



County of Hamilton State of Indiana

Secretary Michael R. Pompeo
U.S. Department of State

Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary Carol T. O'Connell
Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, U.S. Department of State

December 19, 2019

Dear Secretary Pompeo and Deputy Assistant Secretary O'Connell:

We write to affirm that Hamilton County, Indiana will continue to take part in the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP). **As Hamilton County Commissioners, we consent to initial refugee resettlement in Hamilton County, Indiana as per the terms of the Executive Order.** This consent is valid unless or until withdrawn.

By definition, refugees are individuals who have been forced to flee their home country due to persecution based on their race, religion, ethnicity, political opinion, or social group. Resettlement is the last resort for refugees who cannot return to their home country and cannot rebuild their lives where they first fled.

The United States is one of 27 resettlement countries, and has the most extensive refugee vetting in the world. Refugees undergo biometric screenings, medical checks, in-person interviews with specially trained officers from the Department of Homeland Security, and interagency checks involving DHS, the State Department, Department of Defense, FBI, and the National Counter Terrorism Center.

The USRAP is a prime example of a public-private partnership between the federal government, state and local governments, local non-profit organizations, and volunteers that provide refugees with the tools of self-reliance: housing, community orientation, English-language classes, and job placement. Every day, community members in Indianapolis, Indiana are volunteering with resettlement offices to help refugees integrate and thrive.

Even before Congress enacted the Refugee Act of 1980, faith communities across the United States built what we know today as the USRAP, welcoming refugees from World War II, the Vietnam War, the Cold War, the Rwandan genocide, and the Syrian refugee crisis, just to name a few. And faith communities are still deeply involved in refugee resettlement. This is part of our nation's heritage.

Refugees are resilient, hard workers whose innovative skills have contributed greatly to our state. They have opened businesses, purchased homes, and are important members of our communities.

For these reasons and more, Hamilton County, Indiana will continue to welcome refugees.

Sincerely,


Steve Dillinger
County Commissioner – President


Christine Altman
County Commissioner

Mark Heirbrandt
County Commissioner – Vice President