

# REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT IN Michigan

## REFUGEES IN MICHIGAN

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. Michigan residents have played a vital role in the resettlement program and refugees have positively contributed to Michigan communities. In 2013, organizations and communities across [Michigan](#) welcomed [6.6% of refugees arriving in the U.S. Of the 5,450 newcomers to Michigan in 2013](#), 245 were asylees, 4,651 were resettled refugees, 7 were Cuban/Haitian entrants, and 142 were Iraqi and Afghan Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) recipients who served alongside U.S. troops.

Where are most refugees in Michigan from?

Bhutan  
Burma  
Iraq  
Sudan  
Congo

## SERVICES AVAILABLE TO REFUGEES IN MICHIGAN

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 [Michigan Refugee Assistance Program](#) is administered by the [Michigan Department of Human Services](#). 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 MICHIGAN FOR REFUGEE PROGRAMS (AS OF DECEMBER 2013)

Total	Cash & Medical Assistance	Matching Grant	Refugee Social Services	State Targeted Assistance	School Impact	Targeted Assistance Discretionary	Elderly Services	Preventive Health	Survivors of Torture	MED-Home Based Child Development	Ethnic Community Self Help	Preferred Communities
47,306,246	14,150,000	3,049,200	3,020,141	1,066,561	583,200	175,000	97,200	145,877	935,000	359,888	350,000	152,000

Another service available to refugees in Michigan 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.

*“While these large cities do host a significant portion of the refugees who are admitted into the U.S., smaller cities like Grand Rapids, Michigan, also have a reputation for welcoming those who have been forced from their homelands.”*

- [“Recognizing the Refugee Among Us” in The Rapidian](#)

## REFUGEES MAKE MICHIGAN STRONG

[Miguel Abrahantes](#) grew up a Catholic in Cuba where he and his family were forced to practice their religion in secret for fear of punishment by the government. In 2000 after completing an engineering doctorate degree in Argentina he got on a plane to Miami and sought asylum. He was then resettled as a refugee in Michigan with the help of Bethany Christian Services. He took a job working on an assembly line at night and studied English in the morning. Within a year, he had earned a research position at Indiana University. A year later he returned to Michigan and began teaching at Davenport University. In 2004 he accepted a position at Hope College teaching electronics engineering and doing a part-time research project for NASA, where he was developing a mobility system for robots for planet exploration called a Tetwalker. Miguel, became a naturalized citizen, continued to practice Catholicism and met his wife at a Catholic spiritual retreat in 2003. They have two children together, a son and a daughter.

## LOCAL REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT OFFICES AND AFFILIATES IN MICHIGAN

- CWS, Bethany Christian Services Refugee Resettlement Program, Grand Rapids
- HIAS, Jewish Family Service of Metropolitan Detroit, West Bloomfield
- HIAS, Jewish Family Services of Washtenaw County, Ann Arbor
- LIRS/EMM, Lutheran Social Services of Michigan, Detroit, Battle Creek, Grand Rapids, Lansing (URM)
- LIRS/EMM, Lutheran Social Services of Michigan, Southfield
- USCCB, Catholic Charities of South East Michigan, Clinton
- USCCB, St. Vincent Catholic Charities Refugee Services, Lansing, Grand Rapids (URM)
- USCRI, U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, Dearborn

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.