

# REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT IN Arkansas

## REFUGEE POPULATION OF ARKANSAS

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. Arkansas residents have played a vital role in the resettlement program, while refugees have positively contributed to communities in Arkansas. In 2016, organizations and communities across [Arkansas](#) welcomed less than 1% of refugees arriving in the U.S. In 2016, Arkansas welcomed 8 refugees and 309 unaccompanied children who were released to the care and custody of sponsors

Where are most  
refugees in  
Arkansas from?

Burma  
El Salvador

## SERVICES AVAILABLE TO REFUGEES IN ARKANSAS

In addition to [programming](#) to support refugees when they first arrive to 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. Two successful programs, the [Refugee Resettlement Office](#) and the [Catholic Charities Immigration Services](#) are administered by the [Catholic Charities of Arkansas](#). Primary program services include cash and medical assistance, access to English language classes, and vocational and employment assistance.

FEDERAL FY16 ORR FUNDING TO ARKANSAS FOR REFUGEE PROGRAMS		
Total	Cash & Medical Assistance	Refugee Social Services
\$91,490	\$16,490	\$75,000

*"Abbosh, eager to resume his teaching career and complete his doctorate, applied and was accepted into the program."*

*--[Story](#) by Dwain Hebda of the Little Rock Correspondent*

## REFUGEES MAKE ARKANSAS STRONG

In 2011, the Gurungs became the first Bhutanese refugees to arrive in the Fayetteville, Arkansas area, and the rest of their family joined them over the next several months. After a few days of extreme jet lag, the Gurungs began to enjoy the temporary housing that St. Joseph secured for them near the University, close to the trail system, and within walking distance of grocery stores. They have learned how to use a washing machine, microwave, and shower – all for the first time. Yam and Bishnu Gurung's son, Sangam, started Kindergarten at Root Elementary, while Yam and Bishnu began daily ESL classes at Ozark Literacy Center. They made friends with priests, monks, Catholics, Hindus, and Buddhists. The Gurungs are happy to have a fresh start.

## LOCAL AFFILIATES AND OFFICES OF VOLUNTARY AGENCIES IN ARKANSAS

- LIRS, Canopy of Northwest Arkansas, Fayetteville
- USCCB, Catholic Charities Immigration Services, Springdale
- USCCB, Remote Placement Arkansas

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.