



WPI

Development of a Resource Guide for the Worcester Refugee Population



Submitted To:

Shalom Neighborhood
Center

Project Advisors:

Professor Rivera
Professor Traver

Ashilly Lopes

Kevin Kerhulas

Samuel Ellison

Sebastian Rojas



Abstract

The project delivered a Resource Guide to the Shalom Neighborhood Center of Worcester. The Center serves refugees. The Resource Guide contains names, contact information and services offered by 27 refugee support organizations in the city. The project interviewed representatives of these organizations and refugees to obtain relevant information. Refugee advisors will use the Guide to help clients find and access services on an as-needed basis. The project found that networks among refugee support organizations are weak or non-existent.

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Executive Summary

Introduction and Background

The Shalom Neighborhood Center works as a referral and advocacy agency for the refugee population in Worcester. The Center helps them navigate the United States' systems including healthcare, housing, and employment. There are many support organizations that serve refugees in the city. However, there are no effective methods for these organizations to contact the resettled population. The Resource Guide facilitates the SNC's work as an intermediary between refugee support organizations and those who may be a good fit for their services.

Worcester received 122 refugees in the last quarter of 2014, more than any other city in New England. Resettlement agencies receive refugees upon arrival and orient them through their first 90 days in the U.S. In most cases, refugees are unaware of the wide array of refugee support organizations in the city of Worcester.

Methodology

The goal of our project was to develop a Resource Guide that includes the services and programs beneficial to refugees in Worcester. The guide will be used by our sponsor's trained indigenous workers to navigate the refugees through the services they need. Our first objective was to understand the Worcester refugee experience. In order to accomplish this, we conducted interviews of refugees, community leaders, and the members of our sponsoring agency. These interviews allowed us to identify the challenges that refugees face, and the services that they need the most. The second objective was to collect the resources offered in Worcester. To accomplish this, we interviewed refugee support organizations that serve refugees in the city. Each organization we interviewed connected us to other organizations and allowed us to discover the wide variety of services available to the refugees. The third and final objective was to create the Resource Guide. The information we collected was summarized and placed into the Resource Guide on Microsoft Publisher. The resources were organized alphabetically and indexed according to the type of services they offer. Digital and paper copies of the Guide were distributed to the Shalom Neighborhood Center.

Findings and Recommendations

Interviews have shown us that there are numerous refugees in the community that still need assistance navigating through Worcester's systems after their 90 day resettlement period. Resettlement agencies are unable to help already resettled refugees because they need to prioritize the newly arrived refugees. Refugee support organizations offer various services and advocacy work to fill this gap. Therefore, we recommend that refugees be connected to refugee support organizations after the 90 day period. This will allow resettlement agencies to solely focus on the newly arrived refugees.

Although each refugee goes through a 90 day resettlement period, many continue to struggle with accessing services and navigating their new community. The biggest challenges that the refugees face are the language barrier and cultural differences. For their economic mobility and future success in the United States, it is important that a refugee continues to learn English after they find employment. To accomplish this, we suggest that case workers find ESL classes that fit the work schedules of the refugees.

We have found many factors that hinder the capability of refugees to access the services they need. It is difficult for many refugees to navigate the public transportation system. Additionally, Refugee support organizations do not have an effective way of advertising their services to make them known in the refugee community. We recommend that the indigenous workers from the SNC navigate the refugees through these systems and connect them to the support organizations.

After meeting with many refugee support organizations, we have found that there is a lack of a strong network between them. Most refugee support organizations we interviewed could only name 2 or 3 other organizations, showing minimal visibility of services in the city. It would benefit the community to make their work more widely known. Support organizations should reach out to one another so that they may improve their services through collaborative efforts.

The Shalom Neighborhood Center representatives affirm that providing contact information is not enough for refugees to access the resources. We recommend that the SNC uses the Resource Guide as a tool during their referral and advocacy process. It is important that the center's indigenous workers navigate the refugees through each step to access the

resources. This includes arranging the appointment, finding transportation to the agency, and providing explanations of how to pay for the service.

Conclusion

The project sponsors, Reverend Jose Encarnación and Dr. Reverend Sarai Rivera, have sought out our WPI project team to create a resource guide that will contain a full list of services offered to refugees in the Worcester area. The Resource Guide that we created is an effective first step towards establishing a refugee support network in Worcester. As a resettlement city, Worcester must actively integrate the refugees it hosts in its community. At the Center, Indigenous workers will be able to promote the lives of the refugees by connecting them to the appropriate services in Worcester.

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Chapter 1. Introduction

Adapting to a new community can be stressful for refugees arriving in Worcester, Massachusetts, especially if they do not speak English. Refugees seek asylum in order to experience equality and exercise human rights that were nonexistent in their home country. After undergoing displacement from their home countries and inserting themselves into new societies, refugees must quickly adapt in order to navigate the complex processes of immigration and assimilation. Although safe from persecution, catastrophic natural disaster, and even threat of death, a refugee can feel marginalized due to lack of resources and support. Many organizations and government agencies offer services and resources to refugees in order to fulfill Worcester's responsibility as a resettlement city.

The Shalom Neighborhood Center (SNC) is a community-based organization for the diverse ethnic population of Worcester (see figure 1).



Figure 1: The Shalom Neighborhood Center in Worcester, MA

The center functions as the social action branch of the Christian Community Church or the Iglesia Cristiana de la Comunidad (ICC). The mission statement of the church is to be “an Urban Ministry seeking the peace (Shalom) of our city; through Worship, Service, Fellowship, Evangelism, Stewardship, and Discipleship (Learning), Committed to loving God and all people. (Jeremiah 29, Matt 22:36-40, Matt 28:19)” (“Shalom Neighborhood Center,”). Instead

of directly providing services to refugees, the SNC acts as an intermediary that refers them to the appropriate refugee support organization that they urgently need. The SNC recruits already assimilated refugees in order to properly communicate and interact with newcomers. Additionally, the SNC acts as a liaison between refugees and support organizations by facilitating their interaction.

This project developed a Resource Guide to aid the SNC in serving the distressed refugee populations in Worcester. Refugees seek aid from the Shalom Neighborhood Center because they encounter obstacles when attempting to integrate into their new community. Although many programs are available for new residents, they may not be widely noticed due to the lack of visibility to refugees as well as support organizations. Previously, the Shalom Neighborhood Center lacked a comprehensive collection of contacts from available resource providers. The Resource Guide lists all of the available organizations and the programs they provide, allowing the volunteer worker to properly direct the refugee needing assistance. The guide aims to increase awareness of resources offered to refugees in the city of Worcester, optimizing the Shalom Neighborhood Center's capacity to advocate for refugees. Using this Resource Guide, the Shalom Neighborhood Center will be able to address the challenges of refugees in need.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

In the literature review, we describe the challenges and concerns of the refugee population that show the need for the Resource Guide. In this chapter, we detail the mission of the SNC and identify the stakeholders. We discuss Worcester's role as a resettlement city and provide background information on refugees. We examine Worcester refugee support organizations and the services they provide as well as several resource guides created in previous years.

2.1 Agency Description: The Shalom Neighborhood Center

The Shalom Neighborhood Center (SNC) is a nonprofit organization that provides opportunities for the District 4 population in Worcester. The center connects individuals with programs that promote refugee assistance. Reverend José Encarnación and Reverend Dr. Sarai Rivera oversee the center ("Shalom Neighborhood Center,"). Their experience as parents to refugee children has helped them understand the significant challenges that the refugee population faces when arriving to the city. This motivated them to generate change in the city and actively advocate for this population. Reverend Dr. Rivera's work in the city council and her connection with Joseph Petty, the mayor of Worcester, led to the creation of a round table for the discussion of refugee and immigrant issues (S. Rivera, personal communication, February 6, 2015).

The Shalom Neighborhood Center aims to be the bridge between the refugee community and refugee support organizations. Refugees arrive at the SNC with urgent needs and rely on the center to guide them to the solution. Reverend Encarnación and Reverend Dr. Rivera envisioned the concept of training indigenous workers to help refugees access organizations. Indigenous workers are volunteers who refer the refugees to other services and guide them through the process of accessing them. Unlike caseworkers, which are common in many organizations, indigenous workers only focus on this. This will effectively reduce the gap between the refugees and the services available for them. However, the indigenous workers are unfamiliar with the services that are available and the connections that the SNC has established. This shows the need for a Resource Guide with information

allowing indigenous workers to effectively aid the refugees (J. Encarnación, personal communication).

2.2 Stakeholders

The primary stakeholders of the project are the indigenous workers, staff members of the SNC, and refugees. For the purpose of this paper, the term refugee also includes: secondary migrants, unaccompanied minors, and asylum seekers. In the future, our project will potentially affect and influence a much broader group of individuals in Worcester. This group includes other refugee support organizations.

2.3 Worcester as a Resettlement City

Refugees tend to migrate and resettle in places that have services available and a population of their own ethnicity. Resettlement cities are cities that consistently receive a high volume of refugees. Refugees are received by a resettlement agency when they arrive to the United States. The staff of these agencies help the refugees navigate through the many systems of their new community including healthcare, education, and housing. If not offered the proper guidance and support, some refugees fall into poverty or homelessness. Additionally, studies show that demographic characteristics such as age, education level, and ethnicity influence greatly the economic status of refugees. Therefore, resettlement cities must have a strong ability to integrate new refugees (Brandt, 2010). Worcester, as the largest resettlement city in New England, must provide an array of services that promote the well-being of a refugee and assure effective integration into the community.

According to the 2010 census, 20% (35,304) of Worcester's population was born in another country ("Worcester's Demographic Trends: 2010 Census," 2013). Refugees compose a significant portion of the foreign born population of the city. Worcester received 2,196 refugees between 2007 to 2012. Of these refugees, 837 are from Iraq, 617 are from Bhutan, 272 are from Burma, and the rest from countries such as: Burundi, Liberia, Somalia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Vietnam, and 15 other countries (Fábos, Pilgrim, Said-Ali, Krahe, & Ostiller, 2015). This diversity highlights the need for specialized volunteers who are able to communicate with them.

The trends in refugee arrival figures shed light on the changing face of the foreign-born population in Worcester, and raise questions regarding refugee integration

(defined here as a dynamic multi-directional process in which refugees and the receiving society work together to build a secure, vibrant, cohesive community) and how to value the cultural diversity that they bring with them . . . In addition to the economic perspective, and the potential workforce they represent, the refugee and migrant populations present in Worcester can significantly shape the integrative and participative process leading to cultural diversity. (Fábos et al., 2015)

Worcester, as a resettlement city, must “adjust to incorporate those needs and include more people in the planning process. Refugee integration requires that a host society accept its role to adapt in the integration process” (Brandt, 2010). To function efficiently as a resettlement city, there must be resettlement and refugee support organizations prepared to assist refugees to overcome the variety of challenges they face. According to Dr. Rivera, “Worcester historically has been a city that has opened its door to immigrants. Immigrants and refugees should be given a full opportunity for integration and economic mobility” (S. Rivera, personal communication, February 6, 2015).

2.4 The Challenges and Vulnerabilities of the Immigrant Population

Refugees arrive in the city after fleeing their countries from a dangerous or traumatic situation. Although their stories vary, most of them face the same challenges when they arrive to the U.S. After arriving in their new home, refugees are often stressed due to cultural and language barriers preventing them from performing daily tasks and handling issues affecting themselves and their families. Some of the challenges new residents face include adapting to the U.S. education system, finding employment opportunities, accessing healthcare, and interacting with their new communities (“Living In America: Challenges Facing New Immigrants and Refugees,” 2006). In this section, we will discuss the following challenges: English and education, employment, health care, and mental health.

Due to the eligibility requirements of many services, it is important to understand what the term refugee refers to. Following the recommendations of the study “Understanding Refugees in Worcester, MA”, for the purposes of this paper, the term refugee will include secondary migrants, asylum seekers and unaccompanied minors (Fábos et al., 2015). Unaccompanied minors usually arrive to the U.S. with limited resources. Some of them flee from their country after their families are murdered or threatened, and some are

victims of human trafficking (Wolgin & Kelley, 2014). The unaccompanied minors migrating to the U.S. must meet refugee criteria in order to be eligible for asylum, otherwise they are returned to their home countries. They are usually put into foster home programs or detention homes if they cannot return. These vulnerable children are often too scared to seek help upon arrival to a new place (Piwowarczyk, 2005). Asylum seekers are individuals who enter the United States through either legal or illegal means to seek asylum in the country. This means asylum is not always granted to them.

2.4.1 English and Education

According to the US Census Bureau, about 54.10% (20,289) of the 37,498 foreign born individuals in Worcester self-reported speaking English less than “very well” (Fábos et al., 2015). It is safe to assume that this percentage is higher in the refugee population because they receive limited English instruction prior to arriving to the U.S. It has been found that the ability to access translation services and English language courses is helpful in relieving the stress of refugees (Nawyn, Gjokaj, Agbényiga, & Grace, 2012). Competence in the English language is essential for the refugees to integrate and establish themselves in the new environment. Those skills allow refugees to access employment, education, and other services (Fábos et al., 2015).

Language barriers also restrain the refugees from furthering their education after arriving to the U.S. Many schools lack bilingual teachers and aides that help non-native speakers smoothly integrate into their classes and schedules. These students often fall behind in class as they try to learn material that is conveyed in a language they do not understand (“Living In America: Challenges Facing New Immigrants and Refugees,” 2006). Learning the English language empowers refugees and allows them to be less dependent.

2.4.2 Employment

After arriving in their new country, refugees often struggle to find a job that allows them to become self-reliant. They enter the U.S. workforce out of economic necessity. In some cases, the employment they find is part-time or temporary and typically does not offer benefits. As a result, there is a high poverty rate among refugees, with many earning close to the minimum wage (“Refugee Assistance,” 2011). In cities with limited public transportation, refugees have even fewer means to access their jobs and are forced to regularly spend long

periods of time commuting. Many are unable to acquire a driver's license and in many cases are not orientated with public transportation systems. Additionally, they must balance long work hours and time to care for their children (Yakushko, Backhaus, Watson, Ngaruiya, & Gonzalez, 2008).

It has been found that refugees generally have different levels of education depending on their background. Educational opportunities vary greatly across countries, meaning that some refugees are more qualified for employment. For example, it has been found that the Iraqi population in Massachusetts is well educated when compared to refugees of other cultural or ethnic backgrounds (Fábos et al., 2015). This contrast in education is important to consider when assessing the success of the resettlement system.

Unfortunately, jobs usually available for refugees are quickly diminishing and have lower salaries than previous years (Segal & Mayadas, 2005). Many employers require English proficiency, further limiting the number of available job opportunities. Even with advanced degrees and professional experience in their home country, refugees are regularly not chosen over applicants with a U.S. education ("Living In America: Challenges Facing New Immigrants and Refugees," 2006).

2.4.3 Health Care

Those who receive refugee status in the United States are provided with MassHealth Standard coverage to access comprehensive medical care. However, cultural differences prevent some refugees from seeking health care and lead to unfavorable interactions that discourage them returning to these services. Cultural beliefs surrounding the causes of many diseases prevent refugees from seeking professional help or planning for future complications (Nawyn et al., 2012). This suggests that there should be increases in efforts from healthcare providers to learn about the cultural practices of refugees. Additionally, the United States has health-based regulations for those receiving refugee status. According to the Center for Disease Control, medical examination is required for refugees prior to their arrival to the United States. After their arrival, more comprehensive medical examinations are available and recommended in order to screen for diseases and provide preventive care (Walker, Stauffer, & Barnett, 2014).

2.4.4 Trauma and Mental Health

It is difficult to comprehend the experiences of refugees that often include war, torture, terrorism, natural disasters, or famine. These experiences may lead to mental disorders (Piwowarczyk, 2005). Commonly, refugees exhibit signs of post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, and anxiety. These mental disorders can impact a refugee's ability to function in their work and family life and adapt to their new environment. It is important to provide refugees with a connection to appropriate mental health providers.

Emigration to a foreign environment often induces significant culture shock. Refugees are forced to uproot and leave behind family members, friends, belongings, and their culture (Derluyn & Broekaert, 2008). Mental health services provide professional help to refugees with mental disorders and teach them American cultural norms and practices. Mental health services also work with medical providers to incorporate traditional cultural practices in their work (Pumariega, Rothe, & Pumariega, 2005).

2.5 Support Organizations

A resurgence of immigration in the 1990's brought on the discussion of the costs of assistance programs for refugees, leading to government policy changes across the nation. Due to these changes, much of the responsibility associated with assisting new refugees into the United States moved away from the government on both a federal and state level. This has reduced overall funding for refugee support and transferred current work to local non-profit organizations. These organizations are essential to help mitigate the difficulties refugees face when arriving in the city and ease their integration process. Without the hard work of these agencies the refugees would likely fail to integrate into the community (Joassart-Marcelli, 2013).

According to Brandt, a city's ability to meet the needs of refugees can be assessed by examining its relationship with its minority population. The role of a resettlement city is to have a strong non-profit structure in which a network of nonprofit organizations and resettlement agencies meet all the needs of refugees arriving in the city (Brandt, 2010). The organizations offer a wide variety of services and resources to help address the challenges they encounter when arriving in Worcester. These services aim to "help immigrants to develop the skills they need to become productive participants in the US economy"

(Ascentria Care Alliance, 2015). Depending on the type of work they do, the organizations can be categorized as resettlement agencies or refugee support organizations.

There are three resettlement agencies in Worcester: Refugee and Immigrant Advocacy Center (RIAC), Catholic Charities Worcester, and Ascentria Care Alliance (formerly Lutheran Social Services of New England). These organizations receive government funding, and thus are able to provide comprehensive services and monetary based assistance ("Funding Opportunities,"). These services address the basic needs of the refugees, specifically housing, job training, health care, English language courses, and assistance with government paperwork.

In contrast, refugee support organizations provide services that extend beyond basic needs. To be more effective, these organizations generally orient their services towards a community of a specific background. For example, African Community Education (ACE) provides services to the African community and the Southeast Asian Coalition (SEAC) to the Asian community. Due to the volume of services and resources available, navigating them can be a challenging task for refugees.

A working relationship between agencies of different capabilities and purposes is essential. All organizations must realize that "to meet housing, education, employment, and health care needs, other institutions in the community need to be involved" (Smith, 2008). Therefore, for Worcester to function as a resettlement city both federally funded and non-funded organizations must understand that "the voluntary assistance provided by the community co-sponsors comes in addition to, not instead of, the support offered through the federal programs" (Eby, Iverson, Smyers, & Kekic, 2011). The continued improvement of the quality of life of refugees is essential to Worcester's role as a resettlement city.

2.6 Case Studies

This section examines two guides that pertain to refugees in Massachusetts. These guides provided framework for the Resource Guide of this project. The case studies also features research conducted by Scott Smith on the services available for refugees and the methodological approach followed when gathering this information.

2.6.1 Case Study 1. Refugees and Immigrants Resource Manual

The first guide is “The Massachusetts Office for Refugees and Immigrants (MORI) Resource Manual” created by the Massachusetts Office for Refugees and Immigrants (Ripalda, 2009). This guide contains a list of organizations that provide essential services to refugees and immigrants in Massachusetts. Accompanying each organization is the address, contact information, hours, languages spoken, and a brief description of their purpose and services. Agencies are categorized by the type of services offered, such as education, legal aid services, and health and human services. The guide provides an overview of the relevant organizations in Massachusetts. However, options are limited if looking for services in a specific area such as Worcester. Unlike the MORI, the SNC focuses only on refugees within the city of Worcester. The MORI’s manual is well organized and formatted, and represents a good model for our guide.

2.6.2 Case Study 2. Public School System Resource Guide

Members of the Worcester Public School System created a guide that lists the resources associated with the education system titled “A Family Guide & Community Resources” (Worcester Public Schools, 2014). The guide is very specific to educational needs within the Worcester community and is best described as a manual for parents to learn how to enroll their child in the Public School System. This booklet was not created primarily for refugees, but it accounted for their needs in its creation. A portion of the guide lists a number of organizations, accompanied by a brief description and contact information. This guide includes after school programs as well as refugee support organizations. The Public School’s guide is a good example of the range of resources we want to include in our Resource Guide. However, our Guide focuses specifically on refugees, and it expands beyond education.

2.6.3 Case Study 3. The Mohawk Valley Resource Center for Refugees

R. Scott Smith interviewed a variety of immigrant and refugee support agencies in order to gather information on the current resettlement situation in Utica, New York. The author began by interviewing the Mohawk Valley Resource Center for Refugees (MVRRCR). Then, through referrals from the MVRRCR and other popular agencies, they were able to conduct multiple interviews within the network of refugee support organizations in upstate New York. These interviews collected data on how the support organizations accommodate and adapt for refugees. The interviews focused on the efficiency of the agencies in properly

integrating the refugees into their new community. Results were based on common trends found throughout the interviewing process, with trends established if three different subjects mentioned the topic. According to Smith, the findings of the interviews suggested that the historic backgrounds, social norms, and the organization of the agencies determine how successfully refugees integrate in the community (Smith, 2008). We employed a similar methodological approach to that of R. Scott Smith's research.

Chapter 3. Methodology

The goal of our project was to develop a Resource Guide that assists trained volunteers at the SNC in serving refugees resettled to Worcester. The guide facilitates the center's work as an intermediary between providers and refugees. There are three objectives:

- Objective 1. Understand the Worcester refugee experience
- Objective 2. Collect resources that are locally available
- Objective 3. Create the resource guide

An estimated timeline of events and progress by week appears in Figure 2 in section 3.5. A consent form for interviews and surveys is included in Appendix A.

3.1 Understanding the Worcester Refugee Experience

To gather information about Worcester's refugee experience and the challenges that refugees experience when resettling in Worcester, we considered organizing focus groups. However, because of the English language limitations of the refugee population, an open discussion would have been impractical. Surveys were also discarded because there was no reliable way to distribute and collect them among refugees. Also, the larger sample size obtainable through surveys was unnecessary to gather information about the challenges refugees confront after resettlement. We decided to use interviews as the main methodological strategy of the project. The sample included refugee volunteers from the SNC as well as experts in the field.

Interviews served as the primary method for gaining in-depth insight of the stakeholders. Interviewing was an effective way to elicit experiences and stories. Moderately structured interviews were conducted so that language and questions were tailored for the variety of cultural groups (Berg, 2012). The sampling strategy chosen for the interviews was a snowball sampling including individuals from a variety of backgrounds (Berg, 2012). Refugees were asked about any services that they could not find or thought were difficult to access. They were also asked about their experiences during their first year of resettlement. Accommodations for the language barrier and transportation needs of the refugee who was interviewed were provided by the SNC staff. Refugees were driven to the SNC and a

translator was provided, if needed. When interviewing experts in the field, we asked similar questions to those asked to refugees. These interviews gave us an idea of the challenges refugees face from a different perspective. Some samples of interview questions can be found in Appendix B.

3.2 Collect Resources Offered in Worcester

We interviewed the Shalom Neighborhood Center and other local organizations to compile a list of resources. The focus of these interviews was to discover the extent of the agencies' offerings, how they function, and to establish reliable contacts within them. We interviewed their staff to understand each organization's purpose and functions. In order to accomplish this, we asked who the organization served and specific details about their programs. Most importantly, we asked about the process a refugee should follow to receive the organization's services. Interviewing the refugee support organizations comprised the majority of our fieldwork. We interviewed twenty-one refugee support organizations by phone or in person, a complete list is provided in Appendix C.

The information collected from interviews was transferred to electronic documents. Data from each interview was compared to identify reoccurrences, enabling us to determine the refugees' most significant challenges. The analysis of these challenges and recommendations from the SNC allowed us to determine which organizations should be prioritized for interviews. This priority was important to establish because time constraints and scheduling conflicts did not permit us to arrange a meeting with all organizations. It was also important to consider agencies that offer services to the general public that apply to refugees. For example, the YWCA offers after school activities that refugee children may participate in. Meeting a variety of those invested in the community allowed us to expand the resource network of the Shalom Neighborhood Center.

3.3 Create the Resource Guide

The third objective consisted of creating the Resource Guide by compiling data obtained from interviews. We met with the staff of the Shalom Neighborhood Center and developed the criteria of the Resource Guide to ensure the final product would be easy to use by their volunteer workers. This criteria is detailed in Chapter 4.4.

We created a guide that reflects the center’s problem solving approach by interviewing the SNC’s volunteers. The organizations were organized in categories to ensure the guide is navigable by trained volunteer workers. A digital copy of the Resource Guide and a list of contacts were given to the SNC so that they can be updated annually. Along with the Resource Guide, a full procedure on updating the Resource Guide was provided to the Shalom Neighborhood Center staff. This procedure is explained in the Recommendations section accompanying Chapter 4.4.

3.4 Data Management

The Shalom Neighborhood Center developed the idea of the Resource Guide as well as the indigenous workers. Therefore, we ensured that specific details were not disclosed to the interviewed agencies so that there was no opportunity to disclose sensitive data. Names of participants were not requested during interviews. Data was recorded first on paper and then transcribed into a digital version on a password protected laptop. At the conclusion of the project the paper copies of the data were disposed of and the digital versions deleted.

3.5 Estimated Project Timeline

The timeline for the project appears in figure 2, below.

Week	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	Jan 15-18	Jan 19-25	Jan 26 - Feb 1	Feb 2-8	Feb 9-15	Feb 16-22	Feb 23 - Mar 1	Mar 2-5
Planning								
Interviews								
Analyze Data								
Create Resource Guide								
Working on the Final Paper								

Figure 2: Estimated Project Timeline

During the first two weeks, we planned the structure of the interviews while simultaneously contacting refugee support organizations. Starting on the third week, we

began interviewing representatives from refugee support organizations. We also began interviewing refugees and experts during this time. The fourth and fifth week focused on continuing to interview while also transcribing and analyzing the data collected. During the sixth week, we finished analyzing the data and began the creation of the Resource Guide. The seventh and eighth week were primarily used to finalize the Resource Guide and write the findings and conclusions of the project.

Chapter 4. Findings & Recommendations

In this section we include the findings and recommendations of our project. Findings were mostly obtained from interviews conducted on members of the refugee community as well as representatives of refugee support organizations. Due to limited English proficiency, statements from refugees were slightly rephrased to ensure their main ideas were clear. Some of the recommendations included in this chapter were suggested by the members of the community or representatives from the organizations.

4.1 Trends Found Among Worcester's Refugee Population

This section presents the trends obtained from interviews with Worcester's refugees. The trends include resettlement experience, lack of visibility, lack of accessibility to the services, and cultural differences. Following this chapter's recommendations would improve the distribution of services to refugees. Addressing these trends will allow Worcester to become a better resettlement city.

4.1.1 Resettlement Period

Resettlement agencies in Worcester provide a comprehensive variety of services to newly arrived refugees. Case workers are assigned to groups of refugees to assist them for a period of 90 days. During the resettlement period, refugees are given their essential needs which include health care, housing, and food. Afterwards, refugees still face many issues and challenges, especially if they do not know English well. Therefore, refugees are largely on their own if they have not already established a connection to the community or refugee support organization.

During interviews with resettlement agencies, we found that they perform their resettlement responsibilities well by fulfilling the refugees' needs. However, we also found that these agencies rely on the refugee community to help one another navigate and learn about complex systems in the United States

(Representative from RIAC, personal communication, February 18, 2015). This challenges the information gathered from refugees, who expressed that although they desire to teach

"When we were resettling they provided us with clothes and furniture. But after that it became difficult to find those things. No one told us where to find them or how to get there..."
- Refugee from Republic of the Congo

each other to use these services, they do not have enough time due to their personal responsibilities (Refugee from Congo, personal communication, February 6, 2015). For example, after the resettlement period refugees must find their own supplies. Determining where to find the proper goods is a challenge because they feel disorientated by stores with non-descriptive brand names. This shows that refugees need further guidance after the resettlement period.

We found that refugee support organizations are currently providing the refugees with a variety of services. However, there is minimal effort from the resettlement agencies to direct refugees to support organizations that can help them after the resettlement period. Receiving every refugee who enters the city, resettlement agencies have the perfect opportunity to connect refugees to support organizations.

Recommendation:

We recommend that resettlement agencies direct refugees to refugee support organizations during the resettlement period. This will allow refugees to be familiarized with additional organizations by the end of this period. Connecting refugees with these organizations will give resettlement agencies the ability to prioritize new refugees. Refugee support organizations offer assistance and the promotion of a community in a more reliable way than referrals to individual refugees. Refugee support organizations can also navigate refugees to stores that closely fit their needs.

4.1.2 Language Barrier

Most organizations reported that language barriers are a significant challenge because they are closely tied to employment and integration. Many refugees are unaware of the number of organizations in the city that offer ESL (English as a Second Language) courses. Refugees and organization representatives both reported that the resettlement period is not long enough for refugees to become proficient in the English language. After finding employment, refugees can no longer dedicate as much time to learning English. If this persists, refugees may live in the United States for years without being able to communicate in English. Refugees who alienate themselves from the host community by not learning English hinder both the community and economy of the city. This is especially true in cases where the refugee has a professional degree and he or she is unable to work in their industry

because of language barriers (Representative from RIAC, personal communication, February 18, 2015).

Recommendation:

We recommend that case workers examine the ESL classes available in the city to find one that accommodates for each refugee's work and personal schedule. Each refugee that is lacking English proficiency should have a plan to ensure they continue learning the language after they begin working. The "Worcester Parent Guide to Community Services" created by Worcester Community Connections and You Inc. contains a list of nearby ESL services.

4.1.3 Overwhelming the Refugees

Interviewed refugees who previously lived in refugee camps or rural areas found Worcester overwhelming. The fast-paced lifestyle of a city makes refugees anxious (Burmese refugee, personal communication, March 2, 2015). Therefore, it takes time for them to become accustomed to their new environment. Refugees find this process hindered by frustration from the general public that is not aware of their limitations (Representative from ACE, personal communication, February 25, 2015). Americans often expect refugees to be familiarized with the systems, laws, and culture of the United States. This constant discouragement further alienates refugees and hinders their integration.

Recommendation:

We recommend that more research be conducted on the refugee population in Worcester. We were only able to interview a small sample of refugees and believe that conducting a larger study would gather useful information.

4.2 Accessibility to Organizations and Services

In this section, we will discuss factors that hinder the capability of refugees to access services that are available. Some of these factors include the restricted means to contact refugees by services provides, language barriers, and the limited transportation options for refugees.

We discovered that refugee support organizations find it difficult to contact refugees. According to a representative from Caregiver Homes, agencies offer many services to the refugee community but they do not have an effective way of advertising them (Representative from Caregiver Homes, personal communication, February 12, 2015).

Refugees usually find out about organizations by verbal communication with other individuals in their community. However, some of these organizations are sparsely known to the community. Additionally, we found that it is often difficult for refugee support organizations to follow up with refugees after making an appointment (Representative from CACW, personal communication, February 10, 2015).

Many refugee support organizations contract translators to communicate with refugees that lay outside their language capacity. This includes both in-person and phone translation services. However, there are some organizations that are unable to afford these services and must rely on volunteer or internal interpreters. Some organizations conveyed that in some opportunities they were unable to help refugees because they could not accommodate for their language (Representative from Centro Las Americas, personal communication, February 13, 2015).

We found that it is challenging for refugees to comprehend the plethora of systems in Worcester at once. The public transportation system is an important resource that is largely foreign to refugees (Refugee from Congo, personal communication, February 6, 2015). Therefore, refugees spend a lot of their time walking long distances or simply cannot reach services they need. Additionally, we found that it is difficult for refugees to acquire a driver's license. In some cases, refugees must find translators to help them take the permit test (Fatima, personal communication, February 17, 2015).

Recommendation:

We recommend that the Shalom Neighborhood Center pilot their indigenous worker system that they envisioned with two or three reliable volunteers. It is necessary to test this program with a small group before it is finalized. This will allow the SNC to determine the extent of training that the workers need in order to perform their jobs. These trained volunteers would help the refugees navigate through these services.

4.3 Lack of Visibility of Organizations and Services

Most of the organizations interviewed did not know about many of the other organizations beside the three resettlement agencies. While resettlement agencies are knowledgeable about other resettlement work in the city, they are not very familiar with refugee support organizations. We found that resettlement agencies are busy serving the

large volume of incoming refugees. As a result, they have little opportunity to network and contact refugee support organizations to inquire about the services they provide. In an interview with Dr. Sarai Rivera, she detailed that “all organizations play a different role and it is important that they understand this so they can balance each other’s strengths and weaknesses” (S. Rivera, personal communication, February 6, 2015). Dr. Rivera emphasized that this must be fulfilled in order for Worcester to become a successful resettlement city.

Recommendation:

We recommend establishing a well-advertised biannual meeting among the refugee support organizations. In these meetings all agencies can learn about other services that are available and notice opportunities for collaboration. The meeting offers time for networking and referral. Additionally, we recommend the creation of an electronic newsletter including all refugee support organizations that wish to be included. Periodic reports from each organization could be shared among this network without the complications involved in organizing frequent meetings.

4.4 Criteria of the Resource Guide

The criteria for the Resource Guide was developed with the staff of the Shalom Neighborhood Center. We used the information gathered in interviews to establish extra criteria for the design of the Resource Guide. The criteria includes the content and design of the guide. It includes the amount of space that each organization should be given within the guide, how the information should be arranged, and what type of services should be listed. An example of the format can be seen in figure 3. The guide was designed to be easily navigated to ensure that a proper referral can be made by a volunteer worker. The Resource Guide that we developed can be found in Appendix D.

The criteria are:

- Each organization is allocated half of a page in the Resource Guide to ensure equality.
- The information for each organization in the Resource Guide includes the following fields: name of organization, address, phone number, description of agency, language capacity, programs with descriptions, and suggestions for accessing the service.

- Organizations are organized alphabetically so that none appear to be prioritized.
- An index that categorizes the resources by the type of service provided is included at the beginning of the Resource Guide. The categories included are: case management, child care, education, employment, English classes, family services, health care, housing, and legal services.

<p>Name of Organization</p> <p>Agency Description</p>	<p>Contact Info: Phone Number Address</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ List of services and programs offered ➤ Language capacity <div style="text-align: right;">  </div>	

Figure 3: Format example for each organization in the Resource Guide

The procedure on how to update the Resource Guide includes the following:

- The guide must be updated in Microsoft Publisher, the program in which the Guide was created.
- Contact information will be provided in the resource guide as well as the refugee support organization master list.
- The contacts from the support organizations should be reached by email or phone to obtain updated information.
- When contacting a support organization, it is important to state that you are working on behalf of the Shalom Neighborhood Center. One must ask if there has been any changes in the programs and services offered to immigrants and refugees within the last year. State that the information will be used to update the Shalom Neighborhood Center's Resource Guide that includes their organization.
- If new organizations are discovered or the entry for an organization changes, the information gathered should be inputted according the template above (*figure 3*).

The index should also be updated to reflect added or removed services for new or existing organizations.

Recommendation:

We recommend that the guide be updated annually by the Shalom Neighborhood Center staff. Updating the guide will require that the Shalom Neighborhood Center make contact with other refugee support organizations in Worcester, giving the center an opportunity to further network and maintain working relationships with other organizations.

Chapter 5. Conclusion

Refugees find it difficult to adapt to their new home, especially if they do not know the English language. These individuals also struggle to adjust to the city's working public systems. These challenges persist after the resettlement period because many refugees are not familiar with all aspects of the culture and systems of the United States. Currently, refugees are unaware of the abundance of services available for them. Our Resource Guide promotes awareness to these refugee support organizations to increase the visibility of their services.

From the interviews conducted with Worcester refugee support organizations, it was found that a network between them is lacking. The Resource Guide will facilitate the Shalom Neighborhood Center's work as an intermediary between refugee support organizations and refugees. With this guide, the SNC can test their indigenous worker program. The Resource Guide is the Shalom Neighborhood Center's first plan of action in promoting Worcester as a functioning resettlement city.

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Appendix A

Interviews

We are a group of students from Worcester Polytechnic Institute that are doing a research project with the Shalom Neighborhood Center about the challenges refugees in the United States face while living in Worcester. We are asking you to take part in this interview to identify problems that refugees in Worcester find the most challenging.

Information gathered will be analyzed and published, but no individual responses will be recorded. **We will not ask for your name or other information that can be used to identify you.** Taking part in this interview is completely voluntary. You may skip any questions you do not want to answer. You are free to stop at any time.

We wish to gather information about organizations that have helped you with any problems and what problems you were not able to solve on your own. The interview will be around 30 minutes to one hour. If you are comfortable with it, we would like to record this interview. Otherwise, notes will be taken on paper. Feel free to ask questions at any time during the interview. If you have any further questions, do not hesitate to E-mail our project group at snc@wpi.edu.

Appendix B

Sample Interview Questions

For Supporting Organizations:

1. Explain your agency mission statement.
This question gave us a better understanding of what the organization aims to do. We included a brief description of each organization in the Resource Guide, and the mission statement formed a part of this for many organizations.
2. Talk to us about the people your agency serves? It is important to mention things like ethnicity, cultural backgrounds, and economic status.
Many organizations build their programs around the needs of a certain ethnic population so that they can more effectively serve them. This question allowed us to discover this so that refugees can be referred to the organization that is best equipped to assisting them.
3. Describe the problems that your organization can solve for a refugee.
We wanted to understand in what cases the SNC should contact this organization. Understand specifically what challenges their services aim to tackle.
4. Describe some challenges that the organization's staff faces when interacting with refugees
Asking workers about the problems they face allowed us to see challenges that we addressed in the Resource Guide or recommendations.
5. Describe the services or resources that your organization offers for refugees.
Important to the Resource Guide was a description of the services each organization offers. We can find out what types of service or resources are provided and put them in the guide with a short description of what each is about.
6. Do you plan on adding new services or focusing on some types of services in the future?
This question allowed us to determine if these organizations should be prioritized for a follow-up within a year. These refugee support organizations frequently changing their programs and services, so it was important that we inquired about the direction each organization was taking.
7. To be able to refer your organization we need a contact within the organization that is available whenever we need to get in touch with them.
This question allowed us to determine who should be contacted in the organization for further information or as a best contact for specific services. Multiple contacts can be acquired in some cases if different people are better to contact for different situations.
8. Are there any other refugee support organizations that you work closely with? Would you be able to put us in contact with said organization?
Determine how well the organization works with other members of the community. We can also use this to find new organizations to contact.
9. Describe the process your organization goes through when someone contacts your facility seeking assistance.

Allows a refugee to know what to expect from the process they will go through when receiving assistance from this organization.

10. What hours is your organization open and available?
Were the organization's hours not visibly posted, it was important that this question was asked so that the information could be included in the guide.
11. What legal status must a refugee have for your organization to provide services for them?

For Refugees:

1. Aside from the Shalom Neighborhood Center, have you ever sought support from an organization in Worcester?
 - a) What services or programs did they provide to you?
 - b) Did you find the program or service helpful?
 - c) Was there anything you felt the program or service lacked?
2. What have you found to be the most difficult challenge while adjusting to life in the United States? Why?
3. How did you find out about the refugee support organizations in Worcester?
4. Discuss the organizations that you are aware of dedicated to helping refugees.
5. Can you think of any experience throughout your immigration process in which you needed aid or resources that you could not access?
 - a) If so, explain why you could not access them.
6. Have you used services or resources from an organization assisting refugees? (RIAC, Ascentria Care Alliance(formerly: Lutheran Social services), Catholic Charities Worcester, ACE)
 - a) If so, which organization(s)? Describe your experience with them.
 - b) If not, what has prevented you from using them?
7. Tell us your story (only regarding the problem that the SNC helped them with) and how the SNC has helped you.

Appendix C

List of Organizations Interviewed:

African Community Education (ACE)
Caregiver Homes
Catholic Charities Worcester
Centro Las Americas
Community Legal Aid
Counselling and Assessment Center Worcester (CAC Worcester)
Department of Public Health
Edward M. Kennedy Community Health Center
Everyday Miracles
Latino Education Institute
New Citizens Center
Refugee and Immigrant Advocacy Center (RIAC)
Resource for Community and People (RCAP)
Southeast Asian Coalition (SEAC)
Urban Missionaries of our Lady of Hope
Worcester Community Connections
Worcester Refugee Assistance Project
Workforce Central Career Center
YWCA

Appendix D



Refugee Resource Guide



Shalom Neighborhood Center

This Guide has been developed by a group of WPI students for the Shalom Neighborhood Center. It will be used by their indigenous workers to guide refugees through the available sources and programs in Worcester, MA.

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African Community Education (ACE)

ACE works with refugee and immigrant families to provide educational, cultural, and outreach programs, with a special focus on youth. Programs designed for serving the African population in Worcester.

Contact Info:
 (508)-799-3653
 24 Chatham Street

Services Offered:

- ◆ **After School Program:** Monday - Thursday - 3-6 PM
 - ◇ Physical Education, leadership programs, and tutoring for kids in grades 5-12.
- ◆ **Saturday Program:**
 - ◇ Day program that includes ESL and STEM classes, a lunch period, and an activity (dance, sports, art, etc.) period.
- ◆ **Outreach Services:**
 - ◇ Assistance from one of their outreach workers who is both linguistically and culturally competent in Worcester. Provides communication as well as in-home visits to families.
- ◆ To contact, call their general number and ask for a specific service to be directed to an appropriate person.
- ◆ **Languages:** 8-10 languages offered,



Ascentria Care Alliance

"We envision thriving communities where everyone has the opportunity to achieve their full potential regardless of background or disadvantage. Together with our partners, we inspire people to help one another reach beyond their current circumstances and realize new possibilities."

Contact Info:
 (774) 243-3900
 14 East Worcester Street, Suite 300

Services Provided:

- ◆ **Children and Family Services:** Programs for families, children, and teens at risks, full service adoption and foster program, teen parenting program, and unaccompanied refugee minors foster care.
- ◆ **Disability Services - Call (774)-243-3083:** Programs that enable those with disabilities and illnesses to contribute to the communities in which they live and work.
- ◆ **Good News Garage:** Cars are donated and given to low-income families.
- ◆ **Language Bank - Call (774) 243-3100:** Face-to-face language interpretation services for over 60 languages
- ◆ **Services for New Americans:** Refugee resettlement services, legal services for immigrants, foster care for unaccompanied minors, and training for refugees and asylees to start their own businesses.
- ◆ **Services for Older Adults:** Nursing and home care to assisted living, low-income housing, and specialized care.
- ◆ **Client Center - (774) 243-3100 - 11 Shattuck Street**



<p>Caregiver Homes <i>Provide economic support to “caregivers” that have to take care of another family member. The caregiver must live with the client.</i></p>	<p>Contact Info: (508) 745-4225 120 Stafford Street Suite 209</p>
<p>Services Provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Adult Foster Care: Program that supports caregivers. They also conduct cultural orientation and resolve family conflicts to ensure the client is in the best environment. ◆ Caregiver Support Group <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Helps families take care of their loved ones that are disabled or elderly with bathing, dressing, eating, transferring, ambulating, and etc. ◇ Around-the-clock care and support in the home. ◆ Qualifications: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Must be eligible for Medicaid ◇ Need 24-hour care and supervision ◇ Require help from a caregiver with one or more daily personal care needs <div data-bbox="1117 737 1425 936" style="text-align: right;"> </div>	

<p>Catholic Charities <i>“Inspired by the teachings of Jesus Christ and the Church and the pastoral leadership of the Bishop of Worcester, Catholic Charities is committed to meeting the needs of the poor, the homeless and the infirm and to enhancing the quality of life for all.”</i></p>	<p>Contact Info: (508) 798-0191 10 Hammond Street</p>
<p>Services Provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Citizenship Assistance Program - (508) 860-2261 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Provides assistance to legal residents of the community who are seeking to gain US citizenship with day and evening classes. ◆ Immigration Services: - (508) 860-2234 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Helps immigrants with applications including family-based immigration, adjustment of status, application for employment authorization, deferred action for childhood arrivals, etc. ◆ Refugee Resettlement Program - (508) 860-2226 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Support for newly arrived refugees seeking resettlement and case management services. Includes help with housing, food, healthcare, cultural and community orientation, referrals, etc. ◆ Refugee Case Management Program - (508) 860-2226 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Helps refugees, asylees, second migrants, and other populations. Includes case management services, refugee cash assistance (employment eligible), and referrals to employment, ESL, and other refugee services. ◆ They also have a Food Pantry and Clothing Closet. 	

Centro Las Americas

Empowering people to become independent.

Contact Info:

(508) 798-1900
11 Sycamore Street

Services Offered:

- ◆ **Department of Children and Families (DCF):** Provides case-management and support services to DSS involved parents and children.
- ◆ **Department of Developmental Services (DDS):** Provides support services to disabled clients and their families by organizing medical appointments, information workshops, support groups, and case management.
- ◆ **Latinos Elder Program (LEP):** Offers social activities, health screenings, English classes, computer classes, and advocacy to seniors ages 60 and over
- ◆ **Children’s Behavioral Health Initiative (CBHI):** In-home therapy, mentoring, and treatment.
- ◆ **Community Service:** Provides case management services, translations, and help with citizenship and resident concerns
- ◆ **Adult Family/Foster Care (AFC):** Provides assistance to adults 16 and older who cannot live alone due to illness, weakness, disability, or old age.
- ◆ **Food Pantry**
- ◆ **Languages:** English, Spanish, limited Portuguese, they have 7 languages BUT some interns are not there all the time

Commonwealth of Massachusetts - Dept. of Public Health

State department that provides support for parents that have children with complex medical cases. Partner with families to ensure policies and programs meet their needs.

Contact Info:

1-(800) 882-1435
180 Beaman St.
West Boylston

Services Offered:

- ◆ **Youth with Special Health Care Needs Program:** Ages 0-22 with chronic medical, physical, developmental or behavioral conditions. Help parents get the resources they need. Help prepare for emergencies and become effective advocates.
- ◆ **Community Support Line**
- ◆ **Catastrophic Illness in Children Relief Fund**
- ◆ **Care Coordination**
- ◆ **Public Benefits training**
- ◆ **Refugee Program:** Screen for communicable diseases.
- ◆ Ensure that immigrants and refugees are healthy, provides the healthcare and vaccines needed. The workers educate immigrants and refugees on resources available



Community Healthlink

"Promoting, restoring and maintaining the physical health, mental health and wellbeing of more than 19,000 adults, children, and families in central Massachusetts."

Contact Info:
 (508) 860-1000
 72 Jaques Avenue

Services Provided:

- ◆ **Primary Care:** Healthcare on-site
- ◆ **Together for Kids program (TFK):** Provides mental health promotion, prevention, and intervention for various ages.
- ◆ **Youth & Family services**
- ◆ **Adult Mental Health:** Counseling and community support.
- ◆ **Substance Abuse:** Recovery and therapy services.
- ◆ **Recovery Environments and Support (RES):** Provides residential services and support to clients recovering from addiction, mental illness, homelessness, etc.
- ◆ **Homelessness:** Helps the homeless with services including screenings, counseling, healthcare, rehabilitation, and referral to other support systems.



Community Legal Aid

"Community Legal Aid, Inc. (CLA) provides free civil legal services to low-income and elderly residents of central and western Massachusetts."

Contact Info:
 1-(800) 649-3718
 405 Main Street

Services Provided:

- ◆ **Benefits and Employment:** Free legal services for people with legal cases involving Social Security Administration, Department of Transitional Assistance, Division of Unemployment Assistance (SSI, TAFDC, EAEDC, food stamps, MassHealth, and unemployment benefits), and wage or employment discrimination.
- ◆ **Elder Law:** Free legal services for people of 60 years of age and older including housing cases, SSI, and many Social Security cases.
- ◆ **Family Law:** Free legal services for domestic violence, restraining orders, divorce, paternity, custody and visitation, child support, health insurance, and name change petition cases.
- ◆ **Housing and Homelessness:** Free legal services for tenants facing eviction, homeowners facing foreclosure, homeless families seeking the state's Emergency Assistance shelter program, people seeking affordable housing, and housing discrimination testing and enforcement program.
- ◆ **Immigration:** Help victims of domestic violence and other crimes.



Counseling and Assessment Center Worcester (CACW)

“Provide mental health resources to those in the community, especially those who are underrepresented.”

Contact Info:
 (508) 756-5400
 38 Front Street
 5th Floor

Services Provided:

- ◆ **Community Support Program (CSP):** Services include help with getting medical services, obtaining benefits and housing, and support groups.
- ◆ **Therapeutic Mentoring Services:** One-on-one services to individuals under 21 including coaching behavioral problems and conflict resolution.
- ◆ **In-Home Therapy Services:** In-home treatment for children to help them through problems. Assign mentors in other situations to help people become acquainted to the community and in their home
- ◆ **Outpatient Therapy Services:** Provides therapy, diagnostic evaluation, consultation, and referrals.
- ◆ **Outpatient Group Therapy Program:** Separate programs for adults, youth (16-21), and second offenders recovering from addiction. Provide counseling, group therapy, and medication management.
- ◆ **Languages:** English, Spanish, Twi, Mandarin



Edward M. Kennedy Community Health Center

“We help people live healthier lives.”

Contact Info:
 (508) 852-1805
 19 Tacoma Street

Services Provided:

- ◆ **Primary Medical Care**
- ◆ **Urgent Care for Patients**
- ◆ **Dental Care**
- ◆ **Optometry**
- ◆ **Pharmacy**
- ◆ **HIV Counseling and Testing**
- ◆ **Social & Behavioral Health**
- ◆ **Community Health Education and Prevention**
- ◆ **Refugee Health Assessments**
- ◆ Have interpreters for about **30 languages** and phone lines for other languages



Ethiopian Dream Center

"Gives vulnerable communities the opportunity to take charge of their future by sharing information about education, training, and the provision of appropriate tools and skills to sustain children and the community towards self-sufficiency, holistic, and productive balanced lives."

Contact Info:
 (508) 762-8085
 18A Millbury Street

Services Provided: (Ask for Mr. Mesfin Beshir or Mrs. Lisa Lichtenstein)

- ◆ Cultural and Social Activities
- ◆ Housing and Medical Advocacy
- ◆ Social Service Assistance
- ◆ Employment Referrals
- ◆ Job Search Assistance
- ◆ Civic Lessons
- ◆ Immigration Paperwork
- ◆ Free Donated Clothing
- ◆ Social Counseling
- ◆ Business Paperwork
- ◆ Translation Services



◆ **Languages:** English, Somali, Arabic, Amharic, Ethiopian, Tigrinya

Everyday Miracles Peer Recovery Community Center

Offers recovery related workshops, trainings, services, meetings and social events in a safe environment to over a hundred people everyday who are concerned with recovery.

Contact Info:
 (508) 799-6221
 25 Pleasant Street

Services Provided:

- ◆ **Open Men's and Women's Groups meetings**
- ◆ **Peer Coaching and Support**
- ◆ **Support Groups and Workshops**
- ◆ **Health and Wellness**
- ◆ **Sober Events**
- ◆ **Family Education and Support**
- ◆ **Twelve Step Fellowships**
- ◆ **Community Outreach and Advocacy**
- ◆ **Continuing Care Information and Referral**



◆ Call the general number or stop by to learn about the available services. Their website contains a calendar with a schedule of weekly programs and events. An application must be filled out in order to become a member, granting full access to all programs and facilities.

◆ **Languages:** English and Spanish

The Fairbridge Project

"The Fairbridge Project International Incorporated (FPI Inc.) works with the community to improve access to health care, education, economic opportunities, and resources that would make life better for new immigrants and refugees, particularly those from Africa."

Contact Info:

(508) 340-1669
237 Chandler Street
Suite 216

Services Provided:

- ◆ **Youth Empowerment and Support (YES):** Youth development program that includes after school programs, job training and placement, mentoring, and health education workshops.
- ◆ **Cultural Competency and Awareness Training:** Cultural orientations for newly arrived residents to the US systems as well as ESL courses to improve adaption into the city.
- ◆ **One STOP Referral Services:** Through the main phone line, referrals to a wide variety of service organizations are offered.
- ◆ **Community Health:** Offers preventative education and confidential testing in order to reduce the spread of STDs and other diseases. Provides case management to ensure connections to quality and culturally appropriate medical treatment.
- ◆ Sponsors provide meals at a central site. They are served free to eligible participants.



Friendly House Inc.

"Friendly House was funded for the educational, social and family betterment of residents of the City of Worcester."

Contact Info:

(508) 755-4362
36 Wall Street

Services Provided:

- ◆ **After School/Teen Program:** Daily activities for children ages 5-12
- ◆ **Youth Hoop Basketball:** Basketball program for children ages 8 - 15 years old. Fee program.
- ◆ **Summer Camp Programs:** 9-5 Monday - Friday: Fee program.
- ◆ **Food Services:** Summer program to ensure children receive nutritious meals during summer vacations.
- ◆ **Quinsigamond Village Center (Call (508) 755-7481):** Multi-service neighborhood center that includes Services: food pantry, senior wellness program, Worcester Intertribal Indian Center, after-school center, holiday assistance, clothing, farmers market coupon site, counseling services, informational and referral services, housing assistance, food stamp assistance, fuel assistance, employment services, and self-help groups.
 - ◆ Address: 16 Greenwood Street; Hours: Monday - Friday from 9:30 AM to 5 PM
- ◆ **Shelter:** Provides momentary housing for families and rooms for homeless families.
- ◆ **Social Service:** Provides advocacy services for families dealing with social and economic aspects of society including food, shelter, clothing, resume, job search, information and referral, holiday baskets and toys, immigration and naturalization services, translation, forms preparation, notary, etc.

Latino Education Institute

"We strive to improve the academic achievement and well-being of Latino students (grades K-16) and their families."

Contact Info:
 (508) 798-6507
 537 Chandler Street

Services Provided: (Ask for Kathy Orenge)

- ◆ **Club Education (Club E):** ESL classes, family literacy and education planning, and computer skills offered to parents in order to encourage family education.
- ◆ **Innovative Services for Latino Achievers (ISLA):** After school program for Worcester students from grades 3-8.
- ◆ **Latino Achievers in Search of Success (LASOS):** Promotes self-exploration, personal development, cultural enrichment, healthy relationships, sexual education, and early college awareness in the Latina women community. LASOS takes place after school, Saturdays, as well as through different summer camps.
- ◆ **Latinos involved in Discovering Educational Resources (LIDER):** Prepares middle and high school students and their parents for higher education.
- ◆ **One Circe:** Arts and leadership program for middle school girls
- ◆ **Enlace:** Services focused on the personal and educational development of at-risk teenager boys.
- ◆ **Languages:** English, Spanish



New Citizen Center

The New Citizen Center provides ESL and academic courses to students of grades 3-12 in order to prepare them for the public school system.

Contact Info:
 (508) 799-3494
 1407A Main Street

Services Provided:

- ◆ The New Citizen Center is an alternative public school that focuses on an ESL based curriculum. All classes are taught by instructors with dual certification in ESL as well as a secondary subject. Periodic assessments evaluate if a student can handle coursework in an English language dominant classroom.
- ◆ Partners with other organizations to provide after school programs for students.
- ◆ Receive students through the Parent Information Center. A test determines their English proficiency - those with limited skills are sent to the New Citizen Center.

Information for Parent Information Center:

768 Main Street
 Worcester, MA 01610
 508-799-3194
 Hours: 8:30 am- 4:00 pm

- ◆ **Languages:** Around 19 languages



Refugee and Immigrant Advocacy Center (RIAC)

"RIAC's mission is to promote cultural, educational, and socioeconomic development in the refugee and immigrant communities."

Contact Info:

(508) 926-7557
240 Main Street
Suite 802

Services Provided:

♦ **Refugee Resettlement:**

- ◊ Resettle refugees into the community
- ◊ Welcome package includes fire protection, de-lead, and right and responsibilities of tenant brochures.

♦ **Refugee Employment Services:**

- ◊ In-house employment services for resettled refugee clients
- ◊ Help with job search
- ◊ Resume writing help



Refugee & Immigrant Assistance Center

Resources for Communities and People (RCAP Solutions)

"RCAP Solutions mission is to foster personal and public self-reliance and improve the quality of life for individuals, families and the communities in which they live."

Contact Info:

1-(800) 488-1969
12 East Worcester Street

Services Provided:

- ♦ **Housing Consumer Education Center:** A counselor offers information about the different housing programs RCAP provides and can schedule one-on-one meetings.
- ♦ **Homelessness Prevention:** Helps families in crisis, fleeing domestic violence, and those who have public assistance.
- ♦ **Self Sufficiency Programs:** Assist families transitioning from welfare to employment with homeownership opportunities.
- ♦ **Rental Assistance:** Provides rental support and helps tenants pay their rent.
- ♦ **Senior, Disabled & Family Housing:** Manages over 300 affordable apartments for the elderly, disabled, and families.
- ♦ **Senior & Disabled Programs:** Assist elderly and disabled population with many service programs.
- ♦ **Education & Training:** Offers free workshops and trainings to educate tenants, potential homebuyers, and homeowners on buying and maintaining a home.
- ♦ **Language Access Plan**



Somali Bantu Community Outreach

“Assist the Somali Bantus and other refugees in Massachusetts by providing assistance to its members in order to increase their education, economic resources, and opportunities for self-support.”

Contact Info:
508-755-1036
90 Madison Street
Suite 302

Services Provided:

- ◆ **ESL Classes:** Offers ESL classes and a job training program for people receiving Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children and those who are unemployed.
- ◆ **Citizenship Classes:** Classes that will aid refugees and immigrants in preparing for, applying, and interviewing to receive their US citizenship.
- ◆ **Interpretation Services:** Interpretation and translation service for Somali Bantu refugees.
- ◆ **Agriculture Program:** Teach Somali Bantu farmers methods of farming in the United States, specifically for the Worcester climate zone.
- ◆ **Domestic Violence Prevention:** Teach immigrants and refugees about Domestic Violence Prevention and cultural literacy.
- ◆ **After School Program:** After school program for children with free tutoring for students from elementary to high school. Includes a summer school for children grades 3-12.
- ◆ **Leadership Development Program:** Workshops that introduce the skills necessary to Somali Bantu refugees to communicate, work with, and lead the refugee community.
- ◆ **Gang Prevention Program:** Focuses on children from ages 10-19 who are in-danger of illegal and gang activity. Promotes school and community safety and a healthy lifestyle .

Southeast Asian Coalition (SEAC)


Assist Asian immigrants, refugees, and low income families to successfully integrate and become contributors to society while still maintaining their cultural identity.

Contact Info:
(508) 791-4373
484 Main Street
Suite 400

Services Offered: (Ask for Anh Sawyer or Christina Oopara)

- ◆ **Advocacy**
- ◆ **Direct Services:**
 - ◇ **ESL Program:** Free enrollment for English classes. Only have to pay for study book.
 - ◇ **Youth Effect Program:** For youth between the ages of 9 and 19 years. This program “focuses on academic excellence, civic engagement and developing leadership skills.”
 - ◇ **Translation services**
 - ◇ **Wellness Program:** Yoga and martial arts classes
 - ◇ **Citizenship Test:** Preparation for this test
- ◆ **Referral Services:**
 - ◇ Find employment, apply for citizenship, apply for health insurance, and fill out forms
- ◆ **Languages:** Vietnamese, Thai, Cambodian, Burmese, Laotian, Spanish, Nepalese, Bhutanese



<p>Urban Missionaries of Our Lady of Hope <i>Urban Missionaries is a Catholic Social Action ministry in the Diocese of Worcester, Massachusetts.</i></p>	<p>Contact Info: (508) 831-7455 242 Canterbury Street</p>
<p>Services Provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Thrift Store: Includes used and new furniture, clothing, and more. Monday through Saturday from 9-4 PM. ◆ Food Pantry: Monday through Saturday from 9-4 PM. ◆ Christmas Program: Give Christmas presents to children. Need a Social Security number to use this program. ◆ Sr. Alice Petty Vocational Program: Helps with immigration services including employment, paperwork, and computer and language classes. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Work with Notre Dame Health Care to provide services to immigrants. ◆ Languages: English, Spanish, French 	

<p>Worcester Community Action Council (WCAC) <i>"Worcester Community Action Council's (WCAC) mission is helping people move to economic self-sufficiency through programs, partnerships, and advocacy."</i></p>	<p>Contact Info: (508) 754-1176 484 Main Street, Suite 200</p>
<p>Services Provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Educational: Programs from young adults ages 16-24 involving: GED preparation, pre-employment skills training, education and career counselling, job and internship placement assistance, and case management ◆ Fuel and Energy Programs (Call 508-754-7281): Help low income families pay for utilities in emergency situations. Applications available online. ◆ Community Programs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Assistance with SNAP (food stamp) programs ◇ Income tax preparation ◇ Family support activities that include workshops, advocacy, and the creation of task forces to address specific needs. ◆ Job training and Employment: Employment assistance for ages 14-24 for those without high school degrees or those with detrimental criminal records. ◆ Youth and Family Programs: Community based programs for families that address gaps in need, advocacy services, and assistance with conflict resolution. Offer in-home visits for some families with parents under 20 years old. 	



Worcester Community Connections (WCCC)

“WCCC is a parent-driven coalition whose mission is to support Worcester families by: bringing out the voices of residents, better coordinating resources already in the community, and ensuring that services meet the needs of the people.”

Contact Info:
 (508) 796-1411
 484 Main Street
 Suite 460

Services Provided:

- ◆ **Parent Support & Leadership Meeting**
- ◆ **Task Forces to address gaps in services in the community**
- ◆ **Production and Distribution of Community Resource Guides:** Helps families locate and connect to community services including:
 - ◇ Mental health
 - ◇ Support groups
 - ◇ ESL/GED classes
 - ◇ Worcester Parent Pocket Guide to Services
- ◆ **Languages:** English, Spanish



Worcester Refugee Assistance Project (WRAP)

WRAP is committed to assisting local refugees from Burma achieve sustainable self-reliance through mentoring, advocacy and providing material support as needed.

Contact Info:
 (508) 791-4373
 484 Main Street
 Suite 400

Services Provided:

- ◆ **Evening Program:** Monday and Thursday evenings from 6-7:30 PM
 - ◇ English language assistant
 - ◇ Tutoring and reading with children
 - ◇ ESL for adults and homework help for children
- ◆ **Saturday Youth Group:** 1-3 PM
 - ◇ Offered for 12-19 year olds. The youth in this program engage in volunteering, translation, and homework help, as well as a variety of physical activities.
- ◆ Also provides a family mentoring program for general assistance.

*They share space with SEAC. Call SEAC's number and ask for the WRAP program or Meredith.

<p>Workforce Central Career Center <i>Workforce Central Career Center provides services for employers and job seekers.</i></p>	<p>Contact Info: (508) 799-1600 44 Front Street</p>
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<p>Services Provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Career Preparation Workshops: The services they provide prepare the individual for job searching. The services include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Interview Skills ◇ Resume and Cover Writing Services ◇ Introduction to Microsoft Word and Email ◆ Job Fairs and Strategies ◆ Networking ◆ To use services, one must first attend a Workforce Central Seminar. ◆ Languages: English, Spanish, Portuguese, Vietnamese, Albanian 	
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<p>You Inc. <i>To provide youth and families with opportunities to fulfill their potential and build a brighter future.</i></p>	<p>Contact Info: (508) 849-5600 81 Plantation Street</p>
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<p>Services Provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Adventure Challenge Experience (ACE) Program: Therapeutic recreation program that helps youth overcome trust issues from trauma and abuse. ◆ Community-Based: Therapeutic and prevention programs to children and families in their home communities. Ranges from after-school and in-home therapy to foster care and programs for juvenile offenders. ◆ Educational: Programs for students that require educational and mental health services. Includes day schools, college access programs, adult education, and GED. ◆ Family Support Networks ◆ Occupational Therapy ◆ Outpatient: Individual, family, and group counseling, parent and caregiver workshops, and family networking. ◆ Residential: Offers residential care including short-term stabilization, longer-term behavioral treatment residences, and intensive foster care. ◆ Languages: English, Spanish, Turkish, Hebrew 	
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YWCA Central Massachusetts

"The YWCA of Central Massachusetts will strive to be an all-inclusive women's advocacy and resource center with a proactive membership serving the diverse needs of women through leadership, service and support."

Contact Info:
(508) 767-2505
1 Salem Square

Services Offered:

- ◆ **Women's Economic Empowerment – Ask for Alyson Whalen—Young Parents Program:** Support service for youth ages of 14 and 21 teaching independence. Allows them to finish high school education and provides childcare, case management, job search assistance, and parenting training.
- ◆ **Residential Services – Ask for Gale B—Transitional Housing Program:** For a small fee, provides up to 2 years of safe and supportive housing for women 18 years and older. Application needed.
- ◆ **Health Promotion Services – Ask for Patricia Flanagan—**Membership based health and fitness services including support groups, summer camps, classes, and after school programs
- ◆ **Early Education and Care – Ask for Darlene Belliveau—**Childcare services include infant, toddler and pre-school, after-school, and summer camp. Prices based off income and vouchers are accepted.
- ◆ **Domestic Violence – Ask for Amarely Gutierrez—**Offers free services to anyone and do not share any information about their clients. Call **(508) 755-9030** for a 24/7 hotline with a language line.
- ◆ **Languages:** Arabic, English, Spanish