

# REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT IN Maine

## REFUGEES IN MAINE

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. Maine residents have played a vital role in the resettlement program and refugees have positively contributed to Maine communities. In 2013, organizations and communities across [Maine](#) welcomed less than [1% of refugees arriving in the U.S.](#) [Of the 411 newcomers to Maine in 2013](#), 44 were asylees, 1 was a Cuban or Haitian entrant, 350 were resettled refugees, and 16 were Iraqi and Afghan Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) recipients who served alongside U.S. troops.

Where are most refugees in Maine from?

Iraq  
Sudan

## SERVICES AVAILABLE TO REFUGEES IN MAINE

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 [Department of Health and Human Services](#) in Maine enables all refugee resettlement programs to be administered by [Catholic Charities of Maine](#). 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 MAINE FOR REFUGEE PROGRAMS (AS OF DECEMBER 2013)

Total	Cash & Medical Assistance	Matching Grant	Refugee Social Services	School Impact	Targeted Assistance Discretionary	Elderly Services	Preventive Health	Individual Development Account	Survivors of Torture	Micro-enterprise	Ethnic Community Self-Help Grants
2,275,094	475,000	121,000	298,842	145,800	175,000	97,200	97,252	230,000	360,000	125,000	150,000

Another service available to refugees in Maine 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.

*"Generally, refugees or migrants that come into a town give a new injection of energy."*

-[Karen Jacobsen](#), Director, Forced Migration Program, Tufts University's Feinstein International Famine Center

## REFUGEES MAKE MAINE STRONG

[El-Fadel was born in Darfur](#), Sudan in 1984 and grew up in a world of turmoil and genocide. He narrowly escaped murder at the age of 12 and lived in Sudan over the next few years alone, poor, and forced into child slavery. After being recognized by the United Nations as a refugee, he came to the city of Portland in 2004 and was tearfully united with his family members who lived in Portland and whom he had not seen for 15 years. During his first few years in the U.S., El-Fadel worked seven days a week and sixteen hours a day, because he needed the money as well as to stay busy and keep violent images out of his head. He has actively pursued his goal of bringing the community together and raising awareness about Darfur around the United States. He is a volunteer speaker for the Fur

Cultural Revival organization, and schools and institutions all around the country have invited him to speak. He has received over 500 letters from audience members who have been moved and inspired by his story. Despite the struggles he faces trying to raise awareness in Maine, he still believes that people everywhere should be actively working to stop genocide. It does not matter what skin color you are or what country you are from. [He thinks](#) the biggest obstacle to spreading awareness is that Darfur seems so far away from the lives of Americans living in Maine and other parts of the country. El-Fadel says, "I feel excited because I survived and got here and it's safe, but I feel so sad because the same people I left behind, they get killed, the women and girls get raped, the area is being destroyed...that's why, even now when I'm safe, I have difficulty sometimes sleeping or eating. That's why I feel like I can do more. The same experience I went through, there's still people surviving. That's why I try to educate as many people as I can—[to save people's lives](#)."

## LOCAL REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT OFFICES AND AFFILIATES IN MAINE

- [USCCB, Catholic Charities Maine](#), Portland

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.