



**WASHTENAW  
REFUGEE  
WELCOME**

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# **2023 Annual Report**

## **Our Mission:**

**Washtenaw Refugee Welcome is a volunteer organization designed to give long-term support to refugees building a new life in Washtenaw County, MI. WRW utilizes the talents and passions of ordinary people and partner organizations to help our newest neighbors build relationships and navigate their way around the community.**



## 2023 Report Introduction

### *Emmeline Weinert - Board Chair*

Greetings Washtenaw Refugee Welcome (WRW) Supporters,

Another year has come and gone! I am so proud of this small but mighty network as we continue to extend a much needed welcome to our refugee neighbors. "We're so happy you're here!" I heard a volunteer at the Thanksgiving Potluck say again and again. 'We're so happy you're here' pretty much sums up Washtenaw Refugee Welcome.

In 2023, WRW continued to welcome new families, and be a support system and community space for families who have been in southeast Michigan for several years now. For some, WRW has been a lifeline during a crisis like an eviction notice or medical emergency, while for others WRW is just the friends they meet up with at the park or the people who drop off diapers and toys for the new baby.

We're here to help each other succeed. In any interaction, we want our new neighbors to know we're so happy they're here. Whatever conflict, violence or disturbance upended their life, whether we just met, or we are now old friends, we are happy to see you.

In 2024 we are excited to launch our Refugee Community Monthly Meet Ups on the 2nd Saturday of every month at Emmanuel Lutheran Church in Ypsilanti, where all are welcome. We are looking for volunteers to provide and host a snack and craft at each monthly meeting, so please consider [signing up here](#). In 2024 we have plans to host seasonal social events, build connections with more partner agencies and continue our individualized support work.

Thank you for being an advocate of welcome and being a part of the Washtenaw Refugee Welcome movement.





# New Neighbor Arrivals Report

*Maryam Tout - Board Member*

WRW continues to work closely with Jewish Family Services (JFS), Washtenaw County's licensed refugee resettlement agency, as well as collaborate with other agencies and service providers in the area. Here are some of the recent refugee resettlement statistics:

- In FY23 (Oct 2022-Sept 2023) Michigan served almost 9k individuals, including refugees, asylum seekers, sponsorships and Special Immigrant Visas (SIV).
- Washtenaw County received 10% of Michigan refugee arrivals this past fiscal year, the third highest county after Kent and Ottawa.
- FY24 arrivals (Oct 2023 - Feb 2024) in Washtenaw County are around 150 individuals (around 50 cases) and mostly refugees, but a few SIVs. The capacity for the year is 350.
- 21 families arrived in February 2024 alone, nearly triple where we were last year at this time.
- Ukrainian sponsorship applications (separate from JFS resettlements) are over 8k, making Michigan the 10th highest for Ukrainian resettlement. An estimated 4k have arrived already, with 4k more expected.
- The largest populations for local resettlement include: Syria, Afghanistan, DRC, and smaller numbers from Iran, Iraq, Yemen, Venezuela, Somalia and Egypt.

## Welcome

- Michigan has seen the arrival of a significant number of asylum seekers who are not eligible for public benefits. Most come to Michigan after arriving in Chicago or NYC. These folks mostly come from Nicaragua, Venezuela, Ecuador and some African nations.
- Since the start of the fiscal year there have been 500+ Cuban and Haitian migrant arrivals pursuing asylum, and the expectation is about 2k for the fiscal year.



# In-kind Donations Report

*Joyce Deren - Board Member*

In 2023, WRW volunteers drove over 1,250 miles within Washtenaw County picking up and delivering donated items to our refugee families. These families are starting from scratch and your gifts go a long way.

**Thank you to everyone who gave funds or items!**

*A few special "thank yous" to:*

- Jeanne who continues to co-ordinate donations through NextDoor.
- The person who donates diapers each month.
- Faith In Action in Chelsea for toys and games.
- Common Cycle for their distribution and partnership program which provides free bicycles in and around Ann Arbor to those who need them but cannot afford them. They accept used bicycles and rehab them- [commoncycle.org](http://commoncycle.org)
- Emmanuel Lutheran Church in Ypsilanti for providing meeting space for our Second Saturday of the month gatherings.
- St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Ypsilanti for providing secure storage space.
- Corrigan Moving Systems for continuing to provide our major storage units.
- Delta Kappa Gamma - Ann Arbor chapter - for contributing a van full of diapers and wipes.
- The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints for hosting and providing lovely Thanksgiving dinner along with 27 bags of consumable items and new warm weather clothing items.





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## 2023 Events Report

*Sarah Eklov-Monegan - Board Secretary*

WRW had some wonderful events this year, including our Valentine's Event in February and our Summer Festival in June. Our Summer Festival continues to grow and we were so happy to see even more refugee families than last year. This event was made even better with the help of our partners, which included Domino's Pizza, who provided free pizza for the event, and AFC Ann Arbor who provided free tickets to their soccer games and also had players attend the event to play ball with kids of all ages. It was a wonderful event and one that we hope to continue to see grow in the future. In the Fall we gathered to paint pumpkins together and enjoy cider and donuts.



This year also saw the return of our Thanks for Giving event in November, which we have not been able to do since the start of the pandemic. We were so blessed to have The Church of Latter Day Saints-Green Road as our gracious and generous hosts. It was a great event full of delicious food and fantastic fellowship.



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## Business and Financials Report

*Doug Wathen - Board Treasurer*

WRW is very thankful to the donors who continue to support this important work. We are funded mostly by donations, the majority of which are from individuals. We have also received donations from a number of local faith organizations and businesses. In addition, Dominos has again been very generous in their support, both financial and by providing food for events.

Our overhead costs are very minimal, with most of our expenses being for support of refugees. This includes general support such as buying supplies as well as direct support for certain emergencies encountered by our refugee clients. We also fund the various events we host, such as holiday gatherings. Not reflected in the financial statement are the substantial in-kind donations we receive to give to refugees, as well as food and supplies for events.

2024 Operational Budget for Washtenaw Refugee Welcome		
Categories	2023 Actuals	2024 Budget
REVENUE		
Corporate/Grants	\$5,000	\$5,000
Individual Gifts	\$7,863	\$7,000
TOTALS	\$12,863	\$12,000
EXPENSES		
Administrative/Overhead	\$1,276	\$1,300
Direct financial support to refugees	\$4,666	\$6,000
General refugee support	\$1,173	\$2,000
Events and programming	\$1,903	\$2,000
TOTALS	\$9,018	\$11,300

Based on last year's support, we have budgeted for a modest increase in revenue and expenses for 2024. We are happy to report that we entered 2024 with a positive bank balance, allowing us to continue our support mission.