Refugee 101

An Overview of Refugees
and Refugee Resettlement

What is a refugee?

A **refugee** is a person who fled his or her country and is unable to return due to persecution based on religion, race, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group.

Most refugees are women and children.

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How are refugees different than immigrants?

An **immigrant** voluntarily leaves his or her native country to seek a more prosperous life. Some immigrants come legally while others do not.

A **refugee** is legally brought to the United States by the U.S. Department of State. They are immigrants who may become permanent residents after one year and may apply for citizenship after five years. All immigrants may legally work in the U.S. as soon as they arrive.

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Where do refugees come from?

Since 1975, an estimated **1.4 million** refugees from Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos have been resettled in the United States.

In the 1990s, the U.S. resettled over **150,000** refugees from the former Soviet Union, Armenia and the Ukraine and over **140,000** from the Balkan region (mostly Bosnian), Serbia, Croatia and Kosovo.

In the 1990s, refugees from the **Middle East**, specifically Iraq, Iran and Afghanistan, started being resettled in the U.S.

The U.S. has tens of thousands of refugees from **Africa**, including Sudan, Somalia, Congo, Burundi and Rwanda.

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Where do refugees go?

Most refugees go to **camps** where they have few rights and little control over their lives.

Some refugees hide in **cities and jungles** and are subject to arrest and deportation.

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What can be done?

There are three durable **solutions** for refugees:

1. **Voluntary repatriation:** refugees can return to their home country because situation has improved (this never happens quickly)

2. **Local integration:** refugees resettle in a nearby host country with an ability to work legally (this almost never happens)

3. **Resettlement in a third country:** refugees resettle in a third country (this only benefits about 120,000 people a year, or less than 0.5 percent of refugees)

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Refugee Resettlement

In the United States and Utah

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United States Services

UNHCR determines who is a refugee and who is not.

There are currently **16,000,000** refugees in the world.

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United States Services

The **Department of State** works with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to provide for Reception and Placement (R&P).

R&P involves initial resettlement services through a cooperative agreement with 13 national voluntary agencies (VolAgs) throughout the United States.

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United States Services

The **Office of Refugee Resettlement** (ORR) is responsible for coordinating domestic resettlement in the United States after arrival.

The **Department of Homeland Security**'s Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services coordinates security background checks.

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United States Resettlement

Each September, the White House submits a memorandum to the Secretary of State:

"I hereby make the following determinations and authorize the following actions:

The admission of up to ***76,000 refugees*** *to the United States during Fiscal Year* ***2012****."*

—President Barack Obama

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Refugee Resettlement in Utah

Of the **75,000** refugees being settled in the United States each year, nearly **1,100** will resettle in Utah.

About **45,000** refugees from over **20 countries** are currently living in Utah.

There are over **53 languages** spoken in Utah by refugees.

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Refugee Resettlement State Rankings

1. California
2. Minnesota
3. Florida
4. Texas
5. Washington
6. New York
7. Arizona
8. Georgia
9. Wisconsin
10. Ohio
11. Pennsylvania
12. Illinois
13. Massachusetts
14. Virginia
15. North Carolina
16. Oregon
17. Missouri
18. Colorado
19. Michigan
20. Tennessee
21. Kentucky
22. Maryland
23. **Utah**
24. New Jersey
25. Idaho
26. Connecticut
27. Indiana
28. Iowa
29. New Hampshire
30. Nevada
31. Louisiana
32. Rhode Island
33. North Dakota
34. Nebraska
35. South Dakota
36. Vermont
37. Maine
38. Kansas
39. Oklahoma
40. South Carolina
41. Alabama
42. New Mexico
43. Alaska
44. Washington D.C.
45. Hawaii
46. Delaware
47. Arkansas
48. Montana
49. West Virginia
50. Mississippi

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Utah Services

Governor Jon M. Huntsman established the Utah State **Refugee Services Office** (RSO) in 2008.

- The RSO resides within the **Department of Workforce Services**.
- The mission of the RSO is to maximize the **quality and pace** of refugee integration.
- They provide **leadership** in service coordination, policy review, advocacy, resource development and management of all essential refugee services in Utah.

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Utah Services

There are two **voluntary agencies** in Utah that resettle refugees:

- **The International Rescue Committee**
- **Catholic Community Services:** Established in 1945 to assist the poor and those with specialized needs. In 1974 the Refugee Resettlement Program was started, and Catholic Community Services provide reception and placement services and assist refugees to become financially independent through job development.

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Utah Services

Resettlement Core Services offer the following:

- Reception and Placement
  - Airport Pickup
  - Housing
  - Food
  - $900 for housing needs
- Case Management
- Orientations
- Job Placement
- Health Screenings
- School Enrollment
- Assist DWS

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Utah Services

The **Department of Workforce Services** offers various benefits for refugees:

- Cash Assistance (for the first eight months in the United States through the Family Employment Program)
- Food Stamps
- Medical Assistance (Medicaid and Medicare)
- Child Care Assistance
- Employment Services
- Case Management (for two years)

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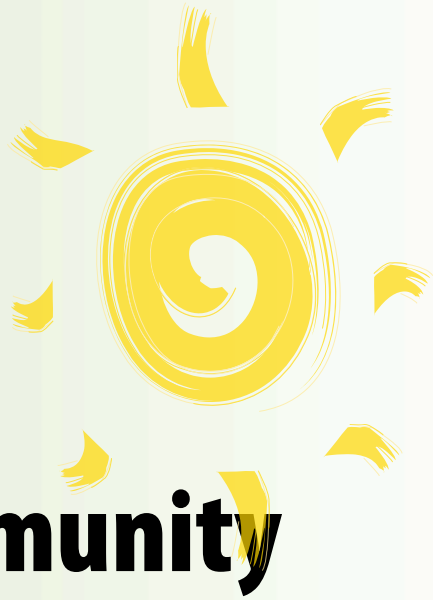
The Welcoming Community Can Help



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What is integration?

Integration involves incorporating resettled refugees as equals into a welcoming community.

Both parties need to **learn** to adapt and work together.

Settling in a third country takes pressure off of neighboring countries and **helps** the most desperate refugees.

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What does integration mean for the community?

It is important that communities create an environment where refugees feel **valued** and **welcome**. Refugees need to be able to access resources that will help them adjust.

It is also important for community members to develop **social connections** with incoming refugees.

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What are the benefits of integration?

Integration enables refugees to achieve **independence** and become productive members of society.

Refugees **contribute** by opening businesses, increasing diversity, working hard and improving quality of life.

*"Integration means to me **to feel** in a new country like **at home**."*

—Resettled Refugee

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Remember

Refugees are **strong and admirable**. They have great work ethics, positive attitudes, solid skills, better retention rates and various workplace and bilingual skills.

They are **eager** to work and highly adaptable. They are skilled, quick learners and dependable and loyal.

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