



Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration

FACT SHEET

U.S. REFUGEE ADMISSIONS AND RESETTLEMENT PROGRAM

The U.S. considers for refugee admission persons of special humanitarian concern who can establish persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion. The legal basis of the refugee admissions program is the Refugee Act of 1980 which embodies the American tradition of granting refuge to diverse groups suffering or fearing persecution.

Each year, following an extensive consultative process during which representatives of the Administration and Congress, state and local governments, public interest groups, private voluntary organizations, mutual assistance associations and other organizations concerned with refugees focus on refugee resettlement needs worldwide and the domestic and international implications of U.S. refugee policy, the President, after congressional consultations, establishes refugee admissions levels and regional allocations for the coming fiscal year. A worldwide processing priority system sets the guidelines for the orderly management of refugee applications for admission to the U.S. within the regional ceilings.

Eligibility for refugee status is decided on a case-by-case basis. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) officers conduct personal interviews of all applicants. Those found eligible for refugee status and their immediate family members then have medical examinations, attend cultural orientation sessions and otherwise prepare for departure for the U.S. Each refugee case is assigned to an American private voluntary agency that, working under a cooperative agreement with the Department of State, provides sponsorship and initial resettlement services, including housing, essential furnishings, food and other basic necessities, clothing, and additional cultural and community orientation.

Transportation arrangements to the U.S. are usually made through the International Organization for Migration (IOM.) Refugees are expected to repay the cost of their transportation. At the U.S. port of entry, INS admits the refugee officially to the U.S. and authorizes employment.

The U.S. Government priority is to promote economic self-sufficiency as quickly as possible, so as to limit the need for public assistance and encourage refugees to contribute to the diversity and enrichment of our country as previous newcomers

have done. Programs funded by the Department of Health and Human Services and administered by each State provide cash and medical assistance, training programs and employment and other support services to assist refugees to make the adjustment to life in the U.S. After five years of residency, refugees are eligible to apply for U.S. citizenship.

Since 1975, over two million refugees have been offered permanent resettlement in the U.S.:

Refugee Admissions, 1975-2000 (11/30/99)	
Africa	85,271
East Asia	1,239,045
Eastern & Central Europe	223,649
Former Soviet Union	546,516
Latin America	79,634
Near East Asia	110,841
TOTAL	2,284,956

FY 2000 Admissions Program

The FY 2000 admissions ceiling is 90,000 with funding provided for 85,000 refugee admissions. FY 2000 regional ceilings are as follows:

Refugee Admissions Ceilings, FY-2000	
Africa	18,000
Southeast Asia	8,000
Eastern Europe	47,000
Former Yugoslavia	17,000
Kosovo Crisis Refugees	*10,000
Former Soviet Union	20,000
Latin America	3,000
Near East Asia	8,000
Unallocated reserve	**6,000
TOTAL	***90,000

* 10,000 Kosovo crisis refugees may be admitted in FY 2000 provided that existing resources from the 1999 Kosovo Emergency Supplemental are available to fund the cost of their admission.

** (1,000 funded/5,000 unfunded)

*** (85,000 funded/5,000 unfunded)

PRM funding for resettling refugees in the U.S. in 2000 and agencies which participated in the processing, orientation, transportation and/or resettlement of the refugees.

\$ 17,010,908*

Center for Applied Linguistics
Church World Service
Domestic and Foreign Society of the Protestant Episcopal Church, USA
Ethiopian Community Development Council, Inc.
Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society
International Catholic Migration Commission
International Rescue Committee
Iowa State Bureau of Refugees
US Catholic Conference
Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service

PRM funding for the resettlement of refugees in the U.S. during 1999
\$129,184,177

*Figures are current as of 2/04/00 and will be updated as more assistance is made available.