

Refugee Council USA's Action Toolkit to Welcome Refugees

February 2025

Background: On January 20, President Trump signed a [refugee ban executive order](#), suspending the U.S. resettlement program indefinitely and grinding refugee admissions to a halt. Within 24-48 hours, the State Department began implementing the refugee ban, canceling flights for refugees who were already booked for travel. By January 24, the ten national resettlement agencies received a stop work order under the [foreign aid pause executive order](#), directing the discontinuation of Reception and Placement (R&P) services for the approx. 40,000 refugees and Afghan allies already here in the United States. By January 25, the State Department began [canceling](#) Afghan SIVs' bookings, set to be resettled by a resettlement agency in the coming weeks. There has been no clarity on an announced waiver for "life-saving humanitarian assistance" and funding [remains frozen](#) for many key humanitarian accounts. Across the country, some resettlement agencies have been forced to cut back on basic services for refugees in their first months after arrival.

TAKING ACTION IN YOUR COMMUNITY: Stand Up & Fight Back!

Engage Your 2 U.S. Senators and 1 U.S. Representative in Congress: This [Quick Reference Guide](#) and accompanying [Refugee Advocacy Toolkit](#) outline how to prepare for and conduct legislative visits with your Members of Congress *via virtual or in person meetings*. You can check out when Congress is "recessed" (in their states and local offices) from [the 2025 schedule](#) (recess periods are unshaded).

You can also contact your Members of Congress *by phone or email* through these action alerts from [Church World Service](#) (and accompanying [social media toolkit](#)), [HIAS](#), [USCRI](#), and [Refugee Advocacy Lab](#). This [Interfaith Immigration Coalition Toolkit](#) has additional guidance for organizing in-district legislative meetings.

Activate Your State & Local Elected Leaders: The Refugee Advocacy Lab is leading a #DefendRefuge Campaign, calling on bipartisan elected state and local officials to sign a letter to Secretary of State Rubio and Secretary of Homeland Security Noem, affirming their communities want to welcome refugees. [Click here](#) to contact your governors and state & local elected officials to ask them to [sign on](#) to the [letter](#) by March 13, 2025. Utilize this [social media toolkit](#) to amplify this message and get the word out!

You can also contact your state and local elected leaders via email through the Refugee Advocacy Lab and Welcoming America's [#UnitedInWelcome Campaign](#). Share this action alert on social media using [this digital toolkit](#), as well!

State and local governments have important roles to play in supporting refugee-serving organizations and your local communities' capacity to welcome refugees and newcomers. Check out [RCUSA's State and Local Action Toolkit](#) and this [accompanying policy agenda](#) to explore ways in which your states and localities can be proactive.

Host Local Days of Action, Vigils, and Press Conferences: You can join We Are All America from February 17-24, 2025 in *Together We Rise*, a national week of action to mobilize communities, advocates, grassroots organizations, and faith leaders. [Click here](#) to find or organize an event near you!

You can also join the Interfaith Immigration Coalition's Week of Action on March 11, 2025: [RSVP here](#) by March 4th to attend. The [Interfaith Immigration Coalition Toolkit](#) also details how to organize your own faith vigil, public witness event, or press conference, drawing from [this recent action](#) outside the White House.

Document Community Support for Refugees and Newcomers: Sign on letters from diverse sectors and partners are helpful ways to demonstrate support for refugees in your local community. [Faith communities](#), [community organizations](#), [businesses and employers](#), state/local [welcome resolutions](#), and other stakeholders are important to mobilize.

NEW: We invite **state and local chambers of commerce, individual businesses, and trade associations** to [sign on](#) to this [letter](#) by March 28, 2025. Given the critical role refugees play in strengthening industries, filling labor shortages, and driving economic growth, we need as many business voices as possible to advocate for the resumption of the refugee program. [Sign on form is here](#). Check out this [template for reaching out to businesses](#).

Short link to this document: <https://tinyurl.com/RCUSAActionToolkit>

For more resources from Refugee Council USA, RCUSA members, and trusted partners, please visit:
<https://rcusa.org/policy-center/>