

# Finding a Well Rounded Workforce: Hiring Refugees and Immigrants (The Hidden Workforce)

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Presented by:

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**MVRCCR** MOHAWK VALLEY  
RESOURCE CENTER FOR REFUGEES

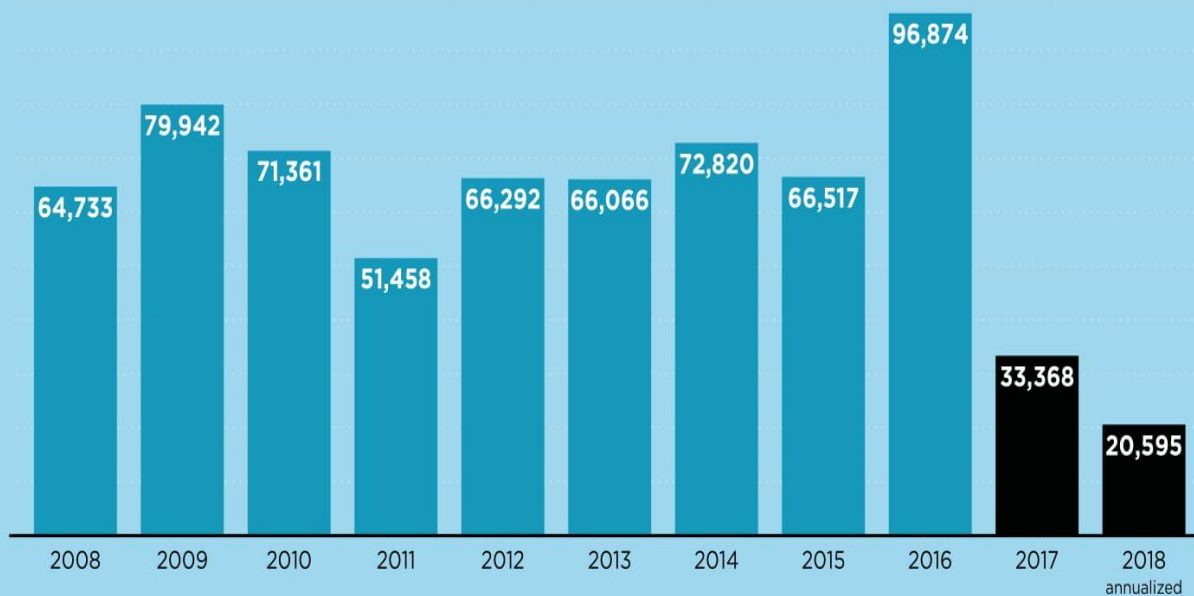
# Introduction to MVRCCR

- The Mohawk Valley Resource Center for Refugees was incorporated in 1981
- Resettled over 16,000 refugees to Utica
- We assist refugees, immigrants, and individuals with limited English proficiency throughout the integration process.
- We provide services to assist in building “community with many cultures.”



# Refugee Placement

▲ **FIGURE 8** | REFUGEE PLACEMENT IN THE UNITED STATES (2008 TO PRESENT)



Source: Fiscal Policy Institute analysis of WRAPS data; 2018 is based on first four months of 2018, through April 30, multiplied by three to approximate an annual rate.

# Services we provide:

- Reception and Placement (Enhanced CO focusing on health and safety)
- Immigration and Citizenship
- Traffic Safety (Child safety seat program – training and distribution, permit test preparation and driving simulators)
- ESL Classes in partnership with BOCES Consortium of Continuing Education (BCCE)
- Compass Interpretation
- TONE (Translation of Nearly Everything)
- Office for New Americans (citizenship classes, legal services, small business development)
- Employment services!!

# Employment Services

- We work with over 50 employers throughout the Mohawk Valley with a radius extending about 60 miles out.
- We do about 300 job placements per year.
- Areas of employment include:
  - Manufacturing (packaging, assembly, machine operations)
  - Hospitality (housekeeping, laundry, grounds keeping)
  - Healthcare (area hospitals, nursing homes, homecare)
  - Seasonal (farm work, greenhouse labor)

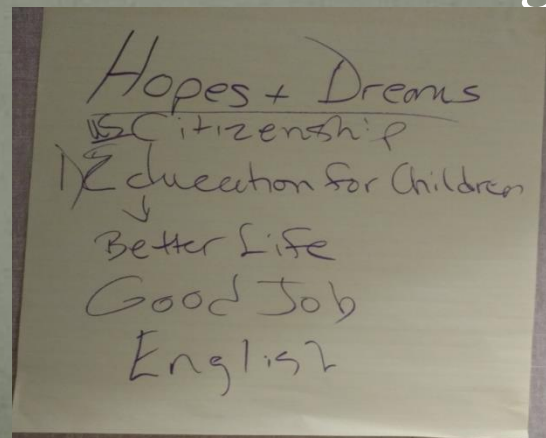
# GOALS!

## Clients

- To provide linguistically appropriate employment services that will provide meaningful employment opportunities for individuals looking to grow within an organization.

## Employers

- To help fill workforce shortage gaps by providing meaningful employment to our clients and maintain low turnover rates for an organization.



# Employment services we offer CLIENTS

- Free of charge services
- Employment Skills Preparation
- Job application, resume and cover letter completion, HR paperwork assistance
- Job placement
- Support services
- Unemployment help
- Coordination of interviews, drug testing appointments, and physicals.
- Linguistically appropriate staff assistance
- Trainings (OSHA 10, Keyboarding, Workplace Success, Bridging the GAP, VESL)



# Employment services we offer

## EMPLOYERS



- Pre – Screening of applicant pool
- Translation of documents using TONE (HR paperwork, safety rules, signage)
- Interpretation assistance using Compass Interpreters (for job orientation, assessments)
- Post employment support (mediation, cultural guidance)
- Cultural competency trainings (for management, staff, leadership, HR)
- Hardworking candidates





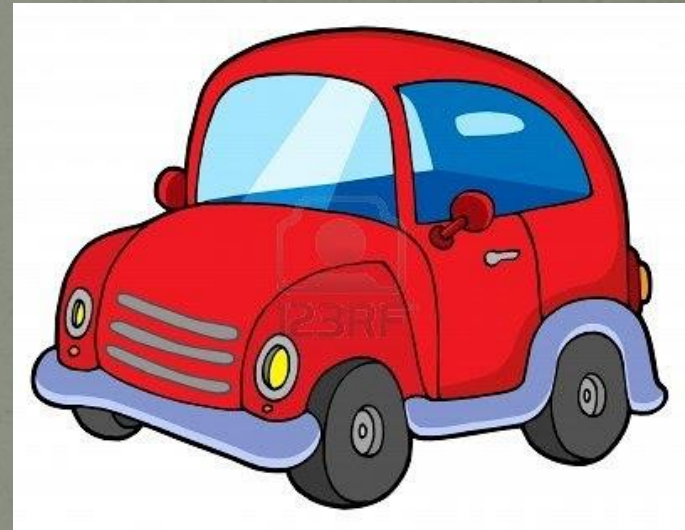
# Benefits

- Strong work ethics
- Skilled workers
- Dedicated/loyal
- Adaptable
- Built in retention support
- Diversity
- Positive community impact



# Challenges

- Transportation
- Miscommunication
- Language barriers
- Cultural differences
- Child care
- Finding employment
- Racism and discrimination



# FPI (Fiscal Policy Institute) findings

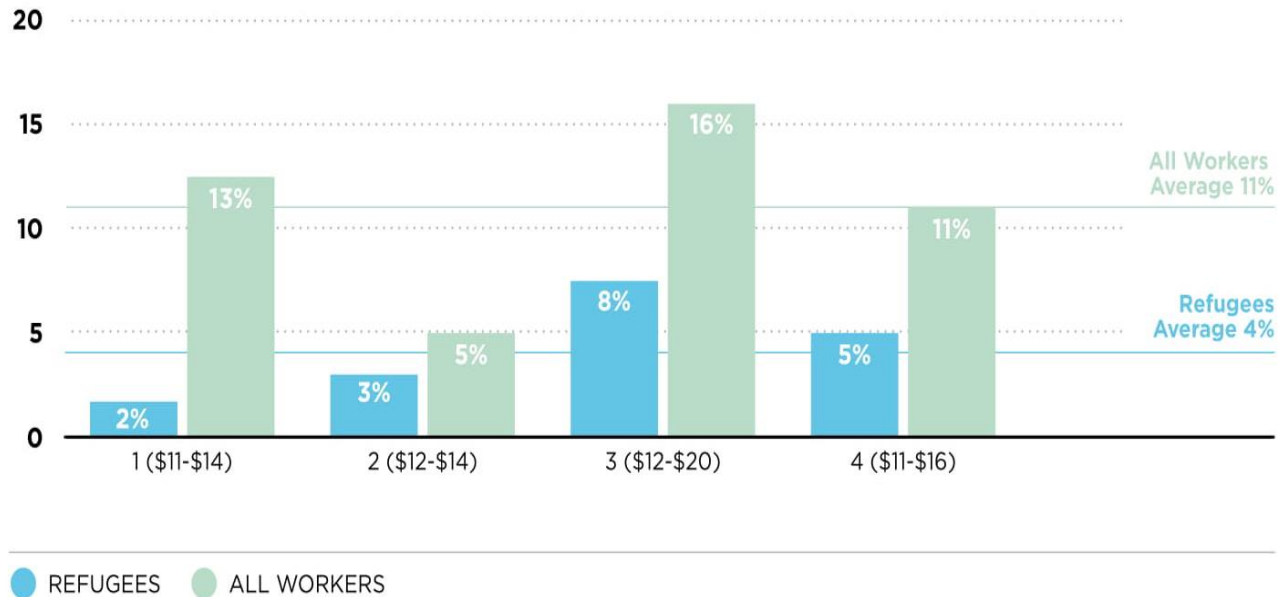
- Three quarters of firms surveyed saw lower turnover rates for refugees than overall
- The turnover rates were lower in all industries, sometimes by half or more. In manufacturing, average annual refugee turnover was 4 percent annually, compared to 11 percent overall.
- In a hotel it was 29 percent compared to 36 percent overall. In meat packing it was 25 percent compared to 40 percent overall. Lower turnover translates into efficiency for companies.
- Replacing an employee was estimated for these employers to cost about \$5,000—more than enough to offset the costs of hiring and retaining refugee employees.
- Employers often saw overall improvements in their managers after refugees were hired.
- Link to full report can be viewed here: <http://fiscalspolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Refugees-as-employees.pdf>



# Manufacturing Turnover Comparison

▲ **FIGURE 6** | LOWER TURNOVER REFUGEE AND OVERALL RETENTION RATES

## Manufacturing Sector



Source: Employer data made confidentially available to FPI.

Typical wage range indicated in parentheses next to firm number, on X axis.

# FAQ's

## How can I hire a Refugee if he doesn't speak English?

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- Many refugees come with basic English language skills.
- ESL classes are provided to refugees shortly after arrival to improve language skills
- Many refugees and immigrants speak several languages, making them valuable interpreters.

## Are our candidates legally able to work?

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- Yes! The refugees and immigrants we serve are authorized to work on arrival and have required documentation to prove so! Including I-94's and Employment Authorization Documents.

# Testimonials

- “We were up against hiring close to 100 new associates with a dwindling applicant pool. I reached out and spoke with Ashley Bustos. She swiftly made arrangements to come here for a tour and a discussion of how we can make this work. Our teams quickly developed a great working relationship. We now have to include Compass Interpreters into this equation.

Since that time we have hired 30 folks and 7 more are starting next week. We are also looking to bring on more for our seasonal needs with hopes to bring them on as full time.

Overall, this has been a huge success for us. Our newly hired folks have exceeded our expectations. We are still working through some bumps in the road but both agencies have helped us to meet our needs...”

Rita A. Franko

Human Resource Manager, Walmart DC 6041

# Testimonials Cont.

“The Fountainhead Group, Inc. (FGI) has continued to have problems filling both unskilled and skilled positions over the last several years. We have had many positions open for months with no candidates available to even consider. On a positive note, the refugee center has become an integral part of our hiring process by providing assistance in hiring refugees and immigrants which are now a key part of our workforce. Approximately 55% of our workforce is refugees. Over 15% of the current refugees employed by FGI have advanced beyond their initial position to higher level positions including lead and supervisory positions. FGI looks forward to continuing our partnership with the refugee center to ensure both of our continued success....”

Mary Wuest – VP Finance  
The Fountainhead Group

# THANK YOU!

Call our agency and speak to an employment representative today to see how we can help your organization transition into a new, positive realm of hiring!

MVRCCR Employment Team 315.738.1083

Ashley Bustos

Kpaw Lay

Tatiana Naumenko

Visit us at: [www.mvrccr.org](http://www.mvrccr.org)