

LUTHERAN DAY ON THE HILL

WELCOMING AND SUPPORTING REFUGEES

*"We are a church that does God's work in the world and in local communities pursuing justice, peace, and human dignity for and with all people."
– Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service*

For decades, "welcome" is something Iowa has been expressing to refugees from around the world. As children and families are forced to leave the homes they love, Iowa must continue to stand for welcome. We must do more. We must be more.

At Lutheran Services in Iowa (LSI), we offer services such as English classes, job training, and small business development to empower our newest neighbors. In 2016, more than 750 former refugees utilized these crucial programs to begin building their new lives in the U.S.

That's why it is critical for Iowa to continue supporting the RefugeeRISE AmeriCorps program and the Community-Based ESL program. These initiatives play a key role in ensuring former refugees develop language and workforce skills and have access to human services that put them on the path to self-sufficiency and success.

In 2016, funding for RefugeeRISE was cut to \$200,000. Previously, it received \$300,000 in funding from the state, which also drew down an additional \$600,000 in federal funding.

Hundreds of refugee families, especially in the Polk County area, are unable to access or succeed in traditional ESL classes due to lack of transportation, childcare, and limited educational experiences. It is crucial for Iowa to continue funding the \$210,000 Polk County Community-Based English-as-a-Second-Language contract, providing former refugees with accessible education they need to thrive.

This funding has supported former refugees like Zeor, who was in a panic when it was time to take her U.S. Citizenship Exam. While she knew the alphabet, she failed both the reading and writing sections of the four-part exam. She attended LSI English classes until she felt confident and ready to retake the test. The second time, she passed with flying colors.



We must continue to support these important programs and lift up former refugees who have no other access to adult education.

Please encourage your legislators to continue making Iowa a place of welcome and hope.

At LSI, there is no greater joy than seeing former refugee families purchase their first home, begin a career, and embrace their new life in Iowa, away from the hurt and turmoil they endured for years.

Former refugees who have entered the U.S. have done so after a thorough screening process, one that is the most lengthy and in-depth of all the immigration processes our country has. Those who are admitted represent less than **1%** of the global refugee population.

The U.S. must continue to serve as a leader for welcoming refugee children, adults, and families.

In the past, the U.S. has admitted 75,000 refugees each year. As a result of recent executive actions, this number has been reduced to 45,000.

Funding for programs such as LSI's Services for Elderly Refugees are linked to the number of arriving refugees each year. When the resettlement number is decreased, the individuals we already serve are also affected.

Join us in opposing the limitation of refugee resettlement.



Tell President Trump (www.WhiteHouse.gov/get-involved/write-or-call) and your federal representatives that you stand for welcome.



Tweet @POTUS and @realDonaldTrump to let the President know that you want to live in a country that encourages its citizens to offer love and compassion across geographic, religious, and political divides.



Meet with refugees in your own community and get to know and understand them. If you are looking for opportunities to meet and engage with refugees in Iowa, visit LSIowa.org for opportunities.



Lutheran Services in Iowa
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www.LSIowa.org/give

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