

Developing a Community-Wide Response to the Refugee Crisis

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City of
Evanston™

Evanston, IL

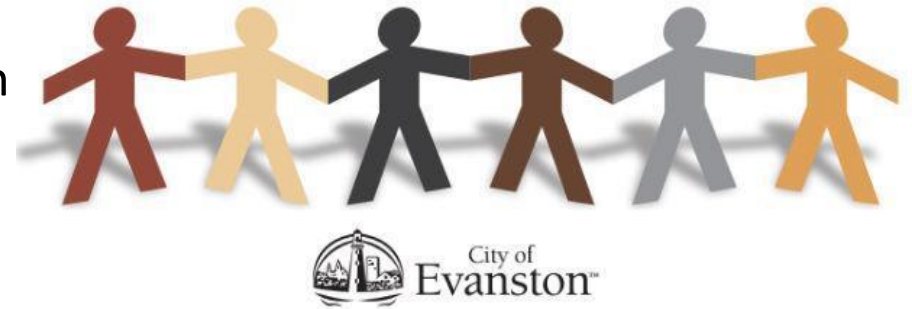


- Population = ~75,000
- Borders Chicago on the north side
- Home to Northwestern University & the world headquarters of Rotary International
- Vibrant community comprised of many strong neighborhoods, races, religions and levels of income.



Evanston Immigration

- Approximately 19% of Evanston residents are foreign-born
 - 20.5% from East Asia
 - 20.4% from Central American
 - 17.9% from Mexico
 - 13% from Americas Caribbean
 - 12.7% from China
 - 9% from Jamaica
 - 6.1% from India
 - 5% from Korea
- 38.4% of non-citizens entered U.S. after 2010



Chicagoland Refugees

- 40% of the more than 30,000 refugees who have been settled in the Chicagoland area since 2002 are from 7 countries affected by the travel ban
- Numbers since 2007:
 - 7,809 Iraqi refugees
 - 1,116 Syrian refugees
 - 798 Iranian refugees
 - 792 Somalian refugees



Source: Daniel Boczarski/Getty Images for MoveOn.org
<https://www.cheatsheet.com/culture/cities-with-the-most-banned-country-immigrants.html/?a=viewall>

Evanston Refugees

- Approximately 100 legal refugee students in Evanston schools
 - Not all households have school-age children
 - Not all refugees have legal refugee status; therefore, not counted in number above
- Sampling of countries represented: Syria, Iraq, Congo, Rwanda, Chad, Sudan, and Nepal



Source: Daniel Tian/Daily Northwestern

<https://dailynorthwestern.com/2017/02/03/city/evanston-task-force-formed-to-aid-refugee-resettlement/>

Evanston is a Welcoming City

- Original sanctuary city ordinance passed in 2008
 - Focused on practice of not challenging the immigration status for those seeking City services
- Welcoming City Ordinance reaffirmed and strengthened in December 2016
 - Modeled after Chicago ordinance
 - New wording that prohibits police and City employees from asking about immigration status
 - City officials are forbidden from reporting undocumented immigrants to federal government
 - Promotes welfare of residents and visitors alike
- School Districts 65 and 202 passed safe haven resolutions in 2016 to protect immigrant students and their families

Evanston is a Welcoming City

- Welcoming City resource page (2016)
- Welcoming signs campaign (2017)
 - English
 - Spanish
 - Chinese
 - French
 - Arabic
- Evanston Refugee Task Force (2016)



Evanston Refugee Task Force

- Initiated from City-School meeting – spike in refugee families resettled in Evanston fall of 2016
- Staffed by City’s Housing Policy and Planning Analyst
- Task Force includes:
 - Resettlement agencies: Catholic Charities, Heartland Alliance, RefugeeOne, and World Relief
 - School Districts 65 and 202
 - City staff from various departments
 - Northwestern University Center for Forced Migration Studies
 - Other area groups: Trilogy Behavioral Healthcare, Evanston Interfaith Refugee Roundtable



EVANSTON
TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL
DISTRICT 202



Additional City Efforts

- Evanston Public Library hosted an “Assisting Evanston’s Immigrant and Undocumented Community” panel in May 2017
 - Reached over 100 educators, administrators, health professionals and social workers who work directly with immigrant populations
- Health and Human Services staff attended 2-day training “Navigating Benefits for Non-Citizens”
 - Reviewed eligibility criteria for several benefit programs, with emphasis on non-citizen population
- Implemented a Volunteer Evanston campaign to connect schools and resettlement agencies to volunteers and resources



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New Challenges

- Some families no longer receiving assistance from resettlement agencies
- Communication between City and resident groups
- Lack of resources
 - Resettlement agencies' funding tied to number of families resettled
 - Under Obama, 110,000 refugees were allowed into the U.S.
 - Under Trump, number permitted cut in half to 55,000



Source: Brian Cassella/Chicago Tribune

<http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/immigration/ct-syrian-refugees-update-met-20170727-story.html>

Recent Case Studies

- Fire displaced refugee family
 - House for refugee family caught fire
 - EPD contacted Housing Policy and Planning Analyst
 - Family was connected with Health & Human Services Dept.
 - Children remained in D65 while temporarily living in Chicago
 - Outpouring of support from community to assist family
- Refugee family living in substandard housing
 - Back on Their Feet, a local resident group, reached out to City Manager
 - City staff met with local alderman
 - City inspected unit to address issues
 - Staff connected refugee family & Back on Their Feet with additional support from Evanston Interfaith Refugee Roundtable
- School transportation
 - Refugee family moved within Evanston
 - Needed transportation to old school to maintain connection with established network
 - Resident reached out to alderman
 - City staff reached out to contacts at school district to resolve the issue

Lessons Learned

- Continued need for housing assistance and supportive services
- Partnerships among both public and private entities are essential, including resident groups
 - Resident groups are sponsoring families
 - Northwestern University piloting COMPASS (Community Partnerships for Settlement Strategies) by conducting a workshop and focus groups in which City staff will help lead on October 12, 2017
- Utilize nontraditional outreach methods to connect with residents, e.g. social media

