

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.