U.S. EDUCATION PATHWAYS FOR REFUGEE STUDENTS

P1-P3 – CATEGORIES
U.S. REFUGEE ADMISSIONS PROGRAM (USRAP)

Refugees are admitted to the U.S. through existing refugee definitions, vulnerability-based resettlement criteria and vetting. Resettled refugees who arrive via these categories may seek to access higher education after they have arrived in the U.S.

- **Priority 1 (P-1)**
  Individuals referred by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), a U.S. embassy, or certain NGOs

- **Priority 2 (P-2)**
  Groups of special humanitarian concern

- **Priority 3 (P-3)**
  Family reunification cases

- **Priority 4 (P-4)**
  Proposed new category for private sponsorship of refugees

**Higher Education: A Complementary Pathway**
Refugee students enter the U.S. to study either through the existing F-1 student visa, university sponsorship (proposed), or the creation of a new refugee student visa.

**F-1 Student Visa**
Non-immigrant pathway. Refugee students enter the U.S. as international students on F-1 visas. Both the requirement that students must not intend to permanently immigrate to the U.S. and the financial requirements pose significant barriers. Students can apply for asylum or Temporary Protected Status once in the U.S.

**Proposed P-4 University Sponsorship Initiative**
Refugee/immigrant pathway. Refugee students would enter the U.S. through a university sponsorship program. Selection criteria would be based on academic qualifications and potential, not on vulnerability or protection considerations. To be eligible, students would need to meet the refugee definition.

**Congress Creates New Refugee Student Visa**
Creating a new visa category would require legislative action.

Sources: