



International Refugee Assistance Project: 2016 Open Philanthropy Proposal

In order to fill the 85,000 refugee resettlement slots available in FY2016 and lift the ceiling to 100,000 or more in FY2017 and beyond, IRAP will undertake an advocacy campaign to 1) diversify direct access pathways to the United States Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP), 2) decrease processing times within USRAP, 3) increase the number of Special Immigrant Visas available to Afghan interpreters and extend the life of the Afghan SIV program, and 4) spearhead innovations to global refugee resettlement, such as private sponsorship. Policy advocacy must be coupled with affirmative outreach to media to build political will.

IRAP's 2016 Policy Goals:

Diversify United States Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) direct referral sources.

Due to the current UNHCR backlog, the United States must increase the number of referrals to USRAP in order to utilize the available resettlement slots and demonstrate the need for a raised ceiling overall. USRAP should make allowances for NGOs in the field and U.S. Embassies to refer refugees directly to USRAP.

Create family reunification programs and designate at-risk groups for P-2 direct access to USRAP. These programs cut years off case processing times, as cases do not need to be first routed through UNHCR, filling resettlement slots in the most efficient manner possible.

Expand and Extend the Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) program. The Special Immigrant Visa program provides visas (not resettlement slots) for Iraqi and Afghan allies who worked on behalf of the United States and who are under serious threat as a result of that service. Expanding this program creates pathways for vulnerable Iraqis and Afghans without burdening USRAP or taking away from overall refugee numbers.

Streamline USRAP background checks. Current background checks are routed through multiple U.S. agencies, each utilizing their own screening processes, leading to duplicated efforts and years-long processing delays. The process must be streamlined to expedite processing times without compromising national security.

Allow refugees access to counsel. Access to counsel decreases case processing times and leads to more accurate decisions by assisting adjudicators. Legal representatives allow refugees to make their best case for eligibility for resettlement, reducing needless holds and denials, ultimately increasing the number of refugee arrivals.

Begin creating pathways for private sponsorship. Private sponsorship is a proven strategy in Canada, recently allowing Canada to achieve the successful resettlement of 25,000 Syrian refugees in only four months. There is fast-growing support for private sponsorship in the



United States, which would reduce post-resettlement costs and promote successful integration into American society.

To push this agenda forward, IRAP is seeking \$267,250 to add three key new positions:

1. **National Security Policy Position:** This position would pursue SIV extension and expansion, background check reform, and address national security issues affecting refugee admission and processing. This position will accomplish these objectives by building Congressional and administrative support; drafting legislation and administrative guidance; coordinating with the Departments of State, Defense, and Homeland Security; mobilizing veterans, refugee veterans, and national security voices; and collaborating with other national security and refugee advocacy organizations and coalitions.
2. **International Refugee Law and Policy Position:** This position will pursue diversifying USRAP referral sources, creating new P-2 direct access designations and family reunification programs, access to counsel, and will work with the emerging coalition around U.S. private sponsorship. This position will accomplish these objectives by building Congressional and administrative support; drafting legislation and administrative guidance; coordinating with the Departments of State, Defense, and Homeland Security; and orienting refugee advocacy around concrete deliverables.
3. **Communications Position:** The position will affirmatively engage media in order to create public pressure in support of our policy agenda, including by: generating regular press releases; pursuing opportunities for clients to share their stories (including through multimedia formats); and promoting the voices of national security advocates who support refugee resettlement.