

REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT IN Pennsylvania

REFUGEES IN PENNSYLVANIA

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. [Pennsylvania](#) residents have played a vital role in the resettlement program and refugees have positively contributed to Pennsylvania communities. In 2013, organizations and communities across Pennsylvania welcomed [3.6% of refugees arriving in the U.S. Of the 3,033 newcomers to Pennsylvania in 2013](#), 331 were asylees, 152 were Cuban/Haitian entrants, 2,507 were resettled refugees, and 43 were Iraqi and Afghan Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) recipients who served alongside U.S. troops.

Where are most refugees in Pennsylvania from?

Bhutan
Burma
Iraq
Congo
Syria

SERVICES AVAILABLE TO REFUGEES IN PENNSYLVANIA

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 [Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare](#) 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 PENNSYLVANIA FOR REFUGEE PROGRAMS (AS OF DECEMBER 2013)

Total	Cash & Medical Assistance	Refugee Social Services	State Targeted Assistance	Matching Grant	School Impact	Targeted Assistance	Elderly	Preventive Health	Cuban/Haitian	Ethnic Community Self-Help	Individual Development Accounts	Micro-enterprise Development	Services for Survivors of Torture
21,165,221	12,300,000	2,695,093	732,368	3,049,200	471,420	225,000	97,200	121,564	98,376	655,000	200,000	195,000	325,000

“Our Church is an immigrant Church, built by our ancestors who left difficult situations abroad to establish communities where they could work, support their families and be free to worship and live in accordance with their beliefs.”

-[Bishops](#) in Harrisburg, PA

REFUGEES MAKE PENNSYLVANIA STRONG

Abbas Hameed Khalaf was a Sunni Muslim living in Baghdad in 2006, when Shiite militia picked him up, beat him up, and gave him a death sentence. Miraculously, he was saved and fled to Egypt to try and find a new life for himself, but sadly his family was forced to stay behind in Baghdad. Abbas fought time and time again to reunite his family and when he discovered a group of Sudanese refugees were planning on sneaking across the border to Israel, he decided he too would join them. Through this treacherous journey, he was the sole survivor who made it to Israel. There he worked and searched for a place to live with his family. After 13 months of living in Israel, Abbas got word from the United States that he and his family were granted refugee status in the United States. Upon arriving in the United States, Abbas, with

the help of Catholic Charities, began building a life and working in Allentown. However, his family had not yet arrived. After several years of failed attempts to get his family to the United States, Abbas met with his Congressional Representative, who helped him speed along the process. After six years, Abbas was reunited with his family. Abbas, his wife, and their three children all live together in Pennsylvania now.

LOCAL REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT OFFICES AND AFFILIATES IN PENNSYLVANIA

- **CWS, Church World Service**, Lancaster
- **HIAS, HIAS Pennsylvania**, Philadelphia
- **HIAS, Jewish Family and Children’s Service of Pittsburgh**, Pittsburgh
- **LIRS, Lutheran Children and Family Services of Eastern Pennsylvania**, Allentown, Lancaster, Philadelphia, Roslyn
- **USCCB, Catholic Charities**, Pittsburgh, Erie, Harrisburg, Pittsburgh
- **USCCB, Catholic Social Services**, Scranton
- **USCRI, International Institute of Erie**, Erie
- **USCRI, Nationalities Service Center**, Philadelphia
- **USCRI, North Area Multi-Service Center of Allegheny County**, Pittsburgh

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.