

Talking Points

Welcome Refugees

The National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW) Message

More than a century ago, NCJW established an agency at Ellis Island to support and aid immigrant families, with partner offices in 250 cities providing job training and legal aid for immigrant women. Today, NCJW continues to advocate for the rights of immigrants and refugees. We remain committed to caring for the most vulnerable immigrants and refugees, including women, children, people of color, and the LGBTQ community. In the face of the world's worst refugee crisis, we are informed by our history and values to ensure our communities are open to those fleeing violence or seeking better lives in the United States.

Lawmakers must support moral and just policies that provide refuge for vulnerable individuals seeking protection.

- **Our Jewish values compel us to welcome the stranger.** The Torah teaches us, “Welcome the stranger, for you were once strangers in the land of Egypt.” This instruction appears 36 times in the Torah and requires not only emotional support for refugees, but makes welcoming refugees a moral imperative. Many Jews remember our own families' experiences as refugees from war, displacement, and religious persecution. As a Jewish community, we retain the memory of being marginalized and mistreated — we know what it is like to seek safety and refuge in the United States.
- **The administration has cut the number of people who qualify for the resettlement program by an alarming 75% in the face of the world's worst refugee crisis.** The admissions goal for the 2020 Fiscal Year was set to 18,000 — the lowest in 40 years. Chillingly, in 1938 the US allowed in just under 18,000 Jewish refugees from Nazi Germany. With an estimated 25 million refugees around the world, half of whom are children, efforts to end refugee resettlement are unacceptable. The administration must increase resettlement to its historic average of 95,000 refugees next year.
- **The administration is systematically dismantling our nation's refugee resettlement program.** The dramatic lowering of the refugee admissions goal has long-term effects on our country's ability to resettle refugees. In the face of low admissions, refugee resettlement agencies are forced to reduce staff, close offices, and limit activities. Even if refugee acceptance numbers increase, it will take time to rebuild capacity and expertise.
- **We have the right to support and welcome refugees in our communities and in our states.** President Trump's Executive Order 13888 tried to make it easy for state and local officials to veto refugee resettlement in their jurisdictions. Even before the federal courts put the order on hold, most states and local governments affirmed their desire to welcome refugees. NCJW supports municipalities, localities, towns, cities, and states that open their communities to refugees.