

IMPACT REPORT 2023



CWS

Virginia

Who We are

CWS in Winchester welcomes refugees, immigrants, and asylum-seekers from around the world to the beautiful Shenandoah Valley. Through partnerships with individuals, faith communities, and local organizations, we empower our newest neighbors to build new lives in peace and security through up to five years of service and support.

OUR MISSION

Building a world where there is enough for all.

OUR VISION

Food, voice, and a safe place to call home.

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR



As we reflect on the work of the past year, I am moved by the strides we've made in our mission to provide refuge and hope to displaced individuals and families. CWS Winchester remains committed to welcoming refugees and offering the opportunity to rebuild a new life in safety and dignity.

From securing housing and employment to providing English language classes and cultural orientation, we've empowered refugees to integrate into the community and make meaningful contributions. While we've included some statistics in this impact report, our impact extends beyond statistics; it's reflected in our clients' stories of resilience and perseverance. Whether it's a family finding stability after years of displacement or a young student pursuing their dreams in school, each story matters and is a testament to the power of welcome.

None of this would have been possible without the support of our volunteers, donors, and community partners. Your generosity has been the cornerstone of our success. While any changes in federal policy for refugees that roll down to the local level can affect our work directly, as CWS we are committed to partnerships with people like you to provide equitable services for all our clients. Together, we can make a difference worth celebrating. As you flip through this report, join me in celebrating the impact we've had in the last year.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Hamidullah Amiry". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

Hamidullah Amiry
WINCHESTER DIRECTOR

TAILORING DREAMS

A CWS (Church World Service) client along with his wife, and their four children, fled from Syria seeking refuge and hope for a better future. Their arrival in the United States brought them to Winchester, where they were warmly welcomed by CWS Winchester.

Initially arriving with uncertainty, they faced challenges with learning to navigate a new area and language barriers. CWS Winchester provided them not just with shelter but with a home filled with warmth and comfort. Beds were made, and the children were swiftly enrolled in schools.

Coming from a background deeply rooted in tailoring, husband and wife were eager to continue their craft in their new home. CWS wasted no time in assisting them in applying for public benefits, enrolling in English classes, and most importantly, finding employment opportunities that aligned with their skills and aspirations.

Despite facing challenges in securing suitable employment initially, our client's determination remained unshaken. With the support and guidance of CWS and Winchester community members, he was equipped with the necessary tools—a sewing machine and fabric—to pursue his passion for tailoring. He currently finds employment at Lifestyle, where he diligently works to support his family. However, outside of his full time duties, both he and his wife have transformed their basement into a haven for their true calling: tailoring and sewing.



The client and his family remained steadfast in their pursuit of self-sufficiency. They firmly believe that setting goals and striving towards them is essential in achieving independence and success.

Reflecting on their past struggles in Syria and discrimination faced in Turkey, they express immense gratitude for the safety and welcome they found in Winchester. Their positive outlook and unwavering kindness not only define their character but also serve as a beacon of hope for others navigating similar paths.

Their message to fellow refugees, immigrants, and newcomers echoes their own experiences: embrace self-sufficiency, stay positive, and extend kindness wherever you go.

“We appreciate the warm welcome and support we received from CWS Winchester. From providing us with a beautiful home to assisting with essential services and schooling for our children, we are so grateful for all the CWS staff that worked with us and helped us feel welcomed.”

PREFERRED COMMUNITY PROGRAM

The Preferred Community (PC) Program, implemented in 2023 in the CWS Winchester office, provides vital assistance to vulnerable refugee groups navigating the complexities of U.S. systems and striving for self-sufficiency post-resettlement. Tailored for diverse marginalized communities, including unaccompanied youth, at-risk women, LGBTQ+ refugees, individuals with medical conditions, unexpected arrivals, and elderly individuals facing social or psychological difficulties, the PC Program offers intensive case management services for a fixed term.



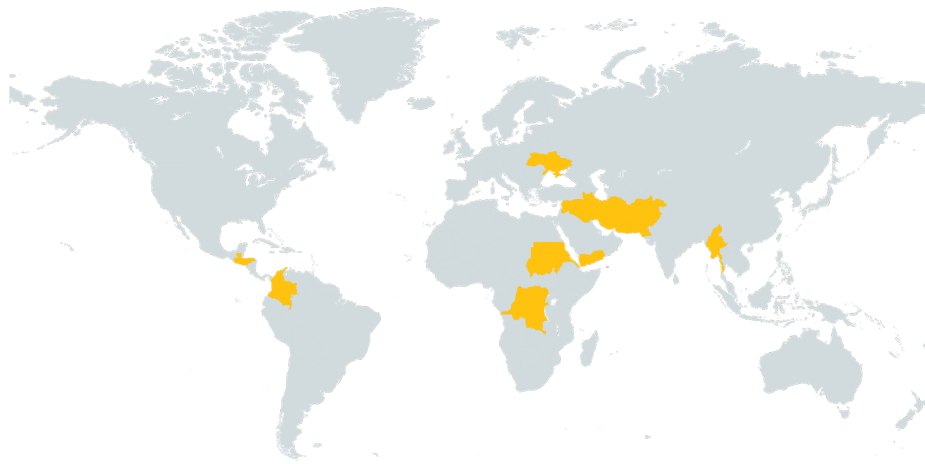
Photo by JMU

27 SCHOOL ENROLLMENT, CAMPS, MENTORING, & SUPPORT SERVICES

As we welcome refugee families to the Shenandoah Valley, CWS provides initial school enrollment services as well as a school liaison to support and advocate for families and students who are navigating a new school system. The school liaison also coordinates enrichment activities like field trips and workshops. This past year summer camps focused on arts, math, business, and computer science. We also matched interested refugee youth with a mentor. These cultural integration experiences allow refugee youth to explore and grow as they develop vision for their lives.

REFUGEE RECEPTION & INTEGRATION SERVICES

CWS Winchester's Refugee Services programs provide up to 5 years of support for new neighbors. From initial reception and placement services like housing and school enrollment to employment orientation, finding jobs, and extended case management for families and vulnerable individuals, we empower individuals and families to build fulfilling lives. We believe all families deserve respect and the ability to make choices to shape their own future.



WHERE ARE OUR NEW NEIGHBORS FROM?

- Mexico
- Sudan
- Ukraine
- Guatemala
- El Salvador
- Honduras
- Iraq
- Afghanistan
- Syria
- Yemen
- Ethiopia

99

TOTAL ARRIVALS

Through our Reception & Placement program, the CWS resettlement team provides initial welcome and core services to new neighbors within the first 90 days after arrival, empowering them towards self-sufficiency.

58

JOB PLACEMENTS

CWS Winchester works closely with new neighbors to understand their educational and employment history, as well as career goals, providing job orientations and workforce readiness programs. In partnership with local employers, these 58 jobs represent first jobs, skill upgrades, and second jobs in manufacturing, agriculture, warehouse industries, and more.

12

FAMILIES AND

5

INDIVIDUALS WERE

SELF-SUFFICIENT WITHIN 2-3 MONTHS.

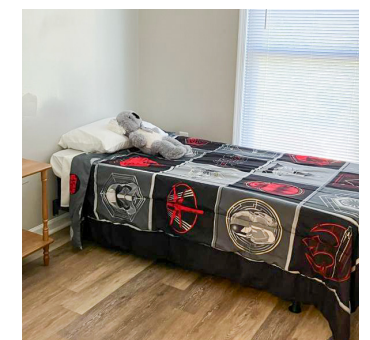
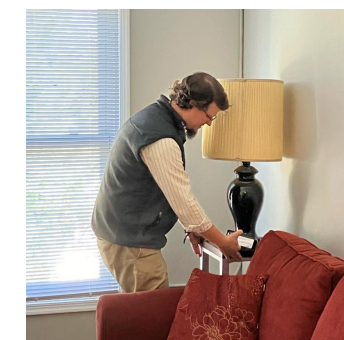
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HOUSES BECAME HOMES

CWS begins identifying appropriate housing for new neighbors once travel dates are confirmed. In partnership with community volunteers, houses are stocked with new beds, donated items, groceries, and a welcome meal before new neighbors arrive.



Temporary housing serves as a crucial bridge for individuals and families in transition, providing temporary shelter and support while working towards securing permanent housing. As a landlord, offering transitional housing is a meaningful way to support new arrivals in their journey to establish stability in a new environment.



ESL CLASSES & HOME TUTORING



ESL and Home tutoring classes are essential for refugee and immigrant communities because they provide a pathway to effective communication in their new environment. By learning English, individuals can access education, employment opportunities, and social integration. ESL classes not only teach language skills but also help build confidence and help learners to navigate daily life and interact with their new community. ESL classes play a crucial role in helping new Americans adapt to their new home.



IMMIGRATION LEGAL SERVICES

Immigrants and refugees have many complicated and expensive legal hurdles on the path to protection, citizenship, and reuniting with their families. CWS Virginia's Immigration Legal Counseling staff provide low-cost legal advice and representation to refugees, asylum-seekers, and other immigrants in the Shenandoah Valley.



Lucia Canizares leads our immigration legal services department. Now we're expanding capacity to provide services to clients relating to the CWS Winchester office as well as CWS Harrisonburg.


APPLICATIONS SUBMITTED

43 ASYLUM

127 GREEN CARD

91 CITIZENSHIP

Asylum provides protection for those fearing persecution. Green cards offer permanent residence and work privileges. Citizenship is often the ultimate goal for our clients.

66 
FAMILY
REUNIFICATION CASES

Once a refugee has been resettled to the U.S., CWS legal staff can provide support for those who wish to reunite with family living in other countries via family-based immigrant visas.

154
WORK PERMITS

500
LEGAL CONSULTATIONS

CWS Legal Staff members are accredited to practice Immigration law before the Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services (USCIS) and the Immigration Courts.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

\$26,000

IN-KIND DONATIONS

Generous in-kind donations supports newcomers in rebuilding their lives and making a home in the Shenandoah Valley.



7,500

VOLUNTEER HOURS

CWS volunteers are flexible, patient, kind, compassionate, willing to offer their expertise, and always ready to lend a helping hand. Volunteers help with move-ins, community and cultural orientation, English tutoring, and more.



CWS staff member Rodrigue Makelele engages local refugee and immigrant leaders to use their collective voice in advocating for policies at the state and federal levels that support welcoming new Americans.



Rachel, one of our dedicated volunteers, has pioneered initiative to provide a sense of home and belonging to our newly arrived youngest neighbors with a gift of a few toys within their first few days.



BE PART OF THE WELCOME

Winchester is deeply enriched by the individuals who have chosen to work hard, create, and thrive here, no matter where they are from. It is our responsibility to continue our legacy of hope and hospitality by offering help to those who have fled their home countries in search of a better life. Together, we can continue to build a world where there is enough for all.

HOW TO SUPPORT CWS AND OUR NEW NEIGHBORS

- **Volunteer**- tutor students, teach adults English, get a group together to complete a household setup, or assist at the front desk. There are many ways to get involved that fit every skillset and time commitment.
- Set up a **recurring donation** of \$10, \$25, or \$50 to CWS Winchester. Making a financial gift is the most effective way to help CWS Winchester. Your funds will go where they are most needed, helping us continue to build community for new Americans. Money raised in the Shenandoah Valley stays in our community.
- Will your **employer match** your philanthropic gift? You can double your impact through an employer match.
- **Like CWS Winchester on Facebook and Instagram** and share a post with your friends.
- Encourage your employer to learn about the benefits of **hiring refugees**. Refugees are authorized for employment the moment they arrive in the United States and do not need visa sponsorship.
- **Rent to refugees**. Families are eager to establish themselves in our community. Landlords can partner alongside them by contacting CWS to learn about the benefits of renting to our new neighbors.
- **Organize a donation drive** for hygiene products, diapers, household goods or gift cards which help newly arrived families settle into their new home. We would work with you to support a donation drive.
- **Contact your local, state, and national policy makers** to educate them about the vital role that refugees and all newcomers play in our community.



cswinchester.org/donate/



Thank You for being part of our
**WELCOMING
COMMUNITY**

 **CWS** | *Winchester*

2273 Valley Ave
Winchester, VA 22601

 cswinchester.org

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