

REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT IN Wisconsin

REFUGEES IN WISCONSIN

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. Wisconsin residents have played a vital role in the resettlement program and refugees have positively contributed to Wisconsin communities. In 2013, organizations and communities across [Wisconsin](#) welcomed [1.3% of refugees arriving in the U.S. Of the 1023 newcomers to Wisconsin in 2013](#), 56 were asylees, 7 were Cuban/Haitian entrants, 946 were resettled refugees, and 14 were Iraqi and Afghan Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) recipients who served alongside U.S. troops.

Where are most refugees in West Wisconsin from?

Iraq
Burma
Bhutan
Somalia
Vietnam

SERVICES AVAILABLE TO REFUGEES IN WISCONSIN

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 [Wisconsin Department of Children and Families](#) is responsible for coordinating refugee resettlement efforts in 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 WISCONSIN FOR REFUGEE PROGRAMS (AS OF DEC 2013)

Total	Cash & Medical Assistance	Matching Grant	Refugee Social Services	State Targeted Assistance	School Impact	Elderly	Preventive Health	Individual Development Account	Targeted Assistance Discretionary
\$5,263,553	3,000,000	446,600	777,908	221,033	223,560	97,200	97,252	150,000	250,000

Another service available to refugees in Wisconsin 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.

"Catholic Charities sponsored my family, and they were helping me with find a job and housing, and also they enroll my children in school, and most of my family have a job now."

[-Nai Raw](#), a resettled Burmese refugee

REFUGEES MAKE WISCONSIN STRONG

[Mai Ya Xiong](#) is a Laotian refugee of Hmong descent, who resettled with her family in Wisconsin when she was a young child. She spoke no English and had never experienced the cold or seen snow before. She has since graduated high school and college and works with new refugees to help make their transition to life in the United States smooth and comfortable. She started a Girl Scout troop for middle school Hmong girls, and was involved in the Hmong American and Asian American Student Unions in at University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. She has also written a children's book about her family's life in Laos, their aiding the U.S. soldiers during the Vietnam War, their time in the refugee camp, and their transition to their new lives in America. She hopes it will help show other immigrants that they are not alone in their struggles to fit in here.

LOCAL REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT OFFICES AND AFFILIATES IN WISCONSIN

- **ECDC, Pan-African Community Association**, Milwaukee
- **LIRS, Lutheran Social Services of Wisconsin and Upper Michigan**, Madison, Milwaukee
- **USCCB, Catholic Charities**, Green Bay, Milwaukee, Sheboygan
- **USCRI, International Institute of Wisconsin**, Milwaukee
- **WR, World Relief**, Oshkosh

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.