

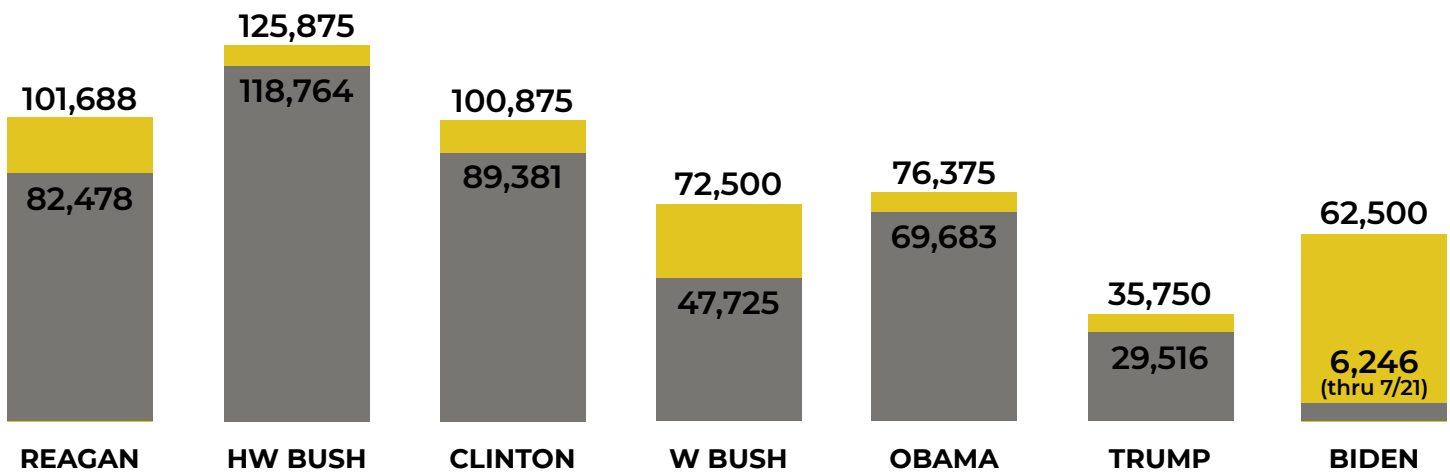
# REFUGEES IN FLORIDA

## Refugee Resettlement Fact Sheet



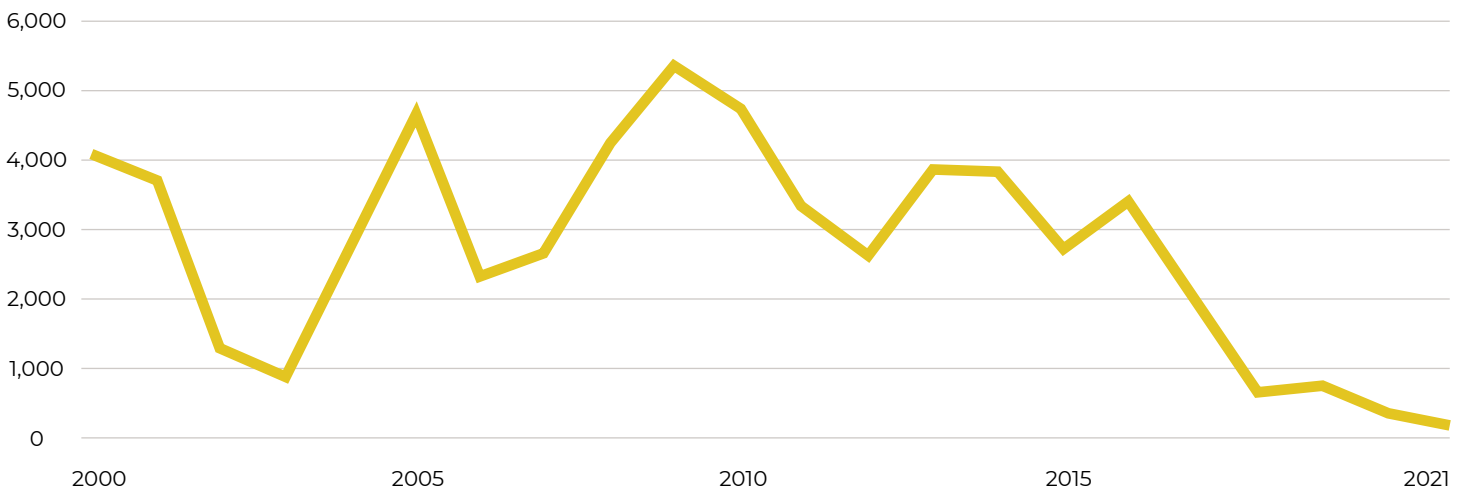
Who is a refugee? A person who was forced to flee their home country to escape war, violence, or persecution. The United States carefully selects the most vulnerable among these, who can neither return to their home country nor live safely in a neighboring country, for resettlement here. Each year, the president sets a ceiling on how many refugees the U.S. can resettle.

### AVERAGE REFUGEE ADMISSIONS CEILINGS & ACTUAL NUMBER OF REFUGEES RESETTLED PER U.S. FISCAL YEAR BY PRESIDENT



Policy changes and COVID have brought refugee admissions down even lower than their previous low after the 9/11 terrorist attacks when new security screening procedures were put into place. Of the refugees that are resettled in the U.S. only about 4% come to Florida. Of these, Hillsborough and Pinellas counties take in roughly 10%.

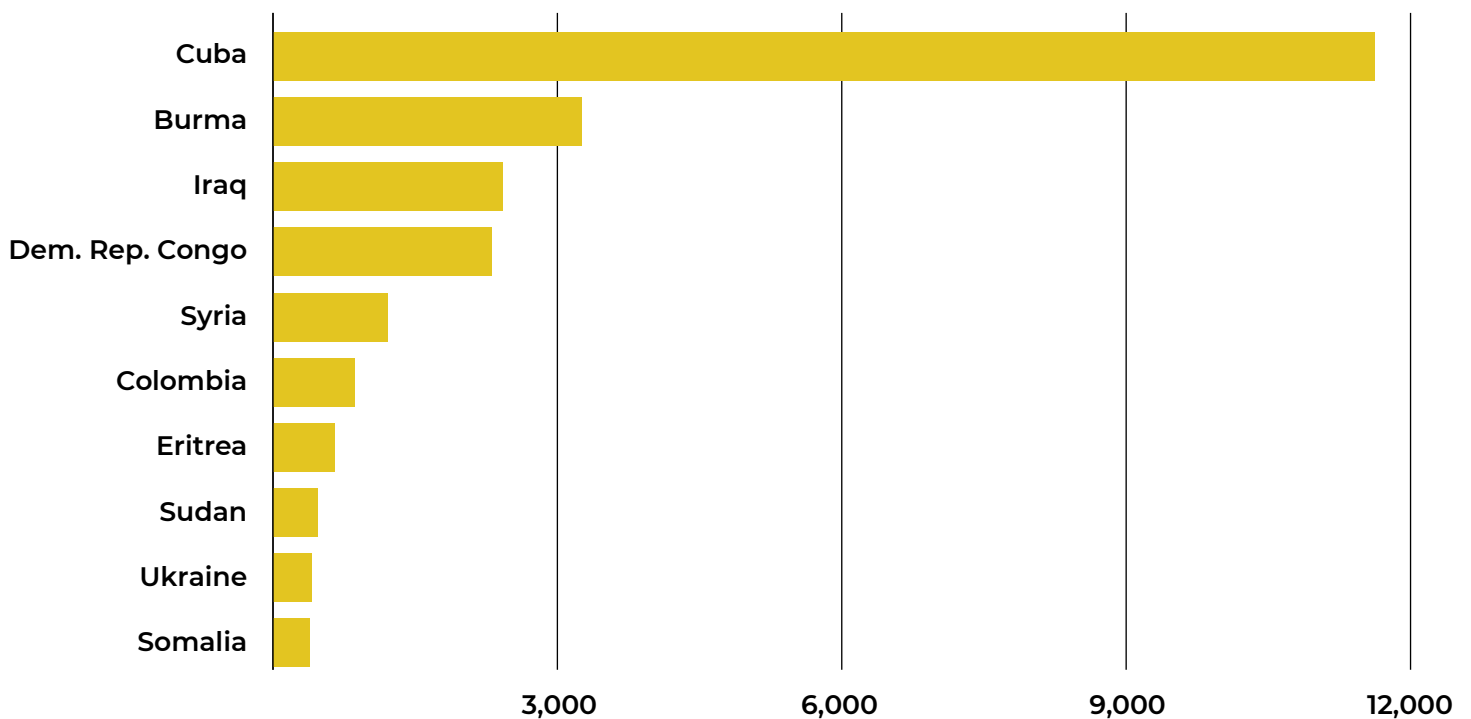
### FLORIDA REFUGEE ADMISSIONS 2000 - 2021



Where do refugees resettling in Florida come from? All around the world! Since 2010, Florida has resettled 25,424 refugees from more than 50 countries around the globe.



Roughly 45% of Florida's refugees since 2010 have come from Cuba. The top 10 origin countries in that time frame also include: Burma (Myanmar), Iraq, The Democratic Republic of Congo, Syria, Colombia, Eritrea, Sudan, Ukraine and Somalia.



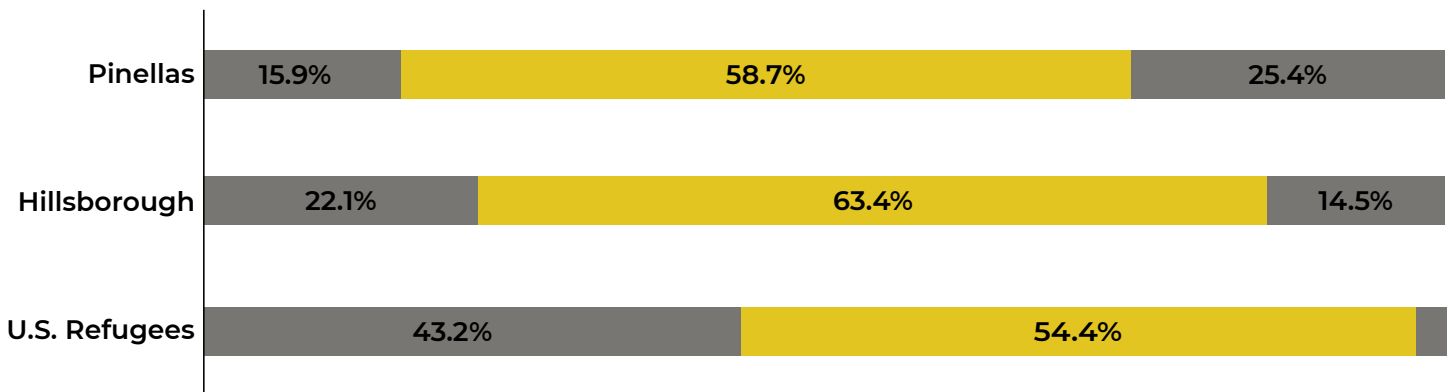
**How are refugees chosen for resettlement in the U.S.?** A rigorous vetting process is used to determine whether to accept a refugee for resettlement. It takes approximately two years and involves the following steps:

1. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) identifies refugees who will need resettlement. Occasionally, a U.S. ambassador will identify a candidate.
2. UNHCR assesses each individual case and gathers background information, like iris scans, fingerprints, facial scans and bio data, and submits the case to be considered.
3. Resettlement Support Centers and U.S. government intelligence agencies run background checks and security clearance processes.
4. The Department of Homeland Security conducts face-to-face interviews to determine whether the application qualifies for resettlement.
5. Pre-approved applicants go through a medical screening to ensure they do not have communicable diseases.
6. Approved applicants are assigned local NGOs that assist them upon arrival. These NGOs help refugees integrate and become economically self-sufficient in their new communities.

**How much does it cost to resettle refugees?** One study estimates the average cost of resettling a refugee in the United States between 2005 and 2014 was \$15,000, including background checks, housing, English language lessons, and job training. However, the study also found that within eight years of their arrival, adult refugees begin paying more in taxes than they received in benefits. These findings were echoed in a 2017 draft report by the Department of Health and Human Services that found that refugees in the U.S. brought in \$63 billion more in government revenues than they cost over the past decade.

**How do refugees impact our economy?** Especially in Florida, where many people moving to the State are retirees, younger workers are needed to keep our economy healthy. The vast majority of refugees are working-age people or children. Contrary to fears that refugees take away jobs from native-born citizens, the evidence shows that they are more likely to create jobs! Starting a business requires risk-taking, resilience, and determination - and many refugees' life experiences have provided them with exactly these skills, making them excellent entrepreneurs. In addition to the thousands of refugee-owned small businesses, several refugee-created businesses are among the most well-known companies in the U.S., including Google (Sergey Brin), WhatsApp (Jan Koum), Comcast (Daniel Aaron), Sriracha Sauce (David Tran), and PayPal (Max Levchin).

**PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION BY AGE (UNDER 18, 18-64, AND 65+) IN 2019**



What are people saying about RAMWI's work with refugees?

***We found love and helpfulness in a new and strange world; this was awesome! They introduced the new world to us in a very nice way. They also educated us on health matters which has been very beneficial.***

Support Group participant from Syria

***I came to Sew Much Hope to learn to sew and I have enjoyed every bit of it. I have become really good at what I do not just because of the teacher, but also because of the sense of community and peer help I received.***

Sew Much Hope participant from Congo

***An immigrant myself, I see these ladies as my own people. I am very happy with my role of being a translator for the Arabic speaking families, providing transportation, and taking them to doctor appointments.***

Wafa Chami, Support Group volunteer