

# REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT IN New Mexico

## REFUGEES IN NEW MEXICO

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. New Mexico residents have played a vital role in the resettlement program and refugees have positively contributed to New Mexico communities. In 2013, organizations and communities across New Mexico welcomed less than [1% of refugees arriving in the U.S. Of the 411 newcomers to New Mexico in 2013](#), 2 were asylees, 108 were Cuban/Haitian entrants, 293 were resettled refugees, and 8 were Iraqi and Afghan Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) recipients who served alongside U.S. troops.

Where are most refugees in New Mexico from?

Bhutan  
Burma  
Iraq  
Somalia  
Cuba

## SERVICES AVAILABLE TO REFUGEES IN NEW MEXICO

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 [New Mexico Human Services Department](#) 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, vocational and employment assistance. [Discretionary grants](#) are also awarded to private agencies for various other self-sufficiency programs.

FEDERAL FY14 ORR FUNDING TO NEW MEXICO FOR REFUGEE PROGRAMS (AS OF DECEMBER 2013)

Total	Cash & Medical Assistance	Matching Grant	Refugee Social Services	School Impact	Micro-enterprise development	Preventive Health	Preferred Communities
\$2,512,571	\$1,450,000	\$327,800	\$191,719	\$145,800	\$200,000	\$97,252	\$100,000

Another service available to refugees in New Mexico 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.

*“There was dancing and music and food and speeches and this real recognition that they’re here. They’re part of the fabric of Albuquerque life now, and how we figure out ... immigration into this society.”*

-J. Enriquez, Daily Lobo on African Refugees in his community.

## REFUGEES MAKE NEW MEXICO STRONG

In response to the large concentration of sub-Saharan African refugees in New Mexico, the Association of Burundian Americans in New Mexico was founded to help make life easier for new refugees arriving to the area. The Association welcomes new arrivals with music, speeches and food, to make them feel like a part of the fabric of Albuquerque life. Martin Ndayisenga, a refugee who fled Rwanda during the genocide, is the secretary of the organization and is proud to advocate for refugee needs as a refugee himself. By building this organization by refugees and for refugees, the Association of Burundian Americans integrates refugees into the community while empowering them to become self-sufficient.

## LOCAL REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT OFFICES AND AFFILIATES IN NEW MEXICO

- **LIRS, Lutheran Social Services, Lutheran Family Services Rocky Mountains**, Albuquerque
- **USCCB, Catholic Charities of Central New Mexico**, Albuquerque

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.