

**For more information,
contact:**

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**South Carolina Department
of Social Services**

**Refugee
Resettlement
Program**

*“The best and most beautiful things
in the world cannot be seen, nor
touched...but are felt in the heart, one
of which is HOPE – for a better life!”
- Helen Keller*

Who are refugees?

Refugees are people who flee from their country of origin and are unable to return because of a well-founded fear of persecution because of: race; religion; nationality; membership in a particular social group; or political opinion. Refugees come from all parts of the world, and represent various nationalities, origins, and cultures. A *refugee* is different from an *immigrant*. Although both are foreign-born individuals, an immigrant voluntarily leaves his/her country of origin. A refugee is someone who is forced to flee from his/her country due to persecution and/or oppression.

How many refugees settle in South Carolina?

It is the historic policy of the United States to admit refugees of special humanitarian concern, reflecting our core values and our tradition – being a safe haven for the oppressed.

Each year the President, in consultation with Congress, sets the number of refugees to be accepted for U.S. resettlement through various voluntary agencies. The current total varies between 50,000 and 70,000 per year throughout the country. Approximately 250 new refugees resettle in South Carolina each year through federally approved volunteer agencies. In South Carolina, the current volunteer organizations responsible for Refugee Reception and Placement are Lutheran Services of the Carolinas (LSC) in Columbia, SC and World Relief (WR Spartanburg), in Spartanburg, SC.

Some refugees may originally settle in other states and later move to South Carolina as “Secondary Migrants”.

Overview and Functions of the DSS Refugee Resettlement Program

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Refugee Resettlement provides funding to states for refugee assistance. The Refugee Resettlement Program at the Department of Social Services manages and administers funds for refugees to receive benefits and services. The Refugee Resettlement staff coordinates and provides quality services that will enable refugees to become

self-sufficient, self-reliant and productive members of society. Our office serves as a link between the refugee population, other social service agencies and service providers.

The Refugee Resettlement Program coordinates allowable services through contracts with providers to assist refugees in making the transition to life in the United States. All services provided in the Refugee Resettlement Program (RRP) focus on family and individual self-sufficiency.

Services are also available to the following:

Asylees

Cuban/Haitian Entrants

Amerasians

Victims of Human Trafficking

Survivors of Torture

The Refugee Resettlement Program consists of the following services:

Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA)

Refugee cash assistance allows employable refugees that do not meet Family Independence (FI) guidelines to receive financial assistance for up to **eight (8) months** after arrival in the US. The RCA cash benefit amount is the same level as FI benefits. Eligibility guidelines and other criteria for **RCA** parallel the federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and State program guidelines. Applications for **RCA** must be filed at the DSS office in the county where the refugee lives.

Refugee Medical Assistance (RMA)

Refugee medical assistance provides a health screening within 30 days after arrival, as well as other medical assistance for up to **eight (8) months** after arrival in the US. Eligibility guidelines and other criteria for **RMA** parallel the State’s Medicaid program guidelines. Applications for **RMA** must be filed at the local Medicaid office in the county where the refugee lives.

Refugee Social Services (RSS)

Refugee social services include employability services such as: job preparation training; job seeking and keeping skills; vocational skills training; On the job Training (OJT); case management; English Language Training (ESL); translation and interpreter services; citizenship preparation; and social adjustment services. These services are offered through contract agreements with various service providers. Some services are available for up to **five (5) years**.

Payment for all Refugee services are managed and coordinated directly by the Refugee Resettlement Program at the SC State Department of Social Services Office, located in Columbia SC.