

# REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT IN Maryland

## REFUGEES IN MARYLAND

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. Maryland residents have played a vital role in the resettlement program and refugees have positively contributed to Maryland communities. In 2013, organizations and communities across [Maryland](#) welcomed [1.86% of refugees arriving in the U.S. Of the 2,207 newcomers to Maryland in 2013](#), 889 were asylees, 1,242 were resettled refugees, 1 was a Cuban/Haitian entrant, and 75 were Iraqi and Afghan Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) recipients who served alongside U.S. troops.

Where are most refugees in Maryland from?

Bhutan  
Burma  
Iraq  
Eritrea  
Sudan

## SERVICES AVAILABLE TO REFUGEES IN MARYLAND

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 [Maryland Department of Human Resources](#) administers the refugee resettlement program for Maryland. 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 MARYLAND FOR REFUGEE PROGRAMS (AS OF DECEMBER 2013)

Total	Cash & Medical Assistance	Matching Grant	Refugee Social Services	Targeted Assistance Program	School Impact	Targeted Assistance Discretionary	Elderly Services	Preventive Health	Survivors of Torture
19,411,060	14,450,000	1,267,200	1,868,911	678,608	340,200	150,000	97,200	108,941	450,000

Another service available to refugees in Maryland 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.

*"In my experience, if a company takes sufficient time in the first few weeks to work with their IRC employment liaison to orient the refugee new hire, that company will have added an eager, reliable, loyal employee to their workforce."*

– Harry Brigham, [Baltimore Sun](#)

## REFUGEES MAKE MARYLAND STRONG

Abdi grew up in Erer, a town in central Ethiopia where his family faced persecution because of their affiliation with a political opposition group. When Abdi was a teenager his mother was imprisoned so Abdi went to live with an aunt in another part of Ethiopia to finish school. He eventually obtained a bachelor's degree in irrigation engineering from an Ethiopian university. His expertise in irrigation systems came in handy when the political turmoil in the country intensified, forcing Abdi to flee to a refugee camp in neighboring Djibouti. Abdi was able to find an underground water source and dig a well so that he and others in the camp would no longer have to trek three miles carrying water on their shoulders. Now, with plenty of water, Abdi and his wife were able to expand the garden they had planted around their tent, growing tomatoes, cabbage, onions and potatoes to supplement their camp food rations. Since he arrived in Baltimore in May of 2012, Abdi has been able to draw on the farming traditions he

grew up with and harvest produce for his family. Abdi is hoping to one day become a farmer in the U.S. As he pursues his passion, Abdi shares his knowledge and skills with other members of the community -truly putting down roots in Baltimore.

## LOCAL REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT OFFICES AND AFFILIATES IN MARYLAND

- **ECDC, African Community Center**, Silver Spring
- **HIAS, Jewish Community Services**, Baltimore
- **HIAS, Jewish Social Service Agency**, Rockville
- **IRC, International Rescue Committee**, Baltimore, Silver Spring
- **LIRS, Lutheran Social Services of National Capital Area**, Silver Spring

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.