

Tennessee stands to receive 10,000 Syrian refugees

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Thousands of Syrians are displaced as a result of the country's civil war. Some are expected to arrive in Tennessee in the next few months. Credit: United Nations

Tennessee will likely receive some of the 10,000 Syrian refugees that President Barack Obama says the U.S. will admit for resettlement over the next 12 months.

The Tennessee Office for Refugees, based in Nashville, is waiting for more information on the families it will help relocate and Holly Johnson, spokeswoman for the organization, says they are prepared to assist those who come. "Statewide our program is very strong," says Johnson. "We have very successful employment outcomes, self-sufficiency; refugees quickly thrive and become part of the community."

Johnson says it's important to note the high level of screening the Syrian immigrants will undergo before arriving to the United States. For that reason it's unlikely, she says, that any of them could pose a danger to citizens here.

Catholic Charities in Nashville played a large role in resettling Kurdish refugees who came to the U.S. in the 1970s. Now the city has the largest Kurdish population in the country, totaling 13,000 people. Johnson says the Kurds are a model for how immigrants can contribute in a positive way to their community. "We're proud of the Kurds, they've done so well and talk about sort of becoming part of a community but still sort of keeping dear the pieces of your own culture," she says.

The Tennessee Office for Refugees is administered by Catholic Charities and is supported with funds from the federal Office of Refugee Resettlement. There are six settlement agencies in the state, three in Nashville and one each in Chattanooga, Memphis and Knoxville.

Source:

Partner Station WMSR