

## Tri-Cities World Relief Richland

The Tri-Cities World Relief resettlement agency is located in Richland, Washington. In 2010, the agency resettled 60 to 70 cases amounting to 238 individuals. The majority of cases are Burmese, Somalis, Cubans, and Iraqis.

The Tri-Cities World Relief office offers a variety of programs, including Reception and Placement (R&P), employment, medical assistance, immigration assistance, and social services.

R&P services are clarified in a form the Tri-Cities office calls “Refugee Orientation Guidelines.” Discussion of these guidelines usually takes place one case at a time in a family’s apartment, but occasionally families who speak the same language will be grouped together. Topics may also be addressed while clients are waiting at appointment locations; this opportunity to reinforce information and messages is helpful to both the agency and the refugees, since there is so much information to cover.

Among numerous topics, R&P orientation includes a description of World Relief (and an explanation of the difference between World Relief, U.S. ties, and volunteers), discussions regarding immigration, the importance of paying back travel loans, mental health, and medical care available in the area. Orientation to the community involves a review of emergency services, public services available, the energy assistance program, transportation in the U.S. (including car seat laws), a bus orientation, information on shopping, information on places of worship, the intolerance of domestic abuse, and ways to stay busy to avoid frustration. Budgeting and money management is addressed, including cash assistance, food stamps, medical assistance, and SSI benefits if applicable. Housing needs, typically addressed in-home upon arrival and shortly thereafter, includes discussion of short-term and long-term arrangements, care of the apartments, respect for neighbors, phone services, and housing safety.

World Relief works with all employable adults to establish an employment plan. World Relief has two employment programs for new refugees and other refugees and immigrants that are referred from the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services. The agency has assisted refugees with becoming employed at Broetje Orchards, Con Agra, J.C. Penney’s, Life Care Centers, Old Country Buffet, Red Lion Hotel, South Basin Potato, Tyson, Washington Potato, and others.

The agency also partners with the local Columbia Basin Community College ESL Program, the Family Learning Center (a center for homework, computer and ESL help for adults and children), as well as the Agape Center, West Side Church, and Kennewick First Christian Church (church-run volunteer ESL programs), to connect the refugees with additional ESL classes at different times. Many refugees later take regular courses at the community college, and some enroll at Washington State University – Tri-Cities. Job training options available for those with strong English skills include industrial maintenance and nursing assistance certificates.

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The Tri-Cities office has developed a volunteer mentor program to ease the refugees' transition to the Richland area. All volunteers are required to commit for a minimum of three months. Once assigned to their family, volunteers are required to visit them for a minimum of two hours per week. Volunteers assist with community orientation, English practice, and more, and the agency has found that friendships develop that often lead to lifelong ties.

**Links:**

- Tri-Cities World Relief Richland: <http://worldrelief.org/Page.aspx?pid=2759>
- Richland Dial-A-Ride: <http://www.bft.org/dialaride.html>
- Habitat for Humanity: <http://www.habitatbuilds.com/>
- Columbia Basin College: <http://www.columbiabasin.edu/>
- West Side Church: <http://www.westside1.org/>
- Washington State University – Tri-Cities: <http://www.tricity.wsu.edu/>
- Department of Social and Health Services: <http://www.dshs.wa.gov/>

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