

# Responding to Refugee Crises



## Discussion Guide

### Let's review

*At the start of each discussion, review the conversation ground rules for returning and new members alike to set the stage for active participation by all. You may want to use a timer as you go around the room.*

*And don't forget to decide who will take notes and post a discussion recap.*

- **Be open and curious:** Everyone has a unique perspective, so be prepared to hear a different point of view. Listen first, and focus on the facts.
- **Be respectful and engaged:** Be sure that everyone has a chance to speak before adding a second comment or perspective. Encourage each other's participation.
- **Be focused and concise:** Keep the conversation centered on the issue and the brief.

**The "Table-it" Rule:** If the group has gone off-topic but the area is of interest, the group can table the conversation and save it for another time to be addressed in a different manner.

### Let's begin

- **Take five minutes** to review the [Executive Summary](#) for this brief. Highlight the main point of each section and key statistics.
- Each member is invited to answer the following questions in a **two-three minute reaction** to the brief:
  - Introduce yourself, and share what "lens of care" did you wear when reviewing this brief (e.g. personal, professional, community, state, nation, global)?
  - What did you find most interesting or surprising from reading the brief? What matters?

### Spread the word: facts to share during your discussion

- By mid-2021, the [UN estimated](#) there were 84 million forcibly displaced people worldwide, including 26.6 million refugees, 4.4 million asylum seekers, and 50.9 million Internally Displaced Persons.
- Since the enactment of the Refugee Act of 1980, over [3.7 million refugees](#) have resettled in the U.S. In FY2021 (Oct 2020 - Sept 2021), [11,411 refugees](#) resettled in the U.S. and immigration courts decided 24,000 [asylum cases](#).
- Shutdowns due to COVID-19 have exacerbated existing backlogs: USCIS faced a backlog of almost [400,000 cases](#) as of the mid-2021, and immigration courts faced a backlog of over [670,000 cases](#) as of 2022.

## Let's discuss

Below are 3 questions for the group to consider and discuss, or choose your own.

- **Community:** How are refugees welcomed or integrated into your community (economically, socially, in public education)?
- **Government:** Are local representatives particularly involved in addressing incoming refugees?
- **Business:** How are business owners affected by policies affecting the integration of refugees? What about refugees who need certain licenses to complete their work?

## Let's act

1. **Take it local. Talk to your neighbors** to understand how policies affecting refugees impacts your community. Identify opportunities to work with other community members.
2. **Explore the impact of refugee policies in your community.** Search for your state's laws related to refugee admissions on [Ballotpedia](#).
3. **Investigate community programs** in your state or municipality. On your state or municipality website, look for a dropdown menu or tab labeled "citizen resources," "community," or "families." Find organizations and resettlement agencies [in your state](#).
4. **Research your elected representatives' positions** on refugee admissions, and their vision for how to tackle immigration-related challenges facing Americans and your community. You can find contact information for federal, state, and local government officials [here](#). Your state or municipality's websites will also have information to contact leaders. Try looking at the drop-down menu for a *Government* tab.
5. **Establish a relationship with your legislators.** It's easy to establish a relationship with your legislators. Start by introducing yourself. You can also learn to write to your representatives or set up a meeting with a legislator on [The Policy Circle website](#).
6. **Consider writing a letter to the editor or an op-ed on your stance on refugee admissions and related policies in your local paper.** Learn how on [The Policy Circle website](#).

## Next Steps for Your Circle

- **Post a Recap:** Summarize your discussion to share thoughts with members not present, and share planned actions from group members. Designate who will post a meeting recap on your circle page.
- **Decide your next meeting topic.** Want to discuss a related brief at your next meeting? Suggestions include:
  - [Foreign Policy: Asia Pacific](#)
  - [Foreign Policy: Middle East](#)
  - [Human Trafficking](#)
- **Dive Deeper into the issues.** If this is an area you would like to pursue further, consider taking possible steps to influence policy. The Policy Circle offers resources for [developing a message about your issue](#) and [organizing a petition](#) to amplify your voice and raise awareness. Don't miss our [latest events](#) that help you dive deeper on this issue and more.