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# Refugee reception in Vantaa

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# Background

**Aim** Initial counseling and integration of refugees and returnees (Ingrians of Finnish ancestry) into Finnish society

**Organization** Unit is located in the Health and Social Welfare Department Family Services, Social Work

## Short history

- 1990 first agreement of refugee reception with the state
- 1991 refugee office founded
- 1999 First Integration Act, focus of refugees
- 2012 second Integration Act, targets all immigrants

# Staff

- About 20
- Head of office: senior social worker
- 3 social workers
- 3 health care workers: 2 nurses, 1 health counselor
- One doctor
- One social instructor doing initial assessments
- 5 counselors speaking Arabic, Russian, Somali, Spanish, English, Kurdish and Finnish
- 2 secretaries who specialize in state indemnities
- 3 allowances coordinators
- 5 immigrant counselors

# Clients in refugee reception office

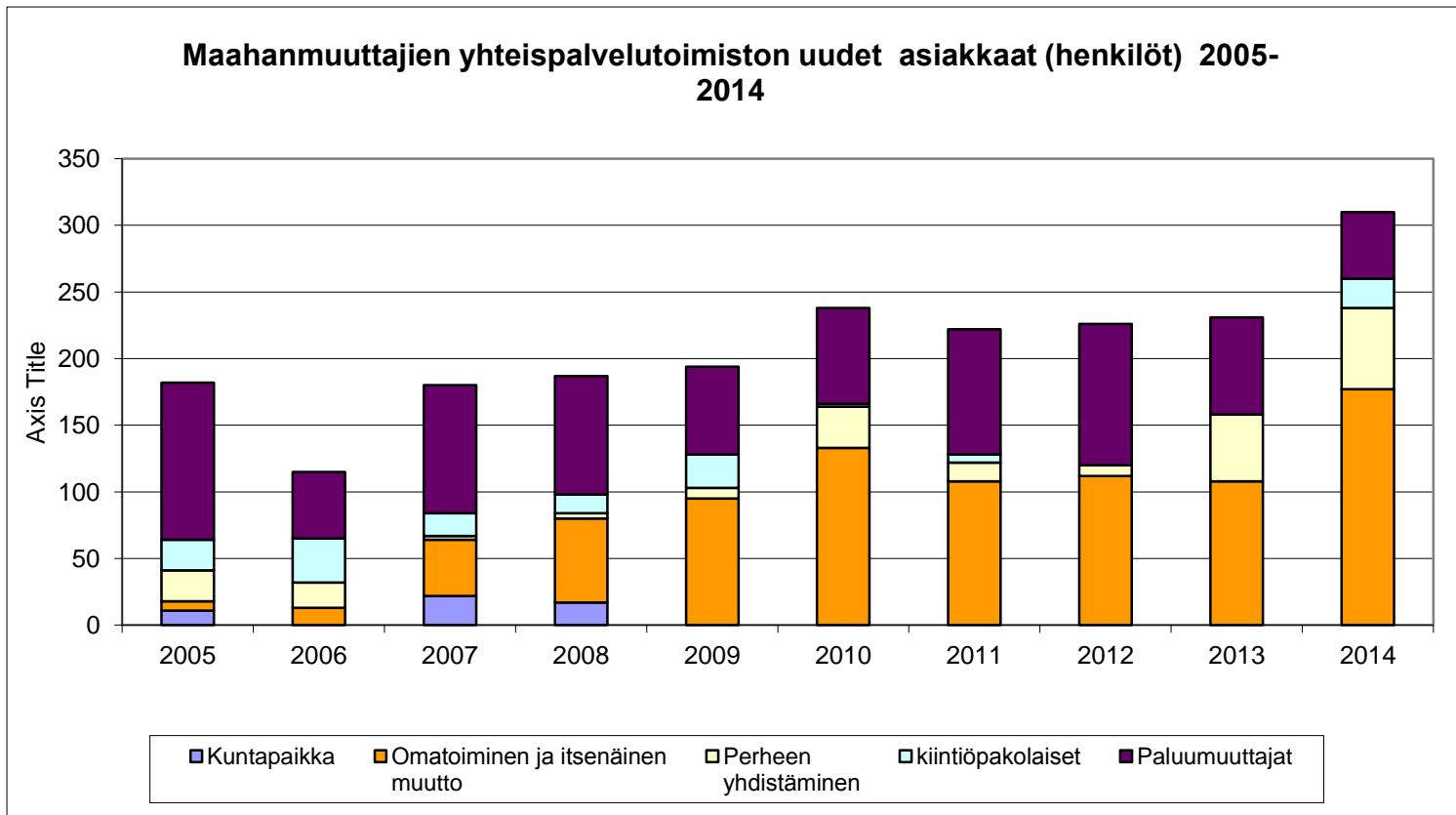
State indemnities are paid for

1. Refugees with residence permit without municipality moving from reception centers
2. Refugees who have obtained residence permit living in Vantaa in private accommodation during the application process
3. Quota refugees
4. Families of refugees arriving on the basis of family ties
5. Refugees registered in the Finnish Population Information Register for less than six months moving from other municipalities

Other clients: returnees

Immigrants with family ties receive mainly information

# New clients 2005-2014



# Services offered

A wide range of services are offered including

- Counseling
- Social work
- Health care
- Other integration services

# Reception process

- Quota refugees are greeted at the airport
- Others come from the reception center to prearranged appointment
- Meeting with the counselor who gives basic information about the city, maybe accompanies to different agencies
- Initial assessment and integration plan with social worker, financial matters (bank account if possible)
- Meeting with nurse/doctor, other medical services if needed
- Waiting list to language course, other possibilities: start up-course, NGO-run courses



## Duration of clientship

Clients under state indemnities 2 to 3 years

Returnees 1 to 2 years

Transfer to mainstream services is done after evaluation of the overall situation of the client

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# Main challenges of client service

- More clients with many problems of health, analphabet clients
- Homelessness and other problems with accommodation due to increasing amounts of clients moving to Vantaa independently
  - Temporary accommodation, small apartments for large families
- Services going electronic
  - Problems opening bank accounts if the client has no passport or his/her identity has not been confirmed. The city provides them with a monthly allowance in cash.
- Clientship is limited to refugees, but other immigrant groups would benefit as well
- Good experiences from group activities, but not enough time to organize activities and motivate the clients
- Networking and good cooperation with other services is indispensable



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