

# REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT IN Washington

## REFUGEES IN WASHINGTON

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. Washington residents have played a vital role in the resettlement program and refugees have positively contributed to Washington communities. In 2016, organizations and communities across Washington welcomed 4% of [refugees arriving in the U.S.](#) In 2016, Washington welcomed 3,233 refugees, 136 unaccompanied refugee minors, and 476 unaccompanied children who were released to the care and custody of sponsors.

Where are most refugees in Washington from?

Ukraine  
Iraq  
Somalia  
Iran  
Burma

## SERVICES AVAILABLE TO REFUGEES IN WASHINGTON

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 [Washington State Department of Social and Health 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 WASHINGTON FOR REFUGEE PROGRAMS

Total	Cash & Medical Assistance	Refugee Social Services	State Targeted Assistance	Refugee School Impact	Targeted Assistance Discretionary	Services to Older Refugees	Health Promotion	Individual Development Account	Refugee Family Child Care Microenterprise	Microenterprise Development	Services for Survivors of Torture
\$16,969,639	\$11,042,141	\$2,397,160	\$1,064,588	\$731,685	\$200,000	\$97,200	\$165,000	\$372,247	\$187,364	\$435,120	\$277,134

Another service available to refugees in Washington 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.

*"They get an employment authorization card the moment they step on U.S. soil. They're good workers. They want the same thing we all want—they want a job to support their families and put their children in school for the first time in their lives. They want to start their lives over again."*

- [Mark Kadel](#), Director of World Relief in Spokane, Washington

## REFUGEES MAKE WASHINGTON STRONG

"After fleeing violence in Iraq with her young family, [Taghreed](#) had trouble coping with life as a refugee. "Do something you love," suggested her mother. So Taghreed started baking, finding comfort in the familiar scents of spices from home. The IRC helped her begin a baking career, and now she works at a popular pastry shop near where she lives in Seattle. Her son Yousif says he's proud of his courageous mom." After gaining an Associate's Degree in Culinary Arts, Taghreed was hired by Bakery Noveau in Seattle, where she teaches the other chefs new recipes from her country and sets a powerful example for her son on the ability of a mom to have success at work and at home.

## LOCAL REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT OFFICES AND AFFILIATES IN WASHINGTON

- HIAS, Jewish Family Service of Greater Seattle, Kent
- WR, World Relief Seattle, Kent
- WR, World Relief Tri-Cities, Richland
- IRC, International Rescue Committee Seattle, Seattle
- EMM, Refugee Resettlement Office, Seattle
- WR, World Relief Spokane, Spokane
- HIAS, Jewish Family Service of Seattle, Kent
- LIRS, Lutheran Community Services Northwest, Tacoma
- LIRS, Lutheran Community Services Northwest, Vancouver
- LIRS, Lutheran Community Services Northwest, Portland (URM)
- LIRS, Lutheran Community Services Northwest, Seattle (URM)
- LIRS, Lutheran Community Services Northwest, Spokane (URM)
- USCCB, Remote Placement Washington
- USCCB, Catholic Social Services of Western Washington, Tacoma (URM)
- USCCB, Catholic Social Services of Western Washington, Vancouver (URM)

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

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refugees by providing a variety of direct services, increasing civic participation, and preserve the community's cultural identity and history.