



## Refugee Resettlement Overview

As international conflicts displace [more than 100 million people](#) from their homes, including [more than 31 million refugees](#) (a record high), it is more important than ever to implement and support long-term, durable solutions. In 2022, approximately [1.5 million](#) refugees are in need of global resettlement, yet historic rates indicate that [less than one percent](#) of these refugees will ever be resettled in a third country. In just the first six months of 2021, approximately [217,800](#) newly recognized refugees hailed from just five countries: the Central African Republic, South Sudan, Syria, Afghanistan, and Nigeria. Ongoing armed conflict in Ukraine has also created [millions of refugees](#) since February 2022, which has led to a sharp increase in international humanitarian aid needs.

With a rise in the number of refugees in need of permanent protection, it is critical for the U.S. to rebuild and strengthen its resettlement program - and encourage other countries to do the same. The U.S. resettlement program has endured [massive cuts](#), culminating in the lowest refugee admissions in FY 2021 since Congress created the current system in 1980. As the United States lays the foundation to rebuild the U.S. resettlement program, Congress' support is central to restoring the United States' position as global leaders in refugee resettlement, a [key](#) objective of the Biden administration.

### Agency Overview:

Several federal agencies play a critical role in the resettlement of refugees in the U.S., including:

#### Department of State (DOS) / Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM)

The State Department helps ensure that families fleeing life-threatening situations can find temporary protection in the countries where they seek refuge -- and supports the pursuit of three durable solutions for refugees: voluntary repatriation back to their home country, integration into a host country; and third-country resettlement when the first two solutions are not viable. [PRM](#) supports overseas refugee assistance and helps maintain humane and stable conditions for refugees and host communities during the interim period until a refugee crisis can be resolved. PRM also administers the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP), which is part of a set of diplomatic tools aimed at resolving protracted refugee situations while advancing U.S. foreign policy and national security interests.

#### Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) / Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR)

ORR provides critical initial investments in the long-term integration and economic success of new Americans, including individuals and families who are rebuilding lives after surviving persecution, torture, trauma, and trafficking. administers federal funding to state and local programs that provide refugee resettlement services. ORR services include integration services for refugees and asylees (including Unaccompanied Refugee Minors), Cuban and Haitian Entrants, Iraqi and Afghan Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) recipients who have assisted the U.S. military or humanitarian missions, Afghans relocated as part of Operation Allies Welcome, and recently-paroled Ukrainian arrivals since the start of Russian hostilities in Ukraine. ORR also administers special programs for survivors of human trafficking and survivors of torture in the U.S. - and the care, placement, and post-arrival services for unaccompanied children.

#### Department of Homeland Security (DHS) / U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)

Highly trained [USCIS](#) officers conduct admissions interviews to determine whether refugee applicants and asylum seekers qualify for relief, manage the security clearance process, and process applications for refugees and asylees to adjust their status to permanent residents and citizens.

## Funding Overview & Requests:

A bold refugee admissions goal must be met with the congressional appropriations. It is critical for Congress to mobilize the necessary resources to rebuild and strengthen our capacity to welcome. The FY23 budget requests for PRM, ORR, and USCIS are outlined [here](#) with additional resources listed below:

- FY23 ORR Populations of Concern: <https://bit.ly/FY23ORRPop>
- FY23 LHHS Backgrounder: <https://bit.ly/FY23LHHSBackgrounder>
- FY23 SFOPS Backgrounder: <https://bit.ly/FY23SFOPsBackgrounder>
- FY23 Oversight Language <https://bit.ly/FY23RCUSAOversight>
- FY23 ERMA Backgrounder <https://bit.ly/FY23ERMABackgrounder>

## Policy Recommendations for Congressional Candidates:

### **Rebuild and Strengthen the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program**

The modern U.S. Refugee Admissions Program was established by the bipartisan Refugee Act of 1980, following the U.S. withdrawal from Vietnam. Each year, the President, after consulting with Congress, sets the refugee admissions goal, also called the Presidential Determination, in response to global developments, foreign policy goals, and humanitarian needs. The last administration cut refugee admissions by more than 80%, causing harm to refugee families and the resettlement program. Following increased pressure, the Biden administration set the FY22 refugee admissions goal at 125,000. Yet, due to lack of resources and operational hurdles, it is likely the U.S. will resettle 23,000 refugees this fiscal year.

The administration should set the FY23 refugee admissions goal at 200,000 by September 30th, take immediate steps to invest in recommended reforms necessary to welcome as many refugees this fiscal year as possible, and rebuild the resettlement program to significantly increase arrivals. Congress should hold the administration accountable to robust consultations before setting the admissions goal, as required by U.S. law, and to publicly call for an FY23 admissions goal of 200,000.

### **Pass an Afghan Adjustment Act (AAA) & Add 25,000 Afghan Special Immigrant Visas (SIVs)**

An Afghan adjustment act is urgently-needed legislation that should be included in upcoming must-pass legislation which would allow Afghans paroled into the U.S. to apply to become lawful permanent residents one year after arrival. Given the temporary nature of parole, tens of thousands of the relocated Afghan men, women, and children resettled in the U.S. need to navigate complex legal issues to find lasting protection in the U.S. As it has for other groups, Congress should also consider offering a pathway to permanent legal status for Ukrainian parolees via adjustment legislation to account for those who ultimately seek to remain in the U.S. permanently.

The Afghan SIV program and the permanent 1059 SIV program provide a pathway to safety for individuals who face threats because of their service to the U.S. Government. Local Afghan employees and Iraqi and Afghan translators/interpreters are vital to the U.S. mission and provide life-saving assistance to U.S. troops, diplomats, and humanitarian workers in a variety of capacities. Congress must allocate visas on a regular basis to allow the State Department to continue to process visas. In light of the U.S. withdrawal and the imminent danger under which U.S. allies in Afghanistan live, Congress should allocate 25,000 visas in the next funding bill - and increase the annual allotment of visas for the 1059 program from 50 to 150 visas.

### **Restore Full Access and Strengthen the U.S. Asylum System and Humanitarian Protection**

In tandem with the U.S. resettlement program, the United States can and should welcome asylum seekers and unaccompanied children. The U.S.'s asylum and refugee resettlement systems must both provide viable pathways to safety for all people fleeing harm, regardless of their country of origin, race, religion, color, or creed. We should not turn our backs on those we have pledged to protect, nor should we pit vulnerable populations against one another. As a global leader, the U.S. has the resources and technical expertise to provide refuge for the most vulnerable seeking protection. The administration should do everything in its power to end Title 42 expulsions -- and fully restore access to the U.S. asylum system for all. We urge Congress to hold the administration accountable to its promise to defend migrants of every color, designate TPS for all countries experiencing the requisite conditions—including African and Caribbean countries, and dismantle racially discriminatory approaches within the immigration system.