

The RAIS Program



With a diverse team of dedicated staff, RAIS provides a supportive atmosphere for clients to flourish in their new lives in the United States.

Refugee Assistance

- Cultural & linguistic support to access cash, medical assistance, public benefits, and other local services
- Intensive case management and employment assistance
- Enrollment in English language training, vocational, citizenship, and job readiness classes
- Individual and group programming to assist in cultural orientation and community integration
- Engaging the community to help meet the basic needs of newly arriving refugees

Immigration Services

Our immigration counselors assist with standard immigration submissions including

- Family-based Visa petitions
- Work Permits
- Lawful Permanent Resident Status (Green Cards)
- Naturalization (Citizenship) applications.



Refugee Assistance & Immigration Services

Anchorage Office
 Catholic Social Services Center
 3710 E. 20th Ave
 Anchorage AK 99508
 907-276-5590
 1-888-237-7376
 907-276-5539 (fax)

Delta Junction Office
 P.O.Box 1468
 Delta Junction AK 99737
 907-895-9830
 1-800-895-9834
 907-895-9832 (fax)

www.cssalaska.org
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A lasting solution, the possibility to begin a new life, is the only dignified solution for the refugee himself.

Poul Hartling
 UN High Commissioner for Refugees, 1978-1985



Refugee Assistance & Immigration Services



Who Are Refugees?



The term “refugee” is a United States government recognized immigration status. Refugees have fled their country because of a well-founded fear of persecution due to political opinion, race, religion, nationality or their membership in a particular social group.

An asylee is an individual already present in the United States who fears persecution in his or her country of origin and is granted asylum by the U.S. government.

Who Are We?

Catholic Social Services’ Refugee Assistance & Immigration Services (RAIS) is the only state and federally funded resettlement program in Alaska. RAIS serves the refugee community statewide.

Eligible clients include refugees, asylees, Cuban/Haitian entrants, as well as victims of trafficking generally in their first five years in the U.S.

Additional programming serves the greater immigrant community.



RAIS supports people from many countries throughout the world, such as Thailand, Laos, Iran, Cuba, Russia, Yemen, Ukraine, Sudan, Iraq, China, Togo, Former Zaire, The Gambia and Uzbekistan.

Volunteer Opportunities

RAIS welcomes volunteers interested in making a difference by working with the refugee and immigrant population.

Opportunities are available to:

- Assist a newly arriving refugee family
- Become an English tutor
- Help a refugee youth with homework
- Support the program projects and events
- Provide holiday gifts and food

Or, contact RAIS staff to discuss your own volunteering ideas

Donations

RAIS relies on donations from the community to support its clients at their initial U.S. arrival and throughout their participation in our program.

Program needs include:

- Personal care items
- Home cleaning supplies, including vacuum cleaners, mops and brooms
- Furniture, most especially beds, couches, dressers and tables
- Household items, such as alarm clocks & phones
- Bed linens & towels
- Bicycles
- New car seats, bed pillows & socks
- Gift Cards & Phone Cards

Your Financial Donation supports:

- Microloans, rotating deposit fund
- Purchase of winter clothes and boots
- Funding for special events and projects

New Alaskans

Abdurafik & Gulnora arrived in Alaska in the summer of 2006 with their daughter & mother after fleeing political persecution in Uzbekistan. Although they had no relatives in the U.S., the family began learning quickly about the culture and the need to study hard. After just a few months, while dealing with medical challenges and learning English for the first time, both parents began working and were able to terminate public assistance. Gulnora, a pediatrician in her home country, completed her Certified Nurse Assistant courses and after a year in the U.S. enrolled in the University’s Nursing Program. Now, the family is building their first home in the U.S. through the Habitat for Humanity program. When asked what life in America is like, Abdurafik stated, **“I feel freedom.”**

At-Tahier & Jaddah arrived in early 2008 with their four children after fleeing genocide in Northern Sudan. While addressing medical challenges, the family began studying English with diligence that amazed RAIS staff. The family has learned the bus system and regularly attends orientation sessions with RAIS. After only a few months in the U.S., At-Tahier, who has worked in Africa in construction, farming and fishing, has begun interviewing for entry level positions. Their continued success will be a model for many refugees to come. Reflecting on what he notices most in his new life in Alaska, At-Tahier explained, **“It is better here, I like to see people— I see that they are very happy.”**

Pa arrived in the U.S. in 2004 from a refugee camp in Thailand. Moving to Alaska in 2005 from Minnesota, she has persevered as a single mother of three. While serving as a Personal Care Attendant for her elderly father, Pa worked hard in the CSS sponsored Fresh International Gardens project. She learned how to raise, market and sell produce while earning a seasonal summer income. After completing the project Pa was able to find full-time employment in a car detailing shop and has since ended her public assistance. When asked how she feels about being here now, Pa exclaimed **“I am proud to be able to come to America. My children and I are happy and thankful that we got assistance from the government. This has been a great help to me and my children.”**