Action and involvement with refugees

Minnesota’s refugee population is from all over the world. Since 1979, Minnesotans have welcomed more than 100,000 people with refugee status from 100 different countries who have made this state their home. Refugees are part of Minnesota’s rich immigrant history. One out of every three recent immigrants to Minnesota came to the U.S. as a refugee. This is a list of resources to learn about and experience the different cultures that are part of Minnesota.

Learn about different cultures

Learn a greeting in another language

These greetings are suggestions. There are many different dialects and geographically specific nuances in language. This is not an exhaustive list but a guide for beginning study.

- “Assalmu Alaykum,” Somali and Muslim (peace be unto you)
- “Nyob zoo (nyong zong),” Hmong (hello)
- “Ghaw Luh Ghay (gawl-a-gay),” Karen (good morning)
- “Selam (se-lam),” Amharic (peace)
- “Akkam (ak-am),” Oromo (hello)
- “Jamb (Jam-buh),” Swahili (hello)
- “Namaste (na-ma-stay),” Nepali (hello)

Listen to stories of refugees in Minnesota and around the world

- Green Card Voices’ mission is to introduce immigrants to their neighbors through story. Listen to 30 stories of immigrants from Wellstone International High School.
- Tracks in the Snow, Stories of the Muslim experience in Minnesota highlights Muslims’ diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds.
- The United Nations Refugee Agency is dedicated to saving lives, protecting rights and building a better future for refugees, forcibly displaced communities and stateless people.
- The Refugee Project looks beyond the current headline crises and allows viewers to explore all refugee migrations around the world since 1975.
- The Refugee Site shares the stories of some of the 21.3 million refugees worldwide. Numbers don’t give a sense of the people who are displaced and in crisis, but stories connect our humanity.

Visit a cultural museum or marketplace

- Hmong Cultural Center
- Somali Museum
- Hmong Village
- HmongTown Marketplace
- Suq Al-Karama (Somali market)
- Village Market (24 Mall)
- Mercado Central market
- Midtown Global Market
Experience new food and support local immigrant business

- Minnesota visitor list of ethnic restaurants in the Twin Cities

Learn about Minnesota’s immigrant history

- Minnesota’s immigrant oral histories
- Becoming Minnesotan: Stories of recent immigrants and refugees
- University of Minnesota digital immigrant stories
- History of immigration in Minnesota
- They Came to Minnesota

Learn to work with other cultures

- Core Source Exchange, cultural background information
- Welcoming America, strategies for being inclusive of immigrants and all residents
- Bridging Refugee Youth and Children’s Services

Learn about refugee resettlement

Refugees, who are fleeing persecution, are often able to reunite with family after being separated for many years. When they arrive in Minnesota, it is the first safe home they have known for years. Refugees survive a journey of trauma but are people of resilience and courage.

Check out the Minnesota Resettlement Programs Office

- Refugee arrival information
- Refugee Programs Overview
- Minnesota’s refugee resettlement programs

Read about the refugee program at a national level

- Refugee Council USA, overview of federal resettlement in the U.S., and current refugee issues
- Federal Office of Refugee Resettlement

Volunteer

The Resettlement Programs Office contracts with 40 different agencies that serve and support refugee communities. Volunteer, get to know your refugee neighbors and share what you learn.

For accessible formats of this publication or assistance with additional equal access to human services, write to dhs.info@state.mn.us, call 651-431-4000, or use your preferred relay service.