

# **Refugee Resettlement**

## **City of Amarillo, Texas**

### **Potter/Randall Counties**

**Prepared for:**

**Texas Senate Health and Human Services Committee Hearing**

**Austin, Texas**

**April 21, 2016**

**Presenter:**

**Mayor Paul Harpole**

**City of Amarillo, Texas**



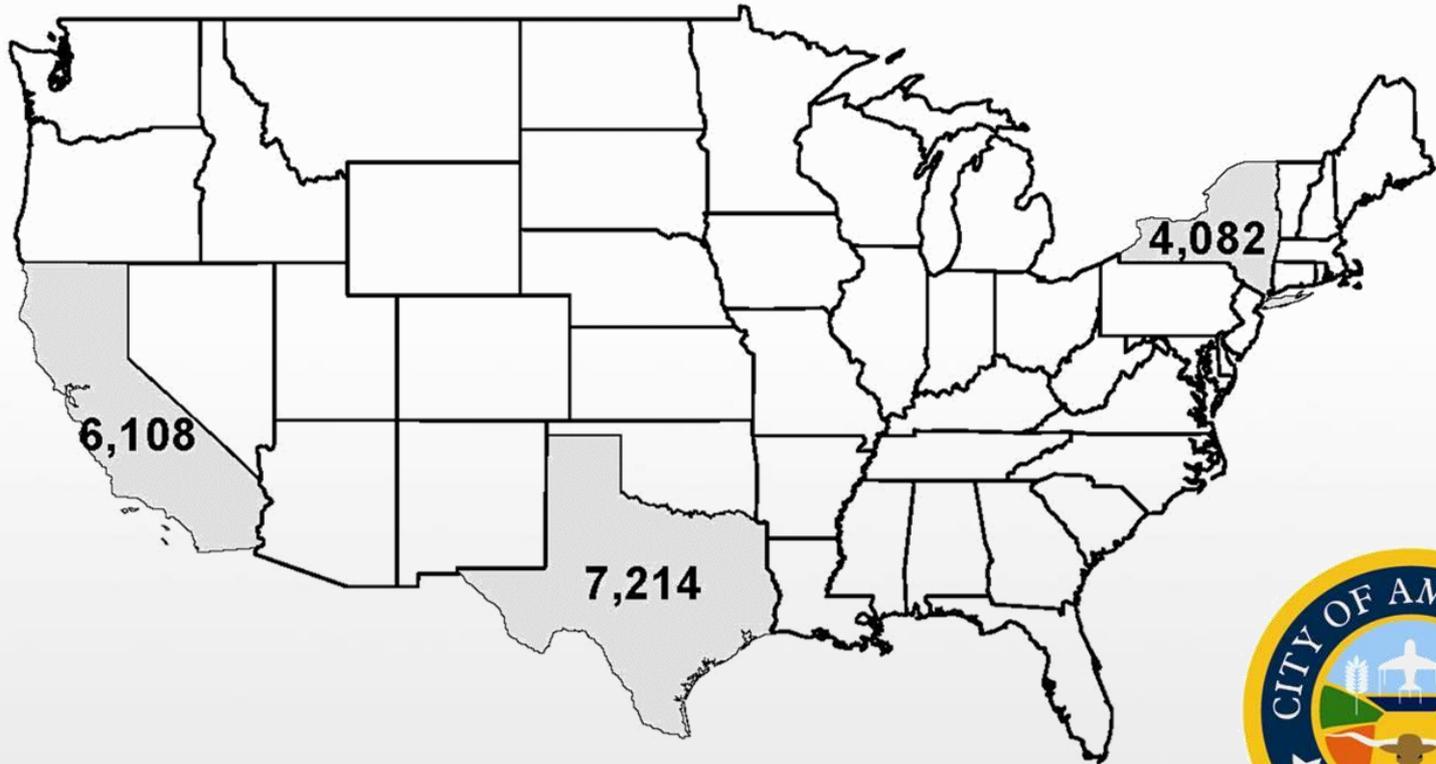
# Amarillo Refugee Resettlement Overview

## Presidential Determination on Refugee Admissions for Fiscal Year 2016

- On September 29, 2015 President Obama declared that the admission of up to 85,000 refugees to the United States during Fiscal Year (FY) 2016 is justified by humanitarian concerns or is otherwise in the national interest



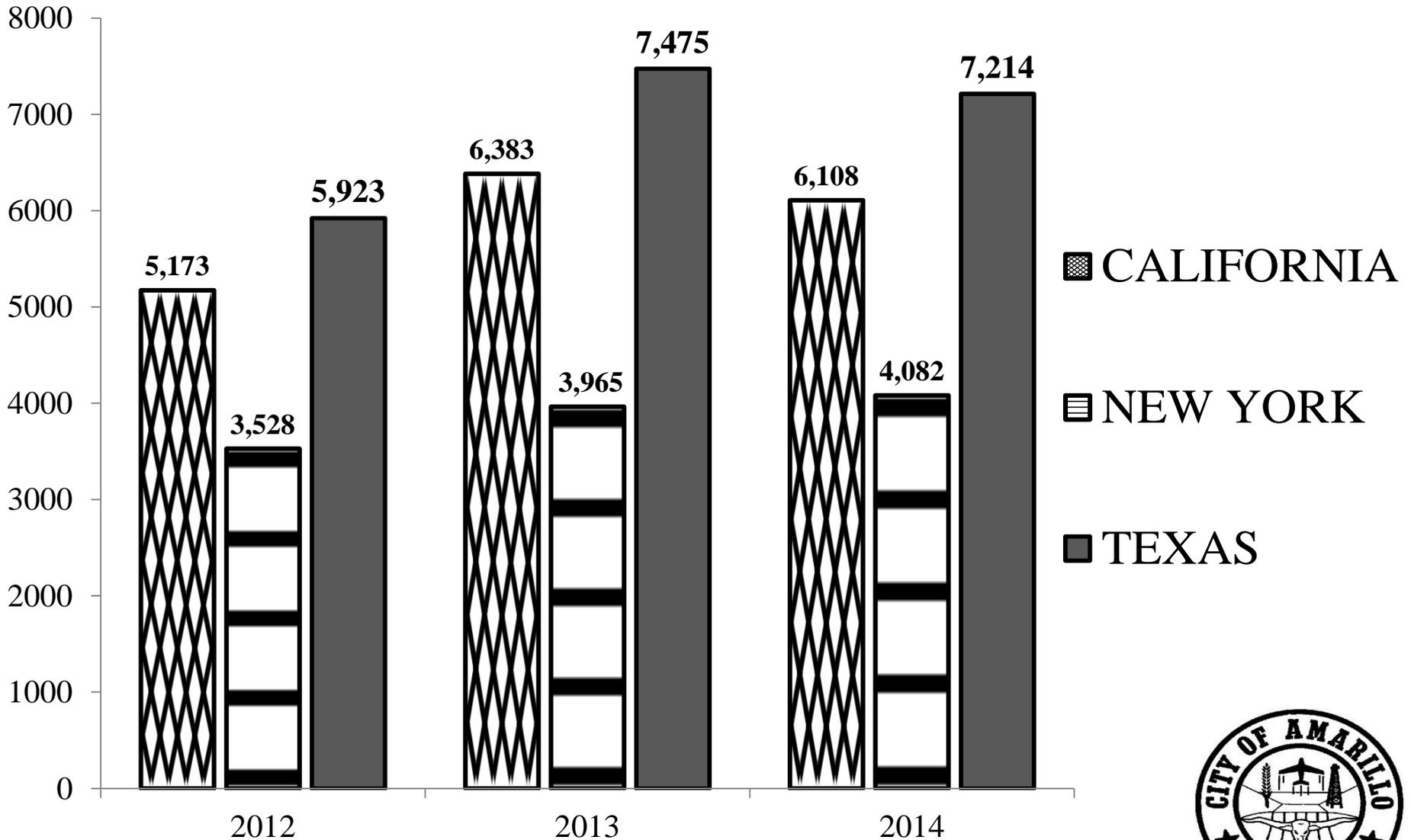
# 2014 Refugee Resettlement Top 3 States



Source: Office of Refugee Resettlement, 2014



# Refugee Arrivals by State



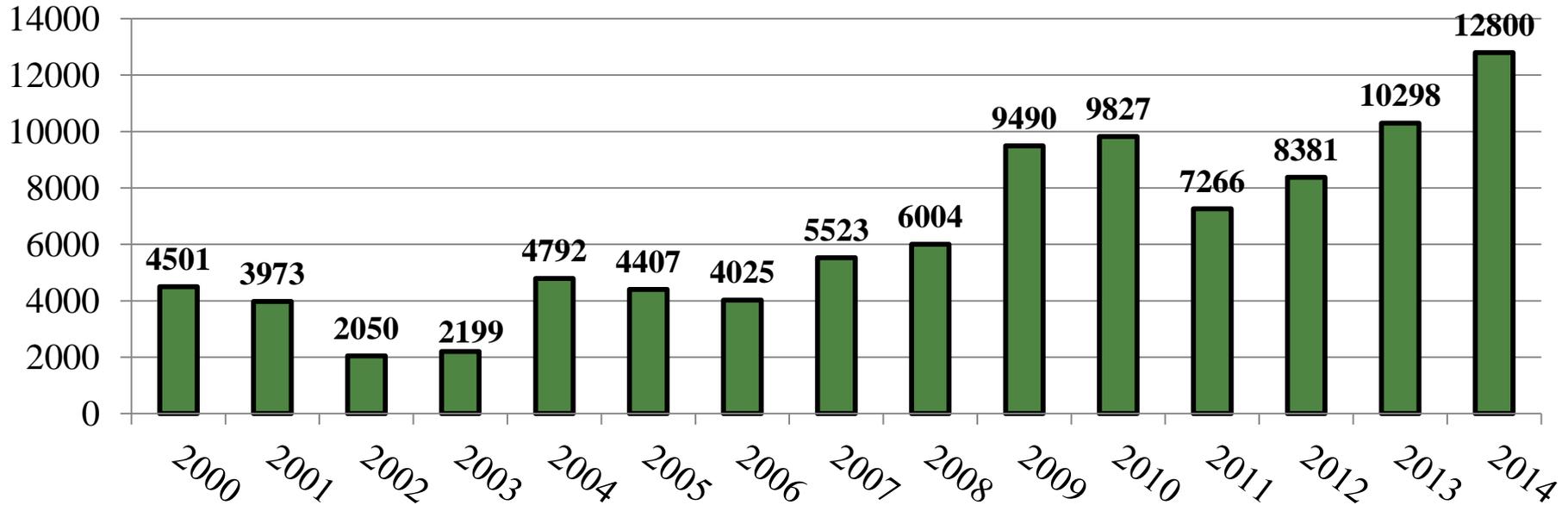
Source: Office of Refugee Resettlement, 2014



# Amarillo Refugee Resettlement Overview

- Amarillo has received, welcomed and supported refugees since the 1970s
- From 2007 to present, Amarillo has received and resettled 4,614 refugees
- Additional refugees arriving to Amarillo are received through the Refugee Resettlement Health Program as other immigration statuses
- S.B. 1928 took effect in September 2015, ensuring that local government input is included in any refugee placement report

# Texas Refugee Program Arrivals by Fiscal Year



Texas received 12,800 arrivals in FY2014

- 24% increase from FY2013

Texas resettled:

- 11% of all Refugees nationwide
- 18% of all Special Immigrant Visa holders

Arrivals originated from 58 countries



# Amarillo Refugee Resettlement

## Public-Private Partnerships Between Federal and Volunteer Agencies “VOLAGs”

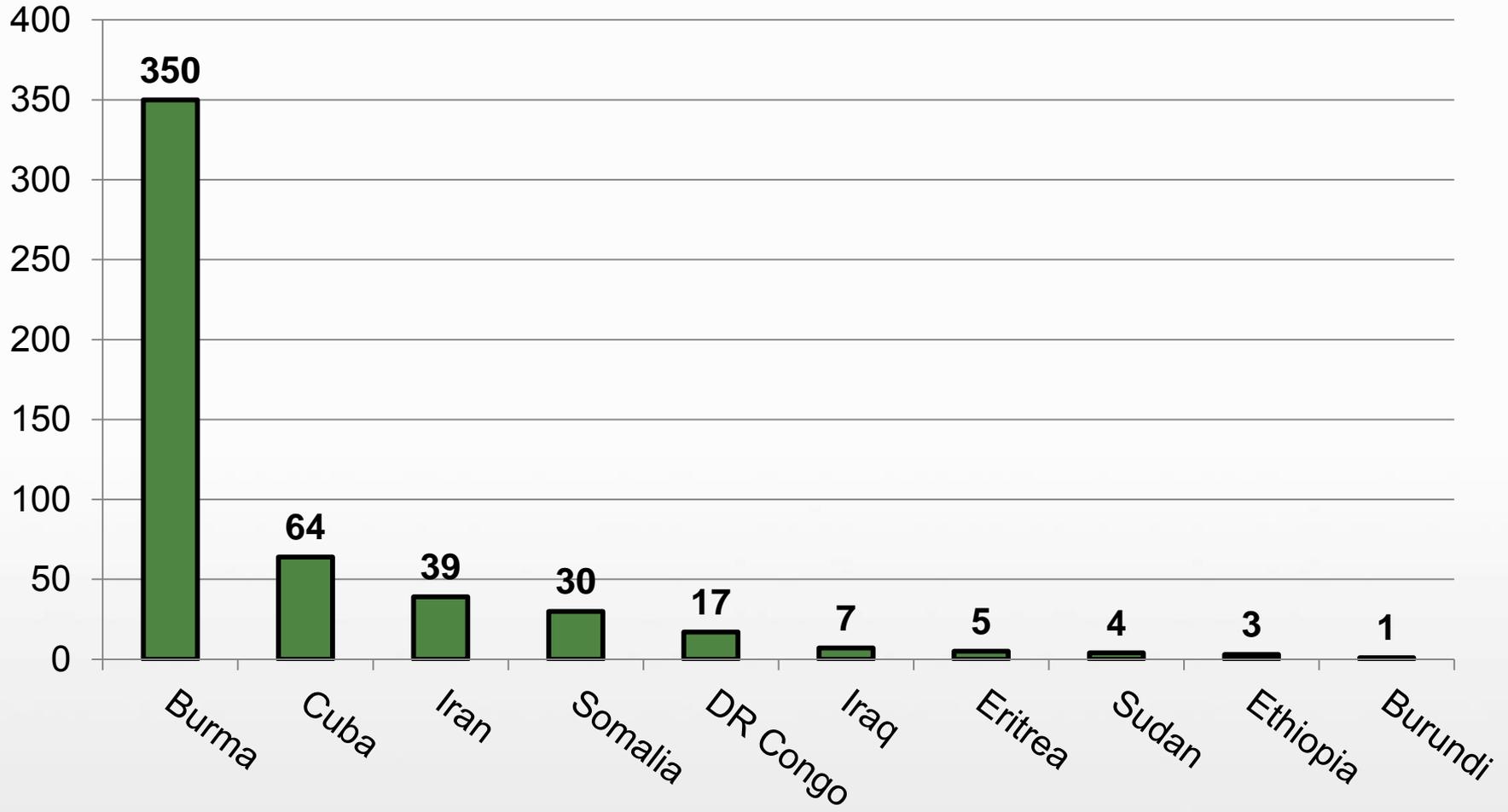
- Refugee Services of Texas (RST) served by (2) VOLAGs
  - Church World Service and Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service
- Catholic Charities of the Texas Panhandle (CCTXP) served by (1) VOLAG
  - U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops

## Local Entities are charged with:

- Resettlement Services
- Job Readiness Training and Placement
- English Training
- Social Adjustment Services
- Refugee Cash Assistance



# 2015 Amarillo Refugees by Nationality



Source: Amarillo Public Health Department, 2016

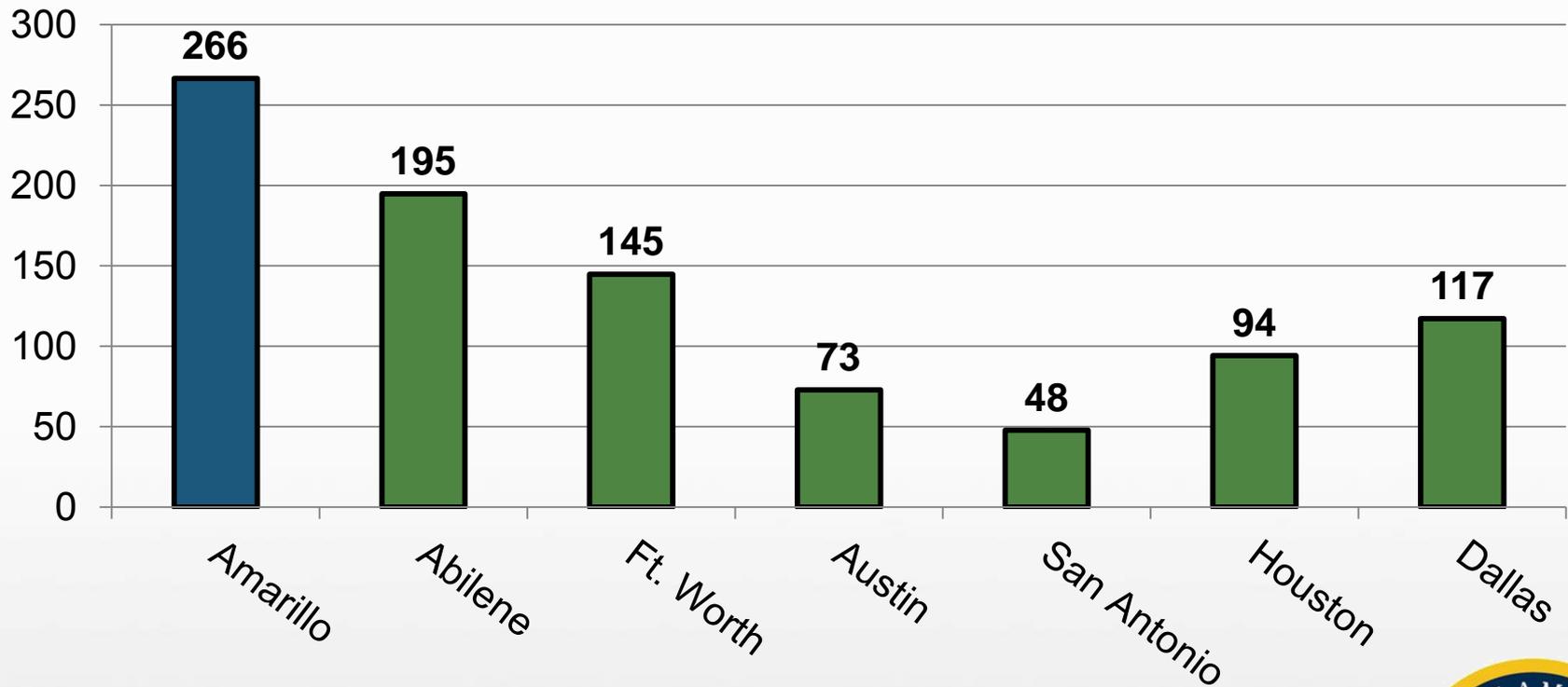
# Refugee Resettlement in Texas Cities 2007-2015 (per 100,000)

	<u>Amarillo</u>	<u>Abilene</u>	<u>Ft. Worth</u>	<u>Austin</u>	<u>San Antonio</u>	<u>Houston</u>	<u>Dallas</u>
2007	203	123	74	37	28	71	69
2008	230	143	85	54	37	69	96
2009	294	200	175	93	75	125	140
2010	399	165	185	100	57	118	143
2011	292	206	132	68	41	76	101
2012	264	184	145	59	47	83	108
2013	268	147	171	88	54	110	121
2014	224	227	171	78	46	97	135
2015	225	357	164	79	46	98	141
Average	266	195	145	73	48	94	117

Source: Texas Department of State Health Services, 2016



# Average Refugee Resettlement in Texas Cities 2007-2015, per 100,000



# Amarillo Refugee Resettlement

## Challenges Amarillo Faces:

- Since 2007, Amarillo has averaged 266 refugees/per 100,000 compared to Houston at 94 refugees/per 100,000 (nearly 3 times greater)
- Disproportionate assimilation: On average, Amarillo receives more refugees per capita than all other major Texas cities
- Houston or Austin afford more: Houston median HH value \$125,400 and Austin median HH value \$227,800 compared to Amarillo median HH value \$114,800
- Arrival numbers are determined by VOLAGS and local entities-no input from City of Amarillo
- Unfunded or insufficient funding support for the City of Amarillo and other community services
- Language/Dialects: 1975-maybe 2-3 languages compared to 2015-35+ languages and multiple dialects (Example: Burma/Formerly Myanmar)

# Amarillo Refugee Resettlement

## City Agencies Impacted and Major Issues:

- Amarillo Public Health Department: Refugee Clinic, Health Screening, Immunizations, and Green Card Paperwork
  - Grant Funded \$471,088 (Texas HH)
- Amarillo Women, Infant, Children (W.I.C.) Department: Health Care, Treatment, and Dietary Needs for Women, Infants, Children
  - Major Issues: May take up to 3-4 times longer to provide services compared to non-refugee families
  - Must provide interpreter
  - Dietary and cultural conflicts such as men refusing to speak with women
  - Estimated Cost: \$19,110/monthly. W.I.C. must “spread over” costs from state funded non-refugee clients to cover refugee expenses



# Amarillo Refugee Resettlement

## City Agencies Impacted and Major Issues (cont'd):

- Amarillo Police Department: Patrol, Investigations, and Victim Assistance
  - Major Issues: Refugee-related investigations & victim assistance time doubles/triples compared to non-refugee related cases because of cultural & language barriers
  - Agencies are not providing officers with training
  - No advance notification of new refugee arrivals
  - Calls involving refugees require two (2) officers per call, 60% of the time
  - Estimated Police Department cost: \$18,088 monthly



# Amarillo Refugee Resettlement

## City Agencies Impacted and Major Issues (cont'd):

- Amarillo Emergency Communications Center (AECC):  
Multi-Agency Dispatch Center For Public Safety  
Communications
  - Major Issues: Language barriers slow down response times considerably
  - Difficult to accurately assess the situation for first responders
  - Languages range from Somali, Lao, Karen, Farsi to multiple Burmese dialects
  - Unfunded service involving language service requires additional dispatch time
  - Average 911 calls are 2 minutes, average translated calls require 11 minutes

# Amarillo Refugee Resettlement

## City Agencies Impacted and Major Issues (cont'd):

- Amarillo Independent School District (AISD):
  - Major Issues: Takes approximately five (5) years for students to learn English
  - Unrealistic federal requirements to reach grade level
  - AISD unfunded, with the exception of some bilingual and lunch programs
  - AISD absorbs additional tutoring, English speaking programs, and multiple teaching strategy costs/time
  - Estimate 75 languages spoken in AISD schools
  - Estimated cost: Received federal refugee school impact grant past three (3) years \$160,000-\$200,000 annually, ending in 2015

# Amarillo Refugee Resettlement

## City Agencies Impacted and Major Issues (cont'd):

- Northwest Texas Hospital: Emergency Room, Inpatient, and Clinic Utilization
  - Major Issues: Increased clinic & ER utilization
  - Language barriers & lack of previous access to proper healthcare & nutrition
  - Over 35 languages spoken, multiple dialects
  - Higher appointment “no-show” rate & cultural barriers. Example: Many cultures do not trust telephone translators versus interpreters & female patients are not allowed to converse with male interpreters
  - Estimated Cost: \$4.2 million unfunded annually for ER, inpatient, & clinic utilization
  - \$160,000 for translator services (2013)



# Amarillo Refugee Resettlement

## Conclusions and City Requests:

- More Funding:
  - Interpreters/Certified Translators
  - Multi-Lingual Call Takers/Dispatchers
  - Cultural Training, Public Safety (911 Center, Police, and Fire Safety Refugee/Cross Trained/Nighttime)
  - Healthcare
  - Hospital & Schools
- Resettle refugees to other areas in Texas or elsewhere in USA
- Direct contracts to other Texas or USA communities
- Request agencies be “open” about intake process with local City/County officials & expected impact on community

# Amarillo Refugee Resettlement

With the passage of S.B. 1928, Amarillo is hopeful that:

- Agencies will provide timely notification & information to all local entities regarding arrival, challenges & physical placement settlement
- Agencies will meet/discuss/interact with City and County officials on a regular basis
- The local government will be the entity charged with holding regular meetings and maintaining records
- Agencies will provide cultural training to “bridge” cultural differences, male/female communication, how legal system works & support public safety preparedness/investigations



