



GOVERNOR OF IOWA Kim Reynolds

GET THE FACTS: Refugee Resettlement in Iowa

“Thanks to the President’s leadership, Americans can be confident once again in the screening process for refugees entering the United States, and Iowans can be assured of the program’s integrity when welcoming refugees to our communities.”

— Iowa Governor Kim Reynolds

An Overview:

President Trump’s Executive Order on Enhancing State and Local Involvement in Refugee Resettlement requires states to consent to the continued resettlement of refugees. Under the direction of Gov. Reynolds, Iowa has consented to participate in the refugee resettlement program, joining more than 30 states willing to accept refugees vetted by the Trump Administration. By doing so, Gov. Reynolds is continuing Iowa’s long-standing refugee procedure in compliance with President Trump’s Executive Order and refugee policy.

How many refugees are coming to Iowa and where are they coming from?

At this time, ***no additional refugees are coming to Iowa*** as a direct result of consenting to President Trump’s Executive Order. ***In 2018, 383 refugees resettled to Iowa***, a decline from the previous three years. Those refugees arrived to Iowa from the Democratic Republic of Congo, Burma and Eritrea. Refugees resettling to Iowa should not be confused with “asylum seekers” who are attempting to enter the U.S., usually at our southern border, without going through the strict refugee vetting process.

Who is vetting the refugees?

Only refugees approved by President Trump’s administration are allowed to enter the country. His administration has taken strong steps to thoroughly vet refugees and provide much needed assurances to local communities.

What is their legal status?

Refugees are required to apply for Lawful Permanent Residence (“green card”) status one year after being admitted. A refugee may then apply to become a naturalized citizen five years after receiving their green card. Only after completing the naturalization process do they receive the right to vote. However, they do pay the same employment, property, sales and other taxes as any U.S. citizen immediately upon arrival.

Who manages Iowa’s refugee program?

The State Department’s Bureau for Population, Refugees and Migration coordinates admissions and allocations to specific cities and resettlement agencies, in conjunction with nine national voluntary agencies that oversee a network of 250 affiliates that operate in individual states. Iowa has three affiliates: Catholic Charities of Des Moines, U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI), and Catherine McAuley Center. Iowa’s Bureau of Refugee Services, located within Iowa’s Department of Human Services (DHS), is fully funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The Bureau’s services include: job skills training, case management services, interpretation, transportation, and a wide variety of other social services.

Who pays for this program?

Federal funds primarily flow through nonprofit charities and DHS to pay for refugee resettlement.