

From: Wingo, Karen <Karen.Wingo@dss.sc.gov>
To: Pisarik, HollyHollyPisarik@gov.sc.gov
Symmes, BrianBrianSymmes@gov.sc.gov
CC: Veldran, KatherineKatherineVeldran@gov.sc.gov
Date: 12/10/2015 12:35:19 PM
Subject: FW: Follow-up from Aiken Standard re: Refugee Resettlement

Brian and Holly,

Please see the follow-up from Dan, as well as my proposed response in red below for your editing.

Dan,

Thank you for your follow-up. Individuals who arrive in South Carolina through the Refugee Resettlement Program arrive throughout the year and the timing of their arrival in South Carolina is dependent on a number of factors including, but not limited to, the completion of background checks by the federal government and coordination of travel between the federal government, resettlement organizations and the refugees. Refugee resettlement services are statewide and the placement of refugees is determined by the resettlement agencies (Lutheran Services and World Relief). However, a majority of refugee arrivals settle in the following counties: Richland, Greenville, Lexington, Charleston, Dorchester, and Spartanburg. For 2016, the Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration has approved the resettlement agencies in South Carolina combined to receive and place approximately 320 refugees in South Carolina. Please let me know if you have any additional questions.

Karen Luchka Wingo
Director of Communications and Legislative Affairs
South Carolina Department of Social Services
1535 Confederate Avenue
Columbia, South Carolina 29202

Office Phone: (803) 898-8030
Email: karen.wingo@dss.sc.gov
www.dss.sc.gov



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From: Brown, Dan [mailto:dbrown@aikenstandard.com]
Sent: Thursday, December 10, 2015 12:19 PM
To: Wingo, Karen <Karen.Wingo@dss.sc.gov>
Subject: Re:

This is great information.

Thank you.

A couple follow up questions.

Is there any definitive time frame as to when refugees may be relocated here? Is there any definite plan as to where refugees might be relocated? (trying to anticipate reaction here).

I'm running this on Friday. Any additional information you can provide would be helpful and appreciated.

Thanks.

Dan

On Dec 10, 2015, at 8:49 AM, Wingo, Karen wrote:

The Refugee Resettlement Program is a federal program administered by the Office of Refugee Resettlement, an office of the Administration for Children and Families within the federal department of HHS. As this is a federal program, the administration of the Refugee Resettlement Program is completely federally funded. Before any individual is resettled in the United States as a refugee, he or she is vetted by the federal government and only individuals approved by the federal government are admitted into the program for placement.

South Carolina has participated in the Refugee Resettlement Program since 1975. Through the Refugee Resettlement Program State Plan ('State Plan'), the Governor has designated the South Carolina Department of Social Services as the agency responsible for the administration of the Refugee Resettlement Program in South Carolina. This means the Agency is responsible for managing and administering funds and coordinating programs with community partners to enable refugees to receive benefits and services that will enable them to become self-sufficient and productive members of the population. However, the Department is not involved in the admittance or placement of refugees. Instead, the two resettlement agencies in SC, Lutheran Services and World Relief, resettle refugees in South Carolina, including specific placements.

The Department of Social Services is aware of the Aiken County resolution and is monitoring developments at both the state and national level regarding refugee resettlement. By the terms of the State Plan, the Department will continue to provide federally funded services and/or benefits to qualifying refugees who are resettled in Aiken County or any other county in South Carolina by either of the resettlement organizations located within the state.

Importantly, federal law prevents the state or county from denying placement of refugees in South Carolina, even if South Carolina did not have a State Plan.