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**CONTACT: Paula Schriefer, President & CEO, Spring Institute for Intercultural Learning,
Phone: (202) 361-6509, pschriefer@springinstitute.org**

REFUGEE ACTION COALITION OF COLORADO COMMENDS STEPS TO INCREASE CAP ON REFUGEE ADMISSIONS TO THE UNITED STATES

Denver, CO—Members of the Refugee Action Coalition of Colorado (RACC) commend the plan to increase the cap on the number of [refugee admissions](#) to the United States announced yesterday by the Biden-Harris administration.

Yesterday the White House [published a briefing](#) announcing that President Biden signed an Executive Order laying the administrative groundwork to increase the refugee admissions cap to 125,000 in federal fiscal year 2022 beginning October 1. The announcement also stated that the president intends to raise the refugee admissions cap for the current fiscal year—which was set to a historic low of 15,000 by the previous administration—after consultation with Congress.

The announcement further outlines the Biden-Harris administration’s commitment to rebuilding the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP), including rescinding policies from the previous administration that limited resettlement, improving USRAP’s integrity, security and efficacy, increasing access to resettlement for the most vulnerable refugees, and reviewing the current Special Immigrant Visa Programs for Iraqis and Syrians.

Under the Trump administration, the U.S. refugee resettlement program was effectively dismantled. Annual caps on refugee admissions, which had averaged about 95,000 under both Republican and Democratic administrations over the past four decades, were sharply and repeatedly lowered during the Trump presidency. In Trump’s final year in office, the outgoing administration announced an unprecedented and absurdly low cap of 15,000 on refugee admissions for 2021.

Advocates laud this important step in beginning to repair the damage to the resettlement program done over the past four years and re-establishing our country’s previously longstanding global leadership in welcoming refugees.

“The Biden administration has a unique chance to not only reverse the most recent damage to the refugee resettlement program, but also to elevate it to its former, highly successful levels,” said Paula Schriefer, President of Spring Institute for Intercultural Learning. “Opening our doors to larger numbers of the world’s most vulnerable people is the first step in reclaiming our role as the preeminent and most generous country in refugee resettlement. Welcoming refugees is humane, patriotic, and it ultimately benefits us all.”

Advocates point out that refugees consistently invigorate American democracy, enliven culture, and strengthen the economy, so it is a moral and practical imperative to restore resettlement numbers as well as focus resources on revamping the infrastructure—namely the nine designated resettlement agencies and the many organizations that assist with integration efforts across the country—that support refugees in becoming successful Americans. A May 2018 report, [*Economic and Fiscal Impact of Refugees in Colorado*](#), found that refugees play a vital role in our economy and shared prosperity by generating \$1.68 in economic activity for every \$1 provided to them in assistance. The vitality of the U.S. refugee admission program also has global implications, bolstering U.S. diplomatic standing and functioning as a pressure valve for other countries that serve as the main entry points for millions fleeing global violence and persecution.

Colorado, which had previously welcomed over 2,000 refugees annually, received under 600 in 2020, leaving many resettled here without hope of ever reuniting with the loved ones they left behind in their country of origin and still other refugees stranded abroad. Restoring local resettlement numbers and making smart investments in integration supports will provide new Americans and new Coloradans with the opportunity to restart their lives while contributing their diverse talents and cultural offerings to our communities.

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The **Refugee Action Coalition of Colorado** is a coalition of organizations dedicated to defending the rights and interests of refugees at the local and national level and to providing a platform for refugees to share their contributions and concerns.

Spring Institute for Intercultural Learning is a nonprofit organization with a mission to empower people and organizations to succeed across languages and cultures. To find out more, visit our website at <http://www.springinstitute.org/> and follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).