



RIS LEADERSHIP COHORT OVERVIEW - 2025

The RIS Leadership cohort aims to do three things:

- 1) Build your awareness about and expertise in refugee issues - locally and globally**
- 2) Support you as a leader in your school and community**
- 3) Offer you an authentic, relevant and high-value community service project**

To accomplish this, we will meet weekly for eight weeks (online) to dispel the myths and introduce you to experts around the world about refugee issues AND support you in creating your own personal inquiry project. For example, you might decide to:

- *Research statewide refugee and immigration laws and talking with various stakeholders about the pros/cons of the laws or policies*
- *Volunteer at a local refugee organization or international NGO*
- *Write and public an article or OpEd about local refugee issues*
- *Record a podcast, photographic and/or video series on local and global refugee issues*
- *Establish a refugee awareness club at your high school*

While we will provide you with project management tools and access to resources, you will be the one to drive the process. We will check in with you weekly to offer accountability, ideas and support. Whether you decide to go into refugee-related work or another field completely, this experience will help you move through the world with more insight, curiosity and confidence.

Upon successful completion of the program, you will have anywhere from 15-30+ community service hours and a unique extracurricular activity that you can add to your college applications. We will also be able to furnish you with a letter of recommendation for your professional file: great to have on hand when you apply to college, a job or internship. Students should expect to spend 4-6 hours every week with RIS Leadership activities (this include our one-hour weekly sessions together).

RIS Leader Commitments:

1) Attend all weekly one-hour Zoom calls. Our meetings will be recorded and shared only within the cohort group. In the event that you are unable to attend, please let us know in advance and we will provide the recording.

2) Develop a Personal Inquiry Project (PIP). Each student will design and create their own refugee-related project with weekly mentorship and support. Students should plan to set aside 3-5 hours every week during the 8-week program to develop and take action on their projects.

RIS Commitments:

- Provide you with exciting opportunities to lead with local and global refugee communities
- Support you with regular check-in meetings, online planning tools and opportunities to talk with refugee students
- Offer you access to reputable experts in the field of human migration and policy
- Provide you with support for future internships and college applications

Program Curriculum

Weekly Saturday Meetings (9 am PT, 10 am MT, 7 pm EAT)	Curriculum (<i>subject to change</i>)
On Zoom: https://us06web.zoom.us/j/3761178429	
April 19	RIS' Executive Director shares an overview of the global human migration landscape today and engages cohort in interrogating questions like: • <i>What are the differences between a refugee, asylum seeker, and internally displaced person (IDP)?</i> • <i>What are the major causes of displacement?</i> • <i>What are some of the social, economic, cultural impacts on host communities?</i> • <i>What are some of the most common misconceptions about refugees?</i>
April 26	Personal Inquiry Project overview; Kimberly explains the overarching goals and scope and shares project management materials

May 3	Refugee camps and illegal immigration • <i>Where are the largest camps and what are they like?</i> • <i>Why do people decide to immigrate illegally? Where do they want to go?</i> • <i>What is the reality illegal immigrants face once they arrive?</i>
May 10	Global initiatives: the major players and how they work together • <i>What legal frameworks protect refugees?</i> • <i>What role do international organizations play in the protection and support of refugees?</i> • <i>How do organizations collaborate with governments, the local government and one another to help refugees</i> Personal Inquiry Project updates and sharing Each student will share their individual projects with one another; give & get feedback using Liberating Structures: Troika
May 17	Refugee student panel discussion • <i>What are the personal stories of refugees from different parts of the world?</i> • <i>How does public perception impact host country treatment and policies?</i> • <i>What can individuals and communities do to best support them?</i>
May 24	Personal Inquiry Project updates and sharing Each student will share updates on their individual projects with one another; give & get feedback
May 31	Discussion with UNHCR and IOM officials and discussion • <i>What are the careers in this field and how does one prepare for them?</i>
June 7	Personal Inquiry Project Presentations Students will share where they are with their projects and how they expect to continue the work through the summer and next year

We may assign a couple [readings](#) and [films](#) in between sessions as well. At the end of the school year, together we will mark the annual **World Refugee Day on June 20th**:

<https://www.un.org/en/observances/refugee-day/>!