

REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT IN Wisconsin

REFUGEES IN WISCONSIN

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. Wisconsin residents have played a vital role in the resettlement program and refugees have positively contributed to Wisconsin communities. In 2016, organizations and communities across Wisconsin welcomed [2% of refugees arriving in the U.S.](#) Wisconsin welcomed 1,691 refugees and 85 unaccompanied children who were released to the care and custody of sponsors.

Where are most refugees in West Wisconsin from?

Burma
Dem. Rep. of the Congo
Somalia

SERVICES AVAILABLE TO REFUGEES IN WISCONSIN

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 [Wisconsin Department of Children and Families](#) is responsible for coordinating refugee resettlement efforts in 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 WISCONSIN FOR REFUGEE PROGRAMS | | | | | | | |
|--|---------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Total | Cash & Medical Assistance | Refugee Social Services | State Targeted Assistance | Refugee School Impact | Services to Older Refugees | Health Promotion | Targeted Assistance Discretionary |
| \$5,170,881 | \$3,076,839 | \$1,030,753 | \$424,939 | \$213,350 | \$75,000 | \$100,000 | \$250,000 |

Another service available to refugees in Wisconsin 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.

"Zeynab is a true inspiration and role model for all"

- Safe & Sound
Executive Director Katie Sanders

REFUGEES MAKE WISCONSIN STRONG

[Zeynab Ali](#) was born in a refugee tent village in Kenya after her parents fled the Somali civil war. Her family suffered from starvation, anarchy, and even the murder of her maternal grandfather. Ali and her family resettled in Wisconsin when she was just six-years-old. Now, she seeks to bring light to refugee experiences. In 2017, at just 18-years-old, she self-published her own book, "Cataclysm: Secrets of the Horn of Africa". Ali tells some Somali history, while also giving a memoir on refugee experience in some of the most dangerous conditions in the world. Ali is also active in her community of Milwaukee; she is involved with nonprofit Safe & Sound, which works to build trusting

relationships between law enforcement and urban residents. She was also recognized with the "Young Adult Leadership Award" for her participation with Inspirational Impact, an organization that seeks to end human trafficking. After graduating from Rufus King High School, she is the first in her family to attend college.

LOCAL REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT OFFICES AND AFFILIATES IN WISCONSIN

- **HIAS, Jewish Social Services of Madison**, Madison
- **LIRS, Lutheran Social Services of WI and Upper MI**, Milwaukee
- **USCCB, Catholic Charities**, Sheboygan
- **USCCB**, Remote Placement Wisconsin
- **USCRI, International Institute of Wisconsin**, Milwaukee
- **WR, World Relief Fox Valley**, Appleton

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.