

REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT IN Illinois

REFUGEES IN ILLINOIS

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. Illinois residents have played a vital role in the resettlement program and refugees have positively contributed to IL communities. In 2013, organizations and communities across Illinois welcomed [3.5% of refugees arriving in the U.S. Of the 3,263 newcomers to Illinois in 2013](#), 718 were asylees, 30 were Cuban/Haitian entrants, 2,452 were resettled refugees, and 63 were Iraqi and Afghan Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) recipients who served alongside U.S. troops.

Where are most refugees in Illinois from?

Bhutan
Burma
Iraq
Somalia

SERVICES AVAILABLE TO REFUGEES IN ILLINOIS

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 [Illinois Department of Human Services](#) 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 ILLINOIS FOR REFUGEE PROGRAMS (AS OF DECEMBER 2013)

Total	Cash & Medical Assistance	Matching Grant	Refugee Social Services	State Targeted Assistance	School Impact	Preventive Health	Survivors of Torture	Ethnic Community Self Help
\$12,251,662	\$6,975,000	\$1,381,600	\$2,102,007	\$648,820	\$307,890	\$129,803	\$400,000	\$306,502

Another service available to refugees in Illinois 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.

"We want to get the word out," said Rebecca Sandberg, founder and president of Re:new. "The refugee women are here, they are working here, and their environment is peaceful and loving. We are not shipping jobs overseas."

- [Rebecca Sandberg of Re:new](#)

REFUGEES MAKE ILLINOIS STRONG

Clemantine Wamariya, Yale class of 2013, escaped the Rwandan genocide and was resettled in Chicago in 2002. Despite never having prior formal education, Clemantine flourished academically, attending New Tier High School. She started speaking out about genocide and her own experiences at the Annual U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum Luncheon, the United Nations Annual Commemoration of the Rwandan Genocide, and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security Human Rights Law Conference. She enrolled at Yale University and is involved in Yale Refugee Project and Reach Out, the university's program for international service. In 2011, President Barack Obama appointed Clemantine to the board of the United States Holocaust Memorial Council, where she serves as the youngest member and first African. Clemantine's story speaks to the important contributions that refugees can

make, exemplifying the American spirit of perseverance. She is an asset to the refugee community, thanks to the resettlement efforts made by Illinois refugee programs.

LOCAL REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT OFFICES AND AFFILIATES IN ILLINOIS

- ECDC, Ethiopian Community Association of Chicago, Chicago
- CWS/EMM, Refugee One, Chicago
- HIAS, Jewish Child and Family Services, Chicago
- LIRS, Interfaith Refugee and Immigration Ministries, Chicago
- USCCB, Catholic Charities, Chicago
- USCCB, Catholic Charities Immigration and Refugee Services, Rockford
- USCRI, Heartland Alliance for Human Needs and Human Rights, Chicago
- WR, World Relief, Chicago, DuPage/Aurora, Moline

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HEALTH AND MEDICAL SERVICES FOR NEWLY ARRIVED REFUGEES:

- **Illinois Department of Public Health**, Chicago
- **Access Community Health Network**, Chicago
- **Chicago Department of Public Health**, Chicago
- **Rock Island County Health Dept.**, Rock Island
- **Mount Sinai/ Touhy Health Center**, Chicago
- **Heartland Health Outreach**, Chicago
- **Winnebago County Health Dept.**, Rockford
- **Aunt Martha's Health Center**, Aurora

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.