

## Guide for Congressional Outreach for Welcome Corps Sponsors

On January 20, 2025, President Trump signed an executive order that pauses refugee resettlement indefinitely. The Administration will review the pause after 90 days. The executive order mentions that there may be case-by-case exceptions for travel, but we do not have information from the State Department about this process or how to request an exception from the pause. Because Welcome Corps operates under the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program, **this pause also impacts Welcome Corps cases.**

This guide suggests two ways that you can engage with members of Congress. It gives a few ideas on how you can share your support for refugee resettlement through programs like Welcome Corps with your representatives. IT also explains how to ask about delays in the case of the family you are sponsoring, and how to share your concerns with your congressional representatives.

### How to Contact Your Senators and Representatives

- **Find your member of Congress.** [This website provides information about your elected officials. Enter your home address under “How to Contact Your Member”](#) to find their website or phone number.
- **Visit the official website of the member of Congress.** You can call their office in your state or in Washington, D.C. Using the link above, you can also find email addresses to raise your concerns.

### Making a Phone Call

#### Who will I talk to?

The people answering the phone are usually staff assistants or interns. You should expect these staff to be friendly and polite. Remember -- their office represents you in Congress! Most calls take one or two minutes.

Sometimes you will leave a voicemail. If you would rather leave a voicemail than talk to a person, you can call after office hours.

#### What do I say?

Start by sharing your name and where you live, which makes it clear that you live in the member's district.

In your message, you should share why welcoming refugees matters to you, your faith community, your neighborhood, your business, etc. Let them know the specific ways that

refugees benefit and are welcomed into your community, and why continuing refugee resettlement through the Welcome Corps is so important to you and your community.

Some points that you might highlight include:

- Welcome Corps empowers Americans and their neighbors to identify refugees and welcome them to their communities.
- Welcome Corps strengthens national unity by building connections between neighbors joining as sponsors – including faith communities, civil society groups, and veterans' organizations – and the newcomers they welcome.
- Welcome Corps is a first-of-its-kind public-private partnership that includes private philanthropy and support from private citizens and permanent residents. Welcome Corps sponsors have committed more than \$100 million to support refugees to move to their communities.
- This program is vital for veterans and others who support Afghan and Iraqi allies. More than 100,000 Afghan SIV applicants are stuck in a backlog waiting for a visa. Welcome Corps is a vital pathway for veterans and their communities to welcome Afghans who served the U.S. mission at great risk.
- Welcome Corps is also a vital avenue for faith-based groups seeking to support persecuted individuals.

### **Sample Script**

Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_. I live in [city] in [member of Congress]'s district. I am calling you today to express my support for refugees. I and several of my neighbors have come together to welcome refugees to our community through a program called Welcome Corps.

Through the Welcome Corps, we pooled our own resources and time to help a family settle into our town.

- If the family you sponsored has already arrived, you can share about them and how they are doing
- Share more about why you and your sponsor group signed up to welcome a family through Welcome Corps

President Trump's recent executive order suspends U.S. refugee resettlement indefinitely. I believe that refugee resettlement through the Welcome Corps is good for the United States. We have a long history of welcoming people to this country, and refugees have so much to offer us.

Refugees are vital contributors to our economy and our culture. Resettlement is also a vital tool to protect people who are persecuted for their beliefs or identity, including Afghan allies.

I urge [member of Congress] to demonstrate your support for refugee resettlement and Welcome Corps.

Thank you for your time today.

## What else can I do?

You can also ask for a written response to your call. This requires the Senator or Representative's office to develop a thoughtful response to your request. Ask other sponsors in your group or members of your community to make their own phone calls.

You can also get others to join you in making a call. When groups of people are calling at the same time, an office is forced to take note!

**Please complete this form to share updates about how the meeting or phone call went.**

## Filing a Case Inquiry with your Members of Congress

Some Welcome Corps sponsors have committed to welcoming a refugee or refugee family but do not yet know the identity of those people. This step is not an option in that situation. But if you know the people who you are sponsoring, you can also file a congressional inquiry with your Senators and/or Representatives to demonstrate concern and ask for updates about their case. Follow these steps:

**Find the page where a constituent can ask for help with a federal agency.** This may be under the “Services” or “Contact” tab of their website. It may say “Get Help with a Federal Agency” or “Casework.” [The webpage may look like this](#) or [this](#).

The site should give instructions on how to ask the Congress member’s office for help. To ask for help, you will have to complete a form. Many offices will ask you to download and submit a form through email or fax. Other offices ask you to submit a form online.

If the form asks you to select which Department you are seeking help with, you can select “Department of Homeland Security” If the form asks what kind of issue you are seeking help with, you can select “immigration.”

**Include relevant information.** On the online or downloaded form, be sure that you or your family member or contact includes the following information:

- Your name and address as the person living in the member’s district to confirm that you are a constituent;
- The name, date of birth, case number, and location of the refugee being sponsored through Welcome Corps;
- A brief description of the Welcome Corps case, including information about:
  - The current status of the Welcome Corps application.
  - Why you believe that a delay in the sponsored refugee’s case would cause significant harm.

- Any other important details about the current situation (for example, you could share why you signed up to be a sponsor for Welcome Corps)
- A request that the Congress member's office ask DHS about this Welcome Corps case.
- Thanking the office for their time and help.

**Sign a Privacy Waiver.** This is a form that gives the Congressional office permission to get information from a federal agency on someone else's behalf. The refugee being sponsored will need to complete this form. If you are sponsoring a family, the person to complete the form should be the primary applicant. [Click here to see a sample of a privacy waiver.](#)

Follow instructions on the website and the form on how to submit the Privacy Waiver and the Congressional Inquiry request form to the Congress member's office.