

# REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT IN THE UNITED STATES



*We have a duty to the millions stranded away from home, not just to preserve life, but to safeguard hope.*

*– Secretary of State John Kerry*

The U.S. Refugee Admissions Program embodies the United States' values of compassion, generosity, and leadership in serving vulnerable populations. The United States has welcomed more than three million refugees since 1975, helping them build new lives in all 50 states.

## Identifying Refugees

Refugees survive terrible ordeals: torture, upheaval, perilous journeys, and tremendous loss. They are persecuted because of their race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group. The vast majority of the nearly 20 million refugees in the world today will receive support in the country to which they fled. A small number, particularly the most vulnerable, will be resettled in a third country, such as the United States.

## What is Resettlement?

Resettlement is the selection and transfer of refugees from a country in which they have sought protection to a third

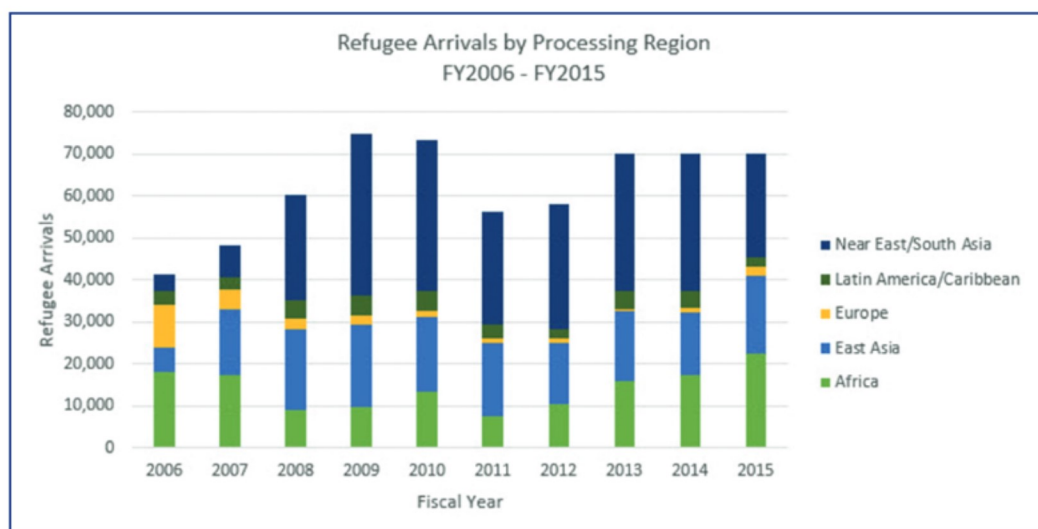
country. This differs from the asylum process, whereby individuals who have reached the United States are granted protection. Resettlement can take 18-24 months or longer from referral to arrival in the United States.

## Who Do We Resettle?

The United States will admit 85,000 refugees from around the world in Fiscal Year 2016:

- Roughly 34,000 will come from the Near East and South Asia (of which at least 10,000 will be from Syria);
- 25,000 from Africa;
- 13,000 from East Asia;
- 4,000 from Europe;
- 3,000 from Latin America and the Caribbean; and
- An unallocated reserve of 6,000 will provide the flexibility needed to respond to emergent situations.

## Where Do Refugees Come From?



# REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT IN THE UNITED STATES

## Entering the U.S. Resettlement System

Refugees are usually referred to the United States for resettlement by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Under the guidance of the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, nine Resettlement Support Centers (RSC) prepare refugee applications for U.S. resettlement consideration. The RSCs collect biographic and other information from the applicants to prepare for the adjudication interview and for security screening.

## Refugee Screening Process

Enhanced security screening is a joint responsibility of the Department of State and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and includes the participation of the National Counterterrorism Center and the Department of Defense.

Within DHS, the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) reviews each application and conducts an in-person

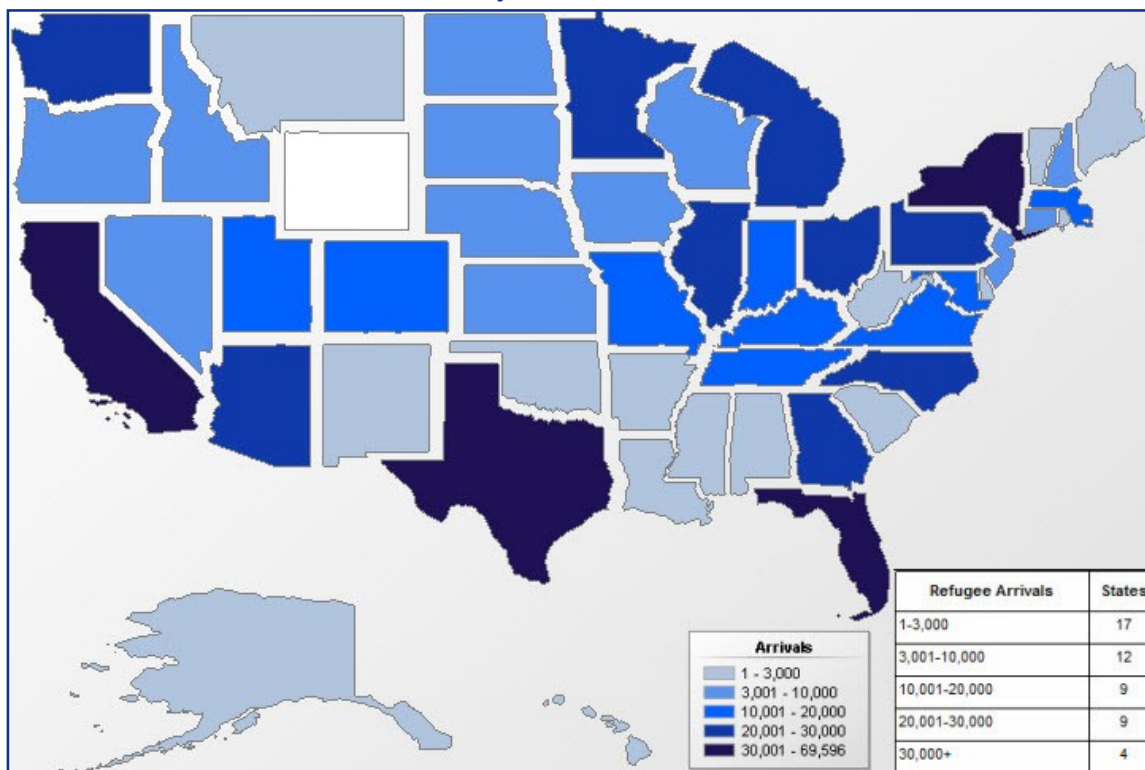
interview with each applicant. USCIS-approved refugees also undergo a health screening to prevent those with a contagious disease from entering the country. The RSC then requests a "sponsorship assurance" from a U.S.-based resettlement agency that is experienced in providing assistance to newly arrived refugees. Finally, the International Organization for Migration facilitates transportation to the United States. Most refugees also undergo a brief cultural orientation course prior to departure for the United States.

## Starting a New Life

Once in the U.S., refugees seize the chance for a new beginning. With the assistance of more than 300 local resettlement agencies, refugees put down roots, attend school, get jobs, pay taxes and become productive members of their communities. They start businesses and make our communities more vibrant and diverse. Refugees share many of America's values: courage, resilience, openness to new experiences, and the determination to rebuild their lives in a new land.

## Where in the U.S. Do They Go?

Arrivals by State FY 2006 – FY 2015



### Additional Resources:

State Department Refugee Admissions Program: <http://www.state.gov/j/prm/ra/>

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services: <http://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/refugees-asylum/refugees>

Refugee Processing Center: <http://www.wrapsnet.org>

ATLA Doc. No. 15110361. (Posted 11/3/15)