

REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT IN Tennessee

REFUGEES IN TENNESSEE

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. Tennessee residents have played a vital role in the resettlement program and refugees have positively contributed to TN communities. In 2013, organizations and communities across [Tennessee](#) welcomed just over [2% of refugees arriving in the U.S. Of the 1,809 newcomers to Tennessee in 2013](#), 113 were asylees, 62 were Cuban/Haitian entrants, 1,551 were resettled refugees, and 83 were Iraqi and Afghan Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) recipients who served alongside U.S. troops.

Where are most refugees in Tennessee from?

Bhutan
Burma
Iraq
Somalia
Sudan
Eritrea

SERVICES AVAILABLE TO REFUGEES IN TENNESSEE

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 [Catholic Charities Tennessee Office for Refugees](#) 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 TENNESSEE FOR REFUGEE PROGRAMS (AS OF DECEMBER 2013)

Total	Wilson Fish RCA	Matching Grant	State Targeted Assistance	Social Services	Refugee Agricultural Partnership Program	School Impact	Elderly Services	Preventive Health	Preferred Communities	Ethnic Community Self-Help
\$12,704,443	\$8,556,600	\$1,388,200	\$353,758	\$1,263,411	\$85,000	\$359,640	\$97,200	\$134,502	\$170,329	\$295,803

Another service available to refugees in Tennessee 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.

"You can help yourself here," he said. "You can become self-sufficient," which is the goal of the resettlement program."

-[Ousman, Sudanese Refugee](#)

REFUGEES MAKE TENNESSEE STRONG

Al Mamourey is from Iraq, and has a Ph.D. in Engineering. He helped American contractors rebuild the war-torn country after the fall of Saddam Hussein. He specifically focused on building a new sewage system for his community. However, when al-Qaeda found him working with Americans, they labeled him as a traitor. After receiving many death threats, he and his family fled to the United States, and were resettled in Nashville near his brother. He has since obtained another Bachelor's degree from Tennessee State University, and is now working towards a Master's degree. He has also become a part of the Refugee Congress in Washington D.C., where he advocates for the rights of other refugees in the United States.

LOCAL REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT OFFICES AND AFFILIATES IN TENNESSEE

- **CWS, Bridge Refugee Services, Inc.**, Knoxville
- **ECDC, Nashville International Center for Empowerment**, Nashville
- **EMM, Bridge Refugee Services Inc.**, Chattanooga and Knoxville
- **USCCB, Catholic Charities of Tennessee, Refugee and Immigration Services**, Nashville and Memphis
- **WR, World Relief**, Memphis and Nashville

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.