



# Voice for Refuge Policy Platform

---

Refugees and immigrants are vital to the foundation of the United States, and generations of refugees and immigrants helped [build](#) and strengthen our country. We are at our best when we have demonstrated our values by serving as a beacon of hope for the persecuted - a golden door for the [tired, tempest-tost, huddled masses yearning to breathe free](#). We look back with shame and regret on the times in our history when we have rejected refugees. U.S. policies should recognize the gifts, contributions, and struggles of immigrants and refugees, ensuring justice, equity, and protection for all.

## [Reclaiming this identity is the ideal to which we aspire.](#)

We have a long way to go. Over the past four years the Trump administration slashed refugee resettlement by [more than 80%](#). The Muslim, African, refugee, and asylum bans along with cruel changes for border policies made it nearly impossible for families and individuals seeking safety to secure protection in the United States. All of these policies are set against the backdrop of a raging displacement crisis, with more refugees in need of protection than at any time [in history](#).

The Biden administration has made a commitment to rebuild and restore the refugee resettlement program and asylum protections, and advance a just and moral immigration system, which will require robust support at every level of government.

The U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) was created in 1980 with strong bipartisan support that [continues to this day](#). Thousands of volunteers welcome refugees across the country, and a [majority of Americans](#) oppose laws that keep refugees out. Former refugees are vital members of our communities, and it is critical that their interests and voices be represented in every level of government.

By [definition](#), refugees are persecuted because of their ethnicity, nationality, religion, political opinion, or social group. Resettlement is the last resort for refugees who can't return to their home country or safely rebuild their lives nearby. Fewer than one percent of refugees will ever be resettled to one of [27 resettlement countries](#). Resettlement is an effective tool of U.S. foreign policy, allowing the U.S. to encourage other countries to keep their doors open to refugees and thus promote global stability. Refugees are pillars of the U.S. economy, [working hard](#), [paying taxes](#), and [creating jobs](#). During the COVID-19 crisis, many refugees are working on the [frontlines and in essential jobs](#), including 176,000 working in health care and 175,000 in the food supply chain.

**VOICE FOR REFUGE ACTION FUND**

**VoiceforRefuge.org**

Refugees are vital parts of our communities and our economies. Welcoming them and including their voices in our political process is good for America.

Voice for Refuge works to enact policies that recognize the dignity of refugees and the important role of refugee resettlement and access to asylum.

## We call on policymakers to:

- 1. Support robust FY 2022 federal funding to rebuild the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program.** We call on Congress to appropriate \$4.936 billion in Refugee and Entrant Assistance (REA) to the Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) to provide critical initial investments in the long-term integration and economic success of refugees and asylees rebuilding their lives. Congress should also allocate \$4.118 billion in Migration and Refugee Assistance (MRA) to the State Department's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) to help ensure that families fleeing violence and persecution can find both temporary protection in the countries where they seek refuge and long term durable solutions including voluntary repatriation back to their home country, integration into a host country, and third-country resettlement when the first two solutions are not viable. Robust funding is also needed for humanitarian protection, including for forcibly displaced people, refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced people and stateless individuals, and those fleeing conflict, natural disasters, and the negative impacts of climate change.
- 2. Support pro-refugee legislation to restore and strengthen the refugee resettlement program and asylum protections.** We call on Congress to support positive legislation, such as the [Refugee Protection Act](#), which serves as a blueprint for reenvisioning a strong resettlement program and asylum system, as well as the [GRACE Act](#), which would set a minimum refugee admissions goal of at least 125,000 to help prevent the devastation of this life-saving program. We also urge Congress to support the New Deal for New Americans Act, the Lady Liberty Act, the NO BAN Act, the Domestic Refugee Resettlement Reform and Modernization Act, the Strengthening Refugee Resettlement Act. We also urge local and state officials to support welcoming and pro-refugee policies.
- 3. Hold the Biden administration accountable in rebuilding the resettlement program and restoring humanitarian & asylum protections.** We call on Congress to support the administration's full restoration of the resettlement program by formalizing - and doing everything in its power to meet - the FY 2021's proposed revised refugee admissions goal of 62,500 and investing in rebuilding the overseas and domestic infrastructure to resettle 125,000 refugees in FY 2022. Congress should also hold the administration accountable to fully restore asylum protections by terminating all anti-asylum policies and operations, including Title 42, immigrant detention, the militarization of our border communities, and deportations, especially of individuals who have been denied a full and fair opportunity to seek asylum in the United States (such as those recently deported to Haiti and several African countries).

To see how Members of Congress compare in their support of refugee protection, see Voice for Refuge's scorecards [here](#).

**VOICE FOR REFUGEE ACTION FUND**

**VoiceforRefuge.org**