

REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT IN Missouri

REFUGEES IN MISSOURI

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. Missouri residents have played a vital role in the resettlement program and refugees have positively contributed to MO communities. In 2013, organizations and communities across [Missouri](#) welcomed [1.8% of refugees arriving in the U.S. Of the 1,415 newcomers to Missouri in 2013](#), 50 were asylees, 53 were Cuban/Haitian entrants, 1,268 were resettled refugees, and 44 were Iraqi and Afghan Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) recipients who served alongside U.S. troops.

Where are most refugees in Missouri from?

Bhutan
Burma
Iraq
Somalia
Eritrea

SERVICES AVAILABLE TO REFUGEES IN MISSOURI

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 Missouri [Department of Social 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 MISSOURI 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	Individual Development Accounts Grant	Microenterprise Development Grants
5,633,984	1,630,000	1,383,800	941,122	191,068	311,100	150,000	97,200	38,901	400,000	244,795	245,998

Another service available to refugees in Missouri 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.

His [Congolese refugee] positive attitude is a joy to [Kevin Vanden Brink](#), lead pastor at New City Fellowship in south city, where Semahoro and his roommates attend. *“These guys have a desire not just to build their own comfortable lives, but to make the world a better place,”* he says.

REFUGEES MAKE MISSOURI STRONG

Caritas Habimana grew up in the Congo. Her father was a doctor, and she attended good schools and spoke multiple languages. Fluent in French, she was offered a position at the embassy in Rwanda, where she got married and had a family. But during the Rwandan genocide, her family was threatened and was forced into hiding, living in the small closet of a relative for three months. She eventually found her way to a refugee camp in Kenya, and was reunited with her family after they had been separated for five months. She was resettled to Columbia, and has now lived in Missouri for 15 years. She became fluent in English in just a year, and has now dedicated her life to helping other refugees coming from Africa. She teaches English to refugees, works as an interpreter and also operates an after-school program for refugee children. She realized she wanted to do something to help her people, and states “Why do I have to go to Africa when Africa is here?”

LOCAL REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT OFFICES AND AFFILIATES IN MISSOURI

- ECDC, Della Lamb Community Services, Kansas City
- USCCB, Catholic Charities Refugee Services, St. Louis
- USCCB, Refugee and Immigration Services, Columbia
- USCRI, International Institute of St. Louis, Kansas City, St. Louis

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.