

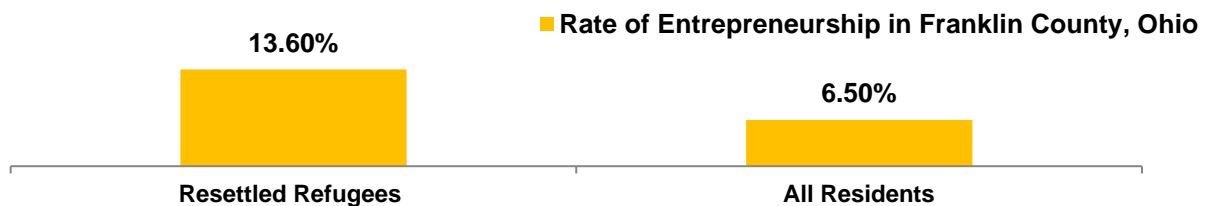


Snapshot of Refugees' Economic Impact and Integration in the United States

Nationwide, research has shown that refugees contribute to local economies. For every dollar spent helping refugees start new lives in the United States, there is significant economic return to our communities. More specifically:

Refugees and immigrants start their own businesses and create jobs in their communities.

- 40 percent of all Fortune 500 companies were founded by refugees, immigrants or their children.¹ And nearly 1,500 economists and six Nobel prize winners agree: immigration drives economic growth and strengthens our economy.²
- Immigrants tend to have higher rates of entrepreneurial activity than other segments of our population, and to invest in businesses that offer everyday goods and services, a critical component of a strong economy. A 2014 study from Columbus, Ohio found that the rate of entrepreneurship among refugees is double that of the general population (13.6 percent among refugees, compared to 6.5 percent among all Franklin County residents), and that more than one-third of refugees' economic productivity stemmed from the value of refugee-owned businesses. In Lancaster, Pennsylvania, refugees and immigrants helped create or preserve 1,062 local manufacturing jobs that would have otherwise vanished or moved elsewhere.³



- Overall, in an analysis of 505 metropolitan areas from 2005 to 2011,⁴ a University of Denver study found that an increasing number of immigrants moving to an area leads to significantly higher employment growth and a decline in the unemployment rate.⁵ Another study from The Partnership for a New American Economy showed that immigrants started more than 25 percent of all businesses in seven of eight sectors of the economy that the U.S. government expects to grow the fastest over the next decade: health care, professional services, construction, retail trade, leisure and hospitality, education, and transportation and utilities.⁶ A study by the Small Business Administration (SBA) also found that immigrants have high business formation rates and create successful businesses that create jobs.⁷

Refugees are taxpayers, pay into federal benefits programs, and generate economic growth.

- Refugees contribute to their communities by starting businesses, paying taxes, sharing their cultural traditions, and being involved in their neighborhoods. A report in Tennessee found that refugees contribute more than they consume and pay almost twice as much in tax revenues, \$1.3 billion, as they consumed in state-funded services – including for schooling and health care – in the past two decades.⁸ Another study in Columbus, Ohio, found that the annual \$4.8 million of funding – predominantly funded out of federal programs – to support the refugee service agencies effectively generates \$48 million in total annual economic activity, supports 650 jobs in a single county alone, and generates nearly \$2.8 million in taxes to the state and local authorities.⁹
- A study in Lancaster, Pennsylvania found that in 2014, foreign-born residents, including refugees and immigrants, contributed \$1.3 billion to the GDP of Lancaster County, \$52.5 million in state and local taxes, and held \$440.5 million in spending power. That same year, immigrants in the area contributed more than \$62.8 million to Social Security and almost \$16.4 million to Medicare.¹⁰ Immigration into Lancaster County increased the total housing value by \$178.2 million between 2000 and 2014. In Akron, Ohio, refugees and immigrants held approximately \$137 million in spending power in 2013, with refugees holding close to \$23 million. Refugees also contributed more than \$3 million in state and

¹ Letter from 80 CEOs. <https://greateras1.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/FOR-RELEASE-finalCEOfugees-immigrants-letter.pdf>.

² "Economists on Immigration," New American Economy. <http://www.newamericaneconomy.org/feature/an-open-letter-from-1470-economists-on-immigration/>.

³ New American Economy, New Americans in Lancaster, November 2016, http://www.renewoureconomy.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Lancaster_Brief_FINAL.pdf.

⁴ Jack Strauss & Hailong Qian, Immigrants or Jobs: Which Comes First to a Metro?, Oct. 12, 2013, http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2339192.

⁵ See American Immigration Council, Immigrant Entrepreneurs and Innovators across the United States, 2014, <http://www.immigrationpolicy.org/just-facts/immigrant-entrepreneurs-and-innovators-across-united-states> for additional studies.

⁶ The Partnership for a New American Economy, *Open for Business: How Immigrants Are Driving Small Business Creation in the United States* (August 2012), <http://www.renewoureconomy.org/sites/all/themes/pnae/openforbusiness.pdf>.

⁷ Robert W. Fairlie, Ph.D., SBA Office of Advocacy, *Immigrant Entrepreneurs and Small Business Owners, and their Access to Financial Capital* (May 2012), <https://www.sba.gov/sites/default/files/rs396tot.pdf>.

⁸ Krista Lee, A Study on the Federal Cost Shifting to the State of Tennessee as a Result of the Federal Refugee Resettlement Program for the Period 1990 through 2012, Nov. 12, 2013, http://www.hias.org/sites/default/files/tn_report_federalcostshifting_refugeeresettlement.pdf.

⁹ Chmura Economics & Analytics, Economic Impact of Refugees in the Cleveland Area, October 2013, www.hias.org/sites/default/files/clevelandrefugeeconomic-impact.pdf.

¹⁰ New American Economy, New Americans in Lancaster, November 2016, http://www.renewoureconomy.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Lancaster_Brief_FINAL.pdf.

local taxes, alongside \$3.5 million to social security and another \$1 million to the Medicare system.¹¹

Refugees obtain self-sufficiency and employment quickly through job training, English language classes, and community partnerships.

- The U.S. refugee resettlement system emphasizes early self-sufficiency through employment, and most adult refugees are employed within their first six months of arriving to the United States. In fact, refugee men are employed at a higher rate than their U.S.-born peers, with 66.67 percent of refugee men employed during the 2009-11 period, compared to 60 percent of U.S.-born men. More than half of refugee women were employed during the same period – the same rate as U.S.-born women. The high employment of refugees increases their tax payments and other economic contributions, while decreasing their dependency on public assistance and services over the long run.¹²

Refugees' rapid integration leads to a corresponding decline in reliance on public benefits.

- Although many refugees initially depend on public benefits,¹³ most quickly become self-sufficient. Benefits usage declines with length of residence, and after 10 years, most of this gap closes. During the 2009-11 period, less than 25 percent of refugee households with at least a decade of U.S. experience received food stamps, compared to 11 percent for the U.S. born; and only 3 percent of refugee households received cash welfare benefits, compared to 2 percent for the U.S. born.¹⁴ Refugees' incomes rise over time, almost reaching parity with the U.S. born.
- Many arrive to the U.S. with limited resources or penniless. But over time, they find jobs, advance economically, and become self-sufficient. The median household income for recent refugees – those arriving within the past 5 years – was just 42 percent of the median for U.S.-born population in the 2009-11 period. But for those who had arrived 10-20 years earlier, their median income was 87 percent of that for the U.S.-born. For example, recently arriving Burmese refugee men have median wage of about \$23,000 per year, but after 10 years' living in the U.S. witness an increase in their median wage to \$54,000.¹⁵ Rising income and falling public benefit dependency demonstrate the increasing self-sufficiency of refugees and their increasingly positive fiscal contributions over time.¹⁶

Learn more at GreaterAs1.org/LEARN and see additional informational resources below.

Other Economic and Fiscal Impact Studies

- Fiscal Policy Institute: [Refugee Integration Report](#) (June 2016)
- Tent Foundation: [Refugees Work: A Humanitarian Investment that Yields Economic Dividends](#) (May 2016)
- Coalition of Refugee Service Agencies: [Refugees and Immigrants in Georgia: The Facts](#) (2016)
- United Way of Amarillo and Canyon: [Community Status Report](#) (2016)

Welcome and Success Stories of Refugee Integration

- Refugee Voices and Community Support: <https://greateras1.org/learn/stories-of-welcome/>
- Success Stories: <http://www.rcusa.org/refugee-success-stories/>
- Contributions of Refugees: <http://www.rcusa.org/contributions-of-refugees-to-the-us/>
- Community Welcome of Refugees: <http://www.rcusa.org/community-welcome-of-refugees/>
- State by State Welcome Stories: <http://www.interfaithimmigration.org/2015/12/03/welcoming-refugees-state-by-state-resources/>

¹¹ New American Economy, *Welcome to Akron: How Immigrants and Refugees are Contributing to Akron's Economic Growth*, 2016, http://www.renewoureconomy.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Welcome-to-Akron_Partnership-for-a-New-American-Economy_June-2016.pdf

¹² Migration Policy Institute, *The Integration Outcomes of U.S. Refugees: Successes and Challenges*, www.migrationpolicy.org/research/integration-outcomes-us-refugees-successes-and-challenges.

¹³ The affiliates are responsible for assuring that a core group of services are provided during the **first 30-90 days after a refugee's arrival**, including food, housing, clothing, employment services, follow-up medical care, and other necessary services. There are approximately **350 affiliates throughout the United States**.

¹⁴ Migration Policy Institute, *The Integration Outcomes of U.S. Refugees: Successes and Challenges*, www.migrationpolicy.org/research/integration-outcomes-us-refugees-successes-and-challenges.

¹⁵ David Dyssegaard Kallick and Silva Mathema, "Refugee Integration in the United States," June 16, 2016, www.americanprogress.org/issues/immigration/reports/2016/06/16/139551/refugee-integration-in-the-united-states/

¹⁶ Migration Policy Institute, *The Integration Outcomes of U.S. Refugees: Successes and Challenges*, www.migrationpolicy.org/research/integration-outcomes-us-refugees-successes-and-challenges.