



I WELCOME



Some Tips and Ideas for Passing a City Council Resolution

- Be sure to **reach out** to our Refugee and Migrant Rights Campaigner, Denise Bell dbell@aiusa.org, your Field Organizer ([click here to find them!](#)), your Legislative Coordinator, and your Student Area Coordinator or Area Coordinator. All can be critical resources—use your support!
- Decide **how much time** you have to devote to this project. Who in your group will devote what time to this? Will you hold an informative event beforehand? Is that strategic?
- **Recognize your role.** Students can be vital in passing city council resolutions! You don't have to be old enough to vote to present to your local City Council, and City Councils often appreciate hearing from young people. High Schoolers in a community can be a powerful voice. And for college students, it's okay if you're not "from" the city you live in for school—you are there now, and you can work with local orgs to pass a resolution in your city!
- You may encounter lots of opposition...or you might encounter none at all! We've had groups with both experiences. Think about how related issues have been debated/covered in your town in the past. Do you expect controversy? What issues do you think people will raise as their main concerns? Try to **anticipate** as much as you can how this topic will be received so we can plan how to address any opposition.
- If you face opposition, it might be due to security fears, medical concerns, or everything in between. **Having an event** might help break down these fears because you have a forum to answer questions; however, be sure you design the event so that loud voices

don't drown out discussion from many others. One example may be to hold a forum with general information at the beginning, which then breaks into smaller group discussions with guiding questions.

- Try to **change the narrative** if you can. People may oppose refugees for a number of reasons, but you are there to discuss why we must welcome refugees. Let people know what you are doing and why.
- **Know your community's history** with refugees. For example, New Paltz, NY, was settled by French Huguenots who were fleeing persecution due to their religion. The local group used this knowledge to frame their messaging: "A town founded by refugees should be open to refugees today."
- Find out what is going on in **neighboring communities**. One Amnesty group had a neighboring town opposing refugees very strongly, which affected the work in their community, which was generally welcoming. Keep this in mind as you design your own resolution process.
- **Create community partnerships**. The Imam from the mosque, the refugee resettlement organization, the local "Peace and Justice Center," local refugee organizations other than the resettlement office, etc. Each of these groups has been helpful and supportive in other campaigns.
- You can also **look beyond typical partnerships**. For example, one group met with a facilitator and then his professor, who gave them great info and helped the group design an informational event.
- How will you reach your audience? Social media is fantastic (use it liberally!) but be sure to also **use media and forums relevant to your communities**. Is there an online community bulletin board? Is there a physical newsletter for your community?
- **Understand the politics within the council**. Know how to contact them personally, and then get to know their goals and perspectives.

- Keep an eye on **councilors up for re-election**. This might change things for or against your favor.
- **Be humble but firm**. Your community leaders are elected by the community: they work for you!
- Contact **local press** outlets, but be very clear about your talking points before you do. If you need guidance, contact your Field Organizer.