



IMMIGRANT CONNECTION

WAYPOINTS

ALONG THE WELCOME JOURNEY



BEST PRACTICES LEARNED FROM PRACTITIONERS DURING THE IC WELCOME CALL

WHAT IS A REFUGEE? AND HOW CAN YOU AND YOUR COMMUNITY PARTNER IN WELCOME REFUGEES

May 2021

A welcome call with Casey Leyva (Resettlement Program Director, World Relief) and Tafie Webb (Community Engagement Coordinator, World Relief) facilitated by Zach Szmara (National Director, Immigrant Connection)

To watch the recording: <https://youtu.be/Co1L9hFA1X8>

WHAT IS A REFUGEE?

- Person who has a well-founded fear of persecution based on race, religion, nationality, political ideology, or participation in a particular social group.

WHY ARE THERE SO MANY REFUGEES IN THE PAST 20 YEARS?

- UN High Commissioner says that it's not that there are more, but it's just that they're getting better at counting displaced people.
- Counting, urban refugees as well as people in refugee camps.
- 80 million forcibly displaced people worldwide; 26.3 million refugees
- 67% of all refugees under UNHCR's mandate come from just five countries: Syrian Arab Republic, Venezuela, Afghanistan, South Sudan, Myanmar

ONLY A SMALL PERCENTAGE OF REFUGEES ARE RESETTLED

- Most live in refugee camps in neighboring countries
- 39% of all refugees are hosted in 5 countries: Turkey, Colombia, Pakistan, Uganda, Germany
- Every country has a different policy and procedure of refugee resettlement
- For more information related to refugees worldwide: <https://www.unhcr.org/figures-at-a-glance.html>

HOW DO REFUGEES COME TO THE US? (Broad steps)

1. Persecution
2. Go to camp where they register with United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
3. UNHCR determines which category they are in:
 - a. Can they return to their country?
 - b. Can they be integrated into the new country?
 - c. We will refer them to resettlement.
4. USCIS will interview to see if refugee fits in resettlement in US.
5. Family starts working with resettlement support center (only 7 in the world) to get medical screenings, family member contacts in US, security screenings
6. Referred to national agency
7. Refer to local office where there are family or people who speak that language
8. Local office will tell your family they are coming (it could be a year before they're traveling)
9. More screening, given information so they can assimilate to US
10. Plane ticket booked for refugee 2 weeks before they travel.

WHERE ARE MANY REFUGEES TO THE US COMING FROM?

- Currently - Congo, Somalia, Syria, Iraq.
- Historically - Burma (Myanmar), Vietnam and Cambodia.

WHAT IS THE REFUGEE CAP?

- President sets max number of refugees and anticipated regions from which refugees are expected.
- Based on annual report written by DOS and DHS.
- Biden 125,000 – he would sign that around October 1 for Oct/2021 thru Nov/2022.
- As a church, we should support raising that cap.

WHAT DOES A REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT AGENCY DO?

- Look where they have family or common language group and find placement in that community.
- Volunteers are needed throughout the refugee resettlement process
 - Language assistance – tutoring and language acquisition/practice
 - Welcoming travelers at airports
- If you want to be involved – reach out and let World Relief know that you want to help.
 - Advocate: <https://worldrelief.org/advocate/>
 - Volunteer: <https://worldrelief.org/volunteer/>
- Refugees bless the community – for example, 13% of refugees are entrepreneurs, 11% of immigrants, 9% of native born.

ONE FINAL THOUGHT...

- Advocate in increasing the refugee cap.
 - This is an executive decision but tell your story to your representatives and community leaders too.
- A smile will get you a long way – spread welcome!
- Volunteer

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- 8 Things You Should Know About Refugees - Free E-book - <https://worldrelief.org/8-things/>
- Refugee screening/process: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aQUixQ6TFZc>
- Church Leader Specific Resources - <https://worldrelief.org/church-leaders-resources-download/>
- Welcoming the Stranger – Small Group Experience: <https://worldrelief.thinkific.com/courses/welcome-the-stranger>

To sign up for upcoming Immigrant Connection Welcome Calls: www.icwelcome.org/call