

Welcome: Refugee resettlement in Minnesota

Newcomers bring fresh ideas, talent and energy that help all Minnesotans thrive. The [Resettlement Programs Office](#) (RPO), agency partners and communities invest in refugees and other people with humanitarian protection as they rebuild their lives, establish well-being and contribute to Minnesota's economy.

Welcoming people with refugee status

People eligible for refugee status have fled their home countries. They cannot return because of a well-founded fear of persecution based on their identity or beliefs. The U.S. Department of State administers the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP), working with the federal Administration for Children and Families to connect people to initial resettlement services through agencies they fund across the country.

The federal government annually determines the maximum number of people who may be admitted to the U.S. with refugee status and priority populations for resettlement. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security screens and rigorously vets every person before approving refugee status. States do not have authority over resettlement decisions or policy—they help people rebuild after they arrive.

If people have connections to family members who already live in the U.S., the federal government prioritizes placement in the state where their family resides. When people granted refugee status overseas do not have family connections in the U.S., the federal government works directly with nonprofit agencies to determine where the person or family will be placed upon arrival here.

Refugee status is a legal, permanent status in the U.S. People have authorization to work immediately and a pathway to citizenship after five years.

Highly vetted arrivals

People who arrive through USRAP are thoroughly vetted by the federal government before they are admitted. Vetting, overseen by the U.S. Department of State, has included more than 17 background checks from eight federal and intelligence agencies. The Department of Homeland Security makes the final decision about whether people are eligible for approval to enter the U.S.

Making Minnesota home

As the state-level coordinator for resettlement in Minnesota, RPO connects people, partners and government agencies to maximize community capacity to welcome refugees and other people with humanitarian protection. In federal fiscal year 2025, Minnesota welcomed 1,337 people from more than 25 countries through USRAP.

Investing in people with refugee status

Program of Initial Resettlement

Three organizations have federal contracts to provide Program of Initial Resettlement (PIR) services to new arrivals for their first 90 days in Minnesota. PIR helps people meet their basic needs and connects them to the ongoing services that RPO administers.

Building well-being

RPO provides federally funded services through a statewide group called [Minnesota Resettlement Network Services](#) (RNS). These services are for people during their first five years in the U.S. In federal fiscal year 2025, 7,353 people accessed RNS services.

Strong partnerships with community organizations across Minnesota—funded as statewide service collaboratives—are key to achieving family well-being and strengthening the state’s economic prosperity. More than 40 RNS partner organizations provide services in six different regions of the state. Supports include help:

- Accessing community resources and taking classes to adjust to life in the U.S.
- Reaching learning and career goals, including help finding a job and moving up at work.
- Finding health insurance, learning about health and navigating the health care system.
- Getting legal assistance to take steps toward U.S. citizenship, like completing green card or naturalization applications.
- Accessing short-term financial help and early employment connections for eligible single adults or married couples without children.

Strengthening Minnesota

Minnesota has a long tradition of welcoming people with refugee status. After arriving in the U.S., people move quickly to find jobs, pay taxes and contribute to our economy. They help create new jobs for fellow Minnesotans.

New residents are key to addressing Minnesota’s persistent workforce shortage. People with refugee status play a key role in helping our communities maintain access to vital goods and services. Almost 60% of Minnesota’s employment growth was driven by foreign-born workers from 2019-2023.

In federal fiscal year 2025, RPO employment services helped more than 850 people find work, including about 250 people in Greater Minnesota. More than 185 new employers expressed interest in hiring people through those services.

Assisting refugees is a smart investment for Minnesota’s future. We know that today’s new arrivals are tomorrow’s workforce and civic leaders.