



# Serving Refugees, Asylum Seekers and Human Trafficking Survivors in Southern CA



International Institute  
of Los Angeles

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# Overview

- **What is IILA?**
- **Helpful definitions**
- **A Few Key Facts**
- **Setting the Scene in the US**
- **What is happening in SoCal**
- **How you can help**





# WHAT IS THE INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF LOS ANGELES?



# A (VERY) BRIEF HISTORY

- ❑ IILA was founded in 1914 by the YWCA to help women and girl immigrants arriving from Europe and East Asia.
- ❑ Our mission is to help individuals and families achieve self-sufficiency and provide community leadership with the goal of cultivating and promoting multicultural understanding.



# IILA Today



- We serve more than 50,000 immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers, survivors of human trafficking and low-income working families and children **every year** through:
  - Network of pre-schools and in home childcare providers;
  - Immigration legal services;
  - Pre-school nutrition program;
  - Case management for survivors of human trafficking and unaccompanied minors;
  - Refugee, asylum seeker and asylee resettlement, employment
  - Other social supports including transportation subsidies and assistance with utility debt.



# Some helpful definitions

## Who is a Refugee?

- Someone who has fled their own country because they are at risk of serious human rights violations and persecution there. Refugees have a right to international protection. Refugees entering the US have been processed by the US State Department and have been granted a green card.

## Who is an Asylum Seeker?

- A person who has left their country and is seeking protection from persecution and serious human rights violations in another country, but who hasn't yet been legally recognized as a refugee and is waiting to receive a decision on their asylum claim. Seeking asylum is a human right. Asylees are people who have received asylum.

## Who is a Migrant?

- Someone who is staying outside of their country of origin but who is not a refugee or asylum seeker. Many migrants leave their country because of poverty, political unrest, gang violence, war, natural disasters or other serious circumstances.

# Key Facts

**108.4 MILLION**

people have been forcibly displaced due to conflict, persecution or natural disasters.

**35.3 MILLION**

refugees globally.

**56,771**

people have died while migrating between countries since 2014.

**ONLY 24%**

of refugees are hosted by high-income countries.

(Sources: IOM, UNHCR)



# Setting the Scene in the USA

- Since 1980 and passage of Refugee Act, US has admitted over 3 million refugees.
- President Biden has authorized the US to accept 125,000 refugees in FY 23-24 (starting in October).
- This does not include Ukrainian refugees admitted under the U4U program or 30,000 per month Haitians, Cubans, Nicaraguans or Venezuelans permitted to enter as parolees. All groups must have a US sponsor.
- Continuing to resettle the 75,000 Afghans who arrived in 2021 and 2022 and the thousands of Afghan SIVs who are now arriving.
- 10 national refugee resettlement agencies manage networks of local affiliates who are responsible for resettling refugee arrivals.





# Refugee Resettlement in SoCal

- **IIA is one of only FOUR refugee resettlement agencies serving LA, Orange, San Bernardino, Riverside and Ventura Counties.**
- **Refugees are assigned by the State Department to USCRI, our national partner agency.**
- **IIA is expecting to resettle 450 refugees this fiscal year.**



# What happens when a refugee arrives in their new community ?

ILLA's is responsible for assisting with their initial resettlement (30-90 days)

Reception and Placement case management responsibilities include:

- Contact/coordinate with US Tie—if there is one
- Arrange temporary/permanent housing
- Disburse refugee grant (\$1,325 per person)
- Enroll in public benefits, including CalFresh and MediCal
- Provide community orientation and referrals
- Enroll in employment services
- Assist with school registration
- Arrange for Refugee Health Screenings
- Assist with accessing medical care

**GOAL OF THE PROGRAM IS TO HELP REFUGEES  
BECOME SELF SUFFICIENT AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE**



# How does ILLA serve survivors of human trafficking?

- HT survivors are all foreign born and include babies and children.
- Most HTS are labor trafficked with a smaller percentage sex trafficked. A small number are both labor and sex trafficked.
- HTS receive case management services and assistance with enrolling in federal and state benefits.
- They also receive the following assistance:
  - Housing
  - Employability services
  - Mental health screening and therapy
  - Medical care
  - Legal Services





# How can you help?

- **Donate to our Refugee, Afghan or Ukrainian Funds.**
- **Host a fundraiser or donation drive (hygiene kits, household items, computers, cell phones, etc.).**
- **Raise awareness in your community about our obligation to help persecuted people fleeing for their lives.**
- **Volunteer to assist a family or individual resettle (financial mentoring, assistance with resume writing and interview skills, and finding employment, etc.).**
- **Become a Sponsor Group through Welcome Corps.**



# Welcome Corps

- **The Welcome Corps is a new service opportunity for Americans to welcome resettling refugees.**
- **It was launched by the federal government in January 2023**
- **With training and support, sponsor groups take on the responsibilities of resettling refugees.**
- **<https://welcomecorps.org/about/>**

**QUESTIONS?**

**[www.iilosangeles.org](http://www.iilosangeles.org)**

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