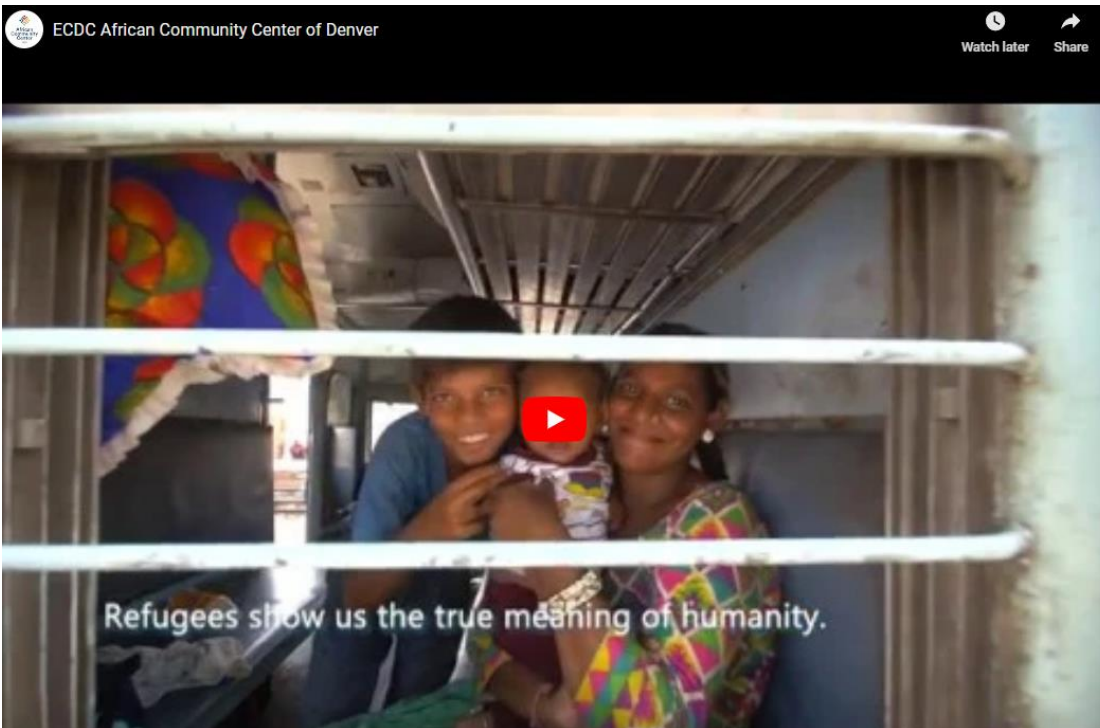




About Us

The African Community Center (ACC)



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1p5UudbAcq0&embeds_widget_referrer=https%3A%2F%2Fdocs.google.com%2Fpresentation%2Fd%2F10aR1PuaekJdNMSmIDDzfs7UUfSTUYr5NO_jmeGGyZY%2Fedit&embeds_referring_euri=https%3A%2F%2Fdocs.google.com%2F&embeds_referring_origin=https%3A%2F%2Fdocs.google.com&feature=emb_imp_woyt



About ACC

- Founded in 2001 with 3 staff members resettling 60 refugees
- Now almost 60 full-time staff that serve 1500+ refugees & immigrants every year
- Support refugees & immigrants from all regions of the world - not just Africa!
- 900% growth in number of clients served from 2022 to 2023

Our Mission

To help refugees and immigrants rebuild safe, sustainable lives in Denver.



Who is a refugee?

“Someone who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a **well-founded fear of being persecuted** for reasons of...

- race
- religion
- nationality
- membership of a particular social group
- OR political opinion.”

Sources: 1951 Refugee Convention



1951 Refugee Convention established international definition and rights of refugee
Membership of a particular social group - this category has been used to protect various groups, including people who identify as LGBTQIA+

Famous refugees: Albert Einstein, Mila Kunis, Rita Ora, Freddie Mercury, Gloria Estefan, Elie Wiesel (Veezel), Madeline Albright,

Refugee Resettlement in the U.S.

1. Flee persecution
2. Apply for refugee status
3. Referral to the U.S. for resettlement
4. Background checks, interviews, medical screenings
5. Assigned to a local resettlement agency
6. Travel plans & arrival

Did you know there are local resettlement agencies in 46 U.S. states?



The average amount of time a refugee spends in exile (living in a host country either in a refugee camp or as an urban refugee in temporary shelter) is estimated at 17 years.

It is the role of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to find a durable solution for people living as refugees. There are three durable solutions:

1. Voluntary returns in safety and dignity;
2. Local integration; and
3. Resettlement to another location or country.

Most refugees referred for resettlement are those who meet vulnerability criteria. There are four major categories of vulnerable populations: elderly at risk, women at risk, children at risk, and the physically disabled. Less than ½ of 1% of the world's refugees are resettled.

Vulnerable refugees who are referred to the US for resettlement undergo a 2 year screening process (the most rigorous screening of any population entering the US).

Our Work

Core Services:

- Housing
- Cultural orientation
- Case management
- School enrollment
- Employment services
- Public benefits enrollment
- Healthcare coordination
- ESL referrals
- Legal services



Refugees can have an open case with ACC and receive services for up to 5 years after their arrival date

- Pick them up from the airport
- We arrange leases and find and provide furniture for community members' initial houses
- Cultural Orientation - teaching about important topics in America, ie. laws, regulations, customs
- Public Benefits - Medicaid, food stamps while community members do not have income
- Healthcare - Required two refugees health screenings
- ESL - English (refugees are eligible for up to 5 years of free English classes)
- Legal - Applying for things like green card or asylum



Our Work

Integration Programs:

We Made This

- Sewing & therapeutic arts

Ready for American Hospitality

- Training with DU students to prepare for hospitality/service jobs

Driving Opportunity

- Driving school for women, by women



We Made This is a sewing, therapeutic arts, and psychosocial program for refugee and immigrant women.

Founded in 2009, We Made This (WMT) was created to build psychosocial skills in refugee and immigrant women who faced extra barriers to integration in Denver. Through 12- to 14-week classes, the program teaches sewing and artistic skills while providing participants a safe and supportive space to strengthen communication abilities, form social connections, and practice overcoming language and cultural barriers.

We Made This classes are divided into Introductory, Intermediate, and Artisan levels and consist of in-class sewing instruction, therapeutic arts activities, field trips, and social/group discussions. The hand-sewn items made by the participants are sold at local stores, markets, and craft fairs with a portion of the proceeds going directly back to the makers.

The program also welcomes volunteer artists and makers to share their craft with the classes. Volunteers also help facilitate integration activities and field trips for the participants.

Ready for American Hospitality (RAH) is a collaborative training program between the [University of Denver \(DU\)](#) and ACC.

Refugee students are paired with students from DU's Fritz Knoebel School of Hospitality management (Knoebel) Human Capital Management course. The DU students and refugee students establish a mentor/protégé relationship as they meet twice per week.

RAH protégés gain knowledge, skills, and experience working in the food service industry while gaining a better understanding of work culture and expectations in the U.S. This ultimately leads to employment opportunities and additional nurturing throughout the integration process.

Driving Opportunity

Many refugee and immigrant women arrive in the United States without driving experience or knowledge. For them, limited mobility and access to transportation can worsen social isolation and restrict employment opportunities. By creating a safe and comfortable environment for refugee women to prepare for their driver's licenses, **Driving Opportunity** provides avenues for greater independence and self-sufficiency.

Driving Opportunity is a one-of-a-kind program specifically designed for adult refugee and immigrant women to learn how to drive in their new country. The curriculum was created using Colorado driving regulations and was structured to serve English language learners. Participants do not need to speak English to enroll. Classes will be provided by trained female instructors who speak the same language as their students and will use translated teaching materials. This innovative approach eliminates barriers for refugee and immigrant women working towards greater independence and mobility.

Throughout the course, students will receive a combination of classroom and in-car instruction in preparation of obtaining their driver's license, learning about important topics such as passenger safety, traffic rules and regulations, and defensive driving skills.

Our 2022 Impact At A Glance



Served **1,504** individuals

Top countries:

1. Afghanistan (719)
2. Ukraine (103)
3. Cuba (63)
4. DRC (62)

347 job placements

92% retained their job for at least 90 days

\$18.04 average starting wage



Ways to Engage



Nest A Home

- Collect new or gently used items to furnish a home for an arriving family
- Great opportunity for groups like families, coworkers, friends, school groups, etc.

Donation Drives

- Collect household and other in-kind donations for new refugee families



Donation Impact

- \$100** *Food Box*
A culturally appropriate food box with oils and spices from home country
- \$200** *Donations Bin*
Ex. Linens Bin includes sheets, towels, and a laundry basket
- \$500** *Nest a Home PARTIAL*
Provide most household items needed to set up a family's apartment
- \$2000** *Nest a Home FULL*
Provide all household items including new mattresses and used furniture
- \$1500** *One Month Rental Assistance*



Volunteer Opportunities with ACC

One-Time Opportunities

- Deliveries, Appointments

Ongoing Roles

- LEAP or Internet Essentials Apps, Bus

First Friends

- 6 months, individual or family

Co-Sponsorship

- 9 months, group of 7 or more, financial + integration support

Internships

- Spend a couple of days a week during your summer gaining professional experience with us! (16+, not compensated)



First Friends

Walk alongside a refugee or a refugee family on their integration journey for a minimum of 6 months. Support them through friendship, conversational English, and integration outings.

First Friends volunteers can choose to participate as an individual or as a family.

Co-Sponsorship

Through co-sponsorship, new refugee families are paired with groups of at least 7 trained volunteers who provide clearly defined financial contributions, in-kind donations, and other support for 9 months to assist in the family's integration into their new life in Denver.

A great opportunity for faith communities, businesses, civil society groups, and others!

Stay updated with ACC!

Website: acc-den.org

Facebook: African Community
Center of Denver

Instagram:
[@africancommunitycenter](https://www.instagram.com/africancommunitycenter)

LinkedIn:
ECDC African Community Center of Denver

