

# REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT IN Texas

## REFUGEES IN TEXAS

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. Texas residents have played a vital role in the resettlement program and refugees have positively contributed to Texas communities. In 2013, organizations and communities across [Texas](#) welcomed [nearly 11% of refugees arriving in the U.S.](#) [Of the 10,440 newcomers to Texas in 2013](#), 793 were asylees, 1,670 were Cuban/Haitian entrants, 7,475 were resettled refugees, and 502 were Iraqi and Afghan Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) recipients who served alongside U.S. troops.

Where are most refugees in Texas from?

Bhutan  
Burma  
Iraq  
Cuba  
Eritrea

## SERVICES AVAILABLE TO REFUGEES IN TEXAS

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 [Texas Health and Human Services Commission](#) 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 TEXAS FOR REFUGEE PROGRAMS (AS OF DECEMBER 2013)

Total	Cash & Medical Assistance	Matching Grant	Refugee Social Services	State Targeted Assistance	School Impact	Targeted Assistance Discretionary	Elderly Services	Preventive Health	Cuban/Haitian	Ethnic Community Self-Help	Home-Based Child Care
53,499,839	33,530,000	7,992,600	6,897,268	2,435,413	972,000	300,000	121,500	39,178	491,880	350,000	185,000

Another service available to refugees in Texas 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.

*"That's really the goal of our long term partnership: to provide more jobs and more opportunities for hardworking women."*

- [Amy George](#) of Open Arms, Inc commenting on hiring refugee women in Austin, Texas.

## REFUGEES MAKE TEXAS STRONG

[Odile](#) is a 56-year-old mother of six from the Congo. [Leslie](#) is a 47-year-old mother of four from Texas. Odile is a refugee. Leslie is an entrepreneur. These two women from extremely different backgrounds now work together. At Open Arms they up-cycle T-shirts headed to the landfill into trendy, hipster, life-giving skirts and scarves. Odile is from a small village in the Congo. She fled with her six children in 1999 when the rebels attacked. They hid and traveled barefoot in parts of the jungle for almost a year before they reached a safer place. After a third application attempt, Odile was accepted to be resettled in the United States.

Unfortunately she was only able to bring her three daughters, as her sons were not eligible. Initially, things were very difficult for Odile. She was illiterate, couldn't speak English, and didn't have a job. Eventually she found out about Open Arms and began working there. She uses her artistic sewing abilities and crafts designs on fabric to be sold in stores. Not only is

she working, but she's also able to take English classes at Open Arms before her shift starts. She has friends now and her family is doing well. Odile is so happy for the opportunity.

## LOCAL REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT OFFICES AND AFFILIATES IN TEXAS

- **CWS/EMM, Interfaith Ministries for Greater Houston**, Houston
- **CWS/EMM, Refugee Services of Texas, Inc.**, Austin, Fort Worth
- **CWS/EMM/LIRS, Refugee Services of Texas, Inc. (Main office)**, Dallas
- **CWS/LIRS, Refugee Services of Texas, Inc., Amarillo IRC, International Rescue Committee**, Abilene, Dallas
- **LIRS, Refugee Services of Texas**, Houston
- **USCCB, Catholic Family Services**, Amarillo
- **USCCB, Caritas of Austin**, Austin
- **USCCB, Catholic Charities**, Corpus Christi, Dallas, Fort Worth, Fort Worth URM, Houston and Houston URM, San Antonio
- **USCCB, Catholic Charities**, Fort Worth and Lewisville
- **USCCB, Diocesan Migrant and Refugee Services, Inc.**, El Paso
- **USCRI, YMCA International Services**, Houston
- **World Relief Fort Worth**, Fort Worth
- **ECDC, Alliance for Multicultural Community Services**, Houston

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.