

REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT IN Alabama

REFUGEE POPULATION OF ALABAMA

The United States has been a leader in welcoming [refugees](#) who seek safety from persecution based on their race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group. Following World War II, the U.S. began welcoming refugees and over time the system has evolved to have a strong infrastructure centered on [public-private partnerships](#). Communities across the U.S. have recognized the important economic and social benefits of resettling refugees. Alabama residents have played a vital role in the resettlement program and refugees have positively contributed to Alabama communities. In 2016, organizations and communities across [Alabama](#) welcomed less than 1% of the refugees arriving in the U.S. In 2016, Alabama welcomed 120 refugees and 870 unaccompanied children who were released to the care and custody of sponsors.

Where are most refugees in Alabama from?
D.R. of Congo
Iraq
Afghanistan
Rwanda
Somalia

SERVICES AVAILABLE TO REFUGEES IN ALABAMA

In addition to [programming](#) to support refugees when they first arrive in the U.S., the federal government provides monetary aid through grants to the state, Voluntary Agencies, and other refugee aid organizations for community and short-term refugee support. In the state of Alabama, the Refugee Resettlement Program (RRP), which is a part of Catholic Social Services of the [Archdiocese of Mobile](#), provides services to refugees and other eligible populations arriving to the state. Primary program services include cash and medical assistance, access to English language classes, and vocational and employment assistance.

FEDERAL FY16 ORR FUNDING TO ALABAMA FOR REFUGEE PROGRAMS			
Total	Cash & Medical Assistance	Refugee Social Services	Wilson/Fish Obligation
\$651,921	\$142,355	\$95,529	\$414,037

With the vision of Japanese soldiers occupying her native China in the early days of World War II, a young Susan Wu resolved to equip herself for an independent claim on the future.

Susan Wu, a refugee who became CEO of an Alabama company

REFUGEES MAKE ALABAMA STRONG

[Thanh Boyer of Madison](#) and [Loan McAllister of Huntsville](#) are sisters and Vietnamese refugees who, as young girls, escaped the horrors of conflict following the fall of Saigon in 1975. Thanh and Loan were told by their parents they were going "on a vacation." With their aunt, uncle, and cousins, they were sent by boat to an Indonesian refugee camp along with a couple of hundred other people. After three days at sea with only a place to sit and little food and water, the crowded boat was attacked by Malaysian pirates. The young girls and their relatives spent more than a year in a refugee camp. They dug wells for drinking water, washed their clothes in a creek, and cut trees to build

thatch huts. Boyer, who nearly died of dysentery, said she remembers often going to bed hungry. Eventually, the girls were resettled in Alabama in 1980. Boyer attended Calhoun Community College and Athens State. She and her husband, John, a native Northern Alabaman, met on a blind date. They have two children, Katherine, 24, and J. B., 23. McAllister graduated from the University of Alabama in Huntsville with a degree in electrical engineering. She also met her husband, Paul, another native Alabaman, on a blind date. They have two children, Allie, 17, and Mandy, 15. Four years after the Boyers married, they decided to sponsor the immigration of her parents and other siblings. Boyer and McAllister's parents, Tan Duong and Phuong Nguyen, live in Madison, along with one sister, Thu Duong, and brother, Tham Duong. Their two other sisters live in California and North Carolina. Boyer and McAllister agree the war was a blessing in disguise for their family. "I would probably be a farmer," McAllister said. "That's hard work. I'm happy I live here. Vietnam is a nice place to visit, but I wouldn't want to live there."

LOCAL AFFILIATES AND OFFICES OF VOLUNTARY AGENCIES IN ALABAMA

- USCCB, Remote Placement Alabama

In addition to these agencies, many ethnic community-based organizations (ECBOs) exist throughout the state to help various refugee communities integrate and succeed in their new homes. These organizations are run by refugees to aid in the resettlement of fellow refugees by providing a variety of direct services, increasing civic participation, and preserve the community's cultural identity and history.