Building Resilience and Community Support and Capacity to Serve Refugees:

Lessons from Catholic Charities of Oregon

2 pm ET, Wednesday, October 16, 2019

*This webinar is intended as an off-the-record discussion with the JFI network. Please direct all press inquiries to Mark Priceman at mpriceman@usccb.org.
Introduction

Tony Cube, JFI National Manager, USCCB/MRS
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Matthew Westerbeck, Resettlement Director, CC of Oregon
Todd Scribner, Education Coordinator, USCCB/MRS
Matt Wilch
Refugee Policy Advisor
MRS/USCCB
Last three years....

Trajectory over last three years

- Administration declining commitment
- Congressional appropriations maintained
- Reduced domestic, international infrastructure
Current Moment

- FY2020 PD
- EO 13888
Strengthen bi-partisan Congressional support for refugees
  • Public statements, letters to administration from members of Congress
  • Visit to refugee resettlement offices
  • Consider supporting the GRACE Act

Build State, Local Support for refugees
  • Public statements, letters to administration from members of Congress
  • Consent to resettlement in State and Locale

Build collaborations in Catholic world and beyond
Today’s Call

- Oregon’s success—USCCB wanting to put a spotlight on the good work and the approach as we explore how best to help the Catholic network build State and Local support and capacity

- USCCB collaboration with Universities
Oregon Success

Matthew Westerbeck
Resettlement Director
Catholic Charities of Oregon
Winning State Support for Refugee Services

Catholic Charities

#REFUGEES
WELCOME
HB 2508
Oregon’s Refugee Resettlement Collaborative

- Catholic Charities of Oregon
- Lutheran Community Services NW
- Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon
- Unite Oregon
- IRCO (Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization)
Enrolled
House Bill 2508

Introduced by Representative PILUSO; Representatives ALONSO LEON, PAHEY, GREENLICK, CONN-GUYER, NERON, PRUSAK, SCHOUTEN, WILLIAMS, Senators DEMBROW, GELSER, MUNNING JR, MONNES ANDERSON (Presession filed.)

CHAPTER ..................................................

AN ACT

Concerning refugees and refugees in Oregon; and declaring an emergency.
Whereas refugees arriving in the United States are at high risk and have high needs because of the long term trauma and suffering they have endured; and
Whereas studies have shown that with appropriate services and intensive case management, refugees can typically become employed within six months of their arrival and make immense contributions to the economy, diversity and social fabric of this state; and
Whereas the federal government has been drastically cutting budgets for refugee services and these budget cuts have had a direct impact on refugees living in Oregon communities; and
Whereas additional cuts to the federal budget for refugee services are likely and will continue to prevent Oregon’s refugees from receiving in full the specialized social services they need to become self-sufficient and thrive; now, therefore,

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Oregon:

Section 1. (1) As used in this section:
   (a) “Eligible agency” means an agency that has contracted with the United States Department of State under 8 U.S.C. 1522(c) to provide initial resettlement and case management services to refugees.
   (b) “Refugee” means an individual who is not a United States citizen, who has been in the United States for 60 months or less and who is any of the following:

- Refugees
- Asylees
- Permanent residents

Legislative Champion

- List attributes of a strong champion
  - Refugee constituents
  - Chair or sits on human services, healthcare, and/or housing committee
  - Proven record/ability to engage both sides of the aisle
Oregon’s Welcoming Refugees Bill – HB 2508

Catholic Charities
As Feds Crack Down, Refugee Resettlement Agencies Ask Oregon For Help

by Erica Morrison Follow OPB March 14, 2019 10:15 a.m. | Portland, Ore.

On a cold and dark winter night, dozens of volunteers gathered at Portland International Airport to give a warm welcome to a family of 11.
HB 2508: Welcoming Refugees Bill

Our history of welcoming refugees is threatened.

Oregon is a critical part of the global response to the refugee crisis.

Countries in blue are where refugees come from who arrive in Oregon.

What is HB 2508?

HB 2508 will provide 1,800 refugees with Extended Case Management (ECM) over two years, including employment services and supports to school aged children. Refugees who receive ECM for two years are significantly less likely to depend on public assistance long-term. In addition, these funds will stabilize the resettlement process to ensure that refugees can reunite with their families and Oregon will remain a welcoming state for refugees.

Problem

Cuts in refugee admissions and funding at the federal level put local refugees at risk of falling through the cracks, experiencing economic hardship and their path to becoming full participants in our communities in jeopardy. In addition, funding gaps from federal sources for refugee resettlement are jeopardizing Oregon’s history of welcoming refugees.

Solution

Intervening in refugees from their first few years of arrival accelerates their trajectory for success. Studies have shown that with proper support and case management, refugees are generally employed within six months and bring immense contributions to the economy, diversity, and social fabric of the state. When refugees are better equipped with support services and ECM, crisis situations are less common, thus saving taxpayer money going toward emergency responses, emergency room visits and public assistance.

“I am grateful to America for welcoming and giving me a chance. In gratitude, I have spent the past 30 years working tirelessly to elevate myself and give support to others so that they can keep the American dream alive. I had only $0 and a plastic bag upon my arrival in this country, and I was able to work my way up past self-sufficiency to being able to give back to the community.”

— Sam Subell, Refugee and Community Leader
Lunch & Learn

Advocacy Days
Bipartisan Talking Points

• The United States has been resettling refugees since end of WWII;
• Refugee Resettlement has ALWAYS been bipartisan and enjoyed bipartisan support in Congress;
• Republicans that have supported refugee resettlement (see Senator Mark Hatfield for Oregon);
• Refugee Resettlement has been an key part of our country’s response to humanitarian crises, and important for international relationships;
• In fact, it was under President Reagan that the US welcomed the most refugees in a given year (Nearly 200,000 refugees in the early 1980’s)
Economic Contributions

• Gather state-specific data on: tax revenue generated; consumer dollars;
• Refugees pay back $21K more in taxes than they receive in benefits;
• Refugees are 1.5 times more likely to be small business owners/entrepreneurs;
• Avg. refugee household, within 25 years, earns $14K more than the total average of all US households;
• Refugees have higher labor force participation;
• Refugee labor force participation is essential for a number of industries: manufacturing, hospitality, food and animal production, service industry;
• Immigration is essential to economic growth
Business Community and Health Care Systems
Materials and Social Media

- T-Shirts
- Stickers
- Postcards

#REFUGEES
WELCOME
HB 2508
The Future

Research:
• RAIN International
• Portland State University

Permanent Funding
• State Refugee Coordinator
• “Program Option Plan”
Oregon’s Refugee Resettlement Collaborative

- Catholic Charities Oregon
- Lutheran Community Services NW
- Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon
- Unite Oregon
- IRCO (Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization)
USCCB & Universities

Todd Scribner
Education Coordinator
MRS/USCCB
Refugee Resettlement and Religion – USCCB/Princeton University Project

Objectives

- To fill the gap in our scholarly and practical understanding to strengthen refugee services
- To create a network of those working on and invested in resettlement
- To increase literacy in refugees’ religious identities
- To support interfaith organizing and collaboration among service providers
- To open up channels of conversation between practitioners and scholars
Oral History Project

- Gathers and shares oral histories from refugees
  - Committed to collecting stories from, and involving, the full range of religious communities in an open access archive
- Provides an opportunity for further civic participation with and for refugees
- Enhances spaces of dialogue, listening, and chaplaincy within communities along intercultural and interfaith lines and across the country
- Let’s collaborate!

Photo by Brian Kostiuk - @BriKost on Unsplash
Potential for partnerships

- Open to partnerships
- Intern Program
- Diverse Skills = Comprehensive Approach
Interested?

› Are you doing or interested in doing a CC of Oregon-type legislative effort in your state?
  
  *Contact Matt Wilch mwilch@usccb.org*

› Are you interested in hosting a Princeton intern, or is a Catholic university in your area interested in partnering with USCCB to provide interns?
  
  *Contact Todd Scribner tscribner@usccb.org*
Q & A / Discussion

jfi@usccb.org