

# REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT IN Maryland

## REFUGEES IN MARYLAND

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. Maryland residents have played a vital role in the resettlement program and refugees have positively contributed to Maryland communities. In 2016, organizations and communities across [Maryland](#) welcomed [2% of refugees arriving in the U.S.](#) In 2016, Maryland welcomed 1,653 refugees and 3,871 unaccompanied children who were released to the care and custody of sponsors.

Where are most refugees in Maryland from?

Burma  
D.R. of Congo  
Iraq  
Eritrea  
Syria

## SERVICES AVAILABLE TO REFUGEES IN MARYLAND

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 [Maryland Department of Human Resources](#) administers the refugee resettlement program for Maryland. 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 MARYLAND FOR REFUGEE PROGRAMS

| Total        | Cash & Medical Assistance | Refugee Social Services | Targeted Assistance Program | School Impact | Targeted Assistance Discretionary | Elderly Services | Refugee Health Promotion | Survivors of Torture | Technical Assistance |
|--------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------|-----------------------------------|------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| \$12,837,712 | \$8,743,730               | \$1,777,147             | \$914,362                   | \$350,420     | \$150,000                         | \$97,200         | \$160,000                | \$247,000            | \$400,000            |

Another service available to refugees in Maryland 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.

*"In my experience, if a company takes sufficient time in the first few weeks to work with their IRC employment liaison to orient the refugee new hire, that company will have added an eager, reliable, loyal employee to their workforce."*

– Harry Brigham, [Baltimore Sun](#)

## REFUGEES MAKE MARYLAND STRONG

Abdi grew up in Erer, a town in central Ethiopia where his family faced persecution because of their affiliation with a political opposition group. When Abdi was a teenager his mother was imprisoned so Abdi went to live with an aunt in another part of Ethiopia to finish school. He eventually obtained a bachelor's degree in irrigation engineering from an Ethiopian university. His expertise in irrigation systems came in handy when the political turmoil in the country intensified, forcing Abdi to flee to a refugee camp in neighboring Djibouti. Abdi was able to find an underground water source and dig a well so that he and others in the camp would no longer have to trek three miles carrying water on their shoulders. Now, with plenty of water, Abdi and his wife were able to expand the garden they had planted around their tent, growing tomatoes, cabbage, onions and potatoes to supplement

their camp food rations. Since he arrived in Baltimore in May of 2012, Abdi has drawn on the farming traditions he grew up with and harvested produce for his family. Abdi hopes to become a farmer in the U.S. As he pursues his passion, Abdi shares his knowledge and skills with other members of the community, truly putting down roots in Baltimore.

## LOCAL REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT OFFICES AND AFFILIATES IN MARYLAND

- **ECDC, African Community Center**, Silver Spring
- **IRC, International Rescue Committee**, Baltimore, Silver Spring
- **LIRS, Lutheran Social Services of National Capital Area**, Hyattsville

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.