



*"I was a stranger and you welcomed me"*

Matthew 25:35

Rooted in faith, Lutheran Immigration & Refugee Service (LIRS) believes that we are called to welcome individuals fleeing persecution and seeking refuge in America. Over the years, our work has grown to encompass a wide-range of services:

- **Refugee Resettlement**—As a vital arm of the U.S. refugee resettlement program, LIRS pairs refugees with LIRS service partners who are uniquely equipped to support them.
- **Empowering New Americans**—LIRS works to empower the people we serve through employment services, targeted education, and advocacy & leadership training.
- **Foster Care & Family Reunification**—LIRS works with vulnerable migrant youth and families to ensure that children in our network grow up in a safe, loving home.
- **Immigration Detention Services**—LIRS provides legal resources, visitation ministry, and post-release services to individuals in immigration detention.
- **Community Engagement**—Leveraging a nationwide network of service partners and congregations, LIRS equips communities to walk alongside and support their new neighbors.

Since 1939, LIRS has helped over 500,000 migrants and refugees rebuild their lives in America. We invite you to join us in this compassionate work of welcome.

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# ENGAGE WITH OUR MISSION

*As a witness to God's love for all people, we stand with and advocate for migrants and refugees, transforming communities through ministries of service and justice.*



## Speak

About your own family migration story and engage with newcomers in your community.

Out and advocate for policies that protect refugees and neighbors.

## Pray

For migrants and refugees who are your neighbors.

For migrants and refugees and places of conflict around the globe.

## Give

A gift to transform the lives of refugees.

Time locally and join advocacy efforts with members of your congregation.

Learn more by visiting [LIRS.org](https://LIRS.org).

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## INTRODUCTION

For 80 years, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service has been a champion for immigrants and refugees from around the globe. As the largest faith-based national nonprofit dedicated to immigration, our legacy of compassionate welcome has made a difference in the lives of hundreds of thousands of people who have sought safety and hope on American soil.

In partnership with community-based legal and social service providers nationwide, LIRS has helped over half a million immigrants and refugees rebuild their lives in America. Our Programs largely fall into one of two categories: Children and Family Services and Refugee and Migrant Services.

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## CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

### Safe Release Support Services

Safe Release Support sites perform background checks on potential guardians to ensure that children are reunited into safe and secure homes. Safe Release staff identify various needs of the family such as pro bono legal counsel, food banks, counseling services, English classes, job training, and medical care, and connect them to these services. During the 2018 family separation crisis, LIRS was one of only two agencies working to reunite families.

### Transitional Foster Care for Unaccompanied Children

The Transitional Foster Care program provides safe and caring foster homes to particularly vulnerable children who will be reunified with their families. The program specializes in serving minors under the age of 12, pregnant/parenting youth, youth with disabilities, and sibling groups while their families are located. All children in transitional care receive individualized assessments, acculturation and adaptation services, case management, education, weekly group and individual counseling, legal support, mental and medical health care, and access to religious services.

### Long Term Foster Care for Unaccompanied Children

Unaccompanied children without family reunification options but who have the possibility of receiving legal immigration protections are placed in Long Term Foster Care where they receive ongoing case management support as they integrate into their new communities. Children in Long Term Foster Care are placed with loving foster families until their immigration case is resolved and typically will transition into the Unaccompanied Refugee Minors program.

### Unaccompanied Refugee Minors Program

LIRS places unaccompanied refugee minors (URM) from all over the world in foster care, group homes, and semi-independent living settings. LIRS works with affiliates who provide culturally appropriate services to support the acculturation and integration of children into communities all over the country. Most URM enter the program between 15 and 17 years of age and are provided the option of receiving the support of a foster family or working towards independence in a group home setting.

### Home Study and Post-Release Services

For particularly vulnerable unaccompanied children, LIRS offers community-based case management services. These include inspection of home environments once the child and the caregiver are together in the home, connecting families to community resources, and empowering families with the resources and knowledge they need to make informed decisions about schooling, legal representation, medical health, mental health, and recreational and religious services.

# REFUGEE & MIGRANT SERVICES

## Refugee Resettlement, Empowerment, & Wellness

### Reception and Placement

In partnership with the Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM), LIRS is one of nine national agencies authorized to resettle newly arriving refugees to the United States. As one of the oldest and largest agencies, our national network consists of a network of local nonprofits across the country working to help refugees secure homes, work, and essential community resources.

### Preferred Communities Program

The Preferred Communities Intensive Case Management program is a client-centered program that empowers the most vulnerable to achieve their highest degree of independence through education, individualized/trauma-informed case management, and holistic community integration support. Funded by the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR), this program serves our most vulnerable refugee and other ORR-eligible populations by providing critical interventions for clients within their first five years after arrival.

## Economic Empowerment & Workforce Development

### Matching Grant Program

LIRS provides employment and case management services to refugees, asylees, and other immigrants with the goal of economic self-sufficiency through employment within six months of enrollment.

### New American Pathways & Refugee Youth Career Pathways

In partnership with the Walmart Foundation, LIRS' New American Pathways program provides career upskilling and advancement to refugees and other immigrants around the country, allowing them to move from 'survival' jobs into meaningful careers. Through Refugee Youth Career Pathways, LIRS assists refugees in the advancement of their educational and career goals through activities like career counseling, mentorship, and internships.

### Economic Empowerment Technical Assistance

LIRS holds a contract with the ORR Technical Assistance provider, Switchboard, to provide training and expertise around refugee employment and economic empowerment. LIRS publishes resources, conducts webinars, and creates blog posts and podcasts to support local resettlement providers.

## Migrant Services

### Border Services

LIRS coordinates services for asylum seekers at the southern border, departing immigration detention, and at their final destinations, including the provision of necessities such as food, clothing, and hygiene supplies, medical triage and basic care, Know Your Rights counseling, emergency housing, and case management services.

### Detention Visitation

LIRS works with a network of organizations and congregations that provide support to migrants in detention through visitation and letter-writing.