Over the past three years our project has added four questions regarding attitudes towards refugee resettlement to the annual Vermonter poll. This survey asks a representative sample of households from across the state a range of questions on various topics. This report summarizes some of the responses between 2015 and 2017.

**Vermont Resettlement**

Since 1988, Vermont has settled almost 7,500 refugees. This number continues to grow by approximately 300-350 refugees per year.

**Chittenden County**

Nearly all of the refugees resettled in Vermont have been placed in Chittenden County. The largest groups include members of the Bhutanese, Bosnian, Vietnamese, Burmese, Somali and several other African, European and Asian communities.

**Vermont Resettlement by Country of Origin Since 2002**

- Bhutan (48.36%)
- Somalia (17.43%)
- Burma (7.22%)
- Democratic Republic of Congo (6.13%)
- All Others (20.85%)

This data is taken from the Worldwide Refugee Admissions Processing System (WRAPS) database whose information is especially accurate post-2002. In Vermont this includes a particularly active period from 2008 onwards during which large groups of Bhutanese, Burmese, Somali and Congolese have been resettled. Earlier large-scale resettlements in Vermont include Vietnamese (1980s) and Bosnians (1990s).

Below are the four refugee-related questions added to the Vermonter Poll:

- **Q1** Are you in favor of resettling refugees in Vermont?
- **Q2** Where should refugees be settled in Vermont?
- **Q3** Who should be most responsible for helping refugees adjust to life in Vermont?
- **Q4** What do you believe is the most important factor in successful integration of refugees in Vermont?

[http://spatializingmigration.net/impact-on-host-communities/vermonter-poll/](http://spatializingmigration.net/impact-on-host-communities/vermonter-poll/)
Question #1

Are you in favor of resettling refugees in Vermont?

Vermonters For or Against State Resettlement

In favor (82.44%)
Against or unsure (17.56%)

SUPPORT OF RESETTLEMENT

In the three years that this survey was conducted, a large majority of Vermonters expressed consistent support for refugee resettlement in the state.

A Closer Look

While over 80% of respondents expressed some level of support for resettlement, there are some differences in their preferences regarding the future directions of the program. In particular, there were some notable differences in the scale of resettlement preferred by different respondents.

Year by Year Comparison

Continuing state resettlement at the current rate of 350 individuals a year is consistently the most popular response, but there are significant changes in two other responses between 2015 and 2017: an approximately 10% increase in respondents who feel Vermont should increase resettlement capacity, and about a 10% decrease in those who opposed resettlement in the state all together.

http://spatializingmigration.net/impact-on-host-communities/vermonter-poll/
ISSUES OF PLACE

While refugees have been historically resettled almost entirely in Chittenden County and continue to be placed primarily in cities such as Burlington and Winooski, many of our survey respondents expressed a preference for resettlement to occur in more communities across the state.

Changes Over the Years

Most respondents have chosen "evenly across the state" as their top answer to the question of where refugees should be placed in Vermont.

A declining number of respondents have indicated a preference for refugees being placed primarily in Chittenden County.

The above responses speak to some of the differing ideas Vermonters have on refugee resettlement.

Between 2015 and 2016, we saw a significant drop in anti-resettlement responses, and a growing emphasis on available services.
The issue of who should be most for helping refugees once they arrive in their new homes represents the most evenly split of our responses.

ASSISTING REFUGEES

Federal and state government prove to be the most popular responses, while non-profits, local communities, city government, and refugees themselves all have a similar percentage of responses.

Changes Over the Years

In looking at the responses year by year, it is apparent that there is less emphasis amongst our respondents on the federal government as primarily responsible for resettlement, and more toward the roles played by local governments, communities, and non-profits.

The graph below represents other responses gathered outside of our given options. For the purpose of analysis, we grouped these responses by reoccurring themes.

While there is some variation in which entities should be responsible, there is a recurring sentiment that there needs to be some degree of collaboration between these various entities.
Among the many challenges to integration, 54% of respondents identified learning English as the most important.

CHALLENGES OF INTEGRATION

Among the many challenges to integration, 54% of respondents identified learning English as the most important.

Changes Over the Years

While learning English is consistently the most popular answer, there was a steady increase each year in those who feel that employment is the most important factor in successful integration.

The graph below represents other responses gathered outside of our given options. For the purpose of analysis, we grouped these responses by recurring themes.

Apart from those who believe all options are most important, we see differing opinions on the importance of culture, as there are some who believe refugees must adopt American culture and those who feel that maintaining refugees' own heritage is critical.

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