



Guidance for community conversations about JF&CS's work with refugees and legal immigrants

When talking with friends, family members, co-workers or community members, these talking points can help guide conversations about JF&CS's work with refugees and legal immigrants in our region.

- JF&CS is proud of the work we do with refugees and legal immigrants. “Welcoming the stranger” is core to our values as an agency with Jewish roots. We honor that heritage when we welcome them.
- Since our inception 80 years ago, JF&CS has helped to resettle thousands of refugees from more than 60 countries; Soviet Jews, Bhutanese, Congolese, Iraqis, Syrians, Holocaust survivors, and more, in addition to providing comprehensive, quality services to the thousands of legal immigrants and refugees who have chosen to make Pittsburgh their home.
- Refugees and legal immigrants add diversity, cultural richness, and economic value to our communities and our region as a whole; Our city needs the fresh energy and ideas that come from refugees and immigrants.
- Our city, and this nation, were built by refugees and immigrants. Many of us are descendants of immigrants or refugees.
- To qualify as a refugee, people must be displaced within or away from their homeland, and must demonstrate that they cannot return to their country of origin because of persecution or violence. Most refugees had never planned to come here. They were forced by circumstance – war and persecution – to flee their homes.
- Refugees accepted for resettlement are the most thoroughly vetted people that come into this county. The process takes a minimum of two years, but often longer.
- Our decades of experience working closely with families as they find housing and work, enroll their children in school, learn English and strive to make a contribution to our community have shown us that clearly these individuals just seek peace and safety and the chance to raise their children.
- JF&CS serves the community at large, regardless of race, religion, sexual orientation, disability, age. In a typical year, JF&CS resettles approximately 200 refugees and provide support to hundreds of others who choose Pittsburgh as their home after being initially resettled in another city. As a whole, JF&CS provides services to more than 10,000 community members each year. Through the Squirrel Hill Community Food Pantry, the Career Development Center, adoption, extensive services for older adults, counseling, programs for those with autism or social and emotional challenges, legal services for immigrants, and more.