



MASSACHUSETTS OFFICE FOR
REFUGEES AND IMMIGRANTS

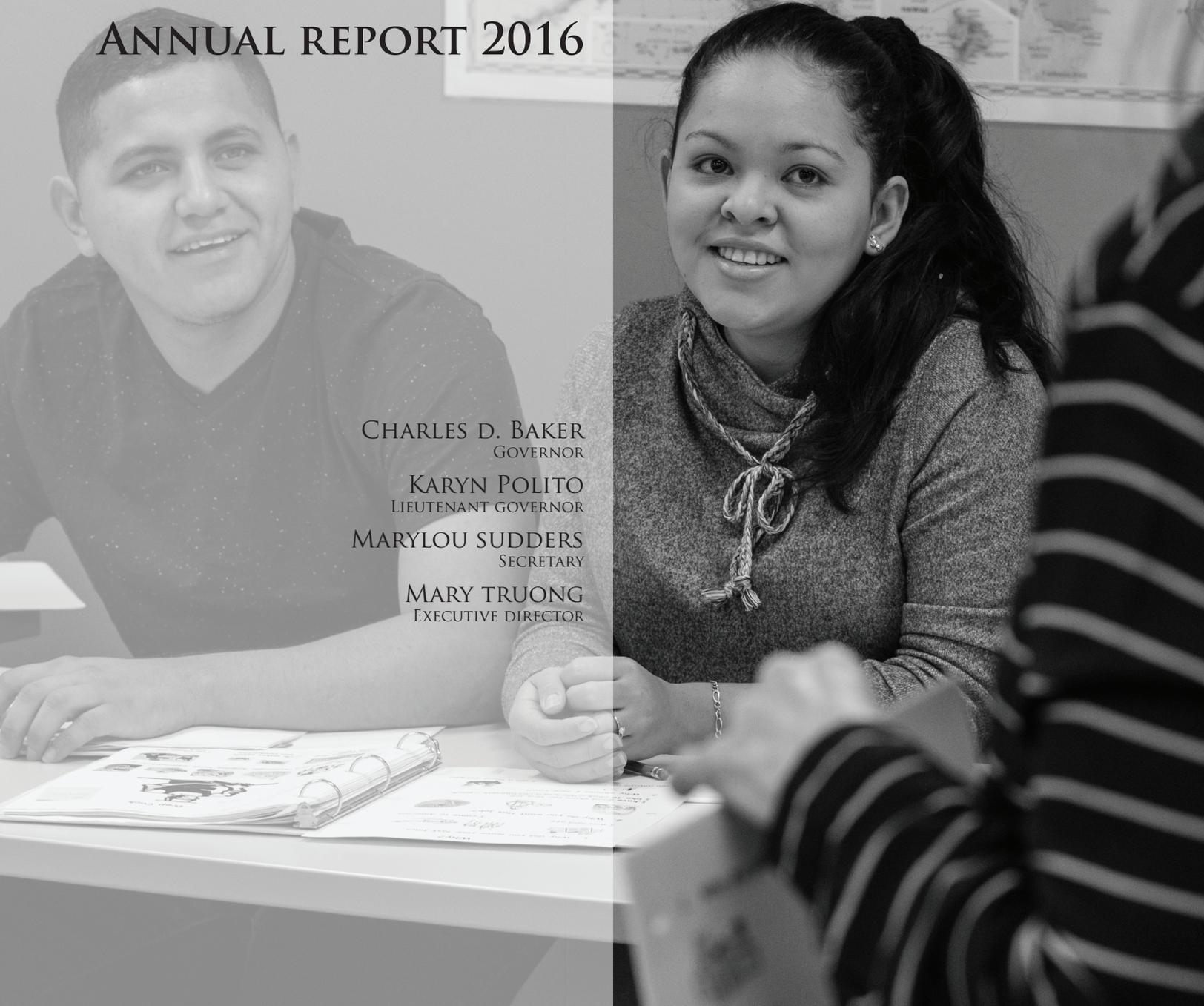
ANNUAL REPORT 2016

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The mission of ORI is to support the effective resettlement of refugees and immigrants in the state; promote full participation of refugees and immigrants in the economic, civic, social and cultural life of the Commonwealth; and foster a public environment that recognizes and supports the ethnic and cultural diversity of the state.

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DEAR FRIENDS,

When communities are torn by conflict and war, Massachusetts responds by offering compassion, services and a path to productive new lives for refugees seeking safe haven at our doorstep. This is our proud legacy and firm pledge to the world's most vulnerable people. Throughout Federal Fiscal Year 2016 (FFY16), towns and cities throughout the state made good on this commitment by together welcoming 2,399 newcomers to their neighborhoods, nearly 300 more people than during the previous year.

The Massachusetts Office for Refugees and Immigrants (ORI) continually strives to make these tumultuous journeys smoother and more successful than the year before. In FFY 2016, our staff, interns, volunteers, community partners and supporters all worked tirelessly to improve and expand upon Massachusetts Refugee Resettlement Program services in core areas, from education, to employment, to health care, to preparation for citizenship. Here are a few of the year's highlights:

- We launched TEAMWorks!, an employment program on the North Shore that serves a growing adult refugee population with short-term skills training and community integration support.
- The Employment Support Services Program received an increase in funding from \$794,000 to \$1 million from the Baker-Polito administration in recognition of the important role ORI plays in preparing refugees and immigrants for the job market.

- More than 1,200 Welcome Kits, including welcoming letters signed by Governor Baker, Lieutenant Governor Polito and EOHHS Secretary Sudders, were made available to newly arrived refugees and immigrants.
- Last year, ORI, in partnership with regional resettlement agencies and the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, hosted Refugee Town Hall Meetings in five cities: Boston, Lowell, Worcester, Springfield and Westfield. Nearly 200 refugees shared their perspectives about access to healthcare, housing costs, English language acquisition and public safety, among other issues. We have already begun fashioning durable responses to address these needs over the long term.

In FFY 2017, we look forward to tackling new priorities that will help our newcomers integrate and achieve self-sufficiency, from strengthening their English language skills to improving their financial literacy. As we embrace these new challenges, I'd like to offer heartfelt thanks to each of our service providers, supporters and ORI staff members for their unwavering support of the MA Refugee Resettlement Program, as well as for their relentless advocacy and hard work on behalf of refugees and immigrants in Massachusetts.

Mary Truong
Executive Director



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, MARY TRUONG

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In response to growing humanitarian crises and geopolitical concerns in the Middle East and other conflict-ridden parts of the world, the United States raised its admission target in FFY 2016 to 85,000 refugees, a nearly 20 percent increase over the year before. Building on policies that emphasize both compassion and sustainability, the Massachusetts Office for Refugees and Immigrants (ORI) in turn bolstered its commitment to the state's longstanding values of providing safe haven to people fleeing desperate and dangerous conditions and to our own ethnic and cultural diversity. We took in an additional 300 refugees and immigrants from the previous federal fiscal year before.

Over the course of the previous year, ORI strengthened its partnerships with service providers and stakeholders to ensure our capacity to successfully integrate refugees and other immigrants into their communities by fostering their trust and delivering high-quality services. We are pleased to report that we were able to provide the necessary funding and guidance to allow our newcomers to flourish.

In our 2016 annual report, ORI will present highlights on the population of immigrants and refugees we welcomed, the services our strategic partners provided them and the agency's notable accomplishments during the previous federal fiscal year, from October 1, 2015 to September 30, 2016.

The populations eligible for ORI's services include: refugees, asylees, Cuban and Haitian entrants, victims of a severe form of trafficking who have received certification or an eligibility letter from the Administration of Children and Families, certain Amerasians from Vietnam who are admitted into the U.S. as immigrants, and Iraqis and Afghans with Special Immigrant Visas. Throughout this report the term "refugee" is used to refer to all of the categorically eligible groups identified above.

MISSION HIGHLIGHTS IN FFY 2016

ARRIVALS

The Commonwealth welcomed 2,399 people from Iraq, Haiti, Somalia and the Democratic Republic of Congo, among a total of 47 countries. This represents a 14 percent increase over FFY 2015 in response to the increase in refugees admitted to the United States and to other immigrants also eligible for settlement in the commonwealth.

CITIZENSHIP

The Office funds a network of community-based organizations that provide English language and civics classes, application assistance, interview preparation and additional support services to individuals and families eligible for citizenship. This year, ORI worked with 17 providers throughout Massachusetts to assist approximately 2,800 individuals seeking our help in navigating the complex, time-consuming and often intimidating naturalization process. In 2016, the Citizenship for New Americans Program (CNAP) helped 1,498 applicants file citizenship applications. Of that number, 746 applicants took the citizenship exam and 662 passed it. Six-hundred and sixteen (616) of those applicants became U.S. citizens.



Job interview coaching at International Institute of New England (IINE)

EDUCATION

ORI works with trusted community-based organizations and school districts, licensed foster care providers and group homes to help elementary, middle and high school students to thrive at their schools. Additionally, through our collaborations with sister agencies, including the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Department of Children and Families, we assist parents and foster parents to support their children's education. Education programs served 831 young people by providing tutoring, English language classes, liaisons to parents and cultural and recreational activities during the previous federal fiscal year.

SENIOR CITIZENS

Elderly refugees face unique hurdles when they arrive in a new culture, such as language and cultural barriers and access to transportation to appointments. Recognizing the critical role elders play within their families and their ethnic communities, and the importance of keeping multi-generational families intact, ORI focuses on connecting them with mainstream senior citizen services and helping them navigate these service systems, while providing access to intergenerational activities and interpretation and translation services. Through collaborative efforts, our office served 200 refugee elders during this federal fiscal year with case management services, assistance with the naturalization process, housing applications and other service referrals.

EMPLOYMENT

One of ORI's top priorities is workforce development—helping newly arrived populations overcome their barriers to employment with the final goal of achieving self-sufficiency. ORI's funded employment services include skills assessments and vocational skills trainings; English for Employment classes; orientation to the World of Work; resume assistance and job interview practice; job placement and retention; job upgrades; career laddering and, additional long-term supports. After completion of trainings, employable individuals are well-prepared to seek jobs as bank tellers, certified nurse assistants, machine operators, kitchen staff/chefs and hospitality workers, among others.



During FFY 2016, a total of 2,021 refugees participated in different employment programs of which 1,398 obtained employment. For these individuals, hourly wages ranged from the minimum salary of \$10.00 to \$23.00 an hour. On average, these newcomers earned \$11.15 an hour.

HEALTH PROMOTION

In FFY 2016, ORI Refugee Health Promotion providers helped 1,039 refugees enroll in health insurance programs and navigate health and behavioral health systems. Service providers made 722 home visits to assist clients with specific concerns related to their home environment, their health or a disability. Regional providers put on 83 workshops throughout the state focusing on such preventive health topics as nutrition, chronic diseases such as diabetes and high blood pressure, fire safety, flu prevention, home and personal hygiene and behavioral health education.

MICRO-ENTERPRISE

ORI provides refugees residing in the Greater Boston, Greater Worcester and Greater Springfield areas of the state with an array of services through the Massachusetts Refugee Enterprise Achievement Program (MassREAP), funded through Office of Refugee Resettlement grant, which offers income-producing strategies to refugees who are unemployed or under-employed. We help them, for example, to develop small-scale and home-based businesses, as well as traditional business ventures. These services are available to refugees who want to start a new business or need help sustaining or expanding an existing enterprise; they include basic business training and credit-building workshops, ongoing one-on-one pre- and post-loan technical assistance, low-interest micro loans, and assistance in obtaining community and commercial loans that are

typically not available to lower-income borrowers with few assets.

REFUGEE TOWN HALL MEETINGS

The Office co-hosted a series of five Refugee Town Hall meetings throughout the state of Massachusetts, in collaboration with refugee resettlement agencies. The purpose of these meetings was to welcome recently arrived refugees and to learn how we could better address the unique concerns of newly resettled individuals and families. These meetings were held in Boston, Lowell, Worcester, Springfield and Westfield. More than 200 refugees from countries including, but not limited to, Afghanistan, Bhutan, Burma, China, Cuba, Eritrea, Iran, Iraq and Syria, attended.

UNACCOMPANIED MINORS

ORI works collaboratively with the Department of Children and Families (DCF) to administer the Unaccompanied Refugee Minor Program. These young people face unique emotional, educational and vocational challenges as they arrive in the U.S. without a parent. The Unaccompanied Refugee Minors Program helps youth develop independent living skills related to school acclimation, job training, financial literacy and behavioral health so that they develop into healthy, productive and self-reliant adults. In 2016, ORI placed 199 children in culturally and linguistically appropriate and licensed foster homes and other licensed care settings that met their specific needs.

NEW PROGRAMMING

ORI's mission is to promote the full participation of refugees and immigrants, as self-sufficient individuals and families, in the economic, social and civic life of Massachusetts. We recognize that a hallmark of self-sufficiency is the capacity to make informed financial decisions. Yet newcomer populations often face unique obstacles with regard to achieving financial proficiency, due to language and literacy, financial customs in their countries of origin and the complexity of the American banking system. During FFY 2016, ORI made inroads with a variety of banking institutions to obtain funding for a groundbreaking program that will assist them on all of these fronts, to be implemented in calendar year 2017.

Additionally, the Office for Refugee Resettlement (ORR) awarded ORI a three-year program for employment services, called TEAMWorks!, that will begin serving eligible refugee populations in 2017. TEAMWorks! will provide skills training, employment services and other aid to help participants successfully enter the workforce.

FINANCIAL PLANNING FOR FFY 2017 WITH YOUR HELP

Overall budget in FFY17 is \$21.3 M. During this year, ORI will continue to seek out additional public-private partnerships to sustain and enhance our mission, to strengthen our collaboration with stakeholders to bridge gaps in services and further empower refugees and immigrants to successfully integrate into their new communities. There are a number of meaningful ways that you – our public, private and non-profit partners – can further help refugees and immigrants, and we hope that you will become a critical source of support. Here are some of the opportunities: you may provide



Summer Program 2016 for youth from the New American Center



Citizenship Ceremony at the Immigrants' Assistance Center in New Bedford.

monetary assistance to our providers who work directly with newcomers; help ensure safe, accessible housing to refugee tenants looking to make Massachusetts their home; and support hardworking refugees and immigrants in their desire to become self-sufficient by hiring them.

We are profoundly grateful to all of our partners and key stakeholders who supported the programming that was such a success over the previous year, and we heartily welcome all of you who would like to join these efforts to make 2017 a banner year for our newcomers and the state.

SUPPORTING REFUGEE POPULATIONS

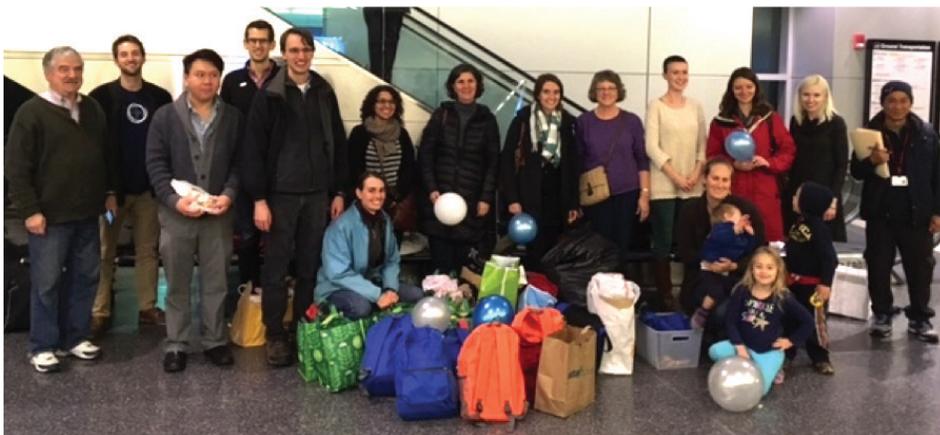
In 1985, the Massachusetts Office of Refugee Resettlement was created by MA Executive Order. In 1992, the MA State Legislature statutorily established the MA Office for Refugees and Immigrants. For the past 25 years ORI has served and continues to serve as the state refugee coordinator's office, primarily responsible for administering the federally-funded Refugee Resettlement Program in the Commonwealth.

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Massachusetts residents and refugee resettlement staff often greet refugee families at local airports with Welcome signs, balloons, and even winter coats. The airport welcome below was for a family of Somali refugees that had just left the desolate refugee camp where they had lived for ten years.

Prior to arrival volunteers and resettlement staff prepare food, purchase toiletries, stuff backpacks with school supplies, ensure the family members have seasonal clothing, and of course, prepare toys for children to play with upon arrival. Oftentimes, this whirlwind of activity needs to take place within a week of learning about the arrival of a refugee family.

Each year Massachusetts serves approximately 2,400 new individuals through the Massachusetts Refugee Resettlement Program. During federal fiscal year 2016, 1,870 new refugees and 529 new individuals with other qualifying immigration statuses were served.



Refugees arriving at the Logan Airport on 10/27/2016 helped by Catholic Charities of Boston

REFUGEE POPULATION DEMOGRAPHICS

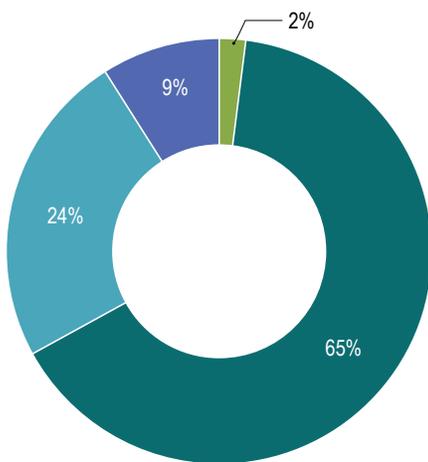
Each year Massachusetts welcomes individuals from more than 45 countries and during recent years the largest refugee populations have been from Iraq, Haiti, Somalia, and Congo DR.

The age groups of newly arriving populations served under the Massachusetts Refugee Resettlement Program has remained unchanged over the past few years, with over 65% of individual between the ages of 18-64. See Figure 1 for age distribution.

The balance of resettlement between regions in Massachusetts has remained steady with approximately 47% of new arrivals resettling in Eastern MA, 25% in Central MA, and 28% in Western MA (refer to figure 2). Predominant cities include Boston (13%), Lowell (8%), Lynn (7%), Springfield (11%), West Springfield (8%), Westfield (5%), and Worcester (25%); with other Massachusetts cities also receiving newly arriving individuals (23%). A city's percentage of statewide resettlement adjusts slightly each year.

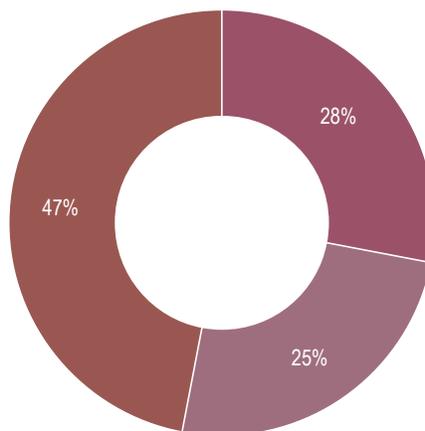
During federal fiscal year 2017 Massachusetts is projected to receive between 700 and 1,935 overseas refugee arrivals. Local Refugee Resettlement Agencies expect that the demographic breakdowns of country of origin and age will be similar to previous years.

FIG. 1
REFUGEE AGE DISTRIBUTION IN FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR 2016



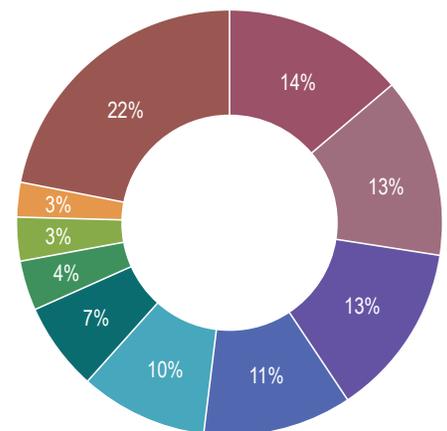
- LEGEND
- 0 - 4 YEARS
 - 5 - 17 YEARS
 - 18 - 64 YEARS
 - 65 AND OLDER

FIG. 2
RESETTLEMENT LOCATIONS IN FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR 2016



- LEGEND
- EASTERN MASSACHUSETTS
 - CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS
 - WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS

FIG. 3
COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN IN FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR 2016



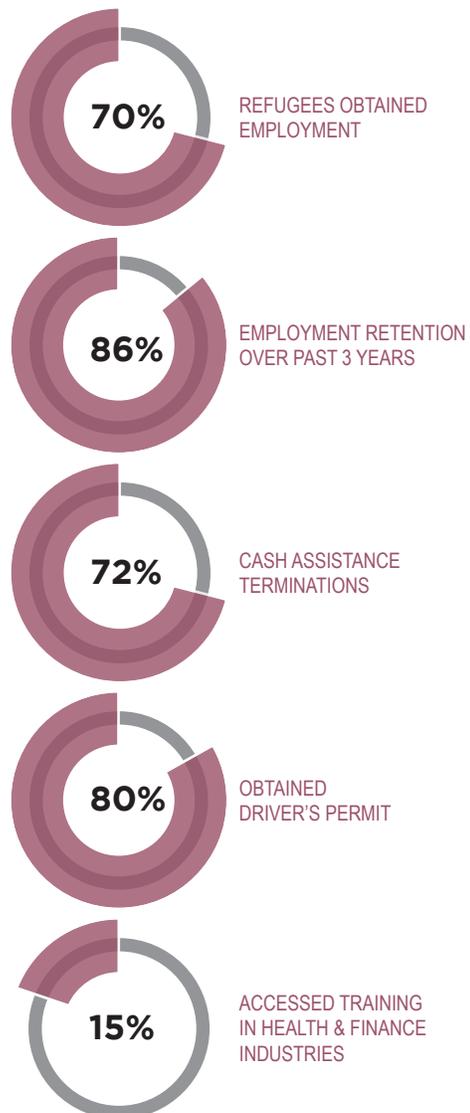
- LEGEND
- IRAQ
 - HAITI
 - SOMALIA
 - CONGO DR
 - BHUTAN
 - SYRIA
 - UKRAINE
 - AFGHANISTAN
 - ERITREA
 - OTHERS

EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

Through both federal and state funding, employment services provide integrated assistance, including targeted services leading to both early and long-term economic self-sufficiency, employment-related case management, English language instruction, employment readiness, vocational skills development and training, job placement, and employment retention supports.

FISCAL YEAR 2016 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- 70% of active caseload obtained employment.
- The hourly wage is over \$11.00 an hour.
- Employment retention has averaged at **86%** over the past three years.
- Cash Assistance Terminations remains at 72% due to employment income.
- Over 100 refugee clients received financial assistance to access Skills Trainings and Driver's Education Training. 80% obtained their Driver's Permit.
- 15% accessed trainings in the Health and the Financial Industry.



SUCCESS STORIES

Husband and wife Gilles and Stephanie arrived in the United States from Haiti in January of 2016, along with their three year old daughter. Through ORI's Refugee Employment Services program, Jewish Vocational Service (JVS) helped Gilles and Stephanie secure a daycare program for their daughter so both parents could attend vocational English classes and short-term skills training at JVS.



Gilles was connected with the DRIVE program, successfully obtaining a Massachusetts Driver's license, as well as Food Service Training with JVS Vocational Training Partnership Program. These skills help Gilles secure and maintain employment opportunities. Gilles completed two-months of food safety training with hands-on kitchen experience and become ServSafe certified as a Food Handler.



Thanks to the partnership between JVS and Marriott Long Wharf Hotel, Gilles was quickly employed at the hotel earning \$18.00 per hour. Many ORI employment partners establish similar connections throughout the state to ensure employment opportunities.

Stephanie graduated from a Customer Service Training program, and also found employment with these newly obtained skills with JVS' partner employers. Stephanie is now working as a cashier at Pret a Manger, a large Boston chain restaurant.

Stephanie and Gilles have performed exceptionally well at their first jobs and receive excellent reviews from both their managers and coworkers. They are each able to work full time to support their family, while their daughter attends day care. Stephanie and Gilles also receive additional assistance from a financial coach at JVS, to help them save money and develop a monthly budget. This helps ensure their long-term success.

Gilles and Stephanie are reaching their goals of improving their language and vocational skills, and integrating into the greater Boston area. They now look forward to planning the next steps in their education and careers and to their future accomplishments.

A political asylee from Uganda, Isaac enrolled in ORI's Refugee Employment Services at Jewish Vocational Service (JVS) in April 2016. In Uganda, Isaac had been trained in videography, photography, and even as an auto mechanic. With a history of hard working and diverse professional experience, he was eager to find his first job in the U.S. in a new industry.

In order to be competitive in his job search, Isaac completed vocational English classes at JVS. These classes improved his speaking and reading skills, and made it possible for Isaac to participate in workplace readiness training.

Isaac enrolled in JVS' four-week Vocational Training Partnership Program for Hospitality Training.

Through both classroom learning at JVS, as well as job shadowing at Homewood Suites, a JVS' employer partner, Isaac learned crucial hospitality skills. This included how to perform house person duties, using industry cleaning equipment, and essential hospitality customer service skills. JVS classes in both hospitality and English helped Isaac practice responding to guests' needs and coworker requests effectively and professionally.



Following his graduation, Isaac received a job offer with the Hyatt Regency Hotel as a bell attendant. He now makes an average of \$15.00/hour including tips, working full time with full benefits. Isaac has been successful at his new job and continues to make advancements for himself. Isaac is determined to grow within the hospitality industry and is to continue working hard to provide for himself and his family.

MICRO-ENTERPRISE

MassREAP

The Massachusetts Refugee Enterprise Achievement Program (MassREAP) offers an alternative income-producing strategy for refugees by helping them to develop small-scale businesses. MassREAP provides access to low-interest loans, credit-building activities and business-related technical assistance. In addition to assisting with new business start-ups, MassREAP contributes to the stabilization, strengthening and expansion of existing refugee enterprises. MassREAP is supported by federal grants from the Office of Refugee Resettlement Program (ORR).

PROGRAM STAKEHOLDERS & SUSTAINABILITY

MassREAP collaborates with direct service providers like the Jewish Vocational Service (JVS) and the Ascentria Care Alliance (ACA) in Massachusetts to help refugees and immigrants start and advance their micro-enterprise through low interest loans. Refugees are the direct program beneficiaries, who seek loans to execute their entrepreneurial ideas.

MassREAP partners are exploring ways to take the program to the next level of success for example, applying to the Small Business Administration (SBA) Microloan Program for loan and operational funds to promote long-term program sustainability. MassREAP program beneficiaries are empowered to a level where many of them have become job creators which is an indication of sustainability.

TABLE 1
LOANS DISBURSEMENT



LEGEND
—●— LOANS DISBURSED
—●— NUMBER OF LOANS

FFY 2016 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The positive program impacts are exceptionally clear due to the increase in both the number and the size of the loans (see table 1). MassREAP saw a 32% increase in loan disbursements and a 15% increase in the number of loans made, from \$805,035 for 41 loans in FY15 to \$1,061,982 for 47 loans in FFY16.

52 new jobs were created through MassREAP's assistance in FFY16. 75 existing jobs are retained through MassREAP in refugee owned businesses (most jobs held by refugees). MassREAP staff based in Boston, Worcester and Westfield provided pre-loan technical assistance, post-loan follow-up; one-on-one and small group technical assistance through workshops and presentations to as many as 524 refugees interested in starting or growing a business.

32%
LOANS
DISBURSEMENT
INCREASE

15%
TOTAL
LOANS MADE

52
NEW JOBS
CREATED

SUCCESS STORIES

*Magbè Savané,
The president of Makomas, LLC*



Makomas

When Magbè lived in Cote d'Ivoire, she and her mother would sell homemade juice in bags to people on the street. Now, Magbè has turned her enterprise from her country of origin into a successful U.S. company. Makomas juice drinks are 100% natural and authentic, combining the freshest juices derived from long held family traditions. In FFY16, Makomas, LLC received a \$20,000 loan from Boston Private Bank to expand the business. By year end, Magbè Savané's Makomas products were in 19 Whole Food Markets and 10 Local Specialty Stores.

Weekly business updates are on the Makomas' website, and its Twitter and Facebook pages.

*StelaTec for Mobil and Computer
Services*



Rowaid Khudhur, an electrical engineer with excellent communication skills in both Arabic and English was a successful business owner in Iraq. He fled to Jordan after the crisis in Iraq, and started a new mobile and computer business. Rowaid and his family eventually resettled in the U.S., and were placed by Ascentria Care Alliance in Worcester, MA in April 2013. After three months from arrival, he was referred to the MassREAP program, as he was again interested in starting a business.

With MassREAP's combination of technical and financial assistance, he was able to open "Stela for Mobile and Computer Services."

Despite already being a successful businessman in Jordan and Iraq, MassREAP helped Rowaid overcome challenges such as community networking and finding an appropriate location. Stela provides comparatively better services than its competitors, thus yielding a good profit. Rowaid is now planning to expand his business, by both increasing the inventory of goods and hiring more employees.

CHILDREN & YOUTH

ORI has strategic statewide oversight of two programs for refugee youth and young adults: the *Unaccompanied Refugee Minors* (URM), and *Refugee School Impact* (RSI). URM and RSI both exist on a national level, and aim to increase opportunities for minors to reach their potential as newcomers to the U.S., particularly in Massachusetts. The URM was developed in the 1980s to address the needs of thousands of children from Southeast Asia without a parent or guardian to care for them. In Massachusetts, the program was initiated in 1996 and is a collaborative effort between ORI and the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families.

THE UNACCOMPANIED REFUGEE MINORS (URM)

Refugee and immigrant youth have unique obstacles upon arrival. They often arrive in the country of resettlement, fleeing dire circumstances in their nation of origin, without an adult family member. The program was able to reach, engage, house and protect 199 minors during 2016. Through a network of caretakers, the URM program helps youth develop appropriate skills to enter adulthood and to ultimately achieve social self-sufficiency. Children are placed according to their individual needs, ranging from licensed foster homes, to group homes, residential treatment centers, independent living programs, or therapeutic foster care.

THE REFUGEE SCHOOL IMPACT (RSI)

RSI addresses the impact of refugee children on local public school districts by identifying and addressing gaps in services to this population, an activity conducted in partnership between refugee service providers and local school districts. The program provides services relative to the needs of refugee children and their families in terms of their educational experiences, and supports local public school districts in fostering high academic and social success among refugee youth. Last year, the RSI program successfully reached 831 young people and 530 parents around the state.



After School Program at the New American Center in Lynn, MA

CITIZENSHIP SERVICES

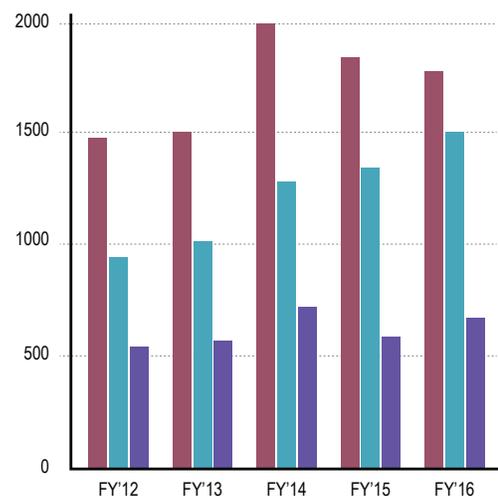
Becoming a citizen of the United States through naturalization can be a complex process for many. It requires English language proficiency, basic knowledge of U.S. history and civics, accurate completion of the citizenship application form and a successful interview with a *United States Customs and Immigration Services* (USCIS) official—many eligible individuals require assistance to accomplish the goal of becoming naturalized citizens of this country. ORI funds a network of community-based organizations to provide English language and civics classes, application assistance, interview preparation and additional support services to aspiring applicants around the state via the *Citizenship for New Americans Program*, or CNAP.

The purpose of CNAP is to enable low-income, lawful permanent residents in MA to become naturalized citizens of the U.S. Citizenship bestows upon foreign-born individuals the right to participate fully in civic and economic life in the U.S.

During this program year (July 1, 2015 – June 30, 2016), CNAP participants had a variety of successes that include:

- 2,800 participants on average received valuable supports leading towards citizenship;
- 1,498 participants received application assistance to begin their paths to becoming citizens; and
- 616 participants became citizens in the last year.

NATURALIZATION EFFORTS PER STATE FISCAL YEAR



LEGEND

- CLIENTS ENROLLED PER YEAR
- NATURALIZATION APPLICATIONS FILLED
- NATURALIZATION EXAMS PASSED

HEALTH & ELDER SERVICES

FINANCIAL LITERACY

HEALTH PROMOTION

ORI has oversight and coordination of the *Massachusetts Refugee Health Promotion Program* (MRHPP). The core objectives of the program include:

- *Health and Behavioral Health Literacy*: Ensuring that all newly-arrived refugees receive education and appropriate follow-up care for health conditions.
- *Health Equity and a Reduction of Gaps in Accessing Health Services*: Ensuring that refugees have full access to health and behavioral health services.
- *Access to Health Care* (including Health Insurance): Provide supports and coordination to ensure that all refugees can access health insurance coverage.
- *Coordination and Capacity Building*: Enhancing state and local level coordination of health promotion, preventive health and behavioral health services for refugees, and maximize federal, state and local resources, refugee social service providers and health care providers.

In SFY16, a total of 1,039 refugees were supported in enrolling in individual health assistance. The program delivered 722 home visits to clients most in need. Culturally and linguistically appropriate workshops were delivered to clients in prevention-based workshops covering a wide range of topics including: suicide and domestic violence prevention, nutrition, behavioral health needs, fire safety, effective parenting in a new culture, and navigating health care coverage in the United States.

PROGRAM TO ENHANCE ELDER REFUGEE SERVICES (PEERS)

Refugee elders serve a valuable role both within the family and within our shared communities. However, with migration and acculturation, the status of the elder in a refugee family can change remarkably. ORI has implemented the *Program to Enhance Elder Refugee Services* (PEERS) as a means to strengthen relationships between refugee elders and refugee organizations and measurably reduce disparities faced by older individuals within a new environment. Services are designed to meet the specific needs of refugee elders, such as providing ethnic food in Meals on Wheels programs, organizing social support groups, or sponsoring health education workshops and activities.

In SFY16, outreach activities reached more than 200 refugee elders and their families. 160 elders received case management services, and 115 homebound elders received home visits.

78 elders were assisted with citizenship supports, 25 elders participated in volunteer, employment, and leadership positions, and computer instruction.

A true hallmark of self-sufficiency is the capacity to make informed financial decisions. Yet newcomer populations often face unique obstacles with regard to achieving financial proficiency, including but not limited to language and literacy, financial customs in the country of origin, and the complexity of the American banking system. To address these obstacles and capitalize on the merits and strengths newcomers bring, ORI met with key stakeholders to establish the *Financial Literacy for Newcomers* (FLN) program via public-private partnership.

The Financial Literacy for Newcomers (FLN) program aims to build stronger bonds among existing financial institutions and develop educational initiatives that target the specific needs of newcomers. Specific objectives include:

- 1 Orientation of refugees and immigrants to financial institutions' portfolio of services;
- 2 Development and delivery of culturally and linguistically appropriate financial information with a focus on basic personal finance, budgeting, avoiding scams, sending money to the home country (a.k.a. remittances), investing and retirement planning;
- 3 Enhanced collaboration and partnership between public and private partners to support local refugee and immigrant communities in understanding the importance of financial literacy.

In SFY16, ORI met with a variety of stakeholders including banking institutions, Businesses, philanthropist, sister agencies of the Commonwealth, and community based organizations to establish opportunities for partnership and the roll-out of the FLN project in calendar year 2017.

TOWN HALL MEETINGS

In December of 2016, Massachusetts Office for Refugees and Immigrants (ORI) Executive Director Truong led the first series of state-wide Refugee Town Meetings to discuss areas of concern for newcomers. These were held in partnership with ORI's refugee resettlement agencies, the Governor's Advisory Council for Refugees & Immigrants, and other partners, including the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). The Town Hall Meetings took place in Essex, Hampden, Middlesex, Suffolk, and Worcester counties, with more than 200 refugee newcomers participating. Individuals came from Afghanistan, Belarus, Bhutan, Burma, Cameroon, Cuba, Nepal, Iraq, Iran, Pakistan, Somalia and Syria, among other countries. Each person was united in their dedication to making America their home.

Newcomers, supported by the nimble linguistic capabilities of their interpreters of Arabic, French, Nepali, Russian and other languages, spoke aptly of obstacles as well as opportunities that come with the resettlement process. The following represents the outcomes of these conversations organized by subject matter.



HOUSING

The cost of living in Massachusetts is among the highest in the nation, and for many, the short-term time specific benefits they obtain create a struggle to paying rent. Many refugees must simultaneously learn English in order to obtain employment and reduce reliance upon assistance. This is time consuming, and as noted below, accessibility to English as a second language classes is so far limited.

ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE

Most newcomers responding to questions with regard to medical care and access to care indicated that they were able to have prompt access to an appointment upon arrival to the United States, and communicated being very impressed with the comprehensive level of care they were able to receive.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

Newcomers shared the obstacles in learning English, indicating a need for more classes, as well as classes that better fit work schedules and specific English learning needs (for example, classes with emphasis on casual conversation). There was a simple desire to be immersed and become fluent in order to more rapidly find employment.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Newcomers communicated a feeling of safety in their particular communities. Many recognized their regions were diverse and welcoming. Refugees were provided the Attorney General's Hotline as a means to prevent report and reduce hate crimes in the Commonwealth.

EMPLOYMENT

Refugee newcomers present at each of the Town Hall meetings indicated a profound need to get and maintain sound employment. Some communicated the difficulty in becoming gainfully employed due to language barriers and having transportation obstacles, while many already obtained jobs.

The Town Hall meetings provide a unique and inclusive approach to highlighting specific concerns and to working towards long-term, sustainable solutions. In alignment with the season, ORI was able to give gifts at a town meeting. These gifts were a result of the first annual Gift Drive organized by the Office and were able to provide warm weather goods, backpacks, school supplies, and other items. These gifts were provided by generous donation from individuals, and businesses.

FINANCIALS

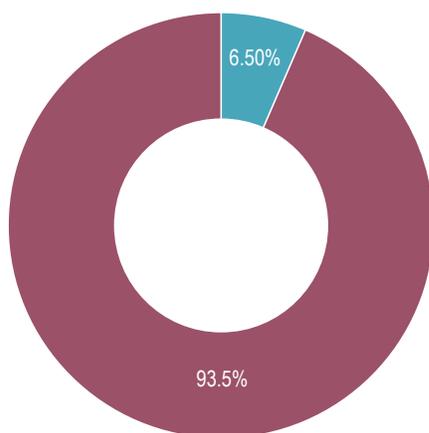
ORI is primarily funded through the federal Office of Refugee Resettlement which supports services for refugees. ORI receives limited state funding which supports citizenship and employment services to refugees and immigrants residing in the Commonwealth (see figure 1).

During federal fiscal year 2017 ORI administered 11 programs that provided direct services to clients through a network of refugee resettlement agencies (including faith-based organizations), and ethnic community-based organizations, that all have the capacity to serve the culturally and linguistically diverse needs of newcomer populations. In Federal fiscal year 2017 the ORI overall budget was \$21.3 M, with \$19.9M funded from federal grants and \$1.4M from state dollars. State funding includes \$0.4 M of appropriation to administer CNAP and \$1 M through an ISA with the Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) to administer the Employment Support Services Program (ESSP).

ORI continues to seek out additional public-private partnerships to sustain and enhance our mission, to strengthen our collaboration with stakeholders to bridge gaps in services and further empower refugees and immigrants to successfully integrate into their new communities.

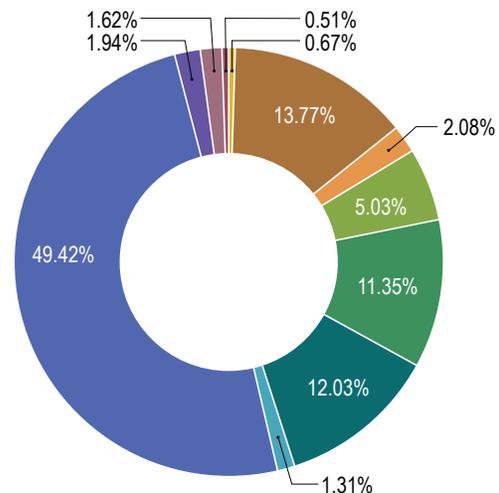
ORI is grateful to all of our partners and key stakeholders who supported the programming that was such a success over the previous year, and we heartily welcome all of you who would like to join these efforts to make 2017 a banner year for our newcomers and the state.

FIG. 1
GOVERNMENT FUNDING IN
FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR 2016



LEGEND
■ FEDERAL GRANTS
■ STATE APPROPRIATIONS

FIG. 2
REFUGEE SERVICES BY
CATEGORY



LEGEND
■ ELDER SERVICES
■ CITIZENSHIP SERVICES
■ SCHOOL IMPACT PROGRAM
■ UNACCOMPANIED REFUGEE MINORS
■ MICROENTERPRISE / SMALL BUSINESS ASSISTANCE
■ HEALTH ASSESSMENT
■ CASH & MEDICAL ASSIST
■ CASE MANAGEMENT
■ SOCIAL ADJUSTMENT
■ EMPLOYMENT SERVICES
■ HEALTH PROMOTION

THANK YOU!

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ORI WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE FOLLOWING PARTNERS IN SUPPORT OF OUR WORK.



Governor Charles Baker
Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito
Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) Secretary Marylou Sudders
Governor's Advisory Council on Refugees and Immigrants

Office of Refugee Resettlement
Executive Office of Elder Affairs
MA Commission for the Blind
MA Department of Children and Families
MA Department of Public Health
MA Department of Transitional Assistance

MA Department of Youth Services
MassHealth
Interns, volunteers and supporters
Service Providers
United States Citizenship and Immigration Services
Fragomen LLP

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