

# REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT IN North Dakota

## REFUGEES IN NORTH DAKOTA

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. North Dakota residents have played a vital role in the resettlement program and refugees have positively contributed to North Dakota communities. In 2016, organizations and communities across [North Dakota](#) welcomed [1% of refugees arriving in the U.S.](#) In 2016, North Dakota welcomed 540 refugees and 10 unaccompanied children who were released to the care and custody of sponsors.

Where are most refugees in North Dakota from?

Bhutan  
Somalia  
Iraq  
Dem. Rep. Congo

## SERVICES AVAILABLE TO REFUGEES IN NORTH DAKOTA

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

FEDERAL FY16 ORR FUNDING TO NORTH DAKOTA FOR REFUGEE PROGRAMS						
Total	Cash & Medical Assistance	Wilson Fish RCA	Refugee Social Services	School Impact	Elderly Services	Refugee Health Promotion
\$4,146,848	\$1,999,493	\$1,378,169	\$443,450	\$175,736	\$75,000	\$75,000

*Mike Arntson is a production manager at Cardinal IG in Fargo. Arntson says 55% of the plant's workforce are new Americans... "They're good employees who work hard."*

– Fargo, N.D., [Minnesota Public Radio](#)

## REFUGEES MAKE NORTH DAKOTA STRONG

Laetitia Mizero arrived in Fargo, ND in the late 1990s as one of the first Burundi refugees. She escaped a country in an upheaval to seek a new life in the United States for herself and her then 18-month-old son. Starting over in a brand new country was a scary experience for Laetitia, but she was encouraged to move because she wanted to protect her son and give him the best possible life. As one of six children, Laetitia was responsible for helping four of her siblings safely resettle in the United States. Inspired by her past and blessed to be welcomed into a hospitable community where she now thrives, Laetitia gives back to her community by serving as a liaison connecting New Americans with resources to help them establish themselves in their new environments. Laetitia says it "was serendipity, or destiny that brought [them] to [Fargo, ND]." Despite a past marked with violence, Laetitia, with the aid of refugee assistance programs in North Dakota, has made a flourishing life for herself and her now teenage children.

## LOCAL REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT OFFICES AND AFFILIATES IN NORTH DAKOTA

- **LIRS, Lutheran Social Services of North Dakota**, Fargo (URM)
- **LIRS, Lutheran Social Services of North Dakota**, Grand Forks
- **LIRS, Lutheran Social Services of North Dakota**, Bismarck
- **USCCB**, Remote Placement North Dakota

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.