

Colorado Refugee Services Program
Colorado Department of Human Services
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http://stateboard.cdhs.state.co.us/oss/Refugee/refugee_services_program.htm



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This division of the Colorado Department of Human Services is funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Refugee Resettlement, under the authority of the Refugee Act of 1980. Its goal is to ensure effective resettlement of officially designated refugees and to promote refugee self-sufficiency. Refugees are federally defined as *having legal status and a lawful presence in the state*. The Refugee Program, in existence since 1980, operates a centralized case management system. Over two-thirds of the staff are multi-lingual/multi-cultural, to enable communication with non-English speaking clientele. Services are provided by Colorado Refugee Services Program (CRSP) staff along with regional service providers and the Colorado Refugee Network Council.

The agency is responsible for everything that happens once refugees enter the state. Examples of services including: ESL classes, job training, cash assistance, legal services, and health care. CRSP works with refugees for up to five years to encourage early economic self-sufficiency and "integration." CRSP provides training and resources for designated refugee resettlement agencies, such as Lutheran Community Services. They also advise on new immigrants and asylum seekers.

Resources available to Colorado libraries include:

- Contact CRSP to learn about your regional refugee service provider and their services to refugees.
- Potential collaborations with your local provider, such as One Morgan County's work with the refugee community and the Fort Morgan Public Library, or public officials, such as the Littleton mayor's engagement with the library refugee welcome center.
- Speakers and other advice are available from CRSP. For example, CRSP can help a library refer a particular refugee to nearby services.
- Ideas for partnerships with libraries:
 - Serve as a connector to other resources such as citizenship information, a kiosk of information, and providing informational resources in multiple languages. Models include the former Glendale Library (now the Eloise May Library, Arapahoe Library District); Littleton's Bemis Public Library, a national award winner; and New York's Queens Library.
 - Create a welcome center for refugees, including a safe haven, information or a person who can assist refugees. A library could designate and promote a branch as a refugee service center.
 - Convene meetings among interested organizations and provide meeting space for CRSP training to refugee-serving organizations and library staff.