



# St. Vincent Catholic Charities

PROVIDING HELP. CREATING HOPE.

2800 W. Willow • Lansing, MI 48917 • Office: (517) 323.4734 • [www.stvcc.org](http://www.stvcc.org)

## Helpful information about the STVCC Refugee Services

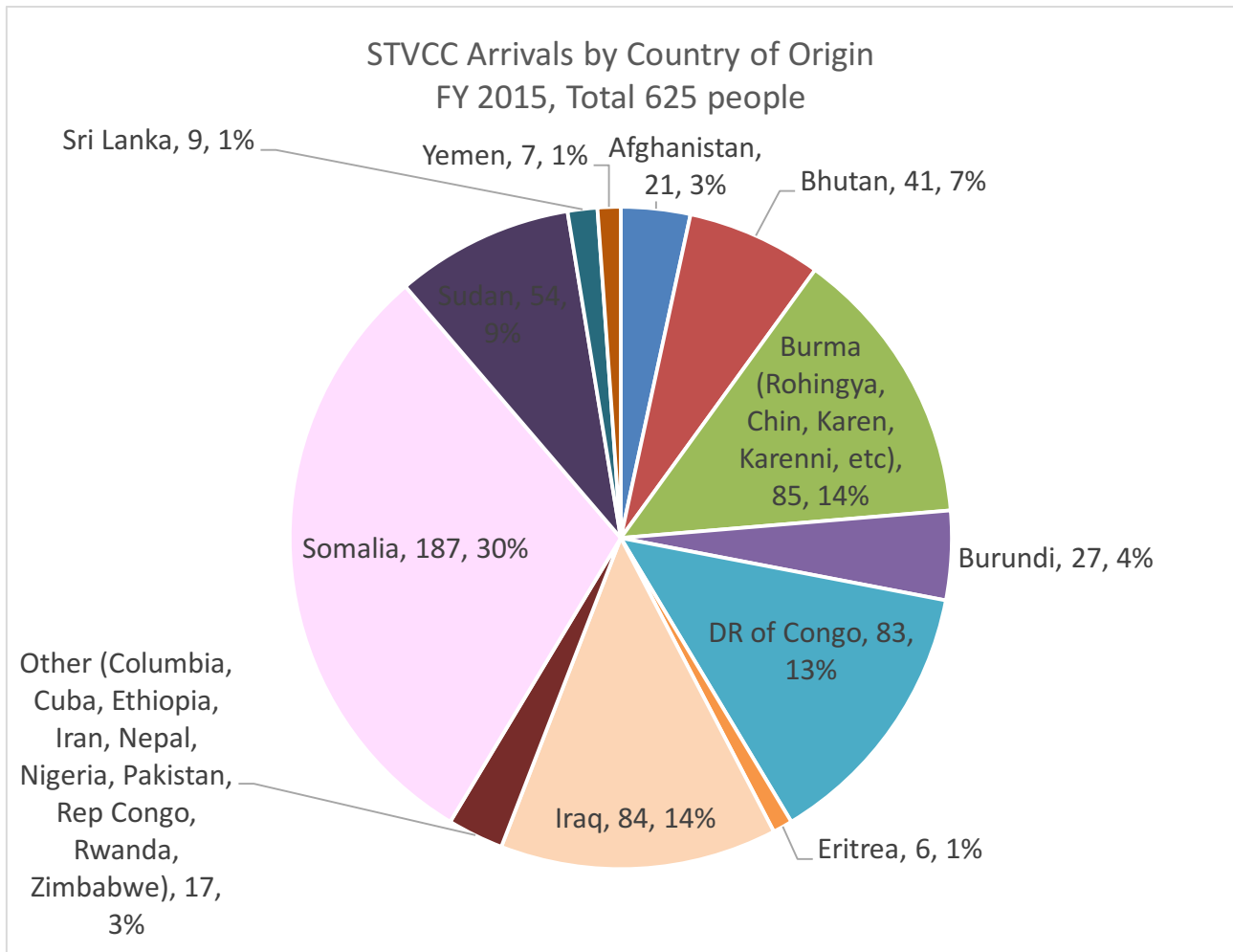
The St. Vincent Catholic Charities resettles 600-650 refugees every year. The definition of a refugee is: a person who fled their country because of a well founded fear of persecution based upon their race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group or political opinion. An estimated 17,000 refugees have already made Lansing their home. According to the United Nations Refugee program (UNHCR),<sup>1</sup> there were 19.5 million refugees worldwide at the end of 2015, 14.4 million of them under UNHCR's mandate. Last year, 51% of refugees were under 18 years old and about 50% were women and girls. Of the 14.4 million refugees of concern to UNHCR around the world, only about 1 per cent are submitted by the agency for resettlement. The USA resettles the most refugees at between 70,000 and 80,000 per year). The length of time most refugees spend in camps varies. Many are born in camps, but many more die in camps. STVCC has resettled large populations of refugees from Bhutan and Burma who were in camps over 20 years as the international community sought a solution to their statelessness.

STVCC began officially providing refugee services in the 1970s. Current services offered include resettlement (which includes housing), employment, social adjustment, and health. Unlike most cities around the nation, we are the only refugee resettlement program in the Lansing area. Refugee Services are part of a nationwide endeavor of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops whose network spans over 80 cities in the USA. The program is linked to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), who identifies and screens potential candidates for resettlement, and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) who processes the paperwork and travel. The core of the program is funded and driven by the Department of State, Bureau of Population and Migration (DOS/BPRM) and supplemented by the Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Refugee Resettlement (DHHS/ORR). Other support comes from the Department of Justice and the Ingham County Health Department.

STVCC Refugee Services currently has a staff of 35. Twenty-five of STVCC's Refugee Program staff came to the USA as refugees. St. Vincent Catholic Charities staff is also fluent in over 26 languages to most appropriately meet the needs of our clients. Resettlement services range from setting up a home, meeting clients at the airport and providing their first hot meal to health screenings, school enrollments and orientation. Employment services include planning, counseling, training, job applications and support for new job placements – orientation, training and retention. Other services include social adjustment and outreach and referral for almost every other need. STVCC has local partnerships with five parishes and nine churches, the Greater Lansing Islamic Center, and the Bharatiya Temple. STVCC works closely with local Ethnic Community Based Organizations such as the Somali Association of Michigan, Rafidain (the Iraqi association), the Somali Bantu Organization, and the Bhutanese Society of Lansing.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: UNHCR Global Trends, Forced Displacement in 2014, <http://unhcr.org/556725e69.html>



**How Churches, other Faith-Based Organizations, and community groups can get involved:**

- Volunteer: welcoming at the airport, mentoring, participating in special projects, orientation, transportation and community support
- Donate:
  - Welcoming – collecting and providing household goods, furniture, warm coats, etc. for new arrivals
  - Employment support – collecting and providing items to support employment (English learning and other educational materials, computers, bus passes, gas cards, etc)
  - Financial support – for vocational training, bus passes, driver’s training and special needs
  - Special collections – for clients with disabilities and other special needs
- “Sponsor”:
  - Sponsor a new family with furniture and household goods
  - Sponsor a family for Christmas by providing new clothes, toys, books and household goods
  - Sponsor a family with one month’s rent. Help families to bridge the gap between their first day of work and receiving their first paycheck.

**For more information contact:**

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