



The

Economic Impact

of Refugees in

Southeast Michigan



**GLOBAL  
DETROIT**



# The Economic Impact of Refugees in Southeast Michigan

**GLOBAL DETROIT** is a nonprofit regional economic development initiative that believes immigrants and refugees are critical to job creation, regional growth, and prosperity. Global Detroit is revitalizing Metro Detroit's economy by mobilizing its immigrant potential. We are an innovator and expert in connecting international talent with regional businesses' unmet talent needs, catalyzing the growth and development of immigrant entrepreneurs, revitalizing neighborhoods, and building a globally-competitive and inclusive region.

Global Detroit has launched leading-edge programs in immigrant entrepreneurship, neighborhood revitalization, international student talent retention, and professional talent connection. Through groundbreaking research, targeted communication, and advocacy, Global Detroit is building regional infrastructure, inclusive policies, and institutional change to make the city and the region national leaders in economic development strategies that position immigrants to spark robust growth and widespread prosperity in our region, as well as to revitalize neighborhoods.

In addition to our local efforts, Global Detroit has spearheaded the creation of the Welcoming Economies Global Network (WE Global), a ten-state regional collaborative of 20 peer local immigrant economic development initiatives across the Rust Belt. WE Global Network is a project of Welcoming America, run in partnership with Global Detroit.

Background [4](#)

Methodology [14](#)

Economic Impact Findings [16](#)

Resettlement Agencies [16](#)

Refugee Spending [18](#)

Refugee-Owned Businesses [20](#)

Summary of Total Economic Impact [22](#)

Conclusion [24](#)

Refugee Profiles [26](#)

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Appendix 1: Extended Methodology [30](#)

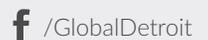
Appendix 2: Survey Questions [36](#)

Appendix 3: Placement of Iraqi and Syrian  
Refugees [37](#)

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study was undertaken as part of a larger effort to build a regional refugee resettlement collaborative in Southeast Michigan. Global Detroit, partners at Welcoming Michigan-Michigan Immigrant Rights Center and the four refugee resettlement agencies in the region—Samaritas, Catholic Charities of Southeast Michigan, Jewish Family Services of Washtenaw County, and U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants—formed a core group to launch such an endeavor amidst the growing global refugee crisis in 2015. Thanks to the generous support from the McGregor Fund, as well as funding provided directly from Samaritas, the refugee resettlement collaborative developed a strategic plan to prioritize areas of collaboration around using volunteers, tackling transportation and housing barriers faced by refugees, and facilitating joint efforts around communications around refugee issues in Southeast Michigan. Following a communications effort to tell refugee stories as part of Immigrant Heritage Month in June 2017, the release of this economic analysis is the second product of the collaborative's efforts.

The bulk of the study was written over the summer of 2017 through the efforts of Global Detroit's Executive Director Steve Tobocman; Professor Elisabeth Gerber, Professor and Associate Dean at the Ford School of Public Policy at the University of Michigan; and Jacqueline Mullen, a Master's candidate in public policy at the Ford School. Regional resettlement agencies and nonprofit organizations deserve much credit for providing data and feedback while continuing to provide critical resettlement and integration services to area refugees in an environment of devastating revenue constraints.

Global Detroit would like to thank the numerous economists and experts, both locally and nationally, many of whom spent hours with us to consult about our methodology and research: David Kallick and Xiao Cheng (Fiscal Policy Institute); Audrey Singer (Urban Institute); Patrick Anderson (Anderson Economic Group); Karen Phillippi (Michigan Office for New Americans); Andrew Lim, Kate Brick, and

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Additionally, early research for the study was conducted by more than a dozen graduate students who took a seminar class in the winter 2017 semester at the Ford School of Public Policy at the University of Michigan, taught by Elisabeth Gerber and Steve Tobocman. Unfortunately, the seminar coincided with President Trump's executive orders aiming to pause refugee arrivals in the United States and ban travel from key predominantly Muslim countries. As resettlement agencies were dealing simultaneously with damaging budget cuts and heavier workloads, collecting the necessary data for the study had to be delayed for a few months.

Finally, thanks to those who agreed to have their stories shared in this report: Zeyad Jabo and Rand Koraeel, Bashar Nazo and Hala Alshalchi, and Yasir Ibrahim. It was a pleasure and an inspiration to interview them and hear their stories. ■

# Background

“ *The United States is proud of its history of welcoming immigrants and refugees. The U.S. refugee resettlement program reflects the United States’ highest values and aspirations to compassion, generosity and leadership.* ”

— U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration<sup>1</sup>

## Overview of the Moment

The nation and many local communities in Michigan are mired in a debate about refugees. On one side are those who believe the United States must continue to play a leadership role in accepting refugees. This belief is often offered on a number of grounds: a moral and ethical imperative for humanitarianism; our national character as a place of refuge; or our country’s status as a beacon of freedom. Those opposing refugee resettlement often argue that accepting refugees, especially from the Middle East, threatens our national security. This is despite the fact that zero refugees have been implicated in a fatal terrorist attack in the U.S. since the Refugee Act of 1980 created systematic vetting procedures. Refugees are the most thoroughly vetted of any foreign visitors to the United States.<sup>2</sup>

**What largely has been missing from the debate is a consideration of the local economic impacts that refugees have on the communities that serve as their new homes.**

This study is an attempt to provide that analysis for Southeast Michigan (Macomb, Oakland, Washtenaw, and

Wayne Counties), which has been home to over half of the refugees resettled in Michigan over the ten-year period of 2007-2016.

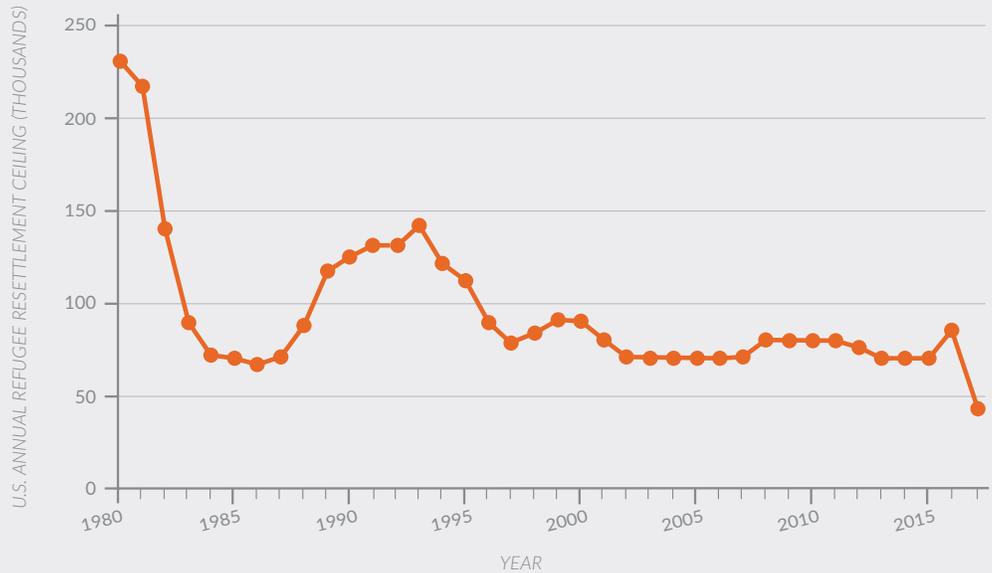
We find that refugees resettled in Southeast Michigan over the past decade generated **between \$229.6 million and \$295.3 million in new spending**, along with **between 1,798 and 2,311 jobs**, in 2016 alone.

<sup>1</sup> “Refugee Admissions,” U.S. Department of State Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, <https://www.state.gov/j/prm/ra/index.htm>.

<sup>2</sup> Alex Altman, “This Is How the Syrian Refugee Screening Process Works,” Time, November 17, 2015 quoting both a senior advisor to the U.N. High Commission on Refugees and a senior U.S. government official.

Figure 1.  
**U.S. Annual  
 Refugee  
 Resettlement  
 Ceiling  
 by year**  
 FY 1980-2016

Source: U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration



This study is being released at a critical moment. President Trump announced in late September 2017 that the U.S. would only accept 45,000 refugees in the coming fiscal year—the lowest ceiling since U.S. Presidents began setting the annual ceiling on refugee admissions in 1980. While local and national debates rage about refugees, this also is an important moment in world history. There are more refugees across the globe (22 million, over half of whom are children) than at any time since the Second World War.<sup>3</sup> Most (84%) of the world’s refugees are hosted in developing countries like Turkey, Pakistan, Lebanon, and Jordan. While less than 1% of refugees worldwide are referred for resettlement by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United States has traditionally accepted the largest number of these referrals—over 3 million refugees since 1975. Recently, other nations—especially in Europe—have stepped up their leadership around the current refugee situation, while actions by the Trump Administration have decreased the United States’ role in providing a place of refuge.

**Michigan was the fourth largest state for resettlement in 2016 and has resettled over 30,000 refugees over the last decade, the fourth largest state over that longer period as well.**<sup>4</sup> Michigan was the only state that lost total population

in the 2010 Census, but has worked hard to reverse that trend since then. Refugees have been an important source of population stabilization and growth. In fact, the number of foreign-born residents in Michigan—which includes refugees—is responsible for all of the state’s net population growth since 2010. Michigan’s foreign-born population has grown by 64,000 residents since 2010, which is 14,000 more than the state’s overall population growth, suggesting that the state is still losing U.S.-born population.

**With the world’s densest Arab population outside the Middle East (and second in total number only to Los Angeles), Metro Detroit is the top destination for Iraqi refugees in the U.S.**<sup>5</sup> The Refugee Processing Center (RPC), a data hub operated by the U.S. State Department,

<sup>3</sup> “Figures at a Glance,” UNHCR, accessed July 2017, <http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/figures-at-a-glance.html>.

<sup>4</sup> U.S. State Department fact sheet at <https://www.state.gov/j/prm/releases/factsheets/2017/266365.htm> and Worldwide Refugee Admissions Processing System (WRAPS), “Refugee Arrivals from January 1, 2007 through December 31, 2016,” Refugee Processing Center, accessed at <http://ireports.wrapsnet.org>.

<sup>5</sup> “Detroit is a Dream Come True for Iraqi Refugees,” Alexia Fernandez Campbell, *The Atlantic*, March 18, 2015 at <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2015/03/detroit-is-a-dream-come-true-for-iraqi-refugees/431898>.



Neighborhood Resource Fair serving Detroit and Hamtramck residents.

ranks Michigan as the second leading state after California in terms of resettling both Iraqi and Syrian refugees over FY2006-FY2017.<sup>6</sup> With the fourth-largest Syrian population of any metro area in the U.S., Metro Detroit is well positioned to play a leadership role in helping to address the Syrian refugee crisis. Currently, there are an estimated 5.5 million refugees from Syria, the largest single source of refugees in the world.

Southeast Michigan was on track to continue playing a prominent role in resettling refugees when the combination of President's Trump's desired pause in refugee resettlement and announcements to halve the number of refugees accepted in the U.S. severely decreased resettlements. Despite the disruption in the flow of refugees, Michigan still welcomed 1,098 refugees from January through July 2017.

Understanding the economic impacts that resettled refugees create can help inform local leaders in Southeast Michigan as they consider the issue of refugee resettlement. The integration of new refugees is an endeavor that ultimately falls upon the public, private, nonprofit, and philanthropic sectors, as well as the neighbors and communities where refugees resettle.

<sup>6</sup> WRAPS data at [http://ireports.wrapsnet.org/Interactive-Reporting/Enum-Type/Report?ItemPath=/rpt\\_WebArrivalsReports/Map%20-%20Arrivals%20by%20State%20and%20Nationality](http://ireports.wrapsnet.org/Interactive-Reporting/Enum-Type/Report?ItemPath=/rpt_WebArrivalsReports/Map%20-%20Arrivals%20by%20State%20and%20Nationality).

## BEST PRACTICE

### Building a Regional Refugee Resettlement Collaborative in Southeastern Michigan

Southeast Michigan (Macomb, Oakland, Washtenaw, and Wayne Counties) is home to about half of all the refugees resettled in Michigan over the past ten years. While there is a great deal of informal collaboration among the resettlement agencies, nonprofit and ethnic service organizations, government, and others who help integrate refugees into the region, no formal collaborative group existed. The growing global refugee crisis in 2015 inspired Global Detroit and partners at **WELCOMING MICHIGAN-MICHIGAN IMMIGRANT RIGHTS CENTER** and the four refugee resettlement agencies in the region—**SAMARITAS, CATHOLIC CHARITIES OF SOUTHEAST MICHIGAN, JEWISH FAMILY SERVICES OF WASHTENAW COUNTY**, and **U.S. COMMITTEE FOR REFUGEES AND IMMIGRANTS**—to collaborate in supporting refugees both during and after their 90-day resettlement period. Through generous support from the **MCGREGOR FUND**, as well as funding provided directly from Samaritas, the refugee resettlement collaborative developed a strategic plan. Following a communications effort to tell refugee stories as part of Immigrant Heritage Month in June 2017, the release of this economic analysis is the second product of the collaborative's efforts.

# Who is a Refugee and What Happens During Resettlement?

A refugee is a person who has been forced to flee their home and is unable to return due to a well-founded fear of persecution based on religion, race, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group. Only the most vulnerable of refugees, less than 1% of the total, are flagged by the UNHCR for resettlement.<sup>7</sup> Those eligible for resettlement in third countries must be unable to return to their home or live in safety in neighboring countries. Vulnerable cases may include women or children at risk, survivors of violence, those with medical needs, or those waiting to be reunited with their family. Anyone who may pose a security threat or who has committed a serious crime is ineligible for resettlement.

After identifying vulnerable individuals, the UNHCR screens and interviews every candidate. The UNHCR assigns refugees to countries based on the quotas each country has submitted. The United States then completes a thorough vetting process for each refugee assigned to the U.S. and makes the final decision on whether to accept the case. Refugees are the most carefully scrutinized group of any people traveling to the United States. The process takes 18-24 months on average and refugees remain abroad until it is completed. *Figure 2* outlines its rigor.

Once an individual or family has been accepted by the UNHCR and U.S. refugee resettlement clearance processes, they are assigned to one of nine organizations that partner with the federal government to resettle and integrate refugees in their new communities. The nine organizations work through local partners to help resettle refugees in our communities. In Southeast Michigan, four nonprofit agencies currently serve as the initial resettlement agencies for refugees: Samaritas (formerly Lutheran Social Services of Michigan), Catholic Charities of Southeast Michigan (CCSEM), Jewish Family Services of Washtenaw County (JFS), and the local affiliate of United States Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI).

Figure 2.

## Vetting Process Components UNITED STATES



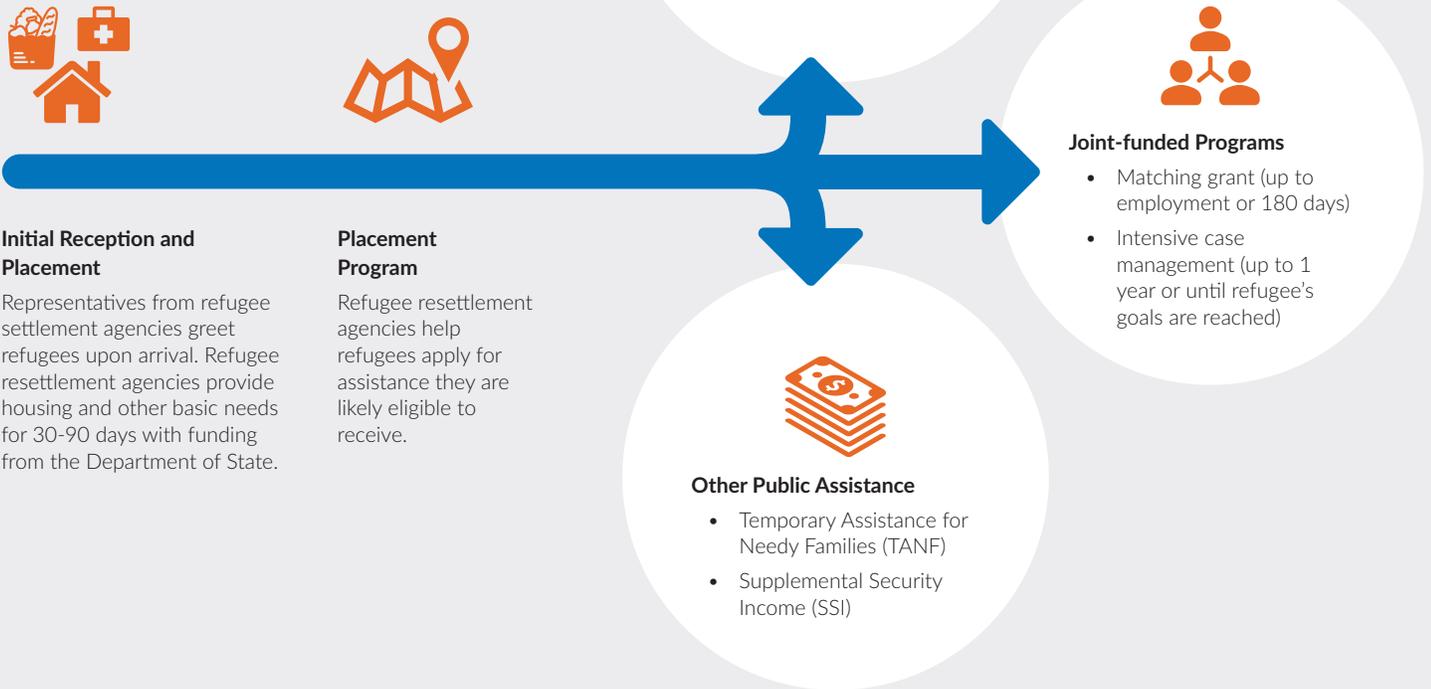
Detroit City Councilmember Raquel Castañeda-López and USCRI Detroit Director Tawfik Alazem welcome a refugee family at the Detroit Metro Airport.

<sup>7</sup> "Resettlement in the United States," UNHCR, accessed July 2017, <http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/resettlement-in-the-united-states.html>.

Figure 3.

### Following the 90-Day R&P Period UNITED STATES

Refugee assistance varies by state. Visit the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) website to learn more about your state. [www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr)



Known as the Reception & Placement (R&P) program, the four resettlement agencies provide supportive services to refugees during their first 90 days in the United States. Funded by the Department of State, refugees receive a minimum of \$925.00 per capita, distributed during the 90-day resettlement period, to support with basic necessities such as food and housing.

The local resettlement agencies provide high-intensive case-management services such as airport reception, access to health services, job placement, cultural orientation, and housing placement to arriving refugees. The program ultimately aims to position refugees to achieve self-sufficiency and become integrated community members as soon as possible.

Local resettlement agencies also connect refugees to ongoing supportive services, such as employment, English as a Second Language, and behavioral health programs, to ensure effective integration into their new communities in the United States. Many of these additional services continue after the 90-day resettlement period, so refugees can successfully integrate into their new communities.

A little-known fact about refugee resettlement is that some assistance, such as their airfare, must be repaid. The International Office of Migration (IOM) issues a travel loan for which a refugee must sign a promissory note and must repay after six months of their arrival to the U.S.

# Refugees in Southeast Michigan

## COUNTING THE NUMBER OF REFUGEES

According to our review of State Department data, information from the Office of Refugee Services, Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, as well as surveys completed by the four area refugee resettlement agencies, **there were 21,466 refugees resettled into Macomb, Oakland, Washtenaw, and Wayne counties between 2007-2016.**

## SECONDARY MIGRATION

We asked resettlement agencies, nonprofit organizations, and other experts to estimate secondary migration into and out of the region. We wanted to determine whether the 21,466 individuals of resettlement refugees based on the agency surveys and WRAPS data might under- or over-count the number of refugees living in Southeast Michigan in 2016. Secondary migration is very difficult to track and there is no precise tool to measure it. Our survey respondents estimated that there were greater inflows into Southeast Michigan than outflows. Respondents also mentioned that migration flows varied depending on individual refugees' countries of origin. For instance, many Iraqi Chaldean refugees move into the region after being resettled elsewhere due to the large Chaldean community in Southeast Michigan. One survey respondent mentioned a refugee who came from Colorado because he couldn't access halal meats in his city of resettlement. Another respondent wrote: "Refugees like to live near their communities so they can feel some kind of belonging. It's not surprising to see them move to an area where they can share a common interest." Some guessed there were greater inflows of Syrians as well given the relatively large Syrian and Middle Eastern communities in Southeast Michigan. Other refugees, such as Somalis, were estimated to have significant outflows from the region, possibly due to large Somali communities in nearby cities such as Lansing, MI and Columbus, OH.

There is some limited data on secondary migration inflows from the State of Michigan's Office of Refugee Services (ORS) that measures refugees who continue to receive services with ORS contractors. This data, however, does not track the secondary migration of refugees who leave ORS programs or who move after their ORS services end. The data from ORS tracks that Iraqis and Cubans were the top two nationalities to enter the state over the past year, but that the numbers of such secondary migrants are small compared to the number of new arrivals. ORS data demonstrates that over 100 refugees migrated into Michigan each year from 2009-2015.

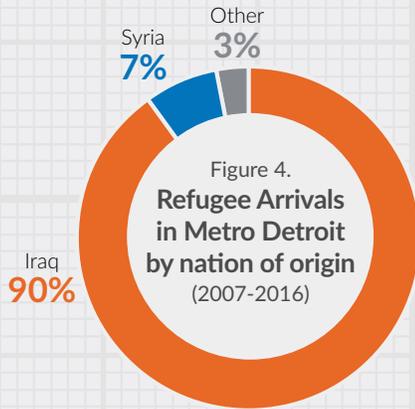
Outflows are much harder to quantify, but data from the Office of Refugee Resettlement suggests there are slightly more refugees leaving Michigan than moving in. Because data on the county level, rather than state level, is unavailable, and because of the difficult nature of tracking secondary migration, we do not adjust arrival numbers for this report to account for either inflows or outflows in the region and assume a net effect of zero.

## SPECIAL IMMIGRANT VISAS (SIVs)

One unique aspect of the refugee population resettled in Southeast Michigan is the large number of Special Immigrant Visa holders (SIVs) among those resettled in the region. SIVs are issued to Iraqis and Afghans who worked for or with the U.S. government and who come to the U.S. as humanitarian entrants. SIVs receive some of the same benefits from Office of Refugee Resettlement as other refugees. In fact, according to WRAPSNet data, over the last decade, Michigan has received 757 Iraqi SIVs, fifth most of any state, all of whom are resettled in Southeast Michigan. SIVs actually are allowed to choose among metro regions to locate and the fact that so many have selected Southeast Michigan is a testament to the region's attractiveness to Iraqis.

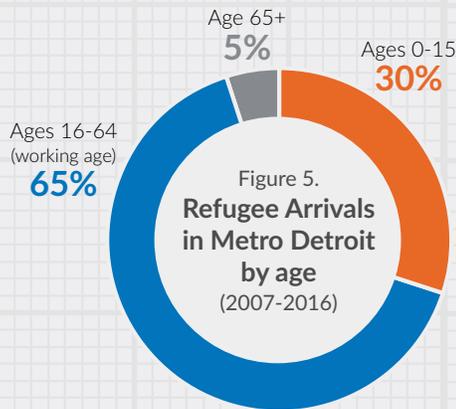
# 21,466

refugees settled in Macomb, Oakland, Washtenaw, and Wayne counties between 2007-2016



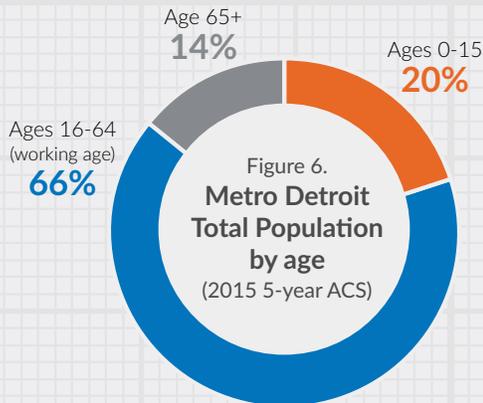
### NATION OF ORIGIN

The vast majority (90%) of refugees resettled in Metro Detroit are from Iraq. A number of Syrian arrivals, mostly in the last two years, make Syria the second largest nation of origin at 7%. Refugees from at least 26 other nations make up the remaining 3%.



### AGE

65% of refugee arrivals in the last decade were working age, or between 16-64 years old. This is similar to the overall population of the region. Another 30% were under 16 years old. Many of these youth have aged into the working age category since their arrival. Just 5% of arrivals were 65 years old or over.



Refugees to Southeast Michigan are younger than the overall population in Metro Detroit, which, like much of the United States, is rapidly aging. While youth make up just 20% of the overall population, they comprise some 30% of refugees. At the same time, while 14% of the general population is 65 or older, only 5% of the refugee population in Michigan is comprised of seniors.

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 For the purposes of data collection, this report focuses primarily on refugees who have been resettled between 2007 and 2016 in the four counties of Macomb, Oakland, Washtenaw, and Wayne in Southeast Michigan.



Figure 7.  
**Refugee Settlement by county<sup>8</sup>**  
 2007-2016

| All Refugees       | Total  | % of Michigan Total | % of SE Michigan Total |
|--------------------|--------|---------------------|------------------------|
| Michigan           | 34,634 | 100%                | n/a                    |
| Southeast Michigan | 21,045 | 61%                 | 100%                   |
| Macomb County      | 7,214  | 21%                 | 34%                    |
| Oakland County     | 11,245 | 32%                 | 53%                    |
| Washtenaw County   | 655    | 2%                  | 3%                     |
| Wayne County       | 1,931  | 6%                  | 9%                     |

| Iraqi Refugees     | Total  | % of Michigan Total | % of SE Michigan Total |
|--------------------|--------|---------------------|------------------------|
| Michigan           | 20,468 | 100%                | n/a                    |
| Southeast Michigan | 19,121 | 93%                 | 100%                   |
| Macomb County      | 6,709  | 33%                 | 35%                    |
| Oakland County     | 10,499 | 51%                 | 55%                    |
| Washtenaw County   | 408    | 2%                  | 2%                     |
| Wayne County       | 1,505  | 7%                  | 8%                     |

| Syrian Refugees    | Total | % of Michigan Total | % of SE Michigan Total |
|--------------------|-------|---------------------|------------------------|
| Michigan           | 1,964 | 100%                | n/a                    |
| Southeast Michigan | 1,643 | 84%                 | 100%                   |
| Macomb County      | 431   | 22%                 | 26%                    |
| Oakland County     | 659   | 34%                 | 40%                    |
| Washtenaw County   | 127   | 6%                  | 8%                     |
| Wayne County       | 426   | 22%                 | 26%                    |



Samaritas New Americans' visit to the Detroit Institute of Arts.

## GEOGRAPHY OF RESETTLEMENT

Refugee resettlement in Metro Detroit is a decidedly suburbanized experience compared to other major U.S. metro areas. Refugees resettled in Southeast Michigan over the last decade are overwhelmingly placed outside the city of Detroit in communities like Warren, Sterling Heights, Southfield, Troy, Dearborn, and Dearborn Heights. The predominance of Iraqi refugees with ties to family members who live in the suburbs is the single most prominent reason for this trend. Notably, the resettlement data suggests that less than 5% of the refugees resettled in Southeast Michigan between 2007-2016 were in the city of Detroit, though as we will see below, these numbers are now increasing.

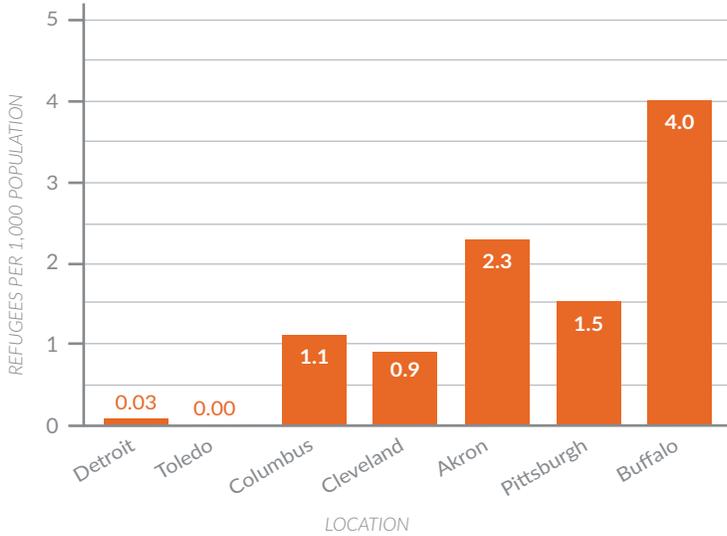
The 2013 “Economic Impact of Refugees in the Cleveland Area” by Chmura Economics and Analytics provides some additional evidence that the overwhelmingly predominant placement of refugees into suburban communities in Southeast Michigan, instead of sizable numbers of placements into the central city, is somewhat unique among its peer cities, noting that while Akron, Buffalo, Cleveland, Columbus, and Pittsburgh range from resettling between

<sup>8</sup> Analyzed by Global Detroit with data from Worldwide Refugee Admissions Processing System (WRAPS), “Refugee Arrivals from January 1, 2007 through December 31, 2016,” Refugee Processing Center, accessed at <http://ireports.wrapsnet.org>. Note the data for all refugees includes numbers from countries of origin where a SE Michigan county received more than 10 refugees over the decade in question. It should be noted that we suspect that this chart and the subsequent chart contain numerous errors in the WRAPSNet recording. In addition to the obvious mislabeling of the occasional city or township (including a few names that do not exist), we believe that WRAPSNet often records the city of resettlement by the address of the resettlement agency rather than the location in which the refugee is placed. Given that refugees are often placed near the resettlement agency’s office, most of the time this will be in the same county. But these charts are not absolutely definitive.

Figure 8.

**Refugees per 1,000 Population by city**  
FY 2012

Source: Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration; US Census; Chmura



900 and 4,000 refugees per 1 million population in 2012 alone, Detroit only resettled 30 refugees per 1 million population.<sup>9</sup>

We have reason to believe that this unique pattern of suburban resettlement is rapidly changing in Southeast Michigan. First, as the country of origin composition of refugees being resettled in Southeast Michigan becomes more diverse—including larger numbers of Syrians, many of whom do not have direct ties to the U.S.—refugee resettlement agencies have greater ability to place such “free” cases in Detroit.<sup>10</sup> Second, the efforts of Detroit Mayor Mike Duggan’s Office of Immigrant Affairs to meet with refugee resettlement agencies and others facilitating refugee integration and to systematically address concerns and build opportunities for Detroit to be a desired destination for refugee resettlement appears to be paying results, with over 300 new refugees placed in the city within the first two years of the Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs launching. ■

<sup>9</sup> “Economic Impact of Refugees in the Cleveland Area,” Chmura Economics and Analytics, October 2013, p. 21.

<sup>10</sup> The federal government classifies refugees as “free” cases when they have no known established ties to someone in the United States. Refugees who have an established tie to a relative or friend in the United States are classified as “geo” cases.

Figure 9.

**Number of Refugees in Southeast Michigan by county (communities with over 50 refugees) 2007-2016**

|                         | Iraqis        | Syrians    |
|-------------------------|---------------|------------|
| <b>Macomb County</b>    | <b>6,709</b>  | <b>431</b> |
| Clinton Township        | 148           | 428        |
| Macomb Township         | 152           |            |
| Shelby Township         | 505           | 2          |
| Sterling Heights        | 4,226         |            |
| Utica                   | 59            |            |
| Warren                  | 1,525         |            |
| <b>Oakland County</b>   | <b>10,499</b> | <b>659</b> |
| Bloomfield Hills        | 76            | 17         |
| Commerce Township       | 74            |            |
| Farmington              | 87            |            |
| Farmington Hills        | 420           | 7          |
| Hazel Park              | 228           |            |
| Madison Heights         | 1,022         | 4          |
| Novi                    | 105           |            |
| Oak Park                | 306           |            |
| Rochester               | 50            |            |
| Rochester Hills         | 94            |            |
| Southfield              | 4,440         | 594        |
| Troy                    | 2,664         |            |
| Walled Lake             | 68            |            |
| West Bloomfield Twp     | 571           |            |
| Wixom                   | 65            |            |
| <b>Washtenaw County</b> | <b>408</b>    | <b>127</b> |
| Ann Arbor               | 359           | 120        |
| <b>Wayne County</b>     | <b>1,505</b>  | <b>426</b> |
| Dearborn                | 808           | 367        |
| Dearborn Heights        | 205           |            |
| Detroit                 | 310           | 20         |



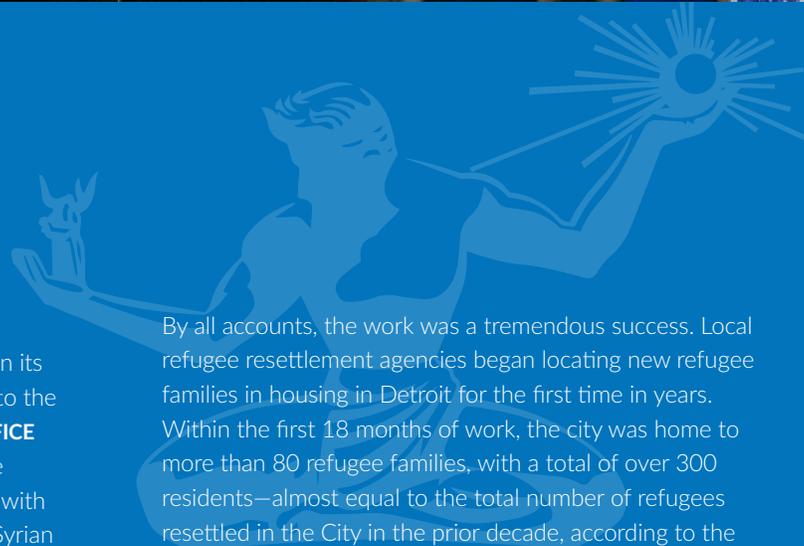
Detroit Mayor Mike Duggan and USCRI Detroit Director Tawfik Alazem visiting a Syrian refugee family.

BEST PRACTICE

## City of Detroit Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs

In the fall of 2015, **DETROIT MAYOR MIKE DUGGAN** announced his intentions for the City of Detroit to open its arms and accept new refugee families being relocated to the area. Working through his newly-created **MAYOR'S OFFICE OF IMMIGRANT AFFAIRS**, the City established a refugee resettlement working group and coordinated meetings with regional refugee resettlement agencies, leaders in the Syrian and Chaldean communities, social service agencies, city department heads and agencies, and other community-based organizations that work on refugee and immigration issues. Together, the Mayor and his team, as well as this working group, agreed on a goal of settling at least 50 families a year for the next three years in Detroit.

To achieve this, these groups tackled issues important to the resettlement and successful integration of refugees in the community. Committees formed around employment, housing, transportation, health care, community engagement, education, and public safety. Each committee identified resources and assets, as well as potential challenges, and worked to develop opportunities and solutions.



By all accounts, the work was a tremendous success. Local refugee resettlement agencies began locating new refugee families in housing in Detroit for the first time in years. Within the first 18 months of work, the city was home to more than 80 refugee families, with a total of over 300 residents—almost equal to the total number of refugees resettled in the City in the prior decade, according to the WRAPS data. Most of the experiences to date have been remarkably positive, and the agencies, refugee families, and new communities have praised the process. In fact, the City has developed multilingual resources to introduce new refugee and immigrant families to the City's bus system. It has organized a youth soccer team for refugee children to join the local youth soccer program and launched a Welcoming Liaison Program with local universities to connect university student volunteers with refugee families. The City's main objective is to ensure that refugees are properly integrated into their new homes and welcomed by their new neighbors. To emphasize his commitment to welcoming refugees, Mayor Duggan hosted the first ever Ramadan Iftar Dinner at his residence this summer with community leaders and recently resettled refugees.

# Methodology

This study measures the annual economic activity generated by refugee resettlement in Southeast Michigan in 2016. The study includes refugees resettled in the region over the prior decade (2007-2016). We analyze three major sources of economic activity: (1) refugee resettlement agencies; (2) refugee workers and their households; and (3) refugee-owned businesses. Impact is measured in two ways across these three types of economic activity: local spending and the local jobs created by this spending.

## Data

Quantifying the impacts of the three major sources of economic activity demands a wide range of data, some of which is not readily available. Most notably, the U.S. Census does not categorize refugees separately, but rather places them with other immigrants in the broader category of foreign-born. As a result, this report (similar to other recent studies that seek to measure the economic impact of refugee resettlement) relies on some proxy measures and educated assumptions. We believe that by being clear and transparent about our methods, measures, and assumptions, readers of this report can be confident that the figures we present here reflect our best attempt to produce valid estimates.

### REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT AGENCIES' SPENDING

We surveyed the four resettlement agencies for information about their budgets, staffing, and programs. Despite the tremendous strain felt by these agencies in early 2017, they generously spent the time and effort to provide this necessary information, for which we are deeply grateful. We used survey responses to determine economic impact for this section. Our analysis focuses on agencies' refugee-related expenditures for Fiscal Year 2016.

### REFUGEE HOUSEHOLD SPENDING

As noted, the U.S. Census does not track refugees, but rather includes them in the larger grouping of foreign-born residents. Foreign-born residents are tracked by their country of origin. For the purposes of this study, we adopt the strategy of recent studies that estimate refugee economic activity by using Census data on the foreign-born residents from specific countries of origin where refugees comprise the majority of immigrants to that metropolitan area. For the purposes of our study, the bulk (90%) of Southeast Michigan's refugees over the last ten years come from Iraq. Moreover, the vast majority of Iraqis that immigrated to the region in the last decade came as refugees. Because refugees make up such a large share of recently arrived Iraqis, we use microdata from the U.S. Census 2011-2015 American Community Survey Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS) for all foreign-born Iraqis in the four-county region that immigrated since 2007 as a proxy for Iraqi refugees in Southeast Michigan.

We assume that refugees from Syria, Afghanistan, and other countries, which comprise the remaining 10% of refugees to Southeast Michigan, had roughly similar employment, income, and business ownership outcomes and impacts.

To test whether the Census data serves as an adequate proxy, we also surveyed refugee resettlement agencies and nonprofit community-based organizations who serve



(Left) Syrian business in Troy, Michigan. (Right) Samaritas' Mihaela Mitrofan and Carmen Bordea partnered with Michigan State University Extension Instructor Sulaiman Mansour to help a Syrian female entrepreneur open a small business.

refugees about employment and entrepreneurship. Community-based organizations have invaluable experience on the ground, where they interact with refugees beyond the 90-day resettlement period on a daily basis. Survey responses largely mirrored the results from Census analysis and comparisons are noted throughout the report.

### REFUGEE-OWNED BUSINESSES

We relied on the IPUMS estimates of Iraqi-owned businesses as a proxy for identifying the number and industry sectors of refugee-owned businesses in the region. We combined these counts with data from the 2012 US Census' Survey of Business Owners on average sales, receipts and revenues of firms within those sectors for the four-county Metro Detroit region to compute total revenues. Because we expect business establishments owned by recently resettled refugees to be small relative to all firms in a given sector, we rely on the SBO's statistics for non-employer establishments. For the 87% of businesses that are identified as unincorporated, we use the non-employer estimates directly. For the additional 13% that are identified as incorporated, we double the non-employer estimates to capture the notion that these firms are likely to be larger than the unincorporated/non-employer firms but still on the small side.

Resettlement agency and nonprofit organization estimates again served as a valuable second data source to compare our results. This was particularly true where certain data (such as number of employees of refugee-owned businesses) was unavailable from the IPUMS microdata.

### Multipliers

These three sources of spending provide direct economic and employment effects. Additionally, they generate at least two types of additional effects. The first is indirect

impact, or the increased spending by those who benefited from the direct impact. For example, if a refugee-owned business pays a supplier for a product, that supplier will in turn purchase raw materials from another business to sustain their supply. The second effect is induced impact, which refers to increased spending by employees of businesses affected by direct and indirect impacts. For instance, a major supplier for a refugee-owned business will hire staff or increase wages for existing staff to fill an order. These employees will then spend a portion of their income in the local economy. For the purposes of this study, we draw from about a dozen previous studies that used economic modeling to estimate industry- and region-specific multipliers. These multipliers tended to range from a lower-bound of 1.4 to an upper-bound of 1.8. We apply both of these multipliers in our analyses to capture lower-bound and upper-bound impacts, with the true value likely somewhere in between these two estimates.

### Double-Counting

To estimate the total economic impact of spending by resettlement agencies, refugee households, and refugee-owned businesses, it is necessary to account for the partial overlap between these categories of activity so as not to double-count various effects. Specifically, since resettlement agencies and refugee-owned businesses both employ refugees in relatively significant numbers, we must deduct their earnings from the overall impact to avoid double-counting these earnings, as they also should be accounted in the economic impact estimates for refugee households. These two amounts are subtracted from the total estimated economic impact calculated as the sum of the three major areas of economic activity tracked by our study. ■

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*For a detailed description of the methodology used in this report, please see Appendix I: Extended Methodology.*

# Economic Impact Findings

## Resettlement Agencies

The refugee resettlement agencies working in Southeast Michigan (Samaritas, JFS, USCRI, and CCSEM) contribute to the regional economy by hiring local residents, purchasing goods and services from local suppliers, paying rent, and otherwise injecting funds spent to resettle refugees into the local economy. In 2016, the agencies' refugee-related expenditures in the region totaled over \$8.7 million.

The result is an estimated direct economic impact of \$8.7 million in 2016 spending from the four refugee resettlement agencies operating in Southeast Michigan. Using a conservative multiplier of 1.4, the agencies' spending spurs another \$3.5 million in indirect and induced effects through additional rounds of transactions. A larger multiplier of 1.8 shows indirect and induced effects could be as significant as \$7.0 million.

The total economic impact in Southeast Michigan from the refugee resettlement agencies is estimated to be between \$12.2 million and \$15.7 million annually. In other words, if the region were to stop settling refugees altogether, the

regional economy would be expected to lose between \$12.2 million and \$15.7 million in annual economic activity just from resettlement agency spending.

The agencies' direct employment impact is 117 jobs, including 96 full-time and 21 part-time positions. Including indirect and induced impacts totaling between 47 to 94 additional jobs, the agencies' total employment impact is 164 to 211 jobs.

In sum, the spending and hiring by refugee resettlement agencies injected **between \$12.2 million and \$15.7 million into the local economy, including between 164 and 211 jobs** in 2016.

Figure 10.

### Refugee Resettlement Agency Spending in Metro Detroit 2016

| Area of Spending                          | Amount             | % of Refugee-Related Budget |
|---|--------------------|-----------------------------|
| Staff Wages                               | \$2,668,550        | 30.52%                      |
| Supplies or Services                      | \$2,661,060        | 30.43%                      |
| Cash Assistance                           | \$1,710,792        | 19.49%                      |
| Other                                     | \$1,710,792        | 19.56%                      |
| <b>Total Refugee-related Expenditures</b> | <b>\$8,744,562</b> | <b>100%</b>                 |

Figure 11.

### Impact of Refugee Resettlement Agencies in Metro Detroit 2016

| Type of Impact    | Direct Impact | Indirect and Induced Impacts | Total Impact                     |
|-------------------|---------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <b>Economic</b>   | \$8.7 million | \$3.5 million to \$7 million | \$12.2 million to \$15.7 million |
| <b>Employment</b> | 117           | 47 to 94                     | 164 to 211                       |



OneMacomb Employer Diversity Panel.



Cultures Day with Leadership Macomb Jr. Program.



OneMacomb Strategic Planning Meeting.

## BEST PRACTICE

### OneMacomb

Macomb County is attracting an increasing number of immigrants and refugees who are choosing to make the county their home. Our analysis suggests that Macomb has resettled about 34% of the refugees in Southeast Michigan. Demographers project increased diversity in Macomb's communities, schools and workplaces. What the data does not show is the lives behind these incredible journeys, some through conflict, others through lineage, but all with great aspirations of a new life and place to call home. Just as Irish and German immigrants that filled our borders along with African American migrants from the South, today's immigrants are learning that Macomb has something for everyone.

When newcomers have access to education, jobs and entrepreneurial opportunities, our community is more vibrant socially, culturally and economically. **ONEMACOMB** is dedicated to equity and dignity for all and works to create an environment in which successful integration can occur.

The program, launched by community stakeholders including **MACOMB COUNTY EXECUTIVE MARK HACKEL**, hosts citizenship workshops, naturalization ceremonies, immigration basics courses, diversity summits, Consular Corps of Michigan events, and OneMacomb business awards to name a few. The program partners with racial and ethnic organizations, refugee resettlement agencies, law enforcement, hospitals, and educational institutions to collaborate on projects and programs that embrace, share and celebrate multiculturalism and inclusion.

# Refugee Household Spending

Refugees inject their earnings back into the local economy through their spending, which supports businesses and jobs. Their work helps local employers and businesses fill unmet talent needs in a wide variety of industries. According to refugee resettlement agencies and refugee-related service organizations, the most common employment sectors for refugees living in Metro Detroit include manufacturing, food service, retail, transportation, hospitality, automotive repair, home health services, construction, nursing and other health occupations, and tailoring. This closely corresponds with Census data, which lists the top five industry sectors for Iraq-born workers as restaurants, motor vehicles and motor vehicle equipment manufacturing, truck transportation, grocery stores, and miscellaneous manufacturing.

Based on estimates derived from analyses of the IPUMS Census microdata, there were 4,340 households headed by a foreign-born Iraqi in the four-county region in 2015, which we take as our estimate of the number of refugee households.<sup>11</sup> These households earned an average of \$30,524 in 2015, generating a total of \$132.5 million in income.

From this total, we subtract \$13.9 million in estimated federal and state taxes, resulting in total disposable income of \$118.6 million.<sup>12</sup> Assuming a 1% savings rate, an additional \$1.19 million is removed.<sup>13</sup>

As a result, the estimated direct impact of refugee household spending in 2015 in Metro Detroit reaches \$117.4 million.

Through additional rounds of spending, indirect and induced impacts reach \$47.0 million on the lower bound and \$93.9 million on the upper bound.

In total, refugee workers boosted the economy in Southeast Michigan by between \$164.3 million and \$211.3 million.



Figure 12.

## Impact of Refugee Spending in Metro Detroit 2015

| Type of Impact    | Direct Impact   | Indirect and Induced Impacts   | Total Impact                       |
|-------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <b>Economic</b>   | \$117.4 million | \$47 million to \$93.9 million | \$164.3 million to \$211.3 million |
| <b>Employment</b> | 939             | 376 to 751                     | 1,315 to 1,690                     |

<sup>11</sup> We attempted to make our research as recent and timely as possible. While we were able to receive refugee resettlement agency spending for 2016, 2015 data was the most recent data available from the Census IPUMS microdata. If anything, given both inflation and the continued recovery and growth of the Michigan economy, this would suggest that the 2016 economic impacts from both household earnings and refugee-owned businesses would be even greater than our estimates based on 2015 data.

<sup>12</sup> Taxes are based on an estimated federal tax rate of 8.0% (including contributions to social security and Medicare) and an estimated effective Michigan state income tax rate of 2.5%. We also considered reducing the amount of refugee spending based on foreign remittances, but for Iraqi Americans, World Bank data implies that such remittances are negligible.

<sup>13</sup> We expect there to be some leakage of income spent outside of the four-county region. However, without complex economic modeling software or comprehensive surveying of the population, the precise amount of leakage is virtually impossible to calculate, and therefore is not included here.



Hamtramck youth during Global Detroit community picnic.

These benefits included the creation of 939 jobs directly,<sup>14</sup> along with 376 to 751 indirect and induced jobs supported by further spending. Total employment impact is between 1,315 jobs and 1,690 jobs.

In total, spending by refugee households had an **economic impact of between \$164.3 million and \$211.3 million** in 2015, including **between 1,315 and 1,690 total jobs.**

<sup>14</sup> Calculated with an employment multiplier of 8 jobs per million dollars in direct spending; see Appendix I for details.

BEST PRACTICE

## Michigan International Talent Solutions (MITS) Program

In Michigan, employers are experiencing a pronounced shortage of workers in high-demand fields. In 2016, for each unemployed worker there were 19 STEM job openings posted online in Michigan. Refugees and immigrants in Michigan are often highly skilled, coming from backgrounds in engineering, IT, and business and have the capacity to lessen the STEM gap. However, these skilled job seekers often struggle to return to their profession because they lack a professional network and familiarity with the professional job search process in the U.S. In order to connect these job seekers to Michigan employers, Michigan’s Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs and Michigan Office for New Americans created the Michigan International Talent Solutions (**MITS**) Program.

Michigan International Talent Solutions (MITS) program is a free job search training and coaching program designed to support highly skilled immigrants and refugees in Michigan return to their professional field. Eligible MITS participants who complete the skills training portion of the program advance to one-on-one job coaching. In this program, job seekers undergo training on how to adapt their resume and cover letter to a U.S. format, interview in the U.S., build a professional network, complete job applications and more. The MITS program supports active job seekers from application through salary negotiation and actively seeks to connect skilled immigrant talent with employers across Michigan.

Over the past year alone, MITS received 174 applications and accepted 73 professional immigrants into its program, placing **38 into full-time professional jobs in their industries with an average starting salary of \$50,000.** They also helped 3 additional program participants **move out of survival jobs and into career pathway “step-up” positions in their fields.**

# Refugee-Owned Businesses

Many refugees start businesses and are self-employed. Often times, self-employment is a strategic response to challenges a refugee may face in finding traditional employment or translating unique occupational skills and experience into the American context. Refugee-owned businesses create jobs and help grow the economy by purchasing goods and services. Spending by refugee-owned businesses increases transactions among other local firms; those suppliers hire more employees and, in turn, increase their own local spending.

Based on IPUMS Census microdata from the 2011-2015 ACS, the self-employment rate for Iraqis in Metro Detroit who immigrated since 2007 is 2.46%, resulting in an estimated 438 refugee-owned businesses.<sup>15</sup> This is significantly less than the average entrepreneurship rate estimated in our survey of local resettlement agencies and nonprofit services organizations, which was about 10%. We therefore consider this to be a conservative estimate of refugee business ownership. These businesses are in many different industries. According to the IPUMS Census data, the top five industries are couriers and messengers, grocery merchant wholesalers, beauty salons, private household services, and grocery stores.

To estimate the total expenditures of refugee-owned businesses, we use data from the 2012 Economic Census/ Survey of Business Owners to calculate the average value of sales, receipts, revenue, or shipments for each of the industries identified in the IPUMS Census data for self-employment. In the 2011-15 ACS IPUMS, of the 438 foreign-born Iraqis who immigrated since 2007 and who report being self-employed, 13% say their businesses are incorporated while 87% say their businesses are unincorporated. For the 381 unincorporated refugee-owned businesses, we use the 2012 Survey of Business Owners statistics for non-employer establishments to calculate the average value of sales, receipts, revenue, or shipments for each of the industries identified in the Census data under



Business on Conant Avenue along Detroit-Hamtramck border.

Figure 13.  
**Impact of Refugee-Owned Businesses in Metro Detroit 2015**

| Type of Impact    | Direct Impact  | Indirect and Induced Impacts   | Total Impact                     |
|-------------------|----------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <b>Economic</b>   | \$50.1 million | \$20 million to \$40.1 million | \$70.1 million to \$90.2 million |
| <b>Employment</b> | 228            | 91 to 182                      | 319 to 410                       |

the expectation that unincorporated businesses are likely to employ zero or very few additional employees. For the 57 incorporated refugee-owned businesses, we double the average receipts for non-employer establishments

<sup>15</sup> As in the previous section, we use data on foreign-born Iraqis as our proxy for refugee residents, given the predominance of Iraqis among Metro Detroit's refugee population.

since we expect these firms to be somewhat larger than the unincorporated businesses but on the lower end of employer establishments.<sup>16</sup> The total estimated expenditures of incorporated refugee-owned businesses add up to \$50.1 million in 2015. Applying the same multipliers as in previous sections, the indirect and induced impacts are \$20.0 million to \$40.1 million. Refugee-owned businesses therefore have a total economic impact of \$70.1 million to \$90.2 million.

Based on the Survey of Business Owners data, refugee-owned businesses also employ an estimated 228 employees.<sup>17</sup> Refugee-owned businesses also support

between 91 and 182 indirect and induced positions in the region, resulting in a total of between 319 and 410 jobs created.

<sup>16</sup> Economic Census/Survey of Business Owner data for employer establishments includes many very large firms and so skews the average receipts for each sector.

<sup>17</sup> Assumes four employees per firm (average across sectors) for the 13% of incorporated businesses. This rate reflects the average number of employees per firm estimated in the agency surveys.



(Left) New citizens during naturalization ceremony. (Right) Hardware store thrives in Detroit.

In total, refugee entrepreneurs generated **between \$70.1 million and \$90.2 million in economic benefits** for Southeast Michigan, including **between 319 and 410 local jobs**.

# Summary of Total Economic Impact

The sum of economic activity generated by these three sources—refugee resettlement agencies, refugee households, and refugee-owned businesses—is estimated to be between \$246.6 million and \$317.2 million. To accurately calculate the total economic impact of these three sources, however, it is necessary to remove several categories of activity that show up multiple times in the analyses. Specifically, we reduce the refugee household spending amounts by \$1.5 million to account for the earnings of refugee employees of resettlement agencies, \$4.2 million in earnings of refugee employees of refugee-owned businesses, and \$8.0 million in earnings of refugee business owners themselves.<sup>18</sup>

After removing the quantities, adjusting for taxes and savings, and applying the multipliers, the estimated **total economic impact of refugees in Southeast Michigan in 2016 is between \$229.6 million to \$295.3 million and between 1,798 and 2,311 jobs.**

As noted, this estimate is based solely on arrivals from 2007-2016, and the total impact from all refugees resettled in the region, including those resettled in the region prior to 2007, is much larger.

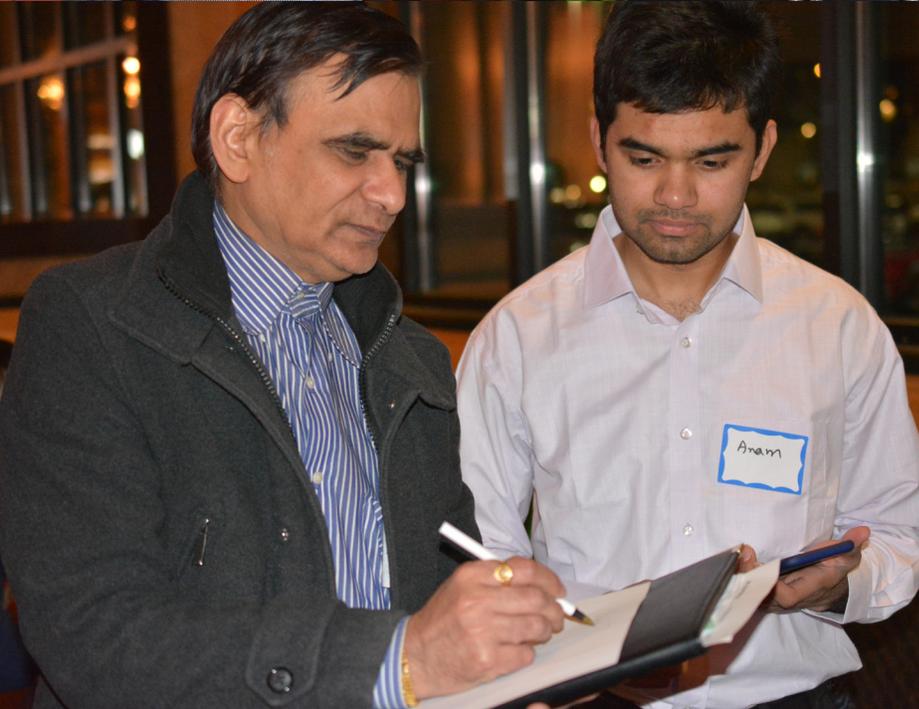


Gracie Xavier, Global Detroit's Director of Corporate and Economic Development Strategy, at Eastern Market.

Figure 14.  
**Total Impact of Refugee Resettlement in Metro Detroit 2016**

|                   | <i>Direct Impact</i> | <i>Indirect and Induced Impacts</i> | <i>Total Impact</i>                |
|-------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <b>Economic</b>   | \$164 million        | \$65.6 million to \$131.2 million   | \$229.6 million to \$295.3 million |
| <b>Employment</b> | 1,284                | 514 to 1,027                        | 1,798 to 2,311                     |

<sup>18</sup> Some studies also attempt to remove from such estimates any possible substitution effects, i.e., the goods and services that might have been provided by other local businesses had refugee entrepreneurs not done so. For more on the counterfactual, see Appendix 1. While we are not able to include this calculation, using the non-employer statistics is meant to ensure our estimates are on the conservative end.



## BEST PRACTICE

# Global Detroit Cultural Ambassadors

**ART SHADDA** was a professional electrical engineer in Iraq before landing in the U.S. more than a decade ago. Despite his foreign credentials and earning a Master's of Electrical Engineering from Oakland University, he struggled to secure meaningful employment in his field and worked in survival jobs for the better part of the last decade.

In 2015, Global Detroit's Cultural Ambassadors Professional Connector Program introduced Art to **KEVIN TAYLOR**, an engineer with a strong network of local professionals and decades worth of experience in the Michigan workforce. The Global Detroit Cultural Ambassadors Professional Connector program has matched 180 immigrant professionals with a volunteer connector who helps them build their professional networks in Southeast Michigan.

"Participating in the Connectors Program not only helped me identify new opportunities to network and meet other engineers, it also, through conversations with my Connector, provided me with valuable insights into the intricacies of the job search in the United States. My Connector, Kevin, helped me understand new ways of talking about my experiences and helped me refine my 'elevator pitch' so that I could more effectively and confidently explain why I am the best candidate for the job." Art has since secured a permanent position with a global leader in innovative engineering solutions for military vehicles.

# Conclusion

Research consistently shows that refugees in the U.S. are motivated, successful, and become fully integrated in their communities over time. Their achievements positively affect their neighbors as well. For instance, refugees' high employment rates result in increased tax contributions and local spending. The New American Economy reports that refugees in Michigan have a combined spending power of \$1.2 billion and contribute \$130 million in state and local taxes each year.<sup>19</sup> Refugees also fuel population growth and economic activity in communities, especially those across the Rust Belt, that have slower growth rates than the rest of the nation. Our study suggests that the more than 20,000 refugees resettled into Southeast Michigan in the last decade contributed over \$200 million to the regional economy. Similar studies suggest that refugees resettled between 2000 and 2012 in Cleveland contribute \$48 million to that regional economy and that refugees contribute \$1.6 billion annually to the Columbus region.<sup>20</sup>



In Michigan, **GOVERNOR RICK SNYDER** articulated his goal during the 2017 State of the State address to return the state to a population of over 10 million. In 2015, the most recent year data is available, refugee resettlement accounted for 39% of Michigan's



Elisabeth Gerber presents findings of this report to members of the press

<sup>19</sup> "From Struggle to Resilience: The Economic Impact of Refugees in America," New American Economy, June 2017, <http://www.newamericaneconomy.org/research/from-struggle-to-resilience-the-economic-impact-of-refugees-in-america>.

<sup>20</sup> "Economic Impact of Refugees in the Cleveland Area," Chmura Economics and Analytics, October 2013 and "Impact of Refugees in Central Ohio: 2015 Report" published by US Together, Community Refugee & Immigration Services, World Relief Columbus, and the City of Columbus, 2015.

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*From the cover* | Refugee-owned businesses provide important sources of income to help refugees achieve self-sufficiency, but also help grow the economy through spending and wages they provide the community.





population growth. While Michigan received a large number of refugees in 2015, their importance to population growth has been significant throughout the decade. Population growth helps rebound, stabilize, and grow local economies, and has been particularly important in peer Rust Belt metros. Cities like Cleveland, OH; Columbus, OH; Fargo, ND; Minneapolis-St. Paul, MN; and many more have enjoyed documented successes from refugee resettlement.<sup>21</sup> Across the United States, dozens of city, state, and regional efforts have taken off to welcome, integrate, and embrace the economic potential of refugees.

It is our hope that quantifying the economic impact of refugees in Southeast Michigan will inform the conversation about refugee resettlement and integration policies in the region. This study shows that refugees and refugee resettlement contribute to the economic activity, job creation, and prosperity of our communities and region in many ways. By working hard, starting businesses, and bringing resettlement money into the region, refugees and refugee resettlement agencies are helping to grow our population and revitalize our regional economy.

This study also attempts to show explicitly our data sources, methodology, and assumptions. We believe that similar economic impact studies will have value for other cities, metros, and states that welcome large populations of refugees. We aim to inspire others to replicate, refine, and improve upon our methods and create similar studies in their own regions.

In today's political climate, it is imperative to advocate for research-based solutions. Our communities should have access to factual information about the economic impacts of refugees and refugee resettlement to consider the issues surrounding them. We hope data-driven studies like this one will help reset the tone around refugee resettlement and demonstrate some of the significant and positive economic contributions being made in Southeast Michigan and other Rust Belt and Midwest communities facing population loss, rapidly aging workforces, and sluggish growth. ■

<sup>21</sup> For Cleveland and Columbus, one can look at the studies referenced elsewhere in this report that inspired us to develop our own report. Impacts in Minneapolis-St. Paul and Fargo are chronicled in David Dyssegaard Kallick and Silva Mathema, "Refugee Integration in the United States," Center for American Progress and Fiscal Policy Institute, June 2016, pp. 33-40.

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Detroit community engagement specialists support residents in connecting to community resources.



# Refugee Profiles



## Yasir Ibrahim

Starting a new life in America was not easy for Yasir, who fled from his war-torn hometown in Iraq in the early 2000s. Yasir arrived in America in 2008 determined to support himself and make a positive impact on his new community. With the help of Samaritas, Yasir enrolled into ESL classes and secured employment early upon his arrival. Despite his busy work schedule, Yasir never stopped finding ways to support others who came to America as refugees. Volunteering at Samaritas as a driver and interpreter inspired Yasir to dream for other ways to support incoming refugees.

Through his sheer resilience and steadfast spirit, Yasir successfully opened his own restaurant, Casper Burger and Escalope in Sterling Heights, in 2017 to employ and empower fellow refugees to self-sufficiency. Wanting to introduce something different than the Iraqi and Mediterranean fare that many of his fellow Iraqis were serving in their restaurants, as well as to demonstrate his own cultural integration, Yasir focuses Casper Burger and Escalope's menus on American food, employing 8-10 workers.

His restaurant is always busy as the quality of the food and service became well known soon after opening. Yasir never imagined that his road to America would mean an open door to start his own business that gives back to others. Nevertheless, Yasir hopes his story can empower others to never stop dreaming for themselves.



## Bashar Nazo & Hala Alshalchi

Bashar Nazo and Hala Alshalchi have been entrepreneurs for many years. In Iraq, Bashar, who has a bachelor's degree in economics and administration, started a videography and photography studio in 1984. He continued running the studio as a side business while working for the United Nations as a linguist and interpreter from 1996-2003. Bashar's wife, Hala, earned a bachelor's degree in biology. She then created two businesses: the first, a gallery that worked with glass and copper and the second, a popular florist business.

In 2003, Bashar became an interpreter and subcontractor for the U.S. Army. But as the situation in Iraq became increasingly dangerous, the couple decided to flee to

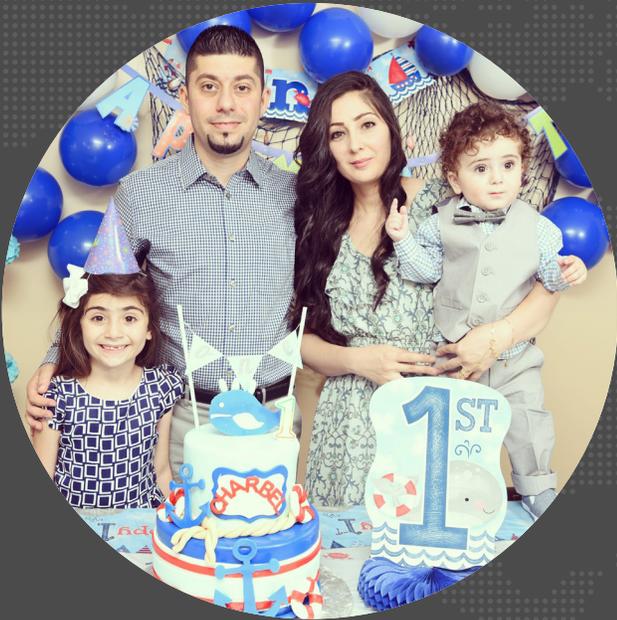
Jordan in 2006 with their three young children. Unfortunately, all of the possessions they had to leave behind were stolen from their house shortly after.

In 2008, Bashar, Hala, and their three children resettled in Salt Lake City, Utah. They remember vividly the feeling of being in a strange country, especially not knowing anybody else nearby. Nevertheless, they made the best out of their situation. Hala became trained as a lab technician and Bashar resumed his translation work. Still, most of their relatives and friends—even their children's friends—lived in Michigan. After two years, they decided to pick up everything once again and move to Troy, a rapidly diversifying northern suburb of Detroit located in Oakland County, where they still live today.

In Michigan, Bashar wanted to work in the nonprofit sector; as someone who had gone through resettlement, he wanted to serve refugees who were going through similar situations. In 2011, he became a case manager at Samaritas, a refugee resettlement agency. Hala worked as a phlebotomist, and their two oldest children became an ophthalmologist technician and a medical assistant.

But Bashar's and Hala's entrepreneurial spirit was still there, and as soon as the couple were able, they started their own businesses in addition to their day jobs. Bashar now owns Nazo Vision Inc., a videography and photography business, and Hala runs Hala Flowers, which provides a wide range of florist services. They estimate they both work 60-70 hours or more each week.

Bashar says they have an obligation to work hard, not just for themselves and for their clients, but also to please God. Bashar also believes being able to present the fruits of one's labors to others is what makes us human. "Life without working is nothing," he says.



## Zeyad Jabo & Rand Koraeel

Zeyad Jabo and his wife, Rand Koraeel, were living in Baghdad, Iraq when the war started. She had earned a bachelor's degree in civil engineering and he held a master's degree in electronics and communications engineering; they enjoyed a middle class life—with ups and downs, but relatively comfortable—when Zeyad's company began working on a project sponsored by the U.S. Government to build up the communications infrastructure in Iraq.

Because of his indirect participation with the U.S., Zeyad and his family started receiving threats. Although he was in danger, Zeyad was reluctant to leave behind their entire life and a job that was helping him provide a better future for his family.

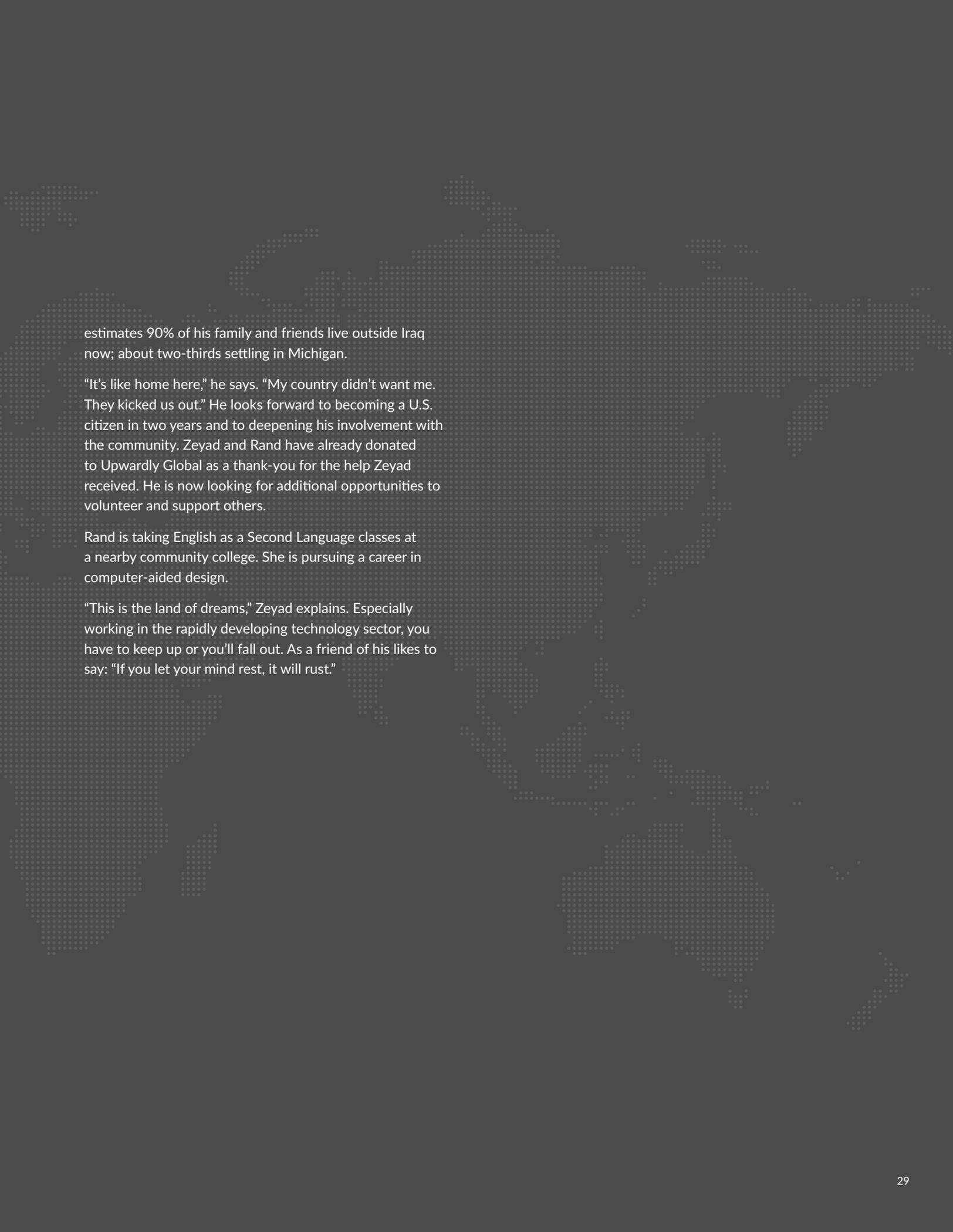
But after his dad received a threat in September 2013, Zeyad, Rand, and their 2-year-old daughter moved to Erbil, Kurdistan, in northern Iraq. The couple could not return to Baghdad, even to withdraw their life savings.

In December 2014, the family arrived as refugees in Madison Heights—a Detroit suburb in Oakland County—thanks to the resettlement efforts of Catholic Charities of Southeast Michigan. There, they immediately began applying for any type of work, from cashier to engineering positions. They were lucky, Zeyad says, because they had many friends in the region who helped them.

Zeyad also received help from Annie Fenton of Upwardly Global's Detroit office, a national nonprofit organization that provides skilled immigrants with job search training and services (Annie is now director of the Michigan International Talents Solution program at Governor Snyder's Michigan Office for New Americans). With Annie's help, Zeyad revamped his resume and went through a mock interview training. After three months, he accepted a position with a contractor for Comerica Bank as an applications engineer. He asked for his family's government assistance to be cut immediately afterward: "It's a burden to get this help from the government," he explains. "I'm not used to it."

Zeyad is now a technical lead for the Comerica Bank contractor, responsible for a team of people. He recently completed his Project Management Professional (PMP) certification. Even though he is assigned to three different projects amounting to a 170% workload, he still asks for more. "We are hard workers," he says with a smile.

Rand and Zeyad have welcomed their second child since arriving in the U.S. Zeyad's parents, who now live nearby in Sterling Heights, often look after their children. Zeyad



estimates 90% of his family and friends live outside Iraq now; about two-thirds settling in Michigan.

“It’s like home here,” he says. “My country didn’t want me. They kicked us out.” He looks forward to becoming a U.S. citizen in two years and to deepening his involvement with the community. Zeyad and Rand have already donated to Upwardly Global as a thank-you for the help Zeyad received. He is now looking for additional opportunities to volunteer and support others.

Rand is taking English as a Second Language classes at a nearby community college. She is pursuing a career in computer-aided design.

“This is the land of dreams,” Zeyad explains. Especially working in the rapidly developing technology sector, you have to keep up or you’ll fall out. As a friend of his likes to say: “If you let your mind rest, it will rust.”

# Extended methodology

The following is a detailed account of the methodology used to conduct this study. The intention of this appendix is twofold. First, it is intended to provide readers with necessary details in order to understand and assess the validity of the study's conclusions. Second, it is also intended as a guide to allow others to replicate the analyses described herein in their own communities.

The full report consists of a description of Southeast Michigan's population of refugees that have arrived since 2007, plus an economic impact analysis. In turn, the economic impact analysis consists of three components: refugee resettlement agency expenditures, refugee household expenditures, and refugee-owned business revenues. Each section required data from different sources and different estimation strategies.

## 1. DESCRIBING SOUTHEAST MICHIGAN'S REFUGEE POPULATION

It is surprisingly difficult to describe Southeast Michigan's refugee population. A primary data source is the Worldwide Refugee Admissions Processing System (WRAPS) data from the Refugee Processing Center (RPC). Using their Interactive Reporting feature, we generated a report on all refugee arrivals, by year, for each Michigan city, and then selected those cities in the four-county region. In total, these reports indicated 21,151 total refugee arrivals in the region between 2007 and 2016. However, these data are insufficient in several ways. First, they do not break down arrivals by age; this is only available at the state level.<sup>1</sup> Second, they document initial arrivals but do not account for in-migration and out-migration.<sup>2</sup> Third, in many cases, it appears they report the city of the resettlement agency to which the refugee is assigned and not of their ultimate residency.

To address some of these limitations (and to collect information for other parts of the study), we conducted a brief paper-and-pencil survey of the four local resettlement agencies operating in Southeast Michigan (Samaritas, Catholic Charities of Southeast Michigan, Jewish Family Services of Washtenaw, and U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants) in the early spring of 2017. We asked the agencies to report the nationalities and ages of all refugees they helped resettle, by year, since 2007. Unfortunately, due to staffing changes and an office move, one agency was only able to provide annual data for 2015 and 2016

(and not 2007-2014). To fill in the gaps, we went back to the WRAPS reports, and compared arrival data from the other three agencies from 2007-2014 for Iraqi, Syrian, Afghan, and "Other" arrivals. WRAPS numbers exceeded agency numbers for this time period in two categories: Iraq (by 4,784) and Other (by 20). For these categories, we added the additional numbers to the fourth agency's totals. For Afghans and Syrians, agency arrival numbers matched closely with WRAPS data, and so we assumed no resettlements of these nationalities for the fourth agency.

Using this methodology, we estimated a total of 21,466 arrivals during the ten-year period. These estimates are corroborated by conversations with numerous experts.

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<sup>1</sup> Knowing the age breakdown is necessary for estimating the working-age population in the economic impact analysis.

<sup>2</sup> There is some limited data on secondary migration inflows from the State of Michigan's Office of Refugee Services (ORS) that measures refugees who continue to receive services with ORS contractors. This data, however, does not track the secondary migration of refugees who leave ORS programs or who move after their ORS services end. The data from ORS indicates that Iraqis and Cubans were the top two nationalities to enter the state over the past year, but that the numbers of such secondary migrants are small compared to the number of new arrivals. ORS data demonstrates that over 100 refugees migrated into Michigan each year from 2009-2015. Outflows are much harder to quantify, but data from the U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement suggests there are slightly more refugees leaving Michigan than moving in. Because data at the county level (rather than state level) are unavailable, and because of the difficult nature of tracking secondary migration, we do not adjust arrival numbers for this report to account for either inflows or outflows in the region and assume a net effect of zero.

## 2. MEASURING THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT AGENCY EXPENDITURES

Refugee resettlement agencies receive funds from the U.S. State Department's Refugee Admissions Reception and Placement (R&P) Program and the Department of Health and Human Services' Cash and Medical Assistance (CMA) Program, as well as additional revenues from other grants and programs, gifts, donations, and fees for services. Currently, the total funds received by resettlement agencies through the federal government programs is \$1,125 per refugee arrival. These funds are then provided to refugees and spent on essential goods and services in the local economy.

To measure the amount and impact of spending by the four refugee resettlement agencies currently operating in Southeast Michigan, we included questions on the agency surveys about their FY 2016 refugee-related expenditures. We also asked the agencies to break their budget down into the following categories: staff wages, cash assistance, and supplies and services. Staff wages were further broken down by employees who were themselves refugees (to allow further analysis in a later section). We asked agencies with a larger geographic scope to limit their reporting to expenditures for refugee-related services in the four-county Southeast Michigan region.<sup>3</sup> The complete list of survey questions is provided in Appendix 2.<sup>4</sup>

Based on the survey responses of the four refugee resettlement agencies, the estimated direct impact of expenditures on resettlement-related activities was \$8.7 million in 2016. They also reported employing 117 people (including 96 full-time and 21 part-time positions).

## 3. MEASURING THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF REFUGEE HOUSEHOLD EXPENDITURES

This section describes our approach to estimating the impact of spending by the region's refugee households. Given the resources and time constraints we faced in conducting this study, it was not feasible to collect primary data (i.e., through household surveys). Instead, we relied on

existing administrative data on the economic activities of refugee households, supplemented by data from the agency surveys. Unfortunately (from a research perspective), no government agency at the federal, state or local level systematically collects such data. Therefore, it was necessary to find a reasonable proxy for this population. Following the approach used in several recent studies, we focused primarily on data on foreign-born people in the U.S. Census from countries where a large percentage of the arrivals were refugees (New American Economy, 2017; Center for American Progress & Fiscal Policy Institute, 2016; Migration Policy Institute, 2015).

In the case of Southeast Michigan, refugee arrivals from Iraq accounted for the vast majority of Iraqi immigrants over the ten-year period studied (2007-2016). Further, Iraqis made up the vast majority (90%) of refugee arrivals to the region. We therefore utilized data from the U.S. Census' 2011-2015 American Community Survey (ACS) IPUMS micro-level data on Iraqi-born immigrants who arrived between 2007-2015 for this report (this was the most recent data available). IPUMS is a sample of individual-level microdata from the U.S. Census. Using IPUMS, we are able to isolate economic activity—particularly employment, income, and business ownership—for residents of the four counties who were born in Iraq and immigrated within the last ten years. IPUMS supplies sample/frequency weights that must be applied to the sample data in order to obtain accurate estimates of population outcomes (in this case, perwt for individual data and hhwt for household data). Organizations seeking to replicate this method will require the capacity and resources to analyze the rich but complex IPUMS data.

Based on the 2011-2015 ACS/IPUMS data, we first identified refugee households as those in which the self-identified head of household was born in Iraq and arrived

<sup>3</sup> In the interest of calculating only new spending, the dollar amount of grants awarded by local foundations and funders within the four-county region should be removed, if applicable. This is done because grantors likely would have awarded the money to other local organizations had they not supported the refugee resettlement agencies. Based on resettlement agency responses, the amount of local financial support for refugee-related activities in FY 2016 was minimal.

<sup>4</sup> As a check against the official U.S. government figures, we also asked the agencies to provide estimates of employment, earnings, and entrepreneurship rates. We also sent the economic and employment questions to other local nonprofit service providers that work with refugees after the 90-day resettlement period.

in the U.S. in 2007 or later. We expect that this definition will overestimate the number of refugee households in some ways, by including households that are headed by Iraqi-born people who arrived as non-refugees. It will underestimate the number of refugee households in other ways, by excluding refugees from countries other than Iraq and refugees living in households that are headed by non-refugees.<sup>5</sup> We expect that these two biases will roughly cancel each other. In total, we identify 4,340 such households.

To estimate spending by these households, we start by computing the mean annual total household income for refugee-headed households (as defined above), which in the 2011-2015 ACS is \$30,524.

We then estimate the federal and state taxes paid by refugee-headed households in order to remove these amounts from the total and obtain estimates of net (after-tax) income. Taxes include estimated federal income taxes, contributions to Social Security and Medicare, and Michigan state income taxes. After accounting for credits, deductions, and exemptions, the effective federal tax rate (excluding excise taxes) is 8% for households earning between \$24,400 and \$47,700.<sup>6</sup> The effective state tax rate for households earning between \$17,000 and \$34,000 is 2.5%.<sup>7</sup>

After removing taxes paid, we further reduced our spending estimates to account for savings. Several sources suggest that savings for the lowest two quintiles of incomes are negligible.<sup>8</sup> To be conservative, we used a savings rate of 1% and subtracted this from earnings.

Finally, we asked resettlement agencies and nonprofit community-based organizations about remittances sent by refugees to their families living abroad. The vast majority of respondents noted that they did not discuss this type of private matter with clients and that they did not feel qualified to make reliable estimates. Based both on dialogue with the Migration Policy Institute, as well as a review of the World Bank's Bilateral Remittance Matrix (looking at remittances from the U.S. to Iraq), we concluded that remittances for this population are roughly zero.<sup>9</sup> One research expert hypothesized that remittance amounts are not high for several reasons, including that recent refugees are less likely to have large disposable incomes and many refugees' families end up joining them in the U.S.

Multiplying after-tax/disposable mean household income by the number of refugee households yields estimated total direct refugee household spending in 2015 of \$117.4 million.

We then use these estimates to calculate the employment impacts of direct refugee household spending. A recent Michigan Nonprofit Research Program report used IMPLAN software to determine that for every \$1 million in household spending, an estimated 8.13 jobs were sustained.<sup>10</sup> A review of similar economic impact studies showed a ratio of 8 jobs per \$1 million in spending was appropriate. We apply the more conservative calculation of about 8 jobs per \$1 million in spending to determine a direct employment impact of 939 new jobs.

## 4. MEASURING THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF REFUGEE-OWNED BUSINESS EXPENDITURES

This section describes our methodology for estimating the economic impact of expenditures by refugee-owned businesses in the region. The first step in determining this impact is to calculate the number of businesses. We use the (weighted) number of people in the 2011-2015 ACS IPUMS that reported being self-employed to estimate the number of refugees that own businesses, as well as the industries (from the reported sector of these self-employed workers). 438 Iraqis that arrived between 2007 and 2015 (2.49%) report being self-employed, a substantially smaller number than the estimate of approximately 10% business owners

<sup>5</sup> We assume that refugees from Syria, Afghanistan, and other countries that comprise the remaining 10% of refugees to Southeast Michigan had roughly similar employment, income, and business ownership outcomes and impacts.

<sup>6</sup> Robertson Williams, "Federal Taxes Are Very Progressive," Tax Policy Center, August 11, 2016 at <http://www.taxpolicycenter.org/taxvox/federal-taxes-are-very-progressive>.

<sup>7</sup> "Who Pays? A Distributional Analysis of the Tax Systems in All 50 States, 5th Edition," Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy, January 2015 at <https://itep.org/whopays/>.

<sup>8</sup> Sam Ro, "CHART OF THE DAY: Rich People Really Love to Save Their Money," Business Insider, March 1, 2013 at <http://www.businessinsider.com/chart-savings-rate-by-income-level-2013-3>, citing Dynan, Skinner, and Zeldes in the *Journal of Political Economy*, vol. 112, no. 2, April 2004.

<sup>9</sup> Bilateral remittances between U.S. residents and Iraq are small (and, presumably, similarly small for Syrians). See <http://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/migrationremittancesdiasporaissues/brief/migration-remittances-data>.

<sup>10</sup> Public Sector Consultants, Inc., "Economic Benefits of Michigan's Nonprofit Sector," Michigan Nonprofit Research Program, 2004.

reported in the agency surveys.<sup>11</sup> We therefore view this as a highly conservative estimate of the entrepreneurship rate.<sup>12</sup>

To determine total refugee-owned business expenditures, we utilize industry-specific data on the value of sales, receipts, revenue, or shipments for businesses by sector from the 2012 U.S. Census' Survey of Business Owners. These data report statistics for both employer and non-employer establishments. For the 87% of businesses that are identified as unincorporated, we apply the non-employer estimates directly. For the additional 13% that are identified as incorporated, we double the non-employer estimates to capture the notion that these firms are likely to be larger than the unincorporated/non-employer firms but still on the small side. The average values by sector are multiplied by the reported number of estimated refugee-owned businesses in each industry (from the 2011-2015 ACS IPUMS) to compute aggregate expenditures, which we estimate to be \$50.1 million.

We then estimate the number of employees hired by refugee-owned businesses and the portion of employees that are refugees. The U.S. Census' 2015 County Business Patterns reports the number of employees in specific industries in the four-county region; however, like the Economic Census/Survey of Business Owners, this includes both large and small establishments, and the result—an average of 14 employees per business—is probably too high for our purposes. Instead, we rely on agency survey responses, which estimate that about 86% of refugee-owned businesses hired additional employees, averaging 4 employees per business. Survey responses also estimated an average of 55% of these employees were refugees.

## 5. MULTIPLIERS

The concept of multipliers is important in measuring total economic impact. While direct spending (by agencies, households and businesses) measures initial expenditures, that money is spent again and again in the local economy, multiplying the impact. There are two types of secondary effects resulting from the initial expenditure. The first is indirect impact, or the increased spending by those who benefited from the direct impact. For example, if a refugee-owned business pays a supplier for a product, that supplier will in turn purchase raw materials from another business to sustain their supply. This business-to-business effect is an example of an indirect impact. The second type of

effect is induced impact, which refers to increased spending by employees and their households due to the direct and indirect impacts. For instance, a major supplier for a refugee-owned business will hire staff or increase wages of existing staff to fill an order. These employees will then spend a portion of their income in the local economy.

To capture the increase in economic benefits through additional rounds of spending and job creation, most studies conduct complex economic modeling using systems such as IMPLAN or RIMS II. Because such modeling is expensive and leaves readers unsure of how conclusions were produced, we instead conducted a careful review of dozens of economic impact studies and found that most multipliers ranged from 1.4 to 1.8. We therefore decided to use 1.4 as a lower bound and 1.8 as an upper bound to capture the likely range of total economic impact for each of the economic activities, with the true measure likely somewhere in between.

## 6. DOUBLE-COUNTING

The sum of economic activity generated by these three sources—refugee resettlement agencies, refugee households, and refugee-owned businesses—is estimated to be between \$246.6 million and \$317.2 million. To accurately calculate the total economic impact of these three sources, however, it is necessary to remove several categories of activity that show up multiple times in the analyses. Specifically, we reduce the direct refugee household spending amounts by \$1.5 million to account for the earnings of refugee employees of resettlement agencies, \$4.2 million in earnings of refugee employees of refugee-owned businesses, and \$8.0 million in earnings of refugee business owners themselves. After removing the quantities, adjusting for taxes and savings, and applying the multipliers, the estimated total economic impact of refugees in Southeast Michigan in 2016 is between \$229.6 million to \$295.3 million and between 1,798 and 2,311 jobs. As noted, this estimate is based solely on arrivals from 2007-2016, and the total impact from all refugees resettled in the region, including those resettled prior to 2007, is much larger.

<sup>11</sup> Again, we assume that non-Iraqi refugees have similar socio-economic characteristics as the Iraqi refugees, including similar business ownership rates.

<sup>12</sup> Census data shows a 9.2% entrepreneurship rate for Iraqi immigrants in the region (not limited to recent arrivals), which is on par with agency estimates.

## 7. THE COUNTERFACTUAL

The purpose of this study is to estimate the economic impact of resettling 20,000+ refugees in Southeast Michigan over the last decade, relative to not being a resettlement location at all. For some impacts, such as spending and hiring by the refugee resettlement agencies, the reduction in impact in the absence of resettlement would have been complete. In other words, the federal program dollars that accompany each refugee and are spent in the local economy on goods and services, as well as earmarked grants and gifts, would have been zero.

In other cases, however, we might expect that some of the activity we see still would have taken place, but with different people undertaking those activities. For example, refugee workers may fill unmet labor demands, take jobs other workers would fill, or grow total output. This is a hotly debated issue (with significant evidence that refugees and immigrants do grow regional output), but even if one believed that refugee workers compete for a fixed number of jobs, we found little research on how one would develop an actual substitution or discount estimation. By contrast, numerous studies portray economies not as zero-sum entities, but dynamic systems. For example, a recent Chicago Council on Global Affairs study looked at the impacts of immigrant labor in the restaurant and hospitality industries in the Midwest, suggesting several reasons why U.S.-born labor should welcome immigrants and refugees as a means of improving regional economies.<sup>13</sup>

Based on this intuition, we expect the substitution effect of refugee household spending is negligible.

In contrast, it is possible that the effects of at least some refugee-owned businesses would be taken up by non-refugees in the absence of resettlement. Theoretically, if a refugee entrepreneur had never arrived in Michigan, there is some chance that the goods or services he or she provides would have been provided by another business in the region. Refugee ownership of a gas station franchise, for example, is likely more of a substitute (for other gas stations) than a refugee-owned business that exports local products to the refugee's home country or that pioneers a new technology. The IPUMS data on Iraqi-owned businesses does provide weighted estimates of the number of such businesses and their specific sectors. However, we doubt the ability to accurately estimate the substitution effect for many of these sectors. For example, refugees in Southeast

Michigan are heavily involved in the grocery sector. For groceries that offer unique Middle Eastern foods in areas of Macomb County, where there traditionally has been little Middle Eastern food, we expect there would be less substitution. If refugee courier and messenger services—one of the top five industry sectors, according to IPUMS data—were servicing primarily immigrants sending and receiving mail and packages back home, there would be far less substitution than if such businesses were competing with FedEx or UPS in servicing law firms and other businesses.

While quantifying the counterfactual to develop the net impact of refugee business expenditures might be something that a study with more resources could undertake, we were not able to develop a reasonable means to accomplish this objective. This suggests that our estimates of the net impact of refugee business spending may be inflated. However, at numerous points throughout the analysis, we made more conservative decisions about the data sources for gross revenues and number of employees that should provide some confidence that our estimates are not inflated.

## 8. FISCAL IMPACT

This economic impact study does not include a fiscal analysis, which would measure state and local tax costs and benefits. Such an analysis was beyond the budget and time that we could devote to this project. Recently, in response to a March 6, 2017 memorandum from President Trump to the Secretary of State, Attorney General, and Secretary of Homeland Security, a draft study dated July 29, 2017 entitled “The Fiscal Costs of U.S. Refugee Admissions Program at the Federal, State, and Local Levels, from 2005-2014” sought to estimate the long-term costs of the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program on the federal, state, and local level. The draft report found that refugees brought in \$63 billion more revenue to federal, state, and local governments than they cost over the 2005-2014 period surveyed. Unfortunately, the report's official release is mired in politics, but a copy of the report is available online.

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<sup>13</sup> The Chicago Council report cites a 2016 report from the National Academy of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine that convened leading national economists—immigration supporters and skeptics alike—whose 500-page review of how immigrants affect wages and employment for US-born workers found that immigrant labor, even low-skilled labor, has “little to no negative effects” on long-term wages and employment for native-born workers.

It is estimated that refugees become net contributors to the tax system by their eighth year in the United States, on average.<sup>14</sup> Many do so much sooner, some even within a few months. Estimating the taxes paid by refugees is not overly complicated (and, in fact, the New American Economy pegs the state and local taxes paid by refugees in Michigan to exceed \$100 million annually), but determining the public spending—including education, workforce development, emergency needs, and public benefits—required to help integrate refugees involves a level of research beyond our scope. As noted, according to the studies we have reviewed, within a decade, the average net tax impact of welcoming refugees turns positive.

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<sup>14</sup> William N. Evans and Daniel Fitzgerald, "The Economic and Social Outcomes of Refugees in the United States: Evidence from the ACS." National Bureau of Economic Research, June 2017 at <http://www.nber.org/papers/w23498>.

# Survey Questions

Refugee resettlement agencies and nonprofit community-based organizations providing services to refugees were asked some or all of the following questions. We continuously revised questionnaires sent to local organizations as our research process solidified and we attempted to streamline the survey to ensure we did not burden organizations unnecessarily. Some questions, particularly those related to budget and refugee arrivals, only apply to resettlement agencies.

1. What are the beginning and end dates of your fiscal year?
2. What was your total operating budget for fiscal year 2016?
3. What dollar amount of your operating budget went toward refugee resettlement activities?
4. What %age/amount of your refugee resettlement budget went toward staff wages?
5. What %age/amount of your refugee resettlement budget was devoted to purchasing supplies or services for refugees?
6. What %age/amount was given to refugees as cash payment?
7. What are the total dollar values of refugee-oriented grants your organization received during the last fiscal year?  
Please list by granting agency.
8. What was the average number of employees (full-time/part-time) working on refugee resettlement services at your agency during the last fiscal year?
9. How many refugees are currently employed by your agency?
10. How many facilities does your agency own/rent?
11. Please provide the number of refugees by age and country of origin that your organization resettled in each of the past 10 years

| Ages 0-15             | Ages 16-64          | Ages 64+ |
|-----------------------|---------------------|----------|
|                       |                     |          |
| Afghanistan           | Iraq                | Syria    |
|                       |                     |          |
| Other African Nations | Other Asian Nations | Other    |
|                       |                     |          |

12. Please provide your best estimates for the following questions. We understand that it is unlikely that you have precise data, but it's extremely helpful to have an estimate based on your experiences with the refugee community.
  - %age of refugees (resettled between 2007-2016) that left Metro Detroit?
  - %age of refugees (resettled between 2007-2016) that later moved into Metro Detroit?
  - Which nationalities most commonly leave the area?
  - %age of working-age adults that are employed within two years of being in the area?
  - %age of working-age adults that are currently employed?
  - %age of households that are self-sufficient?
  - %age that send remittances to their families abroad?
  - For those who send remittances, what do you estimate is the average annual amount?
13. Of those refugees who are currently employed, what would you estimate to be their average annual earnings?
14. Of those refugees who are currently employed, what would you estimate to be the average number of hours working per week?
15. Across caseloads and on average, how many individuals per household do you estimate are wage earners?
16. What are the top two economic sectors that most of your clients work in?  
What %age work in each sector?
17. What %age of refugees that your agency has assisted in the past ten years do you estimate to own businesses today (including self-employed)?  
Out of all of these businesses, what %age do you estimate have additional employees?  
Of those businesses that have additional employees, what do you estimate to be the average number of employees?  
Of those businesses that have additional employees, what %age of those employees do you estimate are refugees themselves?  
In which sectors are most of these refugee-owned businesses?
18. What other organizations or agencies do you suggest we contact for information about refugee-owned businesses?

APPENDIX 3

# Placement of Iraqi & Syrian Refugees, 2007-2016\*

| Community            | Iraqis       | Syrians    |
|----------------------|--------------|------------|
| <b>Macomb County</b> | <b>6,709</b> | <b>431</b> |
| Center Line          | 20           | 428        |
| Chesterfield         | 1            |            |
| Clinton Township     | 148          | 428        |
| Eastpointe           |              | 1          |
| Fraser               | 18           |            |
| Macomb Township      | 152          |            |
| Mount Clemens        | 10           |            |
| New Baltimore        | 2            |            |
| New Haven            | 10           |            |
| Other                | 9            |            |
| Richmond             | 4            |            |
| Roseville            | 6            |            |
| Saint Clair Shores   | 3            |            |
| Shelby Township      | 505          | 2          |
| Sterling Heights     | 4,226        |            |
| Utica                | 59           |            |
| Warren               | 1,525        |            |
| Washington           | 11           |            |

| Community             | Iraqis        | Syrians    |
|-----------------------|---------------|------------|
| <b>Oakland County</b> | <b>10,499</b> | <b>659</b> |
| Auburn Hills          | 6             |            |
| Beverly Hills         | 3             |            |
| Birmingham            | 4             |            |
| Bloomfield Hills      | 76            | 17         |
| Bloomfield Township   | 26            | 29         |
| Clarkston             | 3             |            |
| Commerce Township     | 104           |            |
| Farmington            | 87            |            |
| Farmington Hills      | 420           | 7          |
| Ferndale              | 28            |            |
| Hazel Park            | 228           |            |
| Keego Harbor          | 12            |            |
| Lake Orion            | 2             |            |
| Madison Heights       | 1,022         | 4          |
| Milford               | 1             |            |
| Novi                  | 105           |            |
| Oak Park              | 306           |            |
| Orchard Lake          | 2             |            |
| Ortonville            | 1             |            |
| Pleasant Ridge        |               | 2          |
| Pontiac               | 5             |            |
| Rochester             | 50            |            |
| Rochester Hills       | 94            |            |
| Royal Oak             | 40            |            |
| South Lyon            | 7             |            |
| Southfield            | 4,440         | 594        |
| Troy                  | 2,664         |            |
| Walled Lake           | 68            |            |
| Waterford             | 49            |            |
| West Bloomfield Twp   | 571           |            |
| White Lake            | 5             |            |
| Wixom                 | 65            |            |
| Wolverine Lake        | 5             |            |

| Community               | Iraqis     | Syrians    |
|-------------------------|------------|------------|
| <b>Washtenaw County</b> | <b>408</b> | <b>127</b> |
| Ann Arbor               | 359        | 120        |
| Delhi Charter Twp       | 2          |            |
| Saline                  | 6          |            |
| Willis                  | 1          |            |
| Wolverine Lake          | 40         | 7          |

| Community           | Iraqis       | Syrians    |
|---------------------|--------------|------------|
| <b>Wayne County</b> | <b>1,505</b> | <b>426</b> |
| Brownstown          | 5            |            |
| Canton              | 15           |            |
| Dearborn            | 808          |            |
| Dearborn Heights    | 205          |            |
| Detroit             | 310          | 20         |
| Garden City         | 4            | 1          |
| Grosse Pointe       | 5            |            |
| Hamtramck           | 2            | 38         |
| Harper Woods        | 4            |            |
| Highland Park       | 12           |            |
| Inkster             | 38           |            |
| Livonia             | 31           |            |
| Northville          | 12           |            |
| Redford             | 13           |            |
| Taylor              | 3            |            |
| Trenton             | 5            |            |
| Westland            | 32           |            |
| Woodhaven           | 1            |            |

\* These geographies are from WRAPSNet and presented in unadulterated form.



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