



## Refugees and Immigrants in Georgia: The Facts

⇒ As new Georgians, refugees are **contributors** to communities. Competing in a 21<sup>st</sup> Century economy will require taking full advantage of **our most important resource—our people**. That means welcoming the new Americans who are starting businesses, committing to local communities, and helping to build a stronger economy.

⇒ **92 percent** of refugee households in Georgia are working and paying their own expenses within six months of arrival—**among the highest early self-sufficiency rates in the country**.

⇒ Refugees are immigrants to the United States who are fleeing their homeland because of persecution and **invited by the American people**. Refugees undergo a rigorous background, security, and medical screening process involving **eight U.S. federal agencies, six security databases, five background checks and three separate in-person interviews**, among other things.

⇒ One year after arrival, refugees apply for lawful permanent residency (green card). Four years later, they are eligible to become **U.S. citizens**.

⇒ The State of **Georgia does not fund any programs specifically for refugees**. Georgia voluntarily administers federal pass-through dollars; all refugee funds in Georgia's state budget come from the federal budget.

⇒ Refugees represent diverse faiths, including Christians, Muslims, Jews, Hindus, and Buddhists.

⇒ The refugee program works in partnership with schools to create Georgia's next generation of leaders. Schools with significant refugee populations have afterschool programs in partnership with local organizations. In 2019, these **afterschool programs served 1,138 students**. Programs also assisted **1,521 parents and families** to better understand the American school system and become more involved with their children's education.

⇒ **Georgia communities welcome over 1,000 newly-arriving refugees each year**. Georgia is one of the nation's most populous states and traditionally has welcomed refugees in proportion to its size. Four local agencies help refugees adjust initially, and a larger network of organizations supports refugees moving along the path to self-sufficiency.

⇒ Refugees begin learning English immediately after arrival. In 2019, CRSA agencies provided **English as a Second Language services to 5,115 clients**.

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## Safety and Security

All refugees seeking to enter the U.S. must first be officially deemed as a refugee by the United Nations and then go through **a thirteen-step screening process, including seven steps of security**. This process includes an in-person interview, fingerprinting by U.S. government officials, and a rigorous medical screening from agencies including the FBI, Department of Homeland Security, and State Department.

## Economic Impact

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

In 2019, CRSA members partnered with **over 150 businesses** to place over 2,515 new Americans in jobs.

CRSA agencies **spent an estimated \$2.5 million directly in Georgia's local economies**—especially in localities like DeKalb's cities of Clarkston and Stone Mountain—in FY2019 through rent, utilities, and initial purchases made for newly-arrived refugees.

## Welcoming Communities

In line with **its strong faith traditions and humanitarian spirit**, Georgia has embraced those fleeing persecution and violence for more than 40 years. Georgia's refugee resettlement program is among the most successful and is **seen as a model nationwide**.

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

## Immigration

Multiple CRSA agencies offer services for citizenship, including civics education and tutoring courses. In 2019, CRSA agencies assisted **over 1,308 new Americans to become citizens**. Agencies also assisted **over 12,356 new Americans to register to vote** after citizenship.

Many immigrants have already supported the United States armed forces before ever arriving in the country. These men and women are welcomed on a **Special Immigrant Visa (SIV)** and have served as pilots, interpreters, and drivers during the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

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