



 **CWS** | *Virginia*

IMPACT REPORT

2022

Harrisonburg

Winchester

WE BELIEVE ALL FAMILIES DESERVE SAFETY & DIGNITY

For more than 30 years, CWS in Virginia has welcomed refugees, immigrants, and asylum-seekers from around the world to the beautiful Shenandoah Valley. Through partnerships with individuals, faith groups, & community organizations, we empower our newest neighbors to build new lives in peace and security through up to five years of service and support.



Refugee Services

Resettlement Services + *Integration and Extended Services*

CWS Virginia's Refugee Services programs provide up to 5 years of support for new neighbors. From initial reception & placement services like housing and school enrollment to employment orientation, finding jobs, and extended case management for families and vulnerable individuals, refugee services programs empower individuals and families to build fulfilling lives. We believe all families deserve respect and the ability to make choices to shape their own future.



356 new neighbors welcomed

Through our Reception & Placement program, the CWS resettlement team provides initial welcome and core services to new neighbors within the first 90 days after arrival, empowering them towards financial self-sufficiency.



61 houses became homes

CWS begins identifying appropriate housing for new neighbors once travel dates are confirmed. In partnership with Village to Village and community volunteers, houses are stocked with new beds, donated items, groceries, and a welcome meal before new neighbors arrive.



221 clients placed in jobs

CWS Employment Specialists work closely with new neighbors to understand educational and employment history along with career goals, providing job orientations and workforce readiness programs.



\$16.86 average starting wage

New neighbors are regularly employed in manufacturing, agricultural, and warehouse industries, bringing unique skills and experiences to Shenandoah Valley employers.



497 individuals enrolled in English and career training programs

CWS clients receive ongoing employment and career assistance and ongoing ESL support during their first five years in the United States. This includes adult education, driving classes, computer literacy, and career advancement counseling.



85 clients enrolled in extended services

Extended services assist clients through their integration journeys beyond the initial resettlement period. Programs include intensive case management for vulnerable clients, holistic support to families, health navigation, and mentorship and coding camp for youth.

A 4-H Victory for Former Refugee Youth



CWS celebrates the remarkable achievements of two former refugee youth within the Shenandoah Valley agriculture community. Mulugeta Domo, former refugee youth and 4-H program participant, sold his goat at auction for a record-breaking \$31,000 at the Rockingham County Fair in August. Robel Haile, who is also a 4-H program participant and former refugee youth, won Reserve Champion Owner Born and Bred for his goat, which sold at auction for \$15,000. Journey Financial Group purchased the animals.

The young men came to the United States in 2009 from the northern part of Ethiopia. Through a joint project with CWS Harrisonburg and 4-H, Jim Mumaw and family acted as hosts for a group of refugee youth to learn about raising and showing sheep.

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“These awesome examples of young men ... have put in the hard work and the heavy lifting for all of their 4-H projects with so little objection or complaint. [Mentoring Robel and Mulugeta] has been so... rewarding and fills our emotional cup to overflowing in so many ways we never could have imagined eight years ago,” said Jim Mumaw. “I can’t change the world but I can change someone’s life.”

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2022 was the 7th and final year of 4-H for Mulugeta and Robel. They are now first-generation college students at BRCC and JMU, respectively. Mulugeta is studying computer science and Robel is studying finance.

Emergency Response

AFGHAN PLACEMENT AND ASSISTANCE

Last year the fall of Kabul to the Taliban and subsequent resettlement of 80,000 Afghan nationals nationwide was a once-in-a-generation challenge for a resettlement system already stretched thin. CWS Harrisonburg and our new office in Winchester welcomed and served more clients in three months than we had seen in the last two years combined. In February the Russian attack on Ukraine forced more than 7.5 million refugees to flee the country. Through the immigration legal pathway of humanitarian parole, some Ukrainians have been able to seek temporary refuge in the United States and are eligible to receive services through CWS in Virginia.



161 new Afghan neighbors welcomed

Through the Afghan Placement and Assistance (APA) program, CWS Virginia provided evacuees reception services, housing access, food, clothing, access to health care and public benefits, school enrollment, cultural orientation and limited financial assistance.



166 Ukrainian Humanitarian Parolees served

166 Ukrainian Humanitarian Parolees have received ORR services through CWS. 5 are enrolled in Healthcare Career Pathways, about 10 are matched with tutors, all school-aged children are enrolled in public school and about 70% of adults are taking English classes.

Update on Afghan Placement & Assistance Program

In August 2021, the world watched the largest humanitarian evacuation in United States history unfold live on our televisions. CWS in Virginia responded swiftly and compassionately by building our capacity (adding staff and opening a new office) and working with volunteers and community partners to serve new Afghan neighbors arriving to the Shenandoah Valley. Since then, we have served hundreds of Afghan arrivals, providing food, clothing, and a safe place to call home as well as employment and legal services.

CWS Virginia's Legal Counseling staff continue to meet with new Afghan neighbors to identify legal options and advise on next steps. Because Humanitarian Parole is a temporary immigration status, it does not have a path to permanent residency. Legal Counseling staff are providing initial consultations to discuss immigration legal options for Afghan neighbors.



Last year we celebrated the arrival of several new American citizens who were born here shortly after their parents arrived, who might otherwise have been born into very unstable and dangerous conditions.

We are very happy, and we are proud that we are here. Here we have peace and security. We feel free! Every activity we want, we can do."

Like many other girls around the world, Razia, Amina and Nasima were determined to make their dreams come true. Even if that meant defying odds and breaking down barriers to pursue prohibited activities for girls in Afghanistan such as biking. In less than two months into their arrival here, sisters and friends Razia, Amina, and Nasima have connected to the local cycling community through CWS and partner programs. They have big dreams and knowing how far they've come, the women already have a plan. In one year, they want to perfect their English skills, and work hard to support the rest of their family. Amina, whose education was cut short in Kabul, will now pursue nursing. Nasima has a nursing degree from Afghanistan and CWS is assisting her in the process of making those skills workable in the United States. Meanwhile, Razia will pursue an Information Technology course with the support of the CWS extended services programs.



Immigration Legal Services

Immigration Legal Counseling and Representation

Immigrants and refugees have many complicated and expensive legal hurdles on the path to protection, citizenship, and reuniting with their families. CWS Virginia's Immigration Legal Counseling staff provide low-cost legal advice and representation to refugees, asylum-seekers, and other immigrants in the Shenandoah Valley.



300 legal consultations

The Immigration Legal Counseling Program provides low-cost and pro-bono legal advice and representation to refugees, asylum-seekers, and other immigrants in the Shenandoah Valley.



64 asylum applications

CWS legal staff members are accredited to practice Immigration law before the Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services (USCIS) and the Immigration Courts.



30 family reunification cases

Once a refugee has been resettled to the US, CWS legal staff can provide support for the family reunification process, and help immigrants in the United States who are concerned for their family living in other countries or who wish to reunite via family-based immigrant visas.



156 green card applications

Having a Green Card allows immigrants to live and work permanently in the United States. CWS legal staff can help people determine if they are eligible and advise them on the process and procedures to apply for a green card. They can also assist with the application itself.



124 citizenship applications

CWS Virginia's immigration legal services team helps clients work towards citizenship. We are thrilled for every new American citizen as they achieve this milestone! CWS recently was approved for the USCIS Naturalization Grant in collaboration with Skyline Literacy to help immigrants become citizens.



3 legal department staff members

The Legal Services team is small but mighty! With one Full Accredited Representative, one Partial Accredited Representative, and one Paralegal, this dedicated and hardworking team has accomplished incredible work across the state.



CWS Winchester opened its doors as the first Afghan evacuees were arriving in Virginia. The program began operations quickly without a space or even many staff thanks in large part to a devoted, passionate group of volunteers in Winchester. Special thanks to this group for organizing and operationalizing this project. Without their expertise in disaster response and incredible gifts of time and effort we could not have met this immense need.

Hamidullah Amiry is the CWS Winchester Director. First working with CWS as a case manager and coming to the United States as a refugee himself, he witnesses firsthand the joys and challenges facing new arrivals in the Shenandoah Valley. He also sees the many skills and gifts they bring to their new community and country. "We have doctors, nurses, pilots, former government officials, educated individuals and people with specific skills among our refugee arrivals," he said, "each one of them hoping for a brighter future for themselves and their kids as well as a peaceful life in the United States. We see hope in their eyes and we are sure some time in the future their dreams will come true."

“ [Welcoming new arrivals] was very challenging because it was so sudden, and they didn't have as much preparation. But when they saw that I was there to welcome them, and I was Afghan as well, it was a big relief for them. And they were really happy...that was the thing that I was very proud of. ”

REFUGEE PATH TO THE UNITED STATES AND THE SHENANDOAH VALLEY

The path to refugee status and resettlement can be long and difficult for the many individuals and families across the world that find themselves fleeing their homes. Our clients are coming from countries where war and violence are a part of everyday life, and family members are lost or killed. Some clients are fleeing countries where military service is compulsory and sometimes indefinite. Resettlement means that a family or individual has the chance at a new life: safety, security, and dignity. Our goal is to assist people through the resettlement process and to promote self-sufficiency and integration. We do this by working with a variety of community members and organizations to create a welcoming atmosphere where refugees can become active members of their community. The refugee journey can take anywhere from a few months to several years.

Flee

Flee home country and enter second country, register with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). This is when refugee status determination (RSD) and referral for resettlement is done; less than 1% of refugees are referred for resettlement.



Approval

After going through extensive security, biometric, and medical screenings, refugees are approved by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).

US Assignment, Cultural Orientation, and Travel

Families and individuals are placed near family members or US ties when possible. Travel to the United States is arranged by the International Organization for Migration (IOM). Refugees receive pre-departure orientation to help develop realistic expectations and prepare them for the resettlement and integration process.



Government and Agency Coordination

UNHCR and USCIS work with the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) at the State Department to contract with certain voluntary agencies in the U.S. CWS is one of those agencies. PRM works directly with agencies and state governments to facilitate refugee resettlement in each state. CWS and Virginia's Office of New Americans (ONA) work with the Virginia Department of Social Services in the Shenandoah Valley.

Notification and Arrival

The local affiliate office receives a notice from headquarters with information about who is coming and when. Our staff begins to prepare for new arrivals! We greet clients at arrival and take them to their new housing and community.

Resettlement and Orientation, Initial and Ongoing Services

CWS staff begin cultural orientation and help clients apply for benefits like SNAP and Medicaid, ensure health screening at the local Health Department, and assist with applications for Social Security. Initial and ongoing services also include registering children for school, assisting with finding English class enrollment, and various employment services including: job search, applications, transportation, interview support, interpretation, and job training.

The CWS Harrisonburg Afghan and Refugee Assistance Fund

Welcoming the displaced, transforming the future

An anonymous donor has committed \$500,000 to CWS – the largest single gift in global organizational history. The family's gift will establish an endowment that will fund housing and mental health care for Afghan refugees and newcomers from other parts of the world.

This transformative gift will support and protect CWS programs for decades. The family chose to make this gift out of a sense of responsibility to make a positive impact in the world. "We know that this will change lives- and our community- for the better," said Susannah Lepley, CWS Virginia Director. "We are humbled by the love and support from these friends of CWS."

Housing Solutions

Among the many other challenges that CWS has faced in the last several years, the housing crisis in the Shenandoah Valley has made it increasingly

difficult to find affordable permanent homes for new arrivals. The CWS Harrisonburg Afghan and Refugee Assistance Fund will open doors for newcomers to the United States by generating revenue to ease the burden of finding housing for years to come.

"This gift puts to work the values of collaboration, empowerment, and equity," said Lepley. "As we work together with members of the community to invest in the success of newcomers, we recognize that generosity with our time and resources amplifies individual achievements for positive social change."

Mental Health Care

Refugees have had to face enormous challenges in their lives, including fleeing for safety. When they arrive in the Shenandoah Valley they may be experiencing fear, grief, or frustration alongside feelings of relief to finally be safe. The endowment will also help provide mental health care for clients by funding a LCSW position. This person will provide counseling and help connect clients to other community resources to enable people to thrive after experiencing trauma.

"Refugees who arrive in Harrisonburg have already overcome incredible challenges to make it here. No one makes it this far without having a lot of resilience," said Sarah Alice Coleman, CWS Associate Director of Programs, "But many refugees have witnessed war or violence, or have had to leave behind people or places that they loved. They may still have friends and family living in unstable situations. So it's important to make sure that even while we're already offering so much concrete support – assistance with housing, employment, education, and more - we are also making sure that peoples mental wellness needs are met."

Dreaming Big To Meet Community Needs

"We are grateful to the donors for their role in creating access to housing and mental health care in so many ways," said Lepley. "We are excited to be able to meet some of the unprecedented needs that have arisen over the past few years. This gift helps us to think big and look ahead at what is possible for those we serve and for our organization in the coming years."

Every gift counts toward a better future for refugees in the Shenandoah Valley. For information about how to contribute to this endowment or to make a gift in support of CWS programs, contact Emily Bender at ebender@cwsglobal.org.

"We really can't see ourselves as different than others - we're one world," said the donor. "One of the positive impacts of refugee resettlement is that it helps people get exposed to other cultures and grow to know one another in meaningful ways."

NEW PROGRAMS



Home Study and Post-Release Services (HSPRS)

CWS in Virginia is joining a national program to assist unaccompanied children seeking refuge in the United States, most of whom are fleeing threats and violence in El Salvador, Guatemala, or Honduras. The Home Study Post Release Services (HSPRS) program will allow us to work with these children and their sponsors to ensure that each child has their mental health, safety, education, and legal needs met. This program supports children as they are leaving federal care and reuniting with family members across the United States. Our team will assess for the safety of the placement and support the reunification.



Sentara Healthcare Career Pathways

This program based in Harrisonburg offers outreach and support for refugees and immigrants in the community who are either interested in continuing a career in healthcare or are beginning their journey to becoming a healthcare professional.



Refugee Health and Wellness Program

While refugees are strong and resilient, they have had to face enormous challenges, including fleeing for their lives. When they arrive in the Shenandoah Valley they may be experiencing fear, grief, or frustration alongside feelings of relief to finally be safe. This program will allow CWS to evaluate clients upon arrival and eventually meet more of their mental health needs in-house if that is what they are most comfortable with.



CWS Domestic Violence Prevention and Family Resiliency Program

CWS Harrisonburg offers domestic violence prevention services to the community including outreach and cultural and legal education; crisis support and case management; assistance with legal issues; making safety plans; and otherwise supporting family resiliency.

Community Engagement and Advocacy



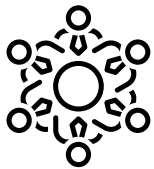
15 co-sponsor teams

CWS Virginia partners with community groups throughout the Shenandoah Valley to help refugee families rebuild their lives. Community co-sponsor groups play an integral role in helping some refugees become self-sufficient and get off to a strong start in their new home country.



352 volunteers

CWS volunteers are flexible, patient, kind, compassionate, willing to offer their expertise, and always ready to lend a helping hand. Volunteers help with move-ins, community and cultural orientation, English tutoring, and more.



37 supporting congregations

Congregations have historically held an important role in refugee resettlement in the United States. Congregational support- whether it is in the form of committees of volunteers, donation drives, co-sponsorship groups, or financial contributions- is a major factor in the success of refugee resettlement in a community.



Spoke at 61 outreach and educational events

CWS staff are available for public speaking or educational sessions. Invite us to speak at your event or book us for a community information session and orientation to CWS programs.



Voter engagement training

CWS VA advocacy staff hosted a Voter Engagement training. The training focused on basics of civic engagement in a 501(c)3 context - including a brief history of voting rights in the U.S., voter registration how to and requirements, and an overview of local, state, and federal elections.. The event was live streamed on Facebook and Youtube with 133 views.



Advocating for immigrants and refugees in VA

The CWS Advocacy team lobbied to pass a bill at the state level that will remove obstacles to workforce participation for immigrants and refugees.



Congolese Choir performing at World Refugee Day celebration 2022



CWS Harrisonburg hosted its 1st annual Community Appreciation Breakfast in honor of our community partners in May

THANK YOU

FOR BEING PART OF OUR WELCOMING COMMUNITY

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