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Clark County, Ohio Haitian Influx Frequently Asked Questions

What's going on in Springfield and Clark County with thousands of Haitians settling there in the last few years?

Our growing economy and affordable housing brought an unexpected surge of Haitian refugees for work over the last few years. The challenges with this are real, and our Midwestern grit will produce the solutions we need.

Exactly how many Haitian refugees are in Springfield?

U.S. Census data does not track where refugees end up settling in the country. According to the last U.S. Census, Springfield was a community of 58,000 people, and Clark County had 138,000. By looking at data collected from the Department of Job and Family Services and the Clark County Health Department, government officials estimate that between 12,000-15,000 Haitians now live here.

What are the Clark County Commissioners working on to ensure the community's success?

Nothing is more important than the long-term vibrancy of Springfield and Clark County. Our priorities remain keeping a strong sales tax base, improving access to government, and retaining and attracting workforce.

It's critical to the success of Clark County for our county seat to be stable economically and culturally. We are finding synergy between organizations and individuals who are committed to the long term success of the community to address the challenges exacerbated by our recent population surge. The Haitian community continues to take part in these conversations about workforce, housing, health, transportation and infrastructure.

The community has been coming together around these issues through the Haitian Coalition since late 2023.

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From that and other conversations among agencies, these are just a few of the steps we are taking:

- ESL Classes are being offered in a variety of locations though several different avenues both funded through state government dollars and those provided by non-profit organizations.
- Offering driving simulators around the community with efforts to offer drivers training in Haitian Creole to help the population assimilate into our culture and be increasingly self-sufficient.
- Collaborating with the Haitian Community Help and Support Center to help bridge the gap between local agencies and our new neighbors. *
- Increasing security around county buildings and services for the safety of all citizens.
- Identifying locations for additional health clinics.
- Filling vacancies at key government agencies in the county with shared support.
- Equipping law enforcement and social workers with translation tools.
- Researching and planning a one-stop center for our Haitian residents.
- Providing more support to local schools.
- Collaborating with the state and federal governments to have essential documents translated into Haitian Creole.

Why are Haitian refugees coming to Springfield?

They found jobs and available and affordable housing here when they were first entering the United States. Today, most of those jobs are filled and housing is hard to find. We have been working to create more housing options for the entire community for the last five years.

Is Springfield a “sanctuary city?”

No. The City has never adopted a resolution to designate the city in that way.

Are Springfield City Commissioners profiting from the Haitian migration?

No. City Commissioners make between \$11,000 and \$14,000 a year for their public service. Source: [City of Springfield](#)

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Are Haitians creating crime concerns?

Haitians are more likely to be the victims of crime than they are to be the perpetrators in our community. Clark County jail data shows there are 199 inmates in our county jail this week. Two of them are Haitian. That's 1% (as of Sept. 8).

Anecdotal data shows that Haitian drivers are having a high rate of accidents, and one resulted in a bus crash that took the life of an 11 year old last year. That's why the City of Springfield started a first-of-its-kind driver training course in conjunction with the State of Ohio. Springfield City Schools is conducting Drivers Training for Haitian Creole speakers.

Are Haitian refugees killing geese in parks for food?

No. The local game warden with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources says there is no evidence to support these claims. The county dispatch received one call claiming this, and it was not able to be substantiated by the deputy who responded.

Was any government entity - local, state or federal - involved in bringing the Haitian refugees to Springfield?

No government entity is responsible for the influx of Haitians into Clark County. Once a person with Temporary Protected Status enters the country, they are free to locate wherever they choose.

Are Haitian refugees registering to vote?

The Clark County Department of Job and Family Services is required by state law to provide voter registration forms to every customer during the benefits process including the application, reapplication and change of address. Currently, the Ohio Secretary of State's office has only approved voter registration forms in English and Spanish. The form is not being offered in Haitian Creole. Any form in Haitian Creole is invalid and is not approved by the county Board of Elections or the Ohio Secretary of State's Office. It is illegal to create a voter registration form without the state's consent.

How much cash assistance do refugees receive when they come to Springfield?

Please see the county's fact sheet on Temporary Protected Status and related programs. [\(LINK\)](#)

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Is there an entire wing of the hospital dedicated to Haitian women with HIV/AIDs?

No. Springfield Regional Medical Center reports that this is not the case today and has never been the case.

Are Haitians being released after arrest because of the language barrier?

Nobody is being released due to the language barrier. There are translators and equipment that allow our police department to communicate in any language.

How many traffic stops have been unlicensed people?

This data is not currently available.

What English Language classes are available for Haitians to help them assimilate into the community?

Clark State College received a \$250,000 grant from the Ohio Department of Development to expand its English as a Second Language (ESL) program.

According to Clark State, the program will include additional workshops like ones on workforce culture and literacy, resumé writing, in-demand job awareness and training related to fields such as manufacturing, healthcare and customer service. It will also offer basic workforce language classes to business owners and HR professionals to help bridge the language gaps for a comprehensive community approach. The program will be free to participants and is projected to serve 400 people over the course of a year in addition to Clark State's current programs. The courses include speakers of Spanish, French and Haitian Creole. LINK: [Springfield News-Sun article](#)

How much of the health budget is going toward Haitian residents?

The Clark County Combined Health District's budget was about \$10 million during fiscal year 2023. The district estimates it spends \$56,000 per month serving the Haitian population, or about 6.7% of its annual budget. Source: CCCHD

How many births have been recorded by Haitian residents?

Through July of 2024, there were 685 live births in Clark County, including 156 babies born to Haitian mothers. That represents about 22.8% of all live births in Clark County. Please note that not all births to Clark County residents occur locally. Source: CCCHD

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