

Refugee Services Key Messages

The framed messages below have been adapted from the talking points originally developed by the Refugee Resettlement Office of the Minnesota Department of Human Services. They are designed to illustrate how the Office's talking points may incorporate the framing strategies.

The federally funded Refugee Programs Office at the Minnesota Department of Human Services supports the effective resettlement of refugees in Minnesota by providing the resources and stable foundation they need to rebuild their lives, achieve their highest potential, and contribute to our state's communities. We ensure access to mainstream programs for people with refugee status, distribute federal funds to local agencies for supplemental services, and provide the public with education and information about refugees in Minnesota.

MESSAGE ONE: Why Minnesota embraces refugee resettlement.

Minnesota welcomes refugees to our state because:

- Minnesotans believe in treating all people with respect and dignity, wherever they are from.
- Refugees have experienced serious hardship: they have fled their home country and cannot return because of a well-founded fear of persecution based on religion, race, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group, and their home government is either unwilling or unable to protect them. They have lost everything and typically arrive with few possessions or resources. We are committed to helping them rebuild their lives and become part of our communities.
- Refugees bring new talents, skills, and ideas that help sustain Minnesota's economic and cultural vitality. Resettled refugees open new businesses, contribute to our workforce, and add to the life of our neighborhoods and communities.
- With a population representing 100 countries around the globe, Minnesota's refugees help connect our state to the rest of the world, an important goal in the global 21st century.

MESSAGE TWO: Why refugee resettlement programs matter.

When refugees arrive in Minnesota, they are building new lives from the ground up. Programs run by agencies and organizations like the Minnesota Refugee Resettlement Office help them to construct good ones. By resettling refugees successfully, the Office helps to:

- **Lay a strong foundation for Minnesota's future.** Today's young refugees are tomorrow's workforce, civic leaders, and business owners
- **Build our state's resources.** Healthy, productive residents add to our state's economy through their labor productivity and by spending money in our communities.
- **Restore refugees' health and wellbeing.** Refugees often arrive in Minnesota after deep hardships. Resettlement programs help them to start over and connect to their new communities, giving them the sturdy frame they need to create a healthy and prosperous future for themselves and their children. When refugees are able to reach their full potential, we all benefit through the contributions they make to the life of our communities.

MESSAGE THREE: How refugee resettlement programs work.

- Just as a well-built house needs a sturdy foundation poured by experts, resettling in Minnesota requires some professional help, quality materials, and a blueprint. The MN Refugee Resettlement Office helps refugees to build a new life by providing those who are eligible with access to programs, resources, and services that:
 - Scaffold refugees' economic wellbeing with job training and placement services
 - Build refugees' understanding of our culture
 - Support young refugees' academic success
 - Connect families to the community's grid of resources
 - Assist with the naturalization process, so refugees can fully integrate into our communities
- These programs are successful in helping refugees to construct healthy, productive lives:
 - Refugees have high rates of employment. Three years out, the overwhelming majority of refugees are employed—in fact, immigrants, including refugees, make up 7 percent of Minnesota's population but 9 percent of its workforce!

- Within five to ten years of arrival, refugees are no likelier to need public assistance programs than the rest of the public.

MESSAGE FOUR: Refugees play a vital role in moving Minnesota forward, economically and socially.

The initial investments Minnesota makes in refugees' resettlement yield long-term benefits to our shared prosperity and healthy economy.

- Refugees pay taxes and contribute to Social Security, like other working Minnesotans, and those resources help to ensure our state's solid physical and social infrastructure.
- Immigrants, including refugees, accounted for 7.5 percent, or \$22.4 billion, of Minnesota's Gross Domestic Product in 2012.ⁱ
- Immigrants, including refugees, currently make up 7 percent of the state's population but 9 percent of the workforce.ⁱⁱ
- Immigrants, including refugees, fill needed jobs in agriculture, food processing, manufacturing and other industries. In 2011, 37.2 percent of lower skilled workers in Minnesota were immigrants.ⁱⁱⁱ

ⁱThe Economic Contributions of Immigrants in Minnesota study in 2013. http://cdn2.hubspot.net/hub/172912/file-371412567-pdf/Economic_Contributions_of_Immigrants_in_Minnesota_2013.pdf

ⁱⁱ<http://www.renewoureconomy.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/MN-Final-Brief.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱhttp://cdn2.hubspot.net/hub/172912/file-371412567-pdf/Economic_Contributions_of_Immigrants_in_Minnesota_2013.pdf