Imagine you are a Sudanese refugee and have just arrived in cold upstate NY.

You just got lucky.

Off Ramp Films presents Utica: The Last Refuge

Discussion Guide
OVERVIEW
Utica: The Last Refuge tells the story of how a struggling rustbelt city has rebounded via the major contribution of its refugee population. Given that there are 25 million refugees globally, fewer than 1% of whom are likely to be resettled by current standards, there is a lot to be learned from Utica’s example. We know that resettling refugees is one way we can fulfill our humanitarian obligations. If it can be shown that doing so benefits the communities in which they land, which is well supported by data, ramping the program up makes great sense.

MAKING A LOCAL CONNECTION
One key to helping Utica: The Last Refuge resonate with audiences is to tie its deep look at how refugee resettlement succeeded in Utica to the local area. We believe the best way to do this is to assemble a post screening panel for either live or virtual screenings that includes, most importantly, a refugee and someone working in resettlement in the area. If you are able to add other panelists, you could consider including someone from the filmmaking team, an expert in migration issues, and/or someone who appears in the film.
The film tracks three threads over nearly 3 years. The first is the arrival of the Azein family and their story of acclimation to their new home. The second is how Utica’s Refugee Center struggles to stay afloat under an administration that wants to shut the resettlement system down. And the third paints a portrait of a small city that has been welcoming refugees for 40 years, spotlighting the partnerships that help the program succeed.

**Aspects of a typical refugee story**

1. The reason they had to flee
2. Their escape story
3. Their first refuge, usually a refugee camp in a neighboring country
4. Obtaining the legal status of refugee
5. Being vetted for resettlement
6. Arrival in their new country
7. First impressions
8. Finding work
9. The challenges of acclimating to their new home
The job of the resettlement agency

1. Procure safe and affordable housing on their behalf, get power and all utilities on, and furnish with household goods
2. Pick up from airport with culturally and linguistically appropriate staff or family
3. Refugee Health Assessments, enrollment with primary care
4. Money—giving refugees the small amount of money provided by the federal government and helping them access local services
5. Cultural training and orientation
6. Language training, ESL classes
7. Job training and employment referrals
8. Enroll children in school
9. Transportation and safety training, introduction the DMV
10. Social security cards, identity documentation and citizenship training
11. General case management

Community Partners

1. Local resettlement agencies
2. National and local religious groups
3. Community Centers
4. Area politicians
5. Schools
6. Police
7. Volunteers
8. Private institutions and businesses
9. Resettled refugees (ethnic groups take care of one another)