



About Refugees

Who is considered a refugee?

A refugee is someone who, "owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his or her nationality and is unable to or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country."

Who decides who is a refugee?

UNHCR conducts interviews to decide if a person should be granted refugee status. UNHCR seeks to find what it calls a durable solution for any refugee situation. There are three durable solutions: 1) voluntary repatriation to the home country, 2) integration into the country of asylum and 3) resettlement in a third country, such as the United States.

Which refugees are eligible for U.S. resettlement?

A person who meets the definition of refugee may be eligible for U.S. resettlement if he or she:

- Has a particularly compelling history of persecution*
- Is a member of an ethnic or religious group that is considered by the United States to be of special humanitarian concern*
- Is the spouse, unmarried child or parent of a refugee who has been resettled or is a U.S. permanent resident or an asylee in the United States*

How are refugees processed for U.S. resettlement?

Overseas processing entities (OPEs) interview applicants, prepare paperwork for USCIS and arrange medical examinations and background security checks for refugees approved by USCIS. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) arranges transportation to the United States. Refugees are expected to repay the cost of their transportation once they get established. Before departure, refugees receive cultural orientation, which provides them with information about life in the U.S. and helps them establish realistic expectations about resettlement.

Who helps refugees resettle in Utah?

In Utah there are two resettlement agencies: the International Rescue Committee (IRC) and Catholic Community Services (CCS). The resettlement agency is the most important source of information and assistance during the refugees' first months in the United States. The resettlement agency ensures that refugees are welcomed at the airport; arranges for their housing, furniture and basic household supplies; conducts orientation; and prepares a resettlement plan, which includes referrals to social services and employment.



Department of Workforce Services

Equal Opportunity Employer/Program

Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. Call 801-526-9240. Individuals with speech or hearing impairments may call the state relay by dialing 711. Spanish Relay Utah: 1-888-346-3162.