

From: Wingo, Karen <Karen.Wingo@dss.sc.gov>
To: Pisarik, HollyHollyPisarik@gov.sc.gov
Symmes, BrianBrianSymmes@gov.sc.gov
CC: Meacham, JoanJoan.Meacham@dss.sc.gov
Date: 12/16/2015 9:35:05 AM
Subject: FW: Refugees

FYI: Response to Tim Smith has been sent (see below). I will keep everyone in the loop regarding follow-up inquiries.

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: Wingo, Karen
Sent: Wednesday, December 16, 2015 9:34 AM
To: 'Smith, Tim' <tcsmith@greenvillenews.com>
Subject: RE: Refugees

Tim,
Thank you for the inquiry. As a little background, 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.

With respect to your specific inquiries, the Department of Social Services cannot provide case specific information regarding any individuals who receive services from the Department. Therefore, DSS cannot detail for you specific services provided to specific refugees. To assist you in better understanding the program, however, we can provide some statistical data regarding refugee resettlement in the state. As of November 2015, no Syrian refugees had been resettled in South Carolina. However, earlier this month, a family comprised of two refugees from Syria were resettled in the Midlands through Lutheran Services Carolinas. The Department of Social Services has been notified by Lutheran Services Carolinas that another family from Syria has been approved for resettlement in the State. However, the Department does not have any additional information at this time regarding their estimated date of arrival or planned location of placement.

Federal law prevents the state or county from denying placement of refugees in South Carolina. Furthermore, the Department of Social Services is legally prohibited from discriminating in the provision of benefits on the basis of national origin. Therefore, any Syrian refugees resettled in South Carolina, presently or in the future, will be able to avail themselves of all services provided by the Department of Social Services for which they qualify. For more information regarding the types of benefits provided to refugees by the Department of Social Services, please visit: <https://dss.sc.gov/content/customers/finance/rrp.aspx>

If you have any additional questions, please give me a call. I will be out of the office in meetings for much of the day, but will have my cell phone on me and can step out to take calls. My cell phone number is (803) 603-1223.

All the best,
Karen

Karen Luchka Wingo

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From: Smith, Tim [<mailto:tcsmith@greenvillenews.com>]
Sent: Tuesday, December 15, 2015 12:51 PM
To: Wingo, Karen <Karen.Wingo@dss.sc.gov>
Subject: Refugees

Karen,

On another issue, it is our understanding - and the governor has said this in a TV interview - that a Syrian refugee family has been settled in South Carolina and another family is on the way. Can you tell me anything about those settlements: how many people, what part of the state they are in, what sorts of services or benefits are being provided to them?

Thanks!

Tim Smith
Senior Writer
The Greenville News/GreenvilleOnline/Columbia Bureau
803.256.7367 (landline)
864.478.5919 (text and cell)
tcsmith312 (Twitter)