



TENT

Hiring a Refugee Recruiter

A refugee recruiter is a specialized role that companies can create to improve their ability to source, attract, and hire refugee talent. An effective refugee recruiter should have a cultural understanding of, language proficiency relevant to, and strong networks within one or more refugee populations. While refugee recruiters do not need to be refugees themselves, refugees will often be strong candidates for these roles.

By establishing a refugee recruiter role, companies can develop a more effective and inclusive hiring process. Tent member companies with a designated refugee recruiter have reported benefits such as a broadened refugee talent pipeline, an improved ability to accommodate the needs of refugee job seekers, and increased responsiveness from refugee applicants to company outreach.

This resource highlights the benefits of hiring a refugee recruiter, outlines important characteristics and skills a refugee recruiter should have, and lists some key areas for training a refugee recruiter once they have been hired.

*This resource was developed based on input from several Tent member companies, including **Great Lakes Cheese** and **Unifi Aviation** in the U.S., and **Randstad** in Sweden.*

While the core function of a refugee recruiter role is to recruit and hire refugee job seekers, companies often task refugee recruiters with additional responsibilities, such as onboarding and integrating new refugee hires, managing relationships with local refugee-facing partners (e.g., staffing agencies and nonprofits), recruiting non-refugee candidates, and providing general HR support.



The benefits of hiring a refugee recruiter

- ▲ **Tailoring support for refugee job seekers:** Because refugee recruiters typically spend more time interacting directly with applicants, they can take a more personalized approach to advancing refugee job seekers through the application and interview processes – one that is focused on building personal relationships, providing tailored support, and accommodating any specific needs (e.g., answering questions; offering flexibility when scheduling interviews).
- ▲ **Expanding the refugee talent pool:** Refugee recruiters can help companies to access a wider pool of qualified refugee talent by tapping into local community networks, building personal relationships with applicants, and deploying outreach strategies tailored for refugees (e.g., leveraging refugee-focused Facebook groups and religious groups, and encouraging referrals).
- ▲ **Reducing language barriers:** Hiring a refugee recruiter who can speak the language(s) of a particular refugee population (e.g., Ukrainian for Ukrainian refugees) can help companies to address any language barriers job seekers from that population may face during the recruitment process – for example, by translating application materials, communicating job expectations more clearly, and acting as an interpreter during interviews.

- ▲ **Showcasing a commitment to hiring refugees:** Hiring a refugee recruiter sends a clear signal to refugee candidates that the company supports the employment and economic inclusion of refugees. This can, in turn, boost candidates' levels of comfort and interest, especially during the early stages of the recruitment process.
- ▲ **Championing refugee hiring improvements:** Refugee recruiters are well placed to recognize challenges that refugees face during the recruitment and onboarding processes, and work alongside Tent to identify solutions.



Characteristics and skills to look for in a refugee recruiter

The process for hiring a refugee recruiter is similar to that of any comparable entry- to mid-level talent recruitment role. While it is not essential for a refugee recruiter to have previous recruiting experience to get started, companies should seek to hire candidates with the following characteristics:

- ▲ **Relevant language proficiency:** Prioritize candidates with strong written and verbal language skills in both the local language (e.g., English for the U.S.), and at least one language commonly spoken by refugee job seekers (e.g., Pashto for Afghan refugees; Spanish for Venezuelan refugees) in the local labor market. This will help to address any language barriers during the recruitment process, and make the overall hiring process smoother.
- ▲ **An understanding of the needs of refugee job seekers:** Seek to hire candidates who demonstrate knowledge about the needs, experiences, and resources available to one or more refugee populations in the local labor market. Having this knowledge puts refugee recruiters in a better position to relate with refugee job seekers of diverse backgrounds, identify challenges, and inform the company's refugee recruitment strategies.
- ▲ **Strong local/community networks:** Look out for candidates who have strong relationships and connections within one or more refugee communities in the local labor market. Leveraging these personal networks can make it easier for a refugee recruiter to source refugee candidates, relate to their experiences, and guide them through the application and interview processes.



Refugee recruiters should be based in close proximity to the refugee talent that is being recruited. Refugee recruiters are most effective when they can recruit in local labor markets (e.g., a city, state, or within a metropolitan area) where refugees are already looking for work.

Additionally, companies should seek to hire candidates with the following soft skills:

- ▲ **Communication:** Communication is an important skill for all recruiters, but this is especially true for those who specialize in recruiting refugees. Given the communication barriers refugee candidates may face (e.g., language differences, low tech literacy, unclear expectations), companies should hire refugee recruiters who will be diligent about communicating clearly, and ensuring that candidates understand each step of the application process.

- ▲ **Empathy:** By showing empathy, refugee recruiters can create a more supportive and inclusive experience for refugee job seekers. Empathetic recruiters are better equipped to build trust with refugee job seekers, address sensitive concerns, and tailor the recruitment process to accommodate their particular needs.
- ▲ **Flexibility:** Refugee recruiters should be flexible, and demonstrate the ability to adjust and adapt their approach and/or strategies (e.g., accommodating last-minute changes to the time and location of interviews) to better suit the particular needs of refugee applicants.
- ▲ **Collaboration:** In addition to working with members of their own HR team, refugee recruiters may also collaborate with senior leadership, team managers, and third-party partners to hire refugee talent. Effective refugee recruiters work well with others, and positively contribute in a team environment.



Training a refugee recruiter

Once a company has hired a refugee recruiter, they should focus on training them in the following areas:

- ▲ **Sourcing:** Prepare refugee recruiters to source talent by training them on how to identify promising candidates, interact with relevant stakeholders, and successfully leverage any existing talent pipelines.
- ▲ **Project management:** Help refugee recruiters to develop their project management skills, which are key for handling a recruitment process that might include tracking deadlines, managing legal documents, and providing ancillary support to candidates. Having these skills helps to ensure that the recruitment process is structured, timelines are adhered to, and company resources are being used efficiently.
- ▲ **Using relevant systems and/or technology:** Educate refugee recruiters on the company's existing recruitment process, and train them on how to use any relevant HR software and tools (e.g., customer relationship management software, applicant tracking systems, social networks, etc.).

Next Steps:

The Tent Partnership for Refugees can work with companies to build and implement effective refugee hiring programs. To learn more about Tent and its services, reach out at info@tent.org.

About the Tent Partnership for Refugees

With more and more refugees displaced for longer periods of time, businesses have a critical role to play in helping refugees to integrate economically in their new communities. Tent was launched in 2016 by Hamdi Ulukaya, the CEO and founder of Chobani – a multibillion dollar food company in the U.S. – to mobilize global businesses to fill this gap by helping connect refugees to work. Today, Tent is a [network of over 400 major companies](#) committed to hiring, training, and mentoring refugees. Find out more at www.tent.org.