



The IRC in Phoenix



From Harm to Home

The International Rescue Committee (IRC) in Phoenix is the largest resettlement agency in Arizona. Since opening in 1994, we have led over 14,000 refugees from harm to home. The IRC restores safety, dignity and hope to people who have been uprooted and are struggling to survive. While the IRC is well known for their work with refugees, the IRC in Phoenix provides extensive services to a variety of population groups including victims of trafficking, survivors of torture, immigrants, limited English speakers, and foster children. Phoenix has a long-standing history of providing a welcoming community to newcomers. Together with local schools, churches, volunteers and community organizations, the IRC helps people to thrive and rebuild their lives despite traumatic experiences. We choose humanity.

Photo by Ethan Fichtner/IRC

Who We Help

Refugees

Refugees are people who have been forced to flee war, violence or persecution in their home country. Refugees come to Phoenix from several countries in crisis including Syria, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Iraq and Afghanistan. The IRC welcomes refugees to America and helps them build a new life here. With a little support, refugees overcome the challenges of transitioning to American life. They become hard-working, self-reliant members of our community. Some well-known refugees include Albert Einstein, Madeleine Albright, Elie Wiesel, Gloria Estefan, Henry Kissinger, and Sergey Brin (co-founder of Google). Their temporary status as a refugee does not have to define them, but our response as a community can define us. From picking them up at the airport to helping them start a business, the IRC in Phoenix gives refugees the knowledge and tools they need to succeed in America.



Refugees take classes at the IRC. Photo: Ethan Fichtner/IRC

How We Help

- Airport welcome and pickup
- Initial housing, including furnishings and household supplies
- Initial food and clothing
- Enrolling children in school, including classroom support and teacher training
- Classes in English language training, cultural orientation, financial literacy, parenting, accessing healthcare, and using the public transit system
- Job assistance and training
- Small loans and matched savings accounts to help refugees build credit, buy a home or car, pay for college, or start a business

Victims of Human Trafficking and Survivors of Torture

Human trafficking is modern day slavery. Human traffickers force and coerce vulnerable people (often women and children) into work as sex slaves or domestic servants, or as laborers in manufacturing, construction and agriculture. Every year, between 14,000 and 17,000 people are trafficked into the United States. The IRC established the Arizona League to End Regional Trafficking (ALERT) in 2003 to help victims and put an end to human trafficking.

Hotline for victims of human trafficking: 1-800-602-5378

A survivor of torture is someone who has experienced mental or physical pain at the hands of their own country's police or government. They may have suffered torture due to war, genocide, political or religious persecution, or because they belong to a minority group.

How We Help

- Food and shelter
- Counseling by trauma-trained professionals who are sensitive to the victim's language and culture
- Medical care coordination
- Referral to pro bono legal services
- Connection with law enforcement to help police investigate and prosecute traffickers

Immigrants

The United States is a country of immigrants. If you are not an immigrant yourself, it is likely that one of your recent ancestors was. Immigrants come to America hoping for a better life than the one they had in their country of birth. They bring fresh ideas and a drive for innovation and optimism. Immigrants strengthen America. And the IRC in Phoenix leads the way in welcoming them into our community.

How We Help

- Green card applications
- Citizenship applications
- Family Reunification
- Free citizenship classes to help immigrants prepare for the naturalization exam

Limited English Speakers

The IRC's Interpreting Service offers interpreting for refugees, victims of trafficking, new immigrants and people throughout the community. With over 100 interpreters and 43 languages to offer, the interpreter service helps clients navigate new challenges and rebuild their lives in their new home country. A few of the languages we offer include Arabic, Spanish, Swahili, Kinyarwanda, and Somali.

How We Help

- Interpreting for job and interview training, credit and banking, home and auto loans, cultural orientation classes, elementary and high schools, legal services and medical services

Foster Children

For children who have spent time growing up in foster care, the transition to adulthood can be a daunting experience. Lacking the financial support that many young adults get from their parents, these young people are often left to fend for themselves when they age out of the foster care system. The IRC in Phoenix has stepped in with a program called Opportunity Passport for young adults (ages 14–26) who have experienced foster care.

How We Help

- Money management education
- Setting financial goals
- Matching participant's savings dollar for dollar (up to \$3,000) to help them build credit, buy a home or car, pay for college, or start a business

Do You Need an Interpreter?

The IRC Interpreter Service offers fee-based interpretation to the Phoenix community as well. Our interpreters receive 40 hours of training and over 40 hours of in-house interpreting before working for community clients. We serve a variety of clients including the following:

- School districts
- Federal law enforcement
- Federal, state, and county courts
- County sheriffs and city police
- Hospitals and health care providers
- Social service agencies
- State of Arizona

Interpreter Services Line:
602-330-1360

E-mail:
phxinterpreters@rescue.org

Hours:
M–F, 8am–5pm

*Interpretation is consecutive and completed in person only.



Refugees receive training on how to use the public transit system. Photo: Ethan Fichtner/IRC

How You Can Help

Donate New or Gently Used Items

All too frequently, refugees are forced to flee their homes at a moment's notice, leaving the life they know and everything they own behind. It is not uncommon for a refugee family to arrive in the United States with no more than a single suitcase. The IRC's Resettlement Shop provides clothing and basic household items to refugees and other survivors so they can begin building a safe and dignified life for their family in Arizona.

Donation Drop Off Location:

IRC in Phoenix
(Arizona College Building, fourth floor)
4425 West Olive Avenue
Suite 400
Glendale, AZ 85302

Donation Drop Off Hours:

M-F, 9am-5pm

Contact:

Dave Kurz
Dave.Kurz@rescue.org
602-433-2440 ext. 175



A refugee mother walks her son home from school. Photo: Ethan Fichtner/IRC

Looking for a Group Service Project? Make a Welcome Kit

Get together with your family, friends, church group, business or school and collect items to package in a welcome kit for refugees and their families. Options include cleaning kits, kitchen kits, bedroom kits, men's hygiene kits, women's hygiene kits, and baby kits. Contact the IRC for details on what should be included in each kit or visit our website at Rescue.org/phoenix.

Items Most Needed

- Diapers
- Cleaning kits
- Hygiene kits
- Kitchenware (dishes, utensils, pots and pans, cutting boards)
- Houseware (bedding, towels, lamps, waste baskets)
- Laptops
- Adult-size bikes in working order (for people to ride to work)

Want to Make a Financial Gift?

Private donations contribute greatly to the success of the IRC's work. Although we receive state and federal funding for initial resettlement and employment services, the assistance we provide to refugee families

beyond their first few months in the U.S. would not be possible without community support.

Currently, most local donations allow us to offer housing subsidies during the brief time before IRC families have secured employment and provide onsite childcare for mothers to fully access training opportunities at the IRC. More than 90 cents of every dollar the IRC spends goes directly to help refugees and others in desperate need.

Charity Navigator Score:
91 out of 100 ★★★★★
Charity Watch: A+

Donate Online:

help.rescue.org/donate/us-phoenix-az

Volunteer

With robust community support, refugees, victims of trafficking and new immigrants can acclimate quickly to their new environments. They go on to thrive and contribute to their communities, building careers, purchasing homes and gaining citizenship. Support the mission of the IRC in Phoenix by donating your skills and time to the people who need you most.

A few of our volunteer positions are listed in the table below. For a more detailed list of all volunteer positions, please visit our website at Rescue.org/phoenix.

Volunteer Information Session

Date:
Second Monday of the month (excluding holidays)

Time: 4:30pm

Location:
IRC in Phoenix
(Arizona College Building, fourth floor)
4425 West Olive Avenue
Suite 400
Glendale, AZ 85302

Contact:
VolunteerPHX@rescue.org

Interested in an Internship?

Gain professional skills while serving your community. The IRC in Phoenix offers several unpaid internships in a variety of areas like K-12 education, financial education, health education, communications, case management, and development.

Time Commitment:
10 or more hours per week,
3-month minimum

Contact:
VolunteerPHX@rescue.org

Volunteer Positions

| | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Advocacy | Make your voice heard. Support refugees and immigrants through phone calls and messages to your elected officials. Use social media to spread the word and show your support. Visit Rescue.org/act to learn more. |
| English Language Training | Prepare new arrivals for mainstream English classes |
| Transit Training | Provide weekly trainings to new arrivals on how to access and use public transportation in Phoenix. Interpreter provided. |
| Job Readiness Training | Assist new arrivals with preparing a resume, filling out job applications, networking, and preparing for interviews |
| Computer Literacy | Teach new arrivals the basics of using a computer |
| Resettlement Shop | Sort donations and help new arrivals find items they need |
| Health Specialist | Make medical appointments and provide transportation for new arrivals |
| Housing Specialist | Set up apartments for new arrivals |
| Child Watch | Supervise children while their parents attend classes and receive IRC training |
| Education & Learning In-Class Tutor | Assist teachers with refugee students in an English Language Learner classroom |
| Youth Program Summer Volunteer | Fill out school enrollment packets for refugee children |
| Community Exploration | Travel alongside new arrivals to libraries, banks, grocery stores, and other community resources |

IRC Programs: At a Glance

Our main service areas:

Safety

Case management for victims of human trafficking, refugees, asylees, and people with Special Immigrant Visas

Health and Wellness

Medical care coordination and behavioral health counseling for refugees, asylees, victims of human trafficking, and survivors of torture

Education

- English language training, financial literacy, job training, cultural orientation, and parenting classes
- School enrollment and in-classroom support for refugee children

Economic Empowerment

- Employment services
- Tax services
- Microloans and matched savings accounts to help refugees buy a home or car, go to college, or start a business
- New Roots Farm Program

Community Integration

- Fee-for-service immigration services
- Free citizenship classes
- Green card applications
- Citizenship applications

“Back home, in your home country, you lose trust and safety. The IRC is like someone taking your hand. The IRC means safety, trust, home. The IRC means everything will be okay.”

— Aysar Alkhafaji, a refugee from Iraq who came to Phoenix in 2008 with her husband and three children.



May and Eric Abraham, refugees from Iraq, at their family-owned grocery store in Phoenix. Photo: Ethan Fichtner/IRC.

New Roots

Approximately half of all refugees coming into Phoenix worked in agriculture before entering the U.S. In response, the IRC has created the New Roots Farm Program. New Roots helps refugees become self-sufficient and contribute to their new home through community gardening, nutrition education and small-business farming. With training, tools and land provided by the IRC, refugees share their agricultural skills and produce affordable, locally grown fruits and vegetables for their families and neighbors. We have four community gardens/urban farms throughout Phoenix, including an aquaponics greenhouse. About 60 families participate in the program.

IRC New Roots Farm Stand

Location:

In front of the Mountain Park Health Center West in Maryvale
6601 West Thomas Rd.
Phoenix, AZ 85033

Days:

Every Tuesday

Hours:

Fall/winter: 9am–1pm
Spring/summer: 8am–12pm

*At the farm stand, we offer Fresh Fund, a dollar for dollar match (up to \$10) for SNAP participants.

You can also buy produce from refugee farmers at the following local farmers markets:

- Phoenix Public Market
- Downtown Glendale Farmers Market
- Troon North Scottsdale Farmers Market



Togolese refugee Koffi Ogou grows produce as part of the New Roots Farm Program.
Photo: Ethan Fichtner/IRC.

Local refugee-owned businesses

With microloans from the IRC, many refugees have been successful in starting a local business. Refugees have created several types of businesses in Phoenix including the following:

- Barbershops
- Fashion accessory shops
- Tailoring
- Restaurants and bakeries
- Grocery stores
- Farms
- Cleaning services
- Transportation services
- Auto care
- Home-based child care (DES and State certified)

By supporting local refugee-owned businesses, you are helping people who are eager to work and give back to their new community. For a complete business directory of all refugee-owned businesses in Phoenix, please contact the IRC.



Staff members at the IRC in Phoenix. Photo: Ethan Fichtner/IRC.

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602-433-2440

Hours: 8:30am–5pm, M–F
(Thursdays by appointment only)

[Rescue.org/phoenix](https://www.Rescue.org/phoenix)



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