

# REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT IN Minnesota

## REFUGEES IN MINNESOTA

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. Minnesota residents have played a vital role in the resettlement program and refugees have positively contributed to Minnesota communities. In 2013, organizations and communities across [Minnesota](#) welcomed [3.2% of refugees arriving in the U.S. Of the 2,326 newcomers to Minnesota in 2013](#), 93 were asylees, 4 were Cuban/Haitian entrants, 2,214 were resettled refugees, and 15 were Iraqi and Afghan Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) recipients who served alongside U.S. troops.

Where are most refugees in Minnesota from?

Bhutan  
Burma  
Somalia  
Eritrea  
Congo

## SERVICES AVAILABLE TO REFUGEES IN MINNESOTA

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 [Minnesota Department of Human Services](#) 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 MINNESOTA FOR REFUGEE PROGRAMS (AS OF DEC 2013)

Total	Cash & Medical Assistance	Matching Grant	Refugee Social Services	State Targeted Assistance	School Impact	Elderly Services	Preventive Health	Individual Development Account	Survivors of Torture	MED-Home Based Childcare Development	Ethnic Community Self-Help Program
8,720,721	2,950,000	528,000	2,653,715	544,826	486,000	97,200	145,877	245,000	535,000	185,000	350,103

Another service available to refugees in Minnesota 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.

### [Jessica O'Brien, said Odola](#)

*[Sudanese Refugee] has the traits of a successful American-born person: professionalism, motivation, friendliness, a desire to do a good job. He has a good grasp of the American mindset in terms of functioning successfully in the world."*

-O'Brien, works both for the county and for MRCI, which provides services for refugees.

## REFUGEES MAKE MINNESOTA STRONG

Somalia's Dehabo Hassan Maow faced grueling challenges as a disabled teen refugee—and now she's working to help other girls carve out a fighting chance. At just 14 years old, Dahabo Hassan Maow was caught in the crossfire of her native Somalia's civil war and injured so gravely that doctors were forced to amputate her leg at the knee. With no family (she was orphaned as a baby) or support, she fled her homeland, traveling by unpaved road to what she hoped would be the relative safety of Dadaab, the world's largest refugee camp, in Kenya. Later that year, Dahabo was resettled by UNHCR in the United States—first in Fargo, North Dakota, and eventually in Minneapolis, which has one of the country's largest Somali populations. She remains a Maisha Collective ambassador. "I talk with the girls at Heshima Kenya all the time," she says. "I say, 'You're going to move forward, change your life and better your life—you're the only one who can do that.'"

## LOCAL REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT OFFICES AND AFFILIATES IN MINNESOTA

- **CWS, Minnesota Council of Churches**, Minneapolis
- **EMM, Episcopal Migration Ministries**, Minneapolis
- **LIRS, Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota**, Saint Cloud, Minneapolis
- **USCCB, Catholic Charities**, Saint Paul, Rochester
- **USCRI, International Institute of Minnesota**, St. Paul
- **WR, World Relief, Richfield**

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.