



Executive Department

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Report to Governor Angus King: New Somali Arrivals and Other Issues Relative to Refugee/Secondary Migrants/Immigrants and Cultural Diversity in the City of Lewiston

May 9, 2002

Prepared and edited by Phil Nadeau, Assistant City Administrator

The purpose of this report is to provide the Governor's Office with an overview of the refugee/secondary migrant/immigrant (RSI) issues faced by the agencies and citizens of the City of Lewiston. Countless individuals and organizations are working tirelessly to welcome the City's new population of RSI's, and to embrace the benefits and challenges associated with being a culturally diverse community. It should be noted that though much of this report discusses the impact of our new Somali residents, the City also has approximately 2,000 Hispanic residents, as well as a small population of Asian and other European immigrants, who also present some of the same challenges relative to English as a Second Language (ESL) training, education, and other social service needs.

A working group met over a period of two months to prepare this report. Those members were: Renee Bernier, Lewiston City Council President; Phil Nadeau, Lewiston Assistant City Administrator; Leon Levesque, Lewiston Superintendent of Schools; Sue Charron, Lewiston General Assistance Director; Ronnie Paradis CMMC Patient Services Coordinator; Janice Plourde, Lewiston School Department, Director of Elementary Education; Mohammed Abdi, Lewiston School Department, Somali Case Manager; Matt Ward, Catholic Charities Maine Program Director for Refugee and Immigration Services; Bonnie Bagley, Catholic Charities Maine Associate Director for Policy, Planning, and Administration; Charles Johnson, Androscoggin United Way Executive Director; Pierrot Rugaba, Dept. of Human Services, State Refugee Coordinator; Jeralyn Mauer, CMMC Guest Relations Coordinator; Sgt. James Minkowsky, Lewiston Police Department; Cheryl Hamilton, Portland- Lewiston Collaborative Refugee Program Cultural Skills Trainer; Heather Lindkvist, Somali Cultural Advisor to the City of Lewiston; and Kaileigh Tara, former Mayor for the City of Lewiston. We would also like to acknowledge James Cassidy, President, Sisters of Charity Health Systems and St. Mary's Regional Medical Center, for his assistance in bringing this effort together.

The scope of the material in this report is quite broad. It is intended to inform, educate, and identify areas of particular concern on a variety of issues specific to the Somali population and those, which impact other RSI populations. This report will provide some of the necessary critical information to assist the Governor, and his agencies, in tracking the issues and challenges associated with the RSI populations that now reside within our community. Our workgroup is a representative group of those agencies, departments and organizations that have responsibility to deliver RSI's the services they may require.

Our workgroup understands that many of the issues associated with RSI residents are not necessarily unique to a particular culture or nationality. However, the challenges associated with an individual who cannot speak English with any great degree of proficiency (or at all); is unfamiliar with local customs; practices a religion not familiar to local residents; has dietary needs unique to only a few local citizens; has insufficient or non-existent academic documentation; practices other customs or rituals that are largely unfamiliar to a community at-large; or may be a person of color are all issues and subjects that must be part of a larger public discussion geared towards developing sound and effective multi-cultural public policy that must reach beyond the physical borders of this community.

Few will disagree that the arrival of our new Somali residents has served as the catalyst for the high degree of public interest in matters associated with becoming a more culturally diverse community. Though the City's history was, and continues to be, populated by the many immigrant groups that moved into the City to work in its flourishing textile industry in the late 19th and early 20th century, this newest immigrant movement is being heavily scrutinized by the media and some of our residents for a number of different reasons. Some have observed that the intense public interest has to do with the speed and the volume of the Somali arrivals and the need for increased public expenditures. Others believe that the level of public discourse has to do with the Somalis being Lewiston's first significant experience with a nationality of color. There has also been some speculation that increased concerns with immigration and national security, stemming from those events of September 11th, has elevated the public's desire to question our country's general immigration policies. Whatever the root cause, the media and some members of the public are now highly engaged in this matter.

The school system is perhaps the most problematic relative to public services. Though our school system currently deals with several nationalities which all require various levels of ESL programming, the Somalis are clearly the dominant group relative to the level of ESL services provided by the City and other agencies here in Lewiston. The RSI experiences in Lewiston, and those in Portland, are indicative that the challenges associated with various RSI groups are no longer just a "local" matter. We believe that the state must adopt a more active role to address the special needs and challenges associated with servicing these students. The resources utilized to assist many RSI's often involve state or federal funds both in the school and general public sector. The policies and programs that are developed necessitate more state and federal involvement. Our hope is that this report will begin the process of developing more effective partnerships with the state and federal governments in an effort to secure the resources necessary to properly address the myriad of challenges that face our school system, this community, and any other municipality in which there may be significant RSI resettlement.

Though there is little evidence to support the notion that Lewiston has a "race" problem at this juncture, the fact remains that the level of public discourse relative to cultural diversity in this City appears to correlate directly to the increasing numbers of Somali individuals that now live in this City. We recognize that this report is not intended to be a study on race relations or to provide the necessary analysis on what can be done to more effectively deal with race relations in general. However, it is important to acknowledge that in addition to discussing language barriers, customs, religion, dress, skin color, diet, or any other feature that makes a culture or ethnic group "different" (relative to existing cultural norms in a community), this report must express what challenges these "differences" may bring to our City, and its support organizations, if its primary goal is to inform, educate and identify the issues associated with sound and effective multi-cultural public policy. It is this workgroup's firm belief that, with the leadership of the Governor's Office and our Legislature, the State and the City will work to develop the necessary partnerships that will foster the kind of

collaboration needed to work with every RSI group in seeking solutions that will reasonably and fairly work for all residents of the City.

The following are those reports submitted by several of the agencies engaged in the workgroup process. All individuals who were involved in the workgroup were invited to make comment on the various reports. Section L of this report outlines many of the issues identified in the various agency reports and summarizes some of the recommendations which, we believe, are necessary to address some of the short and long-term issues associated with the challenges associated with this newest phase of Lewiston's evolution as a culturally diverse community. The immigration story of Portland and Lewiston should serve as the State's opportunity to develop policies and strategies, which can be applied to other communities throughout the state. It is our belief that Maine is on the leading edge of an immigration movement which could involve, at the very least, several other major service centers in the state if the conditions relative to employment and affordable housing remain attractive over time.

Please note that through the process of preparing this report, the original material submitted by the agencies may have been modified or edited for purposes of clarity, spelling, brevity or factual correction:

SECTION A. CAREER CENTER SERVICES ESL (English as a Second Language)/TRAINING ISSUES

Prepared by: Patti Saarinen
Lewiston Career Center

On April 18, 2002, Phil Nadeau, Sue Charron, Cheryl Hamilton, Terry Smith and I met to discuss what the Career Center was experiencing in terms of being able to serve the Somali people and what plans were in effect to serve them in the future.

To date, the number of Somali people seeking Career Center services has been small compared to other organizations in the Lewiston area. However, we are beginning to see the number grow and expect that will be the trend for the future.

We offer services on three levels. Universal services are open to everyone and have no eligibility guidelines or outcomes attached. These services are such things as Labor Exchange registration, use of the Information Center, workshops, testing, etc. The second and third levels of service require enrollment and tracking of outcomes. These services require more intense staff involvement. Such services are case management, on-the-job and classroom training, supportive service, individualized job placement assistance, etc.

Anyone in the community, including the Somalis, may access universal services. When I told Sue that she could send anyone to the Career Center, I was referring to these initial services. Anyone may register and have access to job listings and referral. We also have Internet job search, which is available to anyone. Any Somali person requesting General Assistance through the City can be referred to the Career Center staff for processing, whether they can speak English or not. If they do not speak English, and given that we have only one interpreter on staff, it will take a little time to complete the registration. However, we are committed to insure that it will be done. This additional processing time, which will require translation, is why I suggested we have them come in small groups once or twice a week.

The other levels of service, Intensive and Training, are also open to the Somali people. However, language must be considered at these levels as well. The majority of training sites are not equipped to handle non-English speaking students. People must be able to complete placement tests and course work in order to meet training requirements. If a person cannot understand the textbook, s/he will not be able to pass the course. If the course cannot be completed, that person cannot get employment. Without employment, that person has not met his/her goals, and we have not met our program outcomes. So more planning is required at these levels.

Somali people, who do not speak English but want to work, represent a unique situation. Most of our local employers prefer that employees speak at least some English. They are concerned with safety and other issues resulting from a lack of communication. We cannot force employers to hire, but we are willing to provide support and information to encourage the hiring of these individuals. Of course, as Terry pointed out, a lot of companies within a 50-mile radius of Lewiston are closing or downsizing. This creates an opportunity for employers to hire "ready-to-work" individuals thus dropping the Somalis further down on the list. Cheryl Hamilton is interested in working with us to develop some question and answers sessions for the employer community. This needs to begin soon because without employer support, our other efforts will be for naught. I will be contacting Cheryl to set up a time to meet in the near future.

One thing that is happening at the Career Center is the continuation of the Welfare to Work (W to W) dollars. There have been changes to the W to W legislation that now allow us to enroll non-TANF (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families) recipients into this program. Although the numbers we can serve are small, about 50 people over two years, we are targeting Somalis to be served with these dollars. Through this funding, we are looking to work with Adult Education in order to increase ESL classes. We are also looking to contract with transportation providers to have buses at our "beck and call" in order to transport people to jobs and training. Hopefully some long-term changes will come out of these initiatives.

Editors Note: Since the publication of this report by Ms. Saarinen, the Career Center has now programmed one special day per week where Lewiston's General Assistance Office can schedule those individuals who require ESL services so that a special interpreter may be available to answer questions and provide information as to the Career Center services. This is a positive step in the right direction. However, it is clear the current Career Center resources will reach their maximum capacity quickly. The need for additional resources to be made available for the Career Center are immediately apparent, as the facility can only provide intensive job retraining services for 50 or so ESL applicants—clearly not enough to meet the current need. Employer training is a significant issue as many potential employers have expressed concerns regarding language, cultural and religious practices, and education.

SECTION B. REFUGEE/SECONDARY MIGRANT/ASYLEE GENERAL INFORMATION & SERVICES

Prepared by: Matt Ward
Catholic Charities Maine Program Director for Refugee and Immigration Services

1. Asylees are persons already in the United States (legally as non-immigrants or illegally) who are unable to return to their own country because of a "well-founded fear of persecution."

2. A person applies for asylum to the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) of the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ). Asylum seekers may not work until they receive an employment authorization from the Federal Government. Asylum seekers may work anywhere in the United States once they receive employment authorization. Current regulations require asylum seekers to wait 150 days following the date of receipt of their initial application for asylum before applying for employment authorization. Once employment authorization is granted, an asylum seeker may work until the final adjudication of his/her case.

3. If asylum is granted, the asylum seeker becomes an asylee. Once a person becomes an asylee, they are free to live and work permanently in the United States in virtually the same status as a refugee. They are also eligible for many of the same services as refugees.

4. After one year in the United States as an asylee, the asylee may apply to adjust status to become a legal permanent resident.

5. After a total of five years legal residence in the United States, an asylee may apply for U.S. citizenship.

Editors Note: This is one of two reports from Catholic Charities Maine. This report focuses on undocumented immigrants who have applied for political asylum and are living in the state. As of this date, 16 individuals have or are in the process of filing for political asylum in Lewiston. Though the issue of political asylee applicants has not reached "crisis" proportions, their inability to receive any Federal assistance until they are granted political asylum, coupled with the prohibition to issue work permits for 150 days, places additional pressure on local resources that are already challenged.

SECTION C. REFUGEE/SECONDARY MIGRANT FACTS

Prepared by: Bonnie Bagley
Catholic Charities Maine Associate Director, Policy, Planning, Administration
Matt Ward
Catholic Charities Maine Program Director for Refugee and Immigration Services

1. Refugee Definition and General Resettlement Information

Refugee resettlement is a Federal Government program. The United Nations, through its High Commission for Refugees, determines which populations qualify for refugee status. Refugees are persons forced to leave their own countries and unable to return because of "a well founded fear of persecution." The United Nations and its membership recognize four types of persecution: religious, racial/ethnic, political and social.

The country of first asylum has the primary responsibility to accept and resettle refugees. When the number of refugees arriving in any given country becomes too great a burden, the United Nations establishes refugee camps and works to resettle refugees in other countries. The current worldwide population of refugees in camps is approximately 22 million. Many countries accept refugees for resettlement.

The United States accepts between 60,000 to 90,000 refugees annually. Each year, the President of the United States signs a *Presidential Determination* that sets the intake of refugees for that fiscal year. For fiscal year 2002, President Bush has set the intake goal of 70,000. Federal authorities are not sure that they will be able to process that number.

Once assigned to the United States for resettlement, refugees are screened by the U.S. Department of Justice. If approved for resettlement, refugees are assigned arbitrarily to resettlement programs across the country. In the United States, all refugee resettlement is conducted by community-based non-profit organizations affiliated with one of the ten national voluntary agencies contracted by the U.S. Department of State to receive and place refugees. The most prominent of these are: Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services (LIRS); United States Conference of Catholic Bishops/Office of Migration and Refugee Services (USCCB/MRS); International Rescue Committee (IRC); Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS); World Relief (WR); and Church World Services (CWS).

Every state must have a refugee resettlement program that conforms to Federal guidelines. Resettlement programs assist refugees in the first weeks following their arrival in the United States. They help refugees find employment, housing, education, health care, and support services in order to become economically self-sufficient as soon as possible following arrival. The vast majority of refugees are self-sufficient within the first six months following arrival.

Catholic Charities Maine is the primary agency in Maine for the resettlement of refugees and settles approximately 250 individuals each year. The primary resettlement location is Portland. In the last two years the program successfully resettled 31 French-speaking Togolese refugees in Lewiston and Auburn. Of the 250 resettled annually, about 100 are residual cases from the previous year and 50 residuals are re-opened cases from previous years (in the Portland area only). Refugees are entitled to service for up to five years following arrival.

The Federal government considers a person a refugee for the first 12 months following his/her arrival in the United States. Following the first year, a refugee is eligible to change status to Legal Permanent Resident. After five years in the United States, any immigrant is eligible to apply for citizenship.

2. Secondary Migrant Definition

Secondary migrants are persons who arrived in the United States as refugees, were assigned to a resettlement program, and have subsequently abandoned that site to live elsewhere. Secondary migrants are not eligible to receive resettlement services outside the initial resettlement area.

However, secondary migrants are eligible to receive all federal and state programs and must comply with the same eligibility guidelines applicable to all other citizens. It should also be noted that once refugees arrive at their assigned resettlement community, they may leave that community at any time. Once they leave, however, they are no longer eligible for federal resettlement assistance money. Federal Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) guidelines currently do not allow funding to follow newly resettled refugees to communities they are not “assigned” to by the resettlement agency.

3. Facts about Catholic Charities Maine Refugee and Immigration Services

Under the auspices of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Office of Migration and Refugee Services, the program is responsible for providing basic Reception and Placement Services for the first thirty days after arrival. These services are funded by the U.S. Department of State. Federal funding covers basic case management costs and direct cash payments to refugees are treated as pass-through of funds. Unfunded services, some of which can be delivered in-kind, include initial housing, furnishings, clothing etc. These services are funded through local community support.

Catholic Charities Maine Refugee and Immigration Services resettles all persons classified as refugees by the federal government regardless of race, color, creed, or national origin. The diversity of the refugees resettled in Maine closely reflects the quotas set annually by the President.

After the initial thirty days, Catholic Charities Maine delivers Refugee Social Services to all primary refugee resettlement cases in Region I. These federally funded services are delivered on behalf of the State consistent with guidelines of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Refugee Resettlement (DHHS/ORR). These services are provided for 12 months following arrival in the United States. DHHS/ORR also mandates public health screening which is done by DHS in conjunction with Maine Medical Center in Portland and St. Mary's Regional Medical Center in Lewiston.

Under a contract administered by DHS Region I, Catholic Charities Maine RIS provides intensive TANF/ASPIRE case management to persons who entered the United States originally as refugees but have failed to reach economic self-sufficiency.

Under the same DHS contract, we provide employment services only to 100 secondary migrants (in the Portland area only). This includes job development, resume writing, interview assistance and placement. At any given time, the program has a social services clientele of about 500 persons. The cost of providing social services to this population is approximately \$500,000 annually (or \$1,000 per person). For this fiscal year, the State is providing \$224,000.

Catholic Charities Maine Refugee and Immigration Services is one of a select group of resettlement programs across the country that administers a special Early Self-Reliance program. This is an incentive program available to newly arrived refugees whose willingness to work and employment qualifications meet the program's requirements. The amount of Federal funding depends on the numbers enrolled and requires a 50-cent to the dollar match from the local community. This project has received significant support from the United Way of Greater Portland.

The program also administers a project to develop in-kind and cash resources to support refugee resettlement through local Catholic parishes and community organizations.

RIS *Interpret* is the largest professional interpreter/translation service in the State of Maine and is operated by Catholic Charities Maine Refugee and Immigration Services. Though this service is a not-for-profit enterprise, it is self-financed through fees-for-service.

Services Provided by Catholic Charities For Political Refugees

1. Under the supervision of the U.S. State Department, we receive and provide initial core services to refugees assigned to the program. The core services are:
 - * Reception
 - * Medical Screening
 - * Medical Care
 - * School Enrollment (for Children)
 - * ESL Training (for Adults)
 - * Locate Housing
 - * Furnish Housing
 - * Clothing and School Supplies
 - * Employment

2. Under the State of Maine Refugee Social Services contract, we provide ESL and continuing case management for refugees resettled in (primarily Portland) Maine through our program. These services address all aspects of traditional case management, including but not limited to:
- * Housing
 - * Employment
 - * Family Issues
 - * Health Care
 - * Legal Issues

SECTION D. IMPACT OF SOMALI REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT ON HEALTH SERVICES IN THE LEWISTON-AUBURN AREA

Prepared by: Jeralyn Mauer
Coordinator of Guest Relations
Central Maine Medical Center

Health care issues

Over the last year, the refugees have had a major impact on the health care systems of both hospital and doctors' office practices in Lewiston-Auburn.

By early summer of 2001, the CMMC's Family Practice Residency Program had over 250 Somalis registered as patients of the practice. As of March 2002, they now have close to 500 Somalis registered and using the services of the Residency program. The lack of forewarning about the large number of clients with need for special resources offered the health community little opportunity to do the necessary preplanning when it came to decisions on how to allocate limited monies and resources.

With estimates of between 800-900 Somalis currently living in our community, the providers of both health care systems (CMMC and Sisters of Charity Health Systems) are obviously trying to meet the challenge of providing health care services to these people. The following challenges have been identified by a recent focus group made up of staff from doctors' offices of both health care systems, through interviews with staff of both hospitals:

➤ **Translating resources and monies to pay for these services.**

Prior to March of last year, both hospitals were typically spending several thousand dollars per year on ESL translating. The latest tally of monies for translating is estimated at \$5,000/month within each system. Within doctor's office practices, challenges specific to translation needs included those that doctor's offices experience when arranging for a translator through Catholic Charities and the subsequent problems created when the patient is a no-show for the appointment. The bill from Catholic Charities still has to be met even though the patient has not shown. This is a chronic issue that has an impact on other issues. At times, couples will appear in the Emergency Department at either hospital and refuse the services of a translator (which is within their rights). most of the time relying on the male partner to do the translating. The challenge is that his answers to questions often lead to concerns about how well he understands the nature of the questions (i.e., the male partner that identifies that his wife has a period every 6 months – the question then becomes how accurate the information is and should there be a concern about this physical condition as a symptom?). Translating does increase the amount of time spent with each patient. Physicians and other health care providers interviewed estimate that it often doubles the

time spent with the patient. This, in turn, impacts on the amount of time available to spend with other patients within the health care system.

➤ **Chronic Missed Appointments**

Routinely appointments are missed both within the hospitals and at doctors' offices. In both settings, this is adding to overall medical costs and the inefficient use of resources.

Staff has indicated that at least two issues seem to be contributing to this problem:

- Transportation problems – at a recent meeting with the Somali community, they described the special challenge of a mother trying to prepare 6-10 children to get ready for a ride. Families may not hear the van which is waiting at their apartment house door. By the time they get downstairs with all the children, the transportation has left.
- Concept of time appears to vary for many Somalis from our Western culture, i.e., their time relates to morning and afternoon vs. our Western culture's need to pinpoint time in 15-minute increments. If their appointment is for 9:30 many will feel very comfortable getting to their appointment when they can in the morning.

➤ **Disease Prevention/Health Issues**

There are a myriad of issues related to health and safety:

- Culture issues related to gender issues – Somali women being uncomfortable with male physicians examining them. As much as possible, providers are trying to be sensitive to this.
- Lack of understanding of basic health safety issues:
 - * That a refrigerator does not keep food from spoiling forever possibly connected to a lack of understanding relative to expiration dates on food.
 - * How electrical outlets can be dangerous—especially families with small children
- Family planning issues – interviews with some Somali women have revealed that they would like to learn more about how to prevent unwanted pregnancies but are fearful of their husband's reactions to any attempt to limit family size.
- Immunization records are not available from wherever they lived before.

➤ **Community reaction to Somalis on Medicaid**

There is a certain level of negative feelings within the L-A community about the Somali people using the welfare system. These observations, whether its origination is bigotry or stems from some lack of understanding or misinformation, are unfortunately a part of any community and was most likely present in our community before the arrival of the Somalis. Because Somalis stand out from other members of the community by dress and skin color, a concern that has been expressed by some within the health care system is that some members of the community will take their negative opinions beyond verbal expression.

Editors Note: Though this report reflects some of the issues encountered by both the CMMC and Sisters of Charity health care operations in this community, the City of Lewiston has no Public Health Officer given recent budget cuts. Some concerns have been expressed relative to the potential health risks posed by RSI's as they relate to disease and other communicable health risks. The fact remains that refugees are heavily screened before they enter the country and pose little health risk to the public as it pertains to such health risk exposures as TB, HIV, etc. An issue that requires additional review involves those undocumented immigrants who have not been processed through the same refugee screening procedures to which most of our secondary migrants encounter before they arrive in the U.S. There is little oversight in the area of undocumented immigrants, and policies and programs

relating to the school children of undocumented immigrants and other potential health risks with adult asylee applicants have yet to be fully developed by the State.

SECTION E. DIVERSITY IMPACT/ISSUES AT LEWISTON HIGH SCHOOL

Prepared by: Patrick H. O'Neill, Ed. D.
Principal
Lewiston High School

Administration met with students and faculty to discuss the climate at Lewiston High School. Rumors reported by the press have been dispelled, and there is movement to have a positive transition regarding the influx of immigrant students.

Several faculty members and a number of students are going to be trained as peer mediators to educate and intervene in issues relating to school climate. Plans to host a Culture Celebration Day are being discussed, and tentative dates for after spring recess will be forthcoming.

A forum for panel discussion with parents is being planned for an evening, and the re-institution of a newsletter to Lewiston High School families is forthcoming as well.

Recently, Mr. Boucles and I met with Somali elders to have a dialogue dealing with recent media coverage and reporting. We are working proactively and positively in understanding each other's issues relative to a sound learning environment for all. A student task force has been established to solicit student input. The Civil Rights team, comprised of students and advised by Mrs. Joan Macri, has created role-playing scenarios that deal with culture change and discussions that center around them. Faculty forums for discussion and planning have been conducted by administration with positive results. Resources from Bates College, the University of Southern Maine, and the Attorney General's Office have been tapped and suggested personnel for consult work have been identified.

The process of climate change can be challenging and intriguing as one might imagine. A well-informed student body and faculty can create a smooth transition. We at Lewiston High School are fortunate to have the dedication and support of both groups to make this happen and only time will assist us in preparing for this paradigm shift. I am confident we are utilizing the right approach.

SECTION F. IMPACT OF SOMALI MIGRATION ON LEWISTON SCHOOLSYSTEM

Prepared by: Leon Levesque
Superintendent of Schools
Lewiston School Department

The recent resettling of Somalis in the community of Lewiston has impacted the local school system. The English as a Second Language program has burgeoned from 40 students in 2000-2001 to 243 students in 2001-2002. To accommodate program needs for the new arrivals, the school department has employed three ESL Educational Technicians III, one ESL teacher, and one ESL Community Specialist in addition to present staff. Since ESL services are stretched among six elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school, the school department will have to employ more staff if ESL enrollment increases.

Because the school department has seen a gradual, steady decline in its student enrollment over the decade, the recent influx has, at this point, not dramatically affected class size. Real challenges lie in training staff to change classroom practices to meet the needs of a more divergent student population and in locating school space to provide specialized ESL services outside of the regular classroom. Somali students are at various stages of English proficiency. Some receive no services and do well in a regular class setting while others receive between 45 and 90 minutes of specialized services three times a week. It is understandable that because of the language barrier, a number of students struggle academically and need considerable support.

As mentioned, classroom teachers also need professional training and support to adjust classroom practices to accommodate the learning needs of a more diverse student population. To assist ESL students and staff immediately, the school department has made additional purchases of computers and software to help students acquire English proficiency and subject area knowledge.

Our new population in local schools raises issues concerning understanding cultural diversity. Many Somali students are faced with learning our culture while overcoming negative rumors, which have unfortunately spread throughout the community. Schools and the community need to learn more about Somali people and their culture. A few of the schools have facilitated events inviting the parents of Somali students into the classrooms to help bridge the social gap. Additional events, which aim to raise cultural awareness, may be necessary as the Somali population continues to increase.

Lewiston School Department Data

Student ESL Population K-12:	243 (as of March 2002)
Student Somali Population:	203 (as of March 2002)
Student ESL School Locations:	Students in 6 of our 8 schools
ESL Student Learning Center:	Each school has designated ESL instructional areas to tutor students.
Technology:	Additional computers and software were purchased to use as instructional tools for ESL instruction \$43,000
Staffing:	School Year 2001-2002 (1) Community ESL Specialist (1) ESL MA Degree certified teachers (3) ESL Ed Tech III
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COST:	\$125,336

Projected Additional Staffing 2002-2003:

All the above staff
Also added:
(1) ESL MA Degree certified teacher
(1) ESL Ed Tech III

COST: \$65, 850

2002-2004 School Strategies

- (1) Hire additional certified ESL teachers and Ed Tech III.
- (2) Develop a well-trained, informed staff with appropriate skills and knowledge that will ensure all language minority students are equipped to participate effectively in our schools' educational programs.
- (3) Educate all staff members within the Lewiston School Department on diversity awareness and appropriate practices.
- (4) Purchase essential ESL materials and resources to assist teachers in educating students to overcome the language barriers they are facing, and make a smooth transition into our local schools.
- (5) Implement ESL instructional programs using current technological software aligned to Maine Learning Results standards and assessment practices.

Editors Note: The information on Adult Education services is possibly somewhat more alarming. Currently, approximately 145 Somalis make up the large majority of students enrolled in adult ESL classes. Lewiston's Multi-Purpose Center (MPC) serves as the primary facility for such programs (others are hosted at the Hillview Apartment complex operated by the Lewiston Housing Authority). Space and funding at the MPC is quickly becoming an issue with ESL programs—in addition to finding qualified individuals to work as ESL instructors.

SECTION G. LEWISTON POLICE DEPARTMENT OBSERVATIONS

Prepared by: Sgt. James Minkowsky
Lewiston Police Department

This report is intended to give the City of Lewiston a brief overview with respect to the growing Somali population and overall contact between the Lewiston Police Department and members of the Somali community. It will also cover various concerns voiced by Lewiston citizens.

This paper is intended to reflect my observations as the Police Department's Civil Rights Officer and also as the supervisor of the Youth and Family Services Unit (YFSU). It is not intended to be an all-encompassing report that reflects or represents the views and observations of all Lewiston Police Department members.

With respect to Somali juveniles, I would assert that the issues we have dealt with are not atypical of the day-to-day complaints we respond to with native Lewiston juveniles in the same age groups. While various community members have commented on delinquent or other youthful Somali behavior, I surmise that this observation is based, in part, on the Somali population presently being more visible with the attention given by the media and related forums.

The Lewiston Police have served or otherwise responded to the Somali population through such complaints as family offenses, domestic violence, children trouble, theft, and other routine calls for service. Although communication and cultural differences are significant factors impacting law enforcement activity, it is my opinion that no blatant, unresolved issues exist with respect to police contacts with Somali residents.

We have referred various complaints to the Attorney General's Office Civil Rights Division. One specific complaint, which occurred on Knox St, involved a Somali community member being the victim of an alleged hate bias incident (LPD incident number 0201330).

It has been my experience that the source criticism or concern raised by some local residents regarding the Somalis can often be traced to rumors perpetuated by uninformed individuals or may also be deliberate attempts to negate the acceptance of the Somali population into the Lewiston community. It should also be noted that I have also experienced instances where members of the Somali community were passing along misinformation or rumors.

One such example includes the recent issue at the Lewiston High School in which a fight ensued after an apparent snowball fight. The Somali representative, who discussed this openly in a recent forum at St. Mary's Regional Medical Center, conveyed inaccurate and premature information concluding that the issue was racial, and was started by a group of native Lewiston students. Though our preliminary investigation has revealed that the incident was not racially motivated, this investigation currently remains open, as the Somali suspect has not been identified.

As noted above, the rumors and inaccuracies that exist appear to be one of many problems this community will encounter as the Somali population increases in our community. The opportunities for misinformation and miscommunication will continue if we do not find a mechanism to quickly and accurately answer, or otherwise address, these issues as they arise. We cannot expect that the acculturation process alone will address this problem. The following examples are recent 'rumors', which have been overheard by members of the YFSU:

- 1.) Somali students have a dedicated prayer room at LHS and dedicated times during the day to attend.
- 2.) Somalis moving to Lewiston are **given** cars upon their arrival.
- 3.) Somalis are given \$10,000 upon moving into Lewiston.
- 4.) Somali youth are allowed to wash their feet in the water fountains at LHS.

Suggestions to address this issue could include the forming of a School Department/City cultural awareness liaison. This person could be kept apprized of ongoing community initiatives and act as a central clearinghouse for concerns, issues, or other problems while addressing appropriate levels of confidentiality. This position would address the multi-cultural, multi-national needs of the school system and community at-large. This position could also be responsible for the bulk of school media relations in the Lewiston-Auburn area and, as such, address the wide range of cultural diversity/civil rights issues facing our schools and community. Proper and central media coverage with other related forms of public communication will assist the School Department and the City in developing a more informed community that is better capable of understanding the challenges facing us all.

Further, the School Department's Somali liaison position could be enhanced with more staffing. A full-time position exclusively at LHS would better address issues and rumors as they arise.

The creation of educational forums with a variety of topics, to include State statutes and local ordinances (i.e. Domestic Violence and Child Abuse), should be available and encouraged to Somali community members already in Lewiston and gateway forums for members just arriving. This would go a long way in the area of education and prevention. The YFSU has offered this form of interaction on several occasions. To date, we have not been invited.

Lastly, the availability of more interpreters would be very beneficial to the Police Department, in addition to all related first responder emergency agencies, as these services are often provided after hours and on the weekends. It needs to be stressed that our working relationship with Mohammed Abdi, the School Departments Somali liaison, has been very positive.

SECTION H. PUBLIC AND PRIVATE HOUSING - SOMALI FAMILIES IMPACT AND GENERAL INFORMATION

Prepared by: Renee Bernier, Lewiston City Council President
Phil Nadeau, Lewiston Assistant City Administrator

A. Public Housing

As you may already know, public housing in the City of Lewiston is managed by the Lewiston Housing Authority (LHA). As this report is not attempting to provide you with a complete overview of LHA operations and responsibilities, it will attempt to provide you with some of the more important data relative to the recent arrival of Somalis in the City.

- LHA manages 461 units of traditional public housing in the City. Since February 2001, 25% of the 94 units at the Hillview housing site are occupied with Somali families who now make up 30% of the total Hillview population
- As of April 4, 2002, 68 Somali families are on the public housing waiting list. The breakdown is as follows:
 - *5 bedroom units: 6 families
 - *4 bedroom units: 18 families
 - *3 bedroom units: 19 families
 - *2 bedroom units: 17 families
 - *1 bedroom units: 8 families
- LHA is awarded 930 Section 8 vouchers per year. Since January 2002, LHA has received over 700 applications for Section 8 vouchers (total applications--not solely from Somali families).
- The Section 8 voucher list is now closed as there are 430 families on the waiting list for vouchers; 65 of these families who have applied since January 2002 are Somali. A total of 39 Somali families are still on the waiting list.

The City of Lewiston has worked collaboratively with LHA on a number of inner-city initiatives. Plans are now being developed to construct a \$1.5 million community center, which involves land and funding from the City of Lewiston along with a \$1 million dollar commitment from the Federal government. This center will be located in an area, which has the city's highest low-to-moderate income (LMI) population and will be accessible to many of our new Somali families.

Additionally, another collaborative effort between LHA, the City of Lewiston, and Sisters of Charity has generated some of the first new affordable housing owner/occupied units built in the inner-city in over 12 years.

B. Private Housing

Until very recently, there was little to report in the way of positive news relating to the development of new, affordable, taxable housing within inner-city Lewiston. Lewiston has one of the oldest housing stocks in Maine. However, there appears to be several very important initiatives that are moving the City in a positive direction relative to its aging housing picture.

As little as five years ago, it was painfully clear that Lewiston suffered from an overabundance of sub-standard rental units that depressed rent prices, which created little incentive for new investment in our downtown. Less than adequate rental rates coupled with an overabundance of sub-standard excess square footage was proving to be highly problematic from a development and a public safety point-of-view. With that in mind, the City has aggressively pursued the demolition of over 40 distressed properties around the downtown area over the last four years. This has created critical open space opportunities, which have encouraged the development of several new parks and has led to several other privately funded housing initiatives.

Community Concepts and Coastal Enterprises Inc. have been at the front end of two very important housing initiatives in our downtown. Both of these organizations are working with the City to develop some of the first new affordable housing development in our downtown in over 20 years. With the leadership of Councilor Renee Bernier and the support of the City Council and its Housing Committee, the City is pursuing several very promising opportunities to convert several City-owned parcels into new, taxable housing. The details have yet to be worked out, but it does underscore the need for the State and the Federal government to remain committed to their affordable housing initiatives. It will be critical to maintain funding in areas which will assist urban centers like Lewiston develop the affordable housing that is so desperately needed by many families which include our new Somali residents. It is important to note that these initiatives, as necessary and important as they may be, will continue to leave the issue of addressing our aging housing stock on the front burner for years to come.

Outside of our downtown, the City continues to work with the Caleb Foundation to re-develop 300 units of mixed housing in the housing community known as Tall Pines. Tall Pines is currently in foreclosure and the Caleb Foundation has a proposal before HUD which would allow for \$12 million in acquisition/rehab investment for a project which could put 300 new market/affordable rate housing units back on the market within the next 24 months.

C. Housing Issues

Some of the greatest issues of concern at this moment are as follows:

- The City's demolition of sub-standard housing stock, combined with new Somali and Hispanic arrivals, has created a shortage of available rental units of three, four, and five bedrooms--an important issue given that family sizes can average six to nine individuals per household.
- Housing information is difficult to track as there is no affordable way for the City to gather dependable data on current vacancy rates in the community--important as secondary migrant movement into the City appears to correlate to housing availability which is certainly the case in Portland.
- Transportation is directly related to housing preferences for the Somalis and other families in need. Housing preferences are often driven by proximity to transportation.
- The ability for the City to develop new housing in the downtown area over time will not address the current situation where 20 to 30 new Somali families a month are moving into the City.

SECTION I. LEWISTON GENERAL ASSISTANCE SERVICES – OTHER CITY RSI ACTIVITIES

Prepared by: Phil Nadeau
Assistant City Administrator

1. General Assistance Overview

The arrival of Somalis to the City of Lewiston has required some changes in City operations relative to its General Assistance (GA) services. Since December 2001, the average number of families applying for GA has risen to approximately 20 to 30 families per month. The total number of Somali one-on-one client calls occupied only 17.8% of GA staffing time in December 2001. Since December, the number has steadily risen: January 2002--21.5%; February 2002--39%; and in March 2002, Somali one-on-one client calls occupied almost 50% of GA staffing time.

Many residents may not remember that in 1991 and 1992, unemployment hovered around 9% in the City of Lewiston. During that time, GA funding and the number of actual cases handled by GA was actually much higher than it is today (compare FY 1992's actual expenses of \$1.2 million versus FY 2003's budgeted amount of \$485,000). Today, the City is, thankfully, not in the throes of another significant economic downturn and, consequently, not faced with the long GA lines experienced some twelve years ago. The difference today is in the amount of processing time that many Somali applicants require. On average, due to the number of challenges involving issues relating to language, family size, culture, religion, medical needs, transportation, and education, applicants can require hours of intervention before they can be fully processed. How much time they will require GA will vary widely dependent how proficiently they speak English; what their job skills are; level of education; etc.

The challenges in processing Somali families can be extraordinarily unique. Several weeks ago, a Somali family required GA to provide for the burial of their 9-month-old child. What made this case challenging was their insistence on taking the remains of the child home. Maine state law is not equipped to deal with the probability that any family may make such a request. Its burial permit regulations do not address what occurs in a home environment and the need for Muslims to bury the remains within some 24 hours of death. Burial and emergency GA for burial make not only the issuing of GA challenging (especially on weekends when all agencies are closed), but also requires a level of intervention from local funeral homes and privately operated cemeteries that, currently, does not exist.

The ability to address unique situations as the one discussed above, and recognizing the need to deliver more intense one-on-one service, has resulted in several key changes in the GA Office. The City has increased its staffing by some five individuals: One new full-time clerical position (city employee); one new case worker (city employee); one new Somali case manager (funded with \$250,000 Office of Refugee Resettlement grant shared with Portland); and two new intake workers (full-time ORR grant positions shared with Portland).

It is clear that not all RSI's require General Assistance when they arrive in the City. It is now estimated, given our best information, that there are approximately 800 to 1,000 Somalis living in the City. There is no method of tracking the number of actual RSI's that arrive in the community. Recently, some Somali residents have speculated publicly that there could be another 500 to 1,000 Somalis moving to Lewiston, from the Atlanta region, after the school year. Only time will tell how accurate these numbers are. The real issue is how much more capacity exists within the City GA and

social service infrastructure to effectively manage more Somali arrivals. The City has budgeted an additional \$200,000 (over current budgeted amount) in its GA budget to deal with program issues given our current RSI projections. Another \$60,000 will be needed to address staffing issues. Given that State law requires that we deliver what is legally required for GA, the City is left with little choice but to provide for the expense if that is required--regardless of what is budgeted.

General Assistance Director Sue Charron, Cheryl Hamilton (grant funded intake worker) and I have worked diligently to familiarize ourselves with a number of issues in order to better serve the Somali and RSI populations. Ms. Charron, Ms. Hamilton and I have either met together or separately with a variety of individuals and groups as we attempt to do whatever possible to educate ourselves on a variety of issues. We have met or have had discussions with the following (though this list is in no way exhaustive): Portland GA and public housing staff; Margaret Chase Smith Institute; Lewiston's elected municipal and legislative officials; Lewiston Housing Authority; Catholic Charities of Maine; DHS Aspire program personnel; Career Center staff; many area social service providers; Somali elders; local business leaders; health care providers; and a host of others who have, in one way or another, provided some level of assistance or advice.

2. *GA Coordination With DHS Services*

Sue Charron has worked closely with the Aspire representatives engaged in delivering TANF services to Somali women. We understand that many DHS services are currently short-staffed. As of this writing, Lewiston has three case managers with caseloads of 200 per manager. Though the typical number of staff is normally five caseworkers, the complexities of language, culture, family size, and insufficient documentation significantly increase processing time and add to the difficulty of dedicating even marginal resources to assisting Somali women find work.

What is even more alarming is that DHS has privately contracted the assistance it needs for cases, which have the same kind of complexities that many of the Somali women possess, and it has been reported to us that this contract has not been renewed to date. Currently, many Somali women wait 2 to 3 months for orientation, as they must be scheduled together for translation purposes (keep in mind that there are legal requirements for "certified" translators which are not in abundance). The size of Somali families often serves as the single most insurmountable barrier given the shortage of day care that can meet Somali needs (language, culture, diet, etc.).

Couple these issues with public transportation that cannot meet the full range of mobility needs; increasing unemployment rates; and a DHS system that is already at the margin, and you can begin to understand the many challenges our City must confront in order to adequately address even the most minimum of needs.

The City looks forward to working with the new Region 2 Director, Gail Palman, Pierrot Rugaba, Cindy Boyd and Harry Simones. The issues are many and they are complex. We will need the Governor's leadership to chart new territory as Maine takes on the challenges associated with cultural diversity.

3. *Other City Activities*

In addition to GA activities and services, the City has undertaken a number of other steps to provide information to the public relative to general RSI matters:

- Launched a “Cultural Diversity Resources” web page link on City home page with a commitment to represent those cultures or nationalities desiring representation
- Produced a frequently-asked-questions brochure to assist in answering questions often directed to City personnel relative to Somalis
- Have assigned the City Community Relations Coordinator to serve as the central information gathering point so that all city departments and non-city agencies may forward information on their multi-cultural events to be listed on the City web page
- Has committed to scheduling a Town Meeting style public information meeting with a panel of experts to address public concerns relative to the arrival of Somalis and other related RSI issues (tentatively scheduled for May 14 or 15 at the Lewiston Armory, 6:30 PM)
- Is working to develop a new cultural diversity/multi-cultural advisory committee
- Has developed, and will continue to develop, a number of “life skills” seminars to assist RSI populations in dealing with such issues as transportation, banking, cooking, shopping, etc.

SECTION J. DHS REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT SERVICES

Prepared by: Pierrot Rugaba, State Refugee Coordinator
 Maine Department of Health and Human Services
 Community Services Center
 Refugee Resettlement Program

1. Program Overview

The Federal Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) provides resettlement assistance to refugees, primarily through state-administered refugee resettlement programs. In Maine, the Department of Human Services (DHS) administers the provision of transitional cash, medical assistance and social services to refugees. These services are designed to help refugees achieve economic self-sufficiency and social adjustment within the shortest time possible after their arrival in the US.

DHS sub-contracts with Catholic Charities Maine, Refugee and Immigration Services (CCM/RIS), to provide social services to refugees. These services may include: English language training, employment services, and cultural adjustment services.

2. Services

Funds from this federal program are targeted towards:

- Refugee Cash and Medical Assistance (RCA and RMA) up to 8 months for newly arrived refugees who are not eligible for other cash assistance programs and services such as TANF, SSI, or Medicaid.
- Social Services up to 5 years consisting of English language training, vocational English, employment services, and other employability and social adjustment services.
- Preventive Services that consist of preventive health assessment and treatment service for protection of the public health against contagious disease.

The Federal refugee program reimburses States for their full costs for the RCA and RMA programs.

3. Refugee/Immigrant Secondary Migration

ORR requires states to compile and maintain data on the secondary migration of refugees within the United States and to submit the Refugee State-of-Origin Report (ORR-11) for estimating secondary migration as required by the Refugee Act of 1980 (section 412(a)(3)). *The principal use of the ORR-11 data has been to allocate ORR social service funds to States.*

The State Refugee Program collects data on secondary migration from three sources: DHS, CCM/RIS, the City of Portland Social Services Division, and the City of Lewiston General Assistance Office. The following is a summary report of the movement of secondary migrants in Maine by Federal Fiscal Year (FFY):

- FFY 1999, approximately 100 secondary migrants reported
- FFY 2000, 246 of the 477 reported met the federal guidelines for secondary migrants (SSN on file and the three year period).
- FFY 2001, 480 of the 608 reported met the federal guidelines for secondary migrants (SSN on file and the three year period).
- FFY 2001, 45 refugees, initially resettled in Maine during the past 3 years, have moved out-of-state (out-migrated).

During the past three FFY's, CCM/RIS resettled 690 refugees; the Jewish Family Alliance resettled 6 refugees for a total of 696 refugee arrivals for the State of Maine over a period of 3 years.

The matrix of all possible in and out-migration pairs between States can be summarized into total in and out-migration figures reported for each State. Therefore, Maine Social Services formula funding is based upon the following secondary migrant/refugee numbers: $696 + 480 - 45 = 1131$, this total reflecting the number of refugees who are presently living in Maine and entered the U.S. during the past 3 years.

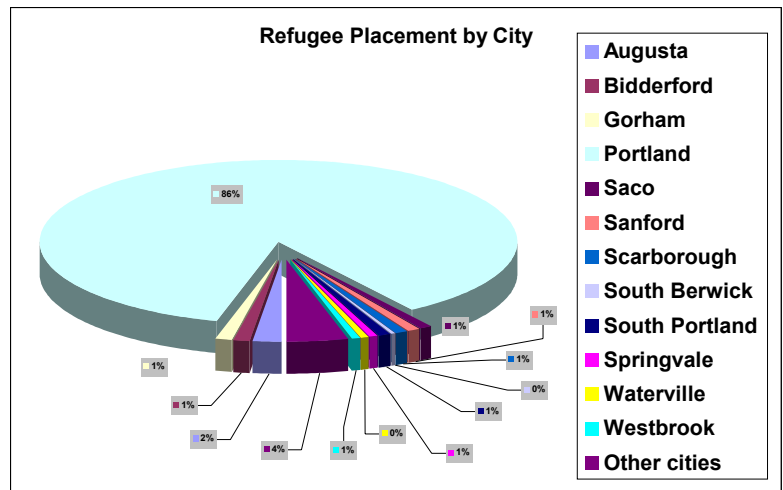
The fact that the reports are based on current assistance or service populations means, of course, that coverage does not extend to all refugees who have entered the State since 1975. *The bias of this method is toward refugees who have entered in the past three years--that portion of the refugee population of greatest interest to ORR.*

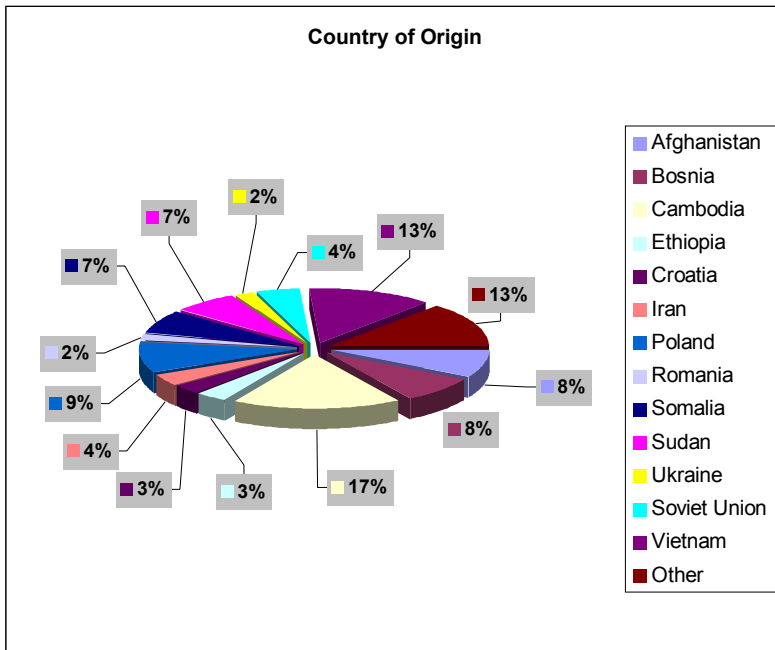
Under the social services formula, social service funds are allocated directly to states according to their proportion of all refugees who arrived in the U.S. during the previous three fiscal years--including secondary migrants.

4. Refugee Resettlement Data

The following data reflects the nationalities, the total from each country, and the cities where refugees have resettled in the State of Maine since 1982:

City	N. Placements
Augusta	79
Biddeford	53
Gorham	47
Portland	3783
Saco	31
Sanford	45
Scarborough	30
South Berwick	16
South Portland	32
Springvale	31
Waterville	15
Westbrook	26
Other cities	184





Country	Placements
Afghanistan	370
Bosnia	335
Cambodia	754
Ethiopia	143
Croatia	124
Iran	157
Poland	388
Romania	79
Somalia	315
Sudan	291
Ukraine	79
Soviet Union	190
Vietnam	568
Other	579
Total	4372

Note: These numbers reflect new arrivals resettled directly in Maine and do not include Asylees and/or Secondary Migrants.

4. Unanticipated Arrivals

The unanticipated arrivals program is intended to provide resources that bridge the gap between the arrival of refugees, and the time when their numbers are included in the population-based formula social services funds (ORR-11 three year cycle). The cities of Portland and Lewiston jointly applied for, and were awarded, the unanticipated arrival grant in the order of \$250,000.00 covering a 17-month period since last fall.

After weeks of negotiations between the State and ORR, permission has just been granted to send in a request for supplemental funding on the ORR unanticipated arrivals (Portland and Lewiston) and the Refugee Children School Impact (Maine Dept. of Education) grants. The State Refugee Program is now working with Portland Social Services Division and Lewiston GA to prepare a rationale for requesting such a supplement.

SECTION K. OPEN LETTER FROM THE SOMALI COMMUNITY

Editors Note The workgroup believed that it would be appropriate to have the two groups who pose the greatest RSI challenges to the City, the Somalis and the Hispanics, submit letters “in their own words” about their experiences here in the City. It is understood that there are several other nationalities that have representation in the City. However, given that the content of this report is focused on identifying those RSI groups that have had some immediate, and identifiable, economic and service impact on the City; and given that the workgroup believes that the Somalis, and to a lesser extent the Hispanic population (though the number is estimated at around 2,000 in the City, they have required fewer City resources to support to date) are the two groups which require the most analysis as of this date, the workgroup believed that it would be appropriate to invite representatives from both groups to submit “open” letters for this report. Though the Maine Rural Workers Coalition, who

work with many Hispanics in the City, was extended the opportunity to submit their “open letter”, no communication from that office was received as of the release date of this report.

Mr. Phil Nadeau

Acting City Administrator
City of Lewiston

Dear Mr. Nadeau,

On behalf of the entire estimated 800 Somali community members in the City of Lewiston as well as the few families who now live in Auburn, we, the elders and community leaders of the Somali Community, would like to express our gratitude and many thanks to the City of Lewiston and her residents for the way we were welcomed and received here. It is in our culture that we say thanks to the one who assists us at times of need. Somalis never forget those who helped them out and would always stand by them.

Lewiston has seen the sudden influx of Somali migrants who have been moving here in the last twelve months or so. The majority of these people have been coming from major metropolitan cities in the southern states i.e. Atlanta, Nashville, Louisville and others. Given the possessive nature of Somali parents towards their families and children, those cities are seen as places where the potential for running into undesirable situations are high. These include drugs, guns and related violence as well as other social problems such as homelessness.

Our people are an oral society who pass word around by word of mouth. In the old days Somalis communicated through poems called “Gabay”. Therefore, when the few families who came here first reported back to have found the perfect place we have always wanted to raise our children where the people are warm hearted and kind, more people moved in based on this good words.

While we believe the City has done a lot to accommodate our people and meet some of the needs they have, we still think there are many areas which need to be worked upon. These includes the following:

- Somalis are hard working people. We have very good track record of hard work and self-reliance. We do not want to be dependent on welfare and handouts as a means to sustain our families. In many cities in North America such as Minneapolis and Toronto, Somali businesses contribute to the local economies of these cities. Our people there reached that level through employment and when the local system opened up opportunities for them. Therefore, we ask the local Chamber of Commerce here and business owners to hire Somalis and make employment available to our people.
- Improvement on the housing situation is another request we have. Naturally Somalis have larger families then the Americans. The average Somali family is composed of six people in most cases. There are families here of up to ten people in one family. Such families find it hard to get homes appropriate to their needs. Therefore, solutions to such problems are welcome within our community.
- Many of our children, especially children of the families who are here in the U.S. a year or less are having difficulties at school due to the language barrier they face. We think that this difficulty can be alleviated if there were some Somali/English speaking tutors in the school

system who are to work closely with the ESL teachers. We hope this recommendation will be considered by the school Department.

Finally we would like to make it clear that the Somali community here have chosen to live here and hope to become useful members of this community and of this society. To that end, we ask the city to bear with us for a little longer until we able to stand on our feet and be able to support our families with minimal assistance.

Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Members of the Somali Community.

Editors Note: This “open” letter from the Somali community was a collective effort. The decision by the Somali community to sign the letter as “Members of the Somali Community” was arrived at by a group process, coordinated by various Elders who serve as the cultural leadership within the Somali community.

SECTION L. SUMMARY OF ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following is a summary of issues and concerns identified in this report. The workgroup has taken the liberty to make several recommendations to assist the Governor’s Office in identifying those specific areas that provide potential immediate and long-term impact relative to the Somali arrivals; refugee resettlement; and immigration in general:

1. Career Center

- Intensive job training resources for non-English speaking RSI’s are limited and only funded for 50 positions
- Translation assistance may quickly exceed existing processing capacity for anything beyond one day a week
- Transportation, ESL, and education are all areas which factor into successful job training for many immigrants (and some lifelong residents as well)
- Some employers have expressed concern regarding language, religious practices and concerns regarding levels of education/skill as it pertains to Somalis

RECOMMENDATION: The State must fund additional intensive job retraining resources for non-English speaking applicants; for no less than one additional Somali translator; and the State must explore possibilities for extended services to address transportation and employer training (relative to culture, language and customs of Somalis and other immigrant groups) needs.

2. Catholic Charities Maine (CCM) & DHS Refugee Resettlement Programs and Funding

- Initial ORR and State resources focused on Portland’s RSI population given its designation as a resettlement community
- Federal funding guidelines for secondary migrant resettlement are not immediately favorable for Lewiston
- Movement of secondary migrant Somali population to Lewiston has generated \$250K from ORR as a shared grant with Portland. Additional “unanticipated arrivals” funding is being requested and coordinated with DHS Office of Refugee Resettlement

- DHS Maine Refugee Social Service contract resources issued to CCM are primarily available only in Region I
- No State funding currently in place for DHS refugee coordinator similar to that position in Region I
- Asylees cannot receive work permits for up to 150 days which place additional financial burdens on the municipality and State
- TANF/Aspire ORR case management funds for secondary migrants in need available in Region I are currently not available in Region II

RECOMMENDATION: Additional ORR funds for TANF/Aspire support are needed in Lewiston. Other ORR funding to support job training, ESL, and staffing for casework must be made available to Region II secondary migrant population—particularly those with ESL issues.

3. **Health Services**

- There are serious questions regarding the health protocols involving asylee applicants and their children who must be registered in the school system, in some cases, without any medical documentation
- Family planning is complicated by cultural and religious issues
- Additional costs are being incurred by many health providers for translation services, medical care, and other needs
- Language translation issues raise concerns regarding the ability of health care organizations to provide accurate and safe medical service

RECOMMENDATION: It is understood that the current state budget problems will make it difficult to address funding support for hospitals relative to unique RSI needs (such as translation) not directly covered by Medicaid or Medicare. However, the financial issues relating to undocumented immigrants can only be mitigated if the Federal government allows for special financial support for asylum applicants. The area of public health, particularly those issues associated with communicable disease (TB, HIV, Smallpox, etc.), is also of great concern. The State Health Office must take a lead role in developing policies and programs, which provide communities with resources to insure that public health is not placed at risk once asylees are identified.

4. **Lewiston School and Police Department**

- ESL related costs are projected for the FY2003 School budget at \$250,000
- School Department has proceeded with more cultural diversity training for staff
- Police Department has a Civil Rights Committee that meets to discuss a variety of multi-cultural concerns that it encounters in both Lewiston and Auburn
- Issues relative to school security, special diet needs, cultural differences, religious differences have posed additional challenges
- Adult education ESL programs are at maximum capacity levels

RECOMMENDATION: ESL and multi-cultural pressures may require the state to look at funding changes relative to programmatic needs for traditional school students with multi-cultural challenges. Resources for ESL support for students; cultural diversity training for students, parents and staff; school security; and other special needs must raise questions relative to existing modes of assessing funding needs. Adult ESL learning is a critical part of the City's success to assist

Somali adults to find success in the workplace. Additional resources to achieve usable levels of English proficiency are critical to the success of diminishing the need for government social service support.

5. Public and Private Housing

- No Section 8 vouchers available at this time
- It is becoming increasingly difficult to accommodate large families (7, 8, and 9 per family)
- Overall vacancy rates appear to be shrinking
- Housing availability appears to correlate very closely to RSI arrivals based on Portland's experiences
- New affordable housing initiative in Lewiston cannot completely address the need to continue upgrading one of the oldest housing stocks in Maine

RECOMMENDATION: State and federal government support for affordable housing must continue to be funded to assist Lewiston, and other service centers like it, address the ongoing need to provide suitable housing for low to moderate income earners. Additionally, Lewiston has experienced a chronic shortage of Section 8 vouchers for years. Support is needed to shift existing HUD funding or to provide some level of recognition for special funds to support communities with high RSI populations.

6. General Assistance

- Spending is projected to increase for FY 2003 GA related expenses by some \$150,000 over the existing FY 2002 budget of \$335,000
- If projections of 500 to 1,000 additional Somalis arriving in Lewiston come to fruition, existing staffing levels and programmatic costs will probably have to increase
- DHS and Career Center resources for GA ESL eligible applicants seeking job training are not adequate
- ORR grant funding for additional case worker positions has proved invaluable

RECOMMENDATION: The level of DHS and Career Center funding dedicated for Region 1 to support refugee ESL, TANF/Aspire, job training, and other special needs must be made available immediately to Region II secondary migrants as the level of need exists--only the classification of their immigrant status is different. The absence of critical support funds to assist the State agencies negatively impacts GA's ability to assist applicants get off the welfare rolls which costs the municipality and the State more money. Additionally, staffing costs are absorbed 100% by municipality with no State support. The level of effort relative to increases in GA costs are proportionately higher on the staffing side. Financial assistance for additional staffing, particularly those needed for translation purposes, will help to mitigate local costs.

It is our sincere hope that this report is received in a manner consistent with its intended purpose: To serve as the starting point for a dialogue on the fiscal and social impacts of immigration in Lewiston and throughout Maine. We look forward to working with the Governor's Office, our State and Congressional delegation, and those agencies engaged in providing RSI services in Maine.