that info rolls up into all the resettlement groups that USCRI has, and frankly USCRI VT has the best outcomes, and then our numbers roll up at USCRI compared to Lutheran services and so we can see comparatively how other resettlement approaches are doing – we continue to lead, and this office continues to lead. This work together is having these important outcomes so thank you for that.

**Question: How do we measure the success rate of our services?**

We have been doing this for a very very long time. We are providing amazing services, when it comes to really knowing how well we do and the impact that we have on the community it is difficult because of the data to get we do assessments of needs we think we know what is needed we try to address the problems and try to find solutions to them. But, how good are they? How well impacted are they? What is the success rate in the communities? I think we had that discussion last year, but how do we know the success rate? We need to address this, the process is long and hard but we need to know what we are doing here. We say every year we always say we are doing great.

**Transportation:**

I want to look beyond our own community and work with the State to come up with a reliable transportation plan for the State. So that people can live here and work someone else, or visa-versa. But if the community is left to fend for themselves for transportation we are not going to succeed. But if we can look at a reliable bus system, train system etc. how would one survive if they do not have access to reliable transportation system. Need communities to come together to ask State to invest in our transportation system. We have lawmakers; the state should look at the long-term plan.

**Funding: Denise Lamoureux**

This is going to be a very exciting year but also challenging as well, while we are trying to expand to a community I'm expecting funding for refugee services is going to decrease this year. Social services are decreasing by 35k I don't know if we'll get targeted assistance, it's formula based. So what we are going to have to do is think about a plan to distribute or share the funding among more providers – so school impact support, employment is not growing unless we find other sources of funding, another direction I see going is less on less discretionary grants we've been applying over 12 years and getting it. It's going to be formula

based no longer based on discretionary. We always lose with formula base in Vermont because we are so small we always get the minimal amount. So the funding for elders 100k a year with the discretionary grant down to 75k with formula base because we don't have enough people to get more. We need to be able to do more with less, as usual. That is an important factor we need to address.

#### **Homeownership: Amila**

Homeownership particular Somali – there are no interest free loans available in Vermont. There are different models in the country, there are different programs in the city that offer interest free loans to potential home buyers, the more people that come in there is a greater need to look at that and to consider how to make it better. The shared equity program is wonderful, but they aren't always accessible. So a lot of folks who have been here 5-6 years cannot really access those programs. So I know it's costly to get these things translated, but that or to have an interpreter available at these sessions would help.

#### **Cultural Competency:**

We struggle a lot with culturally appropriate programming, language, but it's still really hard. We in our organizations need to lead and I've definitely seen leadership. It's still really hard to talk about cultural competency in organizations.

9 minutes left:

#### **What can we coalesce about priorities for the next year?**

- Finding ways to measure this, a VT definition for economic sustainability. Is there a VT way to define that? I think there's much more to success than the money that is made.
- Race conversation and learning around that as a key for our community.
- To build understanding in the community that people are fully formed individuals when they come, look at them by 350 degrees, not just the English they speak. They are us. They are not other.
- I think there are great examples of collaborations with grants in the community; I think diversifying funding so it's not just federal sources or state sourced. So whether it's through RISPNet or other collaborations to put together funding proposals would be helpful.
- There are a lot of nuances to this work – federal dollars, state and local dollars. Let's connect the dots where we need to be is the key, this isn't just a shot from feds, state or local city we need to work that much harder to coordinate things. I'm working on a piece of work for the Secretaries office and I'm thinking how do we make this broader and walk in the same direction on this I see a lot of opportunity here.

- One of the challenges I'd like to point out, we need to applaud business that hire us as we come into VT. But also look at businesses that take advantage of New Americans- a lot of car dealerships that take advantage of newly arrived people here. I know we hear from this in individual cases, but we need to come together at RISPNet maybe and figure out how to approach businesses and say this is not right. So many people being taken advantage of.
- In kind donation is fantastic, w.in the communities because of the funding decreasing doing more with less, there is some potential resources within we have to look for them. It can be different skillsets that that community arriving here already has. This demands an open mind to add more to the education and knowledge of how the workforce system works here. Reaching within to get that in kind that you don't have by hiring someone that is still within the system here would be a good thing.
  - o Someone said the state should be the leader when working with diversity, talking about it is good acting on it is better. I've been here two years and I'm really hoping to see something when it comes to the leaders workforce diversity happening.
- As I hear that knowledge is power, teaching if we are going to provide learning it must come with a quality we cannot provide learning with less quality. Speaking English is the way to integrate with the society. I think it's everyone's responsibility in this community - it's your friend, it's your coworker. I work with universities, schools, the kind of motivation I find in our clients is hard to find. I hope that and I'm very grateful for our partnerships with organizations. It is everybody's responsibility, you are a fellow citizen, a fellow Vermonter to know English and know his or her rights.

**I'd like to go quickly around the room for one word that describes our convo:**

-Pleased  
win win win  
success  
collaboration  
power  
inspired  
model community  
future  
collaboration  
hope  
accomplices  
motivated  
interesting  
inspired  
commitment  
unity

awareness  
willingness  
progress  
human  
engagement  
steadfast  
grateful

I want to thank all of you; it's amazing what happened in this conversation today. We really are working towards a new level of organizational development. Please thank everyone in your organization for what they do. Thank you.



Christopher Louras <mayorlouras@gmail.com>


## support letters


Christopher Louras <mayorlouras@gmail.com>  
To: Dave Wolk <Dave.Wolk@castleton.edu>

Fri, Jul 8, 2016 at 3:27 PM


[Quoted text hidden]

### 4 attachments

 **VRRP mayor.pdf**  
297K

 **vrrp chamber.pdf**  
345K

 **VRRP RCPS.pdf**  
96K

 **NWWRC.pdf**  
427K



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April 28, 2016

Ms. Anne C. Richard  
Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C. St. NW #5805  
Washington, D.C. 20520

*Re: Letter of Support for USCRI's proposal to establish a new Reception and Placement Program in Rutland, VT.*

Dear Ms. Richard,

I am writing in support of the U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants'/Vermont Refugee Resettlement Program application to establish a Reception and Placement program site in Rutland in partnership with the City of Rutland, Vermont.

Rutland is a compassionate and welcoming community with a rich history that is built on an immigrant population, and we know that it will be an ideal location for Vermont's expansion in serving a resettled refugee population. Rutland City and the surrounding area offer ample employment and considerable opportunities for safe and sanitary housing. While we enjoy an historic low unemployment rate, we have a challenge in growing our economy due to local employers' inability to fill job vacancies and an influx of driven and motivated new Americans will readily be absorbed into our workforce. Likewise, as with many New England cities, our housing stock reflects a population that was 15-20% greater than we currently have, and the readily available housing units are much more affordable than other areas of the state.

Over these past six month, throughout USCRI/VRRP's fact finding exercise to assess Rutland's capacity to absorb and integrate a refugee population, the City and the VOLAG have developed a deep and mutually-respected working relationship that has demonstrated our ability to undertake this difficult by rewarding task. Indeed, during my nine-year tenure as Mayor I have not enjoyed an equal level of collaboration and partnership over such a condensed period of time, and this relationship will only strengthen in the future.

We look forward to welcoming resettled New Americans to the City of Rutland just as our state welcomed the southern and eastern Europeans who immigrated to Vermont a century ago. The cultural enrichment we will enjoy from the resettlement program will build on our history, and will further strengthen the very character and identity of this great community.

Thank you for your consideration.

Christopher C. Louras, Mayor  
City of Rutland

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "C. Louras", is written over a horizontal line.



50 Merchants Row, Rutland, Vermont 05701

Phone: 802-773-2747 ~ 800-756-8880

Fax: 802-773-2772

E-mail: [chamber@rutlandvermont.com](mailto:chamber@rutlandvermont.com)

[www.rutlandvermont.com](http://www.rutlandvermont.com)

## The Chamber Supports the resettlement Plan

To the editor:

Through a unanimous vote, the Rutland Region Chamber of Commerce Board voted today to endorse the City of Rutland's efforts to blend compassion with economic development through the expansion of the Vermont Refugee Resettlement Program to Rutland.

The record of refugee and immigrant resettlement in this country stretches back generations, and it has been the life's blood of our population growth. In fact, many Rutland residents can claim they are descendants of immigrants fleeing from challenges in their homeland only to come here and contribute to the economic vitality of our region.

However, in the past few years, the population in Vermont has been essentially stagnant; Rutland County's population has dropped steadily since the 1980s, when it peaked.

In many communities, from Burlington to California, resettlement has been a significant contributor to economic and population growth. In the city of Cleveland, a study by Chmura Economics & Analytics found that "once refugees have adjusted to their new life after resettlement, they can provide substantial contributions to the workforce and economic development in the long run at the regional level."

The study demonstrated a 10-fold payback of dollars invested in the resettlement process. The study determined that the \$4.8 million spent in 2012 produced approximately \$48 million in economic activity in the region - everything from wages earned to dollars spent on food, housing and basic necessities.

"Refugees are more likely to be entrepreneurial and enjoy higher rates of successful business ventures compared to natives," the report said. "At the local level, refugees provide increased demand for goods and services through their new purchasing power and can be particularly revitalizing in communities that otherwise have a declining population."

It is obvious that we need to continue to change to improve our situation. One of the many things that is helping Rutland advance its own economic well being is CHANGE. We hear it everywhere and we agree.

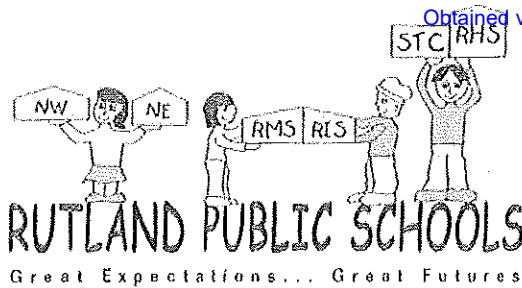
We have seen change all around us for over a decade. We've seen the out migration of our youth and our businesses and we know we need to change to begin rebuilding our population. We cannot change - and at the same time keep things the same. We should embrace change as a way forward.

The Rutland Region Chamber of Commerce applauds the effort to use compassion as an economic development tool, and pledges to assist the city and other organizations to ensure the success of the resettlement program for the good of the greater Rutland community.

Dave Correll, President

Mary Cohen, Executive Director

Rutland Region Chamber of Commerce



Mary E. Moran, Superintendent  
Robert S. Bliss, Assistant Superintendent  
Peter P. Amons, Chief Financial Officer  
Eloise S. McGarry, Director of Support Services  
Patricia W. Aigner, Director of Technology

May 12, 2016

Ms. Anne C. Richard  
Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C. St. NW #5805  
Washington, D.C. 20520

*Re: Letter of Support for USCRI's proposal to establish a new Reception and Placement Program in Rutland, Vermont.*

Dear Ms. Richard,

I am writing in support of the U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants'/Vermont Refugee Resettlement Program application to establish a Reception and Placement program site in Rutland in partnership with the Rutland City Public Schools.

Rutland is a welcoming community and an ideal place for resettling refugees. Rutland City and the surrounding area offers ample employment, safe housing, and excellent schools.


I have recently come to know the team from the USCRI/VRRP and am impressed with their experience, expertise and compassion. Having attended three meeting in the past few weeks at which they presented, I cannot stress how much their presence has added to the acceptance of and confidence in this project in our community.

We in the Rutland City Public Schools stand ready to welcome these New Americans into our schools and hearts. We have two licensed ELL teachers on staff who teach both World Languages and ELL. Current staffing is sufficient to accommodate new students at least through the first semester next year. We will reassess future needs as they arise. I have already had six unsolicited calls or emails from Arabic speaking folks (two of whom are graduates of our high school) with offers of help as we go forward. As well, based on their extensive experience, our friends in the Burlington, Vermont, Public Schools have offered to assist us as this program develops here in Rutland.

We look forward to welcoming refugee newcomers to our schools and to the City of Rutland.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

  
Mary E. Moran  
Superintendent of Education



110 Marble Street  
West Rutland, Vermont 05777  
(802) 438-2303 | nwwvt.org  
info@nwwvt.org



12 May 2016

Ms. Anne C. Richard  
Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C. St. NW #5805  
Washington, D.C. 20520

*Re: Letter of Support for USCRI's proposal to establish a new Reception and Placement Program in Rutland, Vermont*

Dear Ms. Richard,

I am writing in support of the U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants'/Vermont Refugee Resettlement Program application to establish a Reception and Placement program site in Rutland in partnership with NeighborWorks of Western Vermont.

Rutland is a welcoming community and an ideal place for resettling refugees. Rutland city and the surrounding area offers ample employment and safe housing.

Our organization, NeighborWorks of Western Vermont, is a nonprofit housing agency providing multiple services in support of homeownership and neighborhood revitalization. We stand ready to assist the refugees in any way we possibly can to find and maintain healthy, safe and efficient housing for themselves. And, more importantly we look forward to welcoming them genuinely and effectively into our communities with programs and with events and simple offerings of friendship to bring us all together as the Rutland community.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ludy Biddle".

Ludy Biddle  
Executive Director





Christopher Louras &lt;mayorlouras@gmail.com&gt;

---

**Letter of Support**

---

**Springer, Darren** <Darren.Springer@vermont.gov>  
To: Mayor Christopher Louras <mayorlouras@gmail.com>  
Cc: "Allen, Susan" <Susan.Allen@vermont.gov>

Mon, May 16, 2016 at 2:21 PM

Thanks Chris

Sent from my iPhone  
[Quoted text hidden]

&lt;image001.png&gt;

462 Hegeman Ave, Suite 101

Colchester, VT 05446

refugees.org/vermont

p/ 802-654-1700

f/ 802-655-4020

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&lt;VRRP\_Sample Letter of Support.doc&gt;

Letterhead

Date

Ms. Anne C. Richard  
Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C. St. NW #5805  
Washington, D.C. 20520

*Re: Letter of Support for USCRI's proposal to establish a new Reception and Placement  
Program in \_\_\_\_\_.*

Dear Ms. Richard,

I am writing in support of the U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants'/Vermont Refugee Resettlement Program application to establish a Reception and Placement program site in Rutland in partnership with AGENCY.

Rutland is a welcoming community and an ideal place for resettling refugees. Rutland city and the surrounding area offers ample employment and safe housing. [add background on community/resources].

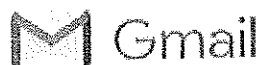
[This paragraph should include information about working relationship with USCRI/VRRP and the author, including collaboration/planned collaboration].

We look forward to welcoming refugee newcomers to \_\_\_\_\_.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Name  
Title  
Agency



Christopher Louras &lt;mayorlouras@gmail.com&gt;

## RE: Meeting w/ Vermont Refugee Resettlement Program

Mayor Christopher Louras <mayorlouras@gmail.com>  
 To: svorenmd@gmail.com  
 Cc: "Todd Gregory M.D." <tgregory@rrmc.org>

Wed, Jul 6, 2016 at 3:01 PM

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** "Friedman, Martha" <Martha.Friedman@vermont.gov>  
**Date:** May 13, 2016 at 3:44:46 PM EDT  
**To:** Amila Merdzanovic <amerdzanovic@uscrvt.org>, "Calvi, Joanne" <Joanne.Calvi@vermont.gov>, "bberhill@chcrr.org" <bberhill@chcrr.org>, "tupton@chcrr.org" <tupton@chcrr.org>, "bwhalen@chcrr.org" <bwhalen@chcrr.org>, "GWhitmer@CHCRR.ORG" <GWhitmer@CHCRR.ORG>, "McKee, Jeffrey D" <jmckee@rrmc.org>, "drjfisch@comcast.net" <drjfisch@comcast.net>, "rutfreeclinic@gmail.com" <rutfreeclinic@gmail.com>, "vpisanelli@rrmc.org" <vpisanelli@rrmc.org>, "seth.coombs@mvhealthworks.com" <seth.coombs@mvhealthworks.com>, "O'Brien, Mike" <mobrien@rmhscn.org>, "Andrew B. Newman" <abnewman@rrmc.org>, Tom Huebner <thuebner@rrmc.org>, "Narkewicz, S" <snarkewicz@rrmc.org>, Rebecca Day <rday@rmhscn.org>, Christopher Louras <mayorlouras@gmail.com>  
**Cc:** "Lamoureux, Denise" <Denise.Lamoureux@vermont.gov>, "Sancic, Adam" <Adam.Sancic@vermont.gov>, Kristen Rengo <KRengo@uscrvt.org>, Matt Thompson <MThompson@uscrvt.org>, Mukiza Noel <MNoel@uscrvt.org>, Supriya Serchan <SSerchan@uscrvt.org>  
 [Quoted text hidden]

[Quoted text hidden]



8/8/2016



Christopher Louras <mayorlouras@gmail.com>

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## Automatic reply: support letters

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Amila Merdzanovic <amerdzanovic@uscrvt.org>

Fri, May 13, 2016 at 5:11 PM

To: Christopher Louras <mayorlouras@gmail.com>

Dear friends and partners,

I will be out of the office Friday 5/13 in the afternoon.

Please call our main line 802.655.1963 if you need immediate assistance. I will be back in touch with you on Monday 5/16

Regards,

Amila



Christopher Louras &lt;mayorlouras@gmail.com&gt;

---

(no subject)

---

Christopher Louras <mayorlouras@gmail.com>  
To: Christopher Louras <mayorlouras@gmail.com>

Fri, May 13, 2016 at 5:13 PM

May 12, 2016

Ms. Anne C. Richard  
Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C. St. NW #5805  
Washington, D.C. 20520

*Re: Letter of Support for USCRI's proposal to establish a new Reception and Placement Program in Rutland, VT.*

Dear Ms. Richard,

I am writing in support of the U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants'/Vermont Refugee Resettlement Program application to establish a Reception and Placement program site in Rutland in partnership with the City of Rutland, Vermont.

Rutland Regional Health Services and Rutland Regional Medical Center stand poised to work in collaborative partnership with USCRI/VRRP medical case workers to ensure that the needs of the resettled refugee population are met with the greatest of care and urgency befitting newly arrived Americans.

We look forward to welcoming resettled New Americans to the City of Rutland just as our state welcomed the southern and eastern Europeans who immigrated to Vermont a century ago. The cultural enrichment we will enjoy from the resettlement program will build on our history, and will further strengthen the very character and identity of this great community.

Thank you for your consideration.

Christopher C. Louras, Mayor

--  
Mayor Christopher C. Louras  
City of Rutland, VT  
(802) 770-5366

8/8/2016



Christopher Louras <mayorlouras@gmail.com>

## FW: Meeting with Vermont Refugee resettlement

Wed, May 11, 2016 at 7:24 PM

Amila Merdzanovic <amerdzanovic@uscrvt.org>  
To: Christopher Louras <mayorlouras@gmail.com>  
Cc: "Sancic, Adam" <Adam.Sancic@vermont.gov>

Hi Mayor Louras,

Forgot to copy you in the e-mail I just sent to DCF/VDH directors confirming the meeting for tomorrow at 2:00-3:15 at Asa Bloomer Building, 4<sup>th</sup> floor conference room #492.

I look forward to seeing you tomorrow.

Best,

Amila

Amila Merdzanovic, MALD  
Director



462 Hegeman Ave, Suite 101

Colchester, VT 05446

refugees.org/vermont

p/ 802-654-1700

f/ 802-655-4020

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From: Amila Merdzanovic  
Sent: Wednesday, May 11, 2016 7:11 PM  
To: 'Sancic, Adam' <Adam.Sancic@vermont.gov>; Giddings, Richard <Richard.Giddings@vermont.gov>; Calvi, Joanne

8/8/2016

Obtained via VT Public Records Law by Judicial Watch, Inc.  
Gmail - FW: Meeting with Vermont Refugee resettlement

<Joanne.Calvi@vermont.gov>; Burkey, Jennifer <Jennifer.Burkey@vermont.gov>; Pendlebury, William <William.Pendlebury@vermont.gov>; Morse, Wendy <Wendy.Morse@vermont.gov>; Patten, Robert <Robert.Patten@vermont.gov>  
Cc: Lamoureux, Denise <Denise.Lamoureux@vermont.gov>; Friedman, Martha <Martha.Friedman@vermont.gov>; Ashraf Alamatouri <aalamatouri@uscrtv.org>; Kristen Rengo <KRengo@uscrtv.org>; Laurie Stavrand <LStavrand@uscrtv.org>; Matt Thompson <MThompson@uscrtv.org>; Mukiza Noel <MNoel@uscrtv.org>; Supriya Serchan <SSerchan@uscrtv.org>  
Subject: RE: Meeting with Vermont Refugee resettlement  
Sensitivity: Confidential

Dear community partners,

My team and I look forward to meeting with you tomorrow. Attached please find the agenda. The meeting will be from 2:00-3:15 as we have another meeting at 3:30 with health providers. I assure you, this is just the beginning of a conversation. We look forward to working hand in hand as we welcome new arrivals to Rutland.

Regards,

Amila

Amila Merdzanovic, MALD

Director



462 Hegeman Ave, Suite 101

Colchester, VT 05446

refugees.org/vermont

p/ 802-654-1700

f/ 802-655-4020

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From: Sancic, Adam [mailto:Adam.Sancic@vermont.gov]

Sent: Monday, May 2, 2016 3:42 PM

To: Giddings, Richard <Richard.Giddings@vermont.gov>; Calvi, Joanne <Joanne.Calvi@vermont.gov>; Burkey,

Sorry, Date is 5/12/16 from 2-4pm , with a request for 5/10/16 confirmation of attendance.

Cell 798-2075

3/4

8/8/2016

Rutland County

802-786-5952

Fax: 802-789-0088

Addison County

802-388-5385

Fax: 802-388-4665

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VRRP Agenda 2016 05 12.docx  
1049K



Christopher Louras &lt;mayorlouras@gmail.com&gt;

vrrp

Christopher Louras <mayorlouras@gmail.com>  
To: Christopher Louras <mayorlouras@gmail.com>

Thu, May 12, 2016 at 4:59 PM

--  
Mayor Christopher C. Louras  
City of Rutland, VT  
(802) 770-5366



VRRP city letter support.doc

37K

April 28, 2016

Ms. Anne C. Richard  
Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C. St. NW #5805  
Washington, D.C. 20520

*Re: Letter of Support for USCRI's proposal to establish a new Reception and Placement Program in Rutland, VT.*

Dear Ms. Richard,

I am writing in support of the U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants'/Vermont Refugee Resettlement Program application to establish a Reception and Placement program site in Rutland in partnership with the City of Rutland, VT.

Rutland is a compassionate and welcoming community with a rich history that is built on an immigrant population, and we know that it will be an ideal location for Vermont's expansion in serving a resettled refugee population. Rutland City and the surrounding area offer ample employment and a considerable opportunities for safe and sanitary housing. While we enjoy an historic low unemployment rate, we have a challenge in growing our economy due to local employers' inability to fill job vacancies, and an influx of driven and motivated new Americans will readily be absorbed into our workforce. Likewise, like many New England cities, our housing stock reflects a population that was 15-20% greater than we currently have, and the readily available housing units are much more affordable than other areas of the state.

[This paragraph should include information about working relationship with USCRI/VRRP and the author, including collaboration/planned collaboration].

We look forward to welcoming refugee newcomers to the City of Rutland, Vermont just as our region has welcomed the southern and eastern Europeans who immigrated to Vermont and who have provided this community with its very character and soul.

Thank you for your consideration.

Christopher C. Louras, Mayor