

Defend Refuge: CWS Toolkit for Action

#DEFENDREFUGE

The Trump Administration Has Suspended the Refugee Program Indefinitely and Frozen Funds Owed to Recent Refugees

The "Realigning the United States Refugee Admissions Program" executive order on January 20, 2025, suspended the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP), to be reviewed every 90-days. On January 24, the State Department responded to the "Executive Order on Review of Foreign Assistance" by halting new foreign aid spending and issuing stop-work orders for existing grants and contracts. These actions culminated on February 26 when the administration terminated cooperative agreements with the ten refugee resettlement agencies

This has left thousands of recently arrived refugees and Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) holders without access to Reception and Placement services from the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM), despite their eligibility. These services are faithfully provided by resettlement agencies in the first few days of their arrival.

Several organizations who resettle or support refugees have filed a lawsuit to unfreeze funds and stop the refugee ban—See these press releases from [CWS](#) for continued updates.

4 WAYS TO TAKE ACTION

1. Encourage your network to Sign the Ash Wednesday Ecumenical Declaration
2. Tell Congress to Support Refugees
3. Mobilize an Action
4. Visit with your Elected Representatives

1. Encourage others to sign the Ash Wednesday Ecumenical Declaration

- **Why sign:** Resuming refugee resettlement responds to core faith values and aligns with U.S. interests to promote peace and stability in the world. By Signing, you join in urging the Trump Administration to resume refugee resettlement and restore humanitarian assistance to recently arrived refugees.
- **Who:** We welcome national and state/local faith-based signatories from a broad spectrum of faith communities, reflecting that this is a priority for many of our members, churches, congregations and other worship communities.
- **Sign On Form and Letter here:** <https://cwsconnect.org/ecumenical-declaration/>
- **Share:** Please share widely throughout your networks that you signed. Encourage others to join you in signing. Use this Ash Wednesday Ecumenical Declaration Toolkit for Sample Posts: [Social Tool Kit](#)

2. Tell Congress To Support Refugees Through Action Alerts

- Current Action Alert: [Stand With Refugees as Court Rules Against Trump's Indefinite Refugee Ban](#)
- Sign up for future CWS Action Alerts: <https://actnow.io/BSY2SKr>
- Encourage members of your faith community to do the above.
- Share Action Alerts in congregational e-news and other outreach vehicles

3. Mobilize an Action, Vigil or Press Conference, and on Social Media

- Organize a faith vigil, public witness event or press conference
 - Draw from this recent rally outside the White House
 - [Media Advisory and Media Release](#)
 - Steps to Organizing
 - Identify key leaders from partner organizations who are willing to help mobilize. Be sure to contact them ahead of the announcement when possible.
 - Decide on the strategic location for the event, such as a city center or ICE office.
 - Put together a Facebook or online event and share the link with an email invite to your base of followers.
 - Identify speakers who are trusted on the issue ahead of time and divide up the talking points among speakers.
 - Contact an organization with a simple PA sound system or megaphone.
 - Send out the media advisory the day before and the morning of the event, and be sure to follow up with personal contacts to reporters in your network.
 - Identify organizations that can Facebook Live the event, and capture pictures & videos to share on social media.
 - After the event, send out a media release to press list with quotes from speakers.
- Mobilize during Congressional Recess March 17-21
 - Contact your congress person to find out when townhall meetings are planned for in district activity and invite your faith community and/or local coalitions to attend.
 - Sample Question: The refugee resettlement program has a long history of strong bi-partisan support and enshrined into law by the 1980 Refugee Act, but was suspended indefinitely through Executive Order. Refugee resettlement makes our communities stronger, safer, and more prosperous, and over a 15 year period refugees [contributed](#) a staggering \$124 billion more than they cost in government expenditures. What are you doing to help save the refugee program as the administration freezes funds and tries to terminate contracts to resettlement agencies?
 - Mobilize a vigil or action in front of a congressional offices (see above steps)
 - Set up in district meetings with congressional offices (see below resources)
- Share on social media (Twitter/X and Facebook)
 - Please defend refugee! See content below which you can post on your website or share via email or post on social media, including Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook.

- Twitter: 🚨 🚨 Refugee Ban 🚨 🚨 On Jan 21, President Trump directed a indefinite refugee suspension and froze funds for refugee reception. Let's call it what it is: a Refugee Ban and an abdication of our moral responsibilities. #DefendRefugee #RefugeeWelcome
- Twitter: 🚨 Refugee Ban Call to Action Refugee flights and funds for recently arrived refugees are frozen! We're calling on people of faith to #DefendRefugee. Tell @POTUS: we are a nation that welcomes the stranger.
- Facebook: Recent executive orders have indefinitely suspended the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) and critical funds for services to help recently arrived refugees rebuild their lives. These services are faithfully and responsibly stewarded by resettlement agencies, like @CWSglobal, @HIAS, @GlobalRefuge. Tell President Trump: Resume Refugee Resettlement and unblock funds for newly arrived refugees!
- Facebook: Urgent Action Needed! Recent executive orders have indefinitely suspended the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) and halted critical funds for services that help newly arrived refugees rebuild their lives. These essential services, responsibly managed by resettlement agencies like @CWSglobal, @HIAS, and @GlobalRefuge, are now at risk. Tell President Trump: Resume Refugee Resettlement and unblock funds for newly arrived refugees! Your voice can make a difference. Act now!
- Top Line Messages for Social Media
 - The freezing of funds has stopped vital services for refugees who have already arrived and caused refugee agencies to furlough critical staff severely hurting welcome infrastructure.
 - The ban on refugees is unconstitutional, goes against the U.S. 1980 Refugee Act, and tarnishes the U.S. proud bipartisan history of welcoming refugees
 - Secretary Rubio must unfreeze funds owed to refugee agencies now.
 - President Trump should rescind the Refugee Ban.

4. Visit Your Elected Representatives

- **How to set up an advocacy meeting with your elected leaders:** To set up a meeting, call or reach out to your members of Congress or state and local elected leaders. Explain who you are, what organization you're with (if any), and that you would like to meet with the official or their staff (in person or virtually).
 - Contact your 2 Senators and 1 Representative:
 - [Representatives](#)

- [Senators](#)
 - Find a sample meeting request email at this link. If you're having trouble finding contact information for your elected leader, email info@cwsglobal.org.
- **How to prepare for advocacy meetings:** The first step is to assemble a team. The ideal team consists of refugees/newcomers, case workers, faith leaders, business leaders, and/or community leaders who can share in the planning and coordination of outreach actions and speak to the diversity of support for refugees and newcomers. It is also important to learn more about the policy stances of the elected leader you are meeting with and develop a plan for the meeting.
- **How to develop an agenda:**
 - **The facilitator** will kick off the meeting by introducing the group, explaining the purpose of the meeting, and providing time for each person attending to briefly introduce themselves.
 - The personal story is key to every meeting. In every meeting it is critical to share **who you are, why you're there, and what you want** the elected leader to do.
 - **Specific issue points** are helpful, and it is important to prepare notes, resources and leave behind materials that outline the key arguments you are hoping to make.
 - **The ask** is an important part of the agenda.
 - Ask the elected official or their staff if they will "be a champion for refugees and newcomers and work to resume refugee resettlement and unfreeze funding for refugees."
- **Make sure to debrief and follow up!** It's important to think through any results and next steps as a group and to follow up with the staff you met with additional information or invitations to upcoming events in the state or district.