

## REFUGEES LIVING IN INDIANA

This fact sheet offers a profile of likely refugees living in Indiana and describes their integration and contributions to the state over time, relying on data from the US Census Bureau's 2017 1-Year American Community Survey (ACS).<sup>1</sup> All refugees covered by this fact sheet were admitted to the United States between 1987 and 2017.<sup>2</sup> By 2017, more than half were naturalized citizens and most of the remainder had adjusted to legal permanent resident status. Like all refugees in the United States, refugees in Indiana arrived penniless but have integrated into their local communities over time.

- As of 2017, at least 18,600 refugees lived in Indiana. Sixty-one percent of these resided in the Indianapolis-Carmel-Anderson Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), 24 percent in the Fort Wayne MSA, 4 percent in St. Joseph County, and the remaining 11 percent in the rest of the state.
- The refugees' top five countries of origin are Burma (10,900), Vietnam (2,300), Bosnia (1,100), Russia (900), and Sudan (800). Some 47 percent are female, and 53 percent are male. About 82 percent are between 18 and 64 years of age, 12 percent are under 18 years old, and 6 percent are 65 years old or older.
- Indiana has both recently-arrived and long-established refugee communities. About 13 percent of refugees in Indiana have resided in the United States for less than 5 years, 27 percent for 5 to 9 years, 34 percent for 10 to 14 years, 22 percent for 15 to 24 years, and 5 percent for 25 years or more.<sup>3</sup>

**At least 18,600 refugees lived in Indiana as of 2017, with most arriving from Burma, Vietnam, Bosnia, Russia, and Sudan.**

**Almost half (46%) of refugees in Indiana have become US citizens, and Indiana-based refugees have 6,800 US-born citizen children.**

- Many refugees have put down deep roots in Indiana. Almost half (46 percent) of refugees in Indiana have become US citizens, and 54 percent are non-citizens. Twenty-three percent are married to US citizens. Refugees have 6,800 US-born citizen children. Sixty-eight percent live in mortgaged homes.

<sup>1</sup> This factsheet is based on a sample of 1.7 million likely refugees of the 2.3 million refugees admitted to the United States between 1987 and 2017, as recorded by the Department of Homeland Security. CMS identified likely refugees using the 2017 1-year American Community Survey (ACS). This large sample permits CMS to estimate the size and characteristics of likely refugees in key states. To do so, it compiled DHS statistics on refugee arrivals by country of birth and year of entry. It then used arrival data by birth country and year to select refugees randomly from corresponding cells in the 2017 ACS data. For more information see Kerwin, Donald. 2018. "The US Refugee Resettlement Program—A Return to First Principles: How Refugees Help to Define, Strengthen, and Revitalize the United States." New York: Center for Migration Studies. <https://cmsny.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/CCUSA-CRS-USCCB-US-Refugee-Resettlement-Report.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> The term "refugee" used here refers to status at entry.

<sup>3</sup> Percentages are rounded and might not sum to 100.

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- High rates of refugees have learned English: 41 percent of those age 5 and over speak English very well or only English, 18 percent speak English well, 31 percent speak a little English, and 10 percent speak no English.
- More than half of Indiana's refugees aged 18 or older have at least a high school education or its equivalent. Specifically, 13 percent of those aged 18 or older have a bachelor's degree or higher; 11 percent have attended college; 28 percent have a high school education or its equivalent; and 48 percent have less than a high school education.<sup>4</sup> These education levels will rise over time since 19 percent of refugees aged 3 or over are enrolled in school.
- In 2017, households with at least one refugee had median incomes of \$30,000, as compared to \$53,100 for the Indiana population as a whole.
- The median personal income of refugees in Indiana was \$20,000 in 2017, as compared to \$25,000 for the Indiana population as a whole.

**The majority of Indiana-based refugees have some English skills, including 41% over the age of 5 speaking English as their primary language or speaking English very well.**

**About 97% of refugees in Indiana in the labor force are employed. They are vital parts of the manufacturing, beauty, and food industries.**

- About 97 percent of refugees in the labor force are employed. Refugees living in Indiana work in a variety of industries. They are vital to the state's manufacturing, beauty, and food industries. The top 10 industries employing refugees, and refugees' top 10 occupations, are listed below in Tables A and B, respectively. Some 16 percent of refugees also work in skilled occupations, including some 600 in computer, mathematics, science, and

engineering occupations. Some 6.5 percent of those in the labor force are self-employed and, thus, employ others.

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<sup>4</sup> Percentages are rounded and might not sum to 100.

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<b>Table A. Top 10 Industries Employing Refugees</b>	
<b>Industry</b>	<b>Number</b>
Motor vehicles and motor vehicle equipment manufacturing	1,800
Nail salons and other personal care services	1,000
Warehousing and storage	1000
Electronic component and product manufacturing, n.e.c.	800
Animal slaughtering and processing	500
Restaurants and other food services	500
Services incidental to transportation	500
Miscellaneous manufacturing	Z*
Electronic /online shopping	Z*
Child day care services	Z*

<b>Table B. Top 10 Occupations of Refugees in Indiana</b>	
<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Number</b>
Laborers and freight, stock, and material movers	1,100
Personal appearance workers	1,000
Metal workers and plastic workers	1,000
Assemblers and fabricators	600
First-line supervisors of sales workers	600
Aircraft mechanics and service technicians	500
Janitors and building cleaners	Z*
Other production workers including semiconductor processors and cooling and freezing equipment operators	Z*
Radio and telecommunications equipment installers and repairers	Z*
Computer control programmers and operators	Z*

\*Z refers to numbers below 500.

**Source: Center for Migration Studies of New York 2019. Unpublished estimates based on 2017 1-Year American Community Survey data and Department of Homeland Security data on refugee admissions, 1987-2017.**