

Frequently asked questions



Who is a refugee?

We hear that term often in the media, but what does it really mean?

The term refugee means any person who is outside any country of such person's nationality or, in the case of a person having no nationality, is outside any country in which such person last habitually resided, and who is unable or unwilling to return to...that country because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group or political opinion... The term refugee does not include any person who ordered, incited, assisted, or otherwise participated in the persecution of any person on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion. --*The Refugee Act of 1980*

How do refugees get to Boise, Idaho?

Refugees go through a lengthy process that begins with being forced from their homes. Refugees then spend an average of 6-10 years in a refugee camp or other temporary living situation. When it becomes clear that returning home is not an option, they can apply for resettlement in a third country. After multiple interviews and background checks the Department of Homeland Security determines their eligibility for the US Refugee Program and assigns them to one of the national resettlement agencies. The national agency will, in turn, assign the case to a local affiliate office, such as Agency for New Americans in Boise.

From which countries are the refugees arriving?

Currently our refugee clients come from Afghanistan, Burma, Burundi, Bhutan, Colombia, Congo, Iraq, and Somalia

How do you communicate with them?

Agency for New Americans uses local interpreters, multilingual staff, and if necessary, an over the phone language interpreting service to communicate with clients.

How long does the ANA assist its clients?

The length of client support can vary. The philosophy of resettlement programs is a declining model of support. In other words, ANA's involvement with a new refugee family will be the most concentrated during the first 8-12 months after arrival. Thereafter, it typically lessens and depends largely on the needs of a particular case. The primary goal of the resettlement program is self-sufficiency through employment and referral. ANA works to connect refugees with providers so that clients become familiar with services and resources throughout the community.

Does the ANA charge fees for its services?

The only component of ANA's services that is fee based is the immigration program. Otherwise, all other services are provided at no cost to ANA clients.



Why should refugees still be resettled in this difficult economy?

The US Refugee Program is, at its core, a humanitarian program that assists some of the world's most vulnerable people to escape violence, ethnic cleansing, torture, war and other atrocities to begin a new life in safety. Even when the economy is down, the US should not waver on its humanitarian commitment. Refugees eventually go on to become employed, tax paying citizens who enrich their new communities in many ways. Also, resettlement agencies bring substantial resources to the communities in which they operate via the various funding sources that cover the service components (e.g. cash assistance paid to refugees to cover their basic needs for the first 6-8 months that is spent in the local economy can amount to hundreds of thousands of dollars each year).

Are refugees legally in the US?

Yes. Once refugees are given refugee status, they are legal and employment authorized from the date they arrive in the United States.