

REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT IN Arizona

REFUGEE POPULATION OF ARIZONA

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. Arizona residents have played a vital role in the resettlement program and refugees have positively contributed to AZ communities. In 2013, organizations and communities across [Arizona](#) welcomed 4.36% of [refugees arriving in the U.S.](#) Of the 3,484 newcomers to Arizona in 2013, 153 were asylees, 218 were Cuban/Haitian entrants, 3,052 were resettled refugees, and 61 were Iraqi and Afghan Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) recipients who served alongside U.S. troops. The majority of refugees are resettled in the Phoenix metropolitan area and the Tucson area.

Where are most refugees in Arizona from?

Rwanda
Iraq
Eritrea
Congo

SERVICES AVAILABLE TO REFUGEES IN ARIZONA

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 [Arizona Department of Economic Security \(DES\)](#) 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 ARIZONA FOR REFUGEE PROGRAMS (AS OF DECEMBER 2013)

| Total | Cash & Medical Assistance | Refugee Social Services | Matching Grant | State Targeted Assistance | School Impact | Targeted Assistance | Elderly | Preventive Health | Cuban/Haitian | Ethnic Community Self-Help | Services for Survivors of Torture |
|------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|---------------------------|---------------|---------------------|---------|-------------------|---------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 18,800,852 | 10,500,000 | 2,132,811 | 3,465,000 | 894,177 | 558,900 | 150,000 | 97,200 | 145,877 | 191,680 | 340,207 | 325,000 |

Another service available to refugees in Arizona 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.

"In the degree of welcome and receptivity we see, I would certainly put Arizona at the top."

- quoting International Rescue Committee vice president Bob Carey in story written by [Jason DeParle](#) of the New York Times

REFUGEE SUCCESS STORY

Thirty years ago, Emmett Kamara, a Liberian refugee, was resettled in Phoenix, Arizona. Today, inspired by his own experiences, he is giving back to his community and mentoring Phoenix youth. While working with the same resettlement agencies that aided in his arrival, he noticed that many refugee families were led by single parents, working long days to provide for their families. Compelled to not only help these families assimilate but also lead youth of this community down a healthy and safe path, he formed the Desert Lone Star soccer team of Arizona. This team serves as an outlet for young men to learn from a successfully integrated and productive man who has life experiences that are similar to their own. Emmett gave these refugee youth a sense of belonging and purpose while contributing to Arizona through advancing the fabric of our society: children.

LOCAL AFFILIATES AND OFFICES OF VOLUNTARY AGENCIES IN ARIZONA

- CWS/LIRS, Lutheran Social Services of the Southwest, Phoenix
- ECDC, Arizona Immigrant and Refugee Services, Phoenix
- EMM/LIRS, Lutheran Social Services of the Southwest, Tucson
- IRC, International Rescue Committee, Phoenix
- IRC, International Rescue Committee, Tucson
- USCCB, Catholic Charities Community Services, Phoenix
- USCCB, Catholic Social Services, Tucson

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.