

Office of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance

Washington State Department of Social and Health Services
Economic Services Administration • Community Services Division

Washington state has a long legacy of welcoming people who are refugees and immigrants. The Department of Social and Health Services' Economic Services Administration's Office of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance offers programs and services that help people who are refugees and immigrants reach their full potential and contribute to thriving and diverse communities in Washington state.

DSHS serves individuals and families by providing client services

Culturally responsive: ORIA contracts with more than 70 providers across Washington state to offer culturally specific and linguistically appropriate services. These providers include refugee resettlement agencies, nonprofit organizations, ethnic community-based organizations, state agencies, health clinics and colleges.

Ensuring success in resettlement: ORIA helps improve the resettlement process for individuals and families coming to Washington and offers client services through a variety of different programs and services in four core areas:

- **Refugee Health and Wellness** supports new arrivals with medical screenings, culturally responsive mental health services, and access to immediate medical care and intensive case management through the Refugee Health Promotion Program.
- **Employment and Training** services are available to help people learn English, get jobs and gain skills through ORIA's programs, including: the Limited English Proficiency Pathway Program, ORIA Basic Food Employment and Training Program and Career Ladder for Educated and Vocationally Experienced Refugees.
- **Immigration Assistance and Naturalization Services** offered by specialized immigration legal services organizations, accredited by the Department of Justice, assist refugees and immigrants with federal applications to become lawful permanent residents (green card holders) or United States citizens.

Who are refugees?

The term refugee is a legal status given to people who resettle in the United States as part of a federal humanitarian program. These individuals have been forced to flee their home countries due to a well-founded fear of persecution based on their race, religion, ethnicity, membership in a particular group or political opinion. They are resettled through the federal U.S. Refugee Admissions Program.

For ORIA services, the term "refugee" also refers to people who are defined eligible by the federal Office of Refugee Resettlement, including individuals granted asylum, victims of human trafficking, Amerasians, Cuban-Haitian entrants, people paroled into the U.S. and made eligible for benefits through federal legislation, and people with Special Immigrant Visas from Iraq and Afghanistan. An expanded eligibility list can be found [here](#).

- **Whole Family Services** include the PRIME program, which stands for Promoting Refugee Integration, Mobility and Empowerment, providing case management, education and immigration-related legal services; the Refugee School Impact program, which supports school-age children and helps their families improve academic performance and integration; Refugee Elder Services, which support integration and wellness by offering elders over 60 opportunities to connect with their communities and peers; and specialized child welfare and youth services through the Unaccompanied Refugee Minor (URM) program and the Refugee Youth Mentoring program (ages 18-24).

More information:

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Transforming lives

(10/2022)

State Fiscal Year 2021 Highlights

- Over 9,500 refugees and immigrants participated in services through ORIA's three largest programs (LEP Pathway, Naturalization Services and PRIME).
- 3,118 refugees and immigrants participated in employment and English as a Second Language services through the LEP Pathway Program.
- 3,796 people received services through the Naturalization Services Program, and 1,218 people became U.S. citizens through the program.
- 2,659 people participated in case-management services, self-sufficiency workshops or immigration assistance through the PRIME Program.
- 528 refugee students and families received specialized services through the Refugee School Impact Program.
- 576 people participated in the ORIA BFET Program.
- 224 refugee children were in care with specially trained families via the Unaccompanied Refugee Minors Program.

Who is eligible for ORIA services?

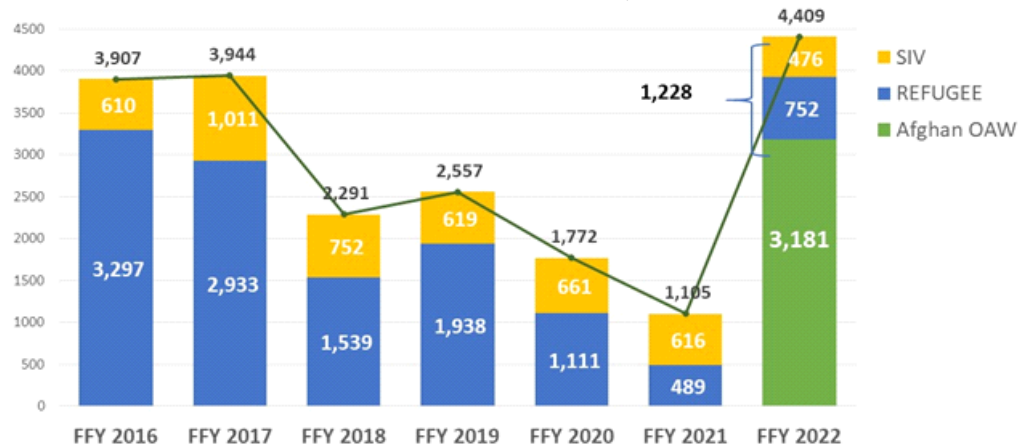
- People resettled in the United States for five years or less and who have an eligible immigration status.
- People with certain immigration status receiving cash, food or medical assistance.
- People who are English language learners receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families or State Family Assistance.

Where do refugees resettle in Washington?

County	Percentage
King	61.5%
Snohomish	8.6%
Clark	7.3%
Spokane	7.3%
Pierce	5.5%
Benton-Franklin	4.7%
Other Counties	5.1%

Washington State Refugee and Special Immigrant Visa Arrivals

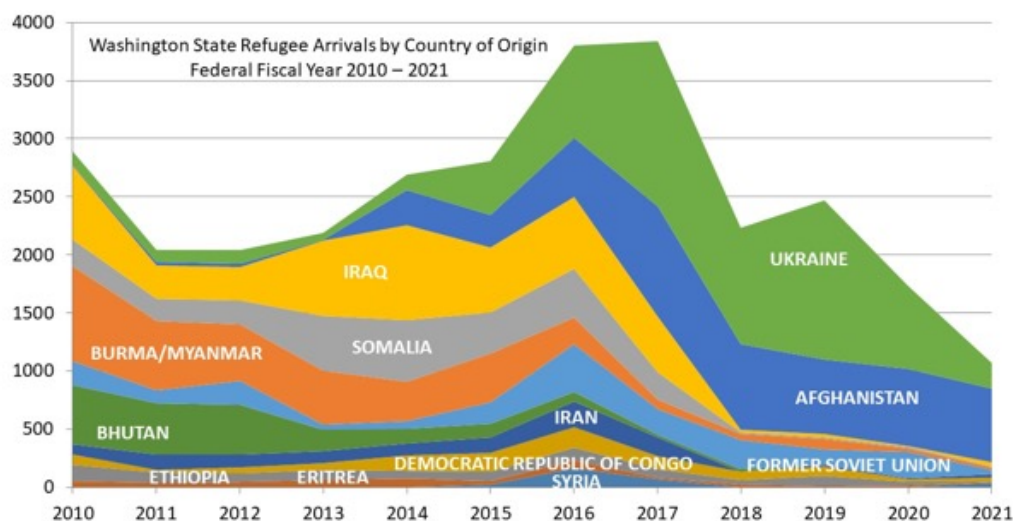
(Partial FFY 2021: Oct. 1, 2021 - July 31, 2022)



Sources: State Post-Arrival Demographics Report, Dept. of State, Bureau of Populations, Refugees and Migration
Afghan Placement and Assistance Program - Weekly Departure Status Report

Washington State Refugee Arrivals by Country of Origin

FFY 2010 - 2021



Source: Data from the Department of State, Refugee Processing Center. www.wrapsnet.org