

Glossary of Refugee Terms

Source: These definitions are abridged and adapted from the training entitled *Strategies and Tools for Improving Infectious Disease Follow-Up in New Populations* produced by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Refugee and Immigrant Health Program.

Alien – as used in U.S. law, refers to a person who is not a citizen or national of the U.S.; term includes Lawful Permanent Resident (LPR).

Asylee – refers to persons who are in the U.S. and make their claim for refugee protection here, rather than from overseas. Derivative asylees may arrive directly from overseas to join immediate family members who are asylees in the U.S. Like refugees, asylees seek protection based on persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution because of race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a social group.

Community-Based Organization (CBO) – a non-profit organization that serves the needs of the community within which it is located.

Cuban/Haitian Entrant - Cubans and Haitians who are granted special status or parole status under the U.S. immigration laws, have applied for asylum, or are in exclusion or deportation proceedings but have not received a final order of deportation. Cuban/Haitian Entrants are eligible for the same federal benefits as refugees.

Date of Entry - the date on which an individual becomes eligible for federal government benefits and services. For refugees, this is their date of arrival in the U.S. For Cuban/Haitian Entrants, this is the date they were granted Cuban/Haitian Entrant status. For asylees, this is the date of their final grant of asylum. For victims of a severe form of trafficking, this is the date of certification or eligibility, or the date they were granted a T visa.

Ethnic Community-Based Organization (ECBO) – a non-profit, community-based organization that is directed by and for an ethnic community. ECBOs are small grassroots organizations that work in specific communities and geographic areas.

Home Country – the refugee or asylee’s country of nationality.

Host Country – a country where refugees have sought temporary safety; it is often nearby to the refugees’ home country.

Immigrant – in U.S. law, refers to persons admitted to the U.S. as lawful permanent residents. They may be issued immigrant visas by the Department of State overseas or adjusted to permanent resident status by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services in the U.S. Immigration preference is given to close family members of U.S. citizens and residents and to persons with needed job skills.

Immigration Status - the status under which a person is allowed to enter and remain in the U.S. and which determines the activities he/she is permitted to engage in while in the U.S. Examples of immigration status include Lawful Permanent Resident, refugee, Cuban/Haitian Entrant, visitor for business or pleasure, student, exchange visitor, specialized worker, temporary agricultural worker, crewmember, and parolee.

Integration – results from a long process of refugees successfully adapting to life in the U.S. Components of integration into American society include good psychological and social adjustment, self sufficiency, self confidence, sense of personal power and control, English language competence, good social support system, and well-functioning family.

Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) – persons who have been forced to flee their homes for the same reasons as refugees, but who have not left their own countries and are therefore not considered "refugees" under the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Statute.

International Organization for Migration (IOM) - the intergovernmental organization that arranges refugee travel and travel loans to the U.S. IOM also provides cultural orientation briefings and/or medical screenings in some overseas locations to refugees before resettlement.

Lawful Permanent Resident (also known as Permanent Resident) (LPR) – a person granted permission by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services to remain permanently in the U.S., evidenced by I-551 (green card). After one year in the U.S., refugees must apply for adjustment of status to LPR. After one year in the U.S., asylees are permitted, but are not required, to apply for adjustment of status to LPR. After five years in LPR status (four years for refugees), the LPR may file an application for naturalization to become a U.S. citizen. LPRs who obtained LPR status by marriage to a U.S. citizen are eligible to apply for citizenship in three years.

Migrant – a person who leaves his/her country to seek residence in another country.

Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) - the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services agency responsible for the domestic refugee resettlement program, refugees, asylees, Amerasians, Cuban/Haitian Entrants, victims of trafficking, survivors of torture, unaccompanied alien children, Lawful Permanent Residents who have held one of these statuses in the past, and Iraqi and Afghan Special Immigrant Visa holders, as well as the repatriation of U.S. citizens.

Parolee – refers to persons who normally would not be admissible to the U.S. but are allowed to enter temporarily for humanitarian, medical, or legal reasons. Parole does not constitute a formal admission to the U.S. and provides temporary admission status only. See information above on Cuban-Haitian Entrants, included in this category are Cuban and Haitian nationals with parole status.

Reception and Placement (R&P) - the initial resettlement services provided by resettlement agencies and their affiliates through cooperative agreements with the U.S. Department of State, to refugees upon their arrival in the U.S. These initial services cover basic food, clothing, shelter, orientation, referrals, and other services for the first 90 days after the refugee’s arrival in the U.S.

Refugee – refers to persons who are outside their country of nationality and who are unable or unwilling to return to that country due to persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution because of race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a social group. The term “refugee” may be used in reference to all persons eligible for Office of Refugee Resettlement-funded refugee benefits and assistance, including asylees, victims of trafficking, and Cuban/Haitian entrants.

Refugee Camps – enclosed areas that are not self-supporting and are restricted to refugees and those assisting them, where protection and assistance is provided until it is safe for the refugees to return to their homelands or to be resettled elsewhere. Refugee camps are usually intended to be temporary and are built accordingly. One of the most serious problems associated with many camps is the failure of local authorities to provide full protection for refugees, particularly since camps are often located in, or close to, conflict zones.

Refugee Resettlement Agency – public or private agencies that provide initial reception and placement (R&P) services to newly-arriving refugees under cooperative agreements with the U.S. Department of State. Local affiliates of these national agencies are responsible for providing initial R&P services covering basic food, clothing, shelter, orientation, referral, and other services for the first 90 days after arrival in the U.S. for refugees.

Refugee Resettlement Program - federally-funded program for the resettlement in the U.S. of refugees, asylees, Cuban/Haitian Entrants, Amerasians, and victims of trafficking, Lawful Permanent Residents who have held one of these statuses, and unaccompanied alien children, administered by the U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR).

Refugee Social Services (RSS) – intensive social services provided to help refugees obtain employment, achieve economic self-sufficiency, and realize social adjustment once in the U.S. Programs that administer RSS services are funded through the U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR), which provides both state grants and direct-service grants. The programs

provide services which may include employment assistance, job training, English language training, and social adjustment. Refugees and other ORR eligible populations are only eligible for this program for the first 60 months from their date of entry in the U.S.

Resettlement Support Center (formerly known as Overseas Processing Entity) - funded by the U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration, the Resettlement Support Center helps refugees complete applications for resettlement consideration by U.S. officials and also gathers information for organizations in the U.S. that offer sponsorship to those granted admission. The Resettlement Support Center also educates refugees living in refugee camps about the possibility of resettlement to the U.S.

Secondary Migrant - refugee who subsequently moves to a state that is different than where they were initially resettled upon arrival in the U.S.

Third Country – country to which refugees are resettled permanently. Third countries that admit large numbers of refugees include the U.S., Canada, and Australia.

Trafficking Victim (Victim of a Severe Form of Trafficking) - individual who is subjected to (1) Sex Trafficking, which is the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for the purpose of a commercial sex act, which is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person forced to perform such an act is under the age of 18 years; or (2) Labor Trafficking, which is the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage or slavery. Victims of trafficking are eligible for U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement benefits and services and other federal benefits provided they have been certified as a victim of trafficking.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) – international organization, headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland that, with host country authorization, provides services (directly or indirectly) in refugee camps including protection, assistance, medical services, registration of camp population, and referral for possible resettlement in the U.S. or other refugee-receiving country.

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS, formerly INS) - agency within the Department of Homeland Security that oversees applications for immigration benefits, including employment authorization, refugee travel document and advance parole, adjustment of status to Lawful Permanent Resident, and naturalization to become a U.S. citizen.