

Montana

REFUGEES IN MONTANA

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. Montana residents have played a vital role in the resettlement program and refugees have positively contributed to MT communities. In 2016, organizations and communities across [Montana](#) welcomed 27 refugees, [less than 1% of refugees](#) arriving in the U.S.

Where are most
refugees in
Montana from?
D R. of Congo

SERVICES AVAILABLE TO REFUGEES IN MONTANA

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 [Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services](#) serves as the refugee resettlement office for the state. Primary program services include cash and medical assistance.

FEDERAL FY16 ORR FUNDING TO MONTANA FOR REFUGEE PROGRAMS

Total	Cash & Medical Assistance	Refugee Social Services
\$101,456	\$26,456	\$75,000

Another service available to refugees in Montana 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 MONTANA STRONG

In 1990, Wilmot Collins boarded a cargo ship and fled the Liberian Civil War. In November 2017, he was elected as the first African-American mayor of Helena, Mt. Collins' election as mayor is the culmination of a lifetime of public service for the former Liberian refugee. The first job Mr. Collins had in Montana was at a home for abused children. Then, he took on a second job working night shifts as a janitor. He signed up for the National Guard and went through boot camp in South Carolina. He worked for the Department of Veterans Affairs in Montana for a decade and even did a stint at the Department of Homeland Security, reviewing applications for American citizenship. Collins has spent his time coaching children's sports teams, performing in musicals, and volunteering. When asked about the stereotype that refugees suck up public resources, Collins said "Why put us in a box? Let us fly. I refuse to get in that box." (Story courtesy of *Globe and Mail*)

LOCAL REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT OFFICES AND AFFILIATES IN MONTANA

- IRC, International Rescue Committee Missoula, Missoula
- USCCB, Remote Placement Montana

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.