

Title: Barriers to Transportation Justice for Refugees in A Mid-Sized U.S. City

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The United States has welcomed over three million refugees since 1975 (National Immigration Forum, 2020). The federal government provides arriving refugees with limited financial support while private volunteer organizations (VOLAGs) secure initial housing for refugees through local rental markets (American Immigration Council, 2020). The resulting housing and accessibility outcomes of refugees are thus subject to what some researchers have called a ‘lottery effect,’ as VOLAG resources varies from place to place and the organizations have little control over local housing opportunities (Brick et al., 2010). Many refugees may thus end up in communities with limited public transportation, although research on this issue is sparse. A third of refugees in a New Hampshire survey reported that they did not have enough transportation to “do the things that they need to do” (Schiller et al., 2009: 18). The authors’ call for improved public transit service and the provision of discounted passes for refugees. Little transportation research incorporates the needs of refugees resettling in the United States. This paper reports on a survey of transportation needs and housing affordability challenges among refugees resettled in the Boise metropolitan area. We analyze data through summary statistics and GIS analysis. Our conclusions identify ways that planning agencies and transit operators can better serve refugees.

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