



CATHOLIC CHARITIES
of St. Paul and Minneapolis

Catholic Charities of Saint Paul and Minneapolis Responds to Executive Order on Refugee Resettlement

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Providing hope in times of darkness. Seeing and honoring the inherent dignity in every person. Welcoming the “stranger” with open arms. These are among the fundamental tenets of Catholic Social Teaching and the foundation of our Catholic Charities mission to serve and advocate on behalf of those most in need.

Refugees fleeing violence and seeking to reunite with family are among the core “customer groups” we serve at Catholic Charities. Our commitment to this work remains steadfast as we join the world in closely assessing the impact of the [Executive Order](#) signed by President Trump to suspend the United States refugee resettlement program for 120 days, reduce the number of refugees admitted into the United States, bar admission to specific nationalities, and suspend indefinitely the resettlement of Syrian refugees.

We are reaching out to share with you what we know about the impact to our direct refugee resettlement work, and to offer specific actions you can take to stay informed and to lift up your voice on this important and dynamic issue.

The Executive Order has had a direct impact on refugees Catholic Charities was planning to resettle in the next month. There are many unanswered questions about the intentions and consequences of the Executive Order. What is clear as stories emerge is that it will have a devastating impact on some of our most vulnerable neighbors: refugees who themselves are fleeing violence, persecution, and terror—and come to the United States, seeking safety.

Twenty-four refugees were expected to resettle to Minnesota through Catholic Charities before the end of February 2017. These men, women, and children—who have already been through an intensive, two-year security review—have had their travel to the U.S. cancelled and are unable to join their families here. Most are Somali and Burmese nationals fleeing violence in their home countries and will have to stay in refugee camps until the ban on refugee resettlement is lifted.

As we monitor and gather greater clarity about the current situation, we are focusing our attention on serving those who have recently arrived and are relying on us to secure housing and assist in their connections to employment and education for young children.

In our longstanding tradition of “welcoming the stranger,” Catholic Charities remains steadfast in serving and advocating for our refugee neighbors. Minnesota has been a leader in welcoming refugees, and Catholic Charities is proud to be part of this tradition. With the support of hundreds of individuals, parishes and the broader faith community, Catholic Charities has successfully resettled refugees in Minnesota since World War II, including 24,000 since 1975; men, women and families who have come from over 25 countries and have added to the depth and vibrancy of our community.

We encourage you to join us in taking action:

- **SPEAK OUT:** With more than 65 million people around the globe displaced from their homes, we are in the midst of the world’s worst refugee crisis in recorded history. Please contact your elected officials and tell them that the United States has a responsibility to provide safety to refugees who are fleeing persecution. Any legislation that discriminates based on nationality or religion contradicts our longstanding tradition of freedom and justice. Support just and humane immigration reform.
- **STAY INFORMED:**
 - Stay up to date by signing up for action alerts from Justice for Immigrants, a network—established by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops—that is committed to immigration reform: <http://justiceforimmigrants.org/category/action-alerts/>
 - The United States has a rigorous vetting process that screens refugees before they are resettled. You can learn more here: <http://refugees.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/USCPNG.png>
 - Learn more about our Muslim neighbors by using this study guide prepared by our colleagues at Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota: <http://www.lssmn.org/refugeeservices/study/>
- **BUILD COMMUNITY WITH US:** Catholic Charities will continue to give refugees a voice in the policy arena as we advocate for just and humane immigration reform that promotes freedom and justice without sacrificing security. For decades, we have worked with refugees who have established roots in Minnesota and have made tremendous contributions to our communities. They have become our neighbors, our colleagues, and our friends. We stand with them in this time of need. We invite you to join us.