



# **BUILD A LONGER TABLE WITH REFUGEES**

**SOLUTIONS AND ACTIONS  
YOU CAN TAKE TODAY**

# “WHEN INTIMIDATED BY THE STATE OF THE WORLD, SOME PEOPLE BUILD A TALLER WALL; WE’RE BUILDING A LONGER TABLE.”

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### Introduction

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A letter to the activist	03
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### Taking action

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Have an hour or two?	04
Free for an afternoon?	05
Got a bit more time?	06
Any plans for World Refugee Day?	08
Does your community say #IWelcome?	09
Looking to sponsor a refugee?	10

### Annex: Materials and resources for taking action

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Posters for print	11
25 examples of longer table actions	12
#IWelcome letter guide	14
Messaging tips and talking points	15
Statistics by state	16
Tabling for a longer table	17
How to transform your community into a movement	18
Hosting a potluck supper	19
Talking with resettled refugees	22
Community sponsorship: Advocacy through service	24



Dear Activist,

People all around the world are fleeing war, violence and persecution. They've lost their homes, family and friends. This is the situation 25.4 million refugees face, and they all need safety and a home.

The world's governments aren't doing enough. Many are holding refugees in unsafe camps on borders and refusing help to millions of others. The Trump administration has waged an attack on refugees and has slashed the number of refugees allowed into the U.S.

**But our voices have power.**

We are building a movement of people uniting to welcome refugees in their own ways. Whatever your "flavor of activism," you can take part, whether it's by adding your voice to a petition, hosting a conversation, writing letters, or something unique to you:

**We are the solution.**

AIUSA is calling on our members and supporters to develop and deepen communities in support

of refugees across the country. Whether you host an event, pass an "I Welcome" refugees resolutions, table at a neighborhood spot, or sponsor a refugee, you have local support – email [refugees@aiusa.org](mailto:refugees@aiusa.org) for materials and to be connected with your fellow local activists and organizers.

**Together, we are powerful. We will build a longer table with refugees.**

During last year's World Refugee Day on June 20 – established to honor the courage and resilience of refugees – Amnesty International members and supporters took action across the country. From calling on our members of Congress to breaking bread with our neighbors and welcoming new Americans, we shared stories of home.

We're continuing this season of action throughout 2019 -- to fight for the respect, acceptance, and appreciation of other cultures. There is no time more vital for Americans and refugees.

This toolkit provides you with some basic information and ideas to get you started, but we hope you'll use it to put your own unique stamp on the work. Let us know your plans so we can amplify your powerful work!

# HAVE AN HOUR OR TWO?

## DOWNLOAD AND SHARE POSTERS IN SUPPORT OF REFUGEES

Download posters at <https://bit.ly/2Ft7qVe>. Display them in your home or dormitory windows and doors! Consider reaching out to your neighbors, teachers, local business owners, libraries, and faith communities asking them to do the same.

## CALL CONGRESS AND URGE THEM TO SUPPORT REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT

Call your Senators & Representatives: 1-833-829-5873. Tell them your community welcomes refugees. Here's a sample of what to say:

*"I am a constituent from [CITY, STATE], and I support refugees and believe that [CITY/STATE] could be doing far more to help. I urge you to support refugees both through robust humanitarian aid and by supporting the U.S. refugee resettlement program. Resettlement is a core American legacy that extends hospitality and offers a chance for refugees to rebuild their lives in safety. My community welcomes refugees and I urge you to reflect the best of our nation by supporting refugee resettlement in the United States."*

## WRITE A LETTER TO YOUR LEADERS AT EVERY LEVEL: FEDERAL, STATE AND LOCAL

Your elected officials represent and are rightly influenced by you, their constituent, and your point of view. **So, make your voice heard!** If they know refugees matter to you, they're more likely to be on the side of supporting refugees in their state and community and may even help fight attempts to vilify refugees, ban them, or reduce the numbers of refugees who can resettle here and rebuild their lives in safety.

Here's some general advice and pointers to get you started. But remember, it's far more important that this comes from you in your own voice.

- Write your full name, city and state – and say in your letter that you're a constituent.
- Keep it personal. Congressional staff can sniff out form letters and won't give them as much attention. They value personal messages far more.
- Share your convictions. Communicate in your own words why you support refugees. Some examples to get you started:
  - Refugees are human beings fleeing war, violence and persecution.
  - It's true to your values (*say why*).
  - The U.S. has a commitment to the international community to provide safety to some of the many in need.
  - It's good for your state's economy (*see statistics in annex, p16*).
- **Make sure to explain what you want your elected official to do:** I'm writing to ask you to support refugees and work to increase the number of refugees given the opportunity to resettle in the U.S.
- Take a photo of your letter and share it on social media, tag @amnestyusa #IWelcome #AmnestyLobby

## WRITE A LETTER TO THE EDITOR ON WHY YOUR TOWN SHOULD WELCOME REFUGEES

Make your voice heard in your local community. Write a letter to your town or city's newspaper telling them why your community should welcome refugees and highlighting June 20 as World Refugee Day.

- If you see that your local publication has published an article recently on refugees, this is an opportune time to write a letter to the editor. Your best chance of getting your letter published is when it's in response to something that has been printed.
- Keep your letter very short, about 150-200 words at most. Include your full name and contact information, and if you are writing in the capacity of an AIUSA member, identify yourself as such. If the outlet is interested, they may write back asking to verify your identity and confirm that the letter is exclusive to their publication.
- Share your personal #IWelcome story; your unique voice will carry the most impact to the publication's readership.



## FREE FOR AN AFTERNOON?

### SET UP A TABLE AT YOUR LOCAL FARMER'S MARKET, LIBRARY, OR CAFÉ

Tabling is an effective and fun way to spread your message of welcome for refugees and gain support. It's also a great way to bring new people into human rights work.

Share our resources and actions for the latest urgent cases of people who

are seeking protection as refugees, which are available on our website: <https://longertable.amnestyusa.org>.

Bring a laptop and show videos about the journeys of refugees and asylum-seekers: [www.youtube.com/user/AmnestyUSA/videos](http://www.youtube.com/user/AmnestyUSA/videos)

For more ideas, check out our "Tabling for a longer table" guide in the annex on p19.



## GOT A BIT MORE TIME?

### **BUILD A LONGER TABLE**

Potlucks are a great way to bring a community together in breaking bread and taking action in support of refugees. This literal as well as symbolic action is a powerful way to build support and empathy for refugees both locally and worldwide.

Host one in support of refugees and invite your friends, family, neighbors, faith community, the local Parent Teacher Association, Facebook friends, or anyone else you believe could be interested in supporting refugees in your community! Consider inviting representatives from your local refugee resettlement agency to talk about current efforts to support refugees; and refugees or other newcomers in the community to bring a dish from their home country. Whether you hold it at your home, a restaurant, community center, school, or some other public place, it will be a tremendous message of welcome and a great way to meet your local and refugee neighbors.

You could also consider organizing a picnic, friendly sports game, or a day in the park with other families, including local refugee families and representatives from a local resettlement agency.

### ***SUGGESTIONS FOR ENGAGING FRIENDS AND FAMILY AT YOUR EVENT***

- Have everyone introduce themselves. Start with an icebreaker: When did you or your family move to our town? What do we love about it here?
- Discuss challenges that refugees face across the world and in the U.S.
- After the meal, consider taking action together:
  - Ask your guests to write postcards to their Congressional delegation in support of refugees after the meal. See instructions in the annex on p15.
- If representatives from a resettlement agency are attending or have provided advice, talk about how you can organize yourselves to support refugees in the community, including through donations and acts of service.
- Take photos of your guests and post images to social media using the hashtag #IWelcome and tagging @amnestyusa.
- See our guide to “Hosting a potluck” in the annex on p21.
- Consider our suggestions for “talking with resettled refugees” in the annex on p24.

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## SHARE THE STORIES OF REFUGEES

Host an indoor or outdoor screening of a popular or classic movie featuring refugees, like *Casablanca* or *The Sound of Music*, and encourage attendees to take action in support of refugees after the film.

Or, if you are looking for films about the current refugee crisis, [Forced to Flee](#) is an immersive virtual reality film which takes you into the world of Momina and Saidur, who fled violence in Myanmar and are now living in a refugee camp in Bangladesh. *8 Borders, 8 Days* is another film that tells the story of Sham, a single mother, who was denied resettlement to the U.S. after fleeing violence in Syria. Finding herself with no other option for herself and her two children, she and her family undertake a harrowing eight-day journey to safety in mainland Europe.

Prefer an open conversation? Host a town hall meeting with elected officials and members of the refugee resettlement community about the need to support refugees in your town.



## OTHER ACTIONS YOU CAN TAKE

- Ask a book club to read a book written by a refugee or about refugees and use your book club as an opportunity to discuss the current refugee crisis.
- Ask a local library to host a “refugee author weekend,” featuring books written by and about refugees. Use the New York Public Library’s list of kid and adult books: <https://on.nypl.org/2qF7P14>
- Ask a local Parent Teacher Association to make a statement in support of refugee families in your community.
- Ask your local faith leader to include a sermon on the role of the faith community in supporting refugees and ask members of your faith community if they would like to support refugees.



# ANY PLANS FOR WORLD REFUGEE DAY?

In celebration of World Refugee Day on June 20, connect with your local refugee resettlement agency, faith and volunteer groups to plan a day of service in the month of June for refugees and newcomers to your community.

## 1 ASSESS NEEDS

Email [refugees@aiusa.org](mailto:refugees@aiusa.org) to let us know your plans, and we'll connect you with your local affiliate so you can talk with them about their needs: donations of goods, money, or services? For some refugee agencies, the biggest needs aren't donated goods. Instead they could use volunteers to help in 1-on-1 tutoring of the English language, career mentorship, or simply navigating town. Design your day of service with these needs in mind and understand that the affiliate may not have capacity to provide you with a great deal of guidance. Give yourself a month or so to plan ahead.

## 2 PUBLICIZE YOUR DAY

Create an event flyer or online invitation and share it with friends, neighbors, faith groups and volunteer organizations. Have someone take and share photos on social media tagging @amnestyusa.

## 3 MAKE YOUR SERVICE AN ACT OF ADVOCACY FOR REFUGEES

Consider inviting local elected officials or their staff to participate in your day of service and call upon them to fight for refugees in 2019 and beyond. The more time you give these offices to prepare, the more likely they will be able to participate. Alternatively, end your day of service with a letter-writing party aimed at your elected officials.

## TIPS FOR YOUR WELCOMING ACTIONS

- Coordinate with your local resettlement agency.
- Generate interest with Facebook or Eventbrite events.
- Create conversation around your actions on social media by using #IWelcome.
- Always have someone taking photos, even just on a phone camera (but follow any local resettlement agency's guidelines for taking photos of refugee families).
- Have educational materials ready, including a flyer, postcards and sign-up sheets.
- It's okay to have a small action – quality is what matters.
- Invite local elected officials, like city council members, state representatives, or even Members of Congress to participate.
- If you're expecting a successful event, invite local press to cover your potluck dinner or day of service. Also consider including them in a planning meeter; lots of reporters want to know what goes into a day of service.
- Share your event with field staff at [refugees@aiusa.org](mailto:refugees@aiusa.org).
- *Be creative!*

# DOES YOUR COMMUNITY SAY #IWELCOME? PASS A RESOLUTION!

## WHAT IS AN “I WELCOME” RESOLUTION?

- It is a **nonbinding declaration of support** for the resettlement of refugees, designed for your local (or school) government.
- It calls for other cities and states to support refugees, regardless of religion, race, gender identity, sexual orientation or country of origin.
- This **nonbinding** resolution does not start a process of admitting refugees into your city. That decision would be up to the US State Department, in coordination with refugee resettlement agencies, the state, and the city. This resolution is a symbolic -but important- statement of support.



## WHY AN “I WELCOME” RESOLUTION?

- The United States should be the world’s leader in welcoming refugees, but our government has abandoned that leadership. They have decided to meet the world’s worst refugee crisis in recorded time with historically low levels of support. If our national and local officials don’t hear voices in support of refugees, this will only get worse.
- Passing resolutions in as many cities and school communities as possible can influence elected officials by showing them that their **constituents support refugee resettlement**.
- The process of getting a resolution passed can also **educate your community**, combat xenophobia, and grow your local or student group in skills and size. It can generate local press, which Members of Congress follow closely!

## HOW DO WE PASS A RESOLUTION?

- Every group is different! Your group could solely work toward passing the resolution: building grassroots support among your community, forging partnerships with other refugee-friendly organizations, putting a letter to the editor in your local newspaper, meeting with city council members, organizing a town hall, and ultimately attending city council sessions to show support for the resolution.
- You could also use it as a vehicle for other actions. For example, Burlington, Vermont chose to host a community conversation and bring people together to talk about the issues. You might incorporate movies, music, panel discussions, etc. Creativity is encouraged!
- Working on passing an “I Welcome” resolution in your community is truly an engaging, interesting and exciting way to declare that refugees are welcome in your community! You will not be alone! **We are here to work with you.**

## INTERESTED, OR WANT TO LEARN MORE? LET’S CHAT

- Email us at [refugees@aiusa.org](mailto:refugees@aiusa.org)!
- See our “Refugees Welcome” resolutions toolkits at [www.amnestyusa.org/tools-and-reports/toolkits-guides/](http://www.amnestyusa.org/tools-and-reports/toolkits-guides/).



## LOOKING TO SPONSOR A REFUGEE?

Community sponsorship (or “co-sponsorship”) is one powerful way for you and your community to take action today in support of refugees awaiting resettlement. **Community sponsorship means that average people like you can partner with a resettlement agency to help newly arrived refugees, asylees and asylum seekers get on their feet in your city.**

The process for you and your established chapter to sponsor a refugee will take about 3-12 months to prepare for an individual or family new to your community, which could mean setting up their new home, welcoming them at the airport, driving them to initial appointments or helping prepare them for job interviews. The model is different across the United States, but one thing remains the same; you help them create a sense of home in your community.

Under the Trump administration, fewer refugees are being resettled to fewer communities in the U.S. Whether or not you are paired with sponsoring someone, your commitment to sponsorship will make your demand for higher refugee arrivals that much more powerful. Your voice will join a choir of other advocates who are demanding for refugees to be resettled in their communities.

To learn more about community sponsorship, email [refugees@aiusa.org](mailto:refugees@aiusa.org) with “Community Sponsorship” in the subject heading, and share your name and location. We will invite you to a training to learn more about this model and how you might be able to participate. For more information, see “Advocacy through service” in the annex on p26.



# ANNEX

## MATERIALS AND RESOURCES FOR TAKING ACTION

Printable posters for download:  
<https://bit.ly/2reZiTo>





## 25 EXAMPLES OF LONGER TABLE ACTIONS

*This isn't an exhaustive list. If you have successfully tried something else, share it with us at [refugees@aiusa.org](mailto:refugees@aiusa.org)!*

- **Host a potluck in support of refugees**, inviting local refugee agency representatives and refugees to join you. Be sure to include an action such as handing out postcards in support of refugee rights for participants to draft and send to your Members of Congress. For postcards, email [refugees@aiusa.org](mailto:refugees@aiusa.org).
- **Pass an "I Welcome" resolution** in your school or city to declare that refugees are welcome in your community. This helps influence elected officials by showing them that their constituents support refugee resettlement.
- Organize a day of **in-district lobbying**. Get a group of people together (including the legislative coordinator for your state – if you don't have one, email [grassroots@aiusa.org](mailto:grassroots@aiusa.org) for more information). Bring your group to connect with your mayor, city council members, or state legislators and ask them what they're doing to support refugees.
- **Host a film screening** in support of refugees. You could screen a documentary that explains the current refugee/asylum-seeker crisis, like *Eldorado* or *8 Borders, 8 Days*, or host a film screening of a classic film about refugees, like *Casablanca* or *The Sound of Music*.
- **Table** near a local farmers' market or a busy intersection and encourage your neighbors to act in support of refugees.
- **Host a panel** at a local library or university in support of refugees. Invite local professors and activists to participate and discuss what your community is doing to support refugees, as well as what actions they can take to support refugees in the future.
- If you belong to a union, **ask your union to come out with a statement** supporting the hiring of refugees and asylum seekers. Ask the union to support any workers who may have refugee or asylum seeker backgrounds, whether or not they are public about their experiences.

- **Ask your book club to read a book by a refugee author** or about a refugee experience and use that discussion to encourage participants to draft postcards by the end of the evening to their Members of Congress in support of welcoming policies.
- If you belong to a parenting group, ask fellow parents to **host a day at a playground and invite local refugee families** to join you. This is an opportunity for your children to play with their children and welcome refugees directly to your community.
- Ask your local sports league, including a soccer league, bowling league, basketball league, or softball league, to **host a day of sports with local refugee families**.
- Organize a **day of service** in support of refugees. Ask your community to join you in supporting a local resettlement agency by helping a refugee family navigate public transportation, prepare for job interviews, learn English, read their mail, or more! This could also help your community decide if you would like to sponsor a refugee in the future.
- Ask your online community to set aside 15 minutes on the same day to **call their Member of Congress** in support of refugees. Share this number with them to be connected to their Member of Congress: 1-833-829-5873.
- If you are a university student, ask others to join you in **chalking your campus** in support of refugee rights. Be sure to include a call to action, like calling their Member of Congress, and align the chalking to any recent news on the refugee crisis. Also consider passing an “I Welcome” Resolution on your campus.
- Host a **“coffee and conversation”** hour at a local coffee shop to share more information with potential advocates about the refugee crisis. You could also consider **hosting a refugee rights happy hour**. Ask friends to join you at a BYOB evening or at a bar and bring postcards for them to write in support of refugee resettlement. (Be sure to draft postcards at the beginning of the evening, not at the end!)
- Ask your faith leader to **lead a conversation** in the next few months on the path of the refugee and what it means to support others. Your Rabbi, Pastor, Priest, Imam, or other faith leader may be positioned to speak on how your faith approaches an issue like the refugee crisis in a way that leads and empowers your congregation.
- **Hold a knitting/quilting circle** to create blankets, hats, mittens or sweaters for recently resettled refugees.
- Hold a **story hour for children** featuring a children’s book about refugees, and encourage parents to participate in advocacy by writing postcards to Members of Congress at the end of the story hour.
- Encourage members of your **local Parent Teacher Association (PTA) to write welcome cards** for recently resettled refugees in your community.
- Ask your employer to **host a jobs fair** in your town, geared towards refugees and other newcomers to the region.
- Hold a **local concert** in support of refugees and use it as an opportunity to highlight famous refugee musicians.
- Host a **Letter to the Editor writing party** with local advocates in response to a breaking news story on refugee resettlement.
- Feature **art created by refugees** at a local art gallery or library.
- **Hold a candlelight vigil** in support of the many refugees in need around the world in a local park or outside of your town hall.
- Create a literal **“longer table” with refugees in your local park** – a dining table with food - and invite passersby to stop for a quick bite and to talk about refugee rights.
- **Invite local refugees to participate in activities your community of friends enjoy**, from hiking to biking to dancing to visiting museums.

As always, celebrate your success! Take photos of your event and post images to social media using the hashtags #IWelcome and #LongerTable and tagging @amnestyusa.

Did any of these ideas get you excited to take more action? Reach out to us at [refugees@aiusa.org](mailto:refugees@aiusa.org) for additional support or to share your ideas with us.



# #IWELCOME LETTER GUIDE

## WHY WE NEED URGENT ACTION

Right now, 25.4 million refugees worldwide are seeking a home, and more than half of them are children. Less than 1% will be resettled each year. Refugees deserve to be welcomed – not demonized.

But in the face of the largest refugee crisis in recorded history, the U.S. is closing its doors. The Trump administration capped annual refugee admissions to another historic low of 30,000 refugees this fiscal year, implemented a series of severe restrictions which act as a de facto refugee ban, restricted access to asylum at the southern border for those fleeing violence and persecution, and proposed drastic cuts to funding for refugee programs and humanitarian aid.

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## WHAT YOU CAN DO RIGHT NOW

Imagine being able to welcome a refugee in your community. Your voice has the power to convince your local leaders to try and make this a reality, and you can start by writing a postcard to your Members of Congress. Here's why: Members of Congress are influenced by you, their constituent. If they know refugees matter to you, they're more likely to help us fight attempts by some in the Trump administration to vilify refugees, ban them, or reduce the numbers of refugees who can resettle here and rebuild their lives in safety.

- 1 Request postcards and other materials from [refugees@aiusa.org](mailto:refugees@aiusa.org).
- 2 Write your full name, city and state in the upper left-hand corner of the FRONT of the postcard.
- 3 Write a personal message to your Member of Congress on the BACK of the postcard about why welcoming refugees is important to you. Urge them to continue to welcome refugees to the U.S.
- 4 Ask a friend to take a photo of you taking action. Share on social media and tag @amnestyusa.
- 5 Mail us your postcards, and we'll deliver them to your Members of Congress.

**Campaigns, Amnesty International USA**  
600 Pennsylvania Avenue S.E., Suite #500  
Washington, D.C., 20003

## WHAT TO WRITE

- **Tell your Member of Congress you're a constituent.** Members of Congress want to hear from people who live in their district.
  - **Say why you're writing.** Make sure to explain what you want your Member of Congress to do: I'm writing to ask you to support refugees and work to increase the number of refugees given the opportunity to resettle in the U.S. (*See our talking points below.*)
  - **Share your convictions.** Communicate in your own words why you support refugees, i.e., because they are ordinary people fleeing violence and persecution; because it's true to your values and U.S. commitments; because it's good for your state's economy; and more. Say why you're urging your Member of Congress to act.
  - **Keep it personal.** We know Congressional staff can sniff out pre-written templates. They value personal messages.
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## TALKING POINTS

- The society we want to live in is one where we take care of people who need safety. This is about looking after each other. Strong communities help people realize their potential, and welcoming others who also want to contribute makes society better for all.
  - We want a world where every country does its bit. The solution is actually simple, if we could agree to a fair system for hosting people who can't go home. We all have a stake in making the world a safer place, and that includes making sure there are safe spaces for people who need them.
  - All countries, including the United States, should protect dignity and fairness, and reject fear and prejudice.
  - Refugees leave their homes because they have no other choice. They want the same safety that any of us would want if we were in their shoes. Refugees should be treated with compassion. They have done nothing wrong, and just want to be part of a safe community again.
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## MESSAGING TIPS

- **Support solution-focused narratives:** Be explicit about the world we want to see and use language and metaphors to support it.
- **Emphasize people's humanity:** Use every opportunity to emphasize that human rights are about human beings - we want Members to see past the stereotypes associated with certain terms and see *people*.
- **Emphasize people's agency:** This doesn't mean portraying people on the move as having full control over their lives and well-being. But we can show people's resilience and courage in the face of tremendous adversity, emphasizing *what they come for* as well as what they are fleeing from, and letting Members know of their own aspirations, hopes, and dreams. Remind Members that after these people have lost everything, the goal is to help them achieve their dreams in a safe place.
- **Tell individual stories:** Be as specific as you can in order to portray people as full, complex human beings.
- **Use active, not passive language:** Describe who is doing what to whom. Passive language distances us from the actual actors responsible for the real, underlying causes.
- **Use terms such as:** person/people; parents and children; human beings; people seeking asylum/safety/protection/sanctuary/freedom and opportunity; people looking to rebuild their lives in peace/safety; new neighbors; people fleeing/escaping to another country because of violence or hardship; people forced to leave their homes.

# STATISTICS BY STATE

<sup>1</sup> [New American Economy](#),  
August 2016

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

<sup>3</sup> Ibid

<sup>4</sup> Ibid

<sup>5</sup> [Worldwide Refugee Admissions Processing System \(WRAPS\)](#)

<sup>6</sup> Ibid

<sup>7</sup> Ibid

STATE	LIKELY NUMBER OF REFUGEES IN STATE AS OF 2016 <sup>1</sup>	2016 STATE AND LOCAL TAXES PAID BY REFUGEES <sup>2</sup>	2016 FEDERAL TAXES PAID BY REFUGEES <sup>3</sup>	2016 SPENDING POWER OF REFUGEES <sup>4</sup>	REFUGEE ARRIVALS FY 2016 <sup>5</sup>	REFUGEE ARRIVALS FY 2017 <sup>6</sup>	REFUGEE ARRIVALS FY 2018 <sup>7</sup>
Alabama	5,886	\$13.3M	\$22.5M	\$124.5M	120	63	38
Alaska	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	128	70	42
Arizona	40,123	\$83.1M	\$168.3M	\$780.9M	4,110	2,250	998
Arkansas	5,873	\$17.3M	\$30.2M	\$137.3M	8	59	59
California	645,437	\$4.8B	\$1.9B	\$17.2B	7,909	5,160	1,370
Colorado	34,206	\$72.1M	\$175.3M	\$756.9M	1,647	1,144	486
Connecticut	23,228	\$93.1M	\$179.9M	\$679.5M	819	432	156
Delaware	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	0	16	21
D.C.	6,048	\$19.8M	\$45.2M	\$167.4M	6	2	1
Florida	77,963	\$165.3M	\$459.1M	\$1.9B	2,983	1,698	591
Georgia	61,409	\$133.6M	\$274.1M	\$1.2B	3,017	1,872	837
Hawaii	7,892	\$25.2M	\$44.9M	\$185.6M	0	3	0
Idaho	5,392	\$9.6M	\$20.1M	\$94.2M	1,135	628	360
Illinois	95,259	\$319.2M	\$589.5M	\$2.4B	3,125	1,705	707
Indiana	17,593	\$34.2M	\$59.8M	\$277.2M	1,893	1,042	493
Iowa	20,395	\$50.5M	\$100.2M	\$422.9M	995	658	538
Kansas	15,872	\$42M	\$89.4M	\$388.1M	914	580	383
Kentucky	14,814	\$29M	\$48.4M	\$233.7M	2,405	1,618	896
Louisiana	16,357	\$39.2M	\$90.6M	\$387.4M	173	84	28
Maine	5,996	\$7.5M	\$9.7M	\$67M	607	288	62
Maryland	49,857	\$182.3M	\$382.6M	\$1.4B	1,653	1,072	465
Massachusetts	64,190	\$196.6M	\$471.1M	\$1.8B	1,734	1,089	463
Michigan	74,284	\$130.8M	\$264.9M	\$1.2B	4,258	2,536	651
Minnesota	94,175	\$227.2M	\$380.7M	\$1.8B	2,635	1,627	723
Mississippi	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	13	9	3
Missouri	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	2,072	1,227	181
Montana	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	27	92	115
Nebraska	12,924	\$26.6M	\$42.5M	\$221M	1,441	1,194	343
Nevada	20,359	\$33.5M	\$106.1M	\$482.6M	753	469	213
New Hampshire	6,076	\$8.8M	\$23.1M	\$109.9M	515	339	162
New Jersey	51,360	\$213M	\$500.7M	\$1.8B	536	379	162
New Mexico	4,170	\$9.2M	\$27.6M	\$92.5M	342	155	65
New York	139,529	\$625.4M	\$1.2B	\$4B	5,026	3,098	1,281
North Carolina	40,891	\$91.4M	\$182.2M	\$831M	3,342	1,916	937
North Dakota	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	540	420	162
Ohio	42,898	\$102.5M	\$180.1M	\$819.4M	4,194	2,867	520
Oklahoma	15,235	\$36.9M	\$86.3M	\$349M	534	260	40
Oregon	28,393	\$70.6M	\$167.2M	\$713.9M	1,293	1,002	175
Pennsylvania	68,333	\$173.9M	\$356.6M	\$1.5B	3,219	2,147	357
Rhode Island	8,087	\$26.1M	\$56M	\$200.8M	337	204	34
South Carolina	7,473	\$15.9M	\$37.5M	\$172.4M	350	242	39
South Dakota	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	426	314	75
Tennessee	26,634	\$43.4M	\$108.9M	\$497.5M	1,959	1,048	166
Texas	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	7,802	4,768	739
Utah	15,335	\$32.8M	\$75.2M	\$323.9M	1,192	714	115
Vermont	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	386	235	44
Virginia	86,847	\$260M	\$704.2M	\$2.6B	1,471	1,043	198
Washington	88,080	\$242M	\$500.6M	\$2.1B	3,233	2,923	506
West Virginia	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	25	13	1
Wisconsin	25,434	\$60.8M	\$105.4M	\$483.3M	1,691	942	150
Wyoming	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	1	0	0



Organizing a tabling event is a great way to educate your community and demonstrate your support and welcome for refugees! All you need is a table, some information, and a willingness to talk to people about welcoming refugees.

### ***Before the event:***

Location, location, location – when looking for a place to table, choose a location that will attract foot traffic to ensure visibility. This might be at a farmer’s market, your student center, the library, or some other public venue.

- Let your Field Organizer or [refugees@aiusa.org](mailto:refugees@aiusa.org) know that you are planning to hold an event!
- Recruit volunteers to join you – perhaps within your Amnesty International group, or from other like-minded groups in your community. You can also do it on your own! Just make sure any volunteers are informed about the issues and the actions you are asking people to take.
- Publicize your tabling:
  - Post on social media using your city’s hashtag and #LongerTable.
  - Post flyers around town and in community spaces.
- Decide what content or type of invitation will be most compelling for your community, and be sure to have educational and advocacy materials at hand. Some ideas might be:
  - Bring a laptop and show videos about refugee journeys.
  - Take advantage of AIUSA’s website for content <http://longertable.amnestyusa.org> and print out fact sheets, reports, toolkits, and the pledge for community members to sign.
  - Have art supplies handy so children can make welcome cards for recently resettled refugee families.
- Contact your local field organizer or email us at [refugees@aiusa.org](mailto:refugees@aiusa.org) for additional materials or support.

### ***At the event:***

Set the table for success! Be creative and draw attention to the table with something visual. Print out posters from <https://bit.ly/2reZiTo>. Arrange your actions and materials in an organized and concise fashion to ensure they are visible and not overwhelming.

- Have print copies of materials to hand out.
- Have copies of a petition to gather signatures and demonstrate support for refugees.
- Hand out swag like stickers, posters, informational pamphlets, cards, and other content. Request materials by emailing [refugees@aiusa.org](mailto:refugees@aiusa.org).
- Be sure to have a sign-up sheet for people interested in taking action or in joining your group!

### ***After the event:***

The action doesn’t stop once the event is over. Keep the momentum going:

- Celebrate! Post photos and videos on social media with #LongerTable and #IWelcome.
- Invite interested participants from the Longer Table sign-up sheet to future gatherings.
- Send the signed petitions to: **The Longer Table Initiative**

**c/o Ashley Houghton  
Amnesty International USA  
600 Pennsylvania Ave. SE, St. 500  
Washington, DC 20003**



## HOW TO TRANSFORM YOUR COMMUNITY INTO A MOVEMENT

Each of us lives inside powerful social circles. As Amnesty members like you build 100 communities across the country in support of refugees, consider recruiting unlikely supporters in your community to “build a longer table” with refugees. In these socially and politically divided times, your call to action can help neighbors, friends, colleagues, and teammates become a part of the solution.

Here are a few steps you can take towards building a movement to support refugees:

- Identify communities you belong to that could be open to taking at least one action in support of refugees. This single, meaningful act could have a massive impact on refugee rights. This could include your faith community, a group of friends, a drinking club, a book club, an exercise group, your local PTA, an online community, or any other gathering.
- Introduce refugee rights at your next meeting or gathering as a non-partisan way of supporting people who need it the most. Share with your friends or colleagues that resettling refugees **has been a priority of every administration going back to Reagan**, and that the attacks we’re seeing right now are **unprecedented**.
- Use information about the refugee crisis that would appeal to your particular community. You can find our resources on our website: <https://longertable.amnestyusa.org/education>.
- Leverage your community’s strengths and lean into what your community already does best and then apply it to supporting refugees. Use what your community already does best and apply it to supporting refugees. If you belong to a soccer team, consider hosting a friendly match where you invite refugees who have been recently resettled. If you belong to the PTA, consider passing a resolution on behalf of the school in support of recently resettled families.
- If possible, invite a local elected official or, at the very least, ensure he or she knows about the community you are building in support of refugees. Your city council member could be interested in attending. Your extended community may have connections, but even if they don’t, now is a great time to build a relationship with your local elected officials.
- Invite local press to cover an event you’re leading in support of refugees. Local television news stations love attending in-person events!
- Share what you’re planning with your local Field Organizer. If you don’t know who your local Field Organizer is, feel free to reach out to [refugees@aiusa.org](mailto:refugees@aiusa.org) and we’ll connect you with that person. We want to amplify your powerful activism!

And continue to celebrate! Share your successes with Amnesty International at [refugees@aiusa.org](mailto:refugees@aiusa.org), and we may ask you to share your experiences and strengths with another community somewhere else in the United States that is considering taking action.



# HOSTING A POTLUCK SUPPER

*When intimidated by the state of the world, some people build a taller wall; we build a longer table.*

Hosting a potluck supper is a great way to bring a community together in breaking bread and taking action in support of refugees. This literal as well as symbolic action is a powerful way to build support and empathy for refugees both locally and worldwide.

## CHECKLIST FOR HOSTING A POTLUCK SUPPER

### Before the event:

- Decide how many guests you'd like to invite and how many people you expect. Remember that a standard attendance rate can vary between 50% and 80% of your total invitation list, but that figure depends upon your community.
  - Keep your intent in mind as you consider whom to invite.
- Choose a location for your potluck and consider accessibility and convenience. Your home, a library, local convention space, or a community center could all be perfect locations.
- Reserve the location.
- Create a guest list based on what you would like to see happen and the event size you've established.
  - Consider inviting friends, family, faith leaders, representatives from a resettlement agency, refugees, other newcomers to the community, coalition partners, and even local elected officials.
  - Consider whose voices are reflected in your guestlist and other voices who should also be included.
- Does the projected event help attendees feel safe, secure, and comfortable in sharing their experiences? Try to make your event inclusive, diverse, equitable, and accessible for all people by setting up some expectations for discussion ahead of time.
- If you want to host a large group, consider using an event planning app, Eventbrite, or a Facebook invite.

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## Developing an invitation:

*Does it include:*

- Date, time, and place?
  - Make sure it doesn't conflict with special observances.
- Purpose or intention? Some examples:
  - The purpose of this potluck is to support our neighbors who have arrived as refugees and to welcome them to our community.
  - Our intention with this potluck is to have a meaningful discussion about what it's like to live in this divided social and political climate, and to identify solutions that each of us can take to support refugees.
  - At the end of this potluck, our goal is for attendees to feel welcomed and inspired to act in support of refugee rights. We want you to meet people of other backgrounds and experiences and to lean into those new connections as we work to support refugees in 2019.
- Schedule, if relevant? For example: Are you starting with a speaker, having a guided dialogue, etc.?
- Information about what people can bring, if you would like them to share something beyond a dish to share:
  - You may ask attendees to bring toiletry items needed by arriving refugees. Check with your local resettlement agency about what is most needed. We can connect you.
  - You could also ask attendees to come prepared with stories of how others have made them feel welcome.

*Do you want to manage the food menu?*

- If yes, there are excellent party planning apps that can help, or you could set up a Facebook event page. Make sure to ask your attendees about dietary restrictions and allergies.
- If no, then perhaps offer suggestions.

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## Being prepared for the day of the potluck:

*Do you need to enlist volunteers:*

- For set up?
- For clean up?
- For decorations (if you choose)? For example: perhaps prepare a slideshow for the background.
- For greeting guests at the door?
- Someone to help troubleshoot at the last moment?

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## Materials list:

*Do you have the following?*

- Tables and chairs?
- Silverware, flatware, napkins, cups, serving utensils?
- Cooler with ice if there is no refrigeration?
- Name tags?
- Cards to label the food? You should do this if attendees have food restrictions and if you organized a meal with international foods.
- Sign-in sheet?
- Any support materials? For example: petitions, fact sheets, cards, or letter-writing materials for an action.

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## Schedule:

While it's not necessary to create a schedule, having one will help ensure a good flow to your evening. Whether your group is quiet or boisterous, you will be prepared with contingency plans to help move your evening along in a productive manner.

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### The night of the dinner:

- Do you have a table at the entrance with name tags, sign-in sheet, information sheets, or any items you would like to hand out?
- Are the materials set up?
- Are decorations done and tables set up?
- Is the space for food is inviting, labeled, and organized?
- Is someone ready to greet guests?

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### Guidelines for engaging friends and family at your event:

*You've done it!* It's the night of the potluck and you have gathered a diverse group of friends and allies to break bread with and in support of refugees. Your tables are set up, people are eating and mingling, everything looks great. Now what?

- Have everyone introduce themselves.
- Start with an icebreaker: When did you or your family move to our town? What do we love about it here?
- If you have a speaker, welcome them and give them a safe space to speak.
- Discuss challenges that refugees face across the world and in the U.S.
- If representatives from a resettlement agency are attending or have provided advice, discuss how you can organize yourselves to support refugees in the community, including through community sponsorship, donations of needed items, and other acts of service.
- Take photos of your guests and post images to social media using the hashtags #IWelcome and #LongerTable and tagging @amnestyusa. Remember, be sure to get consent from all attendees before you take their photos, particularly if you have invited neighbors who are recently resettled refugees.
- After the meal, consider taking action together:
  - Ask your guests to write postcards to their Congressional delegation in support of refugees after the meal.
  - Write letters on behalf of refugees and others fleeing violence. You are able to find individual cases on AIUSA's website: <https://longertable.amnestyusa.org/>
  - Sign petitions.
  - Discuss passing a welcoming resolution in your city or school government.
  - Discuss planning a day of service.
  - Facilitate a conversation that brainstorms other ways to take action.

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### After the dinner:

Did you have fun? Celebrate your success!

Share your experience with Amnesty International at [refugees@aiusa.org](mailto:refugees@aiusa.org) and provide the following information:

- How many attendees joined
- What was discussed
- What actions you took
- Any stories you thought were important
- Any photos (with consent) we might be able to share

We may ask you to share your experiences and strengths with another community somewhere else in the United States that is considering taking action. If you're comfortable publicizing your event, consider sharing details on our website: <https://longertable.amnestyusa.org/take-action>.

Send thank you cards to those who participated, particularly any new contacts you may have made. Consider also sending an email to all attendees with links to any resources that were shared during the evening.

Consider continuing to host potlucks in support of refugee rights, inviting representatives from the local resettlement agency and/or refugee support organizations. If you decide this community would like to take greater action, consider working to pass an "I Welcome" resolution in your city, or be part of AIUSA's new initiative by banding together to sponsor a refugee family awaiting resettlement to the United States. Want to learn more about sponsoring a refugee family? Contact [refugees@aiusa.org](mailto:refugees@aiusa.org).

And continue to celebrate!



## TALKING WITH RESETTLED REFUGEES

For many people, the common instinct when meeting someone and getting to know them is to ask about their backstory. We want to create connections and have meaningful conversations.

That is a great instinct. It also may not be the best way to introduce yourself when talking with a resettled refugee.

Questions about past experiences, such as “Why did you flee your country?” or “Why are you here?” might re-traumatize them.

Questions that only focus on the harm that happened to them risks also reduces them to one identity – that of a refugee, when actually, that part of their life is only a fraction of their story.

Make sure to see the whole person – just as we want to be seen. They are a person like you, with ambitions and concerns and everyday observations to share; someone’s child and someone’s friend or partner; a worker; a person with hobbies.

All of this is advised not because a resettled refugee is vulnerable or fragile, but because we want to respect the person. Just as any of us who have survived abuse would not want to be spoken to only about that abuse or asked about it again and again.

Be culturally aware. If at all possible, before you meet, learn the history and customs of their home country, faith, and ethnicity so the conversation is culturally appropriate. Be sure to follow their lead in how they address you, whether they want to shake hands or make frequent eye contact. Don't assume that hugs or pats on the shoulder will be appropriate, even with the warmest intentions.

Make a point to establish an empathetic connection that builds on identifying mutual experiences and interests and understandings. These may seem like innocuous questions but have a major impact on forging connection and empathy.

- Where do they live? Have they visited local parks/attractions in their community yet?
- What are their hobbies?
- What is their family like?
- What kind of music do they enjoy? Any recent films or books they enjoyed or would recommend?
- How have they found the weather in your area recently?

If they choose to share stories with you, either about their resettlement story or the current challenges they face as a resettled refugee, listen and give space to their experience. Consider validating their experience without taking over and making it your own:

Do say:

- I can't imagine how hard that must be/have been for you.
- I appreciate you sharing that with me. It means so much.
- This sounds like an incredibly tough time.
- What helped you the most in this process? How have you found people most helpful?

Do not say:

- "Everything happens for a reason" or "God works in mysterious ways" – you do not know the refugee's faith, and there is no good reason to experience trauma.
- "I know exactly how you feel... [sharing your own experience.]" – while you may have experienced trauma of your own, or migrated from another country, unless you are a refugee, you will not know how that person feels.
- "Thank goodness we/the resettlement agency/the United States is here to help you." – refugees are not asking to be saved. They are independent adults and, while they need support, they might not find this language reassuring.
- "Well, at least you have [your health/a home/a job]." – Just like anyone else who has experienced trauma, resettled refugees deserve your empathy, not your advice.

Most of all, be friendly and open and welcoming. They are a newcomer and a new neighbor.



## COMMUNITY SPONSORSHIP: ADVOCACY THROUGH SERVICE

Community Sponsorship is a unique form of engagement that pairs AIUSA members like you with refugees, asylees and asylum seekers to give them a warm and supportive welcome. In partnership with your local Resettlement Agency (RA), you may assist with activities like greeting them at the airport, securing their initial housing, setting that housing up with the furniture and household goods that they'll need to start their lives in the US, taking them to initial appointments, helping them to improve their English and find employment, and showing them around their new community.

As a community sponsor, you will serve as a guide, advocate and friend to a person new to your community; gain a better understanding of the refugee and asylum seeker experience; and become a more powerful advocate.

While community sponsorship looks different depending on your location and the individual or family with which you are paired, follow are some things that you should keep in mind:

### **FINANCIAL COMMITMENT:** \$0 - \$15,000

The financial resources required to sponsor a case vary based on a number of factors including: requirements of the partner resettlement agency, size of the family being assisted, cost of housing and the in-kind resources that you're able to pull together.

### **TIME COMMITMENT:** 3 - 18 months

Like the financial commitment required, the time commitment also varies; however, a majority of offices request a six month commitment that declines over time. This means that the 1-3 months of community sponsorship will likely be the most intensive.

**The goal of community sponsorship is to support the refugee, asylee or asylum seeker in becoming self-sufficient as quickly as possible.** This means that all of the support provided should decline over time.

### **How to begin:**

- 1. Find your group.** Your sponsorship experience will be most successful if done as part of a group. This could be your Amnesty chapter, a house of worship or another community group. Email [refugees@aiusa.org](mailto:refugees@aiusa.org) if you're interested in community sponsorship and would like to be connected with a group.
- 2. Indicate your interest and learn more about your local community sponsorship program.** Let us know if you would like to participate in community sponsorship by signing up online at <http://longertable.amnestyusa.org> or emailing us at [refugees@aiusa.org](mailto:refugees@aiusa.org). We will connect you to make sure you feel prepared with an online training. A more comprehensive training will be provided by your local RA.
- 3. Organize your group.** You will want one lead to serve as coordinator and point of contact for the resettlement agency. Other organizing tools can be found at <http://longertable.amnestyusa.org> or through your partner RA.
- 4. Raise the money needed.** Make certain that you raise your financial and in-kind resources after communicating with your partner RA as it may take some time for you to be paired with a family.