



SOMALI COMMUNITY
RESETTLEMENT SERVICES



BY THE COMMUNITY FOR THE COMMUNITY

**Somali Community Resettlement Services
of Olmsted County**

2021 Annual Report



OUR VISION

All refugees and immigrant families can thrive in an equitable world where they lead successful lives with personal responsibility, economic independence, and vitality.

OUR MISSION

To promote and advance the social well-being and welfare of immigrants and refugees by providing much-needed community and resettlement services, with the ultimate goal of building a vibrant community, whose members can successfully settle and effectively integrate into the wider American community.

Somali Community Resettlement Services of Olmsted County (SCRS) was formed in Rochester in 1999 by a volunteer network of Somali refugees to directly respond to the needs of Somali refugees and immigrants. SCRS was established as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization in 2000 and confirmed in 2004. East African communities quickly grew to include Somali, Kenyan, Ethiopian, Sudanese, and Oromo. Since 2017, SCRS has grown to serve immigrants from Latinx communities (Mexico, Central and South America), as well as Afghanistan refugees, who just recently began resettlement in Minnesota. SCRS has served over 14,500 individuals through our offices in Faribault, Minneapolis (main), Owatonna, Rochester, and Willmar.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Abdullah (Sharif) Hared
Executive Director
Somali Community Resettlement Services

Yusuf Ahmed
Production Manager
Jennie-O-Turkey Store

Sadad Ali
Owner
Riverside Home Health, Inc.

Anab Garuf
Elder - Traditional Women's Leader
Rochester Islamic Center

Hassan Hussein
Elder
Faribault Islamic Center

Ayan Mohamed
Registered Nurse
Mayo Clinic

Susan Starr
ESL Teacher (Retired)
Rochester Public Schools

Gulad Mohamoud
Manager
Essential Home Healthcare

Sayid Husseinweli Mohamed
Director
Minnesota Care Counseling Services

Mohamed Yarow
Owner, Personal Care Agency

Faisel Ahmed
Small Business Owner

SENIOR LEADERSHIP

Abdullah (Sharif) Hared
Executive Director

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Program Manager, Social Services

Kari Anderson
Program Director

Abdirahman Dheeg
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Fayrus Duale
Program Manager, Health

Mike Olson
Program Manager,
IT/Education/Careers

Mohamedkader Mohamed
Program Manager,
Community Health Outreach

By the community. For the community.

This is our philosophy at Somali Community Resettlement Services. **Community** binds us together. **Community** drives us forward. **Community** delivers the continued success in the services and programs SCRS offers to the many immigrants and refugees who come to Minnesota looking for a new and better life.

All programming and services offered by Somali Community Resettlement Services (SCRS) are based on the needs we see firsthand. We engage regularly with faith leaders, schools, community organizations, state and local agencies, employers, and our clients to gather their insights into how SCRS can better serve the community as a whole. Many of our staff are immigrants and refugees, so they have walked the path our clients journey on now. We live, work and worship in the communities we serve. SCRS is a valued member of the community, and we believe our services to the East African, Latinx, and Afghan communities are sustaining and life-changing.



"Our community includes many people from many walks of life. It is through your individual contributions that we build a better Minnesota together."

Abdullah (Sharif) Hared
Executive Director

2021: SUCCESSES & CHALLENGES

2021 was a year full of many successes in the midst of continued pandemic challenges. We have much to be grateful for and see many possibilities on the horizon.

The COVID-19 pandemic forced many in our communities to stay home due to sickness, school closures, and work stoppages; while others continued to be on-site at their jobs day after day. Our SCRS staff rallied around those needing support by helping many claim their unemployment benefits, assisting others with requesting rent and utility assistance, and by delivering food and other basic needs. For working parents, who experienced daycare and school closures, we found alternative care providers so they could continue to work.

We realized that as an organization - a community - we can actively encourage others to see the benefits of vaccinations and COVID-19 testing. We held vaccination clinics and offered free at-home test kits to support our state's initiatives to lower infection rates across Minnesota.

2021 was also a year for securing new funding sources to support our programming. We are a nonprofit that is reliant on grants and donations from funding partners who value our work. We greatly appreciate their confidence and trust in SCRS. We will continue to work to broaden our funding sources in the coming year.

2022: FOCUSED ON MANAGED GROWTH

As we enter 2022, SCRS will build upon the successful programs and services we have in place to support East African, Latinx, and Afghan immigrant and refugee communities in Minnesota.

Managed growth will be one of our top priorities. This will include moving our headquarters into a new Minneapolis location and improving our infrastructure so that all our locations can more efficiently and effectively work together. With our staff and Board of Directors, SCRS will formalize a strategic plan that will guide our organization into the future. We will evaluate how our staff and physical spaces can better serve our clients, determining how best to utilize our resources to meet their resettlement needs.

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SCRS PROGRAMS & SERVICES

SCRS offers culturally specific programming that is delivered in native languages to immigrants and refugees in Greater MN and the Twin Cities Metro area.

PUBLIC HEALTH & COMMUNITY OUTREACH

2021 was another year where access and understanding of Western healthcare was a priority for all. The COVID-19 pandemic continued to wreak physical and emotional havoc on our state causing many immigrants to fall ill due to a lack of vaccination and/or working jobs that were deemed “essential” within their communities. Many wrestled with work stoppages and slowdowns due to accelerated infection rates, daycare and school closures, and were at risk of losing their homes due to the negative social-economic impacts the pandemic created.

Many of the immigrants and refugees SCRS serves are new arrivals to the United States (within the last ten years), have minimal English proficiency, and live under the Federal poverty level. Myths and conspiracy theories, as well as a lack of trust in government-led programs, keep many Minnesota adult immigrant populations, specifically East African and Latinx, from seeking COVID-19 vaccination, as well as other vaccines for themselves, their children, and families.

Building trust is the first step in creating positive change. Within the healthcare arena, SCRS builds the bridge between the client and the agency. Through our trusted and valued collaborations with healthcare professionals and agencies, county public health departments, and social service agencies, our clients know we are providing them with resources and treatment referrals from sources that understand their culture and respect their beliefs. And they know SCRS will remain engaged and follow up with them along the way.

To improve knowledge about vaccinations and increase vaccine participation, outreach, education, and assistance, SCRS staff - along with members of the Islamic Association of North America and the Somali Medical Association of America - held weekly outreach discussions on sexually transmitted diseases, HIV, vaccines, and other topics of interest at local mosques and churches.

In 2021, SCRS focused our health and community outreach in the following areas:

- COVID-19 education and outreach: Partnered with the MN Dept. of Health, county public health departments, Allina Health Systems, and the Mayo Clinic to provide COVID-19 outreach and education to immigrant/refugee communities. We assisted in developing YouTube™ videos with accurate information to dispel myths and connect community members with healthcare providers.
- Suicide and sexual violence prevention: Worked with immigrant communities to provide education and connect resources regarding the stigma around mental illness and seeking help specifically for suicide prevention and sexual violence prevention. We also worked with resource agencies to educate staff on cultural differences.
- Training for individuals with disabilities: Provided disability rights and self-advocacy training to immigrants with disabilities through grants from the MN Governor’s Council on Developmental Disabilities and the MN Dept of Human Services.
- Mental Health Counseling: Partnered with Minnesota Care Counseling, Inc. to ensure East Africans have access to culturally sensitive mental health counseling. Over 1,350 clients in the Twin Cities Metro and southeastern Minnesota are being served.



"Building trust is the first step in effecting positive change."

Mohamedkader Mohamed
Program Manager, Community Health Outreach

PUBLIC HEALTH & COMMUNITY OUTREACH (continued)

We are driven when it comes to problem-solving for our clients. In 2021, through a grant from the MN Dept. of Health and Human Services, SCRS partnered with HOPE Center in Faribault, MN to create the first sexual violence curriculum that includes a religious component. To date, seven trainings have been delivered using this new curriculum reaching approximately 200 individuals. We will utilize it more broadly in 2022, as we continue to serve our clients and promote this new training tool to other organizations that work with East African immigrants across our state.

In 2022, SCRS will train elders and community leaders to serve as outreach leaders as part of the Trusted Messenger Program to help dispel myths and conspiracy theories that many immigrants succumb to as fact and bring issues of concern to SCRS staff. Building on our previous success, SCRS will host COVID-19 vaccination clinics and provide education about this infection along with wrap-around resources to support those who attend. We will also begin a two-year education and outreach program – SCRS HIV Health Education/Risk Reduction Program – with the goal of reducing HIV-related health disparities in Minnesota’s East African and Hispanic immigrant communities by improving awareness of HIV prevention and care within these populations.

IN 2022, SCRS will also continue our Friends, Family and Neighbor (FFN) childcare training. Immigrant and refugee parents have difficulty finding quality, culturally specific childcare for their pre-school and after-school-aged children. Many turn to FFN childcare providers who are unlicensed and untrained due to the cost of center-based programs, alternative work hour needs, and because FFN care providers incorporate cultural values into their care that are important to these parents. For the past two years, SCRS – through the BCBS of Minnesota Foundation’s “Healthy Start” grant – has offered childcare safety and development training to FFN providers in Rice, Steele, Olmsted, and Hennepin counties. We continue to see a need for this training as more immigrants enter our state, as immigrant families typically use FFN care, as shrinking childcare options are impacting employers, and those who received training will need to be recertified to meet DHS requirements.



"We are driven when it comes to problem-solving for our clients."

Fayrus Duale
Program Manager, Health

RESETTLEMENT SERVICES



"The families we help resettle in Minnesota are very grateful to have an organization, like SCRS, to guide them through the process."

Ifrah Abdullahi
Program Manager, Social Services

When settling in Minnesota, many immigrants and refugees bring trauma with them. Trauma from leaving a war-torn country. Trauma from living in unstable housing. Trauma from leaving behind friends and family. Physical and emotional traumas – some significant – are paired with many unknowns: Where will my family live? Where will my children go to school? Where will I work? And sometimes, unknowns as simple as finding grocery stores, faith centers, and using public transportation can create significant stress.

SCRS' resettlement services include:

- Assisting new arrivals with documentation and navigating the American system;
- Translation/Interpretation of documents;
- Information/referrals to public health and accessing healthcare;
- Partner with Minnesota Care Counseling, a linguistically-appropriate trauma counseling provider;

RESETTLEMENT SERVICES (continued)

- Partner with HOPE Center, to meet the self-identified needs of survivors, at any and all points in their healing processes, through supportive listening, emotional support, identification of strengths, and resources and expertise offered to victims and their families.
- Help new arrivals find housing and register their children in school;
- Job search and employment training programs; and
- Build communities within their own populations and with other Minnesotans in the places where they live and work.

The families we help resettle in Minnesota are very grateful to have an organization, like SCRS, to guide them through the process. Most of our clients remain in contact with SCRS for up to five to seven years following resettlement; participating in our job training programs, youth and elder enrichment, health-related programs, and more.

Our 2021 focus was on preparation to support the new Afghan refugee community entering Minnesota. Our staff participated in cultural competence training to gain a better understanding of the many supports they would need when entering our state. While many of our staff are immigrants themselves, each population has its own culture and value systems. We honor this and in doing so, build a deeper trust with each person we assist.



As we entered 2022, SCRS partnered with other resettlement organizations - CAPI, Alight, Minnesota Dept. of Health and Human Services, and CYA - as a second-tier service provider to secure housing for Afghan families. SCRS staff aided 100 families in securing new homes. We quickly worked with the State of Minnesota to become an approved resettlement organization for this community and can now provide case management services.

As Afghan individuals quickly resettle here, SCRS will seek to help them to build community, reduce isolation, and increase cultural connectedness while providing access to resources to address trauma and promote healing. To do this we will:

- Engage in outreach: SCRS will connect individually with Afghan evacuees to notify them of services and benefits they can access, including healthcare, mental health care, and public assistance programs. Staffing agencies, recruiters, and local employers will be contacted to assist English and non-English speakers with applying for jobs. We will organize volunteers to help find affordable housing opportunities and gather home goods.
- Host convenings: SCRS will host a series of convenings; bringing Afghan evacuees together in small groups to facilitate social connection. We will host 8-10 meals, each to serve approximately 20-30 people. At each meal, we will create social connections within the Afghan community as well as with larger immigrant and Minneapolis communities.
- Provide follow-up: Through calls, texts, and social media posts we will advertise services and community gatherings to those who attend these convenings.

This type of community-building and support program, once established and proven, can be replicated to support other immigrant groups that SCRS engages with for services, such as those from Ukraine, the next refugee population that may be entering our country very soon.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

A top priority when individuals and families resettle in our state is employment. Many immigrants and refugees who enter Minnesota do not bring job skills that are immediately transferrable within our workforce. Lack of English proficiency and cultural barriers create additional roadblocks for many who are seeking work.

SCRS has great success in helping youth and adults engage in a host of employment programs that improve their self-sufficiency and career advancement. Through grants received from the MN Dept of Education and Economic Development (DEED), SCRS has built a successful workforce development program that provides first-time job seekers and those seeking career advancement training, including:

- Assessments on employability and basic math/reading skills,
- Career readiness training,
- Resume and job application development,
- Interviewing techniques,
- English Language classes,
- Job search assistance,
- Career counseling, and
- Financial literacy training.

SCRS has developed excellent working relationships with employers who value a diversified workforce with companies such as Jenny-O-Turkey Store, Amazon, Viracon, Celestica Company, Daiken Applied, Jarar Home Health Care, Essential Home Health Care, and Perfect Balance Child Care. Training institutions such as IT Metro Hub, Motivation Education & Training (MET), Inc., and community continuing education programs are eager to work with us to support our clients' job training needs. Additionally, public school systems, social services agencies, legal aid services, and community action centers offer referrals and resources to our clients.



In 2021, SCRS assisted many clients with attaining education and training utilizing Coursers®, an online education platform that offers flexible, affordable, job-relevant online learning to individuals and organizations worldwide. Courses include job-ready certificates and degree programs. Additionally, we partnered with local home health agencies to engage clients in Personal Care Assistant (PCA) training and job placement. Several of our clients also completed course work in Commercial Drivers License (CDL) Basic training.

The pandemic negatively impacted many of our client workers in 2021. SCRS, in addition to assisting with job training and placement, offered administration support to nearly 60 families applying for RentHelpMN assistance to avoid eviction from their homes due to COVID-19.

Looking ahead to 2022, SCRS will provide Benefits Cliff training. Public benefits like childcare, Medicaid health coverage, housing vouchers, and food assistance help our immigrant clients meet their basic needs. These benefits can bridge the gap between their earnings and the amount of money needed to make ends meet. Benefit cliffs occur when a small increase in earnings creates reductions or eliminations in these public benefits that were helping them feed their families, afford medical care, access quality childcare or otherwise balance their budget. Through our training, SCRS staff will work with our clients to help them understand their benefits, create a working budget, and prepare for changes in their benefits as their financial situation changes.



"SCRS has great success in helping youth and adults engage in a host of employment programs that improve their self-sufficiency and career advancement."

Mike Olson
Program Manager, IT/Education/Careers

YOUTH & ELDER SERVICES

Two important populations SCRS serves are immigrant youth and elders. Through our job readiness and preparedness programs, leadership training, and enrichment activities, we support the health and well-being of many immigrant families throughout all the stages of their lives.

In 2021, SCRS programs for youth and elders included:

- Violence Prevention – Through a grant from the City of Minneapolis, SCRS mentored and educated youth about self-esteem and goal setting in order to prevent gang activity and drug use.
- Youth Job Readiness Training – A DEED Youth-At-Work grant provided support for SCRS to assist 65 young adults with career assessment and interests, career counseling, and job search assistance.
- Suicide Prevention – Executed a refugee community assessment and created an action plan to educate the communities we serve on mental illness and suicide prevention resources, including dispelling the stigma in the immigrant community regarding mental illness.
- Healthy Living – SCRS offers walking and nutrition programs to improve seniors' health and wellbeing.

At SCRS, we work with parents and their youth to bridge the culture gap. Immigrant youth and/or youth of immigrant parents are quick to accept and adopt the Western culture, while their parents strive to hold true to their African culture. Language barriers impact parent participation in school activities and meetings to discuss student performance. SCRS works closely with school districts and community education programs to inform and educate them on cultural barriers impacting families. Here, we serve as a liaison between the East African community and local school districts, especially when there are instances of discrimination, bullying or fighting. SCRS has also trained elders and community leaders to serve as mediators for parents and youth when issues arise that need outside intervention.

Looking ahead to 2022, in addition to continuing our current programs, SCRS will implement the East African Employment Accessibility program, which will provide career counseling and work experience for 52 low-income East African individuals (ages 18-25) in the Twin Cities Metro. Life and work skills training will be provided as well as job placement based on the participant's career interests and abilities. SCRS will engage with employers to see what additional skills are needed, such as English Language classes, to improve their employment and continued success.



"Our Youth Training & Leadership Program is life-changing for many of the youth and parents who participate."

Siraj Ahmed
Program Manager
Youth Services & Enrichment



Our Youth Mentoring & Leadership Program is life-changing for many of the young people and their parents who participate. In 2022, we will increase the number of program participants to include 50 young people from the Cedar-Riverside and South Minneapolis neighborhoods. Through this program, youth participants set goals for their education and beyond, learn conflict resolution strategies, build their own self-esteem, and discuss what it means to be a Muslim in America.

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At SCRS, our focus is on the family - incorporating services and programs for children, youth, adults, and seniors. We work extensively in collaboration with a wide variety of businesses, government entities, education, and community organizations to develop and execute programming and increase access to services in the areas of resettlement, healthcare access and education, workforce development, and youth and elder enrichment/services.

- **Strengthening capacity.** Assisting new arrivals with documentation paperwork and navigating the American system; accessing healthcare, translating/interpreting documents, school registrations, information/referrals for mental health, legal aid, and healthy living classes.
- **Creating self-sufficiency.** English as a Second Language (ESL) classes, skill-building for youth and adults, housing, transportation, energy assistance, social security, and disability advocacy.
- **Contributing to the economy.** Job search assistance, youth and adult career counseling, job placement services, senior employment and training programs, voter registration, and community cultural awareness.

In 2022, we will focus efforts on educating and informing our clients about the voter registration process. Many of our clients come from countries where there is no democratic process. They want to be active participants in their communities and see great value in the honor and privilege of asserting their voting privileges.

As I close, I want to thank the SCRS staff for their continued drive and commitment to doing their best in all the areas that you serve our clients. To our Board of Directors, thank you for your continued support. To our financial partners, I thank you for your continued confidence and support of the work we do. And to our clients, I thank you for your hard work and continued perseverance as you make new homes in Minnesota. Our community includes many people from many walks of life. It is through your individual contributions that we build a better Minnesota together.



Abdullah (Sharif) Hared
Executive Director



Partner Organizations

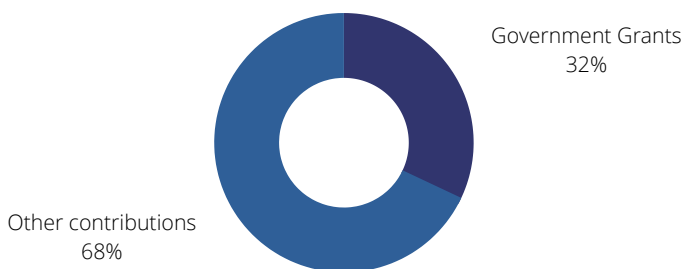
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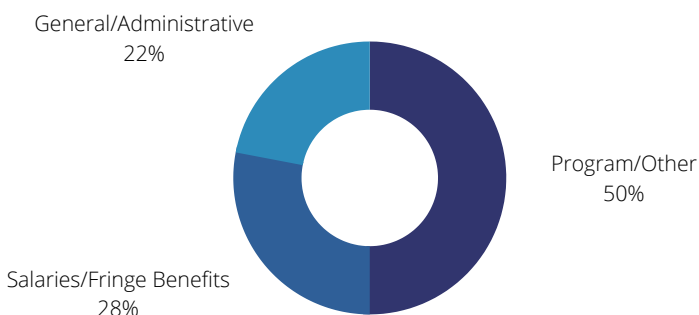
Blue Cross Blue Shield of Minnesota Foundation
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Youthprise

2021 Financial Review

2021 Income



2021 Expenses



Make a Donation

Your financial support helps meet the needs of immigrants and refugees served by Somali Community Resettlement Services. As a 501(c)(3) organization, charitable donations are tax-deductible.

Checks can be made payable to:

Somali Community Resettlement Services of Olmsted County

and mailed to the address below:

4020 Minnehaha Ave., Ste. 2070
Minneapolis, MN 55406

You can also donate directly to SCRS using a credit/debit card on our website:

www.somalcrs.org

Thank you for your generosity.



22 years

Service to immigrant and
refugee communities



10+

Partnerships with local and
state organizations



2,000

youth benefited
from SCRS career and job
placement services



100%

Our commitment to helping
refugees and immigrants in
Minnesota

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