

REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT IN Florida

REFUGEE POPULATION OF FLORIDA

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. Florida residents have played a vital role in the resettlement program and refugees have positively contributed to FL communities. In 2013, organizations and communities across Florida welcomed [5.8% of refugees arriving in the U.S.](#) [Of the 29,706 newcomers to Florida in 2013](#), 2,214 were asylees, 23,813 were Cuban/Haitian entrants, 3,620 were resettled refugees, and 59 were Iraqi and Afghan Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) recipients who served alongside U.S. troops.

Where are most refugees in Florida from?

Cuba
Burma
Iraq

SERVICES AVAILABLE TO REFUGEES IN FLORIDA

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 [Florida Department of Children and Families](#) serves as the refugee resettlement office for the state. Primary program services include cash and medical assistance, access to English as a second language classes, and vocational and employment assistance. [Discretionary grants](#) are also awarded to private agencies for various other self-sufficiency programs.

FEDERAL FY14 ORR FUNDING TO FLORIDA FOR REFUGEE PROGRAMS (AS OF DECEMBER 2013)

Total	Cash & Medical Assistance	Refugee Social Services	Matching Grant	Targeted Assistance Program	School Impact	Elderly	Preventive Health	Cuban/Haitian	Survivor of Torture	MED Home Based Child Care	Refugee Agricultural Partnership Program
140,951,547	84,000,000	19,854,129	11,217,800	7,045,015	972,000	170,100	170,190	16,462,470	800,000	175,000	84,843

Another service available to refugees in North Carolina 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.

“Airman Montero said she loves everything about the Air Force because it has given her stability and a future she can be proud of.”

- [Airman Montero](#) was a refugee from Cuba before joining the Air Force

REFUGEES MAKE FLORIDA STRONG

[Desiree Gutierrez](#) fled to the United States in 2006 from Cuba, where she worked as a hotel manager after graduating from college. Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Venice placed Desiree in a housekeeping job at the Doubletree Guest Suites in Naples, where she was subsequently promoted to Assistant Housekeeping Manager and later Executive Housekeeping Manager. Every morning, Desiree begins the day by providing fellow refugee housekeepers staff training, vocational English, and citizenship classes. She has built a nationally recognized, award-winning housekeeping team that in 2010 received the Doubletree by Hilton Excellence in Housekeeping Award, given annually to the best hotel housekeeping staff in the United States. Desiree was also one of four finalists for Doubletree Employee of The

Year from among 2,500 employees. She was a member of the Naples Refugee Advisory Panel and represented refugees in Florida at the 2011 Office of Refugee Resettlement’s annual Consultation in Washington, DC, and at the Refugee Congress convened by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees. Desiree and two of her Doubletree housekeeping colleagues became U.S. citizens in February 2012.

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LOCAL AFFILIATES AND OFFICES OF VOLUNTARY AGENCIES IN FLORIDA

- **CWS, Church World Service**, Doral, Delray Beach, Miami, West Palm Beach
- **ECDC, Coptic Orthodox Charities Inc.**, Clearwater
- **EMM**, Miami, Jacksonville
- **HIAS, Gulf Coast Jewish Family and Community Services**, Clearwater, Broward County
- **HIAS, Jewish Family Service of Broward County**, Plantation
- **IRC, International Rescue Committee**, Miami
- **LIRS, Lutheran Services Florida**, Miami, Orlando, Tampa
- **LIRS, Lutheran Social Services of Northeast Florida**, Jacksonville
- **USCCB, Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Miami Inc.**, Miami, Orlando, North Port, Riviera Beach, Jacksonville, Naples
- **USCCB, Catholic Charities of NW Florida**, Pensacola, Tallahassee
- **USCRI, Youth Co-Op Inc.**, Miami, Palm Springs
- **WR, World Relief**, Jacksonville, Miami

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.