In most cases, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) refers vulnerable refugees in need of resettlement to the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program. The State Department’s Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) manages the application process overseas and processes individuals who qualify for resettlement in the U.S. Then, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) at the Department of Homeland Security conducts interviews and initiates security background checks carried out by multiple agencies and ultimately determines if an individual can be resettled as a refugee in the U.S. PRM determines where in the U.S. refugees will be placed, and provides assistance for refugees’ first 30 to 90 days in the U.S. through the Reception and Placement (R&P) program. The Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) at the Department of Health and Human Services works with refugees after they arrive in the U.S.

Quick Facts

Who is a refugee?
A refugee is a person who is unable or unwilling to return to their country because of fear of persecution, due to race, membership in a particular social group, political opinion, religion, or national origin.

25.9 million refugees worldwide.
24% of refugees referred by UNHCR were resettled in the U.S. (in calendar year 2018)
<1% of refugees will be resettled.

Source: UNHCR 2018 Figures at a Glance

What’s the role of ORR?
ORR provides refugees and other new arrivals with tools and critical resources to rebuild their lives so that they can become integrated and productive members of American society. As refugees rebuild their lives they become essential, contributing members of their communities, making our cities and nation stronger, richer and more diverse.
Quick Facts: Refugees Resettled in the U.S.

REGION OF BIRTH FY 2018

- Near East & South Asia: 47%
- East Asia: 16%
- Europe: 16%
- Africa: 17%
- Latin America & Caribbean: 4%

U.S. REFUGEE ARRIVALS —FY 2014-2018

- FY14: 69,987
- FY15: 69,933
- FY16: 84,995
- FY17: 53,716
- FY18: 22,491

NUMBERS OF REFUGEES RESETTLED BY STATE —FY 2018

Source: ORR administrative records