

## INS ALERTING LOCAL FAMILIES OF REFUGEES

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### **Body**

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Word that the United States plans to bring 20,000 refugees from Kosovo to this country sent Philadelphia immigration agencies scrambling last week.

Under the White House plan, refugees now in Macedonia and who have family here would be brought to this country and eventually become eligible for permanent legal status.

But first, their relatives must fill out paperwork agreeing to sponsor those family members, and the forms must be filed as soon as possible, said John Kidane, refugee resettlement supervisor with the Nationalities Service Center.

Kidane and other immigration agency workers are trying to spread the news to the approximately 1,000 Albanian Americans living in the area.

"We want to make sure everyone in the Albanian community knows about the process," said Kidane, adding that those who file applications first will be the most likely to be reunited with family members.

Albanian Americans interested in sponsoring relatives must know the address or camp location of their relatives in Macedonia, Kidane said. The International Committee of the Red Cross can help families locate refugees.

The Kosovar refugees would be accepted under a federal law that allows 75,000 refugees from around the world to enter the United States annually and provides them with health, job and housing assistance, and the right to work for one year. After the first year, they are eligible for a green card - or permanent residency.

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