**Talking Points on Refugee Resettlement**

**Trump’s budget would gut resettlement services that support local communities and help refugees and other vulnerable populations of concern rebuild their lives.**Trump’s FY18 budget request proposes a $218 million, 31% cut to refugee resettlement programs, which would negatively impact local schools serving refugee children, public/private programs that successfully help refugees find employment within their first six months of arrival, state governments, and local non-profits.

**The budget request is based on faulty assumptions about the Office of Refugee Resettlement.**Through ORR programs and associated public-private partnerships, roughly 200,000 people each year rebuild their lives and contribute to American communities across the country. In FY16 alone, ORR served over 270,000 people. Alternatively, Trump’s budget request is based on an assumption that ORR will only serve 98,000 individuals through these programs – which has not been the case since 2007. These cuts will not only diminish the prospects of recently arrived refugees and other populations from achieving economic self-sufficiency, but, to the detriment of vulnerable individuals and the communities that welcome them, will shift the costs from the federal government to states, localities, and community organizations.

**Refugees comprise less than half of the individuals under ORR’s mandate**, as the agency also serves Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) recipients who served alongside U.S. troops in Iraq and Afghanistan, asylees, survivors of torture and human trafficking, Cuban and Haitian entrants, and unaccompanied children. Also, ORR serves refugees who have arrived in the past fiscal year, as well as the current fiscal year. Thus, making cuts to ORR funding based solely on reducing refugee admissions is inappropriate.

**Trump’s budget would weaken the ability and flexibility of ORR, states, and local communities to help refugees integrate by:**

●       Eliminating refugee health promotion programs that help refugees and victims of torture, trafficking, and trauma receive needed services.

●       Consolidating, and reducing overall, the Social Services and Targeted Assistance programs into one program, and it is unclear what impact this will have on these critical integration services.

●       Changing the formula that ORR uses to allocate funding to states, from the past 24 months to 12 months, which would negatively impact states given this year’s reductions in refugee arrivals due to the Executive Orders.

●       Reducing the authority that HHS has to transfer funds to ORR, from the 10% that congress authorized to 3%, which would reduce options for HHS to utilize as they respond to uncertainties in the populations served by ORR, which they have needed to do in recent years.

●       Requiring HHS to reimburse other agencies for land and building use for unaccompanied children, which would drastically reduce the ability for ORR to prioritize the safety and wellbeing of children.

**Trump calls for resettling only 50,000 refugees in FY18, the lowest refugee admissions goal in U.S. history, during the worst global displacement crisis ever.** The administration claims that by resettling fewer refugees we can help more people overseas, yet they are also proposing cuts to overseas assistance needed to serve more people. In fact, by resettling refugees, the United States is able to convince countries overseas to keep their doors open to refugees. They also encourage other resettlement nations to resettle more refugees.  For communities that welcome resettled refugees, the initial investment in resettlement is paid back many times over as refugees quickly find jobs and contribute to their new communities.

●     Over time, refugees' income rise–approaching the median income of the U.S.-born in their first 10-20 years– and refugees make increasingly positive fiscal [contributions](https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2015/10/syrian-refugees-resettlement-us/411178/).

●     [Studies](http://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/ten-facts-about-us-refugee-resettlement) show that people whom the United States welcomes as refugees are more likely to be employed than U.S. born citizens. Refugees in the U.S. start businesses of their own and create jobs in the process. For [example](http://www.hias.org/sites/default/files/clevelandrefugeeeconomic-impact.pdf), in Cleveland refugees started more than 38 businesses from 2002-2012, with a total of 141 employees (including owners).

●     Refugees [integrate](http://fiscalpolicy.org/analysis-of-refugee-groups-provides-evidence-of-high-levels-of-integration-across-indicators) into American communities, with a large majority of refugees having learned English and becoming [homeowners](https://cdn.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/15112912/refugeeintegration.pdf) after being in the United States for 10 years, while three-quarters or more become naturalized U.S. citizens after 20 years.

●     One report in Tennessee found that refugees contributed almost twice as much in[tax revenue](http://www.hias.org/sites/default/files/tn_report_federalcostshifting_refugeeresettlement.pdf) as they consumed in state-funded services in the past two decades.

●     Refugees fill critical workforce gaps and fuel [economic growth](http://rsccleveland.org/2016/12/13/local-refugees-fill-talent-gaps-fuel-economic-growth/) in American cities.

**During the worst displacement crisis in history, Trump’s budget would drastically cut funds that assist internally displaced persons and refugees overseas, thus weakening U.S. foreign policy interests and reducing our ability to help our allies who are hosting millions of refugees.** The budget would completely eliminate the Emergency Refugee and Migration Assistance (ERMA) account, which allows the U.S. government to respond to displacement crises that would otherwise result in widespread suffering and regional instability. It would cut by 10% Migration and Refugee Assistance (MRA), which provides humanitarian assistance to refugees overseas, supports refugee processing, and provides initial assistance to refugees during their first 30-90 days of arrival in the United States. The budget request would also cut by 34% the International Disaster Assistance (IDA) account, which provides emergency assistance to internally displaced persons and thus helps prevent them from having to become refugees.

***What do our faiths say about refugee resettlement and protecting vulnerable populations?***

* Among communities of faith across traditions, our shared call to “welcome the stranger” has brought us together in support of this life-saving program and the protection of those who seek peace and safety within our borders.
* Our diverse faith traditions compel us to welcome one another with love and compassion, regardless of place of birth, religion, or ethnicity. All of us are called to love our neighbor – all of our neighbors. Generations of immigrants and refugees have made this country stronger through their ideas, hard work, resilience, and traditions.
* All communities fleeing to safety – whether they are Syrian, Honduran, Congolese, or anyone else forced to leave because of who they are or what they believe – deserve to be treated with dignity.
* Millions of refugees around the world are forced to flee their homes due to violence and persecution, and today we are facing the worst displacement crisis in global history with more than 65 million displaced persons worldwide including over 21 million refugees.
* Following World War II, the U.S. became the world leader in welcoming refugees who seek safety from persecution based on their race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group. Over time, the system has evolved to have a strong infrastructure grounded in public-private partnerships, where communities across the United States have recognized the important economic and social benefits of resettling refugees, and are active in helping them integrate and thrive in their new homes.
* Less than one percent of refugees are ever resettled to a third country. When provided the resources and support they need to rebuild their lives, refugees have opened businesses, revitalized towns, and contribute economically, socially, and spiritually to our communities. Many refugees become U.S. citizens and see their children graduate from U.S. schools.