

SECONDARY MIGRATION STUDY 2020

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FEBRUARY 2021

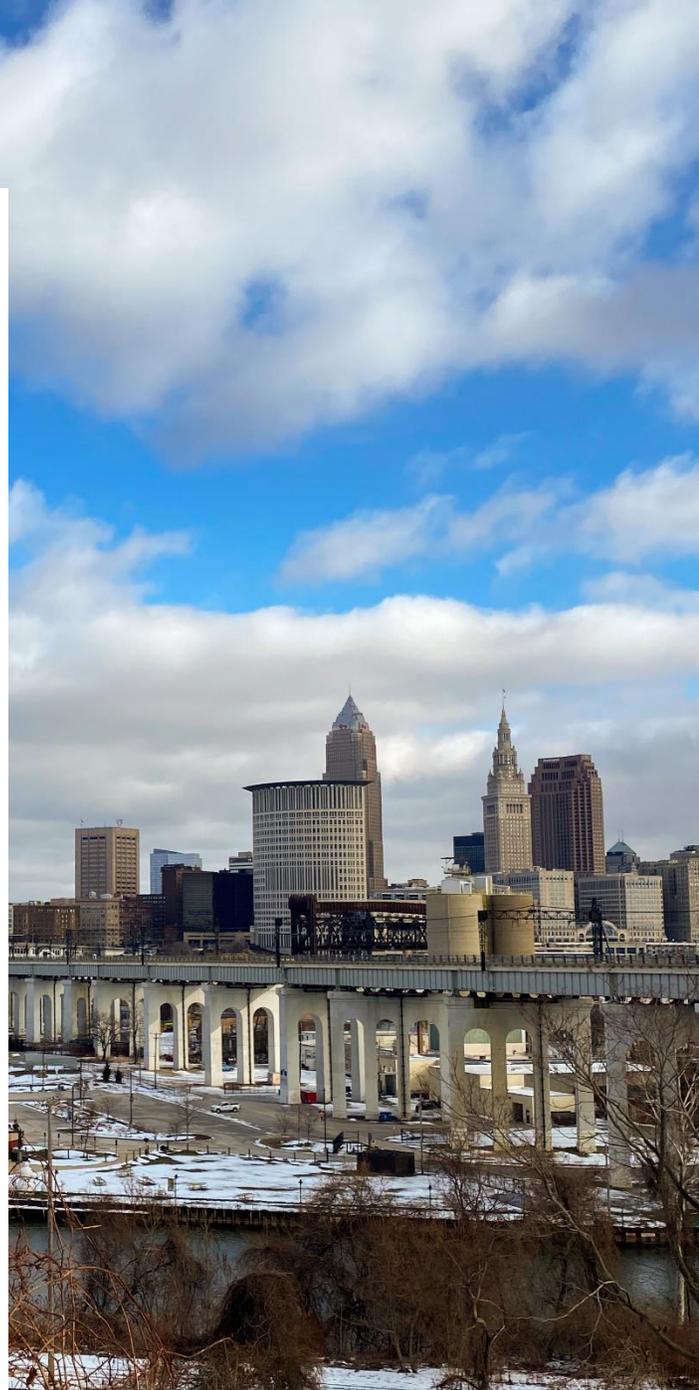


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INTRODUCTION

Background

Due to escalations of political conflict in recent years, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reports that the number of displaced persons has reached 1 percent of the world's population.¹ Those currently seeking safety in a host country include 29.6 million refugees, a term created by the 1951 Refugee Convention for people who are unable to return to their country of origin for fear of persecution for their “race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion.” Refugees who are unable to find safety or meet their needs in the country where they have sought protection may receive the opportunity to apply for resettlement through UNHCR, a process in which they are screened and transferred to another nation willing to admit them for permanent residence.

The United States has been a leader in receiving and resettling refugees, admitting over half a million individuals since FY 2011.² The populations resettled in this period have primarily come from Democratic Republic of Congo, Iraq, Bhutan, Somalia, Syria, Burma, and Afghanistan. The current standardized, federally-based system for resettlement was established under the Refugee Act of 1980 and provides funding to the nine domestic resettlement agencies for reception and placement services and assistance. This one-time program lasts 30 to 90 days after the refugee’s arrival and covers their initial basic needs and living expenses such as rent, food, essential furnishings, and climate-appropriate clothing. This period is immediately followed by short-term access to programs through the state or nongovernmental agencies for employment, English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes, and social services as well as medical and cash assistance. This assistance is provided with the expectation that the recipients will become self-sufficient as soon as possible and most often ends 8 months after arrival.

The resettlement system is designed with the intent that refugees will remain in their city of placement and integrate into the community, requiring support and assistance for only a brief period of time. Throughout the screening and resettlement process, reunification with family members already residing in the United States is given high priority. Representatives from the resettlement agencies meet regularly to individually review incoming cases and assign them to the agency and locality that would best suit their needs.

Despite these efforts, it is estimated per limited data from the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) that between 2012 and 2013 upwards of 17% of newly resettled refugees moved within eight months of arrival.³ This phenomenon is termed secondary migration, a refugee’s movement from the original state of resettlement to another state. Key indicators for secondary migration suggested by the current body of research are the existence of an established ethnic community, socioeconomic factors, educational opportunities, the possession of human capital, and access to social capital.⁴

Impetus for Study

Over 5,300 refugees have been resettled in Cleveland since fiscal year 2011 but this number does not represent the total refugee population in the region as it fails to account for the occurrence of secondary migration from other states. Per calculations based on ORR data tracking refugee movement, Ohio has been a top receiver of secondary migrants with in-migration exceeding 500 individuals per year.³ While refugees in the process of resettlement are carefully monitored before and at the time of arrival, movements afterwards are less consistently recorded and may underestimate actual cross-state migration.

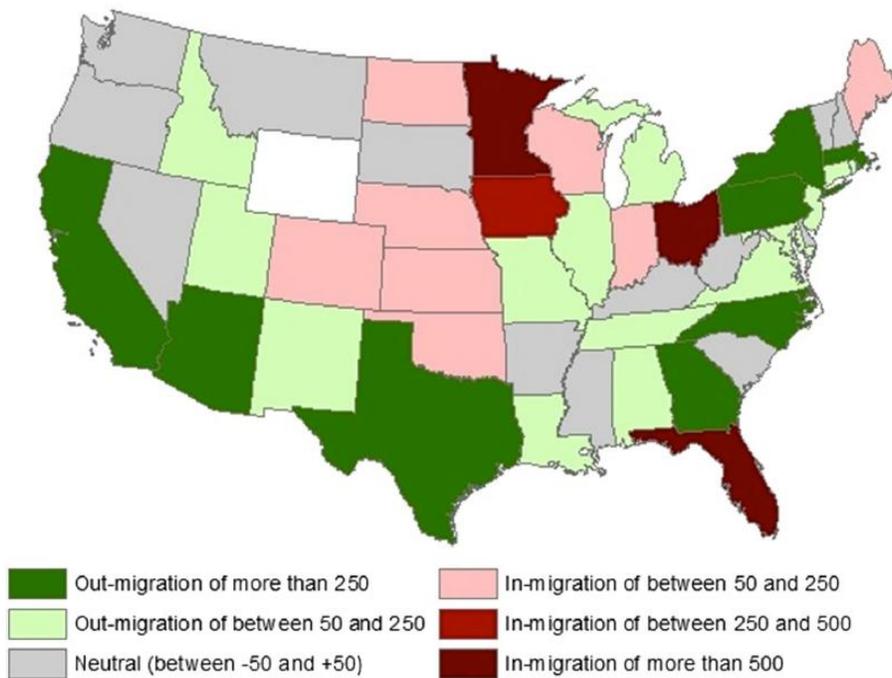


Figure 1. Net secondary migration, fiscal year 2013
From Bloem & Loveridge, 2018, p.236

Anecdotal evidence from those who provide services to refugees in Cleveland has indicated that a notable population of secondary migrants have long been relocating to the area. The Refugee Services Collaborative of Greater Cleveland (RSC) became interested in investigating why and how secondary migrants were being drawn to Cleveland in order to develop their ability to better support them in the future. As these individuals do not establish themselves in the region through the traditional structure and support from a local resettlement agency, service provision to the population can be more challenging and complex across multiple sectors. In this study the RSC has assessed the challenges, needs, and service gaps particular to secondary migrants in Cleveland through the perspective of refugee service providers as well as secondary migrants themselves.

Further questions posed by RSC for the secondary migration study:

- What is the scope of secondary migration to Cleveland?
- What factors influence the failure or success of secondary migration and how?
- How long after arrival does secondary migration usually occur?
- How can the RSC better support secondary migrants in the future?

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

Refugee Secondary Migration: Aggregate Data

In this analysis, we use US Census data, specifically the 2018 American Community Survey (ACS), to investigate the rate of secondary migration among refugees in several mid-sized metropolitan areas within the United States. One distinct challenge is that refugees are not directly identified in the ACS. Instead we need to impute refugee status based on information available in the ACS. We follow the methods developed by Capps et al. (2015) for imputing refugee status based on the year of immigration into the United States and the country of origin.⁵

The first step in this process is to determine the primary countries sending refugees to the United States each year. We use admissions and arrivals data reported by the Refugee Processing Center (RPC).² These data provide summary statistics on the countries of origins of refugees arriving in the United States. In each year we use the eight or nine countries that sent the most refugees to the United States to impute refugee status. For example, if an individual arrived in the US in 2018 and was born in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Burma, Ukraine, El Salvador, Afghanistan, or Bhutan then this method identifies the individual as a refugee.

This method for imputing refugee status is imperfect. It could be that some individuals report a birthplace on the ACS questionnaire that does not align with the origin nationality in the refugee arrival data. More generally, this process includes “omission error” by only identifying refugees from the top eight or nine origin nationalities. In any given year, this means that we are effectively only able to identify up to around 85 percent of all refugees. Additionally, the process includes “commission error” by falsely identifying non-refugees born in the listed countries who immigrate to the US in other ways. Importantly, the omission error rate and the commission error rate are negatively related. We could minimize omission error by adding in more countries to the list but this would increase commission error.

According to RPC refugee arrival data, the United States welcomed about 351,000 refugees in the years 2013 through 2018. Our imputation method identifies about 411,000 refugees. Therefore, our application of the method developed by Capps et al. (2015) leads to larger commission error than omission error.⁵

Metropolitan Area	(1) Total Population	(2) Secondary Migrants	(3) Total Refugees	(4) Share (2)/(3)
Chicago-Naperville-Elgin, IL-IN-WI	7,078,310	833	7,481	0.11
Cleveland-Elyria, OH	1,574,752	316	1,884	0.16
Columbus, OH	1,470,902	1,375	7,933	0.17
Denver-Aurora-Lakewood, CO	2,271,109	575	1,759	0.33
Des Moines-West Des Moines, IA	518,884	205	1,947	0.11
Detroit-Warren-Dearborn, MI	3,233,810	1,335	8,196	0.16
Indianapolis-Carmel-Anderson, IN	1,497,025	1,684	4,862	0.35
Kansas City, MO-KS	1,614,011	118	2,548	0.04
Louisville-Jefferson County, KY-IN	956,374	1,147	4,509	0.25
Minneapolis-St. Paul-Bloomington, MN	2,715,547	1,619	7,619	0.20
St. Louis, MO-IL	2,137,605	282	2,059	0.14

Notes: The estimates are weighted to represent the associated metropolitan area using the person level sampling weight. Source: Authors' calculations based on 2018 ACS data collected by the US Census Bureau, made available by IPUMS USA.

Table 1 reports estimates of the rate of secondary migration for the Cleveland-Elyria, OH metropolitan area along with several other mid-sized metropolitan areas across the midwest of the United States. Of the 1,884 refugees who have arrived in the US between 2013 and 2018 that currently live in the Cleveland-Elyria, OH metropolitan area, 16 percent are secondary migrants. This share of secondary migrants relative to the total number of refugees is not as high as the share in Indianapolis-Carmel-Anderson, IN (at 35 percent) or Denver-Aurora-Lakewood, CO (at 33 percent) and not as low as in Kansas City, MO-KS (at 4 percent). It is more similar to the share observed in Detroit-Warren-Dearborn, MI (at 16 percent), Columbus, OH (at 17 percent), Minneapolis-St. Paul-Bloomington, MN (at 20 percent), St. Louis, MO-IL (at 14 percent).

RSC Partner Data: Methodology

These data were gathered from clients served by RSC partners Catholic Charities Diocese of Cleveland Migration and Refugee Services, Building Hope in the City, and Neighborhood Family Practice. Catholic Charities Diocese of Cleveland Migration and Refugee Services is a refugee resettlement agency that also provides immigration legal services. Secondary migrant data were gathered from their case management system shared with The Refugee Response used for the Reception and Placement, Matching Grant, Preferred Communities, Refugee Social Services Program, Refugee Youth Mentoring, and Survivors of Torture programs. Building Hope in the City is a community organization which provided data from clients served at their Hope Center for Refugees and Immigrants. They provide ESOL classes, citizenship classes, employment assistance, immigration legal services, and economic development services.

Neighborhood Family Practice (NFP) is the primary healthcare provider for refugee resettlement agencies in greater Cleveland. NFP works with each agency to provide newly arriving refugees their two health screens at NFP's Ridge Community Health Center. The team is led by a refugee clinic coordinator and consists of medical providers, a nurse coordinator, medical assistants and a patient advocate. At the screening, refugee patients receive a health history, physical exam, blood work,

vaccinations, a visual screening, hearing test and mental health screening. These data were gathered using OCHIN EPIC, a non-profit EHR vendor serving community health centers. Data collection on secondary migrants was begun in 2016 and secondary migration details were confirmed for each refugee patient by reviewing individual medical histories for details documented during medical visits.

The three partner agencies contributed all known refugee client data to this study. The client was assumed a secondary migrant if evidence of a primary settlement location or a migration date was noted. The data were then paired, processed and cleaned. Consideration was given to those who had migrated to Ohio before secondary migration documentation had begun at all of the partner agencies, and clients who had migrated to Ohio before 2010 were excluded from the study. After exclusion of in-state migration and a more limited timeline, the data set was more limited. The final dataset is shown below in Table 2.

Table 2

Partner Organization	Secondary Migrant
Building Hope	776
Catholic Charities	356
NFP	133
Grand Total	1,265

RSC Partner Data: Limitations

Country of origin may denote the country where a client was born, or the last known country of residence before entry into the United States. This study includes data from refugee, immigrant, and asylees clients that were documented as receiving services from the partner agencies, rather than limiting to those with formal documented refugee status. The data set was then cleaned for accuracy and completion. Refugees with a primary settlement location within Ohio were excluded.

The data set most likely contains a significant number of duplicate refugees seen between partner agencies, but it was not possible with the information available to identify duplicate values with the unique identifiers available. Refugees without a known date of birth are assigned one of January 1 of the year they were born. This created challenges in matching clients between data sets as data collection methods were varied and incomplete among all three organizations. The data that were contributed to this study was collected primarily for internal use at the partner agencies, not for purposes of this specific study. As such there are inconsistencies in the way the data were collected and clients may have been excluded from the study that had a secondary migrant status.

RSC Partner Data: Overview

The dashboard below was compiled using the partner agency data and Power BI, a business analytics service by Microsoft. Of the original data provided by the partner agencies, 1,266 secondary migrants were identified as meeting all considerations for this study.

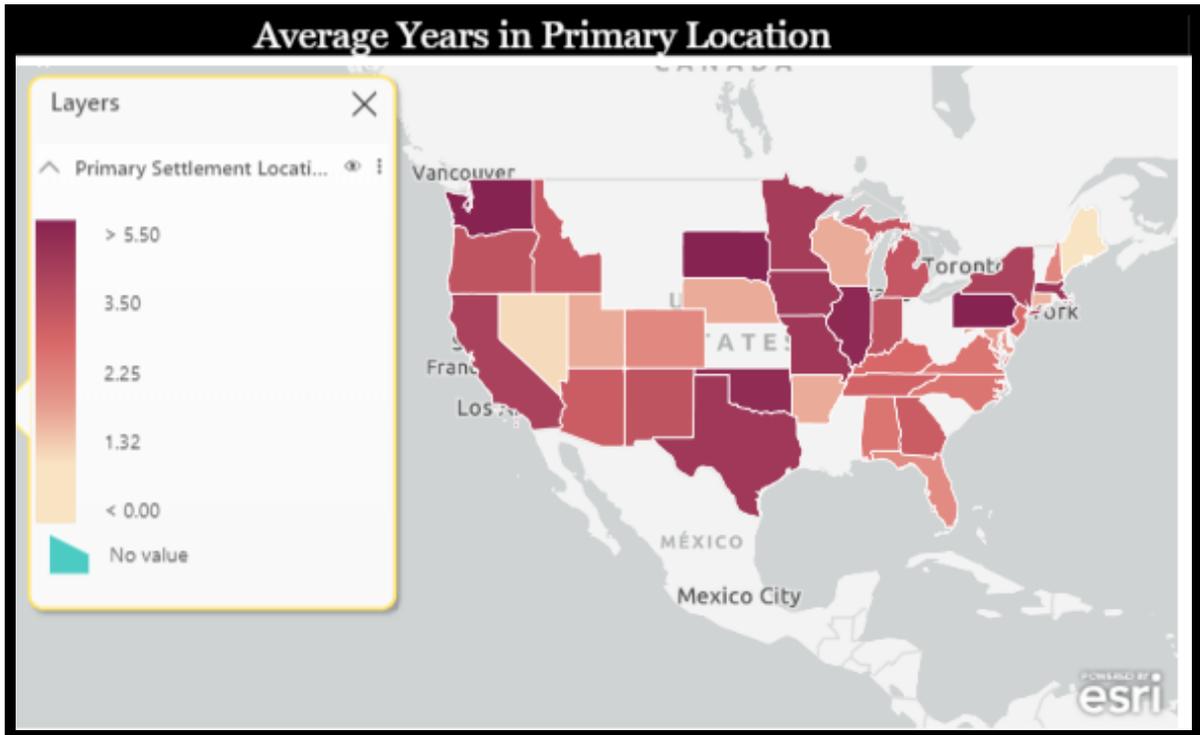


Figure 2

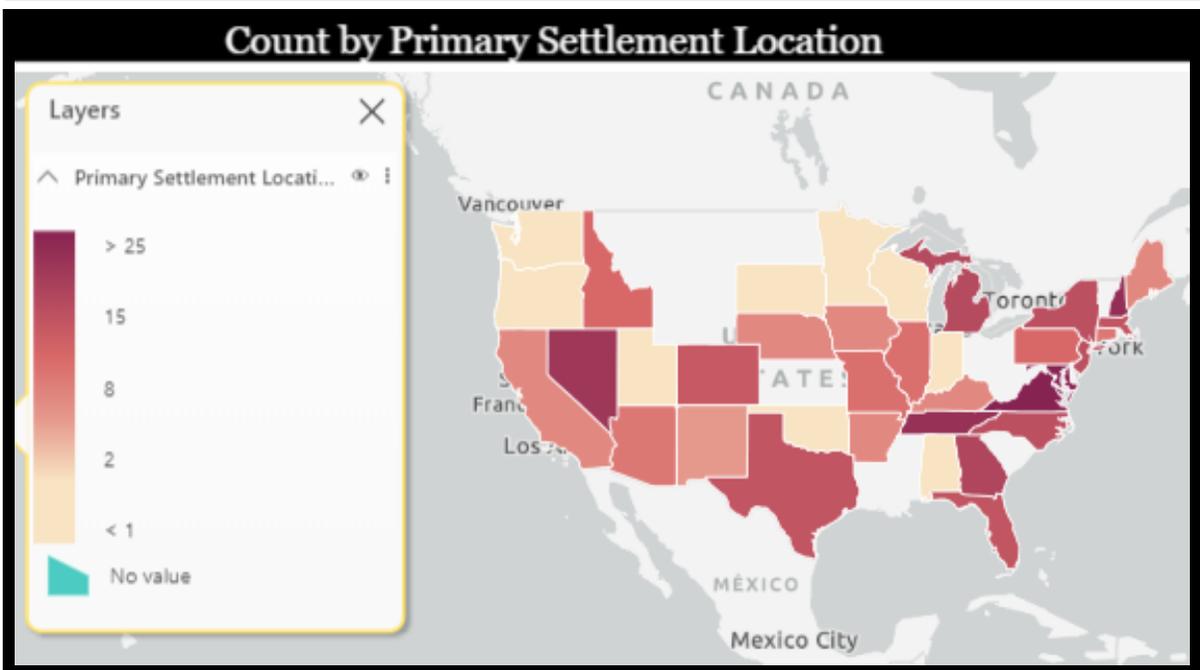
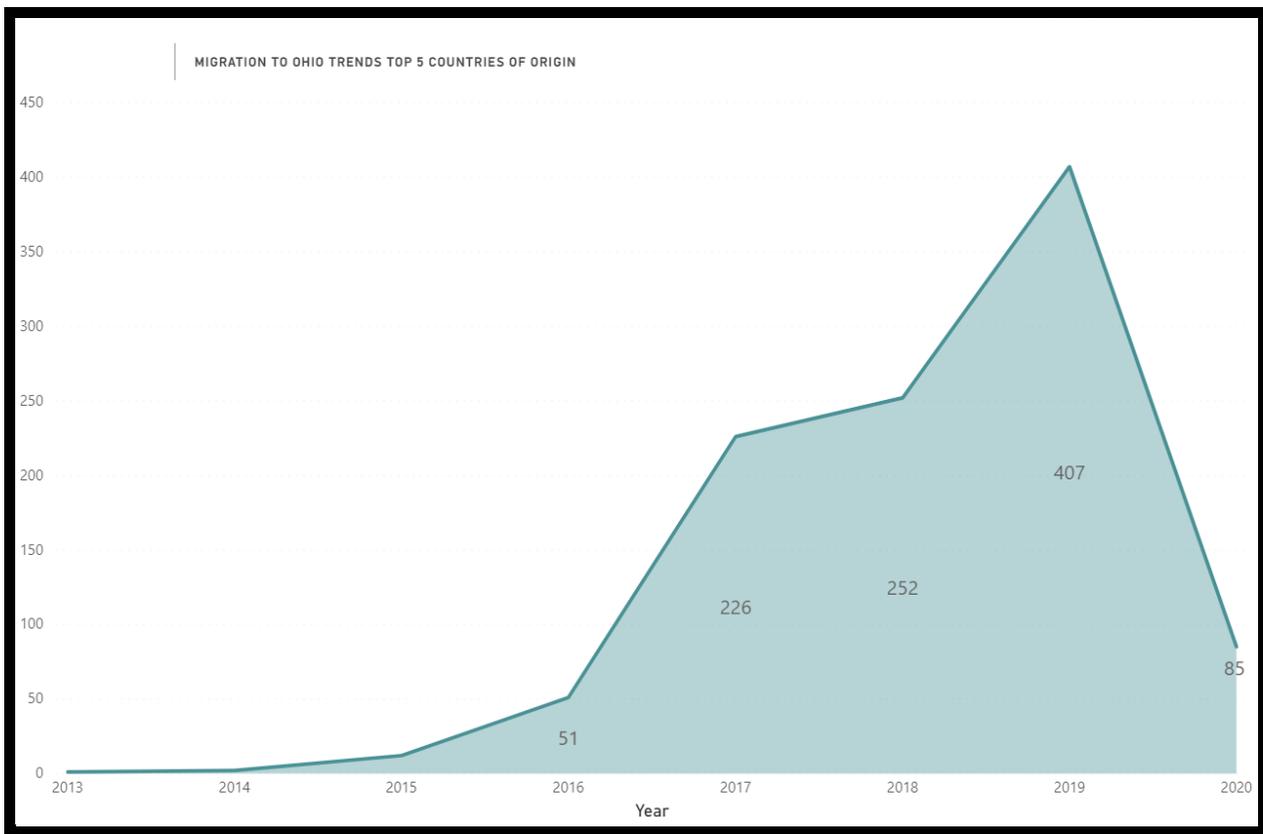


Figure 3

The heat maps above represent the average number of years an individual spent in their primary settlement state (top), and the count of secondary migrant clients from any given primary settlement state (bottom). Darker red denotes a higher concentration, while lighter yellow represents a lower concentration. 328 clients had enough data available to calculate the time spent in their primary settlement location, while 386 clients had enough data contributed to the study to confidently map the primary settlement location. On average, it was found that clients spent an average of 2.41 years in their primary settlement location before moving to Ohio. 1,047 clients had their migration date to Ohio documented, and the trend of their arrival date is noted below.

Figure 4



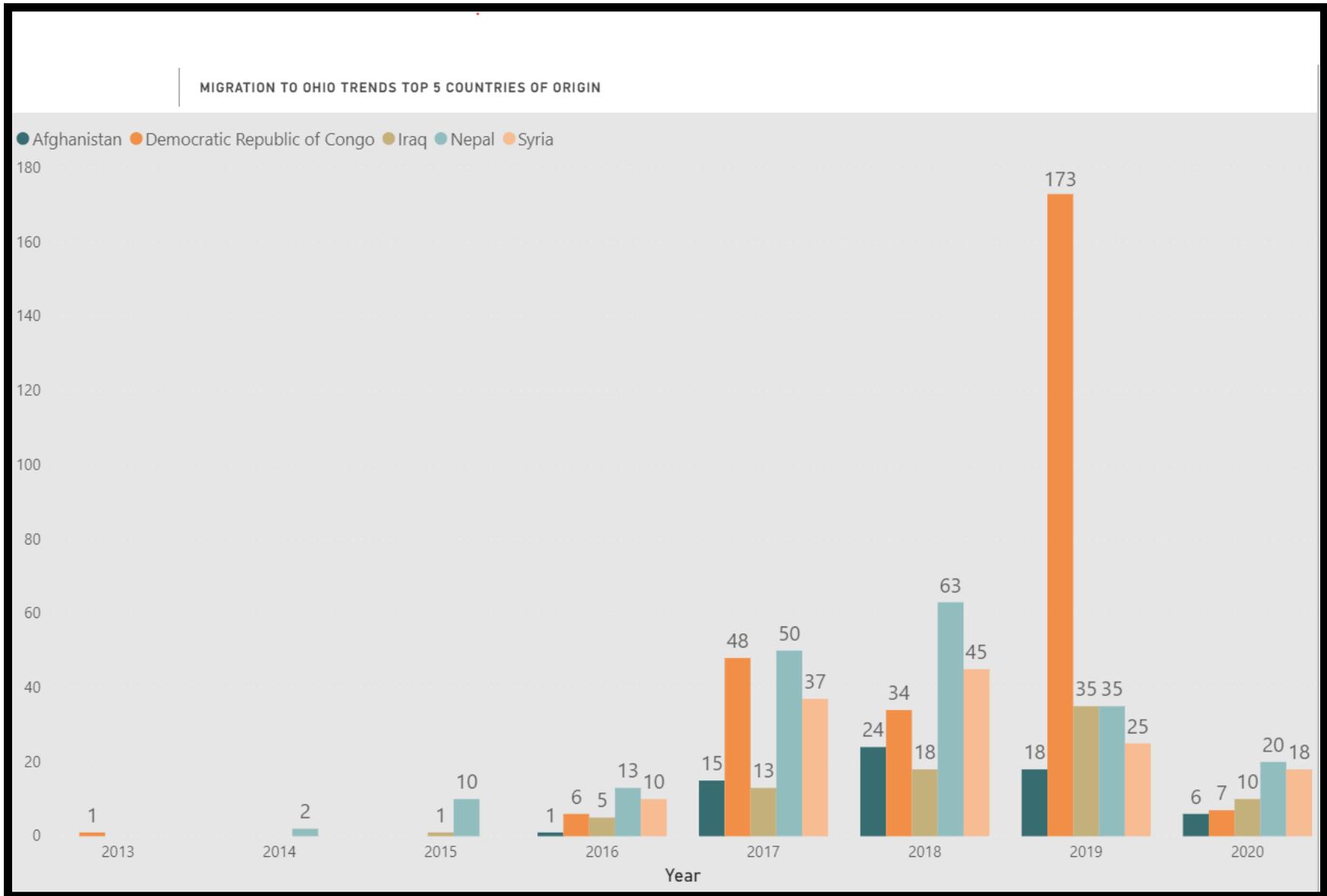


Figure 5: The top 5 unique client nationalities and the years in which they migrated to Ohio

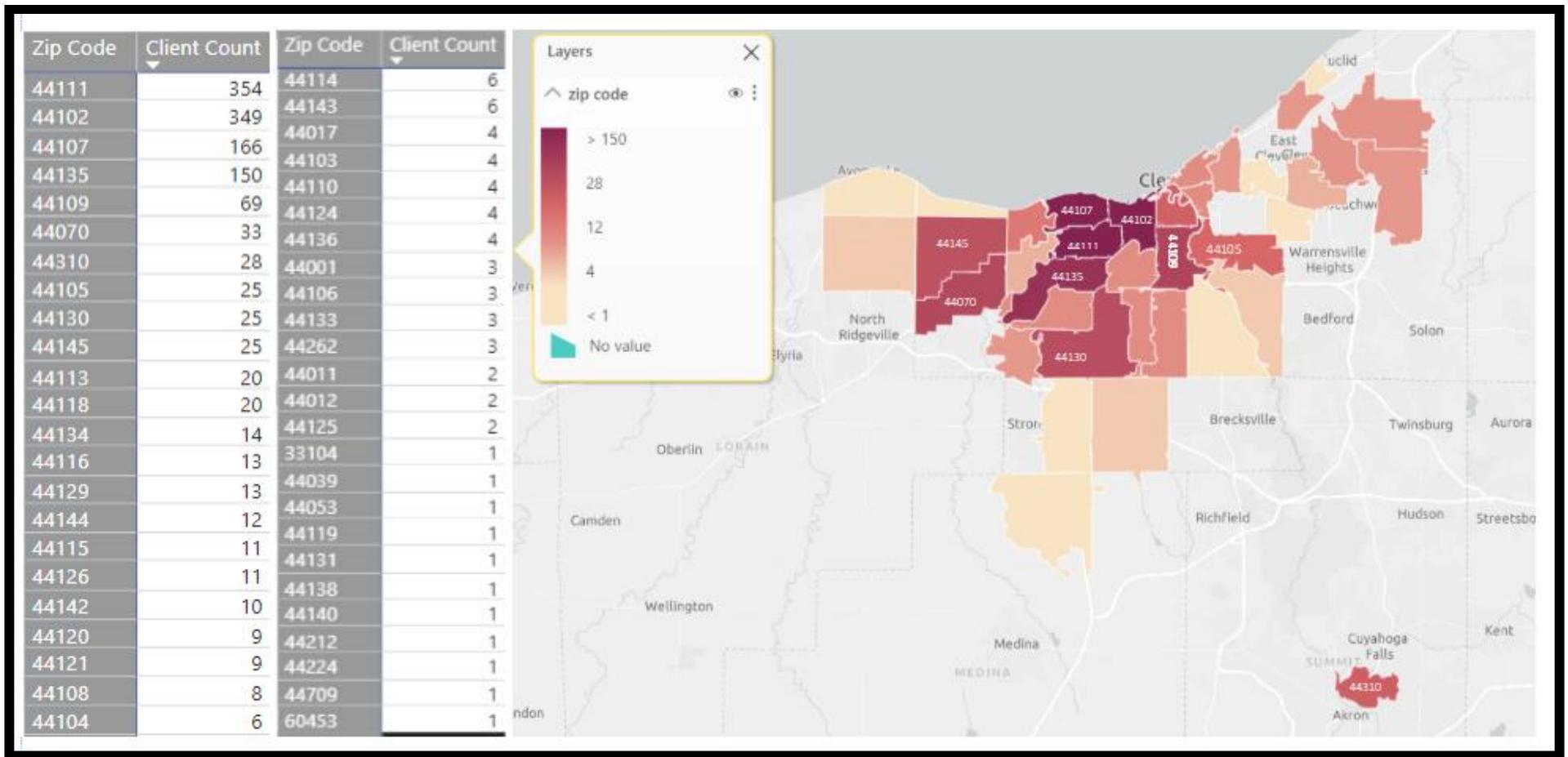


Figure 6
 Above is a heat map and list of all last known addresses of secondary migrants in the greater Cleveland area. There are 1,441 known addresses, 1,339 of which are in Cleveland. Greater concentrations are denoted by a darker red area, while lighter yellow shows areas where there are less known secondary migrants.

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

Research Methodology

As the central element of the study was to develop an understanding of the interviewees' own experiences with secondary migration, we used a qualitative descriptive approach in conducting a series of interviews. This method is best for exploring secondary migration in context because it is designed for building a detailed description of the events and factors within a particular social phenomena from the perspective of those directly involved.⁶

The findings of this report are based on two cohorts of interviews, one with service providers and the other with secondary migrants. Twenty-two total interviews were conducted with two interviewees qualifying as both secondary migrants and service providers. These individuals were included in both data sets for analysis, resulting in totals of 12 interviewees in the service provider cohort (4 male, 8 female) and 12 interviewees in the secondary migrant cohort (7 male, 5 female).

Service provider interviewees were recruited from partner organizations within the RSC. This cohort was asked what populations their organizations served most and least often, whether or not they were serving secondary migrants, where secondary migrants they served were from, how soon after arrival they saw clients move, what drew clients to and away from Cleveland, what needs secondary migrants had and how they differed from those primarily resettled in Cleveland, what the biggest challenges were in serving secondary migrants, and where they were referring secondary migrants for services.

Secondary migrant interviewees were recruited within populations served by the RSC and compensated with \$25 Visa gift cards. Interpreters were used for three of these interviews. Two interpreters were hired through Catholic Charities Migration and Refugee Services and one interpreter was a close family member of the interviewee. This cohort was asked about the circumstances of their resettlement, what their experience was like in their resettlement city, when and why they moved to Cleveland, how the move occurred, how they found resources and employment, what support they had, what challenges they encountered, how their life is now, and how they felt about their decision to relocate.

Efforts were made to recruit a study population representative of the nationalities currently most frequently served by the RSC per the data provided by RSC partners, as described in the tables below.

Table 3: Secondary Migrant Cohort

Country of Origin	N
Bhutan	3
Myanmar	1
Democratic Republic of Congo	2
Iraq	2
Somalia	1
Sudan	1
Syria	2
Total	12

Table 4: RSC Partner Data: Nationalities of Clients

Country of Origin	Client Count
Democratic Republic of Congo	384
Nepal	200
Syria	170
Iraq	95
Afghanistan	67
Somalia	60
Sudan	48
Myanmar	32

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all interviews were conducted over Zoom either with or without video and lasted 30-60 minutes. Both researchers involved in the qualitative portion of this study were present for all interviews. The interviews were recorded, transcribed, and entered into the qualitative analysis software Dedoose for coding.

We built a set of codes for both cohorts based on the major themes and phenomena we had noted while conducting and transcribing the interviews. Some codes were distinct to one cohort, such as referrals and demographics served for the service provider cohort, but most were shared between both cohorts as there was a wide breadth of shared concepts and observations. The codes included motivations for moving, services sought from providers, community groups, employment, service gaps, challenges, etc. Additional rounds of coding were completed to integrate new codes conceived in the course of analysis. Filters were applied so that each cohort could be isolated for individual analysis.

Limitations

The secondary migrant interviewees skewed toward a high level of capacity for speaking and understanding English with 7 participants speaking with at least moderate fluency. Conversely, no interpreter was used for two interviewees who spoke English with poor fluency; therefore, they struggled to fully express themselves at times and some meaning may have been lost or misconstrued. This cohort also skewed toward people with close relationships with RSC service providers, particularly Catholic Charities Migration and Refugee Services as one researcher was an employee of the agency and interviewees were recruited through RSC contacts in the community.

The service provider cohort's experiences of secondary migrants may have been weighted toward those with the least resources and highest needs versus the people who migrate without as much need for help and thereby seek services less often. It is also important to note again that two participants had both professional and personal experiences with secondary migration.

QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

Motivations for Secondary Migration to Cleveland

We found that almost every secondary migrant we spoke with came to Cleveland with a prior connection living in the area, with the sole exception of one individual who had been living in another state but came to Cleveland to receive a spouse who was being resettled here for specialized medical treatment. This connection was often extended family but sometimes a friend or a partner from the same ethnic background or language group, and the connection was mentioned most often as the top reason for a move. Interviewees talked about the good experiences their connections had in Cleveland that made them feel confident in making the move themselves, and in almost all cases told us that they had invited others to come to Cleveland since their own move. Our qualitative analysis of interview data found that a connection person was mentioned nearly twice as often as the next highest motivations for moving (18 mentions vs 10 and 9) which were a tie between cost of living and housing, community feel, and employment.

“We have a peace in Cleveland, that my people like to come here. They asking me, how about Cleveland? I tell them no, come! Come to Cleveland! Is good place, yeah. There is peace in Cleveland. There is good rent in Cleveland. There is what, people go to like Saturday, people go to beach. They go anywhere.”

Many secondary migrants we interviewed or heard about from service providers made the move to Cleveland from areas with a much higher cost of living (ex: Seattle, New Jersey, New York City, Boston, Portland) and were drawn to Cleveland by hearing from their connection that it was possible to work, rent a home, and also save for larger purchases like a car or home in Cleveland. Low satisfaction with the affordability of living in their previous city increased their willingness to relocate; however, improved cost of living was discussed as a motivation secondary to the presence of a connection person.

“Here [in Cleveland] the life is so [much easier than in] New Jersey. Here you can buy house from your income, you can buy cars, you can have everything you want because it’s lower. The [cost of] everything is lower. And here there’s more jobs than New Jersey. New Jersey is beautiful to rich people, not to us.”

Additionally, there was discussion of access to public benefits not as a primary motivator but as a positive of moving to Cleveland. Interviewees spoke of lack of access to the public benefits offices and extended wait times for approval for Medicaid, SNAP, and cash assistance in their states of initial resettlement. Some lived in states that had not elected to expand Medicaid and therefore went without health insurance. They were pleased to find that they could qualify for coverage in Ohio.

“Ohio is good, is good to me. [Before coming] to Ohio I sick a lot. Ohio, she give me medicine, Ohio, she give me house, low income house, for benefits, she give me food and cash assistance, and my children --- they have a bus they going to school. Everybody. I’m happy.”

When asked about their reasons for choosing Cleveland, interviewees spoke of both physical characteristics of the community (city size, proximity of desired groceries/shopping/school/work, transportation, the beach) as well as demographic characteristics and a general feeling of belonging and familiarity due to the presence of certain community groups or characteristics that reminded them of cities where they had previously enjoyed living.

Employment was a motivating factor similar to housing in that interviewees talked about being under- or unemployed in their previous city as a reason to move to Cleveland where a family member or friend could connect them to better job opportunities. No individual said that finding a job in Cleveland directly precipitated their move; rather, they were considering Cleveland already due to a personal connection and then sought employment in the area.

Other motivating factors mentioned by secondary migrant interviewees included climate, childcare, quality education (primary and post-secondary), and specialized medical care.

Patterns: Trial Visits

Once a move to Cleveland was being seriously considered, most interviewees (8 of 12) said they then visited and began a type of trial period to determine whether or not the move would be permanent. The trial was either conducted by the individual themselves (N=5), the head of the household (N=2), or an immediate family member (N=1). Those who moved without conducting a trial period joined a close family member or romantic partner (N=4). Within this trial period, interviewees frequently noted prioritizing the search for housing and employment in planning relocation. Connections would often serve an instrumental role in helping the secondary migrant find housing and employment but, according to one interviewee, this responsibility was shared by the community. They reported that,

as the leader of a community group, part of their duties was to find housing for those who wanted to move to the Cleveland area.

The length of trial visits could last from 5 days to multiple weeks. Secondary migration occurs very rapidly after a successful trial period, often completed in a matter of days or weeks.

“I came here for 5 days... I moved to Cleveland for 5 days just to check the city out and to explore it, we talked with people already about housing, jobs, so I was able to set up everything and THEN I moved. I wouldn’t move without securing a job and a house. And my friend he really helped me a lot because he have a lot of connections at Ohio and he called someone who has houses over here and he talked to that guy and he said—we talked about the house, the rent, and we talked about jobs as well. So I was able to start the job and find the house right away when I moved.”

This interviewee indicated that secondary migration was more complex and involved for families, heightening the importance of the trial period. They felt that their five-day visit was sufficient time for them to plan for their needs only because they were a single person.

“I recommend they take the whole family and go visit for at least 10 -15 days, exploring, checking out schools, everything, exploring, making connections, and then decide whether it work for the family or not.”

Success in the trial period seemed to indicate success in permanently relocating and was strongly recommended by multiple interviewees to others who were considering secondary migration. These interviewees also shared cautionary tales of people they knew who had unsuccessful secondary migration experiences. They linked the failed attempts at permanent relocation to short trial visits, incomplete planning, and lack of consideration of the needs of the entire household.

“A couple of friends already talked to me--they are interested in moving here but I just said, you know, before you move you will have to know the situation because I don’t want you to move here and say I don’t want to live here anymore. That’s why just... take your time, come and visit first, a couple weeks, and see a friend that will tell you what’s accessible, like a job and what is available.”

Patterns: Key Characteristics for Success

Secondary migrant interviewees who did not require an interpreter and spoke English at a higher level of fluency generally reported fewer challenges and more success in secondary migration. These individuals did not report requiring as much support from their connections, community, or social service organizations as those who spoke less fluent or no English. These individuals were also more likely to obtain their own vehicle sooner. This is particularly significant as transportation was frequently mentioned as a challenge and a barrier by most interviewees (N=9). Interviewees who were able to migrate most independently spoke of a high need from others in their community for interpretation and transportation and often volunteered their time and vehicle to assist others.

“There was a family here in Cleveland and they have little kids and they don’t speak English very well. So I get to know them uh when I was interpreting other, their neighbors actually, and they came to visit the house when I was there. So then after I finished my job they were talking to me about how they had a real hard time going to county’s offices because they don’t drive and they have kids. And I told them that I give them my phone number, I say my phone number and they calls me when to take them to different places, help them.”

Patterns: Connections and Community First

The role of the personal connection in Cleveland often served not only as a motivator for secondary migration but also the primary resource for support and assistance. Secondary migrant interviewees spoke of looking to their networks and communities as the first resources for help before seeking assistance from service providers. Strong support from a family or community member was described as instrumental in successful secondary migration with one interviewee even citing their English fluency and ability to volunteer assistance as the primary reason their community’s population grew in Cleveland. Though the service provider cohort reported help with public benefits as the most frequently sought service by secondary migrants, only five secondary migrant interviewees reported receiving assistance in the benefits application process from outside their community.

Service agencies were only contacted if there were needs the individual’s connections and community could not meet. Reasons cited for preferring assistance from one’s network and community included limited availability of services at agencies for secondary migrants, past negative experiences with agencies or non-community members, ease of language access, comfort level, and lessened feelings of vulnerability.

“It will be difficult for secondary migrant to go to the resettlement agency because they do not have the client’s name already there and usually caseworker already have a lot of clients. They don’t feel comfortable to support– or I mean the client don’t feel comfortable to get support from these caseworkers so they rely on community member who already be here who can work for them.”

When interviewees did connect to service agencies, they typically became aware of or were brought to the agency by their connection person. The breadth of the connections’ knowledge of the network of services available would directly influence the services accessed by the secondary migrant. The two interviewees who spoke of being most reliant on an agency were individuals with low English fluency, no transportation, and few resources for support in their local networks.

Challenges for Secondary Migrants

Secondary migrants have the benefit of not being completely new to the U.S. or to the process of settling in a new city--this is not their first time moving into a new apartment or starting a new job or school, but for many of them this is their first time doing any of those things in the U.S. without a resettlement agency’s direct assistance. In some cases, formal and informal community groups or individuals serve as the first level of support for new arrivals by assisting with the search for housing and employment, facilitating benefit applications, and so on. Our interviewees spoke about looking to their existing local networks and ethnic or language communities as the first resources for help before seeking assistance from service providers.

Secondary migrants possessing a high level of English language skills, having local connections with these language skills, and with access to other resources such as personal transportation were often able to make the transition fairly smoothly, while others who possessed few such resources or had quickly exhausted those available to them reported experiencing significantly more challenges upon arrival in Cleveland. These individuals lacking language skills and resources most often reported seeking services at agencies and organizations within the RSC upon arrival. Both our secondary migrant and service provider cohorts identified the following common challenges faced upon arrival of secondary migrants in Cleveland:

Transportation

A lack of sufficient public transportation in Cleveland and a subsequent need for personal transportation was mentioned often by both cohorts. Drivers education, a driver’s license, and a personal vehicle are common needs which link directly to an individual’s ability to obtain and retain employment as well as bolster the self-reliance of an entire household.

“It’s really hard for people to move from one state to another because some people doesn’t have their car and they have to ask for people, cause for me in Chicago we didn’t need a car or anything personal like that. Because we can take bus, train, it arrives in 5 minutes. So we didn’t have to wait that long so we could do our groceries and everything on time. And we could go, we could actually take public transportations and all that. But here, it takes a lot of time. I realize. People cannot really take public transportation when they are doing their shopping and all and taking their kids to daycare, they could have to walk 2 to 3 or 4 miles. I saw those people walking early in the morning to drop their kids off to daycare and go to work and pick up them and come back home by walking. And it’s really hard.”

Housing

Service providers highlighted a lack of knowledge surrounding the rental application and home buying processes and noted frequent instances of secondary migrants being taken advantage of by unscrupulous landlords or sellers. Both cohorts talked about the frustrations of navigating rental applications and finding landlords amenable to renting to the refugee population or those without credit or a solid rental history, as well as difficulties overcoming delays and disruptions of crucial utilities.

“House is the first one people get in trouble for. Like me right now, I wanna move to west side, to find house, because I move from another state is hard for me. They ask me many many question, why did you move, why what, too many why. The new landlord for the new house you wanna move to. They ask a lot. You have to apply for many question. Different to [a newly arrived refugee who] came directly to Cleveland and find house. They don’t know how they find house when they come [initially]... but when you been here but you wanna move to different state—they have to ask you too many questions.”

“Most of [the challenge] is for the housing, you can say. Imagine the owner, they never trust people. Especially if you are refugee and you just move here for a week, you do not have credit, you do not have a job. I find this most important for refugee secondary migrant; needs support a lot. For the benefits, it is ok to apply for it... you can take time. But for the housing, you cannot take time. Well if you take time, you cannot live in other people’s house for a month or two so usually for the secondary migrant refugee [they need] to get support from an agency.”

Language barriers

Without a high level of English language proficiency, secondary migrants are either reliant upon connections who can translate for them or the interpretation services provided at various agencies. This requires coordination, often results in delay of services, and interviewees spoke about instances in which they felt the level of interpretation provided at an agency was not sufficient. While a number of resources do exist in Cleveland for secondary migrants to gain and improve English language skills, this takes time and many individuals will still require interpretation support in situations requiring complex exchange of information such as applying for benefits, enrolling in school, completing important financial transactions, or receiving medical care.

" . . . English as a second language [can be challenging for other secondary migrants]. So it's really hard for them to talk to the county's office where they need to go to office to transfer everything from other state to different states you know. So somebody has to be there. And most of the interpreters isn't really translate everything for them. I've seen that too."

Lack of financial literacy

Interviewees reported situations in which they or secondary migrants they knew were unable to complete tasks related not only to banking and general money management but also paying and withholding taxes, understanding direct deposit of paychecks and how to read pay stubs, and building and maintaining credit. In some instances this lack of knowledge led to loss of money or significant temporary hardships.

"[Secondary migrants in my community ask me for help with] just simple [things] like that, like the ATM machine, bank account. 'Oh I've been working for 6 months and they don't pay me.' How come!? It's America, they have to pay you. 'I go to my bank and they don't pay me!' Okay, let's go to the bank. Money was in savings and she didn't know, she didn't have any clue. She was suffering but money was in the savings."

"[At my new job] I see when they give me check there is no, there is no tax they cut. My friend because I know that the end of the year I can get problem with IRS. . . But I am working with them like a 1 month but all the check they give me there is not removing what the tax. They make me fear. I fear for that because I know in 2017 when I was working at [redacted], I have lost like 3 month where they not give me the tax and at the end of the month where I see the IRS give me the fine for \$3,000. That I fear now to work a company like that."

Family/domestic concerns

Common challenges included relationship instability in non formally married couples/families who might be moving together or separately, childcare needs, domestic conflict or violence, and lack of appropriate family shelters for those experiencing homelessness or violence. If a move is led by one family member (often a male head of household/primary wage earner) the rest of the family may not be in agreement about relocation or be best served by the move for reasons related to social support, medical care, education, or other factors.

Education

Secondary migrants may need assistance identifying which school is best for their children, enrolling children in a particular school of choice, or navigating the transfer from one school to another, all of which can cause disruption or delay in schooling.

Lack of support

A connection person who encouraged an individual or family to move to Cleveland may not be willing or able to follow through on promises of support offered to the secondary migrant. Without other local connections and resources within the community, individuals may need significant support from an agency.

Challenges to Service Providers

On average, secondary migrants tend to move well after the resettlement and placement period when they would be eligible for intensive support at a resettlement agency. Data from RSC partners on secondary migrants served shows that the average time from arrival to moving to Cleveland was 2.41 years. On average, interviewees moved 2.1 years after original resettlement. Interviewees who spoke of being most reliant on an agency were those with very low English fluency, no transportation, and few sources of support in their local networks. In these cases their local connection person may have simply delivered them to an agency and told them they would receive help there.

Service providers stated that in their experience a secondary migrant may not seek this help or be connected to the agency until their situation is urgent, which can mean significant direct case management time is required to untangle needs such as closing old benefits and opening new ones, securing suitable housing, enrolling children in school, sorting out financial situations, and ensuring individuals are back on track on their immigration pathway if they have fallen behind. Since service providers are by default seeing these secondary migrants who have the highest needs, the providers we interviewed are unlikely to have had significant encounters with secondary migrants who moved to Cleveland without difficulty. By this logic, it is also possible that particular demographics whose co-national communities have acquired less wealth and resources are more frequently represented in the secondary migrant population seen by service providers.

Service Gaps for the Secondary Migrant Population

These gaps were noted by interviewees in the service provider and secondary migrant cohorts:

- Housing support for finding rentals, engaging with landlords, and understanding the processes for renting or purchasing a home
- Drivers education
- Support for families/women/children, specifically related to domestic violence situations, women's health concerns, family/spousal mediation, and childcare resources
- Financial education, including paying/withholding taxes, banking, credit, paychecks/direct deposit, etc.
- Mental health resources
- Employment support

Areas of Opportunity for the RSC

As we look to the future of refugee resettlement in Northeast Ohio, it is clear that any framework for welcoming newcomers must also take into account the arrival of secondary migrants. As primary resettlement numbers increase we expect to see secondary migration increase in parallel, so organizations that work with this population will need to work strategically to leverage existing resources and strengths as well as plan to increase support for secondary migrants at the same time as they are building support for more primary arrivals. This study has allowed us to identify several key areas of opportunity for the RSC in this endeavor:

Improved connections between RSC members and client community groups

Our data highlights the importance of fostering connections between service providing organizations and agencies within the RSC and the formal and informal groups which are providing support within RSC clients' communities. Such community groups are able to provide the most culturally appropriate support, react quickly to urgent needs, and are able to identify secondary migrants when they first arrive (in many cases even during a trial visit). Working directly with these groups to identify secondary migrants who may be most vulnerable or in need of support and identifying problems before they become more complicated or severe is key to providing services to the secondary migrant population while using limited resources wisely.

Increased knowledge-sharing

In interviewing service providers from within the RSC, it became clear that we can improve the ways we share knowledge and resources within our group of agencies and organizations. Some newer providers were unaware of certain resources outside their own organization, and many providers seemed reluctant to discuss making referrals outside their own walls at all. They cautioned that certain service providers in the community may be better than others at offering services appropriately to the refugee population, and voiced concerns about making external referrals where refugees may not receive proper treatment.

A resource guide could be created and shared between RSC members, outlining the services provided by each member and also listing service providers outside our collaborative who have demonstrated their ability to serve the refugee community. As some agencies have experienced significant staff turnover in recent years and we anticipate the need to increase staffing as resettlement numbers grow, such a resource guide would be particularly valuable in training new staff members.

Provider training on secondary migration

By training staff to recognize the behaviors and processes associated with secondary migration, providers can better anticipate and support the needs of clients. When working with a client considering secondary migration, a decision to relocate may seem sudden to a caseworker who is not aware of the greater context. Relying on the client to report their intent to relocate shortens the preparation time to when the decision has already been made and the move is already underway.

A provider who is aware of the influence of connections and the importance of the trial period can recognize that a client's (or their head of household's) trip out of state may shortly be followed by secondary migration. The provider then has the opportunity to ask the client if they are considering moving and proactively discuss necessary preparations such as closing public benefits, withdrawing from school, collecting documentation, transferring medical records, identifying service providers in their new city, and completing an AR-11. Providing this support with patience may help the client make the best-informed decision for themselves and their family. It is also key to be strategic and not waste time facilitating steps towards relocation before the individual has finalized their decision, as individuals and families may complete trial periods in several cities before choosing one or deciding to remain in their current city.

Supplemental funding for secondary migrant needs

Given that there is currently no funding specific to refugee secondary migrants, this is an area in which outside funding could be sought in an effort to establish programming to fill the gap areas above as well as establishing emergency funds for critical needs such as temporary food and housing assistance, funeral costs, and so on. This support could help bridge secondary migrants into existing programming following their transition to Cleveland.

Advocacy

The Refugee Services Collaborative could work to develop a policy paper based on the insights from this research and connect with a range of advocacy-focused local and state agencies and advocacy networks with related interests to input policy points into existing structures while also adding to the versatility of these agencies.

Investments in further research

These areas of inquiry are of potential interest to the RSC but fell outside the scope of this study:

- Impacts on community agencies as well as systems of education, healthcare, homeless services, etc.
- Effects of refugee secondary migration on continuity of education and high school graduation rates
- What nationalities of secondary migrants are and are not seeking services and why
- Motivations for outmigration from Cleveland
- Patterns of in-state migration
- Impact of increasing resettlement numbers on RSC members' ability to provide services to secondary migrants

CONCLUSION

The United States' federal and state resettlement programs were designed to address the needs of admitted refugees by bringing an end to their movement with a stationary solution. The funding provided to resettlement agencies for programming and direct assistance comes with the expectation that refugees will quickly become locally integrated and economically productive. Existing research supports that refugees are net contributors to the economy on a local and federal level, with evidence of the positive impact being measured in the Cleveland area through RSC.⁸ Knowing the estimated prevalence of secondary migration, we can assume that it has an impact on the portion of this economic contribution gained by individual localities.

As a group comprised of many multifaceted communities, refugees in the U.S. are a dynamic population that moves, grows, and evolves over time. As is seen in many cities and certainly here in Cleveland, migration begets migration—secondary migrants are not moving at random; they are moving to a location where a prior connection lives and has had a good experience. As more people in our client communities become rooted in Cleveland, their connections will continue to migrate here as well. If the goal of the RSC is to work together to support resettled refugees and empower them to live their lives as they would like, we must understand that this includes supporting a refugee's agency to move freely to better their circumstances.

A successful approach to providing services to this population must include knowledge of the decision-making processes involved in selecting a new city, an understanding of the challenges most often associated with a relocation, and a collaborative mindset that places working with formal and informal community groups and other organizations at the forefront of service provision. The many agencies a refugee becomes connected to over the course of resettlement and secondary migration become a framework that is strongest and most effective when characterized by open communication and collaboration for the common interest. A shift toward recognizing refugee resettlement as a long-term process that may cross state lines is more compatible with the reality of the post-arrival period and may act as a better lens for viewing our mission to serve this population.

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Formed in 2011, The Refugee Services Collaborative (RSC) links together a group of Cleveland-area organizations who serve the rising numbers of refugees resettling in Northeast Ohio. It includes the three Cuyahoga County refugee resettlement agencies and area school systems, healthcare providers, and community and faith-based organizations.

RSCCleveland.org

Aspire – Cuyahoga County Library	Global Cleveland
Asian Services in Action (ASIA)	Lakewood City Schools
Building Hope in the City	Neighborhood Family Practice
Cleveland Catholic Charities Migration and Refugee Services	Ohio Department of Job and Family Service Refugee Services
Cleveland Heights-University Heights School District	Ohio Options for Adults – Cuyahoga Community College
Cleveland Metropolitan School District	The Refugee Response
Cuyahoga County Job and Family Services	U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants
El Barrio (The Centers for Families and Children)	US Together, Inc.

Funding provided by:

