



## COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY SPONSORSHIP OF REFUGEE STUDENTS

As the Department of State and partner agencies explore a pilot program for private sponsorship of refugees in 2022, higher education institutions (HEIs) across the United States stand ready to sponsor and welcome refugee students into their communities. An initiative launched by the Presidents' Alliance on Higher Education has [outlined a program design](#) for a university sponsorship process within a broader new private sponsorship program:

- The **President and agencies can use existing legal authority under the 1980 Refugee Act to create a new Priority 4 (P-4) refugee processing category**, as mentioned in the recent 2021 Report to Congress on annual refugee admissions. Unlike other, existing forms of community sponsorship (including co-sponsorship with resettlement agencies, and Afghan sponsor circles) **private sponsorship would be a new humanitarian immigration pathway to the United States**, made possible in part by harnessing the interest and resources of the private sector – including HEIs.
- HEIs, directly or through an implementing organization, could identify and be enabled to **nominate particular refugee students to this P-4 category to be privately sponsored** - to resettle and to study - in the United States as a cohort on an annual basis.
- Sponsored students would **meet both the U.S. refugee definition and academic eligibility criteria**, and pass through an **initial application process administered by the implementing organization** before their application undergoes the **same standard screening and vetting processes for all U.S. refugee admissions**.
- The **HEI and local community would provide the financial and logistical supports and services** for the private sponsorship - including study at the HEI, housing, healthcare, social integration, etc. - that would typically be provided by a resettlement agency in a traditional U.S. resettlement case.
- Like the broader private sponsorship program in which university sponsorship would sit, university sponsorship would be **in addition to the existing U.S. Refugee Admissions Program**.

Only 5% of refugee students worldwide currently access education, but American HEIs are eager to benefit from an increased pool of potential students with brilliant minds and diverse lived experiences - **including, for example, Afghan university students displaced to other countries following the recent U.S. evacuation** and left without access to a durable living solution or opportunities to continue their study. U.S.-sponsored refugees would, having received both long-term refuge and an academic course in the United States, be ready to thrive in their new homes following degree completion, and perhaps to support the future sponsorship of another refugee student in turn.

For more information, see [the RESPONSE Campaign](#) or contact [info@presidentsalliance.org](mailto:info@presidentsalliance.org).