

Why Do Immigrants and Refugees Come to Iowa?

Immigrants and refugees live in Iowa for the same reasons other residents live here. Most are drawn by the availability of jobs. Many arrive to take jobs in meatpacking and other agricultural industries. But as time goes by, more newcomers work in other sectors of the economy, including construction, services, retail and hospitality. In many communities their labor is in great demand.

Newcomers also appreciate Iowa's low cost of living, affordable housing and safe communities. Just like established-resident Iowans, immigrants and refugees realize their children receive a fine education in the schools. For refugees and immigrants, living in Iowa provides an opportunity to start a new life for themselves and their children. Iowa provides an opportunity for thousands of newcomers to live their version of the American dream.

Adapted from The New Iowans, A Companion Book to the PBS Miniseries The New Americans (2003), provided courtesy of Iowa Center for Immigrant Leadership and Integration, University of Northern Iowa.