

Taking Action For Refugees

A Guide for Congregations and Communities



JOIN THE WELCOME CAMPAIGN

The HIAS Welcome Campaign Network publicly demonstrates the Jewish community's strong support for refugees. Nearly 400 synagogues across the U.S. are standing up for the safety and dignity of refugees, and are impacting the public conversation about refugees both nationally and locally. We encourage congregations to take action in an integrated way, through an approach that combines education, advocacy, direct service, and *tzedakah*.

We invite you to join the HIAS Welcome Campaign if your synagogue has not already done so. The requirements of the campaign are to join a statement of support for welcoming refugees and to make a commitment to take action for refugees in 2018 through at least one action or program. Visit hias.org/hias-welcome-campaign to learn more.

RAISE YOUR VOICE IN SUPPORT OF REFUGEES

Advocacy on behalf of refugees has never been more important. Welcome Campaign congregations are advocating for the safety and dignity of refugees in the U.S. and around the world and raising a Jewish moral voice to ensure that our country continues its legacy of welcome.

We encourage you to participate in HIAS' grassroots advocacy campaigns and to make sure that elected officials and the press know that your community supports the resettlement and protection of refugees - some of our world's most vulnerable individuals. Ways to do that are:

- Demonstrate that your congregation supports welcome for refugees by hosting an action, protest, or event, such as Refugee Shabbat in October 2018. HIAS frequently distributes resources for hosting public actions to the Welcome Campaign Network.
- Make your voice heard to your elected officials. Organizing an in-district meeting with your Member of Congress, attending a town hall meeting, hosting a letter writing campaign, and making phone calls are great ways to start. HIAS staff are available to support these efforts.
- Join forces with other local congregations to create local advocacy coalitions.
- Print signs and bring them with you to rallies and actions in your community.

- Amplify your support for refugees using media and social media. Seek local and Jewish media for your synagogue's activities, write op-eds, letters to the editor, and share positive content on refugees on your social media channels. Follow HIAS on **Facebook, Twitter and Instagram**, and tag us in relevant posts.
- For the most pressing and up-to-date ways to take action, visit **hias.org/take-action**.

EDUCATE YOUR COMMUNITY

Community education can energize your congregation and inspire them to take action on one of the most critical humanitarian issues of our time. It can also be a powerful antidote to the fear and outrageous misinformation that pervades the public conversation about refugees. When people better understand who refugees are and how the U.S. refugee admissions program operates, the better able they will be to create welcoming communities.

Consider these ideas for raising awareness and educating your community, and visit **hias.org/resources** to view available materials:

- Host an educational program to raise awareness of the global refugee crisis and the executive orders barring refugees from entering the U.S. HIAS can provide do-it-yourself programming resources, and may also be able to send a speaker or educator to your community.
- Include HIAS' Jewish holiday resources in your community observances of Passover, Sukkot, Purim, Hanukkah, the High Holidays, and more.
- Broadcast your support for refugees by placing a poster or banner in a prominent location at your synagogue. Posters are available to all Welcome Campaign congregations. Visit **hias.org/hias-signs** to learn more.
- Disseminate HIAS' educational materials to the congregation. These include opportunities to participate in briefing calls, fact sheets, and critical updates from the Welcome Campaign newsletters.
- Access HIAS' resources for b'nai mitzvah students

PROVIDE SUPPORT TO NEWLY ARRIVING REFUGEES

Congregations may be able to play a role in welcoming or supporting refugees who are arriving in your local community. Community support can help newcomers to adapt to their new homes more quickly and easily. There may be a range of ways congregations can support local resettlement:

- Contact your local refugee resettlement agency to inquire about needs in your community. Reach out to us for additional information about other resettlement agencies, or make a connection to other synagogues in your area who are already engaged in resettlement efforts.
- There may be options for direct service in your area, including furniture and clothing drives and creating welcome kits. This will vary greatly depending on the needs of your local resettlement agencies.

TZEDAKAH

Activate a core Jewish value - *tzedakah* - in support of another central value: welcoming the stranger. Consider a financial contribution to support HIAS' domestic and international work. There are many options available to you from encouraging congregants to make individual contributions to organizing a synagogue-wide fundraising appeal. HIAS staff will work with you to provide educational materials and can even offer technological support if your synagogue would like to create a fundraising page on the HIAS website that will be unique to your efforts.

SPREAD THE WORD

- The Welcome Campaign newsletter provides urgent action items and opportunities for synagogues, information about what other congregations around the country are doing, breaking news about the refugee issue, and educational resources.
- Join the "Jews for Refugees" Facebook community, to be connected to other Welcome Campaign synagogues - and to HIAS volunteers and supporters throughout the country.
- Sign up for the general HIAS listserv at www.hias.org, to receive updates on new developments internationally and here in the U.S., and invitations to events and briefing calls.

There are many tactics that you can use to make sure your support for refugees is heard. HIAS staff are available to help to develop a plan for your congregation to take action. Email Janna Diamond, Campaigns Specialist, at janna.diamond@hias.org for further support and information.