

Office of Refugee Resettlement Services for Survivors of Torture

2024 Annual SOT Recipient
Meeting
March 20, 2024

WiFi Information: HHS Guest, no password required



Office of Refugee Resettlement Services for Survivors of Torture

Opening Remarks

Maggie Brewinski Isaacs, ORR DRH Director
Hawthorne Smith, NCTTP Executive Director



Office of Refugee Resettlement Services for Survivors of Torture

Remarks and Dialogue with ORR Leadership

Jen Smyers, ORR Deputy Director
Ken Tota, ORR Refugee Program Director



THE FISCAL IMPACT OF REFUGEES AND ASYLEES AT THE FEDERAL, STATE AND LOCAL LEVELS FROM 2005-2019

THE OFFICE OF REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT (ORR) &
HHS, ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR PLANNING AND EVALUATION (ASPE).



Objective

Underlying question:

Refugee and asylee programs in the US are designed with humanitarian, not economic goals.

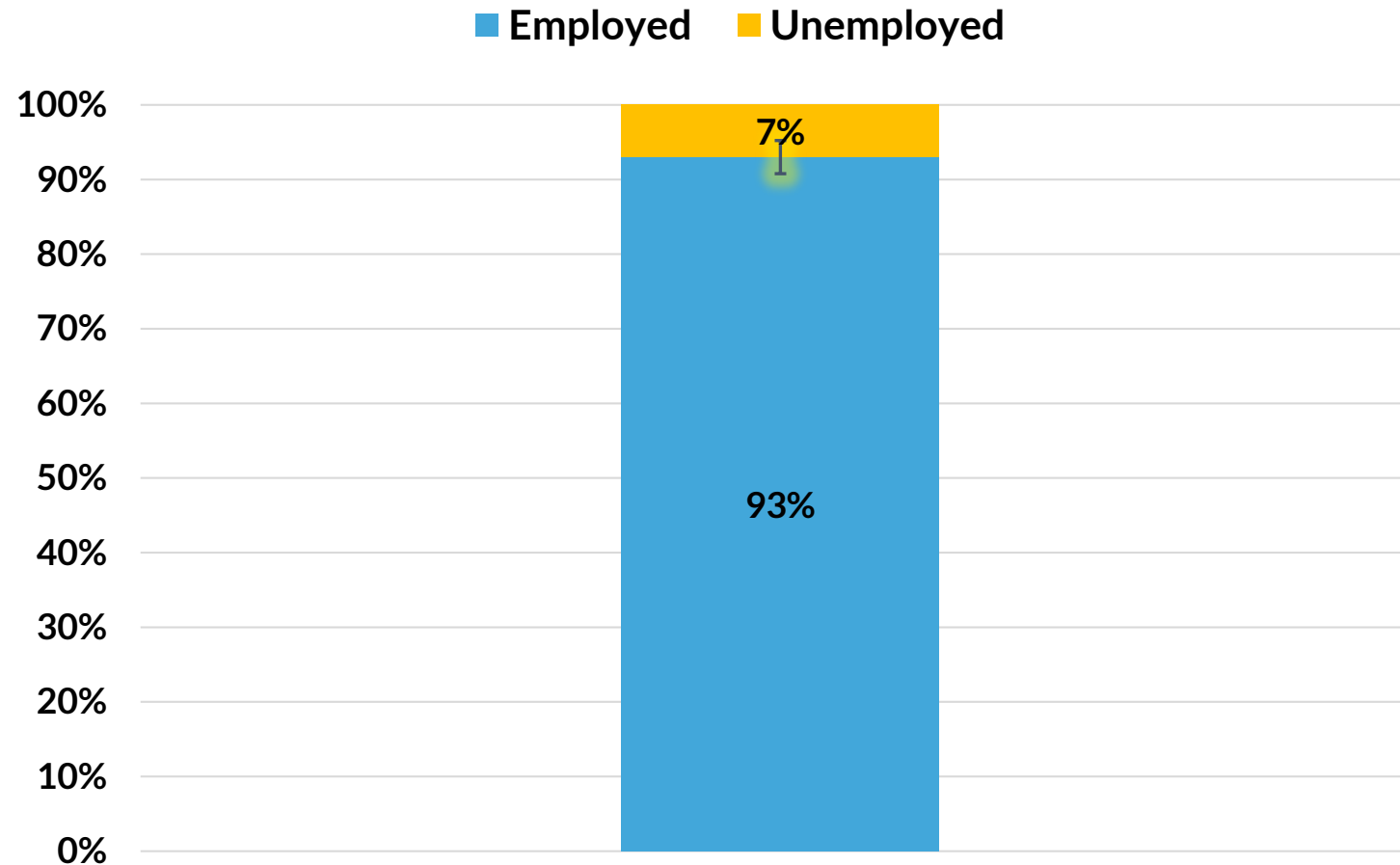
The study seeks to answer the question that we assume to be true:

Do refugees and asylees have a net benefit and positive contribution to the economy in the US?

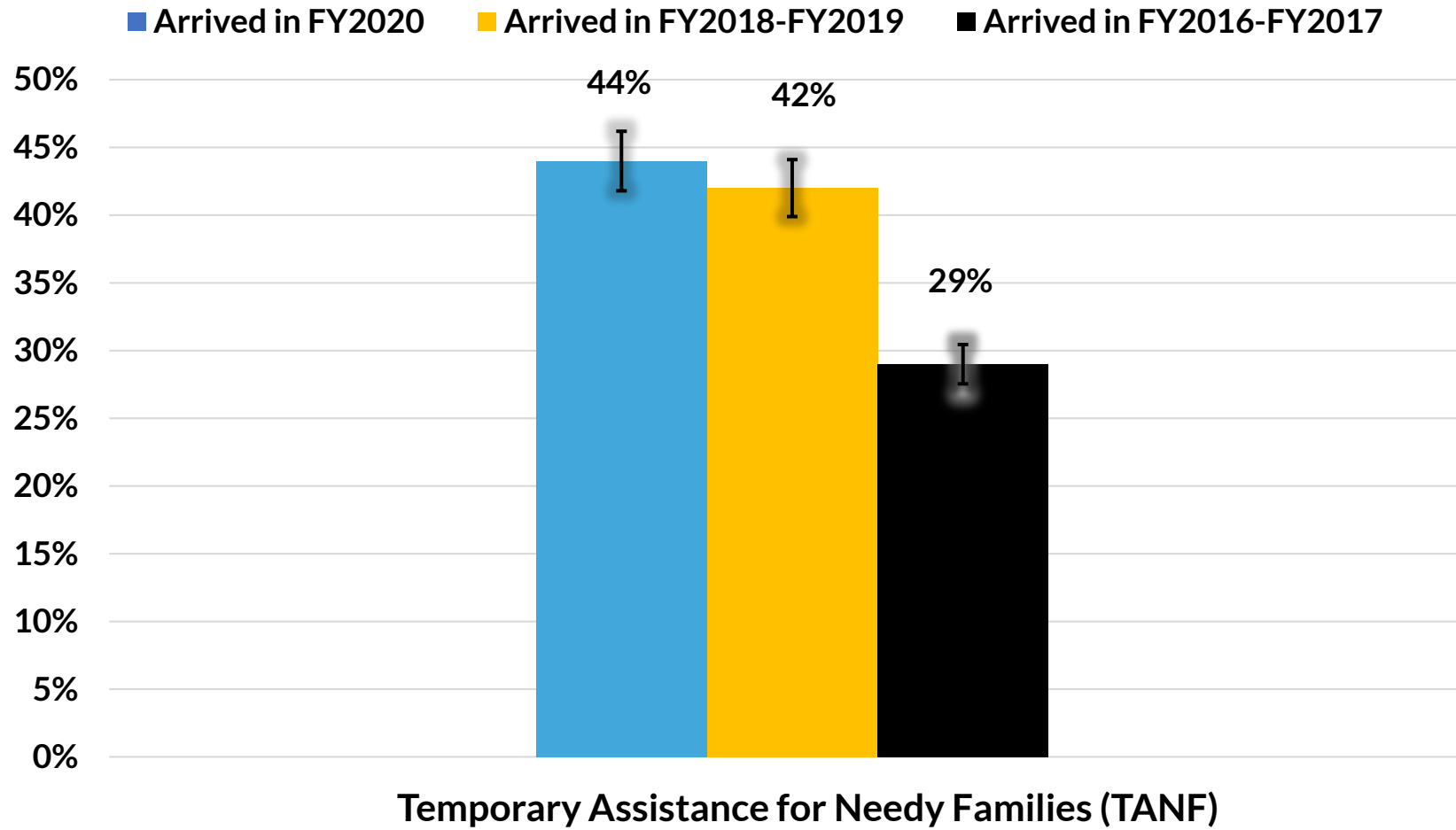
Why to we assume a positive /net contribution?



ASR Results - Among those in the labor force, large majority are employed



Public assistance decreases with time in U.S.



Study Methods Conducted by ASPE

Static accounting approach, following methods of National Academies of Science report *The Economic and Fiscal Consequences of Immigration*¹

Fiscal analysis estimate the net impact on federal and state/local governments over 15 years: 2005 to 2019

All estimates adjusted for inflation, presented in 2019 dollars

Focus on two groups:

- Refugees/Asylees: all individuals since 1980 who entered the U.S. as refugees or were granted asylum in the U.S.
- Refugee/Asylee immediate families: refugees/asylees, and spouses and children who are not refugees or asylees

¹ National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. 2016. "Estimating the Fiscal Impact of Immigration," Chap. 7; "Past and Future Fiscal Impacts of Immigrants on the Nation," Chap.8; "State and Local Fiscal Effects of Immigration," Chap. 9 in *The Economic and Fiscal Consequences of Immigration*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.



Methods Continued:

Comprehensive set of fiscal expenditures:

- Refugee/asylee-specific cash, medical, job training, and social service programs
- Social insurance programs: Social Security, Social Security Disability Insurance, Medicare
- Means-tested benefits (e.g., Medicaid, TANF), education, child welfare, and criminal justice costs

Net impact to federal, state, and local governments

Per capita impact to compare to the U.S. population



Methods Continued:

Compiled budgetary and administrative data from federal programs:

- Office of Refugee Resettlement,
- Department of Homeland Security,
- Department of State, among others

Current Population Survey Annual Social and Economic Supplement

TRIM3 Microsimulation Model

- Imputes refugee and asylee status
- Corrects for underreporting of means-tested benefits for greater accuracy of program costs



Expenditures Included

Refugee-specific Benefits and Programs

- Transitional Assistance and Medical Services
- Refugee Preventive Health Services
- Refugee Social Services
- Refugee Targeted Assistance
- State Department, Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration

- DHS, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

Education, Child Welfare Services, and Criminal Justice

- K-12 public education
- Public funding for higher education
- Child welfare services
- Court and legal costs
- Corrections

Refundable Tax Credits

- Federal Child Care Tax Credit (CTC)
- Federal Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)
- State Earned Income Tax Credits

Social Insurance Benefits

- Social Security
- Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)
- Medicare (parts A, B, D)

Means-tested Benefits

- Child Care Subsidies
- Health Centers
- Health, assistance to hospitals for the uninsured
- Health insurance premium tax credits
- Head Start
- Housing Assistance
- Low Income Energy Assistance (LIHEAP)
- Medicaid / Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)
- National School Lunch Program
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly food stamps)
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- Women, Infants and Children (WIC), Special Supplemental Nutrition Assistance
- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) services

Revenue Included

Federal and state income taxes

Federal excise taxes

State and local sales tax

Property tax

FICA payroll taxes



Expenditures and Revenues Not Included – MARGINAL COSTS (WOULD EXIST IF THIS ONE REFUGEE CAME OR NOT).

Excluded Expenditures

Public goods (e.g., national security, public safety, parks, transportation, interest on national debt)

Other social insurance (e.g., unemployment insurance, workers compensation)

Diffuse benefit programs (e.g., Community Services Block Grant, Social Services Block Grant, Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act)

Smaller public benefits (e.g., IRS support for low-income taxpayers, the Weatherization Assistance Program)

Benefits unique to state and local governments

Excluded Revenues

Business taxes

Licenses and permits



Limitations

Policies, countries of origin, U.S. economy and other factors during the 15-year period may change over time, and may not project into future

No estimate of how fiscal impact varies by refugee/asylee subgroups (e.g., country of origin)

No estimate of lifetime impact of an “average” refugee/asylee

Impacts of 3rd generation refugees/asylees and 2nd generation adults are excluded

Refugee and asylee costs cannot be separated

Ignores any second-order economic impacts of refugee population to business sectors, employment structure and levels, or overall wages, which could affect government revenues and expenditures



Expenditures and Revenues for Refugees/Asylees, and Including Immediate Families, 2005-2019

(values in millions)

	Revenue	Expenditures	Net
	<i>Refugees and Asylees</i>		
Total	\$581,009	\$457,229	\$123,781
Federal	363,040	331,539	31,501
State & Local	217,969	125,689	92,280
	<i>Refugees, Asylees and Immediate Families</i>		
Total	\$739,401	\$723,366	\$16,035
Federal	467,450	429,995	37,455
State & Local	271,951	293,371	-21,420

Values in millions, expressed in 2019 dollars.



Comparison to U.S. Population

Annual Per Capita Net Impact, Refugees/Asylee Population and U.S. Population

	Refugees and Asylees	Refugees, Asylees and Immediate Family	U.S. Population
Expenditures	\$10,222	\$10,270	\$10,416
Revenues	\$12,989	\$10,498	\$12,674
Net	\$2,767	\$228	\$2,258

Values in dollars, expressed in 2019 dollars.

- Refugees and asylees engage certain services to differing degrees relative to the general U.S. population.
- Per capita expenditures on SS, Medicare, school meals, and K-12 education higher for general U.S. population.
- Per capita expenditures on TANF, SNAP, refundable tax credits, are higher for refugees and asylees.
- Refugees and asylees contribute relatively more to income taxes, less to sales and property taxes.



Implications – Impacts

- *Refugee and asylee resettlement efforts align with America's longstanding humanitarian values and traditions.
- *While these efforts have a cost to the government, refugees and asylees contribute more in revenue than what the government spends.
- *Budgetary arguments against the refugee resettlement program and the economic budget are not supported by the evidence.

