

**Thomas R. Lawson – Iris J. Philips:**

## **Immigration and Cultural Integration in Louisville, Kentucky, USA**

### **Introduction**

This paper will provide some general information concerning the overall effect of immigration and refugees on the United States, but will focus directly on refugees and specifically those in the state of Kentucky. Funding sources, demographics of the population served and programs developed will be detailed in an effort to show how one state is attempting to meet the global problem of immigration and refugees.

### **Immigration in the United States**

Almost 10 million immigrants, primarily from Latin America and Asia, entered the United States in the 1980's; another 10 million are expected to arrive legally or illegally in the 1990's. In the 1950's, Canada and Europe accounted for 65% of legal immigrants to the U.S., however, by the 1980's these countries accounted for only 15%. In the 1950's, Asia accounted for only 6% of the immigrant stream, but by the 1980's it reached 45%. Overall, 40% of the legal immigrants in the 1980's came from Mexico and the rest of Latin America. (Passel and Flix, 1994)

The definition of refugee is set forth in the United States by the Immigration and Nationality Act as amended in 1980 and the definition conforms to the 1967 United Nations Protocol on Refugees.

*A refugee is an alien outside the United States who is unable or unwilling to return to his or her country of nationality because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution.* (U.S. Department of Justice Statistical Yearbook of the INS, 1996)

Claims of persecution must be based on race, religion, national membership in a particular social group, or political opinion. Persons within their country of nationality may be treated as refugees, provided that the President, after consultation with Congress, declares that they are of special humanitarian concern to the United States.

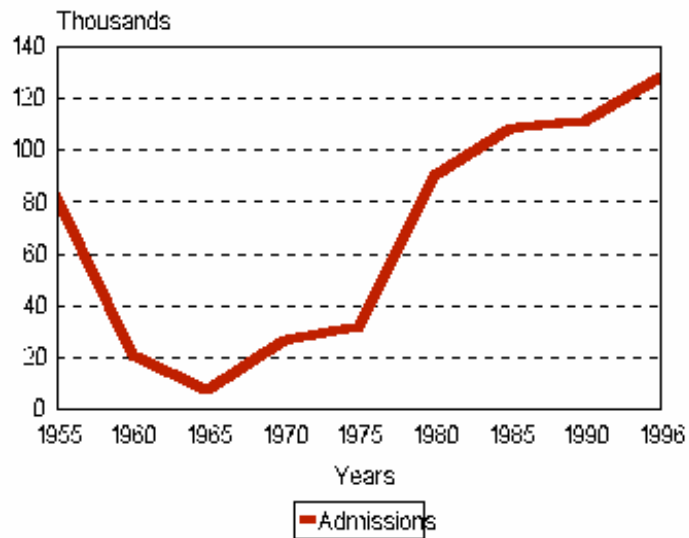
Each year the President determines the total number of refugees that may need to resettle in the United States. Based upon this need, admissions under refugee status are allocated to particular geographic regions. In 1996 the ceiling authorized was 90,000 with the following allocations to regions: Africa 7,000, East Asia 25,000, Eastern Europe-Soviet Union 45,000, Latin America-Caribbean 6,000, Near East-South Asia 4,000, Reserve not allocated, but funded under the refugee program 3,000. (U.S. Department of Justice INS, 1996)

Spouses and minor children of refugees who have qualified for refugee status may enter the country as refugees, either accompanying the principle refugee or following later. Under the Refugee Act, refugees are eligible to adjust to lawful permanent resident status, exempt from the worldwide annual limitation after 1 year of residence in the U.S.

As shown in the chart on the next page, the number of refugees has steadily increased since 1975. The reasons for the increase can be attributed to (1) the internal conflicts in countries world-wide resulting in persecution of individuals within those countries, (2) the involvement of the United States in many of those conflicts resulting in individuals who have sided with the U.S. becoming persecuted, and (3) the sentiment of citizens in the U.S. who have lobbied government leaders to accept refugees from certain countries or those with certain religious/political affiliations.

# Refugee/Asylee Admissions

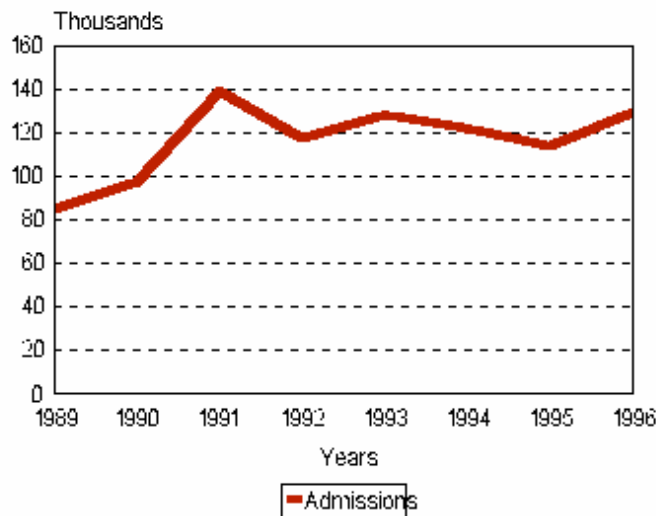
1955-1996



Although there has been a major increase in refugees entering the U.S. since 1975, the figures since 1989 have been relatively constant with an average of about 120,000 refugees per year gaining admission. (U.S. Department of Justice INS, 1996)

# Refugee/Asylee Admissions

1989-1996



The number of refugee applications increased 9% in 1996 over 1995. Vietnam contributed 45% of all applications, the former Soviet Union 25%, Bosnia 12%, and Somalia 9%. In the past few years the number of applications from Bosnia and Somalia has increased dramatically. The geographic distribution of applications, clearly indicates the greatest number of applicants are from East Asia (Vietnam) and from Europe (former Soviet Union and Bosnia). (U.S. Department of Justice, INS, 1996)

### Refugee Admissions – Selected Countries 1990-1996

	1991	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996
<b>Bosnia</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1887</b>	<b>7988</b>	<b>9870</b>	<b>12030</b>
<b>Hungary</b>	<b>274</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Poland</b>	<b>1491</b>	<b>290</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Romania</b>	<b>3650</b>	<b>4452</b>	<b>1499</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Soviet Union</b>	<b>50716</b>	<b>38661</b>	<b>61298</b>	<b>48627</b>	<b>43470</b>	<b>35716</b>	<b>29536</b>
<b>Ethiopia</b>	<b>3228</b>	<b>394</b>	<b>2972</b>	<b>2765</b>	<b>328</b>	<b>239</b>	<b>194</b>
<b>Somalia</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>192</b>	<b>1570</b>	<b>2753</b>	<b>3555</b>	<b>2506</b>	<b>6436</b>
<b>Iran</b>	<b>3329</b>	<b>2692</b>	<b>1949</b>	<b>1161</b>	<b>851</b>	<b>978</b>	<b>1256</b>
<b>Iraq</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>842</b>	<b>4332</b>	<b>4605</b>	<b>4984</b>	<b>3482</b>	<b>2528</b>
<b>Vietnam</b>	<b>27378</b>	<b>27957</b>	<b>26690</b>	<b>31219</b>	<b>34248</b>	<b>32244</b>	<b>16130</b>

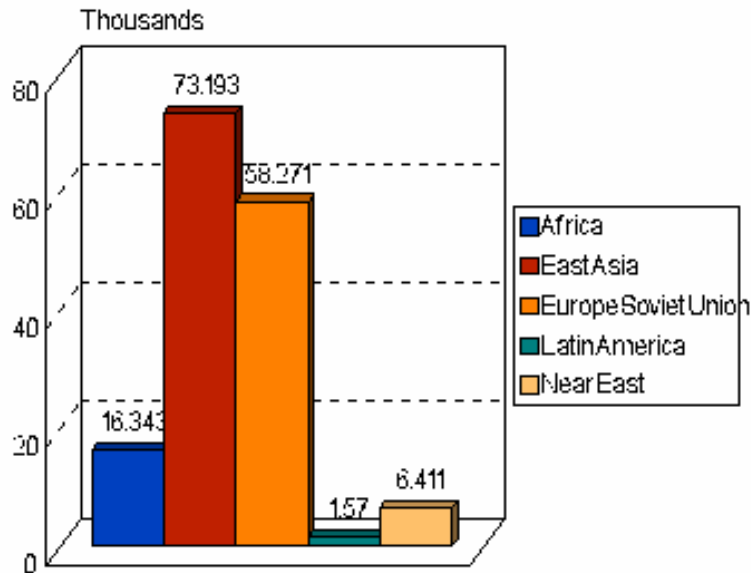
The number of applications approved for 1996, were: former Soviet Union (32,906), Bosnia (14,654), Vietnam (8,566), and Somalia (8,175). These countries accounted for 86% of the approvals in 1996. The approvals for the former Soviet Union has decreased each of the last four years due to the fact that there have been fewer applications each of these years.

Admissions to refugee status, clearly, reflects the global situation and internal conflicts within specific countries. For example, Bosnia has no admissions in the first years of the 1990's but by 1996 following the extreme internal strife there were over 12,000 refugees admitted. Romania, Poland and Hungary while having relatively small numbers of refugees in the early 90's, following internal resolution of problems have almost no refugee admissions by 1996. The former Soviet Union, which had a very high and still contributes a very large number of admissions, has shown a steady and significant decrease since 1993. Somalia has shown a drastic increase in the years 1991-1996. (U.S. Department of Justice, INS, 1996)

While the number of total number of admissions has been relatively constant, the dramatic changes in geographic distribution noted above are also reflected in the comparison of the number of applications to the number of actual arrivals in the U.S.

# Refugee Applications 1996

## Geographical Area

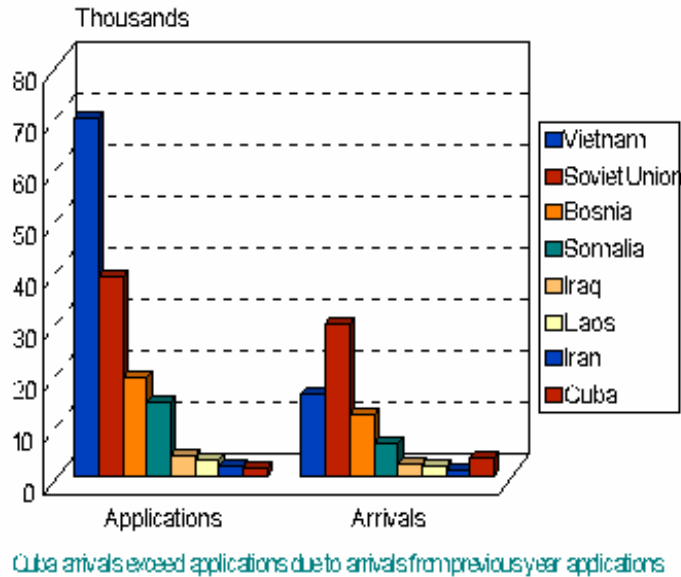


East Asia= Laos, Vietnam; Latin America includes Cuba and Caribbean

Most of the refugee flow from Eastern Europe in 1996 other than from Bosnia was family reunification cases from the former Soviet Union. The principle refugee arrived previously and family members arrived in 1996. Overall Vietnam, the former Soviet Union and Bosnia accounted for 77% of all arrivals in 1996. (U.S. Department of Justice, INS, 1996)

# Refugees 1996

## Applications and Arrivals



The process for refugees is to make application, receive approval and following the approval undergo health and security clearances, have sponsorship and placement arranged and in some cases undergo orientation and English language training.

Two recently enacted pieces of legislation have made substantial changes to the eligibility of aliens for benefits in the United States. The first was the “Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (the Welfare Act). This legislation dramatically altered the current welfare system and, in Title IV, restricted the access of legal and illegal immigrants to a wide range of public benefits. The “Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigration Responsibility Act of 1996”, and specifically Title V of the law added to and amended sections of the Welfare Act. Among other provisions, this law changed the public charge for prospective immigrants and placed greater financial responsibility of petitioners for family based immigrants as well as for some employment based immigrants. (U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Fact

Sheet, 1998)

These laws explicitly stated that illegal immigrants are ineligible for a broad set of Federal public programs as well as State and local programs. However, if a State desires to provide benefits, they may pass a law to do so. Under the provisions of these Acts, aliens who are qualified for welfare are defined as: (1) lawful permanent residents, (2) refugees, (3) asylees and some other small groups.

In addition, there are many requirements concerning public charge and affidavits of support. Two of these requirements are: (1) all new family-based immigrants must have *legally enforceable* affidavits of support which verify that the prospective immigrant has enough financial support so that they will not become a public charge, (2) that a national computer based data system be developed that tracks the immigrant and the sponsor and to provide the requisite information verifying the status of immigrants/refugees and their sponsors.

Many reasons have been cited for these changes in eligibility for benefits, however, the singular reason has been monetary. Immigrants (including refugees) constituted 11% of the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) recipients in December 1992, compared to 3.3% in December 1982. Numerically, this means 601,430 immigrants were on the SSI rolls in 1992 in contrast to 127,000 a decade earlier. The average 1992 SSI monthly benefit amounted to \$316, thus, SSI benefit payments to immigrants amounted to a total of \$27,751,800. (Borjas, 1993)

Over the past few years there have been more than 1.2 million legal and illegal immigrants settling in the United States each year, which has had a major impact on education, health care, infrastructure, government deficits, unemployment, the environment and other areas of American life. (Jarrett et al., 1997) The typical foreign-born welfare household received about \$5,400 in cash benefits in 1990 compared to \$4,000 for a native-born household. As a result, even though immigrant households make up only about 8% of the population, they account for 13 % of the expenditure in cash-benefit programs. The following figures demonstrate the impact of immigrants on two major federal welfare programs, AFDC and SSI. Adult immigrants received 10.8% of all AFDC in 1993, up from 5.5% ten years earlier. The total cost to taxpayers to

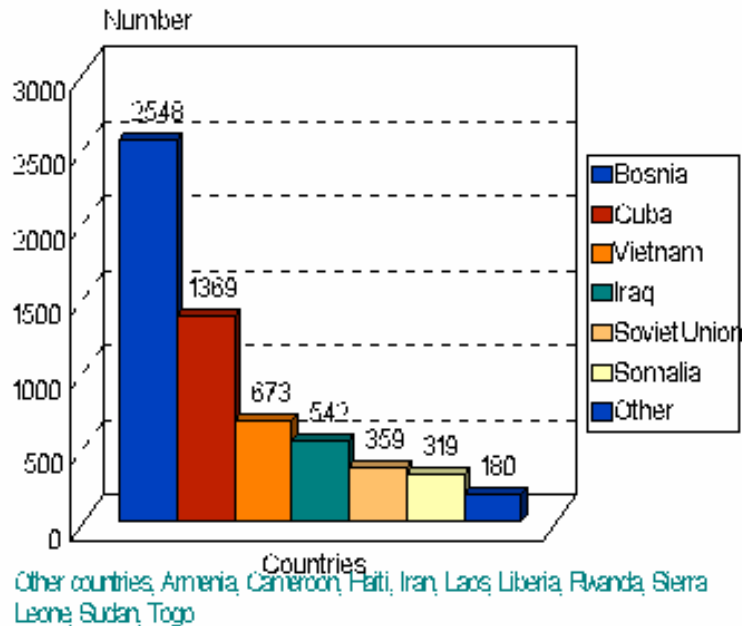
provide AFDC to immigrants in 1993 was \$1.2 billion. Nearly two thirds (65%) of the aliens receiving AFDC were admitted as legal immigrants, while one-third (35%) were admitted as refugees. The Government Accounting Office (1995) report suggests that immigrants have inflated the list of SSI recipients while the number of citizens using the program has decreased. Between 1983 and 1993, the percentage of SSI recipients who were immigrants tripled from 3.9% to 11.5%, while the use of SSI benefits by citizens decreased. (Jarrett, et. al., 1996)

The U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) estimated that there were 10.5 million legal permanent residents (immigrants/refugees) residing in the United States as of April 1996. This figure does not include the additional estimated 5 million illegal aliens in the U.S. Thus, today there are approximately 16 million legal and illegal aliens in the U.S. which is about 9% of the total population. Legal and illegal aliens reside primarily in 6 states: California, New York, Texas, Florida, New Jersey and Illinois. California and New York account for almost 50% of the total number of legal and illegal residents. (INS Fact Sheet, 1998)

Kentucky has only about 21,000 legal immigrants/refugees and the estimate of illegal aliens is relatively small compared to the national averages with an estimate of approximately 2-3,000. Thus, the total alien population in the state of Kentucky is less than 1% of the state's population.

# Refugees in Kentucky

Total 1994-1998 = 5990



## Refugee Programs in Kentucky

The state of Kentucky withdrew from the federally funded refugee program operated by the Office of Refugee Resettlement in 1992. When the state withdrew from operating refugee programs, many individuals and agencies became very concerned about what would happen to refugees. Catholic Charities (a non-profit agency) offered to sponsor a statewide refugee program. It developed and obtained numerous federal grants which fund four (4) agencies that have specific programs devoted to assisting refugees. All funds for refugees in the state of Kentucky flow through Catholic Charities, and then to the other 3 agencies that sub-contract to provide refugee services. Each sub-contracting agency must submit a plan of service, budget and account for monies provided through federal grants.

## **Funding**

The majority of monies for refugee programs comes from 4 grants, all of which are funded under the auspices of the federal government's Reception and Placement Program. These 4 major grants, which will be described below in detail are: (1) Wilson/Fish Demonstration Project, (2) Targeted Assistance, (3) Match Grant, and (4) Community Orientation.

### **Wilson/Fish Grant**

The Wilson/Fish grant provides cash, payment for medical care, employment services, social services and is the only grant providing English language training. This grant focuses on offering services during the first 30 days after the refugee arrives. To be eligible for cash and medical assistance monies under federal programs designed for citizens Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF - which replaced AFDC), the refugee must be part of a family with children under age 18. In addition, the refugee must have a work history which qualifies for the unemployment parent component of the TANF program. If the family qualifies for TANF, they are referred to that program. However, most refugees do not qualify for TANF, therefore, the Wilson/Fish grant is the only program that can provide cash and medical assistance.

If the refugee is single or a part of a family with children older than 18, the case automatically does not qualify for TANF and they are immediately enrolled in Wilson/Fish for cash and medical assistance. This same grant provides for employment services, including assessment, case management, job orientation and placement. A major program operated under the grant is the World of Work program. The World of Work program provides refugees with the basic rules of the workplace and specifics related to the particular job that the refugee obtains. The refugee is provided with written information summarizing conduct in the refugee's native language. This orientation includes the basics of work schedules and available transportation, shift options, how to report when you are ill, the need to work, how to cooperate with other personnel, the concept of periodic pay raises, medical insurance, taxes, social security withholding, retirement plans, dress and how to obtain positions. These services are provided for the first job placement and also for the second job if the refugee lost the first job through no fault of their own. Some

refugees are not enrolled in this program if they are deemed unemployable due to age (over 65), mental or physical incapacitation, or have children under age 2 for whom they are responsible.

Wilson/Fish grants also provide for Interpreter and Translation Services. At every point in the employment process and also with other problems this grant provides the funds for translation and is the only source of funding for English Language Training. Intensive language training is provided for the employable refugee and for other family members. Transportation to employment and assistance in obtaining employment (for example, child care) is also funded by the grant.

### **Match Grant**

The Matching Grant program is an initiative aimed at preventing refugees from accessing welfare even during the transition period between arrival and first employment. Agencies are required to match 75% of federal monies with cash and in-kind donations. The Match Grant program provides four basic services: case management, employment service, assistance and acculturation services. The Match Grant provides cash stipends equivalent to the Kentucky TANF payments. In addition, an extra \$20.00 housing subsidy is provided each month. Families also receive a package of donated household items and personal hygiene items each month. Clothing, furniture, housewares, can be given to each refugee household.

Since Wilson/Fish provides many of the same services Match Grant funds are set aside to fund a unique and most important service the Acculturation Program. This program has been designed to decrease the amount of time that a family needs in order to become self-sufficient and to provide additional support during the early months of adjustment. Match Grant families are either set-up with a volunteer co-sponsor or paired with a mentoring individual or family. Co-sponsors and mentors provide individualized services that address specific needs for tutoring, assistance with accessing social services, learning about various aspects of U.S. culture, and similar areas.

### **Targeted Assistance Grant**

The Targeted Assistance Grant program provides some county-wide services designed through a

planning process in which all local refugee service providers participate. This program includes assisting the refugees in finding day care and monies for day care services to enable refugee women to go to work. Women are eligible for a 100% subsidy for the first two weeks of day care, with a 10% reduction in subsidy every two weeks until the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> week. This enables women to gradually become accustomed to paying for day care and provides the most assistance immediately after they go to work. Funds from this grant have also been utilized to hire an individual who coordinates the translators. Refugees and agencies may call the coordinator directly who will then get in touch with the individual who can provide translation services.

A critical area of support services not funded by other grants is mental health and adjustment services. This grant has been invaluable in the provision of these types of services. One person has been hired within Louisville to coordinate the provision of mental health and adjustment services. Not only is all service now centrally coordinated, but mental health services are now available through payment of monies from this grant.

Because the average starting salary for refugees continues to be low and employers are often reluctant to hire refugees, this grant provides incentives for hiring refugees. In an effort to open up higher paying jobs to refugee women, an On-the-Job (OJT) training program was developed for companies agreeing to offer refugee women at least \$.25 more per hour than the current average starting salary. The OJT program provides a maximum of \$2.50 per hour subsidy to employers for a maximum of 12 weeks for training, thus, reducing the initial cost to the employer by that amount per hour. This program was developed to reduce the risk (unable to successfully perform tasks) that small employers have to assume when hiring refugee women.

### **Agency Orientation Grant**

The Agency Orientation Grant has three program components: (1) Orientation for Elderly Refugees, (2) Orientation to the Public School System for Refugee Children and the Parents, (3) Expanded Cultural Orientation for Refugee Adults.

The orientation for elderly refugees is a 10 hour program. It includes education about new laws regarding fingerprinting, immigration, naturalization, rights and responsibilities of citizenship, holidays in America, access to public institutions, and hints for daily needs (weight, measurement, American substitutes for native country staples, etc.). The orientation to public schools prepares both children and parents for entrance into the public school system. Children attend these classes during the 4 to 6 week period while they are waiting to start regular public school. Parents also attend 2 sessions, and with the advisors make a trip to the child's prospective school. Coordinators of this program work closely with school teachers and administrators in providing special assistance to the needs of refugee children.

The Expanded Orientation Program is for refugees who have lived in the United States for 3 months or longer. It includes topics identified by the refugees themselves or staff as necessary for refugees in later stages of the resettlement process. Some areas that have been covered in the program include stress management, time management, addictions and substance abuse, government involvement in daily life, abuse and violence and health care issues. Speakers are brought in to address specific topics.

### **Catholic Charities Program**

#### **Migration and Refugees Services (MRS)**

The specific program *operated only by Catholic Charities* is called the Catholic Charities Migration and Refugee Services (MRS). The sub-contracted programs are operated by Western Kentucky Refugee Mutual Assistance Association (WKRMAA) in Bowling Green, Kentucky, Kentucky Refugee Ministries (KRM) in Louisville and Jewish Family and Vocational Services (JFVS) in Louisville all of which are funded through Catholic Charities. These programs will be discussed separately in later sections of the paper.

The MRS current client population (1998) is primarily refugees from Bosnia, Cuba, Iraq and Somalia. Small numbers of clients still come from Vietnam, the former Soviet Union and a number of African countries. This client population has changed significantly from a few years ago when the primary client groups came from Vietnam and from the former Soviet Union. The

total 1998 client group (620 refugees) has been projected to be about 500 refugees under the Refugee Program and 120 Cuban/ Haitian parolees. Based upon prior experience, about 30% of these new arrivals will be children. The projected adult group (440) will include about 180 women and 260 men. A small percentage (2-5%) is expected to be unemployable. In addition to the new arrivals, the program is projected to serve about 25-30 refugees returning for services after losing a job or becoming unemployable. This group is normally about 80% men.

MRS operates through a case management delivery model. Upon requesting services, an assessment of the client is completed to identify the scope of need and to develop a comprehensive service plan. This plan includes resettlement and self-sufficiency for each family, a treatment plan for any family member with a condition warranting treatment, and an employment plan for each employable adult. Most clients will be resettled in the Louisville area.

The MRS provides services that are funded from a number of different grants sources. The Reception and Placement grant and the Cuban/Haitian Primary/Secondary Resettlements programs provide the core services to new arrivals. Services for new arrivals are provided during the first 30 days with follow-up for 6 months. Match Grant provides monies for case management, maintenance assistance, and basic employment services to members of about 50 families. Another grant provides individualized English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction and parent training. The grant for the Community Orientation program provides enhanced orientation services and an orientation to the local public school system. The Targeted Assistance grant provides for social adjustment to both individuals and families by utilizing mental health professions, assistance in locating and obtaining child care, monetary subsidies for child care, and special employment services for women who are unemployable or reluctant to enter the workforce. The Wilson/Fish grant provides cash and medical assistance for non-TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families- the program that was formerly called Aid to Dependent Families - AFDC) eligible employable adults and a wide range of employment and social services.

## **Cash and Medical Assistance Payments**

During the course of a normal year about 275 refugees will receive monetary assistance and about the same number will also receive medical assistance. Males comprise about 80% of those receiving cash assistance and will usually receive assistance for a period of 2 months. Of those women who receive cash assistance (approximately 55) a few will be pregnant and eligible for Medicaid. However, the great majority will not be eligible for Medicaid and will require medical assistance from other funding sources. Most will receive the maximum of 8 months medical assistance. In all activities with the clients, from assessment to developing plans to implementing programs and plans, interpreters are available for all language groups.

During the assessment, clients who appear to meet eligibility requirements for TANF, SSI or Medicaid are referred to those programs. Should they be denied assistance under those programs they are enrolled in the Wilson/Fish assistance program. Clients who are categorically ineligible for public assistance (single adults and childless couples) are considered immediately for services from Wilson/Fish through the MRS at Catholic Charities. Secondary immigrants (individuals who are refugees, but who come to Kentucky after immigrating to another state first) must present documentation that they are still within the 8 month limit and no longer receiving assistance from another state. If ineligibility for public assistance is met, then each adult family member who is employable must have a self-sufficiency plan for moving toward and gaining employment.

Eligibility for cash and medical assistance is evaluated on a continuing basis for each individual. Employment information is gathered on a regular basis to include, job offers, if the client refused the offer and if daily compliance with plans (school and work) is occurring. When case assistance is terminated due to employment or time ineligibility, clients are notified in their own language. In addition, clients can be sanctioned for non-compliance and benefits discontinued due to failure to accept or retain a job, or non-compliance with an employment plan.

## **MRS Employment Services**

### **General Employment Services**

Each year about 450 refugees are provided with employment services. About 60% are male and 40% female. An assessment is conducted which reflects the barriers to employability, services needed, and readiness to work. A target date for employment is usually set between 60 and 90 days after arrival. The employment goal is based upon (1) previous work experience, (2) skills and interests, (3) current English level, and (4) the local job market.

### **World of Work Orientation**

The work orientation program provides clients with group instruction 4 days per week for 4 weeks. Classes last 1 ½ hours and have a bi-lingual case worker. Individual work orientation is offered for those clients specifically needing individualized services.

### **Job Development, Referral, Search and Placement**

After completing the orientation program and providing the client is ready for work (language and appropriate skills), a job search process begins. Clients with minimal language are placed in jobs that require little English competence. After placing a refugee in a job, support services are provided to assist the refugee to begin work and to retain the job.

### **Employment Interpreter and Translation Services**

Interpreter and translation services are provided to clients receiving employment services. About 85% of the clients receive this type of service.

### **Employment Transportation**

Over 70% of the refugees (about 360 clients) receive transportation assistance in the form of a bus pass. The pass is supplied on a monthly basis to enable refugees to travel in search of work and after securing employment to travel to work.

### **English Language Training**

Language training is offered both during the day and in the evening for refugees up to a maximum of 6 months. Clients receive approximately 24 hours of English training per week in the day classes and 8 hours per week in the evening classes. Refugees are tested and placed in

the appropriate level of English training, with over 80% of the clients receiving this training.

### **Case Management for Employment**

All clients receive case management services for employment, which include social support services to assist the refugee to obtain and retain employment. Clients are followed throughout the process of securing a job and following job placement in an effort to maintain employability.

### **Other Social Services**

Catholic Charities, in the form of the MRS services, provides an array of other social services to support refugees. These may include: emergency services, information and referral to mental health and health care services not provided directly by MRS, social adjustment services, as well as transportation and child care.

### **Western Kentucky Refugee Mutual Assistance**

#### **Overall Services**

Many of the services provided by WKMAA are similar to those provided by the MRS program of Catholic Charities in Louisville. These services are provided in Bowling Green, Kentucky which is approximately 120 miles south and west of Louisville. In order to provide comprehensive services, WKMAA has obtained 8 major grants to cover the various types of services refugees need. All clients are resettled within 3 miles of the agency in Bowling Green. The population of refugees served numbers approximately 250-300 clients per year. Currently, approximately 90% of the refugees are from Bosnia.

#### **Employment**

Three different grants fund employment opportunities for clients. Each grant has different eligibility requirements and length of time that a client can participate as well as types of services offered. Based upon the clients situation they are enrolled in the program most suited to their needs. For example, the Matching Grant program requires that refugees enroll in the program

within 1 month of arrival, whereas the Jobs Training Program (JTPA) grant has no time limit for initial enrollment. Also, some grants have different outcome expectations, and the client is enrolled in the one most likely to suit the client's potential. The typical criteria for employment benefits is that the refugee must be employed within 90 days. An exception is made for mothers with small children where the limit can be extended to 150 days.

### **Other Services**

WKRMAA provides the same programs and opportunities as the MRS program operated by Catholic Charities in Louisville. These include: (1) Cash and Medical Assistance, (2) Interpreting and Translating Services, (3) Mental Health and Counseling Services, (4) Information and Referral Services, (5) English Language Training, (6) World of Work Orientation, (7) Job Development/Referral/ Search and Placement, (8) other social support services as necessary.

### **Kentucky Refugee Ministries (KRM)**

Kentucky Refugee Ministries (KRM) is the refugee resettlement office in the state of Kentucky for two national church-based programs: The Episcopal Migration Ministries and Church World Service. KRM is authorized by the U.S. State Department to assist refugees who have been legally admitted to the United States as victims of warfare or other forms of persecution because of their religious or political beliefs. The program began in 1991 as an outreach of the Presbyterian denomination and shortly thereafter expanded to include all of the Protestant denominations which make up the National Council of Churches. In 1994 an affiliation with the Episcopal Migration Ministries (the resettlement program of the Episcopal Church) was added.

KRM has a current budget of about \$850,000 most of which comes from three (3) major government grants that are sub-contracted with Catholic Charities in Louisville. They are: (1) Reception and Placement through the Department of State, (2) Wilson/Fish for cash, medical assistance, employment services, English language training, and social services, (3) Targeted Assistance for employment enhancement and translators for access to mental health counseling. A special grant from the Presbyterian Church to KRM provides art therapy for children who

have experienced trauma is also utilized. The program has 18 employees (full and part-time) which includes refugees who are caseworkers and translators. Refugees also serve on the Board of Directors. The staff is fluent in French, Spanish, Kurdish, Arabic, Russian and Bosnian and utilizes contract translators to work with refugees who speak other languages. The overall mission of KRM is to provide refugees with apartments and furnishings, enroll children in school, provide the family with medical treatment, and secure employment for family members who are able to work. Refugees are placed in employment within 90 days after arrival in the United States.

Since 1991, KRM has placed over 2,000 refugees in various Kentucky communities, with approximately 75% in the Louisville area, and the remaining 25% primarily in Lexington, Northern Kentucky and Bowling Green. Refugees placed represent 21 different nationalities and ethnic groups. Each year KRM serves approximately 600 refugees throughout the state of Kentucky.

### **Programs**

All of the programs provided by the other agencies (MRS and WKMAA) are also provided by KRM. These include: (1) General Employment Services, (2) World of Work Orientation, (3) Job Development/Referral/Search/Placement, (4) Interpreter and Translation Services, (5) English Language Training, (6) Transportation, (7) Case Management, (8) Information and Referral, (9) Social Adjustment and other social services, for example assistance in obtaining child care.

### **Jewish Family and Vocational Services (JFVC)**

The Jewish Family and Vocation Services provides services to refugees from the former Soviet Union. The refugees are primary Jewish who have suffered religious persecution. Each year they serve approximately 45-50 individuals, with about 70% being employable adults. All refugees are resettled in the Louisville area.

### **Programs**

JFVC provides the same programs as the other agencies: (1) General Employment Services, (2) Assessments, (3) World of Work Orientation, (4) Job Development /Referral/Search/ Placement,

(5) Interpreter and Translation Services, (6) Transportation, (7) English Language Training, (8) Case Management, (9) Other social support services.

Thus, they provide the basic programs offered by other agencies.

### **Summary**

While Kentucky has developed programs to assist refugees, and there have been many outstanding successes, it has not been without problems. Program staff can attest to many successes. For example, a refugee from Bosnia started a European bakery 7 years ago and has developed the business into over 1 million dollars per year. Other refugees from the former Soviet Union have successfully integrated into the local society and economy and have excellent employment. Refugees from European countries have fared better than those from other countries. Many reasons are cited for this, but the primary ones have been, the similarity with traditional Louisville cultures, higher education, better job skills, and a motivation and willingness to assimilate into the society. Refugees from Latin America (including Cuba) and Africa have been the least successful, while the Vietnamese refugees have had both success and lack of success.

Refugees have imposed a financial burden on the economy, (national, state and local) and there have been steps taken to reduce this burden. In a most recent decision (October 1, 1998) President Clinton lowered the number of refugees to be allowed legal entry into the U.S. For 1999, he authorized entry of 78,000 which is down from the 83,000 in 1998 and mirrors the authorized amount for 1997 which was the lowest in 10 years. (Louisville Courier Journal, Oct 1, 1998) Thus, the U.S. is starting to significantly reduce the entry of refugees. It is interesting to note that a different geographic distribution was established for 1999, with European refugees reduced by 3,000, Latin America reduced by 1,000, however, African entries were raised by 5,000.

Refugees have been the center of humanitarian rhetoric for many years, but, in fact, represent political and economic factors, both positive and negative which any country responds to.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Borjas, G.J. (1993) The Immigration Debate; Tired, Poor on Welfare. *The National Review*, 1, December 13, 1993, 2-26.

Passel, J.S., & Flix, M. (1994) US Immigration In A Global Context: Past, Present, And Future. Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute.

U.S. Department of Justice, Immigration and Naturalization Service. (1997). 1996 *Statistical Yearbook of the Immigration and Naturalization Service*, 72-76.