Over the past four 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 2018.

Vermont Resettlement

Since 1988, Vermont has resettled almost 7,500 refugees. This number continues to grow by approximately 300-350 refugees per year. In 2017, Vermont was projected to receive 300 in Chittenden County, and an additional 100 in Rutland, but was only able to resettle 224 refugees in Chittenden and 14 in Rutland.

Chittenden County

Nearly all of the refugees resettled in Vermont have been placed in Chittenden County. The largest groups coming from Bhutan, Bosnia, Vietnam, Burma, Somalia and several other African, European and Asian communities.

*Note: Rutland opened as a resettlement site in 2016 but closed in 2018 due to federal policies.

Vermont Resettlement by Country of Origin Since 2002

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/Karen, Somali, and Congolese have been resettled. Earlier large-scale resettlements in Vermont include Vietnamese (1980s) and Bosnians (1990s).
In the four years that this survey was conducted, a large majority of Vermonters expressed consistent support for Vermont refugee resettlement in some capacity. Among those supporting resettlement, however, there are variations on the rate at which refugees should be resettled in the state.

**SUPPORT OF RESETTLEMENT**

In the four years that this survey was conducted, a large majority of Vermonters expressed consistent support for Vermont refugee resettlement in some capacity. Among those supporting resettlement, however, there are variations on the rate at which refugees should be resettled in the state.

**A CLOSER LOOK**

While over 85% of respondents expressed some level of support for resettlement, there are differing views regarding the future directions of the program. In particular, whether resettlement should continue at a higher or lower rate.

*Note: Vermont is on pace to resettle far fewer than the approved 300 for FY18 due to significant changes to the USRAP across the entire country (approximately 65 individuals resettled so far).

**Year by Year Comparison**

Continuing state resettlement at the current rate of approximately 300 individuals a year is consistently the most popular response, but there are significant changes in two other responses between 2015 and 2018: more than a 13% increase in respondents who feel Vermont should increase its resettlement capacity, and an 11% decrease in those who opposed resettlement in the state altogether.

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 like Burlington and Winooski, many of our survey respondents expressed a preference for resettlement to occur in more communities across the state.

THROUGH 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 Vermonter have on refugee resettlement. Between 2015 and 2016, we saw a significant drop in anti-resettlement responses, and a growing emphasis on available services rather than job availability.

http://spatializingmigration.net/impact-on-host-communities/vermonter-poll/
The issue of who should be most responsible for helping refugees once they arrive in the US represents the most evenly split of our responses.

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.

**THROUGH THE YEARS**

In looking at the responses year by year, it is apparent that there is less emphasis among 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 graphic below represents other responses gathered outside of our given options. For the purpose of analysis, we grouped these responses by general reoccurring themes.

**Open Responses**

- All of the above (71.90%)
- Varying levels of government (10.74%)
- Non-government actors (8.54%)
- Government & NGOs (3.86%)
- Shouldn't receive assistance (3.03%)
- Anti-resettlement response (1.93%)

**Notes**

While there is some variation in which entities should be most responsible, there is an overall sentiment that there needs to be some degree of collaboration among all actors, or a "coordinated effort" as one respondent expressed.

Among the open responses categorized as "other", there were several references to refugee sponsors, dependency on individual circumstances, and not using tax dollars.

**Other Responses**

- "Conglomeration of many organizations and different people"
- "Everyone who was involved in placement is responsible"
- "Religious & nonprofits – no government involvement"
Among the many challenges to integration, nearly 57% of respondents identified learning English as the most important.

While learning English is consistently the most popular answer, there was a growing emphasis on employment as the most important factor for successful integration, particularly in 2017.

While the large majority of open responses believe all factors are equally important to successful integration, the next most popular answer includes English among several additional factors as most important.

As for the responses in our "Other" category, we see differing opinions on the importance of culture in integration, as there are some who believe refugees must adopt American culture compared to those who feel that refugees maintaining their own heritage is critical. A "welcoming" community in Vermont was also a popular answer.

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