

# REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT IN California

## REFUGEES IN CALIFORNIA

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. California residents have played a vital role in the resettlement program and refugees have positively contributed to communities in California. In 2016, organizations and communities across [California](#) welcomed over 9% of refugees arriving in the U.S. In 2016, California welcomed 7,909 refugees, 263 unaccompanied refugee minors, and 7,381 unaccompanied children who were released to the care and custody of sponsors.

Where are most  
refugees in  
California from?

Iran  
Iraq  
Dem. Republic of  
the Congo  
Syria  
Afghanistan

## SERVICES AVAILABLE TO REFUGEES IN CALIFORNIA

In addition to [programming](#) to support refugees when they first arrive to the United States, 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. [The California Department of Social Services](#) manages statewide refugee assistance. Primary program services include cash and medical assistance, access to English language classes, vocational and employment assistance.

FEDERAL FY16 ORR FUNDING TO CALIFORNIA FOR REFUGEE PROGRAMS							
Total	Cash & Medical Assistance	Refugee Social Services	State Targeted Assistance	School Impact	Targeted Assistance Discretionary	Services to Older Refugees	Cuban/Haitian Program
\$51,998,391	\$32,072,684	\$8,972,718	\$4,571,191	\$1,171,426	\$275,000	\$147,052	\$122,312

  

Individual Development Account	Survivors of Torture	Microenterprise Development	Refugee Family Child Care Microenterprise	Refugee Health Promotion	Ethnic Community Self-Help Program
\$698,465	\$1,659,840	\$763,717	\$745,000	\$195,000	\$603,986

Another service available to refugees in California is the employment [Matching Grant Services](#), administered by Voluntary Agencies in the state. An alternative to public cash assistance, private agencies match federal contributions and provide intensive case management services to help refugees get employed and become self-sufficient within 120 days of arrival.

## REFUGEES MAKE CALIFORNIA STRONG

[Ruta Tesfamicael](#) finished her fourth year of medical school at the University of Illinois College of Medicine at Peoria, however, her journey to arrive where she is today is very different than many of her classmates. At the age of six, Ruta and her family fled the Horn of Africa and were resettled as refugees in California. Because of the welcoming spirit of San Diego, where she grew up, and the opportunities available to her in the United States, Ruta was able to attend UCLA for her undergrad, performed her residency at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles, and is now an MD of internal medicine. She says, "The opportunity that we have in the States is unlike any other in the world. You know I go back, I'm going to go back there in three days and I'm going to be visiting 95% of my family who can't even imagine this kind of opportunity."

*"She brings the African tradition of meticulous hair braiding to Hanford."*

*-Article on Aimee Beumo, a refugee who started her own business in California*

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## LOCAL REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT OFFICES AND AFFILIATES IN CALIFORNIA

- **CWS, Opening Doors, Inc.**, Sacramento County
- **EMM, Interfaith Refugee & Immigration Services of the Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles**, Los Angeles
- **ECDC, Alliance for African Assistance**, San Diego
- **HIAS, Jewish Family and Children's Services of the East Bay**, Walnut Creek
- **HIAS, Jewish Family Service of Silicon Valley**, Los Gatos
- **HIAS, Jewish Family Service of San Diego**, San Diego
- **IRC, International Rescue Committee**, Glendale
- **IRC, International Rescue Committee**, Oakland
- **IRC, International Rescue Committee**, San Diego
- **IRC, International Rescue Committee**, Modesto
- **IRC, International Rescue Committee**, Sacramento
- **IRC, International Rescue Committee**, San Jose
- **LIRS, Crittenton Services for Children and Families**, Fullerton (URM)
- **LIRS, International Christian Adoptions**, Sacramento (URM)
- **USCCB, Catholic Charities**, San Bernardino
- **USCCB, Catholic Charities**, San Diego
- **USCCB, Catholic Charities**, Oakland
- **USCCB, Catholic Charities**, San Jose
- **USCCB, Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County**, San Jose (URM)
- **USCCB, Sacramento Food Bank & Family Services**, Sacramento
- **USCCB, Immigration and Refugee Services**, Glendale
- **USCCB, Remote Placement California**
- **USCRI, International Institute of Los Angeles**, Glendale
- **USCRI, Lao Family Community Development**, Sacramento
- **WR, World Relief**, Modesto
- **WR, World Relief**, North Highlands

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.