



# REFUGEE SERVICES OF TEXAS

*Open Hearts.  
Fresh Starts.*



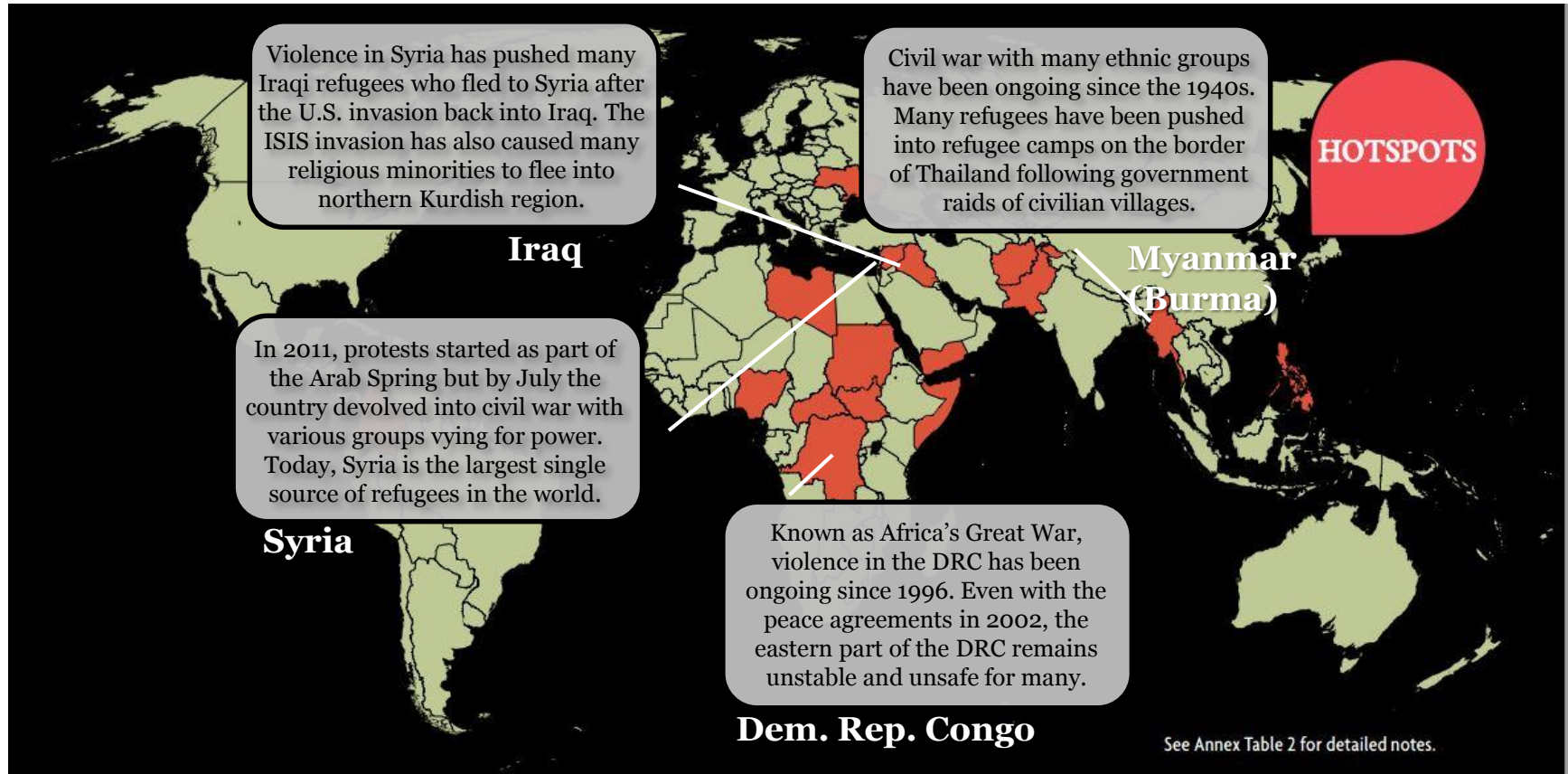
Photo by Sebron Snyder

# Who are Refugees?

A **refugee** is someone who has been **forced** to leave their country, their lives, and their belongings in order to escape war, **persecution**, or natural disaster.



# Where are they from? Why are they fleeing?





# The Crisis in Numbers

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- 59.5 million forcibly displaced worldwide
  - 19.5 million refugees
- Number of individuals displaced daily
  - 2014: 42,500 – increased four-fold in four years
- 51% of refugees are under the age of 18
- **Worldwide displacement is at an all-time high**



# Syrian Refugee Crisis

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- Over 4 million registered Syrian refugees
  - 75% are women and children
- Countries of asylum -> Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey & Egypt
  - Borders are now essentially closed
- Refugees who make it to countries of first asylum:
  - Prohibited from working legally
  - Face extreme challenges accessing food
  - Lack of access to medical care
- Additional issues facing Syrian children refugees:
  - Exposure to trauma
  - Interrupted education
  - Contributing to household income by working
- The vast majority of Syrian refugees are “urban refugees”



# U.S. Syrian Pipeline

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- Since the Syrian conflict began 4 years ago, only 1,854 Syrian refugees have been resettled in the U.S. as of October 2015
- 18,000 Syrian refugees have been referred to USRAP via UNHCR
  - 5,946 Syrian refugees in the current pipeline
    - Of the 5,946 only 258 are travel ready
- National advocacy efforts have urged Obama to allow 10,000 Syrians into the U.S. in 2015



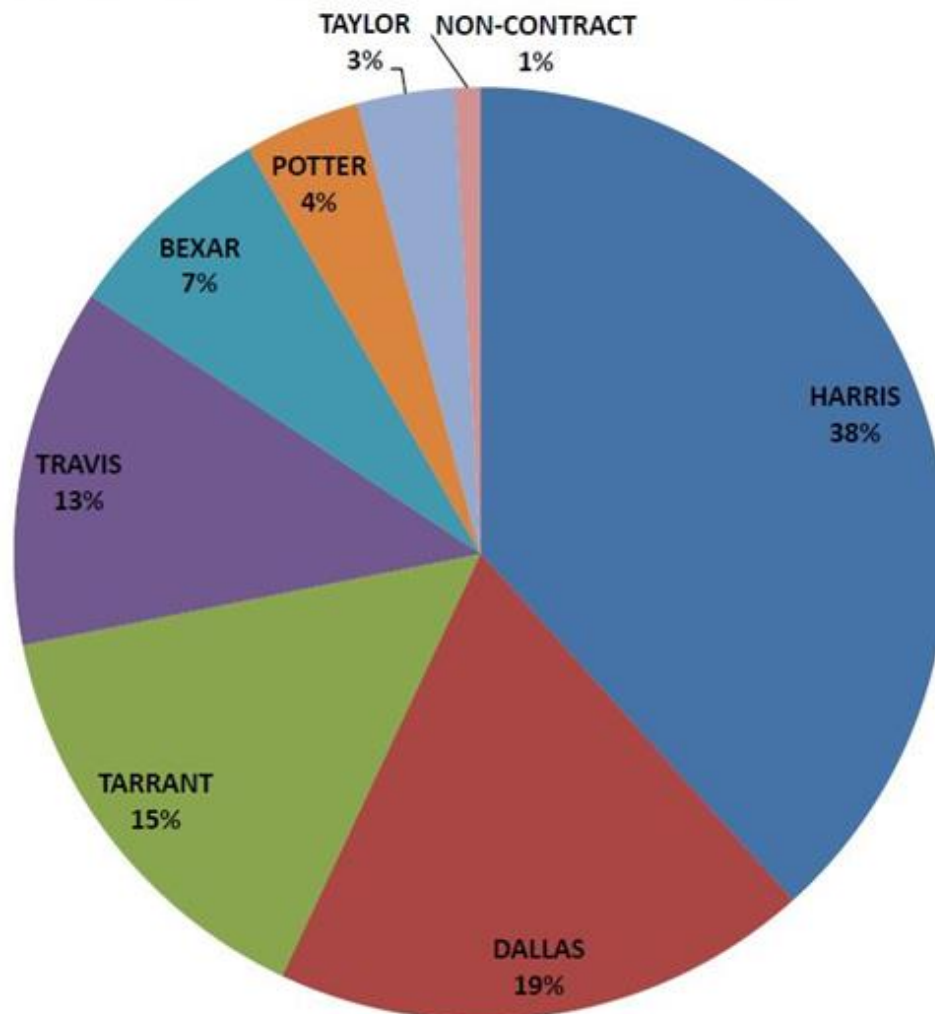
# Refugee Resettlement

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- Resettlement is the last option of three solutions:
  - Repatriation
  - Local integration
    - 86% of refugee hosting countries are developing nations
      - 30% of refugees are in Turkey, Pakistan & Lebanon
        - » Followed by Iran, Ethiopia, Jordan & Kenya
  - Resettlement
    - 0.5% of refugees went through resettlement in 2014
- 26 countries have resettlement programs
  - U.S. resettles 80% of refugees: 70,000
    - Texas is the largest resettlement state: 7,200
      - RST is the largest resettlement agency in TX: 2,000
        - » Tarrant County is 3<sup>rd</sup> largest resettlement county in TX

# Tarrant County Refugee Resettlement

Texas Refugee Health Program Arrivals by Resettlement County, CY2014





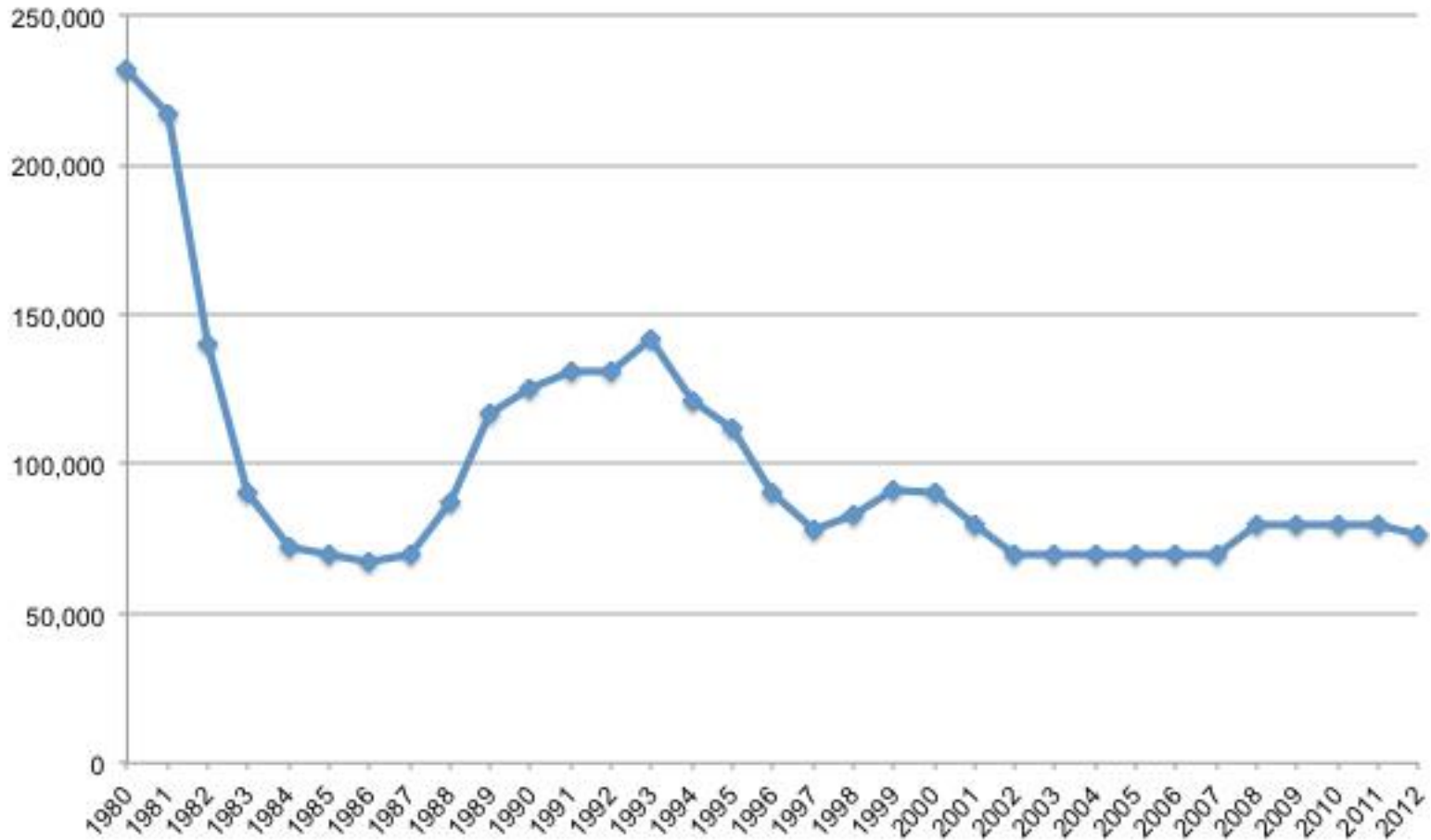


# History of U.S. Resettlement

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- Refugees have been coming to our shores since the pilgrims fled religious persecution
- U.S. Congress enacted the first refugee legislation in 1948 following the admission of more than 250,000 displaced Europeans from World War II
- Refugee crisis responses:
  - 1979: U.S. resettled 111,000 Vietnamese refugees
  - 1980: U.S. allowed another 207,000
    - Around the same time, the U.S. took in more than 120,000 Cuban refugees, including 80,000 in one month alone
- U.S. refugee arrivals by year:
  - 2000: 72,515
  - 2002: 27,110
  - Since then it has slowly increased and eventually remained at 70,000
  - 2015: 85,000 + 10,000 Syrian refugees

# Past Ceilings for U.S. Arrivals



# The Journey to America



## UNHCR Identification and Referral

Refugees flee violence and persecution. They arrive in another country, residing in refugee camps or in urban environments. UNHCR determines the best durable solution for each refugee family, including possible resettlement to a third country like the United States. UNHCR will then submit referrals to the US for potential resettlement.



## Refugee Processing Interviews

The US State Department contracts organizations to manage Resettlement Support Centers (RSC) around the world. These RSCs process refugee applications submitted by UNHCR. CWS currently operates the RSC Africa, which manages all resettlement applications in sub-Saharan Africa.



## Refugee Adjudication Interviews

United States Citizen and Immigration Services (USCIS) officers travel throughout the world conducting interviews of refugee applicants. Once a file is prepared by an RSC, the USCIS officer will interview the refugees in person to approve or deny their application for resettlement based on US immigration law.



## Cultural Orientation and Preparation for Travel

Refugees that are approved for admission to the US will receive a medical examination as well as cultural orientation classes. Refugees in some areas may also be eligible for ESL training and specialized cultural orientation classes.



## Reception in the US and Introduction to Local Communities

Each refugee family that enters the US is pre-assigned a resettlement agency that will meet them at the airport. A resettlement agency caseworker will then bring the refugees to their new home that has been furnished with necessities prior to their arrival. Refugees will then work with their caseworker to find a job, learn English, and integrate into their local communities.



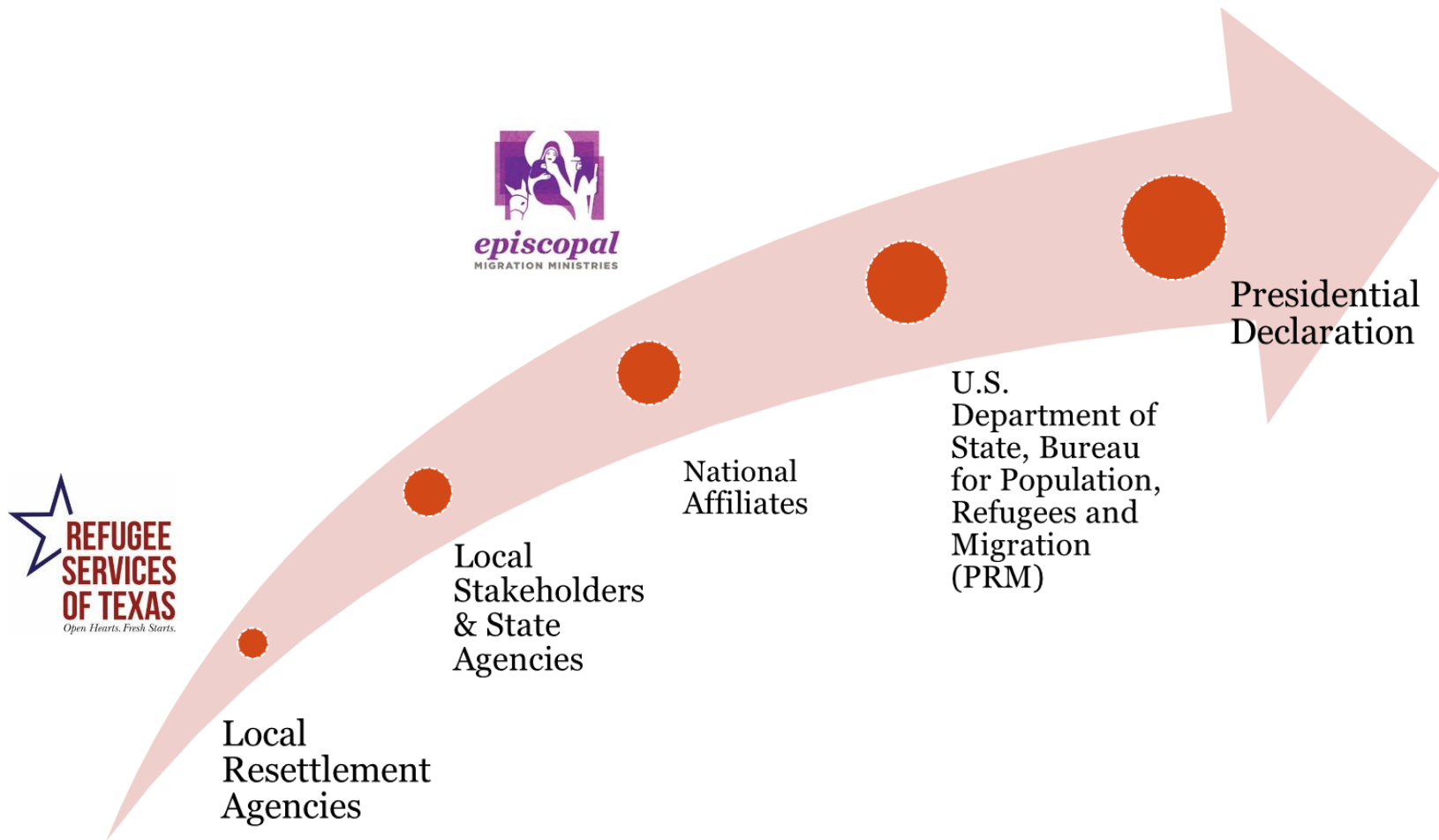
# Refugee Camp: Al Zaatari



**The average wait for resettlement is 7 years**



# Community Consultation Process





# Refugee Services of Texas

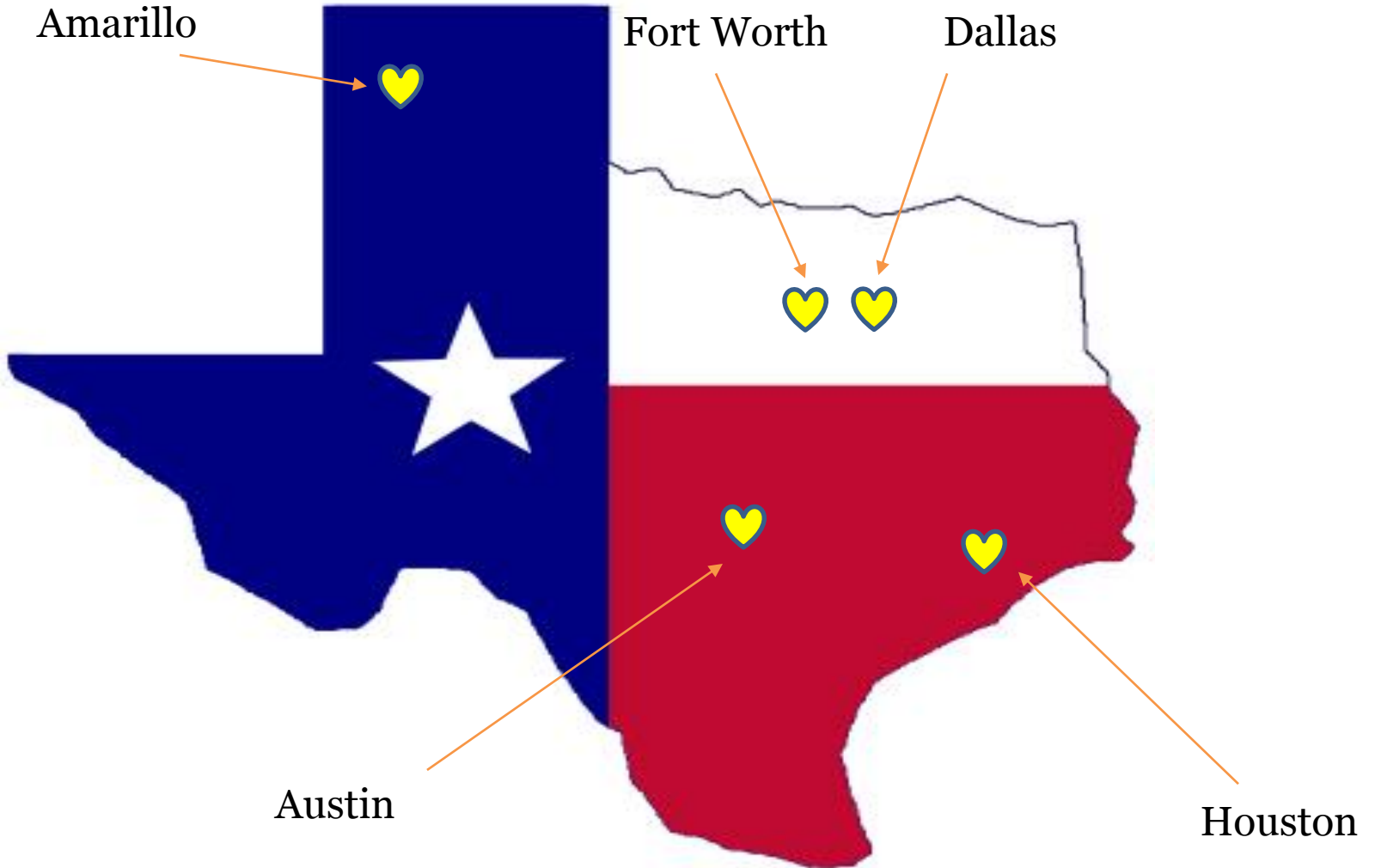
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Guided by the principles of human **compassion** and **dignity**, Refugee Services of Texas **welcomes** refugees, immigrants, and other displaced people and supports them in **integrating** and **thriving** in their new communities.



# RST Service Centers



# Core Values

## Empowerment

Work to ensure that refugees feel confident that they are able to attain early self-sufficiency

## Acceptance

Let refugees live without the fear that someone is trying to change them

## Sustainability

Set boundaries and limits to ensure that refugees become self-reliant and self-sustaining





# Core Services

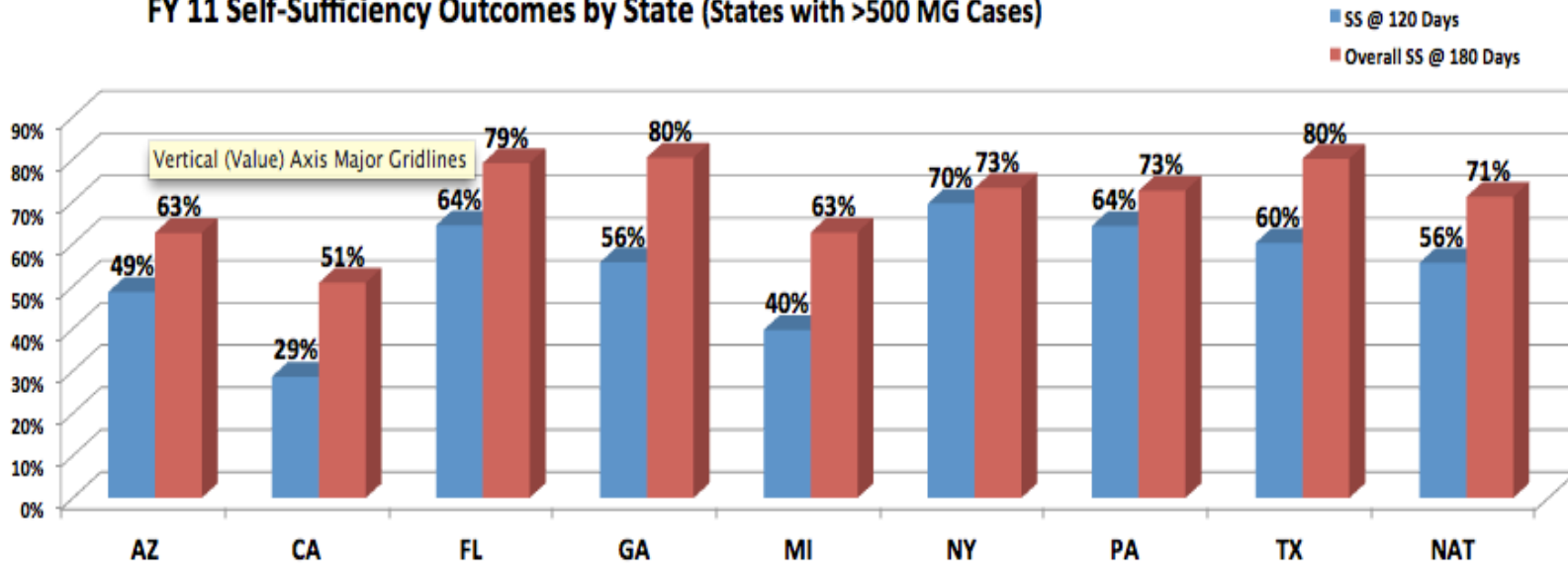
- Reception & Placement
  - Housing & furnishings
  - Case management
  - SNAP/Medicaid
  - Cultural orientation
- English as a Second Language
- Employment



*Bhutanese refugees living in their new apartment*

# Strong Self-Sufficiency Outcomes

**FY 11 Self-Sufficiency Outcomes by State (States with >500 MG Cases)**

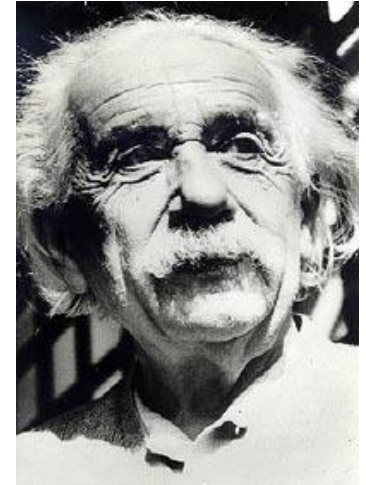
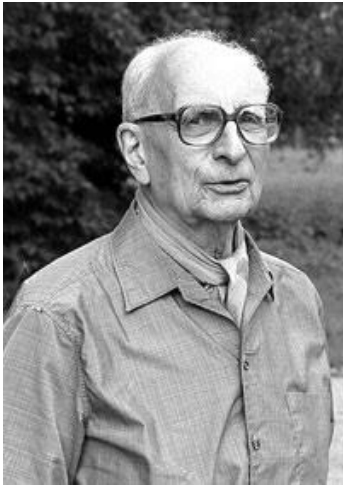




# Why Your Involvement Matters

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“Resettlement takes place at the local level—you can’t resettle into a community if the receiving community doesn’t know who you are; if they don’t know who you are that breeds opportunities for misperceptions, tensions, and fears—so in order for it to be a beneficial process for both sides, **there has to be a concerted effort to make sure that everyone understands why refugees have arrived and the great contributions they make to local communities.**”



# Areas of Greatest Need

#1: Financial Support

#2: Welcome Teams



*“Nobody made a greater mistake than he who did nothing because he could only do a little.”*



# Welcome Team

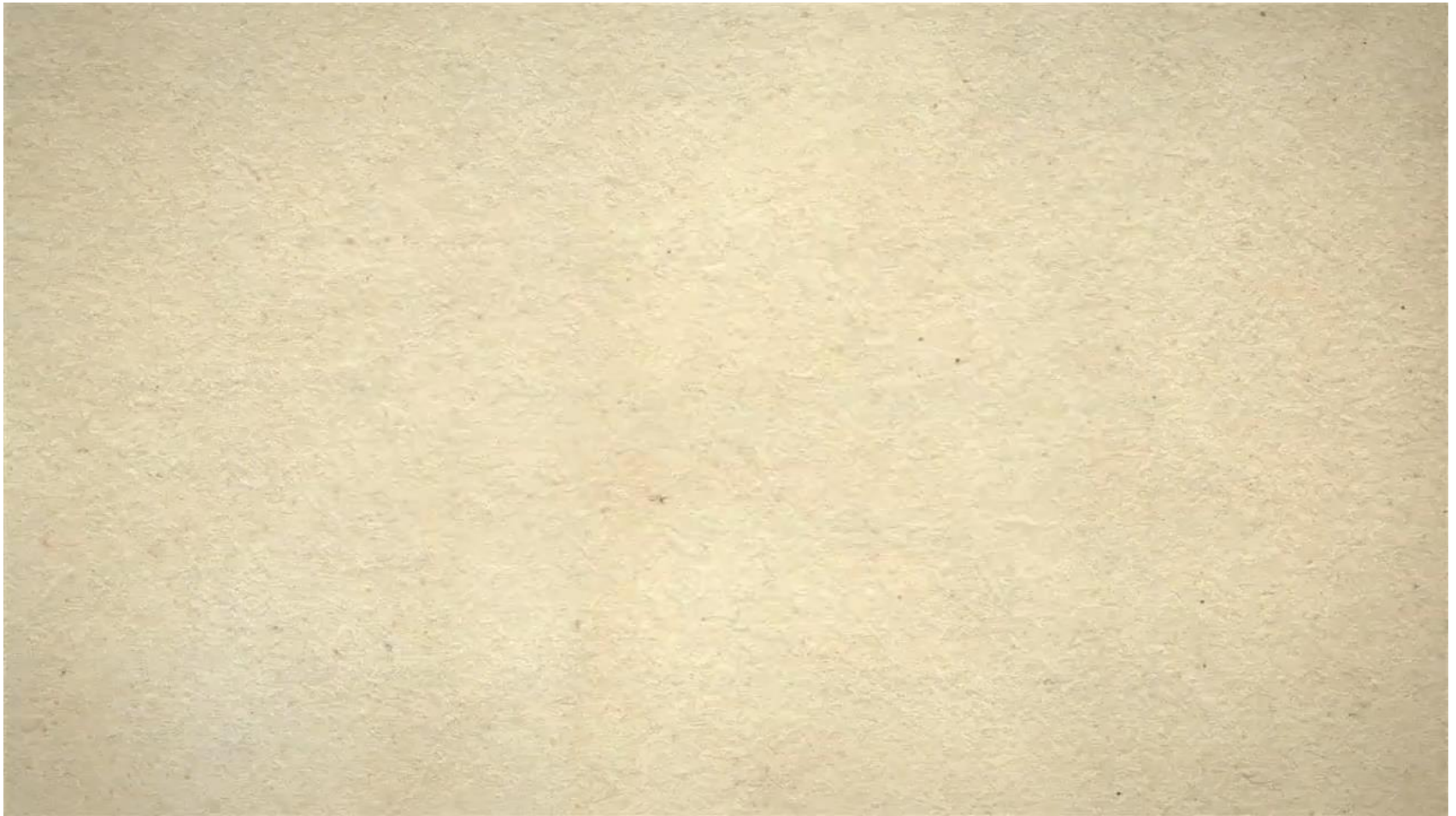
A Welcome Team is an organized and committed group of people who assist a specific refugee family through an organized contribution of in-kind goods and services to help them become self-sufficient in the first 90 days after their arrival.





# Advancing A Legacy of Welcome

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Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing so some have entertained angels without knowing it.

– Hebrews 13:2

