

REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT IN FLORIDA

REFUGEE POPULATION OF FLORIDA

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. Florida residents have played a vital role in the resettlement program and refugees have positively contributed to communities. In 2016, [Florida](#) welcomed 4% of refugees arriving in the U.S., 2,983 refugees, 29 unaccompanied refugee minors, and 5,281 unaccompanied children who were released to the care/custody of sponsors.

Where are most
refugees in Florida
from?

Syria
Dem. Rep. Congo
Colombia
Burma
Iraq

SERVICES AVAILABLE TO REFUGEES IN FLORIDA

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 [Florida Department of Children and Families](#) serves as the refugee resettlement office for the state. Primary program services include cash and medical assistance, 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 FLORIDA FOR REFUGEE PROGRAMS									
Total	Cash & Medical Assistance	Refugee Social Services	Targeted Assistance Program	School Impact	Elderly	Preventive Health	Survivor of Torture	Refugee Family Child Care Microenterprise	Refugee Agricultural Partnership Program
\$187,796,160	\$138,626,698	\$30,657,936	\$16,056,829	\$1,171,426	\$218,648	\$200,000	\$429,780	\$350,000	\$84,843

Refugees in Florida can access 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.

"Airman Montero said she loves everything about the Air Force because it has given her stability and a future she can be proud of."

- [Airman Montero](#) was a refugee from Cuba before joining the Air Force

REFUGEES MAKE FLORIDA STRONG

In 2006 [Desiree Gutierrez](#) fled Cuba, where she worked as a hotel manager after college. Desiree was placed by Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Venice in a housekeeping job at Doubletree Guest Suites in Naples, where she was subsequently promoted to Assistant Housekeeping Manager and later Executive Housekeeping Manager. She begins each day by providing fellow refugee housekeepers staff training, vocational English, and citizenship classes. She built a nationally recognized, award-winning team that in 2010 received the annual Doubletree by Hilton Excellence in Housekeeping Award. She was a member of the Naples Refugee Advisory Panel and participated in the 2011 Office of Refugee Resettlement's annual Consultation in Washington, DC, and at the Refugee Congress convened by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees. Desiree and two of her Doubletree colleagues became U.S. citizens in 2012.

LOCAL AFFILIATES AND OFFICES OF VOLUNTARY AGENCIES IN FLORIDA

- **ECDC, Coptic Orthodox Charities**, Clearwater
- **HIAS, Gulf Coast Jewish Family and Community Services**, Clearwater
- **CWS, Church World Service/ Palm Beach (Sub-Office)**, Delray Beach
- **CWS, CWS/IRP-Miami**, Doral
- **USCCB, St. Augustine/Jacksonville Catholic Charities**, Jacksonville
- **WR, World Relief Jacksonville**, Jacksonville
- **USCRI, IRSA/Youth Co-Op Inc.**, Miami
- **USCCB, Catholic Charities**, North Port
- **USCRI, Youth Co-Op Inc.**, Palm Springs
- **IRC, International Rescue Committee – Tallahassee**, Tallahassee
- **ECDC, Coptic Orthodox Charities, Inc.**, Tampa
- **LIRS, Lutheran Services Florida**, Tampa
- **USCCB, Catholic Charities**, Tampa
- **USCCB, Catholic Charities**, Miami
- **USCCB, Remote Placement Florida**

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.