A Guidebook for Immigrants and Refugees with Disabilities

Summer 2022
Introduction

People come to the United States from many different countries and may need guidance to navigate the complex system of services and programs available to immigrants and refugees with disabilities. The Adult Advocacy Centers (AACs) created *A Guidebook for Immigrants and Refugees with Disabilities* to provide information and to help people connect to needed services and programs.

Adult Advocacy Centers (AACs)

The AACs is a disability-led national organization piloting groundbreaking programs in Ohio. The AACs exist to teach the world how to hear what people with disabilities have to say. The AACs’ mission is to work within the disability, victim services and criminal justice systems to improve access and equity for adult crime victims with disabilities and to educate and train professionals within these systems on the unique needs of survivors with disabilities.

This guidebook uses “person-first” (i.e., “person with disabilities”) and “identity-first” (i.e., “disabled person”) terminology interchangeably because both are favored by different parts of the disability community. “Person-first” language attempts to focus on the person rather than their disability. “Identity-first” language acknowledges that some people feel disability is a central part of their identity. We use both “person-first” and “identity first” to be inclusive of the disability community as a whole.

Acknowledgments

The AACs would like to thank our partner organizations, US Together, Ohio Hispanic Coalition, and the Ethiopian Tewahedo Social Services (ETSS), for their assistance in the creation of this guidebook.

Disclaimer

The purpose of this publication is informational only. It is not designed or intended to be legal guidance or a substitute for legal advice. Laws, policies and protocols for immigration and refugee status are complex and may change at any time. Immigrants, refugees and advocates are encouraged to consult with an attorney specializing in this area of the law to address any specific questions or concerns.
Important Concepts

Although a glossary is included at the end of this guidebook, it is important to ensure a basic understanding of several concepts related to immigrants and refugees with disabilities.

- **Immigrant** - Someone from a foreign country who relocates to live in another country due to the promise of a better life, improved economic conditions, or access to education and healthcare.

- **Refugee** - Under U.S. law, a refugee is someone who is located outside of the U.S., is of special humanitarian concern to the U.S., demonstrates that they were persecuted or fear persecution due to race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular group, is not firmly resettled in another country, and is admissible to the U.S. (USCIS, 2022).

- **Disability** – A physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more life activities.

**U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)**

The USCIS is the federal agency within the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) that regulates permanent and temporary immigration to the U.S, refugee eligibility determination and naturalization. Contact information for the USCIS and their specific programs are listed below. (U.S. Department of State, 2022).

**USCIS National Customer Service Center**

Phone: 800-375-5283
**Related Links**

**USCIS Refugee Eligibility Determination** (uscis.gov/humanitarian/refugees-and-asylum/refugees/refugee-eligibility-determination)

**USCIS Green Card Processes and Procedures** (uscis.gov/green-card/green-card-processes-and-procedures)

**USCIS Citizenship and Naturalization** (uscis.gov/citizenship/learn-about-citizenship/citizenship-and-naturalization)

**Find a USCIS office** (https://www.uscis.gov/about-us/find-a-uscis-office)

**Immigrants**

A summary of the four immigrant statuses is listed below.

- **Citizens** – Individuals may become a U.S. citizen through the naturalization process. During the naturalization process, a person must meet specific criteria before they can be considered a U.S. citizen. Currently, the USCIS requires that those who want to become a citizen through the naturalization process:
  - Are at least 18 years of age at the time of application
  - Have been a lawful permanent resident for the past 3 or 5 years, depending on the naturalization application category
  - Have continuous residence and physical presence in the U.S.
  - Are able to read, write and speak basic English (waivers available for people with disabilities via form N-648)
  - Demonstrate good moral character
  - Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of U.S. history and government
  - Demonstrate loyalty to the principles of the U.S. Constitution
  - Are willing to take the Oath of Allegiance

- **Residents** – A resident, also known as a lawful permanent resident (LPR) or green card holder, is someone who has been granted the right to indefinitely live in the U.S. Once eligible for residency, applicants for permanent residency must go through the application process, which includes filing an application for residence, paying the required fee, undergoing medical checks and going through a biometrics process.

- **Non-Immigrants** – Non-immigrants are individuals who have a nationality other than American and who have been granted temporary permission to be in the U.S. for a specific purpose. Non-immigrants must have a non-immigrant visa that proves their legal status as a temporary visitor in the country. There are many different types of non-immigrant visas that individuals can apply for.

- **Undocumented Immigrants** – An undocumented immigrant is an individual who has en-
entered the U.S. outside of the formal manner. There is no record of the individual entering the country and the necessary paperwork to prove legal presence in the U.S. is not present. An immigrant can also become undocumented when an individual comes to the U.S. through a formal process and then losses their status while in the U.S. due to an expiration date of a visa, for example.

There are also several temporary visas (nonimmigrant visas) to visit, work or study in the U.S. Temporary visas are often renewable and may allow multiple visits.

**Immigration Abuse**

Individuals entering the U.S. are often subjected to a confusing and overwhelming process, leaving immigrants and refugees vulnerable to abuse. This abuse may include but is not limited to: threats of deportation; hiding or destroying legal documents passports, identification and other legal documents; refusing to file needed paperwork; and harassment. Immigrants and refugees may also face victimization motivated by hate, bias and prejudice. Language barriers and confusing social service procedures may discourage immigrants and refugees from reporting abuse and seeking needed assistance. Many of the resources included in this guidebook are specifically for immigrants and refugees and may be of assistance when abuse has occurred.

**Confinement Related to Immigration**

Immigrants and refugees may already be subjected to social isolation due to being in a new country and may be unfamiliar with the language. Abusers can take advantage of this situation and refuse to let an immigrant or refugee have access to a phone, transportation, places of worship, English language classes, work or social activity. This is abuse.

Solitary confinement is a form of segregation in which individuals are held in isolation with little or no contact with others. This may or may not be abuse. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) has two forms of confinement: administrative and disciplinary segregation. Definitions of these confinement types are:

- **Administrative Segregation** – This type of segregation includes protective custody is considered non-punitive by ICE.

- **Disciplinary Segregation** – This type of segregation is considered punitive by ICE. In 2013 ICE’s Segregation Directive was implemented, however, there have been several reports about the misuse and arbitrary application of solitary confinement in immigration detention, especially among people with disabilities (National Immigrant Justice Center, 2020).

**Refugees**

Individuals seeking refugee status must receive a referral from the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP). After a referral is received, individuals living in another country get help filling out the application and then are interviewed abroad by a USCIS officer. These officers determine if
individuals are eligible for refugee resettlement. Refugees selected for resettlement through U.S. Refugee Admissions Program are eligible for Reception and Placement assistance.

The DHS and Health and Human Services (HHS) work together to uphold the U.S.’s humanitarian response to refugees through the U.S. Resettlement Program (USRP). Each refugee approved for admission to the U.S. is sponsored by a participating non-profit resettlement agency through a cooperative agreement with the Department of State. Representatives from the resettlement agencies meet to review cases sent by the Department of State’s overseas Resettlement Support Centers (RSCs). Using this process, a determination is made regarding which resettlement agency will sponsor a refugee and where they will be initially resettled in the U.S.

If an individual is approved as a refugee, a medical exam will be completed. Also, cultural orientation will be provided along with travel assistance and a loan for travel to the U.S. (USCIS, 2021). When refugees arrive in the U.S., someone from a local resettlement affiliate meets them and take them to temporary housing, which includes essential furnishings, food and other basic necessities. From the date of arrival, the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) at HHS provides short-term cash and medical assistance to new arrivals, as well as case management services, English as a Foreign Language classes, and job readiness and employment services. These programs and services are designed to facilitate refugees’ successful transition to the U.S. and help to attain self-sufficiency. Refugees are also connected to local resources, including employment and social or language services, and they are assisted in the process of applying for Social Security cards. This program is limited to the first three months following arrival. After the three-month period, the Department of Health and Human Services’ Office of Refugee Resettlement works through the states and other non-governmental organizations to provide longer-term cash and medical assistance, as well as language, employment and social services (HHS, 2022).

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<tr>
<td>Onsite interview by CIS Refugee Corps (Circuit Rides)</td>
<td>Placement allocations through nine national Voluntary Agencies</td>
<td>Interim cash &amp; medical assistance</td>
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<td>Security clearance &amp; fingerprinting</td>
<td>Cultural orientation &amp; departure processing</td>
<td>Employment services, English as a Second Language services and medical screening</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prescreening by Resettlement Support Staff (RSC)</td>
<td>Initial reception &amp; placement: 30 - 90 days in U.S.</td>
<td>Specialized programs: micro-enterprise development, individual development accounts, survivors of torture</td>
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(U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 2022) (Office of Refugee Resettlement, 2022)
Asylum Seekers

Similar to a refugee, an asylum seeker is someone who has fled their home country and is seeking a safe haven in a different country for fear of persecution based on religion, nationality, political opinion, race or membership in a particular social group. An asylum seeker has yet to apply and receive a legal recognition or status. Asylum seekers in the U.S. apply for asylum while physically present in the U.S. Once their asylum is approved, they are called “asylees” and gain similar benefits as refugees.

Disabilities

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) defines “disability” as “a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activity, such as walking, standing, lifting, bending, speaking, breathing, learning, reading, concentrating, thinking, communicating and working.”

- **Developmental Disability** - A developmental disability is a severe, chronic disability that is manifested before the age of 22, is likely to continue indefinitely, and results in substantial limitations in one or more major life activity. Examples of developmental disabilities include, but are not limited to, cerebral palsy, spina bifida, Down syndrome, autism spectrum disorder, and fetal alcohol syndrome.

- **Dual Diagnosis** - Dual diagnosis is a term typically used to describe the co-existence of an intellectual or developmental disability and a mental health diagnosis. Many mental health organizations also define dual diagnosis as an individual with a mental health diagnosis and a substance use disorder.

- **Intellectual Disability** - An intellectual disability is generally defined as having significantly subaverage intellectual functioning with deficiencies in adaptive behavior, manifested before the age of 22.

- **Mental Illness** - A mental illness diagnosis is generally defined as a substantial disorder of thought, mood, perception, orientation or memory that grossly impairs judgment, behavior, capacity to recognize reality, or ability to meet the ordinary demands of life. Some common mental health diagnoses include depression, bipolar disorder, anxiety disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, psychotic disorder, schizophrenia, schizoaffective disorder, personality disorder, substance abuse and eating disorders.

- **Physical Disability** - A physical disability is a condition that affects a person’s mobility, physical capacity, stamina or dexterity. Examples of a physical disability include a brain or spinal cord injury, amputation or paralysis.
Victimization, Abuse and Crimes Committed Against Individuals with Disabilities

The Adult Advocacy Centers also wants to provide important resources for victims and survivors of abuse with disabilities, including victim services, types of abuse, indicators of abuse, the criminal justice system, safety planning and disability rights.

Victims and Survivors with Disabilities

The National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) compiles data regarding the victimization of people with disabilities in the U.S. The information listed below outlines the some of the survey’s key findings.

- In 2019 the rate of violent victimization perpetrated against people with disabilities was almost four times more than the rate of victimization perpetrated against people without disabilities.
- People with disabilities account for 12% of the population but 26% of all nonfatal violent crimes.
- One in three robbery victims – 33% – had at least one disability.
- People with intellectual disabilities accounted for the highest rate of victimization among all disability types measured.
- The rate of simple assault against people with disabilities was more than three times the rate compared to people without disabilities (DOJ, 2021).

Abuse Committed Against Individuals with Disabilities

Abuse is generally defined as anything that causes harm to another individual. Abuse of individuals with disabilities can occur in many forms, including, but not limited to, sexual, physical, verbal, emotional and financial.

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<tr>
<th>Abuse Type</th>
<th>Definition Summary</th>
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<tr>
<td>Sexual abuse</td>
<td>A sexual act forced upon someone without their consent. Sexual abuse includes sexual assault, rape, sodomy, attempted rape and incest.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Physical abuse</td>
<td>The intentional act of causing another person pain or injury. Physical abuse includes hitting, kicking, slapping and pinching.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Verbal abuse</td>
<td>Occurs when someone uses negative or demeaning words or gestures. Verbal abuse includes name-calling, belittling someone or using threatening language.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abuse Type</td>
<td>Definition Summary</td>
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<td>Emotional abuse</td>
<td>Actions that take away a person's dignity and self-worth. Emotional abuse includes isolating someone, turning off or breaking someone’s communication or mobility device, threatening to destroy their personal property or removing an individual’s personal property.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Financial abuse</td>
<td>Unlawfully controlling a person's finances or taking someone's money without their permission. Financial abuse includes withholding someone’s money, depriving someone of their financial benefits or forcing someone to co-sign for a loan or credit card.</td>
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(The People’s Law School, 2004)

As mentioned above, people with disabilities are at a higher risk of being victimized. Being abused may have profound effects for individuals with disabilities including, but not limited to, diminished personal health, feelings of not being safe, or difficulty engaging in daily life activities. Below are some statistics about individuals with disabilities who experienced abuse.

- Thirty percent of adults with disabilities who used personal assistance services for support with daily living activities reported one or more types of mistreatment by an aide.
- In a study including 342 adult males, 55% experienced physical abuse after becoming disabled.
- In an anonymous survey of 305 adult women with disabilities, 68% reported experiencing one or more types of abuse in the preceding year. Of the 68%, 30% reported sexual abuse (National Center on Elder Abuse, n.d.).

There are many indicators of abuse, some of these are listed below.

- Unexplained injuries
- Delay in seeking medical treatment
- Stained, torn or missing clothing
- Uncharacteristic behaviors
- Depression
- Withdrawal
- Excessive weight loss or gain
- Self-destructive behavior (The People’s Law School, 2004)

If you have a disability and have been abused, or if you know of an individual with a disability who has been abused, you can report the suspected abuse to local law enforcement.
Elder Abuse

In addition to contacting law enforcement, if a person is over 60 years old and is being abused, there are some additional resources available.

**National Adult Protective Services Association** (ncea.acl.gov/What-We-Do/Practice/Intervention-Partners/APS-(1).aspx)

  **Phone:** 202-370-6292

**National Center of Elder Abuse** (ncea.acl.gov)

  **Phone:** 855-500-3537
  **Email:** ncea-info@aoa.hhs.gov

**National Elder Fraud Hotline** (stopelderfraud.ovc.ojp.gov/)

  **Phone:** 833-372-8311

**U.S. Department of Justice, Elder Justice Initiative** (justice.gov/elderjustice)

**U.S. Department of Justice - Elder Abuse Resource Roadmap for Financial Abuse** (justice.gov/elderjustice/roadmap)

  **Phone:** 202-514-2000
  **Email:** elder.justice@usdoj.gov
The Criminal Justice System and Individuals with Disabilities

Not all abuse may meet a state’s criminal definition, and criminal codes vary from state to state. A document from the American Probation and Parole Association (appa-net.org/eweb/Training/IREA/assets/EA_Neglect.pdf) lists criminal statutes, by state, about prohibited conduct against older adults and individuals with disabilities (American Probation and Parole Association, n.d.).

Safety Planning

The Adult Advocacy Centers has created guidebooks to help people with disabilities and advocates to create a safety plan. Safety planning is a process that may empower individuals to think through what they could do if they feel unsafe. This process may also be used during a general planning meeting to provide information regarding safety and safety precautions.

- Assisted Safety Planning Guidebook - adultadvocacycenters.org/assets/documents/safety_planning_guidebook_assisted.pdf
Disability Rights and Laws Related to Immigrants and Refugees with Disabilities

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
The ADA is a federal civil rights law that protects the rights of people with disabilities and prevents discrimination based on disability. The ADA guarantees that people with disabilities have access to the same opportunities as everyone else by providing accessibility and needed accommodations. You may use the information listed below to find out more information about the ADA.

ADA Information Line and Where to File a Complaint
Phone: 800-514-0301
Complaint Form (ada.gov/CRT-ReportPDF-Sep2021.pdf)

Related Links
USA.gov - Your Legal Disability Rights (usa.gov/disability-rights)
U.S. Access Board Guide to the ADA Accessibility Standards (access-board.gov/ada/guides)
U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division – Information and Technical Assistance on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ada.gov/index.html)

Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act (DD Act)
The Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Acts, as known as the DD Act, is the fundamental law supporting and enhancing the lives of people with developmental disabilities and their families. The goal of the act is to assure that individuals with developmental disabilities and their families participate in the design of and have access to needed community services, individualized supports and other forms of assistance.

More information about the DD Act may be found on the Administration for Community Living website (acl.gov/about-acl/authorizing-statutes/developmental-disabilities-assistance-and-bill-rights-act-2000).

University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDDs), DD Councils and the DD Network
The DD Act establishes three programs that operate in each state and U.S. territory. These programs include

- University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDDs)
- Councils on Developmental Disabilities (DD Councils)
- The DD Network/Protection and Advocacy Systems (P&As)
DD Act programs conduct important research and test innovative new service delivery models. They work to bring the latest knowledge and resources to people with disabilities, advocates, families, service providers and policymakers. DD programs also investigate cases of abuse and serve as advocates for individuals with developmental disabilities and their families.

As stated above, three main programs are authorized by the DD Act. Summaries of these programs are listed below.

**UCEDDs**

*Locations: One or more in every state and U.S. territory*


UCEDDs are a nationwide network of independent but interlinked centers that were created to address issues, find solutions, and advance research related to the needs of individuals with developmental disabilities and their families. UCEDDs provide the following services:

- Provide interdisciplinary pre-service preparation
- Perform community services and training
- Conduct research, evaluations and information dissemination

**DD Councils/State Councils of Developmental Disabilities**

*Locations: One in every state and U.S. territory*


These councils advocate and work to change systems and build capacity to promote self-determination, integration and inclusion for people with developmental disabilities. Their activities include conducting outreach, providing training and technical assistance, removing barriers, developing coalitions, encouraging citizen participation and keeping policymakers informed about disability issues. DD Councils provide the following services:

- Understanding system barriers and addressing them through initiatives
- Working with stakeholders to achieve change
- Empowering advocates
The DD Network/Protection & Advocacy Systems (P&As)

Locations: One in every state and U.S. territory


P&As are dedicated to the ongoing fight for the personal and civil rights of individuals with disabilities. P&As work at the state level to protect individuals with disabilities by empowering and advocating on their behalf. P&As provide legal support to traditionally unserved or underserved populations to help them navigate the legal system to achieve resolution and encourage systems change (AUCD, 2011). A summary of services provided by P&As is listed below.

- Monitor and investigate conditions in facilities that care for people with disabilities
- Provide legal representation to people with disabilities
- Ensure equal community access

Immigration Laws

Immigration laws in the U.S. can change. You may research current immigration law on the World Education Services Advisor blog (wes.org/advisor-blog/?s=&advisor_tags=797).

Below is a chart listing laws relating to immigrants and refugees (Texas State Law Library, 2022). This list is only a small example of the many laws relating to immigration and refugee status.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Law Citation and Link</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>U.S. Code, Title 8, Chapter 12, Section 1158</strong> (<a href="uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?req=granuleid%3AUSC-prelim-title8-section1158&amp;num=0&amp;edition=prelim">uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?req=granuleid%3AUSC-prelim-title8-section1158&amp;num=0&amp;edition=prelim</a>)</td>
<td>Authority to apply for asylum and the conditions for granting asylum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>U.S. Code, Title 8, Chapter 1, Subchapter B, Part 207</strong> (<a href="uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?req=granuleid%3AUSC-prelim-title8-section1157&amp;num=0&amp;edition=prelim">uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?req=granuleid%3AUSC-prelim-title8-section1157&amp;num=0&amp;edition=prelim</a>)</td>
<td>Admission of refugees. DHS regulations on eligibility, application processing, waivers of inadmissibility, control over approved refugee numbers</td>
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**A Guide to Disability Rights Law**

A Guide to Disability Rights Law (ada.gov/cguide.htm) is a publication by the U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division, Disability Rights Section. It provides summaries of all major disability rights and relevant federal contact information.
Services for Immigrants and Refugees with Disabilities

Immigrants and refugees face many barriers when attempting to access needed programs and services. This is especially true for immigrants and refugees with disabilities. Challenges include, but are not limited to:

- A complex application process
- Difficulty in understanding multiple eligibility rules
- Language, literacy and cultural barriers
- Transportation
- Fear, mistrust and suspicion of the process
- A shortage of multilingual staff
- Lack of knowledge about how to access needed health and human services (APSE, 2012).

Research suggests that accessing needed public service programs results in reduced hardship, improved health and contributes to a more stable family structure (APSE, 2012). Unfortunately, in addition to the barriers listed above, several factors may affect an individual’s eligibility and eligibility criteria may vary depending on the program. Eligibility for public benefits can also vary within families, based on each person’s citizenship, immigration status, time of arrival and length of residence in the U.S.
Most public benefits are administered at the state level, and states have broad discretion to design their eligibility application forms, web portals and outreach materials (APSE, 2012). Although not exhaustive, the resources outlined below may provide information and guidance to immigrants and refugees with disabilities when trying to connect to needed programs and services.

Food Programs and Resources

There are several food programs and resources available to immigrants and refugees. Information about some of these programs is listed below.

**USDA National Hunger Hotline**

If you are hungry and do not have food you can call the USDA National Hunger Hotline to get help immediately. The hotline offers information in English and Spanish from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. (Eastern Time) Monday through Friday. You may also contact community or religious organizations to inquire about local food assistance options or to connect to your local food bank or pantry.

**Phone:** 866-348-6479 or 877-842-6273

**Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP)/Food Stamps**

SNAP benefits may be used to buy a variety of food including fruits, vegetables, meat, dairy products, breads and cereals. To be eligible for food assistance through SNAP, also known as food stamps, a family's income typically cannot exceed 130% of the federal poverty guidelines. The federal poverty guidelines for 2022 (aspe.hhs.gov/topics/poverty-economic-mobility/poverty-guidelines) outline income requirements for different household sizes (Baker et. al., 2020).

The SNAP Policy on Non-Citizen Eligibility (fns.usda.gov/snap/eligibility/citizen/non-citizen-policy) outlines who is eligible to receive food assistance both with and without a waiting period. To receive SNAP benefits, individuals should apply in the state in which they currently reside. To learn more, read about SNAP food benefits (usa.gov/food-help#item-35787), the application process for each state (fns.usda.gov/snap/state-directory) and see some frequently asked questions about the SNAP program (fns.usda.gov/snap/retailer/faq).

If your state agency determines that you are eligible to receive SNAP benefits you will receive a notice that tells you how long you will receive this benefit. This is called your certification period. Before your certification period ends, you will receive another notice that says you must recertify to continue receiving benefits. Your local SNAP office will provide you with information about how to recertify (USA.Gov, 2022).

**Food Pantries**

The Feeding America national network of food banks and food programs (feedingamerica.org/find-your-local-foodbank) helps millions of people find food resources in their communities.
**Free Food Programs for Seniors**

Senior Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program and Commodity Supplemental Food Program provide food resources for low-income seniors. Although not in every state, the Senior Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program provides coupons for fresh fruits, vegetables, honey and herbs and can be used at farmers’ markets, roadside stands and community farms. The Commodity Supplemental Food Program provides a monthly package of healthy food. The typical eligibility requirements are:

- 60 years of age or older
- Have an income at or below 185% of the federal poverty guidelines

You can access the [nutritional programs contact map](fns.usda.gov/contacts/contact-map?f%5B0%5D=program%3A30&f%5B1%5D=program%3A31) to see if these programs are offered in your area.

**Meals on Wheels**

The Older Americans Act Nutrition Programs are the only federally supported programs designed specifically to meet the nutritional and social needs of seniors. The most well-known of these programs is Meals on Wheels. Many Meals on Wheels programs also manage congregate nutritional sites, such as senior centers, which provide opportunities for seniors to socialize.

Generally, individuals 60 years of age or older are eligible for Meals on Wheels from a [local Meals on Wheels provider](mealsonwheelsamerica.org/find-meals). Depending on individual circumstances, meals may be provided on a sliding fee scale, from no cost to full price. It is important to know that in many areas of the U.S. the need for meals far exceeds the resources available, leading to wait lists or being turned away for the Meals on Wheels program.

**Housing Programs and Resources**

There are many housing programs and resources that may help immigrants and refugees with disabilities find a place to live. These include government and non-governmental programs. Unfortunately, public and subsidized housing is not an entitlement and different rules apply to different housing programs. Some housing programs and resources are listed below.

Please know, noncitizen eligibility for federal housing programs varies based on the type of housing program, the laws that govern the particular housing program, the immigration status of a non-citizen and the composition of the noncitizen’s household. However, if an entire family is undocumented, they will most likely not be eligible for most government-sponsored housing programs.

**U.S. Housing of Urban Development (HUD)**

HUD assists with housing by administering federal aid to local housing agencies. In turn, these agencies manage local housing programs, and HUD provides technical assistance in planning, developing and managing these programs. HUD supports three main types of housing assistance:
### Public Housing

Eligibility for public housing is based on annual gross income, age, disability status and U.S. citizenship or eligible immigration status. Public housing is a project-based subsidy, meaning the subsidy stays with the housing unit, not with the person or family. Most units will cost 30% of the household’s adjusted gross income. Unfortunately, the demand for public housing is often higher than the amount of public housing available, and waiting lists may be long or closed. Some units are specifically reserved for the elderly and people with disabilities (HUD, 2021).

To apply for public housing, you must contact your local housing agency (hud.gov/program_offices/public_indian_housing/pha/contacts). You can also learn more about HUD’s public housing program (hud.gov/topics/rental_assistance/phprog) (National Immigration Law Center, 2018).

### Project-Based/Section 8 Housing

Project-based/section 8 housing is privately owned and managed rental units for low-income households. Some units are reserved specifically for the elderly and people with disabilities. This is a project-based program, meaning the subsidy stays with the housing unit, not the person or family. In other words, if the person moves, the subsidy does not move with them. Most units cost 30% of the household’s adjusted gross income.

Individuals interested in project-based housing will need to apply at each project-based/section 8 property where they want to live. Each property owner keeps a separate waiting list, and these lists may be long or closed. HousingLink (housinglink.org) is a good place to search for project-based and section 8 housing (Housing Link, 2020).

### Housing Choice Vouchers/Section 8

Housing choice vouchers (also known as Section 8) help low-income households pay for private rental units. Vouchers given to eligible people are transferable. That means the person can move from one eligible rental unit to another. To apply for a voucher, individuals must apply at their local housing agency (hud.gov/states) (Housing Link, 2020). Learn more by reading the Housing Choice Vouchers Fact Sheet (hud.gov/topics/housing_choice_voucher_program_section_8).
Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)

LIHEAP assists eligible low-income households with their heating and cooling energy costs, including bill payment assistance, energy crisis assistance, weatherization and energy-related home repairs. Individuals interested in applying for this program may contact the National Energy Assistance Referral (NEAR) project (liheapch.acf.hhs.gov/referral.htm) by emailing energyassistance@ncat.org or calling 1-866-674-6327. NEAR is a free service providing information about where you can apply for LIHEAP. NEAR is open Monday through Friday, from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. (Mountain Time).

Homeless Shelters

Many organizations have emergency shelters, general homeless shelters and some offer transitional housing opportunities. Please be aware that many shelters have long waiting lists. A list of national shelters can be found at the Homeless Shelter Directory (homelessshelterdirectory.org).

Medical Programs and Resources

Several programs may assist immigrants and refugees with disabilities with getting medical care. Some of these programs are listed below.

Refugee Medical Assistance (RMA)

Currently, many refugees may receive short-term insurance called Refugee Medical Assistance (RMA), which is available for up to eight months. RMA provides short-term medical assistance to newly arriving refugees and other populations who are eligible for Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) benefits. RMA is only available to ORR eligible populations who cannot get Medicaid. In addition to providing access to healthcare while refugees start to rebuild their lives, RMA funds pay for refugees to complete a Refugee Medical Screening (RMS) upon arrival in the U.S., protecting public health and providing early health interventions. RMA and RMS programs differ depending on location. Services also vary depending on each state’s Medicaid programs and medical screening processes. Contact your State Refugee Coordinator (SRC) (acf.hhs.gov/orr/grant-funding/key-state-contacts) to learn more about the RMA program in your state.

Medicaid

Medicaid is a federal and state health insurance program that provides free or low-cost medical benefits to those who are eligible. Individuals with low income, people who are pregnant, infants, children, older adults and people with disabilities may qualify for Medicaid. Individuals do not have to be citizens to receive Medicaid coverage. If an individual’s Medicaid eligibility is based on receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI), coverage should continue as long as that person is receiving SSI (Casserly, 2017).
Immigrants who are qualified non-citizens are usually eligible for coverage through Medicaid if they meet their state’s income and residency rules. Some individuals who are not U.S. citizens may have a five-year waiting period, including those people who are:

- Lawful Permanent Residents (green card)
- Conditional entrants
- Paroled into the U.S. for 1 year or more
- A battered spouse, child or parent who has a pending or approved petition with DHS

Refugees generally do not have to wait five years and, after RMA is no longer available, may be eligible for health care coverage under Medicaid. Individuals should contact their state’s Medicaid agency (medicaid.gov/about-us/beneficiary-resources/index.html#statemenu) to see if they are eligible for Medicaid.

**Emergency Medicaid Assistance**

Medicaid provides payment for the treatment of an emergency medical condition for people who meet all Medicaid eligibility criteria in the state but do not have an eligible immigration status. All states must provide emergency Medicaid benefits to state residents who meet the other eligibility requirements for Medicaid, without regard to immigration status. An emergency is defined as a medical condition with acute symptoms that could place the patient’s health in jeopardy or result in serious impairment to bodily functions or serious dysfunction of any bodily organ or part. Emergency Medicaid also includes labor and delivery (Manatt, 2021).

**Affordable Care Act (ACA)/Marketplace/Exchange**

Immigrants and refugees can enroll in individual health plans (medical insurance) using the ACA marketplace/exchange during the open enrollment period (November 1 to January 15, in most states). Immigrants, including individuals in the U.S. temporarily on work or student visas, are eligible for premium subsidies if their income is below the poverty level. There is a special enrollment period for new citizens and new lawfully present residents (Refugee Health Technical Assistance Center, 2014).

The ACA marketplace will check the status of immigrants who want to buy coverage. Exchanges are required to verify lawfully present status. In 2014, approximately 109,000 people had their HealthCare.gov enrollments terminated when they were unable to provide the necessary proof of legal residence. People who are enrolled generally have 95 days to provide immigration status documentation.

Recent immigrants who are eligible to get help with paying for insurance premiums will probably be best served by enrolling in a plan through the exchange. The coverage they get will be comprehensive, with no limits on annual or lifetime benefits and no exclusions for preexisting conditions. But healthy applicants who are not eligible to get financial help may find that a short-term health insurance policy is their best option (Norris, 2021). For more information, visit...
HealthCare.gov or call the Marketplace Call Center at 1-800-318-2596, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. TTY users should call 1-855-889-4325.

Short-Term Insurance Plans

Immigrants who are unable to afford health insurance may find that a short-term health insurance plan will fit their needs. Short-term plans are not sold through the marketplace/exchange, so they also do not require proof of legal residency the way (Norris, 2021).

Travel Insurance

Travel insurance may be another option for people who will be in the U.S. temporarily and who do not qualify for help with paying for premiums in the exchange. Just like short-term plans, travel insurance policies are not compliant with the ACA. They generally will not cover preexisting conditions.

Medical Assistance Programs for Immigrants

Medical Assistance Programs for Immigrants in Various States (nilc.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/med-services-for-imms-in-states.pdf) is a document that can help you find the help you need in your location.

Migrant Health Centers

The federal Migrant Health Program (ncfh.org/migrant-health-centers.html) provides funds to health centers located throughout the U.S. to provide health care to approximately 800,000 farmworkers and their families every year.

Community Health Centers (CHCs)

Collectively, CHCs (also known as Federally Qualified Health Centers) are the largest health care system in the nation. CHCs are safety net providers and are required to provide care to all patients, regardless of a person’s insurance status or ability to pay. (National Association of Community Health Centers, 2020) CHCs can be found in all 50 states and U.S. territories (finda-healthcenter.hrsa.gov).
Mental Health Services

Immigrants and refugees with disabilities may be particularly vulnerable to experiencing stressors due to a variety of reasons:

- Marginalization
- Isolation
- Limited resources
- Interpersonal conflicts
- Discrimination and stigmatization
- Stress associated with the immigration and resettlement process
- Difficulties adjusting to differences in language, economics, health care, education and religion
- Multiple traumatic experiences

In addition, immigrants and refugees may be less likely to connect to mental health services due to lack of insurance, long wait lists, lack of mental health professionals who can speak their preferred language, and fear due to immigration or refugee status. Below is a list of resources that may help immigrants and refugees with disabilities connect with mental health service providers (Fendian, 2021).

### Locating Mental Health Services

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration (SAMHSA) can help you locate mental health services by state ([findtreatment.samhsa.gov](http://findtreatment.samhsa.gov)).

### National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

**The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline** ([suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://suicidepreventionlifeline.org)) is a national network of local crisis centers that provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week in the United States.

**Phone:** 800-273-8255

**Three-digit number to call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:** 988 (Note: This service is expected to launch nationwide on July 16, 2022.)

### National Human Trafficking Hotline

**The National Human Trafficking Hotline** ([humantraffickinghotline.org/](http://humantraffickinghotline.org/)) connects victims and survivors of sex and labor trafficking with services and supports to get help and support safety. **The hotline also receives tips** ([humantraffickinghotline.org/report-trafficking](http://humantraffickinghotline.org/report-trafficking)) about potential
situations of trafficking and facilitates reporting that information to the appropriate authorities in certain situations. The hotline is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. A webchat option (humantraffickinghotline.org/chat) is also available. Help is available in English, Spanish and more than 200 other languages through an online interpreter. The hotline website also provides safety planning information (humantraffickinghotline.org/faqs/safety-planning-information).

Phone: 888-373-7888  
Text: 33733 (BeFree)  
Phone number for deaf and hard of hearing: 711  
Email: help@humantraffickinghotline.org

**Immigration Relief for Survivors of Human Trafficking and Other Crimes**

U.S. Citizen and Immigration Services (USCIS) provides different types of immigration relief to victims and survivors of human trafficking and other crimes:

- **T Nonimmigrant Status (T Visa)** - Provides immigration protection to victims of trafficking. The T Visa allows victims to remain in the United States and assist law enforcement authorities in the investigation or prosecution of human trafficking cases.

- **U Nonimmigrant Status (U Visa)** - Provides immigration protection to crime victims who have suffered substantial mental or physical abuse as a result of the crime. The U visa allows victims to remain in the United States and assist law enforcement authorities in the investigation or prosecution of the criminal activity.

- **Green Card for Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) Self-Petition** - Under VAWA a victim of battery or extreme cruelty committed by a U.S. citizen spouse or former spouse, a U.S. citizen parent, a U.S. citizen son or daughter, a lawful permanent resident (LPR) spouse or former spouse, or a lawful permanent resident parent, may self-petition under VAWA. This can be done without the abusive family member’s knowledge or consent by filing a Petition for Amerasian, Widow(er), or Special Immigrant. A person who files a VAWA self-petition is generally known as a VAWA self-petitioner. If the self-petition is approved, and the victim meets other eligibility requirements, it is possible to apply to become a lawful permanent resident.
## Additional Mental Health Resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource and Website</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Phone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>National Domestic Violence Hotline</strong> (thehotline.org)</td>
<td>Free help 24 hours a day for victims and survivors of abuse</td>
<td>800-799-7233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Take Back the Night</strong> (takebackthenight.org/legal-assistance/)</td>
<td>Free legal advice, support and information from volunteer attorneys who specialize in free legal assistance for sexual and domestic abuse survivors</td>
<td>567-742-8837</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SAMHSA’s National Helpline</strong> (samhsa.gov/find-help/national-helpline)</td>
<td>Free, confidential, 24/7 treatment and referral and information service for individuals and families facing mental health issues or substance use disorders</td>
<td>800-622-HELP (4357)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Alcoholics Anonymous</strong> (aa.org)</td>
<td>Call AA to receive general information and to find local AA meetings</td>
<td>212-870-3400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Elder Abuse Hotlines</strong> (preventfamilyviolence.org/adult-protective-services-numbers)</td>
<td>Find your state’s elder abuse hotline or reporting number</td>
<td>800-677-1116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>National Organization of Parents of Murdered Children (POMC)</strong> (pomc.org)</td>
<td>Call the POMC if you have lost a child, family member or friend to violence</td>
<td>513-721-5683</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LGBT National Youth Talkline</strong> (glbthotline.org/talkline.html)</td>
<td>Call weekdays from 4 p.m. to midnight and Saturdays from noon to 5 p.m. (Eastern Time) for peer support, information, and resources about LGBTQ youth</td>
<td>800-246-7743</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LGBT National Senior Hotline</strong> (glbthotline.org/senior-hotline.html)</td>
<td>Call weekdays from 4 p.m. to midnight and Saturdays from noon to 5 p.m. (Eastern Time) for peer support, information and resources for LGBTQ seniors (ages 50 and older)</td>
<td>888-234-7243</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Resource and Website | Description | Phone
--- | --- | ---
**American Chronic Pain Association (theacpa.org)** | Call to receive information, support and resources for individuals struggling with chronic pain | 800-533-3231

**Parent Stress Line (parentshelpingparents.org/stressline)** | Call 24/7 to receive non-judgmental, confidential and sympathetic support from a trained volunteer counselor for parents and guardians struggling with issues related to their children | 800-632-8188

**National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Helpline (nami.org)** | Call the NAMI Helpline for mental health information, resource referrals and support | 800-950-6264

**211 Community Service Help-line (211.org)** | 211 helpline provides information, including, but not limited to, mental health services, employment supports, housing, food assistance, services elderly, and donations. 211 covers all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico | 211

**Financial Assistance**

Several programs may be available to immigrants and refugees to provide financial assistance if eligibility requirements are met. Some of these programs are listed below.

**Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Supplemental Security Disability Income (SSDI)**

People with disabilities, who meet eligibility criteria, may be paid a monthly income through SSI or SSDI. Benefits through both of these programs are available to qualified immigrants with disabilities. People may need assistance in understanding the basic and immigrant-specific eligibility criteria for these benefits. Below is a link that will assist individuals who have immigrated to the U.S. determine if they are eligible for SSI or SSDI.

“I am a legal immigrant; will I be able to apply for benefits?” (disability-benefits-help.org/faq/can-legal-immigrants-apply) answers frequently asked questions about the process.

All recipients of SSI or SSDI must have a qualifying medical condition by either having an impairment that appears in the Social Security Administration’s (SSA’s) Blue Book or proving the presence of a disability through a Residual Functional Capacity (RFC) evaluation. Either way, individuals must have a severe medical condition that has or will stop them from working for at least
12 months or have a terminal illness. Social Security's listing of impairments for adults (ssa.gov/disability/professionals/bluebook/AdultListings.htm) may be helpful. An overview of the SSI and the SSDI programs is listed below.

**Supplemental Security Income (SSI) Eligibility**

The SSI program and state Medicaid agencies usually rely on the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to verify that an immigrant meets the requirements to be considered a Qualified Immigrant. The SSI program will consider victims of abuse and human trafficking eligible while their applications are under consideration by the DHS. For SSI, no work history is necessary, but you must meet the strict income and asset limits for this need-based program.

The SSI program now uses the terms “Qualified Immigrants” and “Not Qualified Immigrants,” but some states provide Medicaid benefits or state-funded medical benefits to immigrants who have Permanently Residing Under Color of Law (PRUCOL) status, even if they are in the “Not Qualified Immigrants” category (Broder, et. al., 2021).

SSI benefits are sometimes available to residents who are not citizens, including U.S. nationals, aliens and other non-citizens. Generally, to be eligible for SSI as a non-citizen, you must be in one of these alien classifications granted by the Department of Homeland Security. You may be eligible for SSI if one of the following applies:

- Lawfully admitted for permanent residence
- Granted conditional entry
- Paroled into the United States
- Admitted as a refugee
- Granted asylum
- An alien whose removal is being withheld
- A Cuban or Hattian Entrant
- Admitted as an Amerasian immigrant
- Admitted as an Afghan or Iraqi Special Immigrant (Social Security Administration, 2022)

In addition to meeting one of the classifications mentioned above, you must also satisfy at least one of the requirements listed below to be eligible for SSI as a non-citizen:

- Lawfully residing in the U.S. on August 22, 1996, and you are blind or disabled
- Receiving SSI on August 22, 1996, and you are lawfully residing in the U.S.
- Receiving SSI on August 22, 1996, and were lawfully residing in the U.S.
- An active-duty member of the U.S. Armed Forces, or a spouse or dependent of a veteran or active-duty member of the U.S. Armed Forces
- An American Indian born in Canada
- A non-citizen member of a federally recognized Indian tribe
A victim of severe forms of human trafficking (Social Security Administration, 2022)

Others also may be eligible for SSI payments. If you are a non-citizen and want to apply for SSI benefits, contact the Social Security Administration (https://www.ssa.gov/) to see if meet eligibility requirements.

Some non-citizens can get SSI for up to seven years. If your SSI payments are limited to seven years because of your particular non-citizen status, the Social Security Administration will send you a letter telling you when your seven-year period ends. You should also receive another letter explaining your rights to appeal before your payments are stopped.

Additional contact information for the Social Security Administration is listed below.

Phone: 800-375-5283
TTY: 800-767-1833

Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) Eligibility

Note: You do not have to be a U.S. citizen to qualify for SSDI Benefits. SSDI benefits are based on how much you earned and whether you have paid into the system for a sufficient number of years.

Both SSDI and SSI have basic or technical eligibility rules that immigrants and citizens alike must meet before they can receive benefits. For SSDI you must have worked and paid Social Security taxes on your income and have enough years of Social Security taxes accumulated to equal between 20 and 40 work credits. The number of work credits you need depends on your age at the time you become disabled, and work credits accumulate at the rate of about four per year. Immigrants, however, often do not pay Social Security taxes, so you will need to know your status before knowing if you qualify for SSDI.

SSI and SSDI benefits are available to qualified immigrants with disabilities. If all requirements are satisfied, SSDI and/or SSI will provide a monthly income. Immigrants who are in the U.S. legally are entitled to SSDI benefits under certain circumstances. In addition to satisfying the basic and technical eligibility requirements, individuals must also satisfy rules that pertain to a non-citizen status by:

- Holding an appropriate VISA: D-1, D-2, or B-1 or
- Having an SSN assigned after 2004, which allows you to legally work in the U.S.

Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA)

Refugees may be eligible to receive special refugee cash assistance (RCA) (dshs.wa.gov/esa/community-services-offices/refugee-cash-assistance) and refugee medical assistance (RMA) through the refugee program during the first eight months in the U.S. The Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) provides funding for a broad range of social services to refugees, through states, and in some instances through direct service grants.

Address: Division of Refugee Assistance, Office of Refugee Resettlement, Administration for Children and Families, 901 D Street SW, Washington, DC 20447
Phone: 202-401-9246
Additional Resources for Immigrants and Refugees with Disabilities

In addition to financial assistance, medical programs and social services, there are other resources that may be beneficial for immigrants and refugees with disabilities. Some of these resources are listed below.

Centers for Independent Living (CILs)

CILCs in the U.S. work for the full participation and independence of people with disabilities. CILCs are designed and operated within a local community by individuals with disabilities and provide an array of services. These centers provide independent living services and programs for people with all types of disabilities and work to support community living and independence across the U.S. These programs and services provide tools, resources and supports for integrating people with disabilities fully into their communities to promote equal opportunities, self-termination, and respect (ACL, 2022). For more information, contact your local CIL (acl.gov/programs/centers-independent-living/list-cils-and-spils).

Easterseals

Easterseals is a national non-profit organization that provides services through a network of community affiliates located throughout the U.S. Easterseals provides workforce development, in-home services, and community inclusion. Connect to a local Easterseals location using the following link. Easterseals works with and for adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) (easterseals.com/our-programs/autism-services/adults-with-autism.html)

National Association of the Deaf (NAD)

NAD (nad.org/about-us) is the nation’s civil rights organization operated by and for deaf and hard-of-hearing people. NAD advocates for Deaf rights.

National Federation of the Blind (NFB)

NFB (nfb.org) offers several services including, but not limited to, a free white cane program, advocacy, education, employment assistance, scholarships and career mentoring for blind people.

National Library Service (NLS) for the Blind

The NLS is a free braille and talking book library service for people with temporary or permanent low vision or blindness. NLS also provides materials and equipment for people with a physical, perceptual or reading disability that prevents the use of regular print materials.

Through a national network of cooperating libraries, NLS circulates free reading materials and playback equipment needed to read audiobooks and magazines to patrons via postage-free mail delivery. Books and magazines are available in different languages. The enrollment process for the NLS is as follows:
● Find your local NLS (loc.gov/nls/braille-audio-reading-materials/find-a-local-library) or by calling 202-707-5100 or 800-424-8567

● Request an application from your local NLS or complete an application online (loc.gov/nls/enrollment-equipment/apply-for-nls-service/application-in-english-spanish-and-for-institutions)

● The library will contact applicants regarding an individual’s eligibility for the program

**Assistance with Learning English**

There are several proficiency tests that may help with learning English.

- **International English Language Testing System (IELTS)** (wes.org/advisor-blog/ielts-overview)
- **Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL)** (wes.org/advisor-blog/an-introduction-to-toefl)
- **Duolingo English Test** (wes.org/advisor-blog/understanding-the-duolingo-english-test)

**Conclusion**

It is the hope of the AACs and our partner organizations that this guidebook provides disabled refugees and immigrants with useful information about services and programs.

**Adult Advocacy Centers** (adultadvocacycenters.org)

- **Address:** P.O. Box 9118, Columbus, Ohio 43209-7118
- **Phone:** 614-338-7118

**US Together Inc.** (ustothergether.us)

- **Address:** 1415 E. Dublin Granville Road #100, Columbus, Ohio 43229
- **Phone:** 614-437-9941

**Ethiopian Tewahedo Social Services (ETSS)** (ethiotss.org)

- **Address:** 1060 Mt. Vernon Ave., Columbus, Ohio 43203
- **Phone:** 614-252-5362

**Ohio Hispanic Coalition (OHCO)** (ohiohispaniccoalition.org)

- **Address:** 1535 Bethel Road, Columbus, Ohio 43220
- **Phone:** 614-459-6566
Glossary

Citizen: An individual born in the U.S., an individual whose parent is a U.S. citizen, a naturalized U.S. citizen, or an individual born in Puerto Rico, Guam or the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Disability: The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) defines disability as a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activity. This includes people who have a record of such an impairment, even if they do not currently have a disability. It also includes individuals who do not have a disability but are regarded as having a disability. The ADA also makes it unlawful to discriminate against a person based on that person’s association with a person with a disability.

Immigrant: Someone from a foreign country who relocates to live in another country due to the promise of a better life, improved economic conditions or access to education and healthcare.

Lawful Permanent Resident: A person who is not a citizen of the U.S. but who is living in the U.S. under legally recognized and lawfully recorded permanent residence as an immigrant.

Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR): The ORR provides time-limited cash and medical assistance to new arrivals, as well as support for case management services, English as a Foreign Language classes, job readiness and employment services.

Refugee: Someone who moves from their country out of fear or necessity. A refugee is granted refugee status while still outside the U.S. Under U.S. law a refugee is someone who is located outside of the U.S., is of special humanitarian concern to the U.S., demonstrates that they were persecuted or fear persecution due to race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular group, is not firmly resettled in another country and is admissible to the U.S. (USCIS, 2022). The full legal definition of refugee may be found in section 101(a) (42) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA).

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS): The USCIS is an agency that is a part of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and is in charge of security screening processes for applicants.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS): The mission of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services is to enhance the health and well-being of all Americans by providing for effective health and human services and by fostering advances in medicine, public health and social services.

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD): The mission of HUD is to create strong, sustainable, inclusive communities and quality affordable homes.

U.S. Refugee Admissions Program’s Reception and Placement Program: This program from the State Department connects refugees with funding for rent, food, clothing and other necessities for their first three months in the U.S.
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contact@adultadvocacycenters.org
adultadvocacycenters.org

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