



Partnering with Refugee-Focused NGOs in the United States: Quick Guide

▲ This document provides companies with an overview of the types of organizations that can help them recruit refugee talent in the United States and offers recommendations on how to effectively collaborate with them. Companies should reach out to the Tent team to align on the organizations that are best suited to support their hiring needs. After this initial assessment, the Tent team can facilitate relevant introductions to these organizations.

The refugee resettlement agencies: Who are they and what do they do?

The Office of Refugee Resettlement within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services contracts with nine national refugee resettlement agencies with integrating refugees into American society.

These refugee resettlement agencies provide holistic integration support to refugees, including helping them find housing, enrolling children in school, and identifying employment opportunities.

Refugee resettlement agencies are national non-profit organizations with local affiliates and networks around the country. Their local affiliates provide direct services to refugees – this means that it's important for companies to connect to the local affiliates and not just agencies' headquarters.

- 01 [Church World Service \(CWS\)](#)
- 02 [Ethiopian Community Development Council \(ECDC\)](#)
- 03 [Episcopal Migration Ministries \(EMM\)](#)
- 04 [Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society \(HIAS\)](#)
- 05 [International Rescue Committee \(IRC\)](#)
- 06 [US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants \(USCRI\)](#)
- 07 [Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services \(LIRS\)](#)
- 08 [United States Conference of Catholic Bishops \(USCCB\)](#)
- 09 [World Relief Corporation \(WR\)](#)

How do the refugee resettlement agencies work with businesses to employ refugees?

REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT AGENCIES CAN ASSIST BUSINESSES WITH:

- ▲ Identifying refugee job candidates whose skills match the needs of the job
- ▲ Completing new hire paperwork
- ▲ Following up on refugees who have been hired to ensure mutual satisfaction
- ▲ Offering translation or interpretation services

IN ADDITION, THESE ORGANIZATIONS HELP TO PREPARE AFGHANS AND OTHER REFUGEES FOR EMPLOYMENT, INCLUDING BY:

- ▲ Orientating them to the U.S. job market and setting expectations about the types of professional roles available in their metro area
- ▲ Preparing resumes and cover letters
- ▲ Teaching about U.S. workplace customs

Note: These refugee resettlement agencies are not staffing agencies, and cannot guarantee that they will be able to place refugees at a company. It is ultimately the decision of the refugee where they choose to work, and the refugee resettlement agency's responsibility to best prepare and connect the refugee to employment. Services by the refugee resettlement agencies are generally provided at no cost to businesses, however some exceptions may apply.

Other organizations helping to place refugee in jobs

In addition to the refugee resettlement agencies, there are other organizations throughout the country that can help companies hire refugees:



HIGH-SKILLED REFUGEE TALENT

A number of non-profit organizations, such as [Upwardly Global](#), [One Refugee](#), [ReUp](#), [No One Left Behind](#) and [Talent Beyond Boundaries](#), can specifically help companies recruit mid- to high-skilled refugee talent in a range of industries, such as tech, healthcare, and financial services.



REFUGEE-LED ORGANIZATIONS

There are also Afghan-led organizations, such as the [Afghan American Foundation](#) and [Women for Afghan Women](#), that are helping to integrate Afghans into American society. Refugees from other countries have similar community-led organizations too. Companies should search for community-based organizations near their operations to identify other potential local partners.



STAFFING AGENCIES

[Amplio Recruiting](#) is a staffing agency that helps companies hire refugee talent for a fee. Other national and local staffing agencies are already working with refugee resettlement agencies to place refugees at jobs at their clients, or could be prompted to do so if their clients asked for that.



WELCOME.US JOBS EXCHANGE

[Welcome.US](#) has a jobs portal where companies can post jobs targeted at refugee candidates.

Note: Some of these organizations might charge fees to help place refugees at a company.

How to prepare for working with refugee organizations

Refugee organizations will want to partner with companies that they believe will create a welcoming environment for refugee employees. Many of these organizations will be particularly interested in learning about a company's approach to the following topics that are critical to successful refugee integration:



Salary & benefits

Refugee organizations will want to make sure that salaries offered are competitive with offers from other companies in that area or industry, and that employers will offer comprehensive benefits (e.g. healthcare, PTO) to refugee employees. Companies should be prepared to share salary ranges and benefits during introductory conversations with these organizations.



Transportation assistance

Many recent refugee arrivals do not have access to a car or a driver's license. Organizations will be looking to partner with companies that can help refugees without a car get to work, whether it be through carpooling with other employees, chartering a van to pick up multiple refugee employees, or offering transportation subsidies.



Solutions for refugees learning the local language

Many refugees arrive in the U.S. with limited English language proficiency, as English is not the native language in their home countries. Organizations will be looking to partner with companies that are committed to effectively integrating refugees, even if they don't speak English proficiently just yet. To address this challenge, companies should consider which roles at their company could be filled by someone with limited English proficiency and express to the local organizations that they plan to create a welcoming environment for refugees who are English language learners (e.g. translating key documents to other languages, assigning refugees a team lead or manager within the company who speaks their native language, etc).



Career pathways

Even though many refugees will join companies in entry-level roles, organizations will be looking to partner with companies that are committed to the long-term growth and career development of refugee employees. Companies should express a desire to help refugee employees grow within their business, particularly given that refugees are a very loyal talent base.



Hiring for a range of skill levels

Afghans and other refugees in the United States arrive with a variety of educational and professional backgrounds. We encourage companies to be open to hiring refugees at all skill levels. Companies should go into introductory conversations with non-profits with a general sense of the type of positions they are looking to fill, including the skills and backgrounds they expect of applicants.

Note: Tent has published a guide in partnership with JFF in February 2022 to advise companies on strategies for how to hire low-language proficiency employees and ensure their success as they work towards proficiency. You can read the guide here: <https://www.tent.org/resources/overcoming-language-barriers/>

▲ TIPS FOR WORKING WITH REFUGEE ORGANIZATIONS

Refugee organizations in the United States are currently undertaking herculean efforts to integrate tens of thousands of Afghans into the country in a very short period of time. Given that their staff have limited bandwidth as a result of the Afghan refugee crisis, they might sometimes be a bit slower to respond to company outreach. Here are a number of recommendations to address this challenge and effectively work with these organizations:

01 BE PATIENT AND PERSISTENT

We recommend that companies check in regularly with these organizations in a professional and polite fashion about potential refugee employment opportunities. The slate of refugee clients that a local affiliate of a refugee resettlement agency is working with changes pretty frequently. Just because an agency does not have any refugee candidates that might fit a company's needs at one time, does not mean that they will not have relevant candidates in the future. Companies should email their contacts at the refugee resettlement agencies on a monthly basis to share their current hiring needs and inquire to see if the agency has any relevant refugee candidates.

02 ALIGN ON RECRUITMENT PROCESS AND TIMELINE

During the introductory conversation, companies and refugee organizations should align on the process and timeline for how the latter will identify and refer potential refugee candidates for job openings. Each organization will approach the referral process differently and it's important for all parties to delineate clear roles and responsibilities as well as next steps. Both the company and refugee resettlement agency should identify a main point of contact so that all parties know who to reach out to for next steps.

03 ASK FOR A PHONE NUMBER AND EMAIL ADDRESS

Companies should ask for both the direct phone number and email address for the employment specialist at these organizations so that companies have multiple avenues to reach the organization if needed.

04 SHOWCASE COMMITMENT TO REFUGEE HIRING

Refugee-focused NGOs are looking for corporate partners that are committed to forming a long-term working relationship and properly evaluating applications from their refugee clients. Companies should showcase that they are committed to seriously considering all refugee applicants, whether that be through assigning a HR point of contact that can receive refugees' resume via email or creating customized career websites (or referral codes) that companies share with refugee-focused NGOs so that they can track applicants that were referred by these organizations. Companies should also work together with refugee-focused NGOs to track refugee applicants and the status of their application.



Even with following these best practices, companies might face delays with recruiting refugee talent given the challenges this crisis has presented to the refugee resettlement system. Please be patient and persistent with your engagement on this topic – while hiring refugees can require an initial investment in time and energy, there are long-term dividends for hiring this population.

Companies should reach out to the Tent team if they are facing challenges connecting with refugee organizations after following the best practices above. info@tent.org