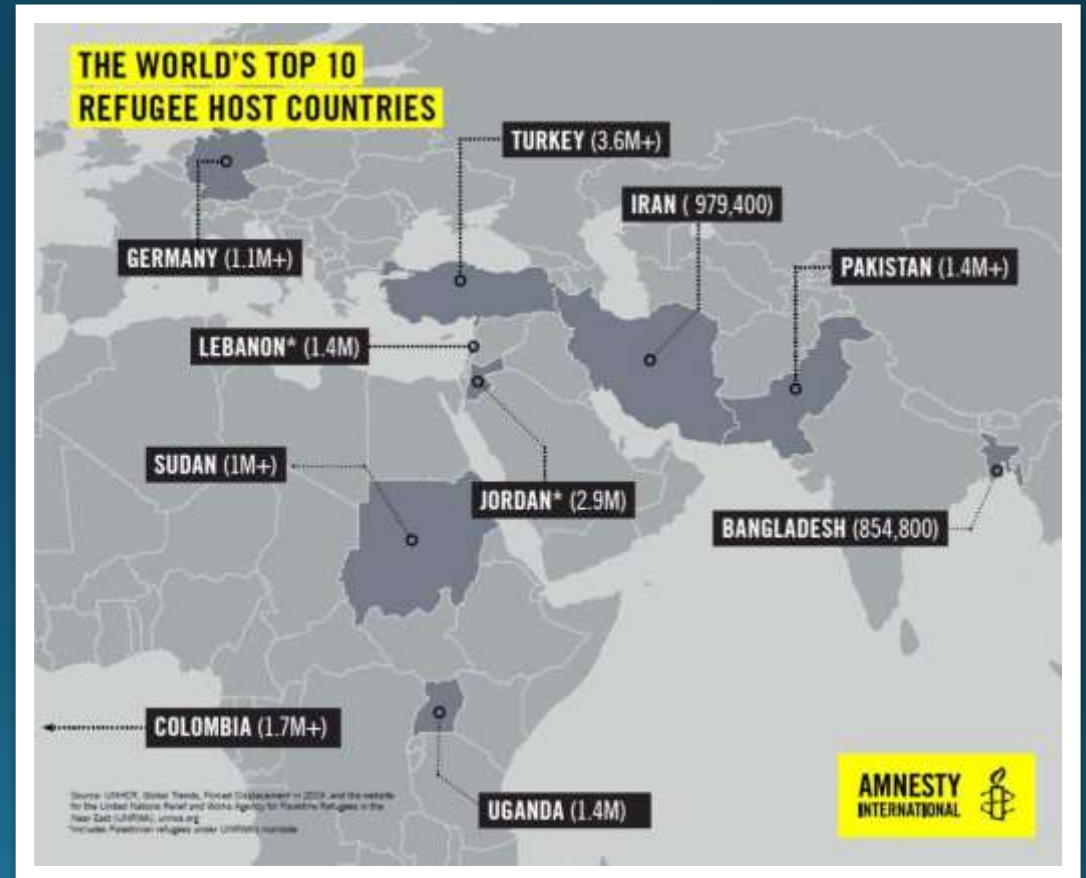


Whatcom County Council – June 2021

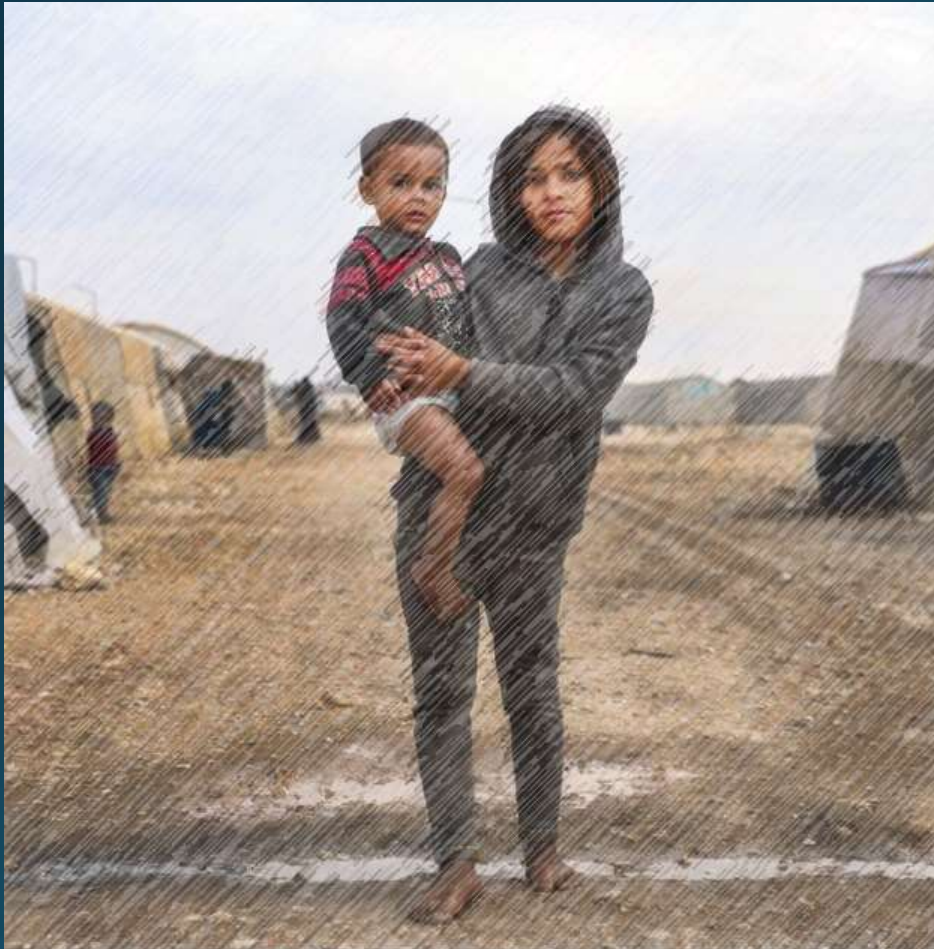
# Refugee Resettlement in Whatcom County

# Global Refugee Crisis

- 80 million displaced people
- 26 million of these are refugees (i.e. they have crossed an international border in search of safety)
- 50% of refugees are children
- 85% of refugees are hosted in developing nations



# Global Refugee Crisis

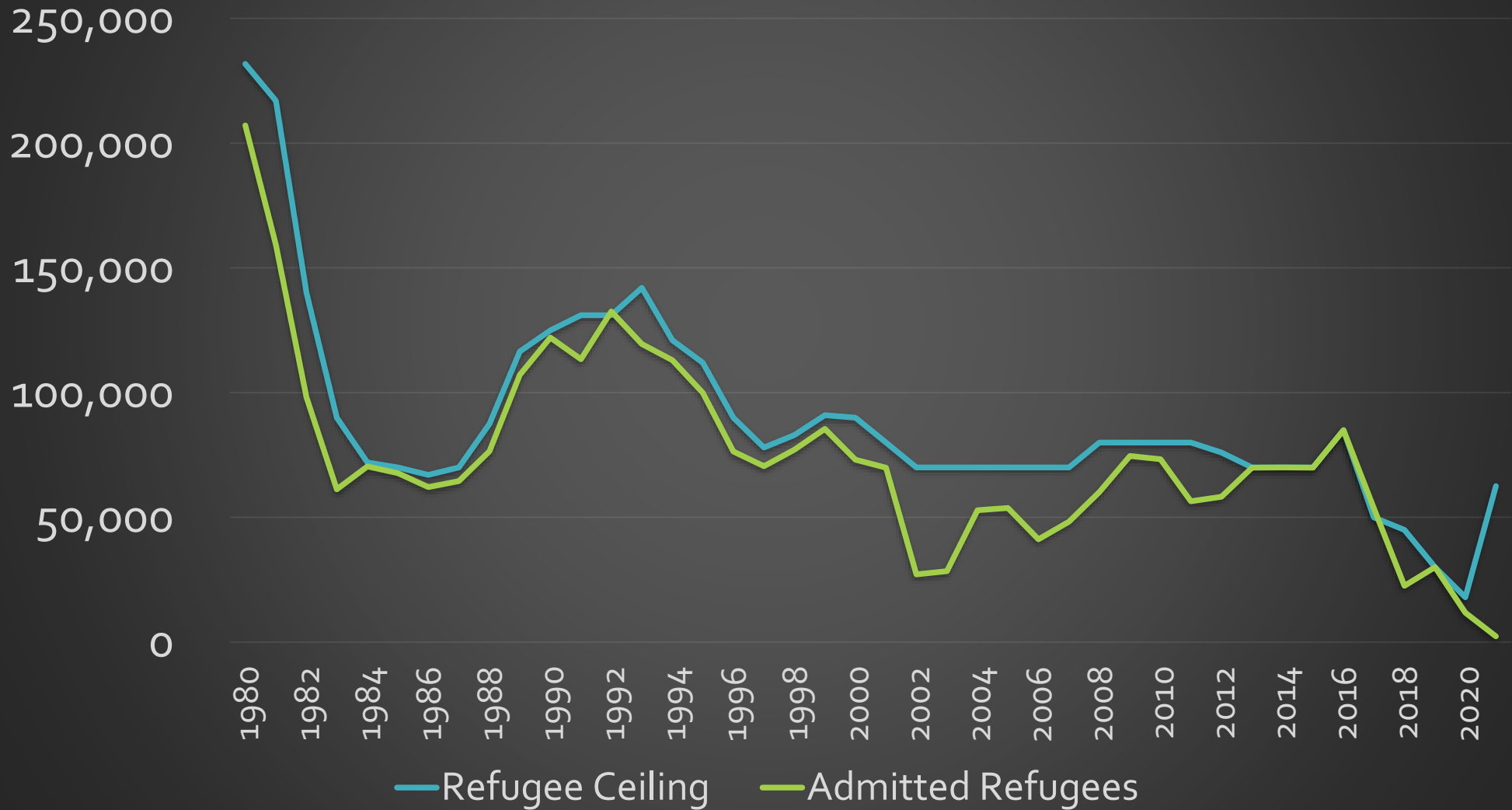


- Definition of **refugee** under U.S. law: “a person fleeing his or her country because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion.”
- Refugees reside in “third countries” (not the U.S. and not their countries of origin)

# How Refugee Resettlement Happens



# Refugee Ceilings vs. Admitted Refugees 1980-2021



# Current State of Refugee Resettlement in Whatcom County

- In 2019 Washington state received 2<sup>nd</sup> most refugees in country
- Locally resettled refugees: Individuals with family ties
- < 20 families in past two years
- Existing agencies



# World Relief



- Began resettlement work in 1979
- 19 resettlement offices, 12 states
- Work with faith communities and others to welcome and support refugees being resettled

# What Would a World Relief Office Do?

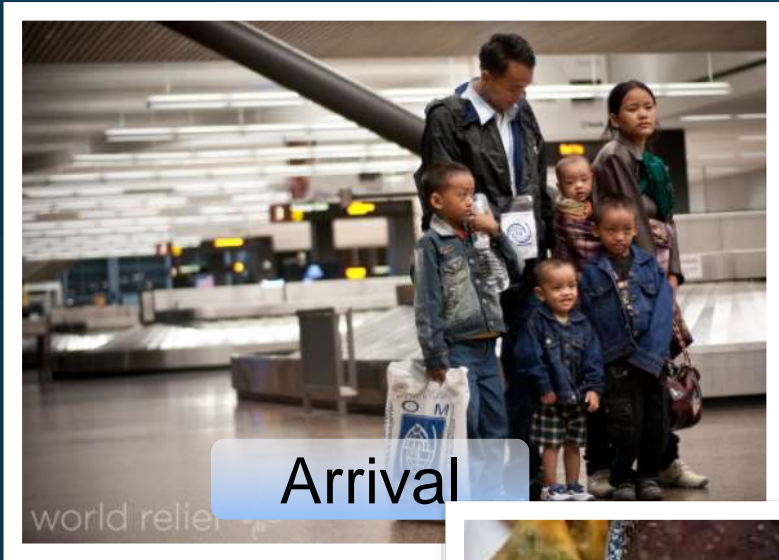
- Receive refugees and special immigrant visa referrals from the U.S. State Department
- Help refugees start new life
- Permanently resettle 75-150+ individuals per year in Whatcom County

Image Credit: Refugee &  
Immigrant Services Northwest





# Refugee Resettlement: First Hours



Arrival



Temporary Housing



First Meal

# Refugee Resettlement: First Days & Weeks



Long-Term Housing



Practical Assistance

Social Services



Public Schools



Health Screening &  
Healthcare Access

# Refugee Resettlement: First Months



ESL / ABE



Employment



Support Groups



Further Education /  
Vocational Training

# Refugee Resettlement: Ongoing (Years to Generations)



Friendship



Entrepreneurship



Citizenship

# The Cost of Resettlement?

- Refugees arrive with the full knowledge, support and involvement of the U.S. government
  - Extensive vetting
  - Work eligibility
  - Residency/citizenship
  - Eligibility for services
  - Financial support



# The Benefits of Resettlement



- **Housing:** Refugee arrivals do not draw on public/subsidized housing.
- **Economy**
  - 77.1% of refugees are working-age (vs. 50% of U.S.-born)
  - 13% of refugees are entrepreneurs (vs. 9% of U.S.-born)
  - On average, after 8 years, refugees pay more in taxes than they receive in benefits

# The Benefits of Resettlement

- The economy question
  - Multiple studies have shown that refugees end up being an economic net positive to regions where they are resettled
  - Europe example: During the recent influx of refugees and asylum seekers into Europe, countries that accepted refugees saw *increased per capita GDP, reduced unemployment, and improved public finance balances*. Countries which refused to accept these populations did not see these same effects.



# Sources for further information

- Migration Policy Institute: <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/data-hub/charts/us-annual-refugee-resettlement-ceilings-and-number-refugees-admitted-united>
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- “The Economic and Social Outcomes of Refugees in the United States: Evidence from the ACS”:  
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- “From Struggle to Resilience: The Economic Impact of Refugees in America”:  
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# Thank you!

Feel free to contact me with questions, or to be added to our monthly email update list:

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