



## **Lutheran Family Services** *of Nebraska, Inc.*

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**CHURCH WORLD SERVICE**



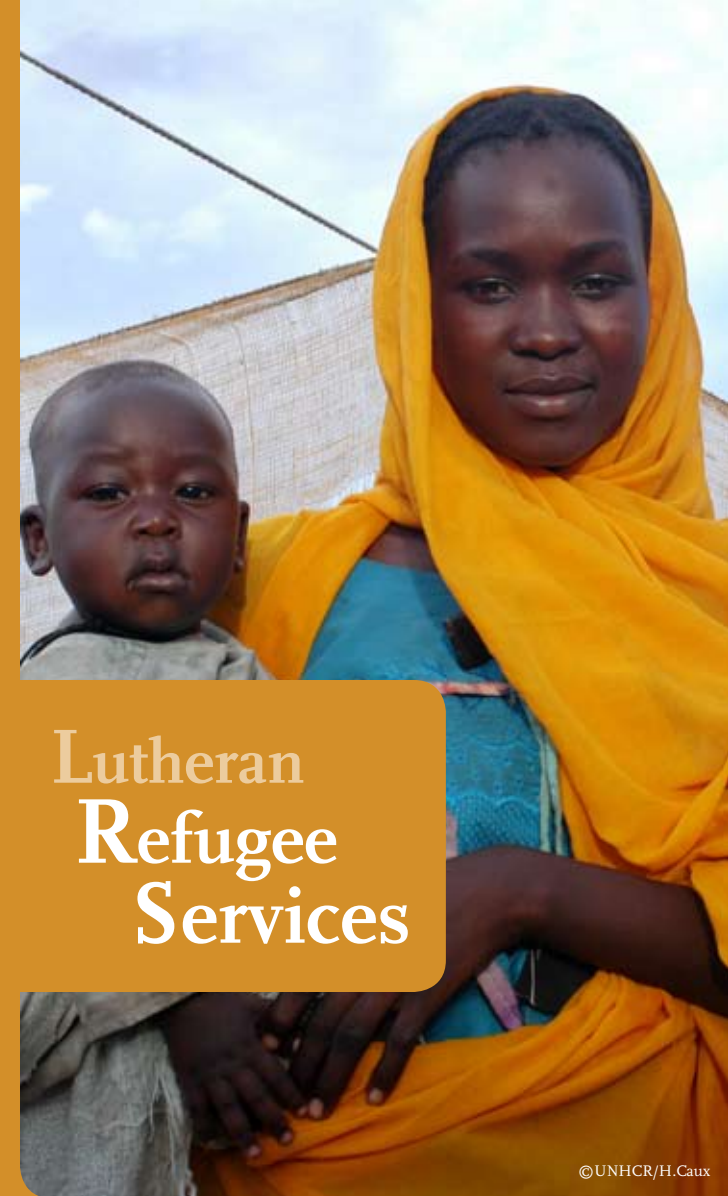
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*Lutheran Services in  
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## Lutheran Refugee Services

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## The Refugee Story

**A** young couple and their newborn baby flee for their lives. You may recognize this as the story of the flight of Mary, Joseph and Jesus into Egypt. However, this is what millions of people around the world suffer every day.

Millions of refugees are driven from their homes and communities by armed conflict, gross human rights violations, and fear of persecution. They risk desert heat, defy the dangers of crossing borders, brave choppy seas and endure the squalor of refugee camps - all for the chance to live in freedom and peace.

Jesus, who had nowhere to lay his head, calls us to respond.

## Who are refugees?

Refugees are people outside of the U.S. seeking protection from feared persecution in their homeland. They come from many countries, but refugees come to Nebraska based on our communities' capacity to work with specific populations. Each year we assess our language, cultural capacity, and community capacity to work with those refugee populations who are currently being resettled. In this manner, Nebraska is able to adapt our services to different populations as conditions in the world change.

## How do people become refugees?

People apply for refugee status in refugee camps outside their home countries. They attain refugee status by proving to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees that they have a well-founded fear of persecution because of their race, religion, national origin, political opinion, or their membership in a social group. Once they are declared refugees, they can then be interviewed by the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS). If the INS accepts them, they are sent to the U.S. through national resettlement agencies such as Church World Service and Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service. Lutheran Refugee Services then works with Church World Service and Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service to resettle refugees in Nebraska.

## How many refugees does the U.S. accept?

The United States accepts a predetermined number of refugees each year. This number is set by the President of the United States each October in consultation with Congress.

## What is Lutheran Refugee Services?

Lutheran Refugee Services is a program of Lutheran Family Services of Nebraska, Inc. that provides services to refugees before, during and after their arrival. We prepare for a refugee's arrival and help them obtain needed services such as:

- English classes
- Cultural orientation
- Employment Services
- Appointments with the Health Department and Social Services
- Programs for church and civic groups
- Training and support for sponsoring congregations

## Employment services

Lutheran Refugee Services offers specific employment services to refugees, secondary immigrants, asylees, and victims of human trafficking through two programs:

- **TAG-D** provides employment services to these populations no matter how long they have resided in the United States providing the client is not a U.S. resident.
- **Refugee Educations and Employability Partnership (REEP)** provides employment services to these populations providing the client has been in the United States for 5 years or less.

## How can I help?

You can help in many ways:

### 1. Sponsorship

Sponsors to help refugees transition to their new life. Sponsors can be local churches, civic organizations, or family members. Experience has shown that local

church sponsorships are the most advantageous because refugees better adjust to their new community through a congregation's love, support and personal care. Sponsors are asked to:

- Offer their prayers and friendship
- Help provide housing, furnishings, clothing and food
- Help refugees become self-sufficient
- Be a mentor

Both Lutheran Refugee Services and the sponsor(s) provide for each refugee's basic needs during their initial resettlement. Sponsorship is a real hands-on mission that brings joy and meaning to all participants.

### 2. Volunteering

We need volunteers to:

- Spread the word about the plight of refugees
- Pray for each refugee's safe travel and successful transition
- Welcome new arrivals
- Interpret
- Provide transportation to English classes and medical appointments
- Tutor English
- Host an "Apartment Shower" for a newly arrived family
- Coordinate employment opportunities for employable refugee family members
- Have Sunday School classes or groups provide food, toys, school supplies, and personal items
- Donate food baskets, used furniture, clothing, and "welcome boxes" full of kitchen and bathroom items
- Take refugees to community events
- Connect refugees with community resources
- Contribute money to refugee funds at churches or to the Lutheran Refugee Services program