



Untapped Potential: Refugee Resettlement and Workforce Opportunities

Greater Des Moines Partnership Workplace Diversity
Webinar Series

December 10th, 2014

Objective Areas

- Refugee Resettlement Process
- Legal Status and Work Authorization
- Benefits of hiring refugees
- Employer best-practices
- Success Stories
- Organizational Supports and Resources

Refugee Status

- The 1951 United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees states that a refugee is someone who:
 - *“owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country...”*

U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

- Established in 1950 in the wake of WWII
- Coordinates basic provisions
- Finding durable solutions
 - **Voluntary repatriation**
 - **Local integration**
 - **Resettlement**
- Funded almost entirely by voluntary contributions from governments, organizations, and individuals



International Resettlement Network

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

*United
States*

Canada

Australia

Sweden

Norway

Finland

*New
Zealand*

Denmark

*The
Netherlands*

Presidential Determination: 2015

Africa	17,000
East Asia	13,000
Europe & Central Asia	1,000
Latin America & Caribbean	4,000
Near East & South Asia	33,000
Unallocated Reserve	2,000
TOTAL	70,000

FY2014 Reception and Placement Program Affiliate Sites

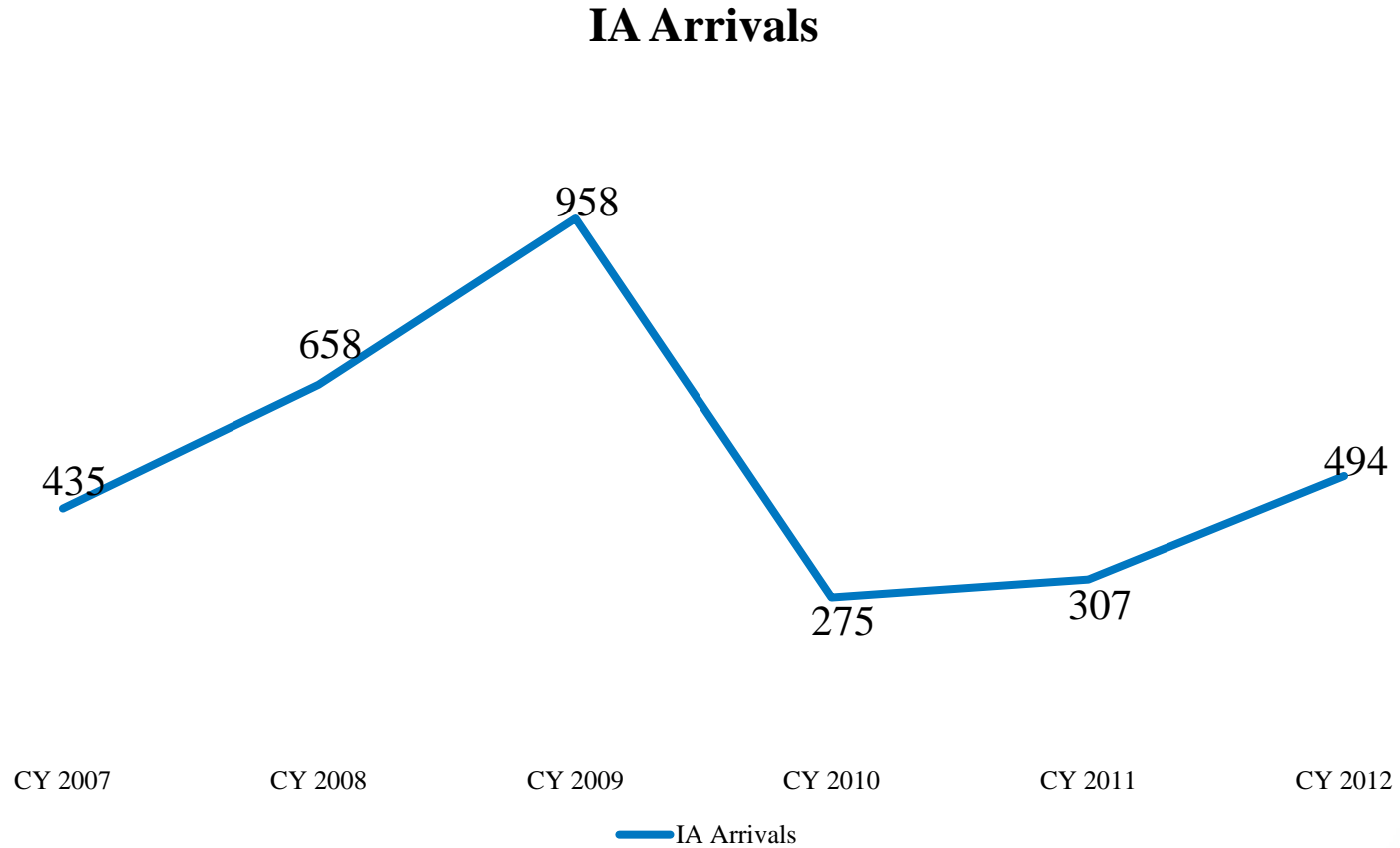


Source: Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, US Department of State

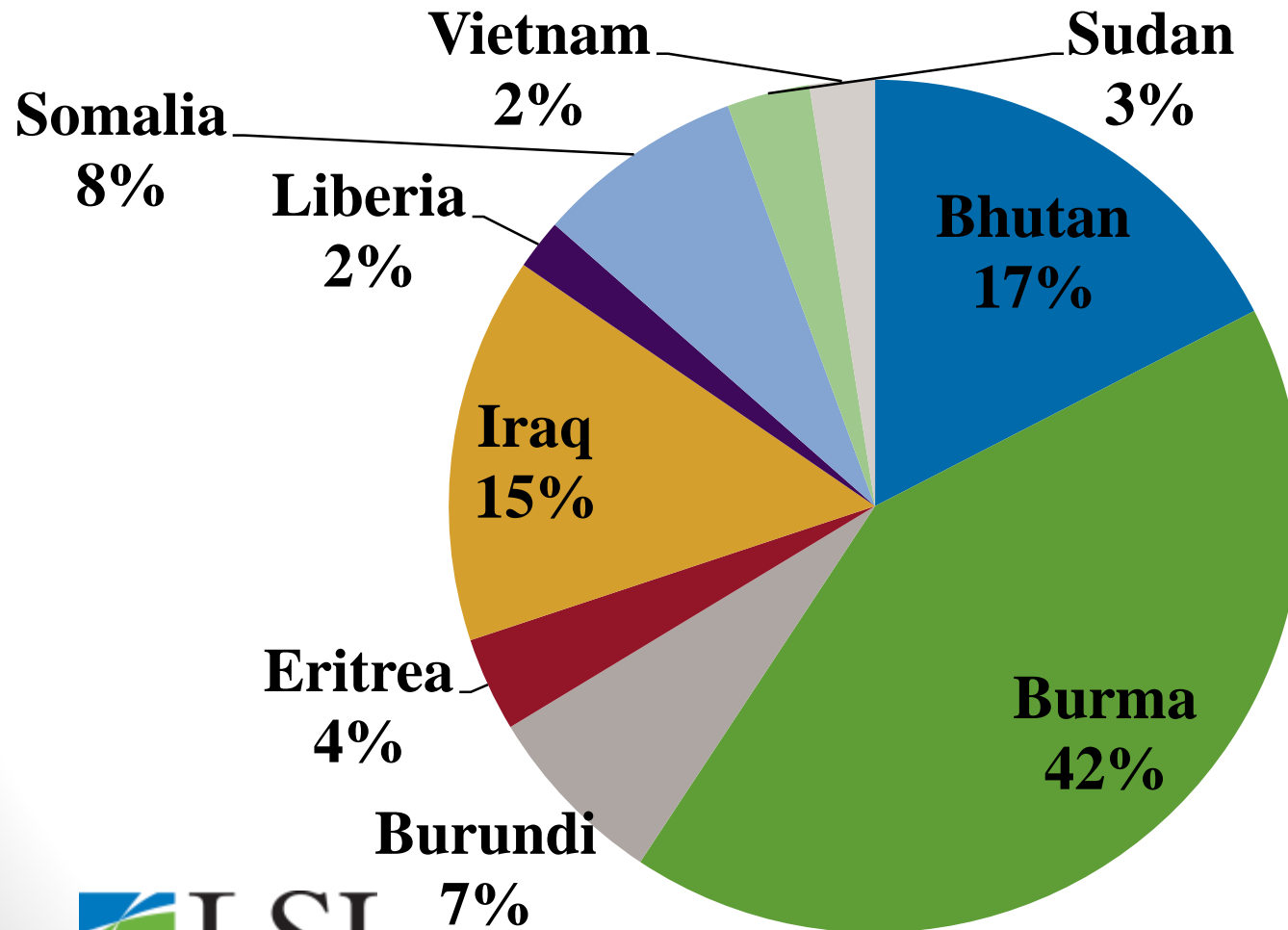
Resettlement to U.S.



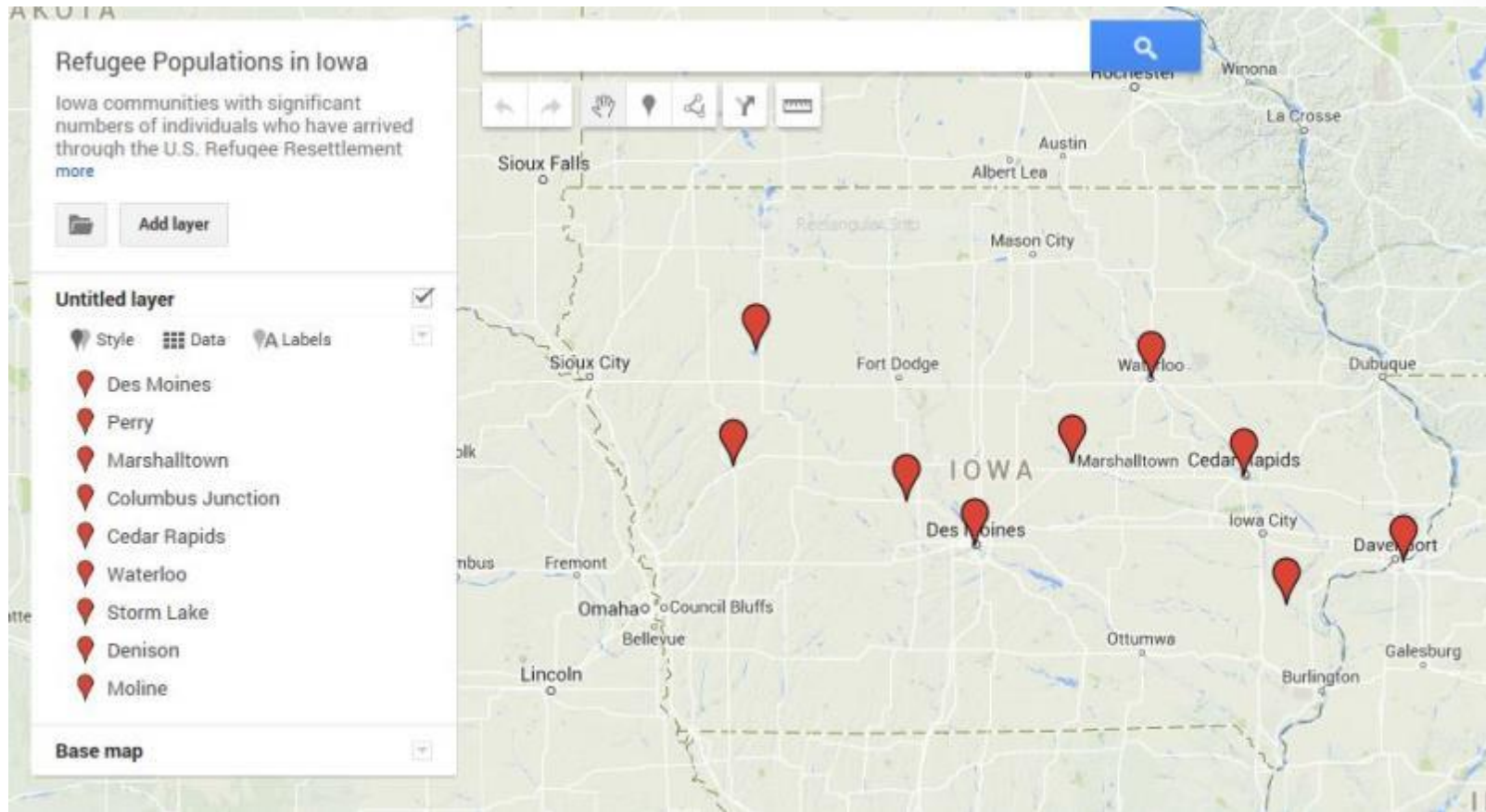
Total Iowa Arrivals 2007-2012



Cumulative Arrivals by Country 2007-2012



Populations in Iowa



Resettlement Services

- Airport Reception
- Safe, furnished housing
- Provision of basic necessities
- Social Security Cards
- School Enrollment
- Transportation to job interviews/training
- Community Orientation
- Health Screening and referrals
- Employment Services
- Referral to ESL or other Educational Programs
- Assistance obtaining appropriate benefits

Status, Rights, and Responsibilities in the U.S.

- Status
 - Refugee status upon arrival
 - Adjust status to Legal Permanent Resident (LPR) after 1 year in U.S.
 - Eligible for citizenship after 5 years in U.S.
- Rights
 - Certain social and health service benefits
 - **Immediate and indefinite work eligibility**
- Responsibilities
 - Repayment of Travel Loan

Benefits

- Variety of Skills and Languages
- Strong Work Ethic/Motivation
- High Retention Rates
- Background Checks
- Supportive Services

Supportive Services

- Interview preparation and personal work readiness skills
- Support with external factors
- Technical assistance to employers
- Interpretation for training
- Pre-screening

Work Readiness Training

■ Objectives:

- English Language
- Job seeking skills
- Work-place competencies
- Expectations
- Job Exploration

■ Activities

- Job Applications
- Mock Interviews
- Bus Training
- Workplace Tours
- Service Learning
- Workplace simulations



Employer Best Practices

- Diverse Leadership
- Transportation
- In-person training
- Translated signs and training materials
- Educational Support and Training
- Embracing Diversity of Culture

Success Stories

- Tyson's Turnover
- Pitney Bowes' Startup
- Straight Up Framing

National Resources

- US Department of Justice Office of Special Counsel for Immigration-Related Unfair Employment Practices
 - <http://www.justice.gov/crt/about/osc/>
 - Employer Hotline: 1-800-255-8155
- Cultural Orientation Resource Center
 - <http://www.culturalorientation.net/learning/populations>
- Higher Advantage
 - <http://www.higheradvantage.org/>

Local Organization Contacts

- Job Placement Organizations
 - Catholic Charities - *Rachel Ecklund*
 - recklund@catholiccharitiesdm.org, (515) 237-5095
 - Iowa Bureau of Refugee Services – *Loren Bawn*
 - lbawn@dhs.state.ia.us, (515) 283-7903
 - USCRI – *Carly Ross*
 - cross@uscricdesmoines.org, (515) 528-7525
- Work Readiness Training
 - LSI – *Caryn Kelly*
 - Caryn.kelly@lsiowa.org, (515) 271-7332
- Refugee Employment Subcommittee – *Sanjita Pradhan*
 - sanjita.pradhan@iowa.gov, (515) 281-4219



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