

REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT IN South Dakota

REFUGEES IN SOUTH DAKOTA

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 Dakota residents have played a vital role in the resettlement program and refugees have positively contributed to South Dakota communities. In 2013, organizations and communities across [South Dakota](#) welcomed around [1% of refugees arriving in the U.S. Of the 539 newcomers to South Dakota in 2013](#), 2 were asylees, 533 were resettled refugees, and 4 were Iraqi and Afghan Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) recipients who served alongside U.S. troops.

Where are most refugees in South Dakota from?

Bhutan
Burma
Congo
Sudan
Eritrea

SERVICES AVAILABLE TO REFUGEES IN SOUTH DAKOTA

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. [Lutheran Social Services of South Dakota](#) 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 DAKOTA FOR REFUGEE PROGRAMS (AS OF DECEMBER 2013)									
Total	Cash & Medical Assistance	Wilson Fish RCA	Matching Grant	Refugee Social Services	State Targeted Assistance	School Impact	Targeted Discretionary Assistance	Elderly Services	Preventive Health
\$3,364,320	\$515,000	\$1,355,461	\$200,200	\$618,832	\$149,823	\$180,552	\$150,000	\$97,200	\$97,252

Another service available to refugees in South Dakota 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.

"What matters is the support of their employers, because farm owners value their workers and contribute resources to carry out this program."

-[Ana Luisa Fajer](#), Mexican consul serving the Dakotas

REFUGEES MAKE SOUTH DAKOTA STRONG

In 1987, an estimated 30,000 unaccompanied children fled religious and racial persecution during the civil war between Northern and Southern Sudan. Two of the boys, Malek and Ajak, arrived in Sioux Falls in 2001. They are part of a group now referred to as "The Lost Boys," which is a group of children who were orphaned by warfare in Sudan. Malek was only six when he fled from his village with his cousins. Ajak was five when he fled, taking his two-year-old cousin with him. It took Malek and Ajak one and a half months to arrive at a refugee camp in Ethiopia. As they traveled hundreds of miles on foot, the boys felt great fear and uncertainty. Escaping children suffered trauma from the loss of their families, starvation, drowning, attacks by wild animals, harsh weather and harm from soldiers. LSS helped Malek and Ajak resettle in the United States. Malek

sees the U.S. as a land of opportunity. He is interested in studying medicine, economics, sociology and agriculture. Ajak is interested in pursuing seminary. He brought religious books, a Bible, and songbooks from his native Dinka tribe, and finds that the church is one place he feels at home in both American and Sudanese communities. Both boys are very happy to have found a safe haven in South Dakota. They feel very lucky to have an opportunity to freely practice their faith and to learn. However, they are solemn when they think of so many others who were killed in the war. They also worry about those who remain in Southern Sudan and continue to endure great suffering because of their race and religion.

LOCAL REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT OFFICES AND AFFILIATES IN SOUTH DAKOTA

- LIRS, Lutheran Social Services of South Dakota, Sioux Falls and Huro

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.