



## FACT SHEET

### RESETTLEMENT AGENCIES (RAs)



#### What Are RAs?

Resettlement Agencies (RAs), formerly known as Voluntary Agencies (VOLAGs), are one of the key partners in the refugee resettlement process. RAs maintain cooperative and consultative relationships with other main entities in the refugee resettlement process: federal, state and local governments; Ethnic Community Based Organizations (ECOBs), formerly known as Mutual Assistance Associations (MAAs); and other service providers. RAs are non-profit organizations that provide sponsorship and initial resettlement services for refugees entering the United States (U.S.). The U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM), is the agency responsible for overseeing programs abroad to prepare refugees for arrival in the U.S. The PRM contracts with and provides partial funding to the RAs to provide reception and placement services for refugees upon their arrival in the U.S. National RAs work through a network of local affiliates throughout the country to ensure that refugees' immediate needs, such as limited-term financial assistance, housing and basic health services, are met. RAs are responsible for providing assistance and services to refugees for the first 90 days after their arrival in the U.S.

#### What Services Do RAs Provide?

In addition to providing for refugees' immediate basic needs, RAs assist refugees in securing services that enable them to achieve financial self-sufficiency as soon as possible. These services may include: cultural orientation, counseling, English language training, job skills training and placement, etc. RAs either provide these services directly or arrange for them to be provided by local government agencies or other social service organizations, such as ECBOs or faith- or community-based organizations.

Some RAs also participate in the federal Office of Refugee Resettlement's (ORR's) Matching Grant program and/or the Wilson/Fish Alternative program. These programs are alternatives to public assistance designed to provide interim financial assistance, medical assistance, social services and case management for refugees.

The PRM also has cooperative agreements with two RA's to ensure that Unaccompanied Refugee Minors (URMs) who have arrived in this country without an immediate parent or close relative to care for them receive the same full range of assistance, care and services available to all foster children in the U.S. The ORR coordinates with the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) and the Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services (LIRS) to care for URMs who are refugees, victims of human trafficking, or who have been granted asylum or special immigrant visa status. The two RAs and their affiliates provide foster care, independent living and resettlement services to eligible minors through the twenty URM programs located throughout the U.S.

#### Who Are RAs?

The following humanitarian and religious affiliated organizations are designated by the PRM as RAs:

- Church World Service
- Episcopal Migration Ministries
- Ethiopian Community Development Council
- Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society
- International Rescue Committee
- Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services
- U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants
- U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops
- World Relief Corporation

For a listing of California affiliates of the national RAs, please visit the RAs web page at:

<http://www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/Refugees/Stakeholders/RAs>.