

# REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT IN Virginia

## REFUGEES IN VIRGINIA

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. Virginia residents have played a vital role in the resettlement program and refugees have positively contributed to Virginia communities. In 2016, organizations and communities across Virginia welcomed [2% of refugees arriving in the U.S.](#) In 2016, Virginia welcomed 1,471 refugees, 70 unaccompanied refugee minors, and 3,728 unaccompanied children who were released to the care and custody of sponsors.

Where are most  
refugees in  
Virginia from?

Iraq  
Dem. Rep. of the  
Congo  
Syria  
Bhutan

## SERVICES AVAILABLE TO REFUGEES IN VIRGINIA

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 [Virginia Department of 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 VIRGINIA FOR REFUGEE PROGRAMS

Total	Cash & Medical Assistance	Refugee Social Services	State Targeted Assistance	Refugee School Impact	Refugee Health Promotion	Services for Older Refugees	Ethnic Community Self-Help (ECSH)	Individual Development Accounts	Survivors of Torture
\$12,290,192	\$8,737,536	\$1,951,108	\$405,587	\$453,839	\$125,000	\$97,200	\$150,000	\$245,000	\$250,000

Another service available to refugees in Virginia 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.

*"More than 3,000 refugees, including Ismailov, have re-started their lives here since the late 1990s with the help of the resettlement agency, the International Rescue Committee (IRC)."*

-Story by June Soh (VOA News)

## REFUGEES MAKE VIRGINIA STRONG

"A Meskhetian Turk, Ismailov was born in Uzbekistan. Ismailov was not in Uzbekistan long. "My family had to flee to Russia because there was a massacre in Uzbekistan of Turks ... in 1989," he explains. Ismailov was seven ... When the U.S. began accepting Meskhetian Turks as refugees in 2004, the family came to Charlottesville. By then, Ismailov was 22. All he, his parents and his brother brought with them were suitcases of clothes." [Isamilov](#) now owns two staple shops in Charlottesville, Larry's auto-repair and Downtown Auto Sales, and he says, "I am proud to be able to contribute to the community in Charlottesville." In addition to his work, he is now a U.S. citizen and married to another refugee with whom he has two children. [VOA News](#)

## LOCAL REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT OFFICES AND AFFILIATES IN VIRGINIA

- CWS, Church World Service Immigrant and Refugee Program, Harrisonburg
- CWS, Church World Service Immigrant and Refugee Program, Richmond
- IRC, The International Rescue Committee, Charlottesville
- IRC, The International Rescue Committee, Richmond
- LIRS, Lutheran Social Services of the National Capital Area, Fairfax (URM)
- LIRS, Lutheran Social Services of the National Capital Area, Woodbridge
- USCCB, Catholic Diocese of Arlington, Fredericksburg
- USCCB, Catholic Diocese of Arlington, Manassas
- USCCB, Immigration and Refugee Services, Newport News
- USCCB, Commonwealth Catholic Charities, Richmond
- USCCB, Commonwealth Catholic Charities, Roanoke
- Ethiopian Community Development Council Refugee Resettlement Program, Arlington

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.