**Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services**

[**https://www.lirs.org/**](https://www.lirs.org/)

VISION

All migrants and refugees are protected, embraced and empowered in a world of just and welcoming communities.

MISSION

As a witness to God’s love for all people, we stand with and advocate for migrants and refugees, transforming communities through ministries of service and justice.

CORE VALUES

Welcome
“When I was a stranger, you welcomed me.” Rooted in faith, LIRS believes that we are called to welcome those fleeing persecution and seeking refuge in the United States.

Prophetic Witness
Not all are prophets, but all are called to be prophetic witnesses. At LIRS, this means we are committed to speaking out boldly and standing up for the just treatment of those we serve.

Integrity
Driven by a desire to serve vulnerable refugees and migrants, we refuse to compromise our moral, economic, and political integrity as we carry out our mission to that end.

Innovation
Committed to bold action and continuous learning, LIRS invites others to join our mission, eager to embrace fresh perspectives and explore new ways to engage in this work of welcome.

Interdependence
LIRS depends on a diverse network of community partners, faith-based groups, and private entities to magnify our reach and impact – and they rely on our expertise and leadership.

You can see a link for many resources about immigration (agencies and materials) at [**https://www.lirs.org/**](https://www.lirs.org/)

**AMMPARO (a commitment of the ELCA)**

[**https://elca.org/Our-Work/Publicly-Engaged-Church/AMMPARO**](https://elca.org/Our-Work/Publicly-Engaged-Church/AMMPARO)

AMMPARO is a holistic, whole church commitment by the ELCA, as a church in the world, to accompany children today and in the future.

The word “amparo” in Spanish means the protection of a living creature from suffering or damage. The ELCA’s strategy to Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities (AMMPARO) was envisioned after witnessing the plight of children who are forced to flee their communities because of complex and interrelated reasons, including chronic violence, poverty, environmental displacement and lack of opportunities in El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala. Due to our connection to companion churches in the region, including companion synod relationships, and existing ministries in the U.S., the ELCA is well-positioned to help ensure that these vulnerable children are protected.

In a holistic, whole church response that connects international and US outcomes, the ELCA has developed this strategy based on the followingcommitments:

Uphold and guarantee basic human rights and safety of migrant children and their families;

Address the root causes of migration in countries from Central America’s Northern Triangle and Mexico and the treatment of migrants in transit;

Work toward just and humane policies affecting migrants in and outside the U.S.; and

Engage as a church body with all of its companions, affiliates and partners to respond to the migration situation and its causes and to advocate for migrant children and their families.

As brothers and sisters in Christ, the ELCA is called to bear witness to the conditions affecting so many communities and to work to find solutions that will acknowledge the humanity in all of God’s children. Join us in making a difference in the lives of vulnerable children and families.

*HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED?*

*Pray* for the safety of migrant children and families on the journey and for justice as they reach their destinations.

*Become a Welcoming Congregation* to accompany these children and families through their transition to life in the U.S. Link to resource. https://www.elca.org/Resources/AMMPARO

*Advocate* for justice for migrant children and families. [www.elca.org/Advocacy](https://www.elca.org/Advocacy)

*Accompany*migrant children and families through the Guardian Angel Program as the physical presence of the church in the courtroom. [https://Vimeo.com/157458987](https://vimeo.com/157458987)

*Give*to AMMPARO to provide opportunities for children and families in Central America and in the U.S. <https://community.elca.org/ammparo-donation-form>

Find dowloadable resources on the ELCA website at: [**https://www.elca.org/Resources/AMMPARO**](https://www.elca.org/Resources/AMMPARO)

**THE ELCA IS A SANCTUARY DENOMINATION**

In its simplest form, becoming a sanctuary denomination means that the ELCA is publicly declaring that walking alongside immigrants and refugees is a matter of faith.

In baptism, we are brought into a covenantal relationship with Jesus Christ that commits us to strive for justice and peace in all the earth. Following the example of Martin Luther, we believe that advocacy is a crucial expression of baptismal identity. As a church, we have advocated for stopping the detention of children and families for decades. We have spoken out against family separation, sought a pathway to citizenship for community members who have lived in the U.S. for many years, and have taken steps to address the root causes of migration in a way that honors the humanity in people who must flee.

<https://www.elca.org/sanctuarychurch> (many other resources including a Bible study and legislative actions are linked there)

**RefugeeOne (Chicago area Refugee Resettlement)**

[**http://www.refugeeone.org/**](http://www.refugeeone.org/)

***How We Help***

Every year, RefugeeOne welcomes hundreds of refugees through the U.S. State Departments Refugee Admissions Program. Having fled violence, persecution, and war, vulnerable refugees from around the world come to the U.S. to rebuild their lives. Resettlement is a long and often difficult process. With your support, RefugeeOne not only equips refugees with the skills needed to survive, but provides a full range of coordinated services that empower refugees to build the foundation for a flourishing life here in the United States.

***Resettlement Services***

Under the care of our dedicated case workers, RefugeeOne provides all new arrivals with a furnished apartment, as well as cultural orientation and comprehensive family adjustment services. We also help them learn English, prepare for the American workforce, and find jobs. The ultimate goal of our programs is to help refugees become self-sufficient in as few as 6-9 months.

**Heartland Alliance Refugee & Immigration Center**

**(Chicago area Refugee Resettlement)**

Refugee & Immigrant Community Services (RICS) partners with refugees, asylees, immigrants and survivors of trafficking to address their needs by connecting them to their new community, providing education and employment services and the help they need to succeed in their new country.

Languages: Arabic, Burmese, Dutch, English, French, German, Hindi, Igbo, Japanese, Karen, Luganda, Malay, Rohingya, Russian, Sango, Spanish, Swahili, Tigrinya.

**Contact Information:**

Shannon Ericson, rics@heartlandalliance.org, (773) 830-5957

Employment Services: Katy Fohrman, rics@heartlandalliance.org, (773) 830-5957

Vocational & English Language Training: Katie Neginskiy, velt@heartlandalliance.org, (773) 830-5957

Youth & Family Services: Paw Ku, rics@heartlandalliance.org, (773) 830-5957

**Address:**
Refugee & Immigrant Community Services (RICS) through Heartland Alliance

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