

# Refugee Council USA

## State and Foreign Operations Appropriations for Displacement Assistance & Solutions

The United States invests in lifesaving humanitarian assistance and permanent solutions for the displaced in accordance with our national values and strategic interests. Forcibly displaced people lack access to the most basic necessities of life, including food and nutrition, clean water, safe shelter, healthcare, education, livelihood, and protection from conflict, war, and violence. Beyond these grave humanitarian concerns, the presence of large populations of forcibly displaced persons is an urgent strategic and security concern for the regions in which they live. U.S. funding helps to meet the basic human needs of persons fleeing persecution while they are displaced, supports permanent solutions to their displacement, and assists the countries hosting them. The U.S. thereby helps to relieve pressures that have the potential to destabilize regions and that also threaten global stability and security.

These investments are focused on two primary functions:

- Overseas Assistance: Provides life-sustaining assistance to refugees, many of whom reside in countries of first asylum neighboring their home countries, and to internally displaced persons.
- Refugee Admissions: Funds activities for the admission of refugees to the United States.

### **FY18 Funding Needs for Refugees and Displaced Persons Pursuant to Certain Accounts of the Department of State**

Accounts for Refugees and Displaced Persons	FY16 Enacted Funding <sup>1</sup> and Related FY17 Funding	FY18 Request
Migration and Refugee Assistance (MRA)	\$3,059,000,000 <sup>2</sup>	\$3,604,000,000
FY17 MRA Anomaly Funds*	\$300,000,000	
<i>Total for MRA, including anomaly funds</i>	<i>\$3,359,000,000</i>	<i>\$3,604,000,000</i>
International Disaster Assistance (IDA)	\$2,794,000,000	\$2,794,000,000
FY17 IDA Anomaly Funds*	\$616,000,000	\$616,000,000
<i>Total for IDA, including anomaly funds</i>	<i>\$3,410,000,000</i>	<i>\$3,410,000,000</i>
Emergency Refugee and Migration (ERMA)	\$50,000,000	\$50,000,000

\*The FY17 Continuing Resolution (until April 28, 2017) extends FY16 funding levels with an anomaly authorizing \$300 million to be spent for MRA overseas refugee assistance, as well as an additional \$616 million for IDA, both covered by OCO.

<sup>1</sup> FY2016 Appropriation for MRA includes \$2.127 billion from the OCO account. FY 16 appropriation for IDA includes \$1.919 billion from the OCO account.

<sup>2</sup> FY2016 estimated for MRA in SFOPs Congressional Justification is \$3.066 billion after a \$7 million transfer from the FY16 Economic Support Fund.

### **Migration and Refugee Assistance (MRA)**

The Migration and Refugee Assistance (MRA) Account is administered by the Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) in order to help ensure that families fleeing life-threatening situations can find temporary protection in countries where they are displaced. This funding also supports the pursuit of the three durable solutions for refugees: voluntary repatriation back to their home country, integration in a host country of asylum, and third-country resettlement when the first two solutions are not viable.

Overseas Refugee Assistance helps maintain humane, stable conditions for refugees and host communities during the interim period until the refugee crisis can be resolved. It also covers some costs related to refugees' pursuit of durable solutions to their displacement. We are currently facing the worst displacement crisis in recorded history with over 65 million displaced persons worldwide, including over 21 million refugees. The Syria crisis alone has produced nearly 5 million Syrian refugees,<sup>3</sup> and there are other multiple, complex humanitarian emergencies involving displaced people from countries such as South Sudan, Central African Republic, and Iraq.

Refugee Admissions remains a hallmark of U.S. global leadership as out of more than 28 resettlement countries, the U.S. has resettled more than any other country. The resettlement program is a reflection of our American values of freedom, opportunity, and compassion. Providing protection to people seeking safety is one of our nation's proudest and longest standing traditions, including resettling Jewish refugees during World War II, Vietnamese refugees in the 1980s, and more recently refugees from Sudan, Burma/Myanmar, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Syria. Refugees undergo rigorous vetting prior to arrival and contribute to American communities. Given the unprecedented scope of today's global refugee crisis and the urgent need for U.S. leadership, RCUSA recommends that the United States admit at least 75,000 refugees in FY2018.

### **Emergency Refugee and Migration Assistance (ERMA)**

ERMA, an emergency draw-down account that is also administered by PRM, provides an important "safety valve" during emergencies, allowing the United States to meet rapidly-occurring and unforeseen humanitarian needs. This funding allows the U.S. to respond quickly and effectively to unanticipated crises.

### **International Disaster Assistance (IDA)**

The International Disaster Assistance (IDA) account is administered by the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) within the Department of State's U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). IDA funds humanitarian assistance to people displaced by disaster, conflict, and war. Longstanding humanitarian crises also continue in Afghanistan, Somalia, and Colombia, causing significant internal displacement and regional pressures. Meeting the needs of internally displaced persons is one way to prevent the need for them to leave their countries of origin and become refugees.

---

<sup>3</sup> *Syria Regional Response*, UNHCR, <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php> [accessed March 10, 2017].

# Refugee Council USA

## Labor-HHS Appropriations for Refugee Integration & Survivor Success

The Refugee and Entrant Assistance (REA) Account provides critical initial investments in the long-term integration and economic success of certain new Americans, including people who are building new lives after surviving persecution, torture, trauma, and human trafficking. It is funded through the appropriations for Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Programs (LHHS), and is administered by the Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR). ORR was originally established in 1980 to assist refugees resettled by the United States to obtain self-sufficiency. Today, the account serves over 200,000 people annually and has the following major components:

- Integration services for refugees and asylees (including unaccompanied refugee minors), Cuban and Haitian Entrants, & Iraqi and Afghan Special Immigrant Visas (SIVs) recipients.
- Special programs for victims of human trafficking and survivors of torture in the U.S.
- Care, placement, and post-arrival services for unaccompanied children (UCs) who are encountered in the U.S. or who present themselves at the U.S. border.

### **FY 2018 Office of Refugee Resettlement Funding Needs for the Refugee and Entrant Assistance (REA) Account of Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Programs**

Program Areas	FY16 Enacted Funding	FY18 Request
Transitional & Medical Services	\$490,000,000	\$490,000,000
Social Services	\$155,000,000	\$155,000,000
Refugee Health Promotion	\$4,600,000	\$4,600,000
Targeted Assistance	\$47,601,000	\$47,601,000
<b>Subtotal of Resettlement Services</b>	<b>\$697,201,000</b>	<b>\$697,201,000</b>
Foreign-Born Trafficking Victims	\$13,000,000	\$16,000,000
Domestic Trafficking Victims	\$5,755,000	\$16,000,000
Torture Survivor Assistance	\$10,735,000	\$10,735,000
Unaccompanied Children	\$948,000,000	\$948,000,000
<b>Total – All REA Activities</b>	<b>\$1,674,691,000</b>	<b>\$1,687,936,000</b>
FY17 Contingency Funds	\$500,000,000	\$500,000,000
<b>Grand Total – All REA Activities</b>	<b>\$2,174,691,000</b>	<b>\$2,187,936,000</b>

*The FY17 Continuing Resolution (until April 28, 2016) extends FY16 funding levels with an anomaly authorizing that up to \$500 million could be spent to care for increased numbers of unaccompanied children. RCUSA urges that such funds be available for all ORR populations. Note that an increase of \$13.2 million is requested to serve trafficking survivors, given the 872% increase in the number of victims identified and certified in need of comprehensive, trauma-informed, gender specific services since 2002.*

## **PROGRAM OUTCOMES**

Refugees strengthen our economy. As a result of minimal initial investments upon their arrival and their hard work, refugees are able to become self-sufficient and successful. Refugees pay taxes, support local commerce, and start their own businesses, providing jobs as well as filling jobs for welcoming employers.

- Six months after arriving to the U.S., over 80% of refugees are self-sufficient.
- Over time, refugees' income rise—approaching the median income of the U.S.-born in their first 10-20 years<sup>1</sup> and refugees make increasingly positive fiscal contributions.
- Studies show that people whom the United States welcomes as refugees are more likely to be employed than U.S. born citizens.<sup>2</sup> Refugees in the U.S. start businesses of their own and create jobs in the process. For example, in Cleveland refugees started more than 38 businesses from 2002-2012, with a total of 141 employees (including owners).<sup>3</sup>
- Refugees integrate<sup>4</sup> into American communities, with a large majority of refugees having learned English and becoming homeowners<sup>5</sup> after being in the United States for 10 years, while three-quarters or more become naturalized U.S. citizens after 20 years.
- One report in Tennessee found that refugees contributed almost twice as much in tax revenue as they consumed in state-funded services in the past two decades.<sup>6</sup>
- Refugees fill critical workforce gaps and fuel economic growth in American cities.<sup>7</sup>

## **PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS**

The long-term integration and economic success of refugees are possible because of strong partnerships with the community, employers eager to hire refugees, and the limited but critical investments by the federal government through programs such as:

### **Matching Grant Program**

This public-private partnership is ORR's most successful employment program. It empowers refugees to become self-sufficient within six months without needing to access federal or state assistance programs. The program leverages public funds with private donations at a 2:1 ratio, requiring nongovernmental agencies to match federal government contributions.

### **School Impact Grants**

This highly impactful program provides schools serving refugee children a range of training, resources, and support to help set them and the refugee students they serve up for success. Because of this program, students participate in English classes, after-school and summer activities, and other programs that encourage high school completion.

### **Microenterprise Development Program**

This program helps refugees develop, expand or maintain their own businesses and become financially independent. To equip refugees to become successful entrepreneurs, the program provides training and technical assistance in a range of essential business skills.

### **Human Trafficking Survivor Programs**

Funding enables vital education and prevention for at-risk communities and access to comprehensive and specialized services for the increasing number of identified victims.

---

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/ten-facts-about-us-refugee-resettlement>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/ten-facts-about-us-refugee-resettlement>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.hias.org/sites/default/files/clevelandrefugeeeconomicimpact.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> <http://fiscalpolicy.org/analysis-of-refugee-groups-provides-evidence-of-high-levels-of-integration-across-indicators>

<sup>5</sup> <https://cdn.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/15112912/refugeeintegration.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> [http://www.hias.org/sites/default/files/tn\\_report\\_federalcostshifting\\_refugeeresettlement.pdf](http://www.hias.org/sites/default/files/tn_report_federalcostshifting_refugeeresettlement.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> <http://rscleveland.org/2016/12/13/local-refugees-fill-talent-gaps-fuel-economic-growth/>