

# Colorado

## REFUGEE POPULATION OF COLORADO

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. Colorado residents have played a vital role in the resettlement program and refugees have positively contributed to communities in Colorado. In 2016, organizations and communities across [Colorado](#) welcomed 2.54% of refugees arriving in the U.S. In 2016, Colorado welcomed 1,647 refugees, 89 unaccompanied refugee minors, and 427 unaccompanied children who were released to the care and custody of sponsors.

Where are most refugees in Colorado from?

Burma  
Iraq  
D.R. of Congo  
Bhutan  
Somalia

## SERVICES AVAILABLE TO REFUGEES IN COLORADO

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. [The Colorado Department of Human Services](#) serves as the refugee resettlement office for the state. Primary program services include cash and medical assistance, access to English language classes, and vocational and employment assistance. Discretionary grants are also awarded to private agencies for various other self-sufficiency programs.

FEDERAL FY16 ORR FUNDING TO COLORADO FOR REFUGEE PROGRAMS

Total	Cash & Medical Assistance	Wilson Fish RCA	Refugee Social Services	State Targeted Assistance	Targeted Assistance Discretionary	School Impact	Services to Older Refugees	Refugee Health Promotion	Individual Development Accounts	Micro Enterprise Development	Ethnic Community Self-Help Program
\$14,220,404	\$7,092,021	\$2,955,177	\$1,607,276	\$665,725	\$379,492	\$460,014	\$97,200	\$120,000	\$435,517	\$242,982	\$165,000

Another service available to refugees in Colorado 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.

*"We have several really dedicated English Language Acquisition teachers at Central and they have been awesome support for students."*  
--[Marte Samuelstuen](#)  
from Greeley Central

## REFUGEES MAKE COLORADO STRONG

When 19-year-old Christian received a Mile High Youth Corps award and gave a speech at the State Capitol on Monday before a crowd of legislators, federal officials and others, his mother Elise was not able to attend. She was at the hospital. Christian was only one year old when his mother was attacked and his father murdered by Hutus in Rwanda. After taking refuge in Congo, violence erupted there as well and Elise sought help from the UNHCR. The family was resettled in Colorado Springs and with the help of Lutheran Family Services, Rocky Mountain Refugee and Asylee program, Elise has been able to receive surgery for her injuries. Christian currently studies at Pikes Peak Community College. He will attend medical school to become a surgeon.

## LOCAL AFFILIATES AND OFFICES OF VOLUNTARY AGENCIES IN COLORADO

- **ECDC, African Community Center**, Denver
- **IRC, International Rescue Committee**, Lakewood
- **LIRS, Lutheran Family Services of Colorado**, Greeley
- **LIRS, Lutheran Family Services of Rocky Mountains**, Denver (URM)
- **LIRS, Lutheran Family Services of Rocky Mountains**, Colorado Springs (URM)
- **USCCB**, Remote Placement Colorado

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.