



Biden Launches Private Sponsorship Program For Refugees

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The U.S. State Department unveiled a new refugee program, “Welcome Corps,” in January, which enables private sponsorship of refugees. Historically, the State Department primarily partnered with nonprofit resettlement agencies to resettle refugees. Given the war in Ukraine, along with the commitment to assisting Afghan allies and other nationals fleeing violence and oppression, the Biden administration called for the expansion of the refugee settlement program and created a path for U.S. citizens and legal residents to privately sponsor refugees seeking protection in the U.S.

[Through Welcome Corps](#), U.S. citizens and legal residents can apply to form Private Sponsor Organizations to welcome refugees. Each group must have a minimum of five members, and each member must be over the age of 18 and either a U.S. citizen or a lawful permanent resident.

Sponsors are required to raise at least \$2,275 for each refugee and commit to providing welcoming services and essential services in the community, including housing, financial support, and guidance to healthcare, education and employment services, for 90 days.

Welcome Corps will be led through a consortium of nonprofit organizations with experience in existing refugee resettlement programs. The consortium will be tasked with overseeing the private sponsor application process, providing sponsors with the necessary training, and monitoring the progress of the program to ensure privately sponsored refugees are getting the support

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they need.

The program seeks to enable 10,000 U.S. citizens and legal residents to provide assistance as private sponsors in welcoming at least 5,000 refugees during the first year. Refugees admitted under the Welcome Corps initiative will initially be eligible for employment authorization and will have a path to obtain legal resident status and, ultimately, U.S. citizenship.