How You Can Help

There are many ways that you can help refugees, whether they are right in your own community or half a world away. You can help create a welcoming and supportive environment for those arriving in your community.

- Become a volunteer. Visit http://volunteer.truist.com/icoys/volunteer/ and do a keyword search for “refugee” to find a non-exhaustive list of opportunities in your zip code area. Also contact local resettlement agencies, faith groups and schools for additional opportunities.
- Donate furniture, clothes, winter coats, toys, food, or other items that are needed by agencies serving refugees.
- Donate money to these agencies or United Nations High Commission for Refugees.
- Welcome refugees with a smile, kind words, patience, understanding and by valuing the diversity and skills they bring. Respect differences and be curious.
- Become an English tutor.
- Be a tour guide to a newcomer—show them where to get groceries, or how to ride the bus or get a library card.
- Invite a refugee or refugee family to your home for a meal or celebration.
- Teach other people about what a refugee is, why they have come to the U.S. and how they are valuable members of our society. Invite refugees or those who help them to speak in schools, workplaces, places of worship and clubs.
- Employ or encourage local business to employ refugees.
- Organize a fundraiser to benefit organizations working with refugees.
- Take part in the Hike to Help Refugees, sponsored by the UNA.
- Hold a collection (furniture, gently used or new clothes, food, etc).
- Invite cultural performers from refugee background communities to perform at events.
- Be a job coach: help a refugee write a cover letter or resume or conduct mock interviews to prepare them.
- Gather a group to volunteer at an event hosted by an organization working with refugees.
- Encourage others to learn more about the countries that refugees come from.
- Read books and watch movies that will educate you on the reasons people become refugees and their experiences.
- Support World Refugee Day (June 20) events in your community.
- Write to local government representatives to support the refugee cause.
- Encourage local media to cover refugee issues and raise public awareness.
- Subscribe to refugee publications like the UNHCR e-newsletters.
- Apply for an internship at UNHCR or agencies working with refugees.
- Do research on refugee issues for a class or project.
- If you are an experienced, skilled professional, offer your services as a UN Volunteer.
- Join UNHCR’s digital dialogue via Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube.
- Read the news and understand global events related to refugee movements and protection.
- Write a letter to a newspaper or your elected officials about a cause important to you.
- Take part in Amnesty International letter writing campaigns to protect refugees, asylees and victims of persecution.

Submit an entry to the Refugees in the Heartland Video Contest by June 1st.

Create a video that shares ideas about what it means to be a refugee or how communities where refugees live can welcome them. Complete details at http://international.uiowa.edu/uichr/refugees-heartland-video-contest.