

REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT IN South Carolina

REFUGEES IN SOUTH CAROLINA

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. South Carolina residents have played a vital role in the resettlement program and refugees have positively contributed to South Carolina communities. In 2013, organizations and communities across [South Carolina](#) welcomed less than [1% of refugees arriving in the U.S. Of the 194 newcomers to South Carolina in 2013](#), 34 were asylees, 6 were Cuban/Haitian, 148 were resettled refugees, and 6 were Iraqi and Afghan Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) recipients who served alongside U.S. troops.

Where are most refugees in South Carolina from?

Bhutan
Iraq
Congo
Ukraine

SERVICES AVAILABLE TO REFUGEES IN SOUTH CAROLINA

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 [South Carolina 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, vocational and employment assistance. [Discretionary grants](#) are also awarded to private agencies for various other self-sufficiency programs.

FEDERAL FY14 ORR FUNDING TO SOUTH CAROLINA FOR REFUGEE PROGRAMS (AS OF DECEMBER 2013)			
Total	Cash & Medical Assistance	Matching Grant	Refugee Social Services
\$641,602	\$264,297	\$198,000	\$179,305

Another service available to refugees in South Carolina 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.

"As we started hiring refugees, I was impressed by their work ethic, loyalty, and eagerness to learn. They made great employees."

-[Beverly Sytz](#), owner,
Beverly Knits

REFUGEES MAKE SOUTH CAROLINA STRONG

[Hamido Mohamed](#) is a refugee from Kenya, who resettled with his family in Columbia, South Carolina after fleeing the violence, drought, and famine afflicting the horn of Africa. His three children illustrate some of the successes of the resettlement program. Having been in the country since 2005, all three children speak excellent English. "It wasn't easy learning the language, but then we take English as a second language where they teach you the language and the reading of it," said daughter Khadija Awes. "It was pretty cool when we were first learning about it, because at first we didn't know anything about the United States or South Carolina," said daughter Ikra Mohamed. And like his older sisters, 11-year-old Mohamad wants to be a doctor and return to Kenya to help her country.

LOCAL REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT OFFICES AND AFFILIATES IN SOUTH CAROLINA

- LIRS, Lutheran Family Services in the Carolinas, Columbia

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.