

REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT IN Idaho

REFUGEES IN IDAHO

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. Idaho residents have played a vital role in the resettlement program and refugees have positively contributed to Idaho communities. In 2013, organizations and communities across [Idaho](#) welcomed just over 1% of [refugees arriving in the U.S.](#) Of the 946 newcomers, 4 were asylees, 920 were resettled refugees, and 20 were Iraqi and Afghan Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) recipients who served alongside U.S. troops.

Where are most refugees in Idaho from?

Bhutan
Burma
Iraq
Congo

SERVICES AVAILABLE TO REFUGEES IN IDAHO

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

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

Total	Cash & Medical Assistance	Wilson Fish RCA	Matching Grant	Refugee Social Services	Targeted Assistance Program	School Impact	Targeted Assistance Discretionary	Elderly Services	Preventative Health	Micro-enterprise	MED-Home Based Child Development
6,807,988	1,900,000	2,594,580	563,200	617,913	179,611	315,900	150,000	97,200	97,252	125,000	167,332

Another service available to refugees in Idaho 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 are getting jobs because we are giving them what we really feel they need to not only survive, but thrive."

– Brent Southcombe, Create Common Good, [KTVB News Story](#)

REFUGEES MAKE IDAHO STRONG

At the age of 12, Fidel Nshombo was completely separated from his family at the height of the genocide in Rwanda. He journeyed through seven African countries in search of safety, barely surviving some of Africa's meanest streets. At more than one point, he narrowly escaped being killed. After years of exile, Fidel was finally approved for refugee status and was resettled in Boise. Just recently, he was awarded the Idaho Refugee Integration and Success Award and has distinguished himself in the community as a human rights activist, an advocate for refugees and refugee issues, a refugee team soccer coach, a refugee youth mentor, a gifted poet and writer, and a dedicated employee at the Doubletree Riverside Hotel as a Night Auditor. He has also been the keynote speaker at the Idaho Human Rights Education Center Book Club and at the Martin Luther King Day celebration at the Idaho Capitol Rotunda. Fidel writes poetry and

prose in the hopes that sharing his story will someday help bring about greater peace and compassion around the globe. His first book of poetry is "Route to Peace." Half of the proceeds are sent to his family in Africa; he discovered that some of his family members were still alive in 2008. Fidel became a proud United States citizen in October 2011 and spends many hours helping other refugees settle into life in the U.S.

LOCAL REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT OFFICES AND AFFILIATES IN IDAHO

- EMM, Agency for New Americans, Boise
- IRC, The International Rescue Committee, Boise
- USCRI, College of Southern Idaho Refugee Service Center, CSI Refugee Programs, Twin Falls

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.