

Commonly Used Terms & Definitions



Welcome the stranger.
Protect the refugee.

Appropriations: Federal funds approved by Congress on an annual basis that outlines how the federal government spends its money.¹

Asylum: Asylum is a protection granted to people from other countries already in the United States, or at the U.S. border, who meet the international law definition of a “refugee.”²

Asylum seeker: An asylum seeker is a person who is seeking protection in a different country than their own because of a well-founded fear of persecution in their home country. Asylum seekers have not yet received any legal recognition or status. In the United States, asylum seekers may apply for protection from inside the country or at the border.

Asylee: A person who asked for, and received, protection from persecution, from inside the United States or at the U.S. border. An asylee is a person who is found to meet the international definition of a refugee.

Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration: The Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM) is a bureau within the Department of State. PRM is responsible for administering the provision of assistance to refugees overseas and the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program.

Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS): HHS is the federal department responsible for helping to keep Americans healthy. It is the department in which the Office of Refugee Resettlement is located. It also administers many programs, including healthcare and social service programs that assist people with disabilities and senior citizens.

Department of Homeland Security (DHS): DHS is the federal department responsible for helping to keep the United States safe and secure. Some of its key responsibilities include border security and immigration enforcement and citizenship services. It is the department in which USCIS is located.

Department of State (DOS): DOS is the federal department responsible for conducting the United States international relations and implementing U.S. foreign policy. It is the department in which PRM is located.

Flores Settlement Agreement: *The Flores Settlement Agreement* sets a nationwide standard for the detention, release, and treatment of all children in the custody of federal immigration authorities in the United States.³

Immigration Detention: Immigration detention is the practice of incarcerating immigrants while they await a determination of their immigration status or potential deportation.⁴

¹ *Congressional Research Service:* The Congressional Appropriations Process, An Introduction, <https://www.senate.gov/CRSpubs/8013e37d-4a09-46f0-b1e2-c14915d498a6.pdf>

² *American Immigration Council,* <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/asylum-united-states>

³ *Congressional Research Service:* The ‘Flores Settlement’ FAQs, <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/homesecc/R45297.pdf>

⁴ *Detention Watch Network:* Immigration Detention 101, <https://www.detentionwatchnetwork.org/issues/detention-101>

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Internally Displaced Person: An internally displaced person, or IDP, is a person who has fled their home but has not crossed an international border to find safety. Even if they have fled for similar reasons to those driving refugees (for example, armed conflict, generalized violence, human rights violations), IDPs legally remain under the protection of their own government—even if that government might be the cause of their flight.⁵

Migrant: A migrant is a person who chooses to move from their home for any variety of reasons, but not necessarily because of a direct threat of persecution or death. “Migrant” is an umbrella category that can include refugees but can also include people moving to improve their lives by finding work or education, those seeking family reunion, or other reasons.⁶

Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR): Office found within the federal Department of Health and Human Services. It distributes and oversees funding for refugees, asylees and SIVs, as well as other populations, to help them integrate into their new communities.

Presidential Determination (PD): Every year, the President must consult with Congress to determine the maximum number of refugees that can be resettled to the United States during the upcoming year. That number is called the Presidential Determination, or the PD.⁷

Reception and Placement (R&P): This program, funded through PRM, is a partnership between the federal government and national and local resettlement agencies. The program helps newly arrived refugees with financial and case management services for up to 90 days.

Refugee: A refugee is a person who has been forced to flee their home country due to a well-founded fear of persecution because of their race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group.⁸

Refugee Resettlement: The transfer of refugees from the country to which they fled (asylum country) to another country that agrees to admit them and give them permanent protection.

Refugee Resettlement Agency: Private organizations that are partners with the Department of State to administer the refugee admissions program. There are currently nine national resettlement agencies.⁹ They partner with a network of hundreds of local organizations, sometimes called “affiliates” that help refugees, SIVs and asylees integrate into their new communities.

Special Immigrant Visa (SIV): People who have Special Immigrant Visas, or SIVs, are either from Iraq or Afghanistan. They worked for, or on behalf of, the U.S. government in Iraq or Afghanistan for at least a year, and are in danger because of this service. Currently, Afghans can still come to this country

⁵ UNHCR: Internally Displaced People, <https://www.unhcr.org/internally-displaced-people.html>

⁶ UNHCR 'Refugees' and 'Migrants' FAQs, <https://www.refworld.org/docid/56e81c0d4.html>

⁷ HIAS: A Brief History of the PD, <https://www.hias.org/blog/video-brief-history-presidential-determination>

⁸ UNHCR, What is a Refugee, <https://www.unrefugees.org/refugee-facts/what-is-a-refugee/>

⁹ National Resettlement Agencies: Church World Service (CWS); Episcopal Migration Ministries (EMM); Ethiopian Community Development Council (ECDC); HIAS; International Rescue Committee (IRC); Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS); U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI); United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB)/Migration and Refugee Services; World Relief

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through the SIV program, but Iraqis must apply directly to the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP).¹⁰

United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS): USCIS is an agency in the federal Department of Homeland Security. It is one of the key agencies responsible for screening refugees before they are resettled to the United States. USCIS also plays a role in determining some asylum cases.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR): UNHCR, the UNHCR Refugee Agency, is a global organization dedicated to saving lives, protecting rights and building a better future for refugees, forcibly displaced communities and stateless people.¹¹

United States Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP): This is the official name for the U.S. refugee resettlement program.

Commonly Used Acronyms

CBP U.S Custom and Border Protection

CR Continuing Resolution

DOJ U.S. Department of Justice

FY Federal Fiscal Year (Oct 1- Sept 30)

ICE U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement

LHHS Labor, Health, and Human Services (U.S.

Congressional committee that oversees funding for ORR)

LPR Legal Permanent Status ('green-card' holder)

NGO Non-governmental organization

SAO Security Advisory Opinion

SFOPs State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs (U.S. Congressional committee that oversees funding for PRM)

UAC Unaccompanied Alien Children

USG U.S. Government

¹⁰ U.S. Department of State, <https://www.state.gov/j/prm/releases/factsheets/2016/254650.htm>; *Human Rights First: The Afghan SIV Program*, https://www.humanrightsfirst.org/sites/default/files/Afghan_SIV_2018.pdf

¹¹ <https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/about-us.html>