

## Refugees in Georgia: The Facts

- As new Georgians, refugees are **contributors** to communities. Competing in a 21st-century economy will require taking full advantage of **our most important resource—our people**. That means welcoming the new Americans who are **starting businesses, committing to local communities, and helping to build a stronger economy**.
- 80 percent of refugee households in Georgia are working and paying their own expenses within six months of arrival—**the highest early self-sufficiency rate in the country**.
- Refugees in Georgia are a **net asset to the state within six months of arrival** and contribute more to local, state, and federal budgets than costs associated with their initial resettlement.
- Refugees are immigrants to the United States who are fleeing their homeland because of persecution and **invited by the American people**. Refugees undergo **the most rigorous background, security, and medical screens** of any class of immigrants.
- One year after arrival, refugees apply for lawful permanent residency (green card). Four years later, they are eligible to become **US citizens**. Refugees are **grateful to Americans** for helping them regain their self-sufficiency and become patriotic citizens.
- The State of **Georgia does not fund any programs specifically for refugees**. Georgia voluntarily administers federal pass-through dollars; all refugee funds in Georgia’s state budget come from the federal budget.
- Refugees represent diverse faiths, including Christians, Muslims, Jews, Hindus, and Buddhists.
- **Approximately 3 percent** of students in DeKalb County Schools are refugees. Refugee enrollments result in more than \$12 million in federal funds for DeKalb County Schools per year, including support for English learning and parent engagement. Schools with significant refugee populations have **after-school programs** in partnership with local organizations.
- The refugee-resettlement program enjoys **bipartisan support in Congress**.

Turn over for information about our **shared values**, refugees’ **economic impact**, and the benefits of **welcoming communities**.



## Shared Values

Americans are defined by how they live their lives and what they do to contribute. **Refugee families come to our state to build a better, safer life—a quintessentially American thing to do.**

When you look at immigrants in our community, you see people who share our values—**people working hard to provide for their families and build a stronger economy** for all of us.

In line with **its strong faith traditions and humanitarian spirit**, Georgia has embraced those fleeing persecution and violence for more than 30 years. Georgia's refugee resettlement program is among the most successful and is **seen as a model nationwide.**

## Economic Impact

Like other immigrants, refugees are **more likely to start businesses.**

Immigrants represent about 13% of the US population but accounted for **39% of net growth in homeownership** between 2000 and 2010.

Refugees are **welcomed by many of Georgia's largest industries**, such as poultry processing, manufacturing, warehousing, tourism, and hospitality. Initially refugees tend to work in entry-level jobs, often during second or third shift, in sectors with labor shortages.

In program year 2013 CRSA collectively assisted 2,247 refugees to obtain jobs in Georgia, with an average hourly wage of \$8.65, above minimum wage. Collectively this translates annually to **\$1,696,970 in sales taxes and \$337,713 in property taxes paid**, and **contributions of \$752,520 to unemployment and \$6,181,822 to FICA.**

## Welcoming Communities

America is **the land of the free and the home of the brave.** Welcoming refugees into our communities speaks to our commitment to this fundamental principle.

Immigrants and refugees realize the value of **working hard and doing your part** to contribute to communities.

Becoming a more welcoming community means **more customers for our local businesses, more jobs created by immigrant entrepreneurs, and a thriving economy** that benefits us all.

**Annually Georgia's communities welcome 2,500 – 3,000 newly arriving refugees. Georgia is one of the nation's most populous states and becomes home to refugees in proportion to its size.** Georgia's affordable housing market and key industries, such as food processing and manufacturing, suit it for successful refugee integration. Five local agencies help refugees adjust initially, and a larger network of organizations supports refugees moving along the path to self-sufficiency.