

REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT IN Vermont

REFUGEES IN VERMONT

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. Vermont residents have played a vital role in the resettlement program and refugees have positively contributed to Vermont communities. In 2013, organizations and communities across [Vermont](#) welcomed less than [1% of refugees arriving in the U.S. Of the 328 newcomers to Vermont in 2013](#), 4 were asylees, 322 were resettled refugees, 1 was a Cuban/Haitian entrant, and 1 was an Iraqi and Afghan Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) recipient who served alongside U.S. troops.

Where are most refugees in Vermont from?

Bhutan
Burma
Eritrea
Somalia

SERVICES AVAILABLE TO REFUGEES IN VERMONT

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. A local office of the U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI), the [Vermont Refugee Resettlement Program](#), 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 VERMONT FOR REFUGEE PROGRAMS (AS OF DEC 2013)								
Total	Cash & Medical Assistance	Matching Grant	Wilson Fish RCA	Refugee Social Services	Elderly Services	School Impact	Survivors of Torture	Preventive Health
\$2,414,893	510,000	209,000	793,122	342,519	97,200	145,800	220,000	97,252

Another service available to refugees in Vermont 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.

"The hallmark of the Vermont [Refugee Resettlement] program, which arranges rental apartments and housing for its clients in downtown Burlington and accessible surrounding towns, is a 450-strong force of volunteers who facilitate outreach with local employers and community organizations."

- Colchester, VT, [Women's eNews](#)

REFUGEES MAKE VERMONT STRONG

Somalia has been in turmoil for over thirty years with famine, civil war/conflict, and fear of persecution. [Norre Bulle](#) was a toddler when his family fled to a refugee camp in Kenya, and he spent his childhood growing up in camps until he was fourteen. Finally, his family was resettled in the greater Burlington area in 2004. Since then, he has learned English, graduated from high school and obtained a Bachelor's Degree from Johnson State College where he also played on the soccer team. Aside from these accomplishments, Norre has written a memoir about his life and the struggles that he has overcome. Without the help of Vermont resettlement organizations and individual workers, Norre would not be where he is today. He is very appreciative of his time in the United States, and understands that not everyone attempting to flee Somalia has been as fortunate as he.

LOCAL REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT OFFICES AND AFFILIATES IN VERMONT

- USCRI, Vermont Refugee Resettlement Program, Colchester

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.