

About HIAS

Founded in the 1880s to help resettle Jews fleeing persecution, HIAS is the world's oldest refugee agency. Today, guided by our Jewish values and history, we bring more than 130 years of expertise to our work providing services to all refugees in need of assistance, regardless of their national, ethnic, or religious background.

HIAS Fast Facts

In Fiscal Year 2017, HIAS

- resettled 3,299 refugees to the United States
- resettled refugees of 38 nationalities to the United States
- resettled 647 Special Immigrant Visa holders to the United States
- 70 percent of HIAS clients joined a friend or family member in the United States

Who is a refugee?

Refugees are people who have a very real fear of persecution because of their race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group. They have fled human rights abuse or conflict, and have sought asylum outside their home country. **Most of them are women and children.**

How many refugees are there?

Refugee resettlement and protection is more important now than ever. According to the UN refugee agency, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), there are **65 million displaced persons worldwide**, of which **22.5 million are refugees**. UNHCR identified 1.2 million of those as needing resettlement to a third country.

3 Options for Refugees who have Fled their Home Country



- 1. Voluntary Repatriation:** the refugee family or individual returns safely to their country of origin.
- 2. Integration:** the refugee integrates and naturalizes in their country of first asylum or host country.
- 3. Resettlement:** the refugee travels to and resettles in a third country, though a pre-approved legal process.

Resettlement is the last resort for refugees. Fewer than one percent are considered for resettlement. The U.S. historically has resettled the **most vulnerable** refugees, including female-headed households, victims of torture, LGBT refugees, and people with extreme medical needs.

Flee

Refugees are forced to leave their home country to escape violence and persecution.



This step can take anywhere from six months to many years.



Interview

Refugees register with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the UN refugee agency. The UN conducts several interviews with applicants and simultaneously collects biodata: name, address, birthday and the like.



Refugees who are selected for resettlement to the United States are referred to the U.S. Department of State, who then selects the refugees out of the group to be considered for resettlement to the U.S.

Vetting

US security agencies screen candidates. The Department of State and the Department of Homeland Security share responsibility for screening refugee applicants. Biographic and biometric data are vetted against multiple intelligence databases.



The vetting process includes more than 20 steps while refugees are still overseas. Medical screening also takes place. It is important to note that security screenings are on-going.



Prepare to Relocate

If refugees clear both medical and security checks, they receive cultural orientation to the U.S. and await their flight information.

Did you know?

From the point of referral to the United States, it can take anywhere from 18 to 24 months, depending on the refugee's region of origin. Refugees from the Middle East go through additional screening.

Arrive

The State Department partners with nine national resettlement agencies. Refugees are assigned to one of these agencies, and the organizations then work with their local networks of resettlement offices to place them in communities around the country.



Staff from these local organizations, find housing for new arrivals; meet refugees at the airport; and help them to navigate access to housing, medical care, education, English lessons, and employment.

Thrive

Overtime, refugees integrate into their new communities. They become college students, homeowners, business owners, and eventually, citizens.

