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Refugee Case Files as an Indicator of Housing Needs

Molly Weilbacher

May 2018

A MASTERS PRACTITIONER'S REPORT

To be submitted to the faculty of Clark University, Worcester, Massachusetts in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in the department of Community Development and Planning

And accepted on the recommendation of

Kathryn Madden, Chief Instructor

ABSTRACT

This study utilizes basic indicators captured from refugee case files at Ascentria, a local resettlement agency, to explore the barriers to housing stability refugees face in the 90-day resettlement process. By piecing together raw data with insight from the data collection process, this research centers refugee households, housing, and the reporting process to answer the question “in what ways can the reporting process better serve resettled refugees in their ability to maintain housing in Worcester?” Looking at how country of birth, household size, and employment eligibility affects refugee households, this research turns to the complexity of housing stability in terms of employment, finances, and housing makeup to demonstrate the nuances of securing and sustaining housing during refugee’s resettlement. The final section on the reporting process delves into standardized forms used to relay information about a refugee’s case, and how captured or lost information affects an overall understanding of refugees and housing. This informs the final recommendations of the research, which focuses on adaptability in the face of the uncertain future of refugee resettlement agencies, expansion of the agency’s circle of partners, integration, and reporting consistency protocols to address how Ascentria’s reporting process can best serve their clients’ housing needs.

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I. Introduction

This research is based on the question “in what ways can the reporting process better serve resettled refugees in their ability to maintain housing in Worcester?” The core of this study is interested in what basic indicators captured from refugee’s case files at Ascentria, a local resettlement agency, may tell us about their ability to secure and sustain housing in Worcester, and how Ascentria’s reporting process can best serve their clients. For the largest refugee resettlement community in the state of Massachusetts, the knowledge of Worcester’s refugee population is limited and often lost in the foreign-born population estimates, with little specific information regarding refugee populations living in the city today. This report seeks to shed light on a population whose needs must be differentiated through examining two critical issues affecting refugees in Worcester—the refugee resettlement reporting process and housing.

This study originated out of a Clark University research project in partnership with Ascentria Care Alliance and the City of Worcester Office of Human Rights and Disabilities. A team of Clark University interns was assembled to identify barriers to housing stability faced by resettled refugees in Worcester. The Clark University interns worked for several months to create a research question and methodology that would utilize Acentria’s client case files as a unit of analysis to extract pertinent information that may better illustrate the relationship between demographic indicators and refugee’s housing in Worcester, Massachusetts. The time period of this study is from the fiscal years of 2014-2017, using information documented mainly within the initial 90-day period of resettlement. By putting together raw data about the refugee population in Worcester with insights from the data

collection process, this research creates a foundation of base knowledge about Ascentria's clients, what the barriers to housing stability may be, and how the reporting process can better serve refugees who are processed in the system. This is done by examining the complexity of households, housing, and standardized forms used to relay information about a case.

Writing this in 2018, there could not be a more important time to turn our attention and identify barriers to a secure and sustainable lifestyle for a population of people under attack by the current administration. As the Trump administration systemically denies entry to refugees seeking resettlement in the United States, granting a cap for the entry of 45, 000 individuals compared to the Obama administration's 110, 000 individuals, the repercussions of the Trump's administration's policies are being felt not just nation or statewide, but on localized levels. The number resettlement agencies in Worcester decreased from three agencies to two, with a legacy of admitting around 150 to 200 total individuals per fiscal year. Currently Worcester is slated to admit 30 to 50 individuals this fiscal year, contributing to a notable decrease from past years. The global refugee crisis balanced with the Trump administration's anti-refugee policies makes it vital to pay attention to local levels of refugee resettlement in Worcester and to know the intricacies of the positioning of a population at threat by the current administration. Therefore, this research turns to refugee case files to shed light on the intricacies of their housing situation that otherwise may be overlooked or ignored amongst larger resettlement demands. It is necessary to analyze the resettlement and reporting process, to piece apart a larger system in order to understand what is happening to individuals at localized levels navigating resettlement. The final recommendations of this

research stem from an effort to balance how a bureaucratic entity can best serve their clients and honor the intricacies of a refugee's case to best secure housing for their client through adaptability, integration, new community partners, and information captured in the forms used in the reporting process.

Refugees' stories are told through marked boxes on forms, with details overflowing to the case notes or lost between categories and check marks. Their case file becomes a puzzle, with information scattered throughout the folder that when pieced together, can hopefully tell a larger story of the refugee's positioning upon entry in Worcester. This research seeks to deconstruct the rigid categories and check marks used in the standardized system and highlight the untold and undemonstrated complexities of housing stability for refugees. To best frame the data methodology and analysis, this research will first explore scholars' opinions of the bureaucratic processing system and resettlement patterns in relation to integration to frame the findings on households, housing, and Ascentria's reporting process.

II. Literature Review

Housing is an integral component of the ability to lead a full, resettled life as a refugee in the United States. The importance of growing roots through access to adequate and affordable housing cannot be overlooked. Creating a space for individuals who have fled conflict and war-torn areas to pursue a life of safety and happiness begins with having a sound roof over their head and a home they can shape as their own. This research is interested in what factors affect a refugee's ability to attain that home, exploring what may be the relationship between a refugee's demographic indicators and ability to secure and sustain affordable housing. Therefore, this chapter will explore opinions on two aspects of the resettlement process: bureaucracy's involvement in the resettlement system and global refugee housing patterns, to weave together a holistic viewpoint of a refugee's experience securing housing.

A. The Bureaucratic Roots of the Resettlement System

The United States is bounded by international legal obligation to accept refugees into its country based on complying with the 1951 Refugee Convention, and its own domestic laws. The term "refugee" was established in Section 101 (a) (42) of the Immigrant and Nationality Act as "a person who is unwilling or unable to return to their home country due to well-founded fear of persecution."¹ The key word bureaucratic entities focus on is *persecution*, that there has to be a well-founded threat or fear that prohibits the individual from returning to their home country. However, in the United States "refugee" is not

¹ Human Rights First (2012). "How to Repair the U.S. Asylum and Refugee Resettlement Systems." Retrieved from https://www.humanrightsfirst.org/wp-content/uploads/pdf/asylum_blueprint.pdf

considered this simple of a definition, nor a neutral word. As evident in the current political climate, it has been subject to assumptions about the positioning of an individual, where they come from, what their needs are, and even a debate around their right to be in the country. The varied connotations of the word “refugee” has created tension within scholarship in both ideology and utilization, as Jeremy Hein writes in *Immigrants, Refugees, and the State*:

Literature faced the charge that "refugee" is simply a bureaucratic label applied by states for political motives, rather than a sociological category demarcating discrete groups and behaviors. One perspective views violence, flight, and exile as definitive of the refugee experience, the other considers "refugee" a social construction.²

While Hein describes the disagreements in the political and sociological thought around the label “refugee,” the differences in opinion do not have to be mutually exclusive but can be held together to illustrate a more nuanced picture of an individual navigating the resettlement experience. Laura Simich describes linking the two ideologies, writing in the context of Canada, “beyond the obvious physical crossing of geopolitical boundaries, profound social and cultural displacements, loss and trauma define the experience. Refugee existence is also defined by the states whose boundaries are crossed. These states often impose controls with little regard for how refugees perceive themselves and their own interests.”³ This illustrates the tension within research and scholarship of how to acknowledge the influence of bureaucracies in dictating the refugee and integration experience without undermining the truth of the trauma and pain from leaving one’s home and community.

² Hein, J. (1993). Refugees, Immigrants, and the State. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 19, 43-59. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2083380>

³ Simich, L. (2003). *Negotiating Boundaries of Refugee Resettlement: A Study of Settlement Patterns and Social Support*.

In the context of refugees and housing, this research uses the term “integration” rather than “assimilation.” The notion of assimilation implies a trade-off; that the non-dominant culture had to adjust to the dominant culture’s way of life to be granted opportunities, leaving their traditions, values and practices behind in order to do so. Authors Robert Murdie and Lars-Erik Borgegard describes refugee integration specifically in the context of housing:

Immigrant integration policy is based on three objectives: equality, free choice and partnership. The equality objective is intended to provide immigrants with the same rights and opportunities as native Swedes, free choice assures that immigrants have the right to retain their cultural heritage and partnership is based on mutual tolerance and solidarity between Swedes and the immigrant population.⁴

These three objectives provide a framework for how this research aims to utilize the term “integration,” as integration demonstrates that everyone is entitled to the pursuit of the same opportunities, education, wages no matter one’s background, traditions, religion, or appearance. The pursuit of a life granted with these principals is reflected in this research, in the refugee’s ability to attain a job or a sound house. The three objectives of integration that Murdie and Borgegard establish are integral to the exploration of the refugee processing system and housing patterns to access a more nuanced perspective of how bureaucracy aids or interferes with integration.

In the context of the United States, the term “refugee” accompanies the federal entities’ role in regulating right to entry and residence within the country. It is a label that creates an identity subject to the current administration’s policies towards foreign entry into the United States; as Robert Zetter writes, “identity is formed, transformed and manipulated

⁴ Murdie, Robert A., and Lars-Erik Borgegard. "Immigration Spatial Segregation and Housing Segmentation of Immigrants in Metropolitan Stockholm, 1960-95." *Urban Studies* 35.10 (1998): 1869-88. *ProQuest*. Web. 10 Mar. 2018.

within the context of public policy and especially, bureaucratic practices.”⁵ The bureaucratic ties to the term “refugee” span global, federal and local institutions and follow the resettlement process across continents and years. The current system gives great power to entities such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Department of State, and Department of Homeland Security (DHS), who play a part in separating refugees while they are overseas into three principal categories, defining their connection to individuals who have already resettled in the United States and their needs in seeking asylum. As individuals take on the “refugee” identity through these institutions, the “labelling simultaneously defines a client group and prescribes an assumed set of needs (food, shelter and protection) together with appropriate distributional apparatus.”⁶ This distributional apparatus according to decided needs results in a process which the DHS says should take 18 to 24 months, but a Human Rights First report counters, stating that the program “can be quite prolonged, leaving some refugees stranded in dangerous locations or in difficult circumstances.”⁷ The report describes,

This overly bureaucratic and fractured system has meant that the interagency issues relating to the protection of asylum seekers and refugees have often fallen through the cracks. The efforts to address and solve these problems are further aggravated by the fact that protection of asylum seekers and refugees has to compete with many other pressing issues that fall within DHS’s responsibility.⁸

The “overly bureaucratic” system is part of the top-down approach that defines the resettlement experience. The needs of the refugee are dictated for them, as Steven Gold

⁵ Zetter, R. (1991). *Labeling Refugees: Forming and Transforming a Bureaucratic Identity*. *Journal of Refugee Studies* Vol. 4 No. 1

⁶ *Ibid*: 48

⁷ Human Rights First (2012). “How to Repair the U.S. Asylum and Refugee Resettlement Systems.” Retrieved from https://www.humanrightsfirst.org/wp-content/uploads/pdf/asylum_blueprint.pdf

⁸ *Ibid*: 19

writes that “refugees cannot help but react to resettlement based upon their own values, expectations, alternatives, and needs. They approach resettlement in ways that reflect their own purpose rather than those of the bureaucrats and staff members who create and carry out resettlement policy.”⁹ Their values, identity, and integration needs are easier to relegate to the case footnotes; valuable information about their needs are marginalized against larger demands. This can be straining on both ends of the resettlement, as “their interests often diverge in the process...While refugees are agents of their adaptation, the resettlement bureaucracy may operate at cross-purposes and constrain their resettlement.”¹⁰ However, it is not just refugees who feel institutional constraints, but caseworkers themselves experience the same fatigue of navigating through this system.

The resettlement process must be examined from both vantage points of the refugee and the caseworker helping them through the resettlement experience. Bureaucracy’s role in dictating the label “refugee” can have harmful repercussions on receiving help as a refugee, as their stories are “reformed into a case, a category... compartmentalizing the refugees into these categories, was also, a bureaucratic way of fulfilling a set of managerial objectives.”¹¹ Zetter’s viewpoint leads to the idea that a refugee’s case essentially becomes a series of boxes to check off and complete, leaving little space for a holistic account of their resettlement needs. This is demonstrated in a report titled *How Does Accountability Affect Mission? The Case of a Non-Profit Serving Refugees* by Rachel Christensen and Alnoor Ebrahim, which follows a resettlement agency Bright Star and studies the exhaustive

⁹ Gold, S. J. 1992 *Refugee Communities: A Comparative Field Study*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

¹⁰ Simich, L. (2003). *Negotiating Boundaries of Refugee Resettlement: A Study of Settlement Patterns and Social Support*.

¹¹ Zetter, R. (1991). *Labeling Refugees: Forming and Transforming a Bureaucratic Identity*. *Journal of Refugee Studies* Vol. 4 No. 1

process of accountability. Remaining accountable to authorities includes mandated reporting, documenting the programs and services clients are enrolled in, medical records, employment status, housing, case notes, and more to prove their work is effective. The paperwork to handle this amount of information was created by removed entities, which portray the prioritization of efficiency yet have only made the reporting process harder for practitioners to efficiently and thoughtfully do their work. The Director of Bright Star describes having to engage in “tedious reporting” to play a numbers game for the funders, board members and state entities to demonstrate everything was accounted for, including the number of spoons:

The image of a practitioner digging through drawers and counting spoons raises several questions about the upward accountability requirements faced by Bright Star. Is spoon counting the best use of a practitioner’s time? Does knowing the number of spoons given to a client actually help the funding agency know about how clients are being served and whether the mission of the organization is being achieved?¹²

While spoons are a specific example, reporting on the minute details signals to the practitioner to focus on activities that are easiest to implement and document rather than deal with the intricacies of a case. They describe, “in this case, the question sometimes becomes ‘how many spoons can I give this client?’ rather than ‘what does this client need in order to be resettled?’”¹³ This example parallels the previously described issue—that the needs of the refugee do not always align with the needs bureaucratic entities prescribe in managerial objectives. However, it is also evident that resettlement agencies, which may be considered part of the bureaucracy, experience their own set of constraints, affecting their abilities to rightfully do their job. The director of Bright Star states, “the people who write the

¹² Christensen, R, Ebrahaim, A. (2006). *How Does Accountability Affect Mission? The Case of a Nonprofit Serving Immigrants and Refugees*. Retrieved from ResearchGate in the Nonprofit Management and Leadership.

¹³ Christensen, R, Ebrahaim, A. (2006). *How Does Accountability Affect Mission? The Case of a Nonprofit Serving Immigrants and Refugees*. Retrieved from ResearchGate in the Nonprofit Management and Leadership.

requirements don't have a clue what the organization does. They need to look beyond [counting] spoons to [valuing] the intangibles...There is no way to account for so many things that we do.”¹⁴ The intangibles are not prioritized as they are harder to define and cannot fit within the prescribed categories. The workers themselves at Bright Star are concerned about the impacts of the reporting demands in regard to the actual “capacity to meet its mission” of adequately helping refugees resettle.¹⁵ The Director of Bright Star went so far as to negotiate with auditors to consolidate forms required in the reporting process to minimize the amount of paperwork involved while maximizing the useful information for the organization's mission.

This case study on Bright Star is vital to acknowledging the fragmentation within bureaucratic entities and the distance between those at the top dictating the reporting process and practitioners on the ground working to fulfill their obligations to both higher entities and the clients they serve. The requirements for organizations are dictated within a rigid system that expects measurable reports on impact. Workers often have to make decisions outside of their written job description or approved activities of the organization, with the intention of giving rightful services to the client. In Bright Star, employees recall helping their clients in ways that go against larger organizational missions—such as setting up a client who became pregnant in a refugee camp with a family planning clinic appointment—but were crucial to the wellbeing of the individual in her resettlement.¹⁶ The paperwork and reporting do not

¹⁴ Ibid: 9

¹⁵ Ibid: 11

¹⁶ Ibid: 16

accurately reflect when tough decisions have to be made, when case workers go above and beyond for their client or accommodate changing circumstances in a case.

However, case workers cannot always go above and beyond, as many have to focus on delivering the immediate and prioritized needs. The practitioner's concern in finding the balance between demands and navigating the maze of priorities is not always seen from the refugees' vantage point. In an earlier body of literature, Stephen Keller describes what happens when "the caseworker cannot accede to all who are needy and must shield himself from emotional involvement; the cool attitude of the caseworker conveys suspicion to the refugee about his truthfulness; if they won't believe the truth the refugee inflates it; hearing exaggerated stories the caseworker becomes suspicious."¹⁷ Practitioners walk a tight line when navigating a resettlement process with restrictions and prioritizations that skew interactions and working relationships. There is a limit to their capacity—they are working within narrow confines of a complex and multi-layered system, as documented in the following case study on the resettlement process in Germany: "this web of institutions, as well as the maze of laws and policies that they enforce, defines asylum seekers' first years in Germany. It also leaves many refugees feeling that they dedicate the bulk of their time and mental space to waiting for appointments and completing paperwork."¹⁸ Keller's description of a tough cycle between the case worker and refugee is indicative of going through the maze; the case worker is trying to find arrangements for the refugee, while the refugee is doubting that they are being heard or will get their needs met. Navigating the web and

¹⁷ Keller, S.L.(1975) Uprooting and Social Change: The Role Refugees in Development.

¹⁸ W Pearlman (2017). *We Crossed A Bridge and It Trembled: Voices from Syria*. Retrieved from <https://pomeps.org/2017/03/29/culture-or-bureaucracy-challenges-in-syrian-refugees-initial-incorporation-in-germany/>

running to various appointments often calls refugees to rely on extended family or social networks to provide additional support for the resettlement process.

B. Global Debates About Refugee Housing Patterns

There are debates within the field regarding the double-edged sword of resettlement: a refugee should be surrounded by individuals who can relate to their language, customs and experiences without segregating them from the host society and inhibiting their integration. Refugees' unique positioning must be emphasized to fully understand why resettlement patterns in regard to where refugees secure housing hold weight in integration. David Haines writes that refugees are "triply disadvantaged" in building a new life in the United States, dealing with the repercussions of surviving tumultuous and traumatic events, and "their exodus involves a rupture of cultural and social relations far more severe than the experience of other immigrants...third, their resettlement lacks the advance preparation and preexisting community structures that are often available to immigrants. Arriving refugees have often found themselves to be the first representatives in an area of a particular ethnic or national group."¹⁹ Many scholars and resettlement experts agree that the vulnerability of refugees makes it imperative to secure housing in neighborhood clusters, allowing the refugee to derive social support in times of stress and need. Gold explores in his research that settling in co-ethnic communities allows refugees to access social capital and gain necessary information regarding jobs and logistics of navigating the new society. Simich describes that refugees make decisions in conjunction with their extended networks, and clusters aid

¹⁹ Haines, D. W. 1996 "Patterns in Refugee Resettlement and Adaptation." In *Refugees in America in the 1990s*. Ed. D. W. Haines. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press. Pp. 28-62.

available social support for issues such as housing, emotional instability, and stress. Roger Zetter and David Griffiths argue that settling refugees in a dispersal is unfair, as it is based on temporary rather than permanent stay, and that individuals in dispersed regions “struggle to find what they need in established modes of community organization and networking, and are therefore compelled to organize informally and also without existing networks... dispersal has fractured the connection between refugees/asylum seekers and their well-established frameworks of community support and organizational structures.”²⁰ However, some scholarship take issue with resettling in cluster formations; a study by Morton Beiser argues that settling in a cluster can act as a “cocoon” “militating against exploration” from integrating to the larger host society.²¹ Yet this study also found that refugees settling in like-ethnic communities are a social resource that protects an individual from initial mental health issues.

Bureaucracy’s self-interest does not always align with that of the refugee, and resettlement agencies are often left as the middle-man between two competing entities, the individual refugee and larger processing entities that dictate the resettlement practices. This is demonstrated in a study by Vaughn Robinson and Caroline Coleman, which researched a United Kingdom government policy to disperse Bosnian groups across the entire UK because it would avoid “placing undue burdens on individual authorities.”²² The dispersal was rejected by the Refugee Council because of their previous evaluation of dispersed refugees,

²⁰ Zetter, Roger & Griffiths, David & Sigona, Nando. (2005). Social capital or social exclusion? The impact of asylum-seeker dispersal on UK refugee community organizations. *Community Development Journal*.

²¹ Beiser, M. (2006). Longitudinal Research to Promote Effective Refugee Resettlement. *Transcultural Psychiatry*, University of Toronto.

²² Robinson, V., & Coleman, C. (2000). Lessons Learned? A Critical Review of the Government Program to Resettle Bosnian Quota Refugees in the United Kingdom. *The International Migration Review*, 34(4), 1217-1244.

which indicated that dispersal “exploits vulnerability of newly arriving groups.”²³ Within the bureaucratic framework, the Refugee Council and Government were at opposite ends of legislation, ultimately compromising on a clustered dispersal—similar size clusters of refugees dispersed around the country. However, communication issues between the Refugee Council and Government created a policy that did not deliver what the Council believed was successful resettlement, and the process took its own natural path, with natural clusters forming around hospitals and public transportation hubs. In this example, we again see fragmentation within bureaucratic entities; the political interests of the government did not align with the Refugee Council’s expertise opinions, resulting in a process that did not fully accommodate refugees in the compromised system. The “choice in housing was actually illusory, being heavily constrained by shortage of housing,”²⁴ the clusters ended up having extremely varied resettlement numbers, and natural clusters formed around affordable housing and hospitals.

Refugee resettlement does not process refugees similarly through the system—it is constantly taking on new shape and is a different experience for every individual refugee. Refugee resettlement is not just influenced by the agencies’ priority to secure affordable housing in certain spatial formations, but also by race, class, and religious beliefs, which influence a refugee’s ability to not only be accepted, but to fully integrate in their new host society. A study by Carlos Teixeira conducted qualitative interviews with refugees who experienced discrimination because they are black-presenting in the culture of Toronto but

²³ Ibid: 1226

²⁴ Ibid: 1233

are African refugees nonetheless.²⁵ This study found that when trying to locate affordable housing in Toronto, refugees secured living options on the edge of the city due to discrimination from local landlords and a history of spatial segregation that informed the housing market. This resulted in social exclusion and housing segregation from other immigrant groups in low-income neighborhoods, inhibiting their integration into Canadian society. Similarly, Robert Murdie and Lars Erik-Borgegard concludes that while Sweden has legislation in place that specifically addresses refugee integration, there is a disconnect between policy and action, resulting in housing practices with discriminatory tendencies that reinforce spatial segregation in Stockholm.²⁶ By studying the history of refugee and immigrant housing spatial patterns in Stockholm, they find that immigrant groups from countries such as Poland, Finland, Yugoslavia and Greece have better integrated within city boundaries than other groups from areas such as Iraq, Somalia, and Bosnia who have been pushed to edges of the city. This research demonstrates that it is necessary to acknowledge the racial component of the spatial patterns in the resettlement process: that refugee groups integrate differently into the host society due to discrimination and ongoing racism. While resettlement patterns are indicative of the priorities of the bureaucracy involved, they are also influenced by the values of the host society.

²⁵ Teixeira, Carlos. "Barriers and Outcomes in the Housing Searches of New Immigrants and Refugees: A Case Study of "Black" Africans in Toronto's Rental Market." *Journal of Housing and the Built Environment* 23.4 (2008): 253-76. *ProQuest*. Web.

²⁶ Murdie, Robert A., and Lars-Erik Borgegard. "Immigration Spatial Segregation and Housing Segmentation of Immigrants in Metropolitan Stockholm, 1960-95." *Urban Studies* 35.10 (1998): 1869-88. *ProQuest*. Web. 10 Mar. 2018.

C. Key Concepts

This chapter has explored the complexity of the top-down approach of the resettlement system, and the burden it places on the refugee themselves and the case worker navigating a system of skewed priorities. The tension between those on the ground working through the system with the refugee, and those at the top expecting measurable deliverables creates a shaky foundation for the entire resettlement process. This conceptual framework informs the research: the reporting process enforces a system of categories, placing undue burdens on the refugee themselves and lowering the capacity of the caseworker to relay intricacies or intangible parts of the case. The framework also demonstrates that the question about best practices for resettling refugees has not been settled—issues around resettlement theories in clusters versus dispersals is ongoing and effects on the ground conditions in terms of encountering structural racism or discrimination when securing housing. The conceptual framework directly informs the findings from this study, as the data that drives this research is drawn from case files on individuals who are living between the lines of the processing forms.

III. Methodology

A. Research Question

This research is based on the question “in what ways can the reporting process better serve resettled refugees in their ability to maintain housing in Worcester?” The core of this study is centered on three major themes in the raw data and collection process: households, housing, and reporting. By doing so, this research will begin to seek answers to how the reporting process can better serve Ascentria’s clients in securing housing.

B. Data Collection

This research originated out of Clark University in partnership with Ascentria Care Alliance and the City of Worcester Office of Human Rights and Disabilities. A team of Clark University interns was assembled to identify barriers to housing stability faced by resettled refugees in Worcester. The Clark University interns worked for several months to create a research question and methodology that would help identify barriers to housing stability faced by refugees in Worcester. This research will be followed in the upcoming year with a qualitative phase, going further in depth into the case files and refugee’s resettlement. This paper is focused on analyzing data captured in the 314 case files housed at Ascentria and entered into a database by Clark University interns, before the deeper qualitative dive of the case files is conducted. To fully understand the extent of this research, this methodology section is divided into two parts: the methodology of creating the database on the basic indicators of refugees, and how that database will be analyzed in this research.

C. Creating the Database

The first step of the research was to ensure that the subjects in the case files remain anonymous. To gain access to the data, I completed a background CORI check as part of the volunteer process at Ascentria Care Alliance, which gave me clearance to work with case files containing clients' information. This research also received Institutional Review Board approval, and a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Ascentria and Clark University approving the use of the data. Each file has its own assigned unique number; the names of participants cannot be identified. This study does not involve direct interaction with human subjects but is based on the existing hard copy files at Ascentria's office, which were not digitized to protect the refugee's personal information. The Clark University research team developed a basic methodology for selective indicators, as well as a strict protocol for where to find and how to enter the information to create a standardized data entry process.

The case files used as the main data source for this research contain information pertaining to all aspects of a refugees' resettlement within the initial 90-day period, and occasionally after the initial settlement period if the refugee returns to the Ascentria office to seek additional services. Generally, the files contain the same standard forms, but due to changes in federal and state regulations, the forms utilized to report on a refugee's case fluctuate given the time of entry and the practitioner working on the clients' case. Therefore, there was a multi-month process to create a database that includes a range of indicators that, taken collectively help to indicate housing stability or instability.

The database comprised 22 entry fields with information pertaining to data collection, demographics, and housing information in order to best understand the components, if any,

that interact with refugees' ability to secure housing. Information relating to data collection includes: letter in the filing cabinet, initials entry was completed by, and assigned case number. The rationale behind these categories is ensuring a means of quality control of the data entry and for the files to be tracked and easily accessible should they need to be referenced at a later point.

Information pertaining to demographic information includes: ethnicity, country of birth, household size, number of household members eligible for employment, English proficiency level of the primary applicant, number of programs in which a household is enrolled. These categories were chosen in attempts to acknowledge the intricacies of a refugee's positioning upon entry and in attempts to understand how variables pertaining to personal identity and demographics may affect their integration and ability to secure and sustain affordable housing in Worcester. Additionally, these categories sought to determine if components of identities interact with other variables – such as ethnicity and education, or household size and number of household members eligible for employment.

Lastly, information related to housing and landlord interaction included the following categories: language proficiency, initial placement address, total apartment rent, case file rent, and subsequent addresses. These categories were chosen to capture basic indicators about housing conditions that refugees face in Worcester, such as the rent paid for an apartment, trends in apartment location, frequency of addresses and landlords used for resettlement, and what barriers to housing refugees may face.

The in-depth rationale for these twenty-two indicators can be found in Appendix A. The indicators were assembled in an excel database stored on the password protected

computers of the Clark University interns and advisors. This database comprised 314 entries and will be used for analysis on how the basic indicators of refugees can be utilized to understand overall demographics of refugee's clients as a microcosm of refugees in Worcester, and how the data illustrate three major themes in the raw data and collection process: households, housing, and the reporting process. The next section of this methodology will delve into the limitations of the database and data analysis.

D. Limitations of the Database

This research is based on data found within Ascentria's case files. A major limitation is that when creating the database, the interns did not have control over what information was recorded or available within the case files. Important information was often found within the footnotes or margins of the file and was difficult to process efficiently at this phase of work in capturing data from over 300 files. Therefore, information in the case notes and outside the categories on the forms was not captured in this phase.

The indicators used to assemble the database are not perfect measurements of the refugee's integrated experience, because they are capturing information from forms that do not always allow for a nuanced picture. For example, number of moves and housing instability is extremely hard to capture on the standard forms. The majority of case files only indicate the initial placement address within the first 90 days, and landlord verification or shared housing forms do not illustrate issues an individual may be having with their apartment or rent. Much of the information about a client's satisfaction with their apartment

is illustrated in the case notes, which were not part of the data entry for this phase of the project.

The changes in regulations and reporting systems means that the forms utilized to capture each indicator were not always readily available. The database and the data analysis reflect these limitations, as pertinent information is either not there, or is more nuanced than the number portrays. This will later be explored in the sections on Housing and the Reporting Process. Additionally, much of this data utilizes information for the Primary Applicant of the case file, yet the Primary Applicant is not always representative of the household situation. For example, we tracked English proficiency level for the Primary Applicant, which does not allow us to capture other dynamics of assistance or proficiency within the household makeup.

E. Limitations of the Data Analysis

The data analysis is subject to the same limitations as the limitations of assembling the database. However, a few extra limitations are necessary to convey. My positioning as a US born citizen that has lived in the same country my entire life gives me a limited understanding of the true complexity of what it means to be a refugee. Additionally, I am not a resettlement caseworker—therefore my full understanding of the forms and reporting process is limited to what I have witnessed as an outsider examining the case files. As an outsider to the system, I have a different context of important information to analyze and convey. Therefore, this analysis is limited by my ability to fully understand the intricacies of reporting on a case.

The data analysis is also limited to the indicators in the database: the categories used to capture refugee's information will not fully illustrate their positioning in relation to integration through housing. Integration is extremely difficult to quantitatively capture – therefore while this research captured variables that can speak to the point of integration through housing, this data set will not be able to fully address integration or housing stability, as quantitative data extracted from the files does not wholly convey that information. Therefore, this research is limited to basic demographic indicators, a precursor to a deeper qualitative dive for each case file.

IV. Data Analysis

The case files contain refugee household's stories, their background, histories, and experiences of trauma, pain, and resiliency. Their story is told through marked boxes on forms, with details overflowing to the case notes or lost between categories and check marks. Their case file becomes a puzzle, with information scattered throughout the folder that when pieced together, can hopefully tell a larger story of the refugee's positioning upon entry in Worcester. By putting together raw data with insight from the data collection process, this research seeks to piece together a picture of the intricacies of households, housing in Worcester, and the reporting process in attempts to answer the research question, "in what ways can the reporting process better serve resettled refugees in their ability to maintain housing in Worcester?"

A. Households

Ascentria's clients are born in 32 countries, with each country of birth informing aspects of their integration process. The top five countries of birth are Iraq, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Bhutan, Somalia, and Syria (Figure 1). Entry into US society means they may be perceived by American classifications that do not leave room for complexity in personal identities, therefore their origins of birth may inform housing practices and discrimination they face in the housing market due to their presenting skin color. America's housing system is deeply intertwined with segregationist housing practices, therefore country of birth and presenting skin color will present each refugee with their own distinct experiences in trying to secure housing during the 90-day resettlement period. Just over 20% of housing

discrimination complaints reported in the city of Worcester are race-related,²⁷ and a report issued by the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development in 2013 discusses patterns of racial and ethnic segregation in low-income areas in Massachusetts, with larger percentages of higher income Black/African American households living in the State’s “lowest opportunity communities.”²⁸

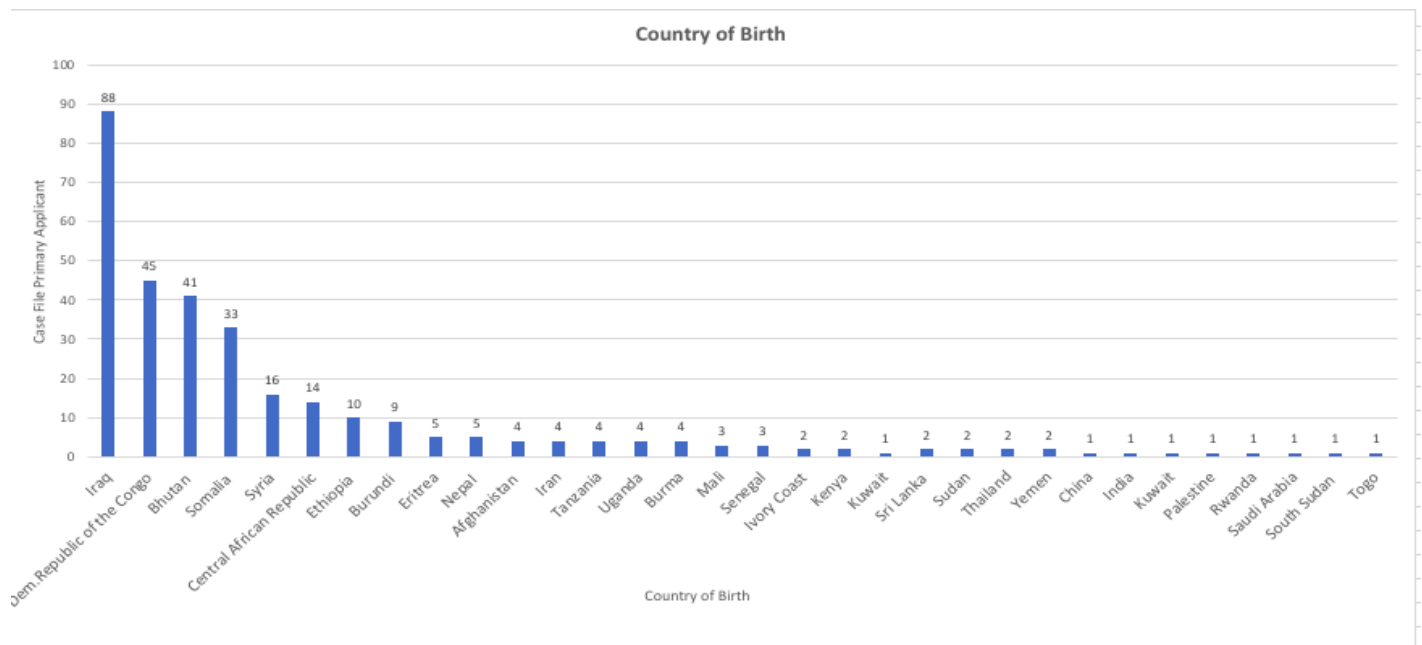


Figure 1: Country of Birth

The case file does not have a standardized form used to report discrimination within the housing process, creating a limited capacity for this research to measure how experiences may have differed in terms of encountering structural racism with landlords, finding new leases after the 90-day resettlement period, skewed interactions with neighbors, and more. While this is not a concrete finding, this research cannot ignore how America’s constructions

²⁷ Edmonstone, J. (2018, March 02). Letter: The fight against housing discrimination is continuing. Retrieved from <http://www.telegram.com/news/20180302/letter-fight-against-housing-discrimination-is-continuing>

²⁸ “Where You Live Matters: 2015 Fair Housing Trends Report.” National Fair Housing Alliance, 2013.

of racial categories affects integration and manipulates identities to confine within rigid structures. Therefore, how securing and sustaining housing may differ depending on country of birth must be something that is later returned to when conducting the qualitative portion of this research.

Ascentria's clients range in household makeup and sizes, each comprising their own set of household dynamics that aid or inhibit the housing and integration process upon resettlement. Fifty-two percent (52%) of the case files are single person households, meaning that they are processed through the resettlement system as their own unit (Figure 2). For some single person case files, the refugee is going through the resettlement system totally alone, without family members or ties to the U.S (see Appendix B for US tie information).

For other files, being a single-person household means that they are over eighteen and are processed as individuals, but may have a sibling, a mother, father or extended familial connection going through resettlement at

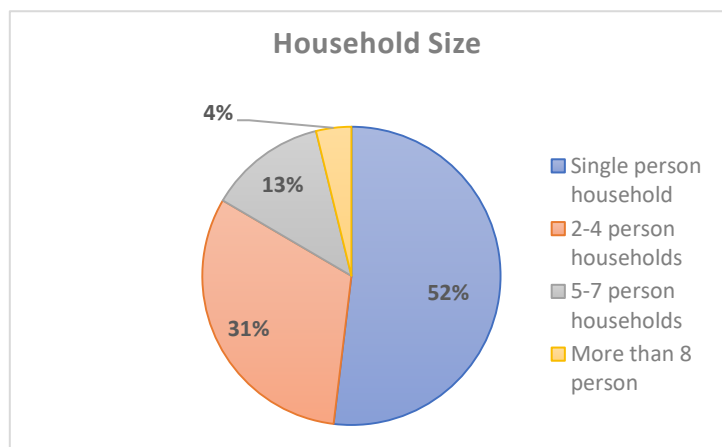


Figure 2: Household Size

Ascentria at the same time. This connection may be mentioned in the file, perhaps in the case notes, or maybe an individual with the same last name appears on a shared housing form later in their file. But if the case worker did not find the time to add it to the case notes or if the shared housing form is not completed or only listed the case files' name, then the connection

to their sibling in resettlement and housing is lost among the forms. For example, a Primary Applicant from Bhutan with a newborn baby was resettled next to her mother, which we can assume will help with her ability to maintain her household and look after her newborn baby with greater ease while integrating to new life in Worcester. Yet the information that she lived next door to her mother was not included in any form related to housing and could not be captured in the addresses in the database, but rather mentioned in the file's case notes, and is therefore lost among the hard data extracted from the forms utilized in the reporting process. The database created for this research enables the inference of familial connections, as it is comprised of case files organized in alphabetical fashion, making it easier to notice individuals with the exact same demographic and housing information, yet a scan of their hard copy case file sometimes fails to legitimize this inference. This not only means that the 52% of single-person households is a limited indicator, but that the case files do not consistently account for fellow familial or social connections the single-person household had upon entry in Worcester, which is a lost piece of vital information pertaining to integration.

The number of household members is directly tied to housing, as households must find apartment units that accommodate their household size. If a single-person household goes through the resettlement process alone, they will often be placed in a shared housing unit with a fellow refugee who is also responsible for contributing to rent (see Appendix A for form definitions). While Ascentria tries to resettle individuals from similar cultural or regional contexts, it cannot always be prioritized, meaning that a single-person household may be placed with a fellow refugee from a different cultural context, which leads to an

entirely different set of integration needs than a single-person household actually living with their own family members. It also means that if there is not another refugee in the system to pair with at the time, a refugee may be placed in a one-bedroom or studio apartment which will likely be more expensive, constrain their costs, and isolate them from potential connections. Alternatively, as household units become larger, accommodations that are affordable and able to sustain may be harder to find, as a family of twelve may have to compromise housing quality or accommodation capacity to make their day-to-day ends meet. Take for example, a mother from Somalia who has limited English skills and eleven kids under the age of eighteen who must be cared after. She is the primary caretaker for her twelve-person household, therefore she cannot work. She was initially resettled in a house with a monthly rent of \$1,000 but ended up moving within the 90-day period because she was not satisfied with the placement, their change in address resulted in an accommodation with a higher rent, a total of \$1,300 a month. The case files provide a breadcrumb trail towards an idea about household burdens – that this mother must be financially and emotionally stretched to make ends meet.

English capability in household dynamics is another factor in an initial understanding of household positioning. The ability to speak English aids the housing process as the Primary Applicant is more likely to be able to negotiate with the landlord, have a better understanding of the lease agreement, and personally address issues that may arise. Fifty-seven percent (57%) of the Primary Applicants in the files are marked as “none” in the category of English proficiency, which is the lowest categorization of English skills according to the State Department; only eleven percent (11%) of case files are categorized as

speaking “good” English, the highest categorization of English proficiency (Figure 3). Yet these categories utilized by the State Department to rank proficiency do not illustrate what actual capabilities fall under their labels. For the twenty-six percent (26%) of applicants who speak “some” English, we do

not know what capabilities qualifies as “some”—is it basic conversational abilities, knowing a few words, or as it translates to housing, the ability to read and understand a lease agreement? What we do

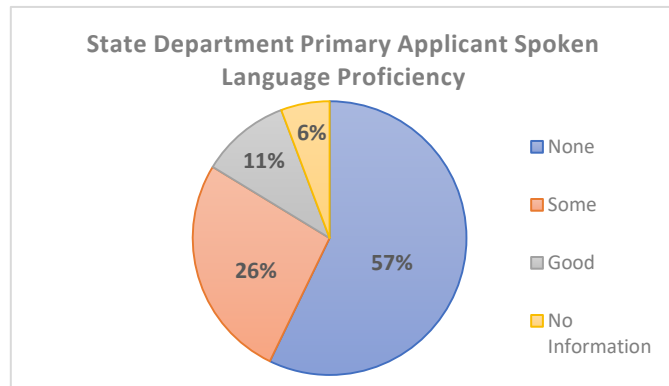


Figure 3: State Department Primary Applicant Spoken Language Proficiency

know is that eighty-three percent (83%) of Ascentria’s clients are below the “good” language threshold, clearly indicating a need for additional language support during their resettlement process, whether that is through ESL classes or tutoring. Further details about language capabilities and refugee’s plan of action for attaining English proficiency are sometimes included in the case notes and becomes further complicated by Ascentria’s assessment of spoken English proficiency which utilizes different criteria to assess language capacity. This is further detailed in Section C Figure 7 regarding the reporting process. Yet for the majority of the files the raw data tallying the State Department’s checked box is the full knowledge we have about the Primary Applicant as the household’s language skills in resettlement.

English capabilities are intertwined with employment, as proficiency in English can aid the employment search and help secure higher paying jobs. Employment is a cornerstone of resettlement, helping the household secure a means of self-sufficiency that is beneficial in the transition to independence in the post 90-day resettlement period when the household does not have Ascentria to rely on for cash assistance or coordination. Table 1 demonstrates the number of household members eligible for employment based on household size.

Table 1: Household Members Eligible for Employment from Household Size

Number of Household Members	Number of Household Members Eligible for Employment						
	Total Case Files	0	1	2	3	4	No information
1	163	36	116				11
2	25	9	10	3			3
3	35	3	14	12	1		5
4	39	8	12	7	4	1	7
5	12	1	4	4	2		1
6	18	1	4	8	1	1	3
7	10	2	3	3			2
8	6			2	2		2
9	2				1	1	
10	2	1	1				
11	1						1
12	1		1				

A key finding is that as household sizes get larger, the number of household members eligible for employment does not follow. The number of members eligible for employment does not exceed four in any of the case files, meaning that households as large as eight to twelve people do not have even half of the household able to earn an income. This has direct implications on housing, as larger families are settled in larger accommodations with higher rents, they still do not have a full household able to contribute towards a basic income for the family. This can also be seen in Appendix E, which details the case file rent, household size,

and household members eligible for employment to better understand the burden of the rent in relation to the size of household and how many members can work.

Like most families, refugee households are messy, imperfect to measure and impossible to fully capture between categories and analysis (see Appendix B and C for detailed demographic indicators). This section on households has examined the challenges of the case files to capture information on familial or social connections between separate case files, the obscurity of proficiency categories used to define households' basic skills, and the reality that this data cannot fully account for refugee's positioning, such as how country of birth may inform certain barriers to integration. With a basic understanding of the complexity of household makeup, this research paper will now turn to look at housing indicators to capture the challenges the refugees may face in the housing market.

B. Housing

The search for a safe, affordable and comfortable home is not unique to the refugee experience, but one that most individuals living in cities in the U.S can relate to. Everyone wants to find a home to shape as their own, a place to come back to at the end of a long day, a space to create their own worlds. Yet a refugee's positioning, as established in the literature review, demonstrates the added emphasis on the necessity of security and tenure for an individual who has experienced trauma and displacement, a place a refugee can independently sustain and ease their transition to life in a newly resettled country.

The variety of family situations informs housing makeup, as it is extremely difficult

to capture in this research how refugees are living in a unit and what exactly they are paying. Standardized forms to track basic housing information are not present in every case file, are sometimes only half filled in, or maybe have the actual details of the housing case written in the margin of the file, outside of the formalized entries. In efforts to avoid assumptions about rent amounts and payments, this research created two categories to track rent payments: initial placement address rent and case file rent. The case file rent is the number that we know the refugee to be paying in rent and recorded in the necessary forms, whereas the initial placement address rent is the overall rent amount for the unit listed.

Figure 4 visually demonstrates this differentiation in rent: the case file rent is a subset of the initial placement address rent, as it a piece of the total rent. This is because

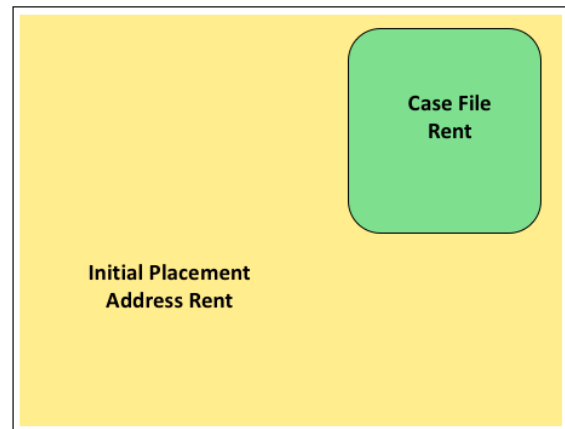


Figure 4: Case file Rent and Initial Placement Address Rent

households are sharing the space, so they are splitting the rent, most commonly with single-person households living with other resettled single-person households. Yet the initial placement address rent is recorded in 57 out of the 314 case files, therefore our understanding of the rent amount is limited to case file rent, which may offer a skewed understanding of overall affordability in Worcester since it is a portion of the rent collected by the landlord. This is a lost piece of vital information in relation to housing; for the majority of the case files we only know a piece of the unit's rent.

This way of measuring case file rent still does not fully account for the complicated makeup of households, of members that fall between the categories in resettlement and

whose reality cannot fully be pieced together from the case files. For example, there is a family of four from Iraq with two parents, a son who is over eighteen years old, and a daughter who is younger than eighteen. The two parents cannot work due to medical issues, and the daughter is not work-eligible because she is under eighteen. The son is the only one eligible for employment and has a minimum wage job. From a landlord verification form (see Appendix A for definition), it appears the whole family is living together in a unit with a \$900 monthly rent, but a shared housing form buried in the case file indicates that the son is paying \$350 in rent due to his employment eligibility and his parents are paying the remainder of the rent. This means that the family is splitting the burden of rent due to differences in employment eligibility and income. This household can be seen in Table 1, reflected as one of the families of four with only one member eligible for employment; but still it does not neatly fall into rent categories, as it is not clearly defined at the end of the day whether the burden of rent falls on the son or parents, what happens in the makeup of rent after the 90-day resettlement period, and how to capture households that have individual members paying differing rents amount.

This arrangement of multiple generations living together is indicative of the housing units most commonly secured for refugee families in Worcester, which are a classic triple-decker style home. Triple-deckers were built to house working class immigrant families around the turn of the 20th century, with 83% of three family triple-deckers built between 1890-1920²⁹. They are a flexible housing style that can accommodate multiple generations in

²⁹ Three Deckers. (n.d.). Retrieved from Worcester Historical Museum. <http://www.worcesterhistory.org/worcesters-history/worcesters-own/three-deckers/>

different units, as they vary in sizes and rooms can be reconfigured and rearranged depending on the household's needs (Figure 5). Historically, housing families in connected units is a form of clustering that aided in immigrant settlement of the Worcester area. Ascentria's clients do not necessarily live in distinct clusters in Worcester, but there are five areas that refugees case units are primarily concentrated in: Bell Hill, Pleasant Street, Oak Hill, Shrewsbury Street, and Piedmont. The majority of Ascentria's clients live in triple-deckers, with 48% of the case files resettled in triple-decker apartment units, 33% housed in apartments with 4-8 units and 7% of families in one-unit houses. Further information about concentration of case files in geographic areas and housing types can be found in Appendix I.³⁰

A large component of the housing process is the financial burden of rent on the refugee as they integrate and adjust to life in a new country. Once refugees are processed as Ascentria's clients, they are placed on the Reception



Figure 5: Renovated Triple-deckers in Worcester

and Placement (R &P) Cash Assistance Program. This program allots each case \$1,000 per household member (including minors) within the 90-day resettlement period to use towards their rent and other living expenses. For example, a single-person household would receive \$1,000 as their R & P cash assistance for their 90-day period, while a family of five would

³⁰ Kathryn Madden, Clark University

receive \$5,000 as their R & P cash assistance. This money is to be used within the first 90-days, otherwise the household is eligible to receive the remaining money in a check after the 90-day period is up.³¹

Housing is often chosen for the refugee based on affordability but does not fit perfectly within the 90-day R & P cash assistance budget. The first 90-days of rent are paid with the \$1,000 received from the program, but often refugees will get their R & P fund with money already taken out of it for the security deposit and first month's rent, which most landlords require upon signing a lease agreement, the reasoning being that housing is part of the provision of provided services by the R & P cash assistance program. However, each case differs – some cases may get their \$1,000 with security deposit and first month's rent taken out, while in other cases Ascentria may have created an agreement with the landlord to waive the security deposit or advanced first month's rent to lessen the financial burden on the refugee.³² Additionally, if a client has a disability or other standing barriers that prohibits them from working, Ascentria will work to enroll the client on social security benefits to aid them with finances. If the 90-day resettlement period concludes and it is clear the refugee needs additional financial resources, Ascentria will enroll them on the cash assistance program which picks up where the R & P program left off. How each of these programs are utilized is extremely case specific, as the finances of the R & P program differs for every case unit, as does social security eligibility and the cash assistance program. This research did not capture these nuances of programs in the case file, making the specifics of the financial positioning of each case and their specific burdens in regard to paying rent unclear.

³¹ Ascentria Care Alliance

³² Ascentria Care Alliance

Putting this into context, a refugee from Burma arrived in Worcester in 2014 and was placed at an address with a rent of \$750. There was no information in their case file about being in shared housing with a fellow refugee, therefore for the purposes of this research we must assume that they are paying the \$750 monthly rent themselves. This means that the \$1,000 cash assistance they received upon entry would most likely already have at least \$750 deducted from it for first months' rent, leaving them with just \$250 to help through their first months of resettlement. There is no information in their case file on employment eligibility, therefore we do not know if the refugee can earn an income and become self-sufficient for the subsequent months' rent. If they had to rely on the cash assistance for the next few months of resettlement, they could tap into a flex fund set up by Ascentria for each client in these exact circumstances where the allotted financial assistance is just not enough. The flex fund ranges from \$125 to \$1,000 depending on the client's needs.

The limitations to the cash assistance puts the refugee in a constrained financial situation, forcing an individual to be fiscally minded in a foreign currency and culture. This again demonstrates why employment eligibility is intertwined with housing, as the cash assistance refugees receive is often not enough for their necessities. While Ascentria prioritizes placing a refugee in housing that is affordable first, market-rate housing is dependent on the city's housing market prices and therefore cannot be relied on to remain

affordable. Table 2 demonstrates the case file rent based on number of household members eligible for work. When reading this table, keep in mind the \$1,000 cash assistance limit and how that may factor into rent for the first 90 days— for example, of the 25 households paying

Table 2: Number of Household Members Eligible for Employment and Case File Rent

Case File Rent	Number of Households Eligible for Employment						
	Total Case Files	0	1	2	3	4	No Info
\$100-399	124	19	90		4		11
\$400-699	39	11	16	8			4
\$700-999	111	21	42	26	5	2	15
\$1000-1299	25	7	11	4	2	1	
No Info	15	3	6	1			5
Total	314	61	165	39	11	3	35

over \$1000—\$1299 in rent, seven households have zero members eligible for work, meaning that they must be wholly using their cash assistance for rent, which we can assume leaves little cash for other living expenses. A deeper analysis reveals that there are five single-person households paying \$1000-\$1299 a month in rent – this would be their entire \$1,000 cash assistance check, supposed to fund them through 90-days of resettlement expenses but in reality, can only help with one month’s rent payments in this situation (see Appendix E and F for a more detailed breakdown of case file rent, household size, and number of household members.) How these families are making ends meet is not known; perhaps they are drawing into Ascentria’s flex funds or post 90-day cash assistance program, which places a greater burden on Ascentria to ensure they can fund their clients through their housing needs.

Additionally, the housing placement does not have the capacity to prioritize transportation or ensuring Primary Applicants with children are settled near a school. Within Worcester, transportation to employment can become a major barrier to sustaining housing,

as the city has a public transportation system with an extremely limited capacity and people rely heavily on cars for mobility and transportation. Therefore, refugees may be placed in accommodations that are not convenient to employment or transporting kids to school every day. The mother of twelve from Somalia can again be brought to mind – how does she navigate transporting her twelve kids to school? Is her housing in the city able to aid her integration process through access to transportation and mobility? This mother’s move during the initial 90-day is part of what Ascentria says is a general trend, that refugees may move either within the first 90-days or right after, often for affordability, to be closer to other family members or jobs. Yet this research’s attempts to legitimize this opinion through the data was not possible, as the shared housing and landlord verification forms filled out by the case worker every time the household moves are often not included in the case file. As seen in Figure 6, 78% of case files only have one form, indicating just their initial placement

addresses during resettlement. Details about a client’s move are often found in the case notes, meaning that vital pieces of refugee’s resettlement in relation to housing is

lost among the case notes rather than officially tracked on the standardized forms.

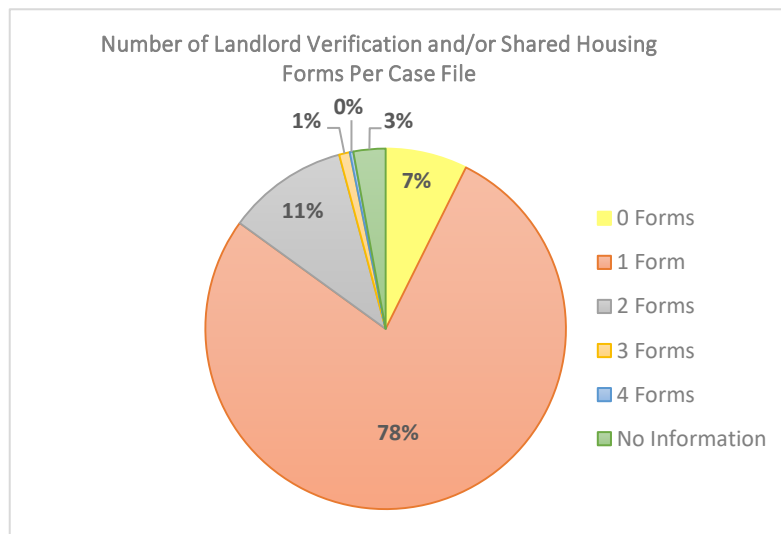


Figure 6: Number of Landlord Verification and/or Shared Housing Forms Per Case File

Housing is extremely difficult to fully capture within these case files, between the blurred familial networks and inconsistent rent amount information noted in the files. Yet housing is a cornerstone of successful resettlement and informs the entire resettlement process as it is such an active part of a refugee's ability to not just settle but integrate and create new a new community and new life for themselves. The fact that trying to create an accurate representation of refugee's experiences with housing in Worcester, including what they were paying and who they were living with, was so difficult to piece together accurately from the forms in the case files is indicative of the larger reporting process. That a standardized system manages to leave out vital information on refugee's relationship to housing impedes research of resettlement, as it allows researchers to either jump to assumptions or disregard the information altogether. This next section will explore the reporting process in the case files to explore outcomes and recommendations for reporting in the future.

C. The Reporting Process

The difficulties in accurately capturing housing and household information has informed all aspects of how this research, from the methodology to the final section on recommendations. The reporting process sets the foundation for how information is processed and communicated in the case files, which this section will explore by documenting the experience of navigating the reporting process through the forms and categories used to collect data. This will inform the final recommendations of the research in regard to how Ascentria can find the best practices for resettling their clients.

As noted in the limitations of the data analysis, I am an outsider to the bureaucratic refugee resettlement system, therefore I do not have a firsthand experience of what it is like to be a caseworker filling in the forms and handling the day-to-day logistics of the case. Yet the learning curve to understanding the case files was not just my outsider positioning to the forms utilized in reporting, but due to the variation in information recorded and included in every case file. As Ascentria is a local resettlement agency reporting to the larger state and federal bureaucratic entities, they are subject to utilizing certain criteria to discern refugee's positioning upon entry into the United States. The different levels of reporting can leave discrepancies between files, making it difficult to draw conclusive findings about the refugee population and its experience in the housing settlement process.

Section A highlighted the importance of understanding the level of English proficiency since it may affect the ability to negotiate a lease or gain employment. To make this more complicated, Ascentria and the State Department evaluates proficiently differently, which can be seen in Figure 7. Ascentria records that 24% of files have “none” spoken English proficiency compared to 57% of the comparative category in the State Department forms. Ascentria's percentage of “low” is higher at 31% than the 26% documented in the comparative category of the State Department. These stark differences in percentages for comparable categories indicate that refugees may have basic English level skills that are not captured by the State Department. Yet 39% of Ascentria's case files have “no information” regarding English proficiency—meaning the box was left unchecked, or the form itself was not included in the file.

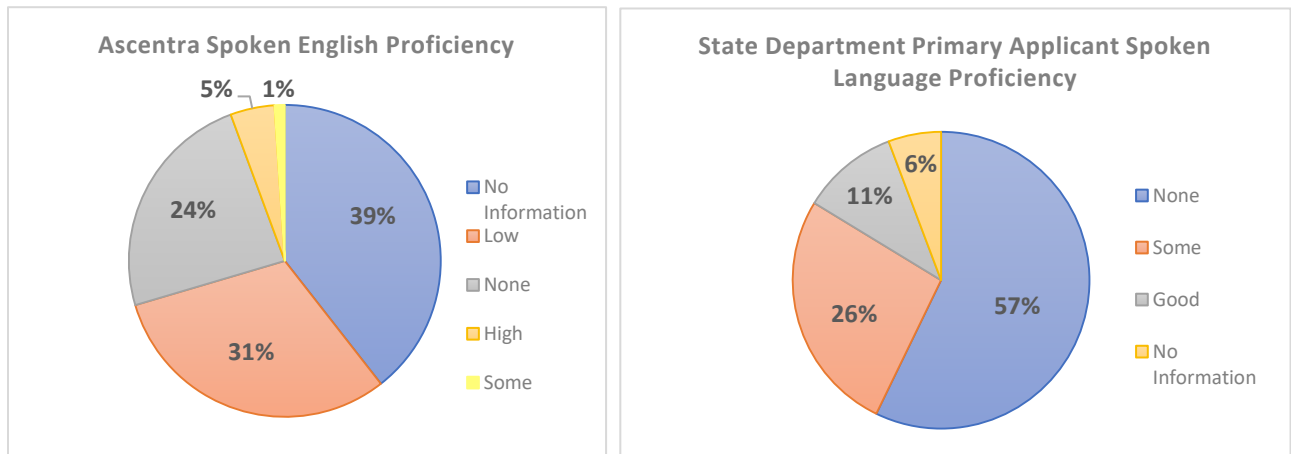


Figure 7: Ascentria Spoken English Proficiency vs. State Department Spoken English Proficiency

This research defaulted to utilizing the State Department categories because of this lack of data, yet there is a clear difference in how the State Department evaluated refugees upon entry than Ascentria’s evaluation; the differences in processing makes it difficult to draw conclusive findings about the client’s language capabilities, as information either varied in how it was captured or was not included. It is possible that clients have better English by the time they reach Ascentria’s doors as opposed to processing by the State Department in refugee camps, making it more vital that Ascentria records English proficiency at the start of the client’s resettlement in Worcester.

The variation in how information is captured is not subject only to the State Department versus Ascentria’s criteria, but with where information is actually included on a form and what form may be utilized to convey information. This research has extensively discussed the difference between landlord verification and shared housing forms; the templates for these forms can be found in Appendix H. While the Shared Housing and Landlord Verification form are utilized interchangeably, they call for different information –

therefore case files are not necessarily using a standardized system that accurately depicts the case file rent and initial placement address rent. The landlord verification form calls for the “total rent of the address”, whereas the shared housing form states “pays rent in the amount of \$ _____ per month.” It may seem easy to disregard this difference, but the reality is that the landlord verification form is specific in what it is calling for whereas for the shared housing form it is unclear whether the amount listed is what the refugee pays or what the total amount of rent is per month, which then affects how it is interpreted and recorded in the case file. This smallest differentiation makes a huge difference when trying to piece together an accurate depiction of rent payments – a housing unit with the total rent of \$400 split among a household is very different than an individual living in a shared housing unit paying \$400 for their proportion of rent.

The experience of going through case files and creating a standardized documenting system off of standardized forms should have been easy, yet the demands of the reporting process and the change in protocols over time perpetuate a layered system where caseworkers are overextended and may not necessarily have the time to fill out forms, return to correct information if variables change in resettlement, or notice information that may be wrong. The case notes were most often relied on to convey changing or intricate information about the case, yet the variability of case notes make it difficult to collect and understand consistent data. The case notes were used in two ways: to record information that was meant for certain forms, or to catch information that did not neatly fall into any of the categories found on the forms. For example, often the case notes contained valuable information that about housing such as instances where the family moved to a new address with a new rent,

which was not included in any of the forms used to track this exact instance of a change in address and rent. Yet on the flip side of this, the case notes caught information the forms could not accommodate, such as family members living nearby who are helping a household with resettlement, or personal hardships the refugee is experiencing as a result of the trauma and pain they previously experienced that is creating barriers to integration in resettlement.

V. Recommendations for Reporting Protocols

This research has been conducted to equip Ascentria and the City of Worcester Office of Human Rights and Disabilities with knowledge about refugee households in Worcester and what challenges refugees may face when it comes to housing stability. Having a clear understanding of the barriers to housing stability for refugees in Worcester can inform future practices for Ascentria and policies for refugee resettlement in the city. To best address the purpose of this research, this section on recommendations is organized into two categories: one set targeted to resettlement practices and protocols, and the other targeted to future research.

A. Adaptability in Uncertain Times

Conducting this research in 2018, our current political administration is changing refugee and local resettlement policies on many fronts. This is a pivotal moment for resettlement agencies to think about how to best serve their clients based on the federal resettlement changes and how to remain flexible in the face of federal policies and adaptable

towards the clients they serve. This could mean many things for an organization such as Ascentria, but a strong recommendation advocated by this research is thinking critically about the reporting process and taking stock of the forms used to relay information about a case. There is real space for Ascentria and refugee resettlement agencies to think about the efficacy of collected information, what practices work in resettlement cases and what needs further attention. Perhaps this takes shape in a staff retreat, laying all the forms used in the reporting process to brainstorm their efficacy in the day-to-day casework, or perhaps this means engaging in strategic scenario planning to help the organization develop new operating missions and programmatic strategies in the face of these uncertain futures. The possibility for even less refugees to be settled in upcoming years can create room for reflection on core values of the organization and how to best engage with refugee resettlement processing system.

B. Circle of Partners

A push for information sharing between Community Development Corporations in neighborhoods such as Piedmont or Main South with resettled refugee cases can help illustrate refugee integration post the 90-day resettlement period. Community Development Corporations (CDC) have aggregated information on the specific issues refugees encounter upon resettlement in the local area; they hold knowledge on landlords, rental disputes, and issues pertaining to discrimination in housing and integration. Expanding Ascentria's circle of partners to include CDC's at the table will elevate Ascentria's knowledge of how their clients fare in the post 90-day period, ensuring that information about the client's resettlement experience does not stop when services with Ascentria end. CDC's localized

knowledge can help illustrate refugee's integration in relation to housing and their access of community spaces, amenities, transportation, and employment.

C. Attention to Integration

The case files used for the data in this research are focused on the initial 90-day resettlement period with a limited capacity to illustrate the complete trajectory of a refugee navigating integration upon resettlement. Integration is deeply intertwined with housing, as demonstrated in the literature review—housing grounds and informs much of the refugee's experiences adjusting to life in their new city. The relationship between housing and integration is something Ascentria can lift up in their daily work; by defining their values for what integration means for their clients they can try putting it into practice when finding housing for a refugee case. By doing so, Ascentria can connect housing practices to a larger understanding of how their clients are doing in resettlement. While integration can feel like an intimidating concept, this research advocates for grounding an understanding of integration through examining what a daily life of a refugee is like. Asking questions such as, “it is easy for the client to access transportation and have their own mobility in the city?” or “are their local cultural community centers near their home?” or perhaps, “is the neighborhood welcoming their presence or forcing certain values or lifestyle habits?” can begin to address integration on a localized level that allows Ascentria to acknowledge the implications of the location of housing units they secure for their clients and how their client is adjusting to their resettled life.

D. Reporting and Consistency

The case files are filled out by hard-working and talented caseworkers who are diligently working on demanding resettlement cases. This research has extensively explored the burdens the bureaucratic reporting process places on the caseworkers who have a limited capacity to document the changing variables or information outside of what the forms ask for, contributing to disorganized or lost information. Yet there are specific measures Ascentria can take to ensure their hard-copy case files are consistent, up to date, and relevant. Ascentria's spoken English language proficiency can be filled out for every case unit to ensure they are capturing the important data that is a client's change in English speaking capacity from being processed overseas to entering Ascentria's doors. There are opportunities to better clarify on the given forms the rent-unit make up to ensure the amount of rent paid is consistently found on the expected forms rather than buried in the case notes. The landlord verification forms can be utilized to track change in addresses rather than noting the change in the case notes. Local family members can be more clearly indicated, and family units that are processed as single-person households can be explicitly stated on shared housing forms to capture whether the client is living with a family member rather than infer from similar addresses. These tactics to ensure consistency in the information recorded in the case files is imperative in Ascentria's quest to better understand the barriers their clients face to housing in Worcester; the fight for policy to protect refugees and housing will be impeded if the information pertaining to the nuances of housing is not captured.

VI. Recommendations for Qualitative Research

A. Deeper Understanding of the Barriers Clients Face in Resettlement

This research is designed around utilizing qualitative case files to create data on basic indicators to illustrate barriers to housing refugees face in resettlement. Yet there are limitations to what quantitative data can illustrate, therefore the qualitative phase of this research must aid where the data falls short. Individuals whose cases I have described, who are living between the simplified categories on forms, should become a focus. Shedding light on their lived experiences will help illustrate a need for a change in practices and policies regarding housing in Worcester, helping others through the resettlement process.

The qualitative research must delve further into tensions within the basic indicators this research has demonstrated. How country of birth affects potential discrimination in the housing market must be considered and further researched as the range of refugee experiences navigating the housing market is vital information in ensuring refugees are attaining their fundamental rights. This will also provide city officials and resettlement case workers knowledge for populations of refugees who may be at higher risk for discriminatory practices, which can inform how to best advocate and prepare for specific clients. This could be done through going through the case notes for different populations of refugees to see if the case notes included any descriptions of discrimination, or by conducting interviews with refugees from varied countries of birth to then see if there are themes with how country of birth affected their ability to secure housing.

Single-person households must be a population at the forefront of issues with the

resettlement process. They are the highest population of people entering Ascentria's doors, yet it is still unclear how many single-person households are being processed as single-units in relation to family connections. This research's findings that single-person case files and familial connections have direct implications on housing must be returned to: whether single-person case files are living with a family member processed at the same time, an already resettled family connection, are totally alone facing their full burden of rent, or living with a fellow resettled refugee—these are all distinctions that must be made in this research. Each of these groups will have an entirely different set of resettlement needs; the current grouping of single-person case units into one category does not provide a full picture of barriers to housing and resettlement clients are facing.

On the flipside, large family units should be examined in further depth to understand how they navigate a process that often restricts availability in securing homes that can accommodate large family units. Family units exceeding eight members that have less than half of their household able to work should be interviewed to understand how the family makes ends meet: are they enrolled in Ascentria's cash assistance program post 90-day resettlement period, are they on social security, have they compromised on the standard of their living accommodations for a cheaper rent, or are there other alternative means of making ends meet this research has not considered?

B. Additional Basic Indicators

The database utilized in this research did not account for the gender of the Primary Applicant, which is a major demographic indicator that this research failed to capture. To help Ascentria best resettle their clients, it would be extremely beneficial to know whether

there are distinct gendered experiences as a Primary Applicant navigating the housing process in terms of lease agreements, landlord disputes, gendered expectations of household members, and specific barriers individuals may face due to their gender. If considering gender in an interview process with Primary Applicants about the resettlement and housing experience, then we will be able to better understand how variables in the resettlement process may change due to gender status within the household.

How US ties shape a refugee's ability to secure and sustain housing should be returned in the case files to capture the varied positioning of Ascentria's clients as they begin their resettlement process. This research noted in the database what cases were resettled with a US tie versus those who were resettling alone, therefore a qualitative analysis on the case files that goes further in depth on the 52% of the case files with a US tie versus the 41% without ties would legitimize what this research has anecdotally inferred this far about how a US tie may provide additional financial support in sustaining rent payments, help in the integration process, and more. Understanding refugee's connections to US ties and what support they can depend on will be especially helpful in nuancing single-person case unit categories and acknowledging the individualized housing and integration needs of refugees upon entry in Worcester.

The financial positioning of Ascentria's clients must be further researched to capture how many clients are on the R & P program, the cash assistance program that continues once the R & P program ends, or fast tracked to receiving their social security benefits. First, the R & P cash assistance program should be returned to in each case file, as this research recorded the number of programs a refugee is enrolled in but did not specify what types of programs.

Knowing how many clients are on the R & P program and how many received their cash assistance with money already taken out for housing needs would help us better understand the exact number of dollars a refugee has to begin their 90-day resettlement process and where the burden of rent may fall. In many case files the specific breakdown of the R & P cash assistance is demonstrated in copies of the refugee's receipts, documenting their expenses; if there is a way to capture how many refugees receive their R & P with money already taken out for rent and/or security deposit and how much that leaves the refugee with, we will have a better understanding of the refugee's financial positioning upon entry into their resettlement period. This would also help capture the burden on Ascentria to provide money for a case's flex fund and to see ultimately how many clients need the additional financial assistance that the R & P program cannot provide. Lastly, this would give us an idea of how many clients are prioritized in receiving their social security benefits due to disabilities or other circumstances. By better aggregating financial information, this research would have an in-depth of an understanding of the different financial resources refugees are utilizing, which has direct implications on demonstrating how refugees and Ascentria are making rent payments meet.

VII. Appendix

Appendix A. Categories for Database Rationale

1. Letter in the Filing Cabinet

Tracking the filing cabinet the file was pulled from allows for an easy identification and return to any case files that may need further examination or corrections.

2. Initials Entry was Completed By

Documenting the initials of the intern completing the data entry was to ensure quality control of the data entry, acknowledging who was doing the data entry, as well as a reference if there were mistakes or differences with how data was entered.

3. Assigned Case Number

The assigned case number tracks the specific number given to a case file by the Clark University interns to protect personal identities and for files to be tracked and returned to if necessary.

4. Household Size

Household size distinguishes what the total number of refugees within a household are. We have hypotheses of how household size may affect programs the household are enrolled in, their ability to secure housing for their entire family, employable members, and overall integration.

5. Date of Arrival

This section is capturing the date of arrival in Worcester that determines their length of stay until the present time. This is intended to assess whether there is a relationship between time in the US and housing affordability or insecurity.

6. Date of Allocation

This is intended to identify when a refugee's case was allocated for resettlement in Worcester and the time between allocation and arrival in the U.S

7. Ethnicity of the Primary Applicant

There are many hypotheses about how a refugee's ethnicity affects resettlement, therefore documenting the ethnicity of the primary applicant is intended to ensure integral information about their identity was captured to assess how it may pertain to aspects of resettlement.

8. Country of Birth

The rationale of this category echoes what was previously described in the category of "ethnicity."

9. Country Fled

The rationale of this category echoes the previous two categories.

10. Does Primary Applicant Have a US Tie?

This category stems from a hypothesis that refugees coming into the US with an anchor may have a different resettlement experience due to an established social tie, and that may affect integration and/or ability to secure housing.

11. Education Level of Primary Applicant

This was created with the rationale that it is necessary to acknowledge any previous skill or knowledge a refugee is coming to the U.S with, and hypotheses about how education may affect employment.

12. State Department Spoken English Proficiency

It is necessary to document what assets the refugee is coming with that may aid them in integration, such as a certain level of English proficiency.

13. Ascentria Spoken English Proficiency Level

The State Department English proficiency is found in almost every case file, whereas the Ascentria English proficiency form was not standardly completed. Therefore, this category is complementary to the State Department, as well as to see if bureaucratic processing entities may assess skill levels differently.

14. Number of Programs the Head of Household is Enrolled In

This section is tracking the number of programs the total household is enrolled in. According to Ascentria, if a file has a high number of enrollments it may be an indication of vulnerability, as they have a greater set of needs that must be addressed through the formal resettlement program. Using the number of total programs the household is enrolled in is not a perfect measure, but will be used with other indicators to assess trends or patterns in terms of vulnerability in resettling to Worcester and how that may affect housing.

15. Number of Household Members Eligible for Employment

Employment is an essential part of integration and self-sufficiency for a resettled refugee, therefore this category is tracking who within the total household size is eligible for employment and how that number may affect ability to become self-sustaining and afford rent in Worcester.

16. Number of Landlord Verification and/or Shared Housing Forms

Landlord verification and shared housing forms are in most case files and utilized to track a refugee's placement and rent at that address. This category captures the landlord verification form, which is the landlord's stated rent amount and signature of the lease agreement. This category also captures the shared housing form, which is used when refugee case files are rooming in a unit together, because it is signed with the roommates the form typically accounts for the individual rent amounts. These files are used interchangeably depending on the total case size and the form the case worker decided to use.

17. Initial Placement Address and Apartment Number

This category is intended to track where refugees are resettled, whether they are clustered or dispersed throughout the city, and if where refugees are settled changes over the years to assess whether where a refugee is resettled in Worcester may affect aspects of their integration, employment, and social networks within the city.

18. Initial Placement Address Total Rent

This category is only utilized when the total apartment rent for the placement address is indicated in a case file. While the larger number may differ than the portion of rent a refugee is paying, it is important to acknowledge that the refugee is still accountable to making sure the entire sum of rent is paid every month.

19. Case File Rent

This category is utilized to document what we know the case file to be paying in rent for the address.

20. Subsequent Address #1

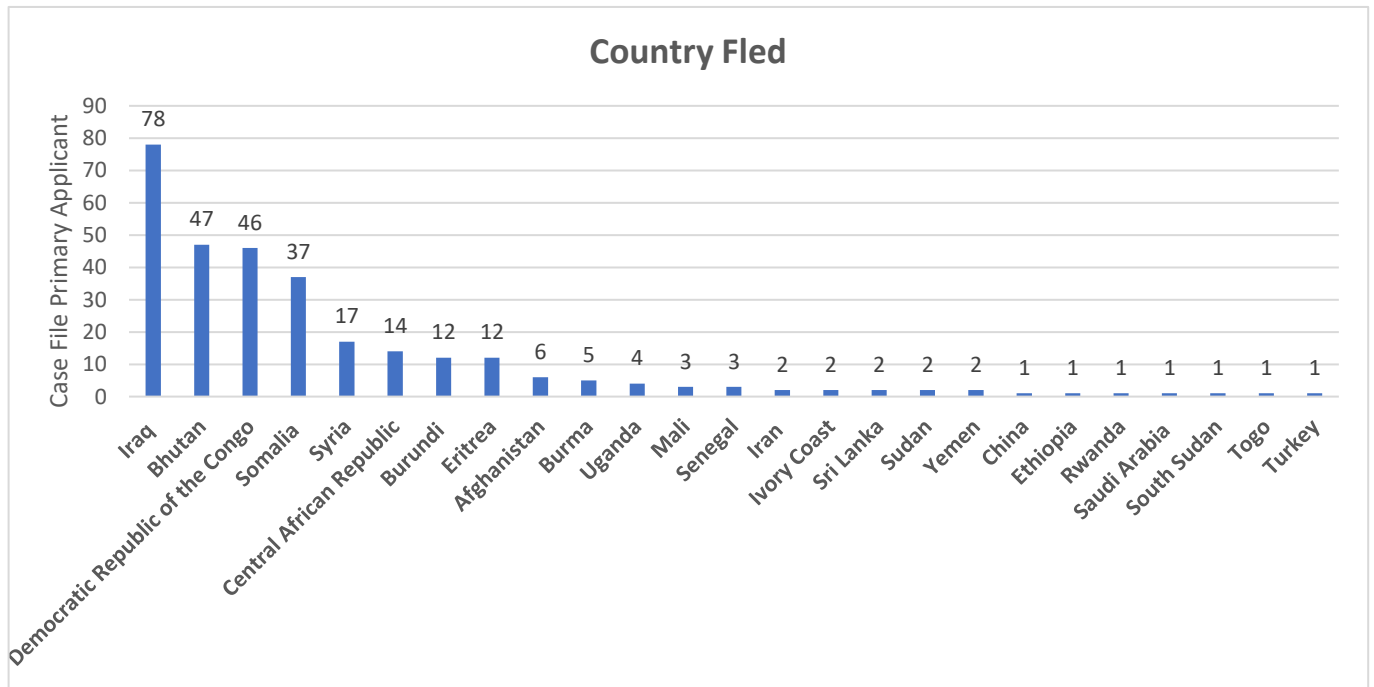
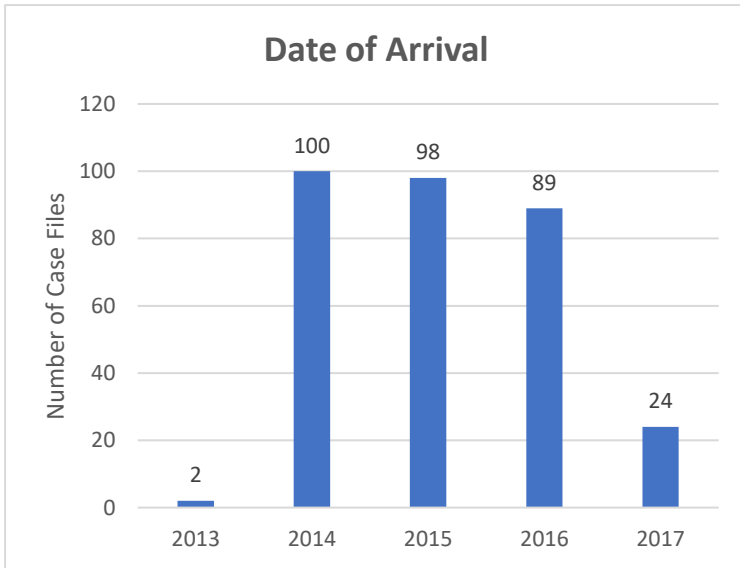
This is intended to track if a household has moved within 90 days, if there are trends in movement, and how that may affect housing stability.

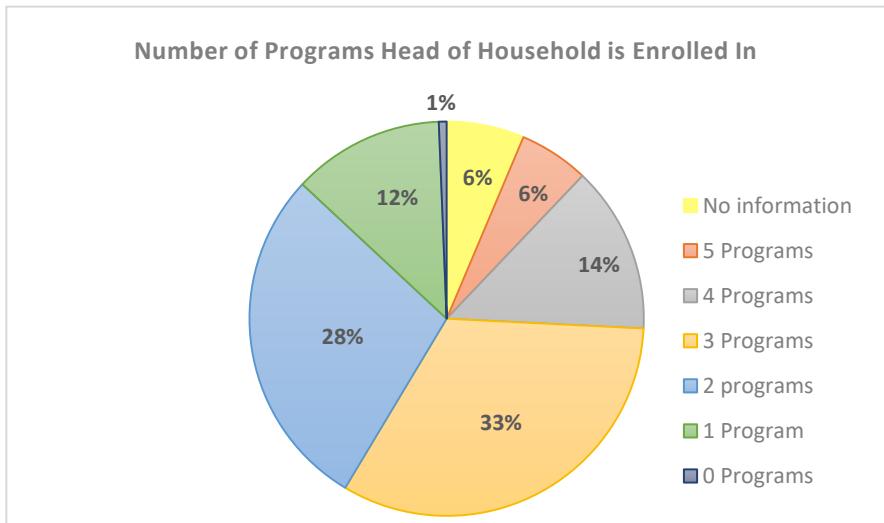
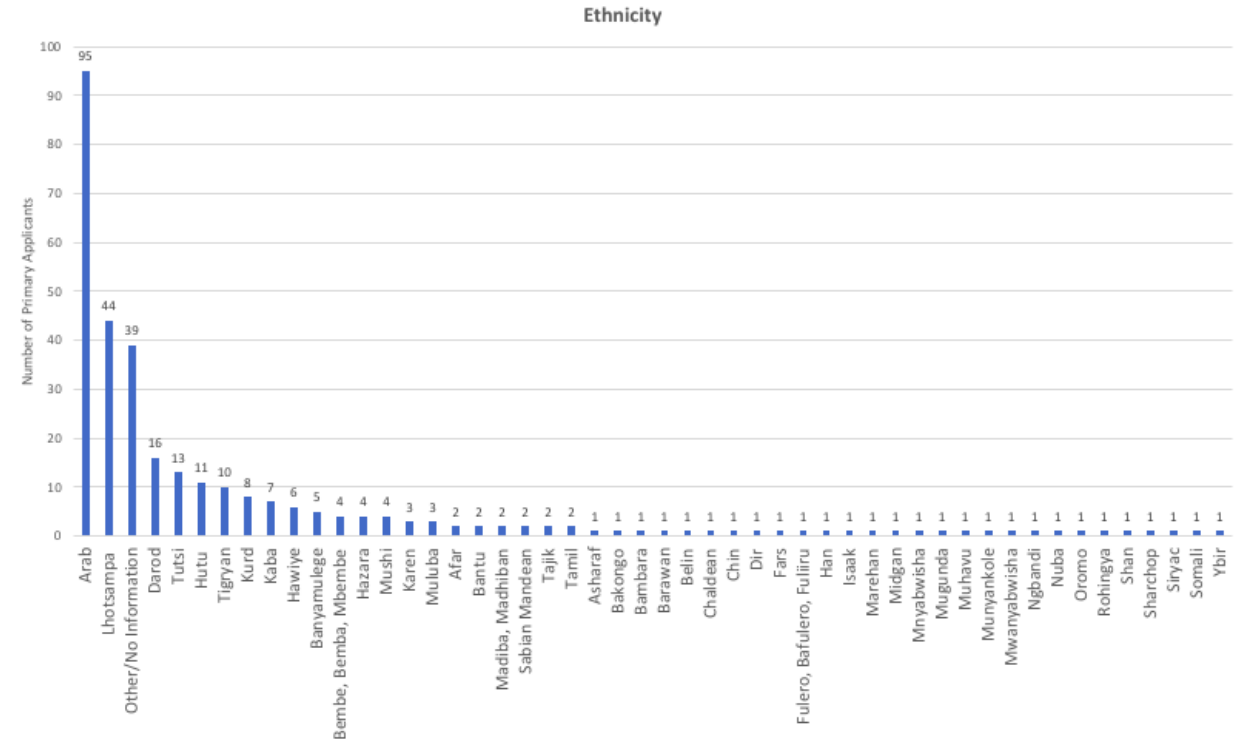
21. Subsequent Address #1 Case File Rent

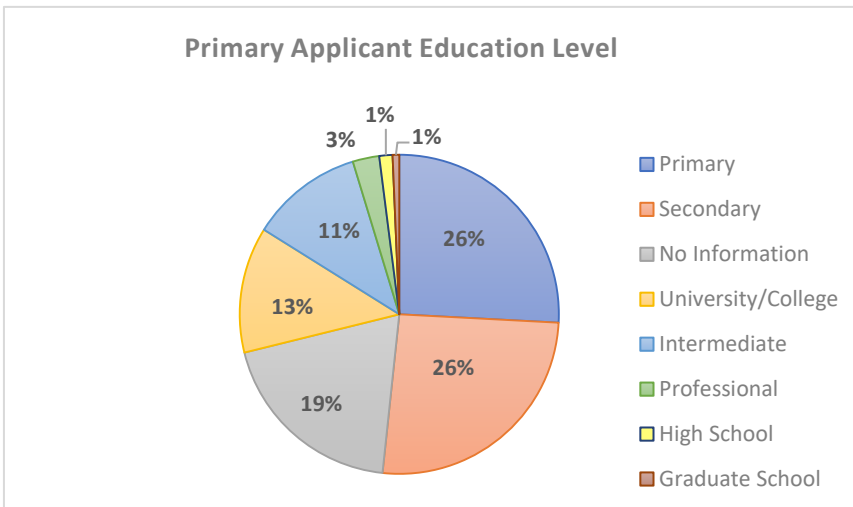
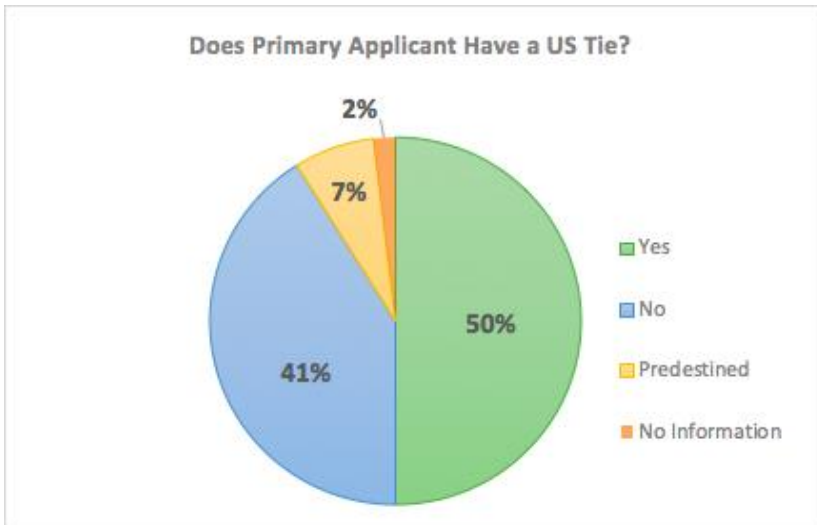
This category follows the same rationale as Case File Rent.

22. Notes

This is a miscellaneous category for anything worthy of noting about the case or case file.







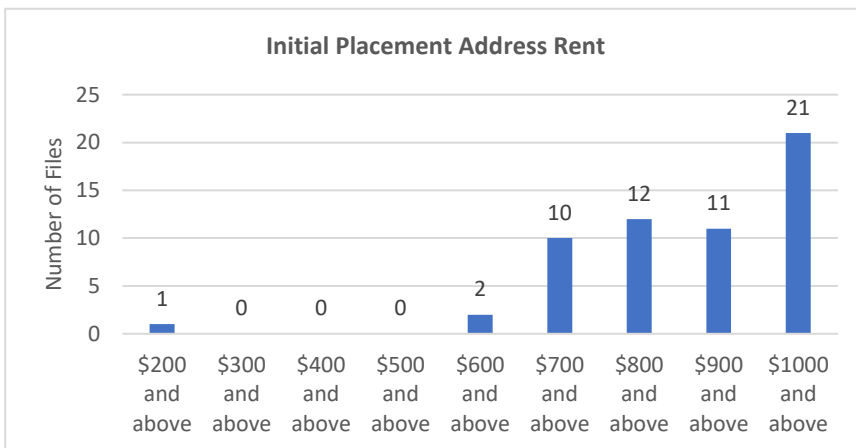
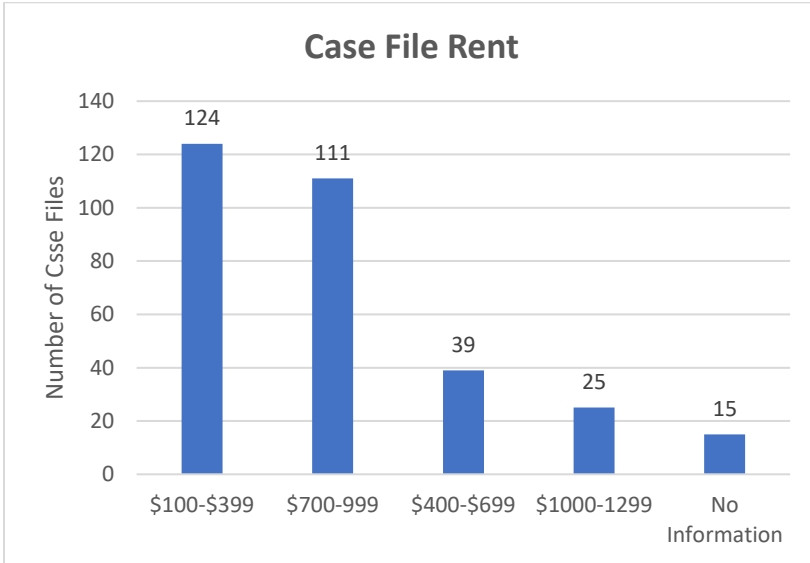
Appendix C. Demographic Cross Indicator Tables

Country of Birth	State Department Spoken English Proficiency			
	Good	Some	None	No Info
AFGHANISTAN	2		2	
BHUTAN	4	14	23	
BURMA		1		2
BURUNDI	1		8	
CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC		1	13	
CHINA			1	
DEM. REP. CONGO	4	13	28	
ERITREA		1	4	
ETHIOPIA		6	4	
INDIA			1	
IRAN		2	2	
IRAQ	7	24	47	9
IVORY COAST		1	1	
KENYA			2	
KUWAIT			1	
MALI		1	2	
NO INFORMATION				5
NEPAL	1	4		
PALESTINE	1			
RWANDA	1			
SAUDI ARABIA		1		
SENEGAL			3	
SOMALIA	5	6	20	2
SOUTH SUDAN	1			
SRI LANKA		2		
SUDAN			2	
SYRIA	2	4	8	2
TANZANIA			4	
THAILAND			2	
TOGO		1		
UGANDA	4			
YEMEN		1	1	
Total	33	83	178	20

Country of Birth	Education Level				Total
	College and above	High School	Less than High School	No information	
AFGHANISTAN	1	1	2		4
BHUTAN	5	9	7	20	41
BURMA		2	1		3
BURUNDI		4		5	9
CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC		7	5	2	14
CHINA			1		1
DEM. REP. CONGO	2	24	13	6	45
ERITREA		1	4		5
ETHIOPIA		4	4		8
ETHIOPIA				2	2
INDIA				1	1
IRAN	1	1	2		4
IRAQ	26	24	36	2	88
IVORY COAST	2				2
KENYA			2		2
KUWAIT				1	1
MALI		2	1		3
NO INFORMATION				3	3
NEPAL		2	3		5
PALESTINE		1			1
RWANDA		1			1
SAUDI ARABIA	1				1
SENEGAL			3		3
SOMALIA	3	2	12	16	33
SOUTH SUDAN			1		1
SRI LANKA		1		1	2
SUDAN	1		1		2
SYRIA	2	2	10	2	16
TANZANIA			4		4
THAILAND			1	1	2
TOGO		1			1
UGANDA	3	1			4
YEMEN	1	1			2
Total	48	87	113	62	314

Country of Birth	Year of Arrival					Total
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	
AFGHANISTAN				3	1	4
BHUTAN	1	23	13	4		41
BURMA		2			1	3
BURUNDI		1	4	4		9
CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC			8	6		14
CHINA		1				1
DEM. REP. CONGO		14	13	14	4	45
ERITREA			3	2		5
ETHIOPIA			4	6		10
INDIA		1				1
IRAN		3		1		4
IRAQ	1	38	24	20	4	88
IVORY COAST				2		2
KENYA					2	2
KUWAIT					1	1
MALI				3		3
NO INFORMATION		2			1	3
NEPAL		2	2	1		5
PALESTINE					1	1
RWANDA			1			1
SAUDI ARABIA					1	1
SENEGAL				2	1	3
SOMALIA		9	9	13	2	33
SOUTH SUDAN					1	1
SRI LANKA			2			2
SUDAN			1		1	2
SYRIA		1	9	4	2	16
TANZANIA				4		4
THAILAND			2			2
TOGO		1				1
UGANDA		2	2			4
YEMEN			1		1	2
Total	2	100	98	89	24	314

Appendix D. Housing Indicators



Appendix E. Case File Rent, Household Size, and Members Eligible for Employment

		Number of Employable Household Members						
Household Size (HS)	Case File Rent	0	1	2	3	4	No info	Total
		\$100-\$399						
	1 HS	15	87				7	109
	2 HS	3	1				2	6
	3 HS		1		1			2
	4 HS		1		1		1	3
	5 HS	1						1
	6 HS				1			1
	7 HS						1	1
	9 HS				1			1
	\$400-\$699							39
	1 HS	5	11				1	17
	2 HS	3	2	2			1	8
	3 HS	2	2	5				9
	4 HS	1					2	3
	5 HS		1					1
	7 HS			1				1
	\$700-\$999							111
	1 HS	10	11				2	23
	2 HS	2	5	1				8
	3 HS		11	7			4	22
	4 HS	7	9	6	2	1	3	28
	5 HS		1	3	2		1	7
	6 HS	1	3	7		1	2	14
	7 HS	1	2	1			1	5
	8 HS			1	1		2	4
	\$1000-\$1299							25
	1 HS	5	4					9
	2 HS		1					1
	4 HS		1		1			2
	5 HS		1	1				2
	6 HS		1	1				2
	7 HS	1	1	1				3
	8 HS			1	1			2
	9 HS					1		1
	10 HS	1	1					2
	12 HS		1					1
	No Rent Info							15
	1 HS	1	3				1	5
	2 HS	1	1					2
	3 HS	1					1	2
	4 HS		1	1			1	3
	5 HS		1					1
	6 HS						1	1
	11 HS						1	1
	Total	61	165	39	11	3	35	314

Appendix F. Date of Arrival, Household Size, Case File Rent

Case File Rent	Date of Arrival						
	2008	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	Total
\$100-399			40	34	41	9	124
1 HS			36	30	37	6	109
2 HS			2		2	2	6
3 HS			1		1		2
4 HS			1	2			3
5 HS				1			1
6 HS					1		1
7 HS						1	1
9 HS				1			1
\$400-699			13	15	9	2	39
1 HS			5	8	3	1	17
2 HS			2	3	2	1	8
3 HS			4	3	2		9
4 HS			2	1			3
5 HS					1		1
7 HS					1		1
\$700-999		2	41	36	23	9	111
1 HS			8	8	5	2	23
2 HS			3	1	4		8
3 HS		2	9	5	4	2	22
4 HS			8	12	5	3	28
5 HS			3	3		1	7
6 HS			7	3	3	1	14
7 HS			1	3	1		5
8 HS			2	1	1		4
\$1000-1299			2	10	12	1	25
1 HS				3	6		9
2 HS			1				1
4 HS				1		1	2
5 HS				1	1		2
6 HS				2			2
7 HS				1	2		3
8 HS					2		2
9 HS					1		1
10 HS				2			2
12 HS			1				1
No Information	1		4	3	4	3	15
1 HS	1		1	2	1		5
2 HS			1			1	2
3 HS			1		1		2
4 HS			1	1	1		3
5 HS					1		1
6 HS						1	1
11 HS						1	1
Total	1	2	100	98	89	24	314

Appendix G. Initial Placement Address Rent, Household Members, Number of Employable Household Members

		Initial Placement Address Rent					
		\$100-399	\$400-699	\$700-999	\$1000-1299	\$1300-1499	
Number of Employable Household Members	Household Members						
	1 Household Member						
	0			3	1	2	
	1	1	2	18	8		
	No information			2	2		
	2 Household Members						
	0			2			
	No information			1			
	3 Household Members						
	1			2			
	3			1			
	4 Household Members						
	0			1			
	1			1			
	3			1	1		
	No Information				1		
	5 Household Members						
	0				1		
	1					1	
	6 Household Members						
	2				1		
	3				1		
	7 Household Members						
	No information			1			
	8 Household Members						
	3				1		
	9 Household Members						
	3				1		
	Total		1	2	33	18	3

Appendix H. Landlord Verification and Shared Housing Forms

Shared Housing Verification

Part I

Requester Name _____

Return the completed form by ____/____/____

Part II

Name of head of household sharing expenses with the person named in Part III.

Street Address _____

City/Town _____ ZIP _____

Date person named in Part III moved in: ____/____/____

This Shared Housing Verification form explains how you and the other people living at your address share the costs for rent, utilities, and food. **Section IV, below, must be completed by the head of household.**

Part III Authorization to Release Information

I, _____
(Print Name)
give my permission to the requester to obtain and verify this information.

Signature _____ Date _____

Part IV (TO BE COMPLETED BY THE HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD)

A. Household Information

- Do you live in public or state or federally subsidized housing? Yes No
- Is anyone in your family related to the person named in Part III? Yes No
- Do you purchase and prepare meals together? Yes No
- Name of all household members, including the person named in Part III.

REQUESTER USE ONLY

- SUA Type
 Heating/Cooling
 Nonheating
 Phone

B. Rental Information (for person living with you)

- The person living/sharing with you:
- Gets meals provided? Yes No If yes, how many meals per week? _____
Amount paid per week for these meals is \$ _____
 - Rents a room? Yes No
 - Pays rent in the amount of \$ _____ per month week other _____ (specify)

C. Utility Information (for person living with you)

- No Separate Utilities:** All utilities are included in the rent. Yes
- Heating/Cooling:** Does the person living/sharing with you pay for either of the following SEPARATE from rent?
 heating (seasonally) air conditioning (seasonally)
- Nonheating:** Does the person living/sharing with you pay for any of the following utilities SEPARATE from rent?
 electricity (nonheat) gas/oil (nonheat) water/sewerage trash/garbage removal
 other _____ (specify)
- Telephone:** Does the person living/sharing with you pay for a telephone (may include a cell phone)?
 Yes No Unknown

LANDLORD VERIFICATION

Part I

Name of Department Worker _____

Return completed form by ____/____/____

Tenant's Name _____

Tenant's Address _____

City/Town _____ ZIP _____

Part II (Please complete, sign and date this form.)

A. Rental Information

- The total rent for this address is: \$ _____ per month week other _____ (specify)
- Does the tenant live in: Public Housing? Yes No
 Section 8 or Massachusetts Residential Voucher Program? Yes No
- If subsidized: Tenant Payment is: \$ _____ per month week other _____ (specify)
- Is the tenant behind on the rent? Yes No

B. Utility Information

- Are heat/air conditioning and all other utilities included in the rent? Yes No
- If not, does the tenant pay for any of the following separate from the rent?

Utilities	
Heat	
Air conditioning	
Electric	
Gas for cooking	

C. Landlord Information

Appendix I. Refugee Resettlement and Housing Types by Neighborhood Census Tracts³³

Census Tract	TownH	1 Fam	2 Fam	3 Fam	4-8 Apts	8+ Apts	Total
7319		1	2	22	12		37
7315		2	3	22	2	1	30
7324		4		21	4		29
7318		2		23	3		28
7314	1	3		9	4		17
7303				3	10		13
7326				9	4		13
7327	11			1			12
7330			1	5	5		11
7316			1	2	3	4	10
7317					6	4	10
7313	1			3	5		9
7322.03		1			7		8
7312.04				3	4		7
7325		4			3		7
7311.02				1	5		6
7312.03				4	2		6
7329.01					5	1	6
7328.02				1	4		5
7301	1						1
7302		1					1
7304.02					1		1
7323.02			1				1
Grand Total	14	18	8	129	89	10	268

Census Tract	Neighborhood	Total
7319	Bell Hill	37
7315	Pleasant St.	30
7324	Oak Hill	29
7318	Shrewsbury Street	28
7314	Piedmont	17
7303	QCC area	13
7326	Vernon Hill West	13
7327	Vernon Hill East	12
7330	South Worcester	11
7316	Elm Park	10
7317	Downtown	10
7313	Main South	9
7322.03	Franklin Street area	8
7312.04	University Park	7
7325	Green Island	7
	Other	27
TOTAL		268

³³ Kathryn Madden, Clark University

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