

Refugee Resettlement in Vermont

Vermont Economic Conference, January 30, 2024

Tracy Dolan, Director, State Refugee Office



Vermont Refugee Resettlement - mission

The mission of refugee resettlement in Vermont is to promote and provide a safe and welcoming home for refugees and immigrants, and to promote their full participation as self-sufficient individuals and families in the economic, social, and civic life of Vermont.

State Refugee Office | Agency of Human
Services (vermont.gov)

Vermont refugee resettlement

- ▶ Federal administration has set a refugee target of 125,000 for this fiscal year. Each state's refugee agencies then determine how many they can resettle in communication with communities and partners
- ▶ Vermont has two resettlement agencies – USCRI and ECDC. Sites are in Colchester, Rutland, Brattleboro and Bennington. We also have other organizations helping to serve refugees – AALV, Grace Initiatives, World Learning, Vermont Adult Learning, MercyCorps, Schools and Healthcare systems across the state
- ▶ Before refugees arrive, they may stay in refugee camps for 5 or more years, waiting to be given refugee status so that they can come to a new country (Exceptions – Afghans, Ukrainians). They are eager to start work.

Refugee projections FFY2024

- ▶ Vermont expects help resettle approximately 600 refugees (and others with similar status) this year.
- ▶ Families tend to be larger than Vermont born families and multiple adults are often employed in a family
- ▶ Housing is biggest limiting factor at this time

Where are refugees come from in FY2024?

- ▶ Possible locations:
 - ▶ Ukraine
 - ▶ Afghanistan
 - ▶ Syria
 - ▶ Sudan
 - ▶ Congo
 - ▶ Ethiopia
 - ▶ Eritrea

Achieving Economic Self Sufficiency

- ▶ Federal goal of refugee resettlement is economic self sufficiency
- ▶ Core activity of refugee agencies and partners is to assist refugees in finding employment
- ▶ In FFY 2023, among refugees who were available to work, 80% found employment and of those, 77% had employment that offered health benefits
- ▶ First jobs tend to be low skilled and low pay – average hourly wage among newly arriving refugees in Vermont last year was \$17.14 per hour
- ▶ Refugees often then look for job upgrades, more English classes and training, or other programs to assist them in moving into better paying jobs

New resettlement pathways

- ▶ Ukrainian Sponsorship
- ▶ CHNV – Cuban Haitian Nicaraguan Venezuelan Parole
- ▶ Welcome Corps

How do I hire refugees?

- ▶ Reach out to Vermont's job centers with your requests
 - [Find A Local Job Center | Department of Labor \(vermont.gov\)](#)
- ▶ Reach out to refugee serving agencies who assist with employment
 - ECDC, USCRI, AALV, BDCC, Grace Initiatives
- ▶ Assist with finding or providing affordable housing
- ▶ Provide English language classes on site
 - Vermont Adult Learning and USCRI currently partner with some worksites