

SUPPORT FOR SERVICES THAT EMPOWER REFUGEES



The Iowa Legislature must continue to support the Community-Based English-as-a-Second Language program and restore funding levels to the RefugeeRISE program. The return on investment for these initiatives is massive, as former refugees gain employment and contribute to our community in new and exciting ways.

When refugees fleeing persecution, torture, and war arrive in Iowa, they have an extremely limited window of support from the federal government. That's why services that connect them with skills are critical in moving refugees to self-sufficiency and building Iowa's workforce.

LSI COMMUNITY-BASED ESL BY THE NUMBERS

From July 2017 to December 2017

290
participants
attended an
LSI-sponsored
English class

After 40 hours of study,
86%
of students in the class
made improvements on
their testing

36%
of students had
no schooling prior
to LSI classes

For decades, "welcome" is something Iowa has expressed for refugees from around the world. As children and families are forced to leave the homes they love, Iowa must continue to stand for welcome. We must do more. We must be more. Please continue to make Iowa a place of welcome and hope by supporting these crucial programs.

These services have been life-changing for former refugees like Zeor, who was in a panic when it was time to take her U.S. citizenship exam. While she knew the alphabet, she struggled with both the reading and writing sections of the four-part exam. Then she learned about LSI's ESL classes. LSI's curriculum gave her the education and confidence she needed to retake the test. The second time, she passed with a high score and gained her citizenship.

AT LSI, WE PROVIDE THESE CRITICAL PATHWAYS:

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING

VOCATIONAL TRAINING & WORKFORCE READINESS

EDUCATIONAL CONNECTIONS

CITIZENSHIP CLASSES

FINANCIAL LITERACY

SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

In 2016, more than 750 refugees utilized this programming to achieve greater levels of independence.

In 2016, funding for RefugeeRISE was cut to \$200,000. Previously, it received \$300,000 in state funding, which also drew down an additional \$600,000 in federal dollars.

Iowa must also maintain its \$210,000 support level for Polk County Community-Based English-as-a-Second-Language services. Unlike other ESL programming, this curriculum is tailored especially for refugees, and classes are scheduled with their transportation and childcare needs in mind.



Lutheran Services in Iowa

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