

**PROPOSED REFUGEE ADMISSIONS
FOR FISCAL YEAR 2019**

REPORT TO CONGRESS

**SUBMITTED ON BEHALF OF
THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES
TO THE
COMMITTEES ON THE JUDICIARY
UNITED STATES SENATE
AND
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**IN FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS OF
SECTIONS 207(D)(1) AND (E)
OF THE
IMMIGRATION AND NATIONALITY ACT**

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**



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INTRODUCTION

Pursuant to Section 207(d) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA), the President proposes resettling up to 30,000 refugees in the United States in Fiscal Year (FY) 2019. This ceiling takes into account the operational realities associated with security measures to protect national security and public safety, as well as the need to conduct credible fear screenings of aliens seeking asylum at our borders and address the backlog of affirmative asylum cases, which stands at about 320,000 (approximately 492,000 individuals), the highest since 2002. That is in addition to the asylum case backlog in the immigration court system, which stands at about 348,000.

Who is a Refugee?

Under Section 101(a)(42) of the INA, a refugee is an alien who, generally, has experienced past persecution or has a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion. Individuals who meet the statutory definition may be considered for either refugee status under Section 207 of the INA if they are outside the United States, or asylum status under Section 208 of the INA, if they are already in the United States or present themselves at a U.S. port of entry. Both refugee and asylum status are forms of humanitarian protection offered by the United States.

Individuals outside the United States seeking admission as a refugee under Section 207 of the INA are processed through the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP), which is managed by the Department of State in cooperation with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). Those admitted as refugees are eligible for U.S. government-funded resettlement assistance, which is discussed in greater detail below. Individuals in the United States seeking asylum status under Section 208 of the INA are processed by DHS and, in certain cases, by the Department of Justice (DOJ)'s Executive Office of Immigration Review (EOIR, also known as the immigration court system). Asylum applicants are not eligible for resettlement assistance through USRAP but are eligible for certain assistance and services run by state, private, and non-profit agencies and may apply for employment authorization.

Since the passage of the Refugee Act in 1980, which incorporated this definition of refugee into the INA, the United States has admitted more than 3 million refugees and granted asylum status to over 683,000 individuals. In Fiscal Year (FY) 2018, the United States anticipates admitting approximately 21,500 refugees for resettlement and granting asylum to approximately 31,600 individuals.¹

The Asylum Backlog

In recent years, the United States has seen a substantial increase in the number of individuals seeking asylum under Section 208 of the INA. According to the UN High Commissioner for

¹ This figure for individual asylum grants includes affirmative asylum grants through August 2018 and defensive asylum grants through Q3 FY 2018.

Refugees (UNHCR), the United States led the world in the number of new asylum applications in 2017.

- DHS received 51,001 credible fear² cases in in FY 2014, 48,052 in FY 2015, 94,048 in FY 2016, 78,564 in FY 2017, and 87,215 cases so far in FY 2018.
- DHS received 56,898 new affirmative asylum³ cases in FY 2014, 83,197 in FY 2015, 114,965 in FY 2016, 141,695 in FY 2017, and 95,195 new cases so far in FY 2018.

DHS reallocated resources in order to address this surge in protection claims. The DHS response included shifting staff from the affirmative asylum caseload to conduct credible fear screenings. At the same time, throughout FY 2016 and the first quarter of FY 2017, DHS diverted asylum officer resources to overseas refugee processing in order to meet the goal of increasing the number of refugee admissions. These factors resulted in a steady increase in the affirmative asylum backlog. The number of pending affirmative asylum cases at DHS at the end of FY 2018 is about 320,000 (approximately 492,000 individuals), a 10 percent increase from the end of FY 2017 and an increase of over 500 percent since FY 2009. This is in addition to the asylum backlog in the immigration court system, which stands at about 348,000 individuals.

Lengthy backlogs in asylum processing undermine the integrity of the asylum system. They delay legal protection for individuals who are legitimately fleeing persecution and have valid asylum claims. Further, such delays are a “pull factor” for illegal immigration. By providing protection from removal, they create an incentive for those without lawful status to enter and remain in the United States. Asylum applicants also are eligible to obtain employment authorization after their asylum applications have been pending for six months, creating an incentive to file frivolous or fraudulent asylum applications.

To address this situation, DHS in FY 2017 and FY 2018 shifted a significant proportion of its refugee officers to processing affirmative asylum applications and conducting credible fear and reasonable fear⁴ screenings. This reduced the number of refugee interviews that could be conducted abroad in those years. DHS also has taken other measures to modernize its asylum case management system and increase efficiency, including by returning to “last in, first out” scheduling. This system prioritizes the most recent applications, allowing DHS to place

² Asylum Officers of DHS’s U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) conduct a credible fear of persecution or torture interview when a person who is subject to expedited removal expresses an intention to apply for asylum, expresses a fear of persecution or torture, or expresses a fear of return to his or her country. An individual will be found to have a credible fear of persecution if he or she establishes that there is a “significant possibility” that he or she could establish in a full hearing before an Immigration Judge that he or she has been persecuted or has a well-founded fear of persecution or harm on account of his or her race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion if returned to his or her country.

³ Affirmative asylum applications are filed by asylum-seekers who are *not* in removal proceedings in the immigration court system. USCIS’s Asylum Division is responsible for processing affirmative asylum applications. Note that the total number of people ultimately granted asylum in a given year is substantially higher than the number of cases, since a “case” counts only the principal applicant and does not include spouse and children – i.e., a case can include several individuals.

⁴ USCIS conducts reasonable fear of persecution or torture interviews for those subject to reinstatement of a prior removal order because they illegally reentered the United States after having been removed or having departed voluntarily while under an order of exclusion, deportation, or removal and those who are not lawful permanent residents, who are subject to an administrative order of removal because they were convicted of one or more aggravated felonies after admission to the United States.

individuals found ineligible for asylum into removal proceedings well before six months have passed, which minimizes the incentive to file frivolous or fraudulent asylum applications to obtain work permission. It also allows DHS to render decisions on qualified applications in a more efficient manner. These measures had an immediate effect on affirmative asylum filings, which decreased by 30 percent since January 2018. As a result of these efforts, the number of pending affirmative asylum cases leveled off since February 2018 and has not experienced significant monthly growth for the first time in several years.

DHS continues to fill new positions within the USCIS Asylum Division devoted to eliminating the backlog of affirmative asylum cases. In order to address the affirmative asylum backlog and prevent it from again increasing, however, DHS will continue to shift some refugee officers to assist the Asylum Division, consistent with Section 5 of Executive Order 13767 on Border Security and Immigration Enforcement Improvements.

Enhancing Security Vetting in Refugee Admissions

The National Security Strategy notes that the United States “will enhance vetting of prospective immigrants, refugees, and other foreign visitors to identify individuals who might pose a risk to national security or public safety” and “will set higher security standards to ensure that we keep dangerous people out of the United States and enhance our information collection and analysis to identify those who may already be within our borders.” Over the past year, agencies involved in USRAP have instituted new vetting procedures to close security gaps and take a more risk-based approach to refugee admissions.

Section 6(a) of Executive Order 13780 on Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States directed a review of USRAP to determine what additional procedures should be used to ensure that individuals seeking admission as refugees do not pose a threat to the security and welfare of the United States. The joint review, conducted by the Department of State, DHS, and the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI), recommended a number of measures to strengthen the security and integrity of USRAP, including ensuring that the vetting procedures for certain qualified refugee family members be more closely aligned with those of principal refugees and other types of qualifying family members traveling with refugees.

Pursuant to Executive Order 13815, Resuming the United States Refugee Admissions Program with Enhanced Vetting Capabilities, the Department of State, DHS, and interagency partners conducted a review of countries whose nationals are required to undergo specialized vetting to assess the risk to the national security and welfare of the United States if those nationals were admitted as refugees. As a result of that review and in consultation with Department of State and ODNI, DHS announced further security enhancements to USRAP, including: (1) additional specialized screening for refugee applicants who are nationals of certain high-risk countries; (2) administering USRAP in a more risk-based manner when considering overall refugee admissions, regional allocations, and the groups of applicants considered for resettlement; and (3) periodic interagency review of the selection criteria and the countries whose nationals require additional specialized screening.

DHS also implemented additional program integrity measures in FY 2018. These include additional guidance and training for officers on identifying national security indicators and the use of their discretion, as well as ensuring officers have sufficient time at refugee applicant interviews to fully explore potential national security, inadmissibility, and credibility issues. For example, interviewing officers have received additional training on assessing credibility consistent with the REAL ID Act. In addition, specialized USCIS Fraud Detection and National Security (FDNS) officers accompany interviewing officers on certain refugee processing team trips overseas, allowing them to develop fraud and national security cases on site, in real time with interviewing officers.

In addition to the enhanced interview process, refugee applicants also undergo more thorough screening than ever before. The U.S. government has increased the amount of data it collects on refugee applicants, and more applicants now are subject to higher levels of security screening. The Department of State and DHS work with interagency partners from the intelligence and law enforcement communities to conduct these checks.

DHS will develop a risk-based feedback loop based on trends identified through the regular review of cases with national security concerns, quality assurance reviews, and fraud assessments. This exercise will identify factors for referring partners to take into account when determining whom to refer to USRAP. This will enable the U.S. government to ensure the safety of the American people while focusing limited resources on those applicants most likely to qualify for admission to the United States as refugees.

USCIS Credible Fear Caseload FY 2008-2017

Fiscal Year	New Receipts	Fear Found	Fear Not Found	Closed	Pending at end of FY
2008	4,995	3,097	816	915	108
2009	5,369	3,411	1,004	807	210
2010	8,959	6,293	1,404	1,080	500
2011	11,217	9,423	1,054	1,052	295
2012	13,880	10,838	1,187	1,554	1,488
2013	36,035	30,393	2,587	3,194	890
2014	51,001	35,456	8,977	4,204	787
2015	48,052	33,988	8,097	6,330	3,045
2016	94,048	73,081	9,697	10,212	4,420
2017	78,564	60,566	8,245	10,899	1,658

USCIS Affirmative Asylum Caseload FY 2008-2017

Fiscal Year	New receipts (individuals)	Receipts Pending at end of FY (individuals)
2008	36,754	14,281
2009	32,661	7,230
2010	36,044	7,749
2011	44,617	11,520
2012	54,852	19,475
2013	60,829	42,452
2014	80,011	83,071
2015	117,679	154,552
2016	167,838	268,018
2017	288,087	438,507

Refugee Admissions and Asylum Grants Since 1980

Fiscal Year	Refugee Arrivals	Individual Asylum Grants⁵	Annual Totals
1980	207,116	1,104	208,220
1981	159,252	1,175	160,427
1982	98,096	3,909	102,005
1983	61,218	7,215	68,433
1984	70,393	8,278	78,671
1985	67,704	4,585	72,289
1986	62,146	3,359	65,505
1987	64,528	4,062	68,590
1988	76,483	5,531	82,014
1989	107,070	6,942	114,012
1990	122,066	8,472	130,538
1991	113,389	5,035	118,424
1992	132,531	6,307	138,838
1993	119,448	9,543	128,991
1994	112,981	13,828	126,809
1995	99,974	20,703	120,677
1996	76,403	23,532	99,935
1997	70,488	22,939	93,427
1998	77,080	20,507	97,587
1999	85,525	26,571	112,096
2000	73,147	32,514	105,661
2001	69,304	39,148	108,452
2002	27,110	36,937	64,047
2003	28,422	28,743	57,165
2004	52,868	27,376	80,244
2005	53,813	25,304	79,117
2006	41,279	26,352	67,631
2007	48,281	25,318	73,599
2008	60,192	23,022	83,218
2009	74,654	22,303	96,942
2010	73,311	19,771	93,066
2011	56,424	23,569	79,994
2012	58,238	27,948	86,248
2013	69,925	24,996	94,922
2014	69,987	23,369	93,283
2015	69,933	26,011	95,904
2016	84,994	20,340	105,449
2017	53,716	26,568	53,716
Totals	3,049,489	683,186	3,732,675

⁵ 1980-1989 figures exclude grants of asylum by DOJ/EOIR.

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

This Proposed Refugee Admissions for Fiscal Year 2019 Report to the Congress is submitted in compliance with Sections 207(d)(1) and (e) of the INA. This report provides the following information required by those sections:

- (1) A description of the nature of the refugee situation;
- (2) A description of the number and allocation of the refugees to be admitted, and an analysis of conditions within the countries from which they came;
- (3) A description of the plans for their movement and resettlement and the estimated cost of their movement and resettlement;
- (4) An analysis of the anticipated social, economic, and demographic impact of their admission to the United States;
- (5) A description of the extent to which other countries will admit and assist in the resettlement of such refugees;
- (6) An analysis of the impact of the participation of the United States in the resettlement of such refugees on the foreign policy interests of the United States; and
- (7) Such additional information as may be appropriate or requested by such members.

According to INA Section 101(a)(42) of the INA, the term “refugee” means:

- (A) any person who is outside any country of such person's nationality or, in the case of a person having no nationality, is outside any country in which such person last habitually resided, and who is unable or unwilling to return to, and is unable or unwilling to avail himself or herself of the protection of, that country because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion, or
- (B) in such circumstances as the President after appropriate consultation...may specify, any person who is within the country of such person's nationality or, in the case of a person having no nationality, within the country in which such person is habitually residing, and who is persecuted or who has a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion. The term "refugee" does not include any person who ordered, incited, assisted, or otherwise participated in the persecution of any person on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion. For purposes of determinations under this Act, a person who has been forced to abort a pregnancy or to undergo involuntary sterilization, or who has been persecuted for failure or refusal to undergo such a procedure or for other resistance to a coercive population control program, shall be deemed to have been persecuted on account of political opinion, and a person who has a well-founded fear that he or she will be forced to undergo such a procedure or subject to persecution for such failure, refusal, or resistance shall be deemed to have a well-founded fear of persecution on account of political opinion.

This report also contains information as required by Section 602(d) of the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (Public Law 105-292, October 27, 1998, 112 Stat. 2787) (IRFA) about

religious persecution of refugee populations eligible for consideration for admission to the United States.

This report also meets the reporting requirements of Section 305(b) of the North Korean Human Rights Act of 2004 (Public Law 108-333, October 18, 2004, 118 Stat. 1287), as amended, by providing information about specific measures taken to facilitate access to the United States refugee program for individuals who have fled “countries of particular concern” for violations of religious freedoms, identified pursuant to Section 402(b) of the IRFA.

I. DESCRIPTION OF THE NATURE OF THE REFUGEE SITUATION

According to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), there were 25.4 million refugees around the world at the end of calendar year 2017.⁶ This figure includes 5.4 million Palestinians under the mandate of the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). It also includes an unknown number of individuals who qualify as refugees under UNHCR's mandate but would not qualify as refugees under the INA.⁷

Africa: According to UNHCR, the refugee population in sub-Saharan Africa increased by 1.1 million during 2017, to 6.2 million. The largest increase was of refugees from South Sudan, where the political conflict began in December 2013. More than 2.4 million South Sudanese have fled the country, the majority to Uganda, Sudan, Ethiopia, Kenya, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). The number of Somali refugees declined slightly over the year to 986,000; Kenya, Yemen, and Ethiopia were the main host countries. Ongoing conflict with rebel groups has forced some 695,000 Sudanese refugees to flee to South Sudan, Ethiopia, and Chad since 2011. Conflict in DRC is responsible for nearly 621,000 refugees, mostly to Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Tanzania, Angola, Zambia, South Sudan, and the Republic of Congo. The outflow of Eritreans also continues, both to refugee camps in Ethiopia and eastern Sudan and also further north as Eritreans attempt to travel to Europe and beyond; there are approximately 272,000 Eritrean refugees in Sudan and Ethiopia. In Burundi, election-related violence and the aftermath since 2015 has forced over 439,000 to flee, mostly to Tanzania and Rwanda.

East Asia: UNHCR reports the refugee population increased by 732,000 during 2017, to 4.2 million. More than 1.2 million people from Burma, including Rohingya fleeing violence and atrocities, are now living outside Burma in other parts of the region. The international resettlement of Bhutanese refugees is scheduled to end in FY 2018. As reflected in the North Korean Human Rights Act, the United States remains deeply concerned about the human rights situation of North Koreans both inside the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and in various countries in the region. The United States began resettling interested, eligible North Korean refugees and their family members in 2006 and remains committed to continuing this program.

Europe: According to UNHCR, the refugee population in Europe increased by approximately 936,000 during 2017, to nearly 6.1 million. The vast majority of refugees in Europe came from outside the region, particularly Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan. Ukrainians represented 75 percent of refugee arrivals from within the region, followed by Russians, who comprise 7 percent of

⁶ Unless noted otherwise, all figures in this section come from the June 20, 2018 UNHCR report, *Global Trends: Forced Displacement 2017*. Note that all UNHCR figures are on a calendar year basis.

⁷ The definition of refugee at Section 101(a)(42) of the INA is consistent with the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol, to which the United States is a party. UNHCR's figure includes individuals who are recognized under other instruments, such as the 1969 Organization of African Unity Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa; recognized in accordance with the UNHCR Statute; granted complementary and temporary forms of protection; and, in 15 Latin American countries, covered by the criteria in the 1984 Cartagena Declaration on Refugees. UNHCR's figure also includes individuals "in refugee-like situations that includes groups of people who are outside their country or territory of origin and who face protection risks similar to those of refugees but for whom refugee status has, for practical or other reasons, not been ascertained."

arrivals, and Moldovans, who comprise 5 percent of arrivals. The United States continues to accept refugees from the region, of whom the vast majority are religious minorities from former Soviet countries who fall within the scope of the Lautenberg Amendment.

Latin America and the Caribbean: UNHCR reports there were 252,300 refugees in the Americas outside of the United States and Canada at the end of 2017. The majority of them – 192,000 – were Colombians in Ecuador, Costa Rica, Panama, and Venezuela. Over the last few years, however, Venezuela has gone from becoming a refuge for displaced Colombians to becoming a source of displaced people itself, as more than 1.5 million Venezuelans have fled political repression and economic decline. In 2017, Venezuelans made 111,600 asylum claims, most of them in Peru and the United States.

In addition, poor economic conditions and high levels of violence contributed to tens of thousands of Central Americans leaving their home countries. According to UNHCR, 49,500 El Salvadorans, 35,300 Guatemalans, and 28,800 Hondurans sought asylum in the United States in 2017. These figures represent a considerable increase since 2013, when, according to DHS, fewer than 5,000 individuals from these three countries combined sought asylum in the United States.

Near East and South Asia: According to UNHCR, there were more than 5 million refugees in the Middle East, North Africa, and South Asia regions at the end of 2017. Syria remained the main country of origin of refugees worldwide due to the ongoing civil war that began in 2011. In addition to the Syrian refugees in Turkey, who are counted as part of the Europe figure above, there were nearly one million in Lebanon, 653,000 in Jordan, 247,000 in Iraq, and 127,000 in Egypt. In Iraq, despite the recent successes against ISIS, the security environment remains fluid. At the end of 2017, nearly 274,000 Iraqi refugees were displaced throughout the region. The second-largest population of refugees in 2017 was from Afghanistan. Despite the voluntary repatriation of over 5.8 million Afghan refugees since 2002, Pakistan continues to host about 1.4 million Afghan refugees. Iran hosts another 950,000, as well as significant numbers of Afghan visa holders and undocumented Afghans. Many Afghans have resided in these countries for over three and a half decades. India, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh together host more than 224,000 UNHCR-registered refugees.

II. DESCRIPTION OF THE NUMBER AND ALLOCATION OF THE REFUGEES TO BE ADMITTED AND AN ANALYSIS OF CONDITIONS WITHIN THE COUNTRIES FROM WHICH THEY CAME

Proposed FY 2019 Regional Ceilings

Africa	11,000
East Asia	4,000
Europe and Central Asia	3,000
Latin America and the Caribbean	3,000
Near East and South Asia	9,000
TOTAL PROPOSED CEILING	30,000

Country Conditions

USRAP accepts applicants of any nationality, including stateless refugees, who are referred to the program; in FY 2018, the United States admitted refugees for resettlement from 70 countries. Given the lengthy processing required, it is likely that refugees referred to USRAP will not be admitted to the United States until a subsequent year. It is therefore impossible to determine exactly which countries will be the sources of refugees admitted to the United States in FY 2019. Information on countries of origin for refugees admitted to the United States in FY 2017 is available in section VII.

The Department of State’s annual Country Reports on Human Right Practices (www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/) and annual Report to Congress on International Religious Freedom (www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/irf/) include information about conditions in every country in the world, including those from which the United States resettles refugees. It is important to emphasize, however, that not all of these practices covered in these reports would be recognized as “persecution” under Section 101(a)(42) of the INA.

Religious Freedom: Countries of Particular Concern

On December 22, 2017, then-Secretary of State Tillerson designated Burma, China, Eritrea, Iran, North Korea, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan as Countries of Particular Concern (CPCs) under the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 for engaging in or tolerating systematic, ongoing, and egregious violations of religious freedom. The Secretary also designated Pakistan a Special Watch List Country.

The USRAP provides resettlement access in various ways to refugees who suffer religious persecution:

- Priority 1⁸, Individual Referrals: Nationals of any country, including CPCs and Pakistan, may be referred to the USRAP through a Priority 1 referral by UNHCR or a U.S. embassy for reasons of religious persecution.
- Priority 2, Groups of Special Concern: Under the Lautenberg and Specter Amendments, Iranian, Tajik, Turkmen, and Uzbek religious minorities designated as Priority 2 category members are considered under a reduced evidentiary standard for establishing a well-founded fear of persecution.
- Priority 3, Family Reunification: Refugees from Eritrea, Iran, North Korea, and Sudan with certain refugee or asylee family members in the United States have access to the USRAP through Priority 3.

⁸ An explanation of USRAP Priorities is available at Annex I. Entering USRAP under a certain “priority” does not establish precedence in the order in which cases will be processed. Once cases are established as eligible for access under one of the three processing priorities, they all undergo the same processing steps.

III. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED PLANS FOR THEIR MOVEMENT AND RESETTLEMENT AND THE ESTIMATED COST OF THEIR MOVEMENT AND RESETTLEMENT

Overseas Processing

The Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) works closely with UNHCR and other partners to identify candidates for resettlement through USRAP. When an applicant is referred to USRAP for consideration, the case is received and processed by a Resettlement Support Center (RSC). PRM funds eight RSCs around the world operated by non-governmental organizations (NGOs), international organizations, or U.S. embassy contractors. Under PRM's guidance, RSCs collect biographic and other information from the applicants to prepare cases for security screening, interview, and adjudication by DHS's U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).

The Secretary of Homeland Security has delegated to USCIS the authority to determine eligibility for refugee status under the INA. Refugee determinations under the INA are entirely discretionary. USCIS officers review the information that the RSC has collected and the results of security screening processes and conduct an in-person interview with each refugee applicant before deciding whether to approve him or her for classification as a refugee.

If an applicant is conditionally approved for resettlement by USCIS, RSC staff guide the refugee applicant through post-adjudication steps, including a health screening to identify medical needs and to ensure that those with a contagious disease do not enter the United States. The RSC also obtains a "sponsorship assurance" from a U.S.-based resettlement agency that receives funding from PRM for Reception and Placement (R&P) assistance. Once all required steps are completed, the RSC refers the case to the International Organization for Migration (IOM) for transportation to the United States.

Transportation

The Department of State funds the international transportation of refugees resettled in the United States through a program administered by IOM. The cost of transportation is provided to refugees in the form of a no-interest loan. Refugees are responsible for repaying these loans over time through their R&P providers, beginning six months after their arrival. Further information on the travel loan program is available in Section VI, Additional Information.

Cultural Orientation

The Department of State strives to ensure that refugees admitted to the United States are prepared for the changes they will experience by providing cultural orientation programs prior to departure. Every refugee family is offered a copy of "Welcome to the United States," a book developed with contributions from refugee resettlement workers, resettled refugees, and government officials that provides accurate information about initial resettlement. In addition, the Department of State funds one- to five-day pre-departure orientation classes for eligible refugees at sites throughout the world. Refugees may also access cultural orientation

information through a website that is translated into seven languages and provides information in numerous modes to meet all literacy levels, as well as a new mobile application. In an effort to reach Afghan and Iraqi Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) holders, a population that does not routinely have access to pre-departure classroom cultural orientation, the Department of State also created a series of four videos in Dari and Arabic.

In addition, the Department of State also offers a curriculum for cultural orientation after refugees' arrival in the United States. This includes a model assessment tool for domestic orientation providers to assess refugee understanding of orientation topics during the R&P period.

Reception and Placement (R&P)

Unlike asylees, who arrive in the United States on their own, refugees selected for resettlement through USRAP are eligible for R&P assistance. Each refugee approved for admission to the United States is sponsored by one of nine resettlement agencies, several of which are faith-based, participating in the R&P Program under a cooperative agreement with the Department of State. The sponsoring agency is responsible for placing refugees with one of its affiliated offices and for providing initial services, which include housing, essential furnishings, food, necessary clothing, orientation, and assistance with access to other social, medical, and employment services during the refugee's first 30-90 days in the United States. The R&P Program is a public-private partnership, which anticipates that sponsoring agencies will contribute significant cash or in-kind resources to supplement U.S. government funding for the program.

Many refugees have family or close friends already in the United States, and sponsoring agencies make every effort to reunite them. Others are placed where they have the best opportunity for success through employment with the assistance of strong community and refugee-specific services. Agencies place refugees through a network of 268 local affiliates operating in about 170 communities throughout the country. Through its network, each agency monitors the resources that each community offers (e.g., interpreters who speak various languages, the size and special features of available housing, the availability of schools with special services, medical care, English classes, employment services, etc.). Information about the states where refugees admitted to the United States in FY 2017 were initially resettled is available in section VII.

Beyond R&P

Under the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, refugees are eligible for public assistance when they first arrive. Nevertheless, the U.S. government seeks to promote early economic self-sufficiency through employment to speed integration into American society.⁹ Beginning with arrival in the United States, and continuing after the R&P period ends, refugees benefit from programs funded by the Department of Health and Human

⁹ Economic self-sufficiency is defined at 45 CFR 400.2 as "earning a total family income at a level that enables a family unit to support itself without receipt of a cash assistance grant." Cash assistance includes Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Supplemental Security Income (SSI), refugee cash assistance, and general assistance, but not other forms of public assistance, such as housing and medical assistance.

Services Office of Refugee Resettlement (HHS/ORR), and administered either by the states, resettlement agencies, or community organizations.

Up to eight months of Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA) is available for refugees who are not eligible for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI). Refugees not eligible for Medicaid can receive up to eight months of Refugee Medical Assistance (RMA) upon arrival. In addition, each refugee receives a medical screening within the initial resettlement period. ORR also provides health and mental health services through the Survivors of Torture and Refugee Health Promotion grant programs.

ORR distributes Formula Refugee Support Services (RSS) grants based on arrival numbers and refugee concentration levels in counties with high levels of public assistance use. Refugees can access RSS services up to five years after arrival. These services may include employment services, on-the-job training, English language instruction, vocational training, case management, translation, social adjustment services, health-related services, home management, childcare, and transportation.

The Matching Grant Program through the R&P resettlement agencies is an alternative to public cash assistance. It aims to enable certain refugees and other eligible populations, including Iraqi and Afghan Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) holders and victims of trafficking, to become economically self-sufficient within four to six months. Participating agencies provide case management, employment services, maintenance assistance, and cash allowance.

The Unaccompanied Refugee Minor (URM) Program funds over 20 URM programs in 15 states. States contract with local, licensed foster care agencies that provide specialized placements and services to URMs. URMs live in various placements, including traditional and therapeutic foster homes, group homes, semi-independent and independent living and residential treatment centers, and homes of relatives. URMs receive various services, including English language training, educational and vocational training, cultural preservation, social integration, family tracing, permanency planning, independent living, medical care, and mental health care. ORR requires states to provide URM services in parity with their Title IV-B foster care plans.

ORR also funds non-profit agencies to carry out special initiatives or programs for refugees including: case management, ethnic community development, career pathways, individual development accounts, microenterprise development, and agricultural projects.

Estimated Cost for Refugee Processing and Resettlement

Agency	FY 2018 Availability (in millions)	FY 2019 Estimated Availability (in millions)
DHS/USCIS USRAP processing ¹⁰	\$64	\$50
Department of State/PRM USRAP admissions ^{11,12}	\$368	\$454
HHS/ORR refugee resettlement ¹³	\$527	\$514
Totals	\$959	\$1,018

¹⁰ FY 2018: Includes cost factors to reflect Headquarters facilities rent related to the refugee resettlement program, staffing, general expense and following-to-join refugee processing, in addition to certain International Cooperative Administrative Support Services (ICASS) and Capital Security Cost Sharing (CSCS) costs. It also includes \$13 million in personnel salary and benefits for refugee officers detailed to the Asylum Division.

¹¹ FY 2018: Includes FY 2018 Migration and Refugee Assistance (MRA) appropriation of \$203.8 million, \$94.3 million in MRA carryover from FY 2017, \$66.4 million in projected IOM loan collections/carryover, and an estimate of \$3.5 million in prior year MRA recoveries. A portion of these funds will be carried over into FY 2019.

¹² FY 2019: Includes FY 2019 MRA budget request of \$395 million, \$53 million in projected IOM loan collections/carryover, and an estimate of \$6 million in prior year MRA recoveries. Additional funds carried forward from FY 2018 will be available in FY 2019.

¹³ HHS's Office of Refugee Resettlement's (ORR) refugee benefits and services are also provided to asylees, Iraqi and Afghan Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) holders and their spouses and unmarried children under the age of 21, Cuban and Haitian entrants, certain Amerasians from Vietnam, victims of a severe form of trafficking who have received certification or eligibility letters from ORR, trafficking victims family members with T nonimmigrant visas, and some victims of torture. The estimated funding for these groups is included here. None of these additional groups is included in the refugee admissions ceiling except Amerasians. This category does not include costs associated with the Unaccompanied Alien Children's Program, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Medicaid, Supplemental Security Income (SSI) programs, or the Victims of Trafficking or Survivors of Torture. These estimates do not include any prior year carryover funding. The estimated FY 2019 figures above reflect the President's FY 2019 Budget request.

IV. ANALYSIS OF THE ANTICIPATED SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, AND DEMOGRAPHIC IMPACT OF THEIR ADMISSION TO THE UNITED STATES

In accordance with the Refugee Act of 1980, ORR produces an Annual Report to Congress that presents ORR's activities, expenditures, policies, and information about the individuals receiving ORR benefits and services, which addresses this issue in greater detail. The Annual Report to Congress also includes data from the Annual Survey of Refugees (ASR), which provides insight into the social, economic, and demographic impact of refugee admissions. The ASR collects basic demographic information such as age, level of education, English language proficiency and training, job training, labor force participation, work experience, and barriers to employment. It collects other data by family unit, including information on housing, income, and utilization of public benefits.

ORR published the results of the 50th ASR in the 2016 Annual Report to Congress, covering refugee arrivals FY 2011 to FY 2015. Findings include:

Education level: Respondents age 25 or older averaged 8.7 years of education before arrival; about half did not have a high school diploma upon arrival; and 29 percent of refugees age 25 or older listed their prior educational attainment as "none." Among respondents age 18 and older, 16 percent were pursuing a degree of some kind, with most seeking high school equivalency.

English language proficiency: Respondents improved their English over time, but large deficits remain. Among refugees age 18 or older who had lived in the United States between 4.5 and 6.5 years, 53 percent spoke English "not well" or "not at all," based on self-assessments.

Employment: 59 percent of respondents ages 16 to 64 were employed, lower than the 67.5 percent employment rate for native-born members of the U.S. population. Male respondents were employed at a rate roughly on par with the U.S. population after being in the United States for only two years. Employed refugees age 18 or older earned \$12 per hour on average.

Public benefits use: Two percent of respondent households reported public assistance as their only source of income; 27 percent received cash welfare of some kind, most often Supplemental Security Income (SSI); and 56 percent received Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits. Among respondents age 18 or older, 57 percent reported having health coverage throughout the previous year, while 34 percent reported no health coverage. Among those with coverage, about half received Medicaid or Refugee Medical Assistance.

ORR is currently overseeing a multi-year review of the data collected through the ASR, including revisions that improved the design of the ASR 2016, to ensure the survey offers representative data on the refugee population. ORR will release the results of the most recent Annual Survey of Refugees in its forthcoming Annual Report to Congress.

Further information about refugee use of HHS programs is available in Section VII, Additional Information.

V. DESCRIPTION OF THE EXTENT TO WHICH OTHER COUNTRIES WILL ADMIT AND ASSIST IN THE RESETTLEMENT OF SUCH REFUGEES

The United States and UNHCR recognize that most refugees desire safe, voluntary return to their homelands. When safe and voluntary return is not possible, the United States and its partners pursue self-sufficiency and temporary, indefinite, or permanent local integration in countries of first asylum. The United States, in conjunction with UNHCR and other partners, encourages host governments to protect refugees and to allow them to integrate into local communities. The United States also provides financial support to enable these activities.

Resettlement is an option for certain individuals who cannot return to their home countries. In 2017, UNHCR submitted 75,200 individuals for resettlement; 108,200 total were admitted for resettlement with or without UNHCR's assistance. The top resettlement countries, after the United States, were: Canada (26,600 admissions), Australia (15,100), the United Kingdom (6,200), and Sweden (3,400). UNHCR also made referrals to Argentina, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Chile, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Uruguay, and the United Kingdom. The United States provides financial support to expand and improve UNHCR's resettlement capacity, principally for staff and construction of facilities, and also supports UNHCR's efforts to expand the number of countries active in resettlement.

Africa: In the absence of political solutions in the countries of origin, UNHCR does not promote or facilitate returns. A number of African countries were among the top ten refugee-hosting countries worldwide. According to UNHCR, Uganda hosted 1.4 million refugees at the end of 2017, mostly from South Sudan, but also sizable populations from the DRC, Burundi, Somalia, and Rwanda. The refugee population in Sudan reached 906,600; most were South Sudanese, with an additional population of Eritreans. Ethiopia hosted 889,400 refugees, most from South Sudan, with additional populations from Somalia, Eritrea, and Sudan. An increasing number of European countries are becoming active in resettling refugees from the region, although the United States remains the largest resettlement country for sub-Saharan Africa.

East Asia: Countries in the region traditionally have been reluctant to integrate refugees, and the vast majority does not have asylum systems, although Bangladesh, Malaysia, and Thailand host over 1.2 million Burmese refugees. According to UNHCR, Bangladesh hosted the seventh-largest refugee population in the world by the end of 2017: 932,200, most of them Rohingya fleeing violence and atrocities in Burma's Rakhine state. Thousands more refugees of other nationalities are in the regional capitals of Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur, and Jakarta, including Afghans, Iranians, Iraqis, Pakistanis, Somalis, and Syrians. UNHCR and international partners continue to encourage Bangladesh, Malaysia, and Thailand to make policy changes relating to refugees and to expand humanitarian protection and assistance for refugees and asylum seekers, and those countries have made efforts to improve refugee self-reliance and inclusion. The United States continues to lead third country resettlement efforts from the region. Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the Nordic countries also resettle refugees referred by UNHCR.

Europe and South Central Asia: According to UNHCR, at the end of 2017, Turkey hosted more refugees than any other country in the world, with 3.4 million Syrians and over 350,000 refugees from Iraq, Afghanistan, Iran, and elsewhere. Syrians in Turkey are afforded “temporary protection” status, which does not normally include a path to citizenship or permanent residence. Non-Syrian asylum-seekers are granted “International Protection,” which does not provide a pathway to long-term residency, citizenship, or protection from deportation. Germany was the sixth-largest refugee-hosting country at the end of 2017, with 970,000 refugees, a combination of resettlements and approved asylum claims; 497,000 came from Syria, with substantial populations from Iraq, Afghanistan, Eritrea, and Iran. Other European countries also have accepted hundreds of thousands of refugees and asylum-seekers, including Sweden, Italy, France, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom. Jewish immigration to Israel from the region continues under the United Israel Appeal Program.

Latin America and the Caribbean: Most countries in the region have maintained policies allowing individuals in need of protection to obtain asylum and integrate locally, although the processes involved are usually slow and cumbersome, and these governments’ capacity to review applications and confer refugee status can be limited. A number of countries in the region have provided asylum and alternative legal forms of stay for over half a million Venezuelans, however, mostly in Colombia but also in Chile, Ecuador, Panama, Argentina, Peru, Mexico, Brazil, Costa Rica, and Uruguay. In addition to the United States, Canada, New Zealand, Sweden, Denmark, and Norway offer resettlement to at-risk Colombian refugees. With support from the United States, provided through UNHCR, Mexico is improving its ability to adjudicate asylum claims and support asylum-seekers, including from the El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. In addition to the United States, Canada, Australia, and Uruguay have resettled small numbers of at-risk individuals from the Northern Triangle via the Protection Transfer Arrangement.¹⁴

Near East and South Asia: At the end of 2017, Lebanon hosted the second-highest number of Syrian refugees, after Turkey, and the fourth-highest number of UNHCR-registered refugees overall, just under 1 million. In addition to sheltering Syrians, Lebanon also provided protection to about 20,000 non-Syrian refugees, most from Iraq. Jordan had the tenth-largest refugee population in the world at 691,000. The vast majority of these refugees were from Syria (655,000), while an additional 66,000 were from Iraq. Jordan’s laws do not provide for the granting of asylum or refugee status, and the government lacks a formal system of protecting refugees. Jordan has hosted several waves of refugees since 1948, however, including Palestinian, Iraqi, and, most recently, Syrian refugees. By agreement with UNHCR, Jordan allows recognized refugees a maximum stay of one year, during which period UNHCR must find a durable solution. This period is renewable, however, and Jordan generally does not force refugees to return to their countries of origin.

According to UNHCR, in 2017, Pakistan hosted the world’s second-largest refugee population at the end of 2017, with 1.4 million refugees, most of them Afghans. In cooperation with the

¹⁴ In 2016, Costa Rica entered into a Protection Transfer Arrangement (PTA) with UNHCR and IOM. After pre-screening in the refugee applicant’s home countries, the PTA allows UNHCR and IOM to transfer applicants from the Northern Triangle most in need of immediate protection to Costa Rica, where they undergo refugee processing before being resettled to the United States or another third country.

Afghan government, Pakistan documented 878,000 previously undocumented Afghans in Pakistan and began to distribute Afghan Citizen Cards, which provide documentation but do not confer refugee status. Iran ranked fifth among refugee-hosting countries worldwide, with 979,000 – the vast majority Afghans and a much smaller population of Iraqis. India does not have a clear national policy for the treatment of refugees, but hosted 197,000 at end-2017. UNHCR-recognized asylum seekers and urban refugees in India are eligible to apply for long-term, renewable visas that provide work authorization and access to higher education and public services.

VI. ANALYSIS OF THE IMPACT OF THE PARTICIPATION OF THE UNITED STATES IN THE RESETTLEMENT OF SUCH REFUGEES ON THE FOREIGN POLICY INTERESTS OF THE UNITED STATES

The December 2017 National Security Strategy says that the United States will prioritize “support[ing] displaced people close to their homes to help meet their needs until they can safely and voluntarily return home.” U.S. humanitarian assistance reaches millions of refugees and displaced people worldwide every year, including those who will never be considered or qualify for resettlement. By focusing our humanitarian efforts on overseas assistance, the United States can help many more vulnerable individuals, and do so more rapidly, than we could ever hope to help through resettlement in the United States. Further, by helping displaced people in areas close to their homes so they may return when conditions allow, we set them to participate in the rebuilding of their homelands, an important factor in recovery and long-term stability.

The National Security Strategy also notes that the United States will continue to lead the world in humanitarian assistance. The largest single country provider of humanitarian assistance worldwide, we fund the programs of UNHCR, the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), IOM, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the World Food Programme (WFP), and a number of other international and non-governmental partners. Total U.S. humanitarian assistance was more than \$8 billion in FY 2017, including funding from PRM and the U.S. Agency for International Development’s (USAID) Bureau for Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance (DCHA). Our assistance provides urgent, life-saving support and services, including food, shelter, health care, and access to clean water for millions of displaced and crisis-affected people, including refugees, worldwide.

Through this humanitarian leadership, the United States can continue to emphasize the need for all donor governments to do their part to address humanitarian crises. U.S. diplomatic efforts focus on expanding the number of donors and increasing global contributions to humanitarian appeals and responses, urging states to uphold their international obligations, and advocating for humanitarian access and durable long-term solutions for refugees. In addition, DHS provides technical assistance to help other host countries strengthen their asylum programs to provide protection to refugees closer to their home countries.

VII. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

FY 2017 USRAP Admissions by Country of Origin

Country of Origin	Arrival Number	Percentage of Total
Dem. Rep. Congo	9,377	17.46 %
Iraq	6,886	12.82 %
Syria	6,557	12.21 %
Somalia	6,130	11.41 %
Burma	5,078	9.45 %
Ukraine	4,264	7.94 %
Bhutan	3,550	6.61 %
Iran	2,577	4.80 %
Eritrea	1,917	3.57 %
Afghanistan	1,311	2.44 %
El Salvador	1,124	2.09 %
Sudan	980	1.82 %
Ethiopia	766	1.43 %
Russia	377	0.70 %
Pakistan	346	0.64 %
Moldova	301	0.56 %
Burundi	291	0.54 %
Central African Republic	275	0.51 %
Colombia	233	0.43 %
Cuba	177	0.33 %
Republic of South Sudan	176	0.33 %
Honduras	104	0.19 %
Rwanda	104	0.19 %
Palestine	81	0.15 %
Belarus	73	0.14 %
Uganda	58	0.11 %
Armenia	57	0.11 %
Ivory Coast	51	0.09 %
Guatemala	50	0.09 %
Vietnam	46	0.09 %

Kazakhstan	39	0.07 %
Nepal	39	0.07 %
Uzbekistan	35	0.07 %
Kyrgyzstan	25	0.05 %
China	24	0.04 %
Senegal	22	0.04 %
Cameroon	21	0.04 %
Yemen	21	0.04 %
Azerbaijan	20	0.04 %
Korea, North	12	0.02 %
Sri Lanka (Ceylon)	12	0.02 %
Egypt	9	0.02 %
Latvia	8	0.01 %
Liberia	8	0.01 %
Bangladesh	7	0.01 %
Chad	7	0.01 %
Kenya	6	0.01 %
Kuwait	6	0.01 %
Mali	6	0.01 %
Congo	5	0.01 %
Gambia	5	0.01 %
Guinea	5	0.01 %
Jordan	5	0.01 %
Sierra Leone	5	0.01 %
Djibouti	4	0.01 %
Thailand	4	0.01 %
Cambodia	3	0.01 %
Ghana	3	0.01 %
Libya	3	0.01 %
Mongolia	3	0.01 %
Burkina Faso (U Volta)	2	0.00 %
India	2	0.00 %
Indonesia	2	0.00 %
Morocco	2	0.00 %
Nigeria	2	0.00 %

Philippines	2	0.00 %
Serbia	2	0.00 %
Tibet	2	0.00 %
Tunisia	2	0.00 %
Zimbabwe	2	0.00 %
Botswana	1	0.00 %
Oman	1	0.00 %
Sweden	1	0.00 %
Tanzania	1	0.00 %
Togo	1	0.00 %
Turkey	1	0.00 %
Zambia	1	0.00 %
Totals	53,716	100.00 %

FY 2017 USRAP Arrivals by State of Initial Resettlement

State	Refugees	Amerasians	Total Arrivals	Percentage of total arrivals to U.S.
California	5,160	0	5,160	9.61 %
Texas	4,765	3	4,768	8.88 %
New York	3,098	0	3,098	5.77 %
Washington	2,920	3	2,923	5.44 %
Ohio	2,867	0	2,867	5.34 %
Michigan	2,536	0	2,536	4.72 %
Arizona	2,249	1	2,250	4.19 %
Pennsylvania	2,147	0	2,147	4.00 %
North Carolina	1,916	0	1,916	3.57 %
Georgia	1,869	3	1,872	3.48 %
Illinois	1,700	5	1,705	3.17 %
Florida	1,698	0	1,698	3.16 %
Minnesota	1,624	3	1,627	3.03 %
Kentucky	1,618	0	1,618	3.01 %
Missouri	1,227	0	1,227	2.28 %
Nebraska	1,194	0	1,194	2.22 %
Colorado	1,144	0	1,144	2.13 %
Massachusetts	1,085	4	1,089	2.03 %
Maryland	1,072	0	1,072	2.00 %
Tennessee	1,048	0	1,048	1.95 %
Virginia	1,043	0	1,043	1.94 %
Indiana	1,042	0	1,042	1.94 %
Oregon	999	3	1,002	1.87 %
Wisconsin	942	0	942	1.75 %
Utah	714	0	714	1.33 %
Iowa	658	0	658	1.22 %
Idaho	628	0	628	1.17 %
Kansas	580	0	580	1.08 %
Nevada	469	0	469	0.87 %
Connecticut	432	0	432	0.80 %

North Dakota	420	0	420	0.78 %
New Jersey	379	0	379	0.71 %
New Hampshire	339	0	339	0.63 %
South Dakota	314	0	314	0.58 %
Maine	288	0	288	0.54 %
Oklahoma	260	0	260	0.48 %
South Carolina	242	0	242	0.45 %
Vermont	235	0	235	0.44 %
Rhode Island	204	0	204	0.38 %
New Mexico	155	0	155	0.29 %
Montana	92	0	92	0.17 %
Louisiana	84	0	84	0.16 %
Alaska	70	0	70	0.13 %
Alabama	63	0	63	0.12 %
Arkansas	59	0	59	0.11 %
Delaware	16	0	16	0.03 %
West Virginia	13	0	13	0.02 %
Mississippi	9	0	9	0.02 %
Hawaii	3	0	3	0.01 %
District of Columbia	2	0	2	0.00 %
Report Totals	53,691	25	53,716	100.00 %

HHS Estimated Expenditures on Refugees and Asylees, 2005-2014

HHS estimated expenditures from the major HHS programs assisting refugees and asylees and their dependents over the 10-year period 2005-2014. For purposes of its analysis, HHS included individuals who entered the United States since 1980 as refugees, asylees, Iraqi and Afghan Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) holders and their spouses and unmarried children under the age of 21, Cuban and Haitian entrants, certain Amerasians from Vietnam, victims of a severe form of trafficking who have received certification or eligibility letters from ORR, trafficking victims family members with T nonimmigrant visas, and some victims of torture. Individuals who later changed their immigration status to legal permanent resident or naturalized as U.S. citizens are included as well.

The total cost of major HHS programs supporting or benefitting these individuals from 2005 through 2014 was \$96.65 billion. Costs accrue to state governments as three programs – Medicaid/Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP), Child Care Subsidies, and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) – require state matches to federal dollars. Total estimated costs, broken out for federal and state governments, are as follows:

Estimated Expenditures for Major HHS Programs, 2005-2014 (in 2014 dollars)

	Refugees and asylees		Refugees and asylees plus spouses and children	
	Millions	Percent	Millions	Percent
Total	\$96,650	100%	\$125,696	100%
Federal	\$74,739	77%	\$94,832	75%
State	\$21,911	23%	\$30,864	25%

In an average year over the ten-year period, estimated per-capita refugee costs for major HHS programs totaled \$3,300. Per-person costs for the U.S. population were lower, at \$2,500, reflecting a greater participation of refugees and asylees in HHS programs, especially during their first four years in the United States.

Estimated Annual Per Capita Expenditures for Major HHS Programs, 2005-2014 (in 2014 dollars)

	Refugees and asylees	Refugees and asylees plus spouses and children	U.S. population
Total	\$3,346	\$2,793	\$2,501
Federal	\$2,587	\$2,107	\$2,186
State	\$759	\$686	\$315

Total estimated expenditures by HHS program are as follows.

Estimated HHS-Related Expenditures by Program, 2005-2014 (in millions of 2014 dollars)

	Refugees and asylees			Refugees and asylees plus spouses and children		
	Total	Federal	State	Total	Federal	State
Medicaid/CHIP	\$47,554	\$26,146	\$21,408	\$65,338	\$35,924	\$29,414
Medicare	\$39,251	\$39,251	\$0	\$45,811	\$45,811	\$0
ORR Transitional Assistance and Medical Services	\$3,245	\$3,245	\$0	\$3,245	\$3,245	\$0
Disproportionate Share Hospital (DSH) Payments	\$2,919	\$2,919	\$0	\$5,348	\$5,348	\$0
ORR Social Services	\$1,609	\$1,609	\$0	\$1,609	\$1,609	\$0
TANF	\$993	\$541	\$452	\$2,045	\$1,114	\$931
ORR Targeted Assistance	\$508	\$508	\$0	\$508	\$508	\$0
Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)	\$220	\$220	\$0	\$299	\$299	\$0
Health Centers	\$186	\$186	\$0	\$289	\$289	\$0
Child Care Subsidies	\$113	\$62	\$51	\$1,154	\$634	\$519
ORR Preventive Health	\$52	\$52	\$0	\$52	\$52	\$0
<i>Total</i>	<i>\$96,650</i>	<i>\$74,739</i>	<i>\$21,911</i>	<i>\$125,696</i>	<i>\$94,832</i>	<i>\$30,864</i>

The estimates do not include non-HHS expenditures on refugees and asylees, including:

- Social Security
- Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- National School Lunch Program
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Woman, Infants, and Children (WIC) Special Supplemental Nutrition Assistance,
- General K-12 public education spending
- Public funding for higher education

- Criminal justice and corrections costs
- Housing assistance
- Child Care Tax Credit
- U.S. Earned Income Tax Credit
- State Earned Income Tax Credits
- State and local general assistance programs
- Other state and local government costs

Refugee Travel Loans

The Department of State funds the transportation of refugees resettled to the United States through a program administered by the International Organization for Migration (IOM). Refugees traveling to the United States receive interest-free loans from IOM to pay for their transportation from overseas to their domestic resettlement sites. Upon accepting the travel loan, refugees sign a promissory note to repay the loan over time. These promissory notes require the refugee borrowers to keep their R&P agencies informed about changes of address.

Travel loan terms vary in length from three to nine years, depending on the amount of the loan. Approximately 90 percent of these loans have terms of three to four years. The average IOM loan amount per refugee is approximately \$1,100 and the average loan note is approximately \$2,740. Refugee families often collectively have more than one promissory note because husbands and wives co-sign a single note for themselves and their minor children, while each adult child 18 years and older signs his or her own note. Refugees typically begin repaying their loans six months after arrival. The average monthly loan repayment amount is \$84 per month.

Approximately 73 percent of all IOM travel loan amounts are repaid within ten years, and 64 percent of loan amounts are repaid within five years. Loan repayments over the life of the loans reflect refugees becoming established within the United States, with the bulk of loan repayments made during the second through fourth year of the loans as follows:

Travel Loan Repayment by Year of Loan

Year	Percentage repaid
1	9.2%
2	20.3%
3	17.9%
4	11.2%
5	5.6%
6	3.2%
7	2.3%
8	1.5%
9	1.0%
10	0.8%
11	0.7%
12	0.6%
13	0.5%
14	0.3%
15	0.2%
5-Year	64.3%
10-Year	73.1%
15-Year	75.4%

All IOM loans are subject to credit reporting in accordance with the Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA). Missed payments cause the loan to be reported as past due and adversely impact the refugee’s credit score. Conversely, newly arrived refugees with no prior financial history who pay on time will soon have an average credit score, assuming no other derogatory credit information. Refugees are informed about the importance of their credit score for their ability to obtain housing, credit cards, loans, or employment. They are counseled to pay their bills on time, and if they have missed payments, to get current and stay current.

Under their cooperative agreements with PRM, R&P agencies responsible for IOM loan collection activities retain 25 percent of gross loan repayments they collect. This is to cover their loan collection costs and support resettlement agency programs. The remaining net repayments are returned to IOM to defray the cost to the United States of future refugee resettlement transportation. The following are IOM travel loan gross and net payment amounts for FY 2013-2016:

Travel Loan Repayment Amounts, FY 2013-2016 (dollars in thousands)

FY	Gross Repayments	Net Repayments
2013	\$54,999	\$42,328
2014	\$56,914	\$44,176
2015	\$61,767	\$48,218
2016	\$63,494	\$49,819

Travel loans for which collections started during FY 2013-2016 are still within the repayment timeframe. The following is information for each of those fiscal years about cases where the loans have never been credited with a repayment:

Travel Loans with no Credits of Repayment, FY 2013-2016

FY	Number of Loans	Percentage
2013	5,803	15.5%
2014	6,211	17.4%
2015	7,018	19.9%
2016	6,673	20.4%

Refugees can request deferral of payments and restructuring of schedules and terms in the event of hardship, such as unemployment or temporary medical disability, or while in school full-time. For loans that have never been credited with a repayment, those deferral status for FY 2013-2016:

Travel Loan Deferral Data

FY	Number of Loans	Percentage
2013	19	0.1%

2014	28	0.1%
2015	36	0.1%
2016	76	0.2%

IOM can cancel outstanding travel loan balances on a case-by-case basis for the following reasons: (1) bankruptcy; (2) death; (3) repatriation; (4) permanent medical disability with no prospect of recovery or future employment (based on an SSI determination or physician’s signed statement); (5) hardship due to the need to care for a minor orphaned child; and (6) when balance is less than or equal to \$5.00. The following are loan cancellation statistics for FY 2013-2016.

Travel Loan Cancellation Data

Fiscal Year	# of Loans Full/Partial Cancelled	\$ Cancelled
2013	963	\$1,556,276
2014	650	\$944,648
2015	510	\$754,919
2016	238	\$355,566

When a loan is cancelled, the IOM travel fund forgoes the associated revenue. PRM annually funds the difference between total funding requirements for USRAP travel and loan repayment revenue deposited into the fund.

ANNEX 1: USRAP ACCESS CATEGORIES

Section 207(a)(3) of the INA says that USRAP shall allocate admissions among refugees “of special humanitarian concern to the United States in accordance with a determination made by the President after appropriate consultation.” There are three categories of individuals eligible to enter USRAP, known as “priorities”¹⁵:

- Priority 1: Individual cases referred by designated entities to the program by virtue of their circumstances and apparent need for resettlement.
- Priority 2: Groups of special concern designated by the Department of State as having access to the program by virtue of their circumstances and apparent need for resettlement.
- Priority 3: Individual cases from designated nationalities granted access for purposes of reunification with family members already in the United States.

Priority 1 (P-1): Individual Referrals

P-1 allows consideration of refugee claims from persons of any nationality, usually with compelling protection needs, for whom resettlement appears to be the appropriate, durable solution. P-1 cases are identified and referred to the program by UNHCR, a U.S. embassy, or a designated NGO. UNHCR has historically referred the vast majority of P-1 cases. Some NGOs providing humanitarian assistance in locations where there are large concentrations of refugees are eligible to provide P-1 referrals. A U.S. ambassador may make a P-1 referral for persons still in their country of origin if the ambassador determines that such cases are in need of exceptional treatment, and the Departments of State and DHS concur.

Priority 2 (P-2): Group Referrals

P-2 includes specific groups whose members are in need of resettlement (within certain nationalities, clans, or ethnic groups, and sometimes in specified locations) identified by the Department of State in consultation with DHS, UNHCR, NGOs, or other entities. The process of identifying the group and its characteristics includes consideration of whether the group is of special humanitarian concern to the United States, and whether individual members of the group are likely to qualify for admission as refugees under U.S. law.

There are two P-2 models: open access and pre-defined group access, often upon the recommendation of UNHCR. Under both models, P-2 designations are made based on shared characteristics that define the group. In general, these characteristics are the reason members of the group have been persecuted in the past or will face persecution in the future.

The open-access model allows individuals to access the program directly, on the basis of meeting designated criteria. The RSCs responsible for handling open-access P-2 applications, working under the direction of PRM, make a preliminary determination as to whether individual

¹⁵ Entering USRAP under a certain “priority” does not establish precedence in the order in which cases will be processed. Once cases are established as eligible for access under one of the three processing priorities, they all undergo the same processing steps.

applicants qualify for access and should be presented to DHS for interview. Applicants who clearly do not meet the access requirements are “screened out” before the DHS interview.

In contrast, a pre-defined group designation is normally based on a UNHCR recommendation describing eligibility criteria that should apply to individuals in a specific location. In this model, the referring entity (usually UNHCR) provides the biographical data of eligible refugee applicants for to the RSC for processing.

Once an individual gains access to processing via a P-2 designation, all other processing steps are the same as for those referred by P-1, including individual pre-screening and DHS interviews, and all security and medical checks.

FY 2019 P-2 Designations:

Open-access P-2s inside their country of origin:

- *Eurasia and the Baltics:* Jews, Evangelical Christians, and Ukrainian Catholic and Orthodox religious adherents identified in the Lautenberg Amendment, P.L. 101-167, § 599D, 103 Stat. 1261 (1989) (codified at 8 U.S.C. § 1157) as amended (“Lautenberg Amendment”), with close family in the United States. With the annual statutory renewal of the Lautenberg Amendment, these individuals are considered under a reduced evidentiary standard for establishing a well-founded fear of persecution.
- *Iraqis Associated with the United States:* Employees of the U.S. government, U.S. government-funded contractors or grantees, U.S. media, or U.S. NGOs working in Iraq, and certain family members of such employees, as well as beneficiaries of approved I-130 Petitions for Alien Relative for whom immigrant visas have not yet been issued, are eligible for refugee processing in Iraq.

Open-access P-2s outside their country of origin:

- *Iranian Religious Minorities:* Iranian members of certain religious minority groups are considered under a reduced evidentiary standard for establishing a well-founded fear of persecution pursuant to the annual statutory renewal of the Lautenberg Amendment as amended in 2004 by Sec. 213 of Title II, Division E, of the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2004, P.L. 108-199, 118 Stat. 3 (“the Specter Amendment”).
- *Iraqis Associated with the United States:* Employees of the U.S. government, U.S. government-funded contractors or grantees, U.S. media, or U.S. NGOs working in Iraq, and certain family members of such employees, as well as beneficiaries of approved I-130 Petitions for Alien Relative for whom immigrant visas have not yet been issued. This program operates in Jordan and Egypt, in addition to the in-country program in Iraq.
- *Syrian Beneficiaries of Approved I-130 petitions:* Certain Syrian beneficiaries of approved I-130 Petitions for Alien Relative for whom immigrant visas have not yet been issued.

Pre-defined group access P-2s outside their country of origin:

- *Ethnic Minorities and Others from Burma in Camps in Thailand:* Individuals who fled Burma, are registered in one of nine refugee camps along the Thailand-Burma border, are

identified by UNHCR as in need of resettlement, and expressed interest in third-country resettlement prior to January 2014, depending on location.

- *Ethnic Minorities from Burma in Malaysia:* Members of ethnic minorities from Burma who are recognized by UNHCR as refugees in Malaysia, registered by August 17, 2010, and identified as being in need of resettlement. UNHCR has referred the vast majority of all Burmese Chin P-2 cases, and USRAP will focus on resolving the Burmese Chin residual caseload in FY 2019. UNHCR will continue to refer Rohingya and other Burmese ethnic minorities for resettlement consideration.
- *Congolese in Rwanda:* Certain refugees from Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in Rwanda who arrived between 1994 and 2005, were verifiably registered in 2011 or 2012, and were identified as in need of resettlement.
- *Congolese in Tanzania:* Certain DRC refugees registered by UNHCR in Tanzania whose residence in Nyarugusu camp was confirmed in a 2013-2014 UNHCR verification exercise.

Priority 3 (P-3): Family Reunification

P-3 provides USRAP access to members of designated nationalities who have immediate family members in the United States who entered as refugees or were granted asylum (even if they subsequently gained LPR status or naturalized as U.S. citizens). Parents, spouses, and unmarried children under the age of 21 of the U.S.-based asylee or refugee can participate. For FY 2019, P-3 processing is available to individuals of the following nationalities:

- Afghanistan
- Burundi
- Central African Republic
- Cuba
- Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK)
- Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)
- Eritrea
- Ethiopia
- Iran
- Iraq
- Mali
- Somalia
- South Sudan
- Sudan
- Syria

Following-to-Join Family Reunification Petitions

A refugee admitted to the United States may request "following-to-join benefits" for his or her spouse and/or unmarried children under the age of 21 who were not previously granted refugee status. Within two years of admission, the refugee may file a Form I-730 Refugee/Asylee Relative Petition with DHS for each eligible family member.

Individuals who gain access to the USRAP through the Form I-730 petition process are interviewed by DHS or Department of State consular officers to verify the relationships claimed in the petition, as well as to examine any applicable bars to status and admissibility. Beneficiaries of I-730 petitions are not required to establish past persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution, as they derive their status from the petitioner. Beneficiaries of I-730 petitions may be processed within their country of origin or in other locations.

Certain relatives in the United States may file an I-730 petition and simultaneously seek Priority 3 access for their qualifying family members (if eligible). In some cases, the I-730 petition will be the only option as the family members are still in their country of origin. Unlike the P-3 process, the I-730 process does not allow the relative in the United States to petition for parents.