

# REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT IN South Dakota

## REFUGEES IN SOUTH 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. South Dakota residents have played a vital role in the resettlement program and refugees have positively contributed to South Dakota communities. In 2016, organizations and communities across South Dakota welcomed [1% of refugees arriving in the U.S. In 2016, South Dakota welcomed 426 refugees](#), and 81 unaccompanied children who were released to the care and custody of sponsors.

Where are most refugees in South Dakota from?

Bhutan  
Burma  
Dem. Rep. of the Congo  
Somalia

## SERVICES AVAILABLE TO REFUGEES IN SOUTH 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. The [Lutheran Social Services of South Dakota](#) 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 SOUTH DAKOTA FOR REFUGEE PROGRAMS

Total	Cash & Medical Assistance	Refugee Social Services	Wilson/Fish Obligation	State Targeted Assistance	School Impact	Targeted Assistance Discretionary	Refugee Agricultural Partnership Program	Refugee Health Promotion	Services to Older Refugees
\$2,378,151	\$439,603	\$382,118	\$841,890	\$157,2644	\$175,736	\$150,000	\$81,540	\$75,000	\$75,000

Another service available to refugees in South Dakota 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 his own words, "refugee camp taught me lessons that no man can teach."

- [Wilson Kubwayo](#)

## REFUGEES MAKE SOUTH DAKOTA STRONG

"[Wilson Kubwayo Nitunga](#) comes from a small African country called Burundi. At age two, Wilson's family migrated to the Tanzania refugee camp, where he grew up for 10 years. In 2008 his family migrated to the United States as refugees seeking a second chance to build their new lives." "During his time at Washington High School [in Sioux Falls], a game-winning bicycle kick grabbed the attention of colleges looking to recruit an up and coming soccer star. But [Kubwayo](#) was only on the field because he had flipped his life around, shedding the burdens of anger and resentment. He carried both with him from his childhood in a Tanzanian refugee camp ... Kubwayo realized his potential after he moved to Sioux Falls as a teenager." In 2018, Kubwayo graduated with an MBA degree from the University of Sioux Falls in South Dakota and in addition to being a Director of Community

Engagement for the Refugee Center Online, he is also a [professional motivational speaker](#).

## LOCAL REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT OFFICES AND AFFILIATES IN SOUTH DAKOTA

- LIRS, Lutheran Social Services Of South Dakota, Huron
- LIRS, Lutheran Social Services Of South Dakota, Sioux Falls
- USCCB, Remote Placement South 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.