

# REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT IN Kentucky

## REFUGEES IN KENTUCKY

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. Kentucky residents have played a vital role in the resettlement program and refugees have positively contributed to Kentucky communities. In 2016, organizations and communities across [Kentucky](#) welcomed [3% of refugees arriving in the U.S.](#) In 2016, Kentucky welcomed 2,405 refugees and 503 unaccompanied children who were released to the care and custody of sponsors.

Where are most refugees in Kentucky from?

Dem. Rep. Congo  
Bhutan  
Ivory Coast  
Iraq  
Burma

## SERVICES AVAILABLE TO REFUGEES IN KENTUCKY

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 [Catholic Charities of Louisville](#) 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 KENTUCKY FOR REFUGEE PROGRAMS												
Total	Cash & Medical Assistance	Refugee Social Services	Wilson/Fish Obligation	State Targeted Assistance	School Impact	Targeted Assistance Discretionary	Microenterprise Development	Services to Older Refugees	Individual Development Account	Refugee Health Promotion	Cuban/ Haitian Program	Services for Survivors of Torture
\$12,185,660	\$1,999,846	\$2,194,950	\$4,856,018	\$1,123,461	\$463,104	\$150,000	\$169,123	\$97,200	\$229,656	\$150,000	\$475,168	\$277,134

Another service available to refugees in Kentucky 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.

*"I want them to understand that we care very much about them. It's important that they know it's safe here — emotionally and physically."*

**-Adam Hatcher, GEO principal**

## REFUGEES MAKE KENTUCKY STRONG

[Faris Nakhal](#) was walking home after work late one night in Damascus, the Syrian capital, when two men grabbed him and hit him over the head. They held the teenager captive for 24 days until his father, a driver for the United States ambassador to Syria, got enough money together to pay the ransom. His family had been reluctant to leave Syria, but after that, fearing something worse might happen, they applied for asylum in the United States. And because education was second only to safety for Faris' parents, when they finally arrived in Kentucky in February, they immediately enrolled Faris and his younger sister, Rana, in school.

To their surprise, Faris' school in their adopted hometown of Bowling Green, was filled entirely with students who had similar stories of violence, displacement and survival. There were Somali, Iraqi, Burmese, Bhutanese, Ethiopian and Latin American teenagers — all learning English, math, history and science in an 11-room, domed building. Last August, Bowling Green opened a new public high school dedicated solely to recent immigrants and refugees, adjacent to Warren Central High School. GEO International High School, with about 185 students in grades 9 to 12, is connected to the Internationals Network for Public Schools in New York. The network's schools often have had more success than traditional schools at educating new, and often traumatized, immigrants, and at boosting their emotional and social well-being, graduation rates and other data show."

**LOCAL REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT OFFICES AND AFFILIATES IN KENTUCKY**

- **USCRI, Western Kentucky Refugee Mutual Assistance**, Bowling Green
- **CWS, Kentucky Refugee Ministries**, Lexington
- **CWS, Kentucky Refugee Ministries, Inc.**, Louisville
- **USCCB, Catholic Charities**, Louisville
- **USCRI, International Center, Owensboro**, Owensboro

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.