

New York State Enhanced Services to Refugees Program



February 2019

THE NEW YORK STATE ENHANCED SERVICES TO REFUGEES PROGRAM began in 2017, as a remarkable response to the federal government’s radical retreat from refugee resettlement. New York took on what no other state did: it helped resettlement agencies to get through a difficult period, and also to rethink their role in their communities. **The first two years of funding were \$2 million; this year we are requesting \$4.5 million.**

The program, known as NYSESRP, has been a huge success, and is a beacon for other states around the country. NYSESRP helps refugee resettlement agencies repurpose their staff and facilities to more fully serve refugees already in their communities, and to help attract others to areas that recognize refugees as contributors to population growth and economic revitalization.

New York communities know that refugees are resilient, and they see how these agencies help refugees get on their feet and succeed. Refugees learn English, get jobs, start businesses, pay taxes, buy homes, and become citizens. Upstate New York cities have seen refugees stem population decline and in some cases tip the cities toward vital population growth. Over 90 percent of resettlement in New York is in upstate cities, but resettlement agencies play a key role downstate as well, helping not only refugees but also asylees and asylum seekers.

NYSESRP allows resettlement agencies to work with refugees beyond the 90-day period of initial resettlement funding, and is free of some restrictions attached to federal funding. The NYSESRP-funded agencies can do more to help integrate refugees into the community and the workplace, with positive impacts rippling out to employers, neighbors, schools, local businesses, and more.

Raising the profile of our welcoming communities and the unique supports New York agencies can offer will also

Where are Refugees Resettled in New York?

	Number of Refugees Placed
2007 to 2016	
Erie	12,744
Onondaga	9,536
Monroe	6,332
Oneida	4,163
Albany	3,048
Manhattan	1,811
Queens	496
Brooklyn	459
Bronx	270
Rensselaer	249
Broome	173
Nassau	141
Suffolk	91
Tompkins	77
Westchester	44
Schenectady	38
Staten Island	34
Niagara	32
Ulster	25
Saratoga	20
Dutchess	19
Jefferson	18
Orange	18
Chautauqua	12
Rockland	12
Orleans	10
All Other	58
New York State	39,921

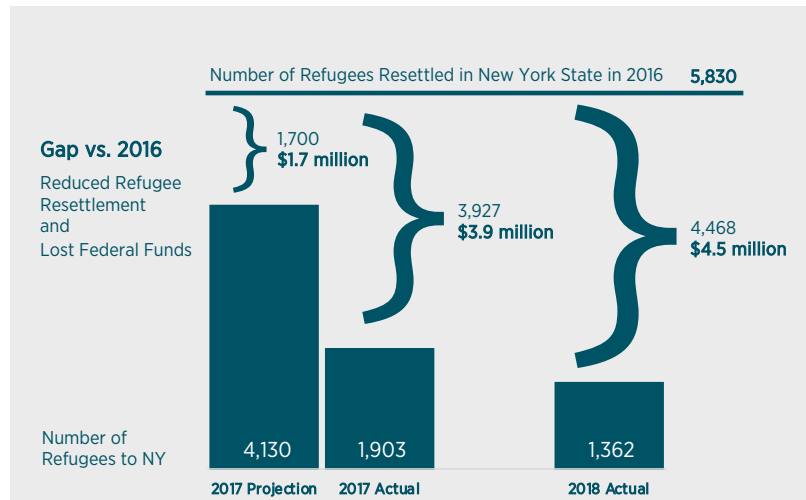
Source: Fiscal Policy Institute analysis of WRAPS data.

attract people from Bhutanese, Somali, Burmese, Congolese and other communities already in this country to New York, helping spur local growth. More prominent refugee and immigrant communities are also a key to attracting young people of all backgrounds who want to live in vibrant and diverse areas.

Even though the number of new arrivals is down dramatically, the need for refugee resettlement services is not diminished. Many secondary migrants come to New York, and enhanced support gives a chance for local refugee communities to thrive. The experienced and talented multilingual staff of the agencies also provide support to asylees, asylum seekers, and others in the community whether or not they are funded to do so. With minor modifications, the NYSESRP program could allow them to do this even better.

The first year of funding for NYSESRP was \$2 million. That made good sense based on what was known at the time. The gap in funding to New York’s resettlement agencies was conservatively projected to be 1,700. Since federal funding is allocated at \$1,000 per refugee, this would have created a funding gap of \$1.7 million compared to 2016. In retrospect, however, the drop turned out to be 3,927, creating a funding gap of \$3.9 million. The gap between refugee resettlement in 2016 and 2018 was 4,468, a 77 percent drop from 2016, creating a funding shortfall of \$4.5 million.

**NYSESRP: \$2 Million Made Sense in 2016
\$4.5 Million Makes Sense Today**



Source: Fiscal Policy Institute analysis of WRAPs data. Dollars lost based on funding formula of \$1,000 per refugee. The rate was marginally lower in 2017

The FY 2019-2020 Executive Budget does not include the \$2 million allocated in each of the past two years. At its inception, funding for NYSESRP was led by the New York State Assembly. **This year, we are asking the legislature to include \$4.5 million in the state budget to make sure this vibrant program continues to achieve its goals.**



Enhanced aid to refugees helps our communities grow and thrive.

New York State Enhanced Services to Refugees Program (NYSESRP)

CAMBA
Catholic Charities
Community Services
Catholic Charities
of Buffalo
Catholic Charities
of Onondaga County

Catholic Charities of the
Diocese of Rockville Centre
Catholic Family Center
in Rochester
HIAS New York
Interfaith Works of
Central New York

International Institute
of Buffalo
International Rescue
Committee in New York
Jewish Family Service
of Buffalo & Erie Counties
Journey's End Refugee Services

Mohawk Valley Resource
Center for Refugees
U.S. Committee for Refugees
and Immigrants
New York Immigration Coalition
Fiscal Policy Institute