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lives and contribute to their new communities across the U.S. have been **eliminated**[↗](#), while refugees who have already passed **intensive vetting** procedures are being subjected to detention and the re-determination of their refugee status.

These policies aren't just separating families and leaving the world's most vulnerable people stranded; they're also eroding trust, destabilizing American communities and workplaces, costing the U.S. **billions in economic contributions**[↗](#), wasting taxpayer dollars and government resources and undermining essential services that all Americans rely on. The human cost is immeasurable, and the economic repercussions affect every community across the country.

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## A timeline of Trump administration policies that impact refugee resettlement

**January 20, 2025:** The U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) was **suspended**<sup>1</sup>. During the administration's first week in office, the entire refugee resettlement program came to a screeching halt. Thousands of refugees who had already been thoroughly vetted and approved, and were set to travel to the United States were suddenly left in limbo. Flights for more than 10,000 refugees were canceled overnight, families were separated across continents, and Afghan allies who had risked everything to support U.S. missions were stranded.

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Although the administration eventually reinstated these cooperative agreements a few months later under revised terms, the interruption has inflicted lasting damage on the networks that underpin successful resettlement.

**April 20, 2025:** First 90-day report on restarting the resettlement program was due. The executive order that suspended the USRAP requires a report be provided to the President every 90 days on whether and how to restart the program. No report on the program has been published publicly.

**June 4, 2025:** A new travel ban was [issued](#). The ban blocks people from twelve countries from entering the U.S. and partially restricts people from an additional seven

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7,500 resettlement slots made available are to be “primarily” allocated to Afrikaners from South Africa.

**October 31, 2025:** Food assistance for newly arrived refugees through SNAP officially ended under new government [guidelines](#) from the [“One Big Beautiful Bill Act”](#).

**November 21, 2025:** A new immigration memo [paused processing](#) of green card applications by refugees. It also ordered DHS to potentially subject families admitted during the prior administration to redetermination of their refugee status.

**December 16, 2025:** The June 4 travel ban was [widened](#). It places total entry bans

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massive funding-related bill that was signed into law in July 2025, restricts access to federal benefits for refugees and other newcomers with lawful immigration status. Under this legislation, newly arrived refugees are no longer eligible at the federal level for Medicaid, the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), Affordable Care Act subsidies, Medicare, and SNAP.



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to the United States. They generated \$581 billion in revenue, which far exceeded the \$457.2 billion in services they received. **In 2023 alone**<sup>7</sup>, refugees' **contributions to the US economy** included:

- \$115 billion in household income earned,
- \$31.2 billion in taxes paid, and
- \$83.8 billion in spending power in local economies.

That spending directly supports American businesses and creates American jobs.

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The IRC continues to support thousands of impacted refugee clients across the United States. We ensure that people understand their rights and have access to available services, including workforce development, health, and education, to rebuild their lives and regain self-sufficiency; however, these programs are under strain and risk being shuttered entirely.



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restore the refugee resettlement program and honor our pledge to those we have committed to protect by continuing America's leadership in refugee resettlement.

### > **Take action for refugees**

Call on the Trump administration to **fully restore** the refugee resettlement program, **increase** the refugee cap and regional allocations for fiscal year 2026 and **rescind** the travel ban. You can also ask the administration to reconsider the **re-review policy** of long-standing refugee determinations for already vetted refugees.

Contact your members of Congress to share your support for refugees and ask that they

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refugees; and employ or encourage local businesses to hire refugees.

Ways to help right now:

- **Look for IRC volunteer opportunities** assisting refugees in the U.S.
- **Rent to refugees.**

\*Name changed for confidentiality.

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Refugees in the U.S.

## How the U.S. refugee vetting and resettlement process really works

January 21, 2026

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