



RESOURCE GUIDE

(for refugees and advocates)



This guide is only intended as a resource and is changing daily. SAWA does not endorse an individual or agency. Please contact us to add to the guide.

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RESOURCES FOR GREATER HARTFORD REFUGEES & ADVOCATES

- SAWA <http://sawagreaterhartford.org>
- [The Bridge for Families and Children](#)
- [Capital Community College \(ESL\)](#)
- [CAIR](#) (Council on American-Islamic Relations)
- [CIRI](#) (Connecticut Institute for Refugees and Immigrants)
- [CIRC](#) (Connecticut Immigrant and Refugee Coalition)
- [Catholic Charities](#)
- Connecticut Coalition of Mutual Assistance Associations,
ct.coalition@yahoo.com
- [CT State Refugee Assistance Program](#)
- [CRIA](#) (Commission on Refugee and Immigrant Affairs)
- [DCF](#) (Department of Children and Families)
- [Golden Door](#): A Center for Immigrants
- Hartford International
- [IRIS](#) (Integrated Refugee and Immigrant Services)
- [Jewish Family Services](#)
- [JIRAN Program of Middlebury College in New Britain](#)
- [The Village for Children & Families](#)
- [Trinity College](#)
- [Wesleyan University](#)

State Refugee Personnel

Kathy Libal, Director: Human Rights Institute, University of Connecticut
Kathryn.libal@uconn.edu

Janet Bauer, Trinity College and Co-Chair of Hartford's Commission on Refugee and Immigrant Affairs. janet.bauer@trincoll.edu

Elizabeth (Liz) Nalley- Department of Social Services (DSS)
State Refugee Coordinator Elizabeth.Nalley@ct.gov

ACCESSING DSS (Department of Social Services)

IRIS has a contact if you need assistance in connecting with DSS (Department of Social Services)

<https://portal.ct.gov/DSS/Economic-Security/Refugee-Assistance-Program>

<https://refugees.org/uscris-statement-on-the-passage-of-the-continuing-resolution/>

<https://portal.ct.gov/DSS/Economic-Security/Temporary-Family-Assistance---TFA>

<https://cirict.org/critical-funding-approved-for-afghan-refugees/>

In early October, 2021, the Continuing Resolution was passed authorizing Afghan parolees to receive refugee resettlement benefits including reception and placement services, and public benefits such as food assistance.

WIC (Women, Infants, and Children Special Supplemental Nutrition Program)

- Hartford, 450 Main Street. 860-757-4860
- New Britain, 860-225-8695
- East Hartford, 50 Chapman Street, 860-528-1458

Helpful information about WIC program:

- Currently all applications are done by phone or email
- Call office to receive paperwork
- They will call back with a phone interview to discuss application
- They have a translation line!
- Need: ID, Social Security Number for all members, Husky & Snap budget sheet/client ID or snap card, ages of mom & children, if child is over 1 years old you need most, Obstetrician's name if mom is pregnant, recent hematocrit & hemoglobin & children's pediatricians's name
- WIC provides coverage for only certain food items a month
- Family will need assistance shopping for WIC items

EMPLOYMENT

<https://portal.ct.gov/cthires>

Discover job openings in Connecticut and see who's hiring including online training.

<https://portal.ct.gov/Services/Jobs-and-Employment>

[Indeed.com](https://www.indeed.com)

Hartford American Job Center, Manchester American Job Center, CTWorks in New Britain

American Job Centers offer no-cost services to job seekers, in convenient locations throughout the state. Check out the employment & training opportunities.

<http://www.ctdol.state.ct.us/JobCenterCT/Index.htm>

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

International Hartford

<https://interhartford.org/>

Supporting immigrants and refugees to start small businesses.

Small Business Administration

<https://www.sba.gov/offices/district/ct/hartford/resources>

Resources, counselors, information, possibly loans to start small businesses.

FOOD SERVICES

Parkville Market

<https://parkvillemarket.com/>

This project has a component of a shared commercial kitchen. And booth areas are rented to individual vendors that serve all different types of food in a food court setting.

Hands On Hartford

<http://www.handsonhartford.org/>

Has a commercial kitchen and they were willing to look into grant funding for refugees to use it.

Hartford Food Incubator Project

<https://www.innovationhartford.com/hartfords-new-food-incubator-mentorship-program/>

A mentorship program started by Hands on Hartford and ReSet Food Collaborative. They started a Culinary Collaborative, which includes [Hands On Hartford](#), [Forge City Works](#), [Knox](#), [Community Solutions – The North Hartford Partnership](#), [Swift Factory](#), [Breakfast Lunch & Dinner](#), and [Parkville Market](#). Their goal is to think about how to bring the community together around food.

Swift Factory

<https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2019-10/documents/bf-ss-swift-factory-hartford-ct.pdf> Offering commercial kitchen space and food service training in a renovated factory building.

Forge City Works (Billings Forge)

<https://www.forgecityworks.org/> Food Service training and internships in their café/catering.

Literacy Volunteers

Has a free food service training course Safe Serve in East Hartford, through Sodexo. Wickham Literacy Center, (at New Covenant United Methodist Church) 16 Church Street, East Hartford

Sodexo Food Service Job Training Program

Tuesday and Thursday, 4 PM-7:30 PM

<https://lvgh.org/students/job-training/>

City Seed/Sanctuary Kitchen, New Haven

<https://www.sanctuarykitchen.org/>

Sanctuary Kitchen offers food service training and then employs refugees to do food service, although it's a little far for the refugees to go to New Haven. If someone is serious about opening a food truck or a restaurant, though, this is the type and level of training needed.

Cottage Food industry in CT

<https://portal.ct.gov/DCP/Food-and-Standards-Division/Cottage-Food/Cottage-Food-Home> Cook or bake certain lower risk foods from home, sell them from home directly or at a Farmer's Market. The easiest route to having one's own food service business at home, and a person can make up to \$25,000 per year through this program.

FOOD ASSISTANCE

Jewish Family Services Food Pantry A kosher food pantry is available. There's often overlap between kosher foods and halal.

Grace Worship Center Church Food Pantry 750 Wethersfield Avenue Hartford. Church food pantry is in addition to being a Mobile Foodshare site. Church food pantry distributes food to anyone in need on M: 12noon-2pm; Walk in. Food pantry also open at other times for emergencies.

St. Augustine Church 10 Campfield Ave. (rear) Hartford. Food Pantry Wednesdays 12 to 2.

Hartford-area Mobile Food Share sites

Foodshare Mobile Truck - text FOODSHARE8551 to get a schedule of food truck locations. Bring bags.
Or call 860-856-4321

Most towns have social services departments and food pantries but you need to apply.

INTERPRETERS (Arabic, Pashto, Dari/Farsi, Swahili)

The app is: <https://tarjimly.org/start> provides on the spot virtual interpretation. Possibly free for basic, a fee for Premium version.

Google Translate can help.

Google Lens

Contact IRIS or refugees advocates in your area for a list of names. Hospitals have virtual interpreting services.

Email SAWA at SAWA2020@gmail.com for assistance in finding somebody who speaks the language.

RECREATION FOR CHILDREN

Dinosaur State Park, Imagine Nation Museum, Norwalk Maritime Center, Mystic Aquarium, etc.

<https://foodstampsnow.com/connecticut-ebt-discounts/>

Many museums offer free or reduced entry for EBT card (SNAP benefit) holders.

<https://portal.ct.gov/DEEP/State-Parks/Connecticut-State-Parks-and-Forests>

All **state parks** are free to CT residents, just show that your car has CT license plates. Small fee for certain parks with indoor exhibits.

Libraries

Encourage refugees to get a library card! They will have access to English books, movies, children's books, etc., and computers at their computer centers. Town public libraries offer passes for local museums and centers. Ask at your local library.

Parks

Local parks are free. Many have playgrounds and splash pads for young children, and basketball, tennis, walking trails, swimming pools. Nice places for a family outing are Westmoor Park, a farm with walking trails in West Hartford, or Elizabeth Park Rose Garden in Hartford/West Hartford.

Most towns have sports teams & camps - check town websites. Some offer scholarships or reduced rates based on need.

HEALTHCARE

Dr. Susan Levine ,UConn Immigrant health - they do Refugee Health Assessments (RHAs), green card exams, asylum evaluations, and provide primary care to refugees and immigrants.

Dr. Hugh Blumenfeld, Asylum Hill Family Medicine - Primary care to refugees and immigrants.

[Fact Sheet: Health Coverage Options for Afghan Evacuees](#) (PDF, 246.91 KB) Sep 27, 2021

This information may change as Afghan Evacuees are now eligible for refugee benefits.

Dr. Al Shami (Syrian, Arabic) - Starling Nephrology team in New Britain

Dr. Parvin (Starling Southington Internist, Speaks Farsi) in Southington

Hoda Abdel Salam MD, New Britain, 300 Kensington Avenue, New Britain, CT| (860) 832-8150

Dr. Maher Suede (Syrian, Arabic), Surgeon, 272 Main St, Manchester, CT 06042
Phone: (860) 432-2100

Dr. Hazar Dahhan (Syrian, Arabic), Cardiologist, 201 Main St, Manchester, CT 06042
Phone: (860) 643-5443

Dr. Ahmed Elwan, 40 Sunrise Dr, Manchester, Cardiologist, (Arabic)

Dr. Arshad Yekta, Cardiovascular (Urdu) 290 Collin St, Hartford, CT

Dr. Mohiuddin Cheema, 330 Western Blvd, Glastonbury, CT, Family Medicine (Urdu)

Dr. Ali Torabzadeh, Avon, Family Medicine/Persian

Dr. Marwan Haddad, Meriden (Arabic), Family Medicine

Dr. Sulton Quraishi, 677 Silver Ln, East Hartford, CT, Family Medecine (Urdu)

Dr. Ali Hemacha, 428 Hartford Tpk, Suite 207, Vernon, CT, Gastroenterology (Arabic)

Dr. Sherif Saleh, 196 Kittls Ln, Newington,,P, (Urdu)

Dr. Faiqa Cheema, 80 Seymour St, Hartford, CT, Infectious Disease, (Arabic)

Dr. Sana Idrees, Bristol Health, Southington, CT, Internal Medicine, (Urdu)

Dr. Othman Elalami, 211 New Britain Rd, Suite 201, Kensington, CT, Internal Medicine, (Arabic)

Dr. Patricia Nasr, 114 Woodland St, Hartford, CT 06105, Internal Medicine, Internal medicine, (Arabic)

Dr. Wayel Sayej, 399 Farmington Ave, Farmington, Pediatrician, (Arabic)

Dr. Muhammad Azeem, 1000 Asylum Ave, Suite 4304, Hartford, CT, Nephrology

Dr. Anees Ahmad, 500 Vine Street, Hartford, CT, Psychiatrist

Dr. Prashant Grover, 140 Hazard Ave, Suite 103, Enfield, CT Pulmonology

DENTAL NEEDS

Dr. Loay Hammad, 31 William Shorty Campbell St, Hartford, CT 06106-3401 (Arabic)

CHILDREN AND FAMILY DENTISTRY & BRACES, 272 Franklin Ave, Hartford, CT 06114-1848 (Arabic)

University Dentists, 65 Kane Street, WH (Arabic)

UConn Dental Clinic - they often have dental students with a variety of spoken languages. They provide dental services to those without benefits. Husky only covers dental services for children (under 21.) Need to apply to UCONN in advance - it takes a while to schedule.

Some refugees have been fortunate to receive “pro-bono” dental services through personal connections made through their American friends.

CT Children’s Medical Center has a children’s dental clinic.

FOOD(HALAL) MARKETS

Asian Grocery & Halal Food

244 Broad St, Manchester, CT 06040

[\(860\) 432-2455](tel:(860)432-2455)

<https://www.facebook.com/Asian-Grocery-and-Halal-Food-LLC-196689777161387/>

Open daily 10 am – 9:30 pm

Crown Market (kosher) - 2471 Albany Ave, West Hartford, CT 06117

Costco (some halal meat) - 405 Hartford Road, New Britain

Desi Grocery

824 Main St, Manchester, CT 06040

[\(860\) 730-2771](tel:(860)730-2771)

<https://www.facebook.com/desigrocery822/>

Open daily 10 am – 8 pm

Halal Food Market

398 Windsor Ave, Windsor, CT 06095

[\(860\) 560-0722](tel:(860)560-0722)

[https://www.facebook.com/HALAL-FOOD-Market-398-Windsor-AveCT-06095-81904435](https://www.facebook.com/HALAL-FOOD-Market-398-Windsor-AveCT-06095-819044354813680/)

[4813680/](https://www.facebook.com/HALAL-FOOD-Market-398-Windsor-AveCT-06095-819044354813680/) Open Daily 10:30 am – 9 pm

The Olive Bazaar

1763 Wilbur Cross Hwy, Berlin, CT 06037

[\(860\) 829-2210](tel:(860)829-2210)

<https://www.facebook.com/theolivebazaar>

Open daily 10 am – 8 pm

Rasham Groceries

579 John Fitch Blvd, South Windsor, CT 06074

[\(860\) 290-9126](tel:(860)290-9126)

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Rasham-Grocery/146713868686710>

Open Tuesday through Sunday 11 am – 8 pm -- Closed Mondays

Rasham Marketplace (2nd location)

770 Farmington Ave, West Hartford, CT 06119



[\(860\) 232-6600](tel:8602326600)

<https://rashammarketplace.com/password> (website not yet up and running)

Open Tuesday through Sunday 11 am – 8 pm -- Closed Mondays

Saba Poultry

Sahara Halal Market, 365 Allen Street, New Britain

<https://www.zabihah.com/sub/OQsB99TKAc?t=m&s=r&v=0> Use Zabihah to find Halal restaurants and places in Connecticut.

CULTURAL TRAINING (Cultural Competency & Cultural Humility)

- <https://preemptivelove.org/blog/cultural-competence/>
- **IRIS Training for Co-sponsorship groups**
- <https://landingpage.irisct.org/resources/>

EDUCATION (Children, Adult ELL, GED, Special Education)

- Every large town and city plus places like Hartford Public Library and Literacy Volunteers offer GED, Adult English Language Learner classes, and Citizenship classes.
- **Literacy Volunteers**, Hartford, East Hartford
- **Connecticut Parent Advocacy Center (CPAC)** has a mission to educate, support, and empower Connecticut's diverse families of children and youth with any disability or chronic conditions, ages birth to 26, and the professionals who serve them. <https://cpacinc.org/>

Hartford Public Library



ESL classes & Citizenship classes offered year-round at the library and in online courses produced by the library. Main Library will also help with completing naturalization/citizenship forms, Address: 500 Main Street, Hartford, CT 06103
<http://www.hplct.org/>

The American Place (Hartford Public Library)

Provides industry-recognized certificate training, GED preparation services, English as a second language, and a nationally recognized U.S. Citizenship program.
<https://tap.hplct.org/>

FINANCIAL LITERACY

VITA - free tax preparation, Hartford County at 330 Market St., Hartford

<https://portal.ct.goa>

[v/DRS/Individuals/VITA-TCE/Free-Income-Tax-Assistance#vit](https://portal.ct.goa/v/DRS/Individuals/VITA-TCE/Free-Income-Tax-Assistance#vit)

VITA Tax Clinic - at Trin.fo Cafe, Hartford. <https://trinfocafe.org/>

HOUSING/RENTAL/PREPARING FOR HOME OWNERSHIP

[Connecticut Housing Finance Authority](#) Homebuyer programs, including downpayment and closing cost assistance.

[Connecticut State Department of Housing](#) Everything you need to know about housing in CT.

[Welcome to the Housing Choice Voucher Program](#) (also known as Section 8)

The Section 8 Mainstream Housing Opportunities Program for Persons with Disabilities.

ENERGY ASSISTANCE

[The Connecticut Energy Assistance Program](#) is designed to help offset the winter heating costs of Connecticut's lower-income households.

Connecticut Renewal Team - CRT, they accept applications for heating assistance. All done remotely right now. Call for an application to be sent to you.

Hartford 395 Wethersfield Ave 860-560-5800, 330 Market Street 860-761-7908
East Hartford 70 Main Street
West Hartford 50 S. Main Street
Manchester 479 Main Street

LEGAL ASSISTANCE

- [Greater Hartford Legal Aid](#)
- IRIS attorneys
- Many co-sponsorship groups have attorneys helping them and can help find pro-bono attorneys through personal relationships.

COMPUTER TRAINING/TECHNOLOGY

[Computer Skills Center](#) Online video tech lessons. Video courses are one of the fastest and easiest ways to learn how to use a computer.

Hartford Public Library, The American Place, English Classes, GED, and Computer training are part of the Library's resources as well.

500 Main Street Hartford, CT 06103 <https://tap.hplct.org/computer-training-page/>

[Literacy Volunteers of Greater Hartford](#)

COMCAST has low priced internet service for families with children in school.

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

[Marwa Mansour, Licensed Professional Counselor, Trumbull, CT, 06611 | Psychology Today](#)

<https://www.northeastfamilyservices.com/massachusetts> (Arabic speakers)

They accept state insurance and also offer telehealth services

TRANSPORTATION/Learning to Drive

The CT Department of Motor Vehicles offers drivers' manuals or tests in certain languages other than English, e.g. Arabic.

[CTtransit is the Connecticut Department of Transportation](#). Learn how to ride a bus in CT and everything you need to know about bus stops.

HOUSES OF WORSHIP/MOSQUES

- Altaqua Masjid, Islamic Association of Central CT (New Britain)
- Bayt UI Mamur Mosque (Manchester)
- Bosnian-American Islamic Cultural Center (Hartford)
- Farmington Valley American Muslim Center (Avon)
- Islamic Association of Greater Hartford (Berlin Mosque)
- Islamic Center of Connecticut (Windsor)
- Islamic Center of South Windsor
- Muhammad Islamic Center of Hartford

HELPFUL GROUPS/LINKS

- <https://switchboardta.org/blog/a-round-up-of-resources-for-serving-afghan-evacuees/>
- SAWA Website
- SAWA Facebook Group <https://www.facebook.com/groups/597676537270736>
- Hartford 311

SUPPORT GROUPS

POLITICAL ADVOCACY

Connecticut Alliance For Basic Human Needs.

<https://www.endhungerct.org/advocacy/>

GREATER HARTFORD AREA IRIS AFGHAN RESETTLEMENT COSPONSORSHIP GROUPS (contact SAWA or IRIS)

- <https://landingpage.irisct.org/resources/>
- **River East Refugee Alliance** - Manchester, Glastonbury, and East Hartford Group. Several faith communities (St. James' Episcopal Church, SS. Isidore and Maria Catholic Church, Congregation Kol Haverim, Buckingham Congregational Church, all in Glastonbury, St. Peter's Episcopal Church, Hebron, Avery St. Church, South Windsor) and several individuals plan to resettle a family in Manchester.
- Farmington Valley: Valley Community Baptist & other congregations
- Glastonbury & East Hartford: First Church of Christ Congregational and South Congregational Church, South Glastonbury are sponsoring some families in East Hartford.
- **West End Welcome/Hartford**
- **Kore** - West Hartford
- **Windsor Coalition**
- **The Welcoming Project** - New Britain, Newington, & Simsbury
- **Trinity Episcopal Church** and other partners, Hartford.
- **South Windsor Refugee Coalition**
- **JFS**
- **Welcome Home West Hartford** - First Church/ Congregation Beth Israel
- **Wethersfield Group**

WORDS OF WISDOM

(Tips from past refugees)

- Try to meet new people - Americans and people from your home country
- Work on your English - it is better than you think

- From my experience, I advise newcomers to choose good housing to live in, comfortable for children, and also learning the language is the most important and not to feel frustrated in negative situations because we do not know what the future holds for us. Don't ever give up because the US gives you a lot of chances to be what-ever you want.

Refugee Advocates

- Every family is different and their needs are different so it is ok to “make things up as you go along.” There is no one-size-fits-all way of doing things.
- Don't generalize - refugees are a diverse group - religion, education, job potential, language....
- These families are scared, traumatized and missing their families. This may affect how well they respond to your suggestions. Be patient. This is a huge learning curve for them to adjust to life here in Connecticut.
- Don't set your sights too high. You may find yourself wanting them to jump into a “middle class life” in Connecticut. And although their children may like what we want to offer, the parents are still trying to maintain their own culture and we need to give them that space.
- Listen & watch
- Communication is possible without translators - technology helps. Don't be intimidated - you'll figure it out!
- **Expect the unexpected. Set good boundaries.** Evaluate your resources and your bandwidth.
- Drama can happen with everyone - with volunteers, refugees, state services, schools, etc...
- It is very hard to not get attached to families - because THEY need family. And it is ok to bond with them. But they need to become self-sufficient so a little “tough-love” will help them adapt faster. Let them figure things out so they can gain some confidence.
- Difficult conversations will take place (DCF, American norms about children & spousal relationships)
- Don't take things personally - some families you will adore and be friends forever or you may not connect.
- **Understand Cultural Competency** which is the ability to understand, appreciate and interact with people from cultures or belief systems different from one's own. Many of us require training.
- What a wonderful opportunity this is to learn about a new culture and another part of the world. You have as much to learn from them as they have to learn from you.

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