

# More than 100 Major U.S. Companies Commit to Hire and Train More Refugees

With federal government resources only designed to last for six months, refugees who arrive in the United States are expected to quickly achieve self-sufficiency. That requires settling into a foreign community, establishing English language skills, and also finding a job.

Unfortunately, with legal, language, and recertification barriers cited as common constraints, these individuals often struggle to access the labor market.

In a report released last year, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees highlighted the importance of “employment and employability to successful integration” into the society of the host country.

For refugees, “successful economic adjustment remains one of the most pressing challenges,” the report said.

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That said, with President Joe Biden’s commitments to welcome an additional 75,000 Afghan and 100,000 Ukrainian refugees, the United States is in increasing need of programs to connect newcomers with stable, well-paying jobs.

Biden, along with other officials from the U.S. State Department, has pleaded with private citizens and organizations to support these resettlement efforts.

“We urge more governments to engage the private sector, NGOs, faith groups, universities, youth, and other parts of society in resettling refugees,” Secretary of State Antony Blinken said in a video statement during a UNHCR event on Monday.

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“The more we can make our communities partners in these efforts, the more fully we can integrate refugees into the fabric of all our nations,” he added.

The U.S. refugee admissions ceiling was raised to 125,000 in Fiscal Year (FY) 2022, double the number from the year before, according to the U.S. State Department. In response, the government has launched innovative solutions such as Refugee Cash Assistance, Refugee Medical Assistance, and the Community Sponsorship Hub to support the influx.

The Tent Partnership for Refugees, a non-profit organization, which focuses on mobilizing the global business community to include refugees, has created a unique approach to the job-training challenge.

Building on an effort launched in 2021 that focused specifically on Afghan and Ukrainian refugees, leaders at the Tent Partnership have spent months rallying a group of 103 companies to commit to reducing barriers for refugees looking for jobs and helping them integrate into the U.S. economy.

Headlined by major companies like Delta, Pfizer, and Marriott, the Coalition for Refugees in the U.S. has agreed to provide mentorship and training opportunities to all refugees in the country, regardless of their place of origin.

Gideon Maltz, executive director of the Tent Partnership, called the program “unprecedented and extremely significant,” telling Newsweek he sees it as a welcome shift from previous efforts to support refugees.

“At the height of the Syria crisis in 2015, we saw a lot of companies do token, in-the-moment things to help,” he said. “They might have sent an in-kind donation or wrote a check, but they never really engaged or invested in the issue.”

Maltz said that the Coalition focuses on creating genuine, long-term engagement from the private sector. To accomplish that goal, Tent leaders seek to connect with the spirit of charity and generosity of participating companies, and also emphasize the economic benefits that comes from employing refugees.

Tent recently released a survey conducted with the NYU Stern School of Business that found that 63% of U.S. consumers are more likely to purchase from brands that are involved in helping refugees, a number that exceeds the percentage that back brands selling environmentally friendly or fair-trade products.

And with 11.4 million job openings in the U.S., Maltz also noted that hiring refugees is already helping states across the nation.

“In states with labor shortages, we have seen governors of both political parties increasing the admissions of refugees in the last year, partly because they need to,” he said.

“To get to a place where there’s broad public support for America to bring in more refugees,” he said, “we have to highlight and emphasize the amazing contribution that refugees make to the American economy.”

Maltz is looking beyond the short-term refugee crisis to a brighter future for them, and for their new country.

“We have been focused on creating programs that companies benefit from and see the value in so that in a year or two, when Afghanistan and Ukraine are not in the news, companies will still be engaged because it makes sense with their business,” he said.

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