

Chippewa Falls Mission Coalition Minutes – Monday, Feb. 5, 2024

PLACE: Central Lutheran Church, 28 E. Columbia St., Chippewa Falls

TIME: 5:00 p.m.

* Introductions and Prayer Requests

* Open Meeting With Prayer

* **Guest Speaker:** Jodi Jewell, Community Engagement Specialist for World Relief Wisconsin, Chippewa Valley – 221 W. Madison Ave., Suite 107, Eau Claire, WI 54703 – Office Phone: 920-231-3600

Subject: Refugee Resettlement in the Chippewa Valley

<https://worldrelief.org/wisconsin/about-us-chippewa-valley/>

- The Chippewa Valley office was set up in October 2023. The name Chippewa Valley was chosen mostly because there's already a Fox Valley location. Right now, they anticipate mostly resettling in Eau Claire.

World Relief is a global Christian humanitarian organization.

- They've been around for 80 years in 100 countries
- They're the humanitarian arm of the National Association of Evangelicals
- They believe every person is created in the image of God
 - God loves and cares for the vulnerable and commands people to as well
- WR is one of 10 different Refugee Resettlement agencies in the nation
 - Other examples: Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS), Catholic Charities, Episcopal Migration Ministries (EMM), etc.
- They contract with the federal government to resettle all individuals/families

Definitions of a Refugee

- A refugee is a person forced to flee their home country due to war, violence, persecution, or well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group.
- 'Refugee' is an internationally recognized legal status.
- Refugees are not the same as asylum-seekers.

110 million

people forcibly displaced worldwide by May of 2023



2X
people displaced in 2013



35.3 million

refugees displaced across borders



76%
live in low- and middle-income countries



62.5 million

internally displaced people



Worldwide Displacement in 2022

5.4 million

asylum seekers



Who are refugees?



35.3 million

refugees displaced across borders



87%

of people forcibly displaced across borders originated from just ten countries

51%



of displaced people are women and girls



41%

of all displaced people are children but they only make up 30% of the world's population

1.9 million

children born as refugees between 2018-2022



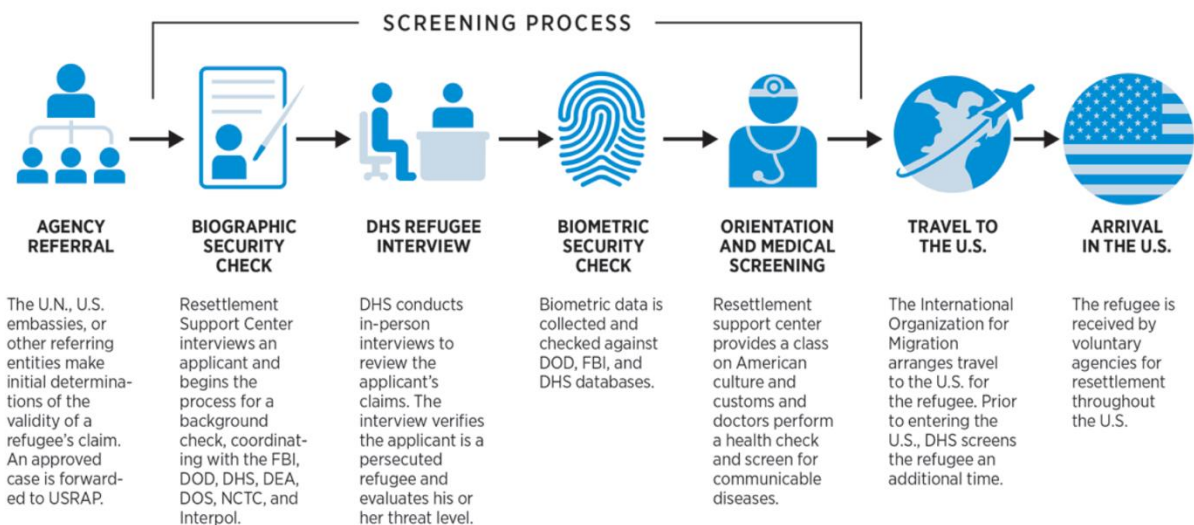
A Refugee's Journey

- UNHCR office provides immediate protection, shelter, healthcare, and referrals for resettlement
- Refugees wait for resettlement for 10-15 years, on average.
- They seek one of '3 Durable Solutions'
 1. Voluntary Repatriation - returning back to home country once safe
 2. Local Integration - into the country where they've sought initial refuge
 3. Resettlement - into a different country (only about 1% of all refugees)

* This year 2024, the US refugee allotted admissions is 125,000. This number fluctuates every year. For example, 2021's allotment was 62,500.

The Screening process for refugees happens before resettlement.

- It is EXTENSIVE
- The US process takes 24-36 months



SOURCE: Heritage Foundation research.

BG3212 heritage.org

<https://www.heritage.org/immigration/report/the-us-refugee-admissions-program-roadmap-reform>

World Relief assists in a refugee's first 90 days in the US.

- Goal is self-sufficiency after 90 days are up.
- They coordinate and help with doctors, schools, grocery stores, and core services like registrations, employment services, medical appointments, cultural orientation, and home visits.

- **This year, Wisconsin has been allotted 350 refugees. The Chippewa Valley location will receive 75 of those.**
- Anticipated populations: Democratic Republic of Congo and Myanmar/Burma
 - Still not certain though
- The name Chippewa Valley was chosen mostly because there's already a Fox Valley location. Right now, they anticipate mostly resettling in Eau Claire for at least the first year because of the public transportation available.

How Can We Welcome?

- **Volunteer! (Most opportunities involve being a friend)**
<https://worldrelief.org/wisconsin/get-involved/volunteer/>
 - Transportation
 - Move-in team
 - Friendship partner
 - Good Neighbor team
 - 6-10 people to partner with 1 family for 6 months
- **Give donations**
 - Household items
 - Furniture
 - Monthly financial support

Question: What about housing?

- They're still working on finding housing.
- If housing isn't yet available, families will likely begin in an extended stay hotel during the interim.

Question: How does funding work?

- World Relief is federally funded and uses donation support
 - Donations help alleviate the cost of extended stay hotel bills
- Refugees themselves are each given an initial stipend of one lump sum. Most is used towards rent, which refugees are responsible for paying. Refugees sign their own leases, and World Relief does not cosign.

ACTION ITEM:

On February 13 at 6:00PM, the Chippewa County Board has a vote regarding World Relief and refugee resettlement. There is a public comment period before the vote. Please attend if you are able!

- Regardless of public opinion, this World Relief Office has already been approved by the federal government.

The Chippewa Valley Office

- Will be using phone translation apps and is still working on finding interpreters
- The Eau Claire schools have expressed excitement and support of new refugee students
- Refugees could arrive anytime between now and September.
- Technically, refugees can be resettled anywhere within 100 miles of the World Relief office.
 - Staff need to do home visits, so they aren't likely to opt for extreme distances. Ideally, resettlement will be within Eau Claire city because of public transportation. It is possible that resettlement could eventually branch to Chippewa Falls if, for example, suitable employment can be found and transportation solutions arise.
- There are 5 people on staff in Eau Claire, including a case worker, employment specialist, and health specialist.
- Refugees will come with some medical documents from their screening process.
- Refugees come approved for work in the US.

*** Mission Update: Hope Village/Tiny Houses (Mike Cohoon)**

Quarter Auction: Still counting quarters from the Hope Village “Quarter Auction” Fund Raiser held on Feb. 3rd.

Close to 300 people in attendance bidding on 140 donated baskets.

- **Tiny House Build:** House #12 is nearly completed.
- **Start Building Housing --** Mike is preparing a grant proposal for \$2 million to start the duplexes and 6-plex at Hope Village
 - Ground breaking may be around August or September

New CFMC Website (Mark Birrittella)

Check it out...

<https://www.cfmissioncoalition.org/>

- CVTC made the logo
- Still being fine-tuned

- Has tabs for upcoming events, current projects, member congregations and organizations, past meeting minutes, and a contact us form.
- Check to make sure all information about your church/non-profit, etc., is correct.

“Lighten Your Load” Laundry Mission (Gayle Klitzke)

- Fully staffed through March
- Gayle will send out the new calendar to Tom. He will forward it to the group.

“Lather With Love” Soap Mission for local Food Pantries (Tom Drehmel)

- Will happen in April this year.
- Tom is suggesting church youth groups run it this year. Have them do the promoting for your church, gather the donations, and then bring everything to Central. More details at our March 4th meeting.

CFMC Group Service (Angela Maloney)

- The CFMC will be serving at Agnes Table April 2
- Need 5-7 people
- A business often sponsors meals without providing volunteers. Angela is checking to see if Mason Companies will sponsor our meal service.
- We finalize plans at our March 4th and April 1st meetings.
- A sign-up will go out to the group
 - Please make sure volunteers are not all from one church/organization. Hoping to show the diversity of CFMC members.

Next Meeting is March 4th -- 5:00pm

- At Christ Episcopal, 624 Bay St., Chippewa Falls
- Please note that there are stairs

* Close with Lord’s Prayer/Our Father.

Respectfully Submitted, Kari Allen

CFMC Mission Statement; “Faithful people joining hearts and hands to be God’s Love in action for our neighbors near and far.”

CFMC Bible Verse: Psalm 60:12 – “With God’s Help We Will Do Mighty Things.”

Website: cfmissioncoalition.org