



Tennessee Welcomes Refugees

November 2019

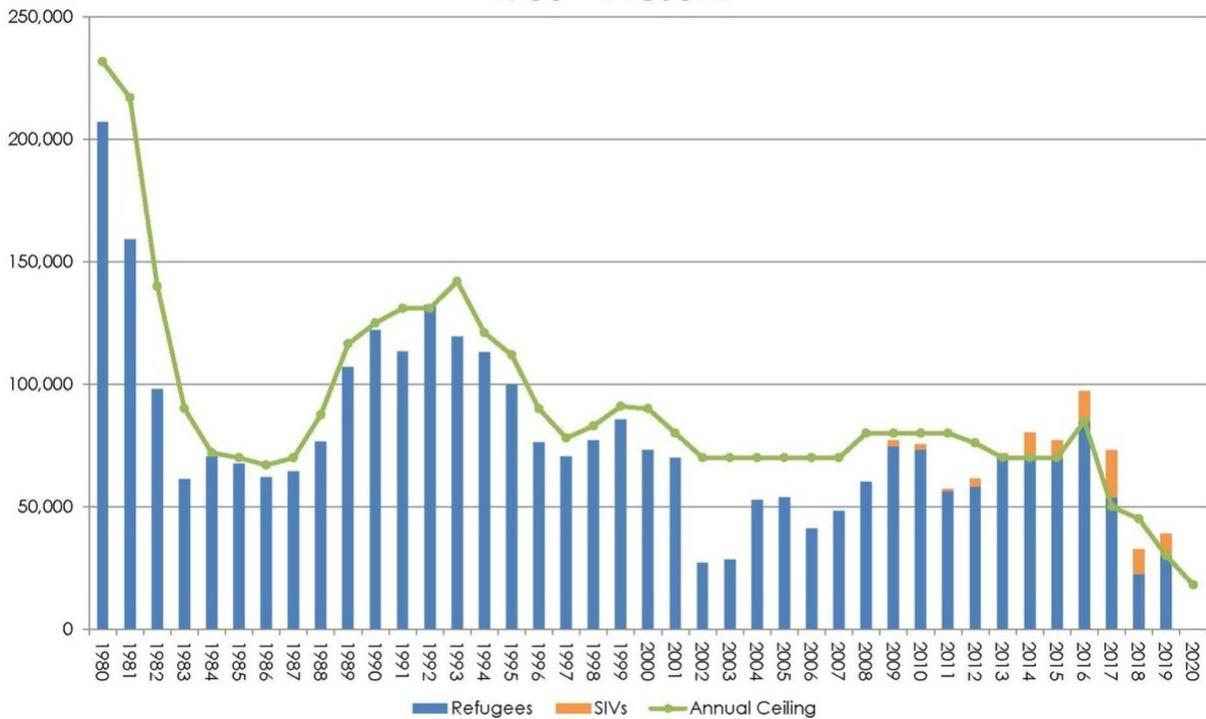
The number of refugees who will be admitted into the United States in Fiscal Year 2020 is lower than it has ever been. The Presidential Determination sets this fiscal year's annual ceiling for refugee arrivals at only 18,000, a drastic decrease in an already downward trend in the past four years.

An Executive Order published the same day as the Presidential Determination has the power to further inhibit refugee programs' ability to help refugees attain self-sufficiency. The Executive Order requires state and local authorities to submit their agreement to accept the initial placement of refugees. Traditionally, refugees who are admitted into the United States are placed with a local resettlement agency which assists them to quickly attain self-sufficiency and become contributing members of their community. This year, however, if states do not take steps to affirm their humanitarian commitments and desire to help new Americans become contributing community members, refugees will be assumed unwelcome and turned away. The Tennessee Refugee Program is administered by Catholic Charities through its Tennessee Office for Refugees, so the task of resettlement does not rest upon the state.

What is the Tennessee Office for Refugees doing?

Since the issuance of the Presidential Determination and Executive Order, the Tennessee Office for Refugees has reached out to Governor Lee to answer any questions he may have about refugee resettlement in Tennessee. We are also working with each resettlement agency to communicate with their local authorities and answer questions, provide data, and educate them about how refugees contribute to their new communities. Even in this time of uncertainty, resettlement agencies continue to serve refugees, community members continue to seek ways to support their local resettlement agencies, and refugees continue to flourish in the country they now call home.

Refugee and SIV Arrivals in U.S. and Annual Ceilings by Fiscal Year 1980 – Present



Data Source: Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, U.S. Department of State

What can you do?

1. If you support refugee resettlement in Tennessee, it is important to let Governor Lee know! Call, write, or tweet to make your voice heard. [Tennessee Immigrant & Refugee Rights Coalition](#) provides a helpful form letter.
2. Contact your local elected officials to let them know their constituents support refugee resettlement.

Chattanooga City Mayor

Andy Berke

(423) 643-7800

mayor@chattanooga.gov

Hamilton County Mayor

Jim Coppinger

(423) 209-6100

Email: hamiltontn.gov/Mayor/form.aspx

Knoxville City Mayor

Madeline Rogero

(865) 215-2040

mayor@knoxvillekn.gov

Glenn Jacobs
(865) 215-2005
Email: knoxcounty.org/email/email_new.php?email_name=county.mayor

Memphis City Mayor
Jim Strickland
(901) 636-6000
mayor@memphistn.gov

Shelby County Mayor
Lee Harris
(901) 222-2000
officeofthemayor@shelbycountyttn.gov

Nashville Metro Mayor
John Cooper
(615) 862-6000

3. Reach out to your local resettlement agency to volunteer or provide other support.
There are five resettlement agencies in Tennessee:

Chattanooga
Bridge Refugee Services
(423) 954-1911
Mpeshterianu@Bridgerefugees.org

Knoxville
Bridge Refugee Services
(865) 540-1311
dmugorewera@bridgerefugees.org

Memphis
World Relief
(901) 341-0220
pjmoore@wr.org

Nashville
Catholic Charities of Tennessee, Inc.
(615) 259-3567
kbranson@cctenn.org

Nashville International Center for Empowerment
(615) 315-9681
information@empowernashville.org

4. The [GRACE Act](#) is a proposed bill that will increase the annual refugee admissions floor to 95,000, the average refugee admissions goal set by previous presidents. Call Representative Cohen & Senator Blackburn to let them know that Tennesseans stand behind the GRACE Act.

For More Information

- act.rescue.org/grace-act
- immigrationforum.org/article/infographic-fy2020-refugee-ceiling/
- niskanencenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Salehyan-Niskanen-Center_September-2019.pdf
- wrapsnet.org/admissions-and-arrivals/



Tennessee Office for Refugees

2806 McGavock Pike, Nashville TN 37214

(615) 352-9520

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