

Soe's story of resilience

Soe was resettled in Chicago with his family in 2019, when they came to the U.S. as refugees from Burma. As a member of a persecuted minority in Burma, Soe had limited opportunities to attend school. When he arrived in Chicago, he soon found himself attending online schooling during the COVID pandemic, using technologies he'd never seen before. He quickly found a passion for technology, and joined the robotics team at FORA, a community-based organization in Chicago providing Refugee School Impact Services. As his English proficiency improved and his love for STEM grew, Soe pursued additional educational opportunities, including winning a summer internship at the Adler Planetarium. Soe was later awarded a full-tuition scholarship and admission to Middlebury College, where he studies Computer Science, and is planning to launch a blog about his college experiences. Soe now serves as a role model for other refugee students who are investing in their educations and seeking to attend college.



ILLINOIS REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT PROGRAM

Administration

Illinois Department of Human Services/Bureau of Refugee and Immigrant Services

Refugee Support Services

Administration

- Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago

Service Providers

CHICAGO AND COOK COUNTY

- Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Chicago*
- Ethiopian Community Association of Chicago*
- Forging Opportunities for Refugees in America (FORA)
- Heartland Alliance Health
- Heartland Human Care Services, Inc.*
- JCFS Chicago* (Skokie)
- RefugeeOne*
- Rohingya Culture Center
- Sinai Medical Group
- Syrian Community Network
- World Relief – Chicago*

GREATER STATE OF ILLINOIS

- The Refugee Center* (Champaign)
- Rock Valley College (Rockford)
- World Relief – DuPage/Aurora*
- World Relief – Quad Cities*

*These agencies are known as Resettlement Agencies, which have contracts with the U.S. Department of State to provide initial (30–90 days) resettlement services to refugees. Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Rockford and ICNA Relief are also resettlement agency, but do not operate any Refugee Support Services programming.

Refugee Health Screening and Health Promotion Program

Administration

- Illinois Department of Public Health/ Office of Racial and Cultural Health Equity

Community Health Clinics

- Aunt Martha's Clinic (Aurora)
- Champaign-Urbana Public Health District (Champaign)
- Community Health Care, Inc. (Rock Island)
- Hamdard Health (Bensenville)
- Rock Island County Health Department (Rock Island)
- Sinai Medical Group, Antillas Clinic (Chicago)
- Tapestry 360 Health (Chicago)
- Winnebago County Health Department (Rockford)

Health Education, Interpretation and Case Management

- Tapestry 360 Health (Chicago)
- World Relief – DuPage/Aurora



Illinois Refugee Resettlement Program

STATE FISCAL YEAR 2025
ANNUAL REPORT

REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT PROGRAM OVERVIEW

A refugee is a person who fled from their country due to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion. The Refugee Act of 1980 created the Federal Refugee Resettlement Program to provide for the effective resettlement of refugees and to assist them in achieving economic self-sufficiency as quickly as possible after arrival in the United States.

The federal Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) funds states to provide services to refugees and similarly situated immigrants—individuals with a variety of immigration statuses, including refugees; asylees; Cuban and Haitian Entrants; Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) holders; non-citizen victims of human trafficking; certain humanitarian parolees; and certain Amerasians.

After resettling more than 100,000 refugees in the U.S. for the first time in 20 years in federal FY 2024, FY 2025 saw a dramatic decline in refugee admissions, with refugee arrivals suspended indefinitely in January 2025. Despite a refugee admissions ceiling of 125,000 for federal FY 2025, only 27,000 refugees have been resettled during the first three quarters of the federal fiscal year. Despite a decline in overall arrivals, FY 2024 saw an influx of Ukrainians through the United for Ukraine (U4U) program and SIV holders from Iraq and Afghanistan, highlighting the essential role of Refugee Support Services in helping newcomers resettle in the U.S.

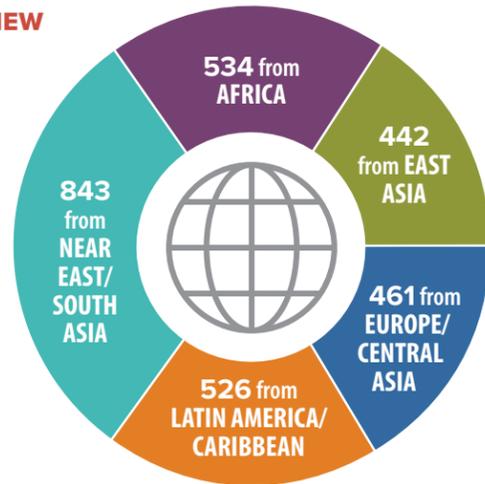
ILLINOIS PROGRAM

The State of Illinois has operated a successful refugee resettlement program since 1975. More than 135,000 refugees from 86 countries have resettled in Illinois. With funding provided by the ORR, the Illinois Refugee Resettlement Program is administered by the Bureau of Refugee and Immigrant Services at the Illinois Department of Human Services. The goal of the program is to help refugees achieve stability and move toward healthy integration in their local communities. The program has three main components:

- **Short-term cash assistance** administered by the Illinois Department of Human Services. Under this program, refugees not otherwise eligible for federal cash assistance can receive assistance for up to four months. This cash assistance helps meet basic needs while refugees work with service providers to secure their first jobs in the U.S.
- **Refugee health screening program** administered by the Illinois Department of Public Health in partnership with eight local health care providers. The program aims to reduce the spread of infectious disease, treat any current ailments, and promote preventive health practices
- **Refugee Support Services**, operated in partnership with Illinois organizations. Services include case management; employment; English language learning; mental health; children and youth services; and support for senior adults. The Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago is contracted to manage the day-to-day operation of this program.

New Arrivals in Illinois Fiscal Year 2025: July 1, 2024–June 30, 2025

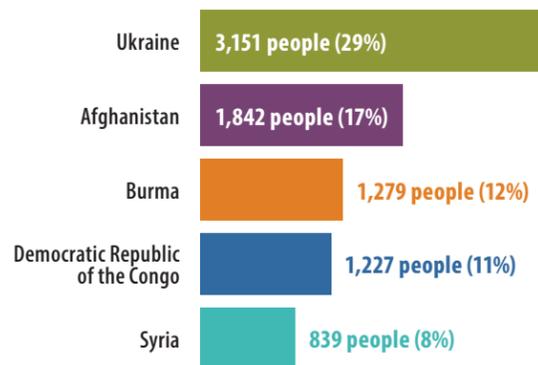
ORIGIN OF NEW ARRIVALS TO ILLINOIS



ORR-eligible new arrivals who accessed Illinois Refugee Support Services, FY 2025.

TOP FIVE COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN FOR ALL CLIENTS SERVED

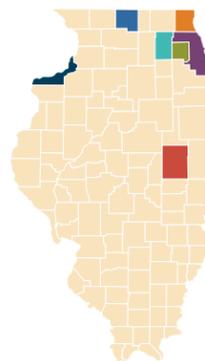
77% of new arrivals who accessed Illinois Refugee Support Services in FY 2025 came from these five countries:



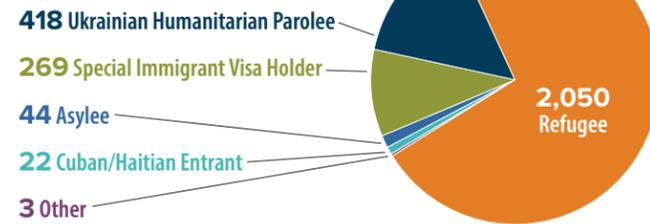
KEY ILLINOIS RESETTLEMENT & SERVICE SITES

97% of all clients served reside in these seven Illinois counties.

County	Number of People	Percentage
Cook County	7,095	65%
DuPage County	1,294	12%
Kane County	704	6%
Winnebago County	690	6%
Rock Island County	473	4%
Lake County	233	2%
Champaign County	166	2%

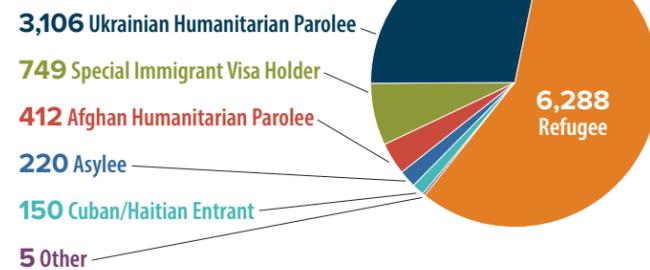


IMMIGRATION STATUS OF NEW ARRIVALS



ORR-eligible new arrivals who accessed Illinois Refugee Support Services, FY 2025.

IMMIGRATION STATUS OF ALL CLIENTS SERVED



Social Services

EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

2,589 clients received services to secure employment, improve job readiness skills, navigate the U.S. workplace, and move toward skills recertification and career advancement.



Of those placed in jobs:

- 1,047 (90%) retained jobs after 90 days
- 952 (82%) had full-time jobs
- 804 (84%) with full-time jobs had medical benefits offered by their employer
- \$18.35 average hourly wage (full-time)
- \$17.14 average hourly wage (part-time)

JOB READINESS ENGLISH LANGUAGE TRAINING

1,019 clients participated in the Job Readiness English Language Training (JRELT) program. JRELT provides English language instruction with a focus on employment-related skills. 679 clients (67%) advanced to a higher English class or graduated from their English program.

SENIOR SERVICES

274 seniors (60+) accessed dedicated senior services designed to link them to food, income, and utility assistance; to public transportation; and to other senior services programs. 47 seniors were assisted to prepare for naturalizing as a U.S. citizen.



REFUGEE HEALTH SCREENING

Refugee health screening provides linguistically appropriate comprehensive health assessments and intervention. Services provided include vaccinations, follow-ups, and referrals to treat health conditions identified in the assessment process.

3,262 clients screened in FY 2025

2,738 with refugee status

524 with all other eligible statuses

1,829 (56%) screened within 30 days of arrival/eligibility

1,386 (42%) screened within 90 days of arrival/eligibility



CASE MANAGEMENT SERVICES

5,933 clients received orientation, assistance, and support to help integrate into their communities.

YOUTH MENTORING PROGRAM

The Youth Mentoring program is designed to match young adults with a mentor to help them consider their next educational or vocational steps and chart a path forward. Together, the young adult and mentor explore options and address challenges faced in pursuing their goals.



133 youth and young adults ages 16–24 were served in the Youth Mentoring Program in FY 2025

EDUCATION ASSISTANCE TO YOUTH

2,821 total youth served

927 served in after-school programs

749 participated in social-emotional learning programs

626 served in summer programs

593 children ages 0–5 engaged in early childhood services

211 enrolled in preschool or early learning programs

10 received early intervention services



BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES

Behavioral Health services support the emotional wellness of refugee and immigrant populations, recognizing its importance for successful resettlement and integration. The program provided individual and group behavioral health counseling and wellness services to **604 individuals** this year, all delivered by qualified professionals in a culturally and linguistically appropriate manner. **471 clients (78%)** reported positive progress.

REFUGEE HEALTH PROMOTION

1763 individuals were served in the Refugee Health Promotion program, which serves to promote health literacy; coordinate physical and mental health care; and offer health education and wellness groups.