

## Eritrean Newcomer Population Briefing

- **Where is Eritrea?** Eritrea is a small country in East Africa.



- **Why has there been an influx of Eritrean refugees?** Multiple circumstances including regional wars, famine and repressive government have resulted in mass flight from Eritrea creating a large scale refugee situation.
- **What brings them to Chelsea?** The new group has been recently resettled in large numbers in Chelsea by the International Institute of New England. Chelsea has been chosen by the Institute because of its prevalence of affordable housing and because it is an immigrant-friendly community.
- **How many Eritreans are there and when did they arrive?** 30-40 Eritreans arrived in Chelsea in September 2011. Most belong to the Tigrinya ethnic group.
- **What parts of the city do they live in?** Most live in Sector 4 on the following streets: Bellingham, Shurtleff, Marlborough, and Chestnut. One family lives on Congress Street. Some also live on Spruce Street in Sector 3.
- **Has a good community contact been identified?** No individual has emerged yet as a community leader or contact, however, the Newcomer Advocate can contact MGH with questions.
- **Where do they work?** Most of the Eritrean newcomers work at State Garden, some work at KSM and others at the airport.
- **What religion do they practice?** Most are practicing Christians who regularly attend church.
- **What are gender dynamics like in Eritrean culture?** Eritrean culture is typically patriarchal, where men enjoy greater decision making power than women within families. The majority of Eritreans arriving in Chelsea, however, have arrived as single individual men who fled life in the military in Eritrea.
- **What language do they speak?** The main language of the Eritrean newcomers is Tigrinya. Most speak some English. Resettlement agencies do their best to ensure that at least one person per household speaks English.
- **Is an interpreter available?** A Tigrinyan interpreter is available if necessary, Language Line is also able to connect with a Tigrinya interpreter.
- **Have they had any encounters with the police?** There is a young 19 year old male Eritrean who has come to be known in the Department as The Wanderer. He has been found wandering in the middle of the night or on the Tobin bridge, and has been picked up by the CPD and Boston PD on more than one occasion. His name is [REDACTED]. He is not hostile, usually just lost and disoriented. He lives on Bellingham Street and has been brought home as well as to Whidden Hospital. The MGH Refugee Health Program, IINE and the CPD Newcomer Advocate can all be contacted with questions in regards to [REDACTED]'s well being. There have been no other known encounters.