Meeting the Moment

A Real-Time Rapid Impact Evaluation

Every Campus A Refuge

January 2026

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How ECAR and Resettlement Campus Ecosystems are Rising to Action After the Halt of the U.S. Resettlement Program

January 2026

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Authors and Primary Investigators

Dr. Diya Abdo
Executive Director, Every Campus A Refuge

Dr. Christian Matheis
Director of Monitoring, Evaluation, and Training Development, Every Campus A Refuge

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that they have no relevant or material financial interests that relate to the research described in this evaluation.

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What is Every Campus A Refuge (ECAR)?

Every Campus A Refuge (ECAR) is a non-profit 501(c)(3) that calls on colleges and universities to host at least one refugee[1] individual or family and provide them with housing and support during their resettlement process. Institutions of higher education are uniquely positioned to offer a safe, resource-rich environment that helps newcomers navigate legal systems, access essential services, and build stable lives.

ECAR Mission	**Mobilize colleges and universities to host refugees on campus grounds and support them in their resettlement.**

ECAR Vision	**Transform the landscape of refugee resettlement and higher education by creating thousands of sustainable resettlement campus ecosystems.**

ECAR's primary goals are to:

- Leverage existing material and human resources at colleges and universities to provide welcome, resettlement, and integration support for refugees, and to
- Provide powerful opportunities for community engagement and service learning for higher education institutions and transform U.S. students' place-based and experiential learning practices with a focus on glocal and practical applications.

ECAR began with a powerful call to action. In September 2015, Pope Francis called on every European parish to host one refugee family. This simple yet powerful appeal resonated deeply with Dr. Diya Abdo – Lincoln Financial Professor of English at Guilford College in Greensboro, NC, sparking a revolutionary idea:

Why couldn't colleges and universities, with their abundant resources and supportive "communities, host refugees?"

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[1] *or asylum seeker.

Motivated by this question, Dr. Abdo published an influential article titled "Re-imagining the University in a Time of Crisis: Every Campus A Refuge Campaign" in *Jadaliyya* in 2015, which laid the foundation for what would soon become a global movement of resettlement campuses, challenging academic institutions to take direct action in addressing one of the most pressing humanitarian issues of our time.[2] Dr. Abdo envisioned college campuses not just as centers of learning but as physical sanctuaries – places of refuge and safety in times of crisis.

What is the status of ECAR today?

The resettlement campus movement spearheaded by ECAR began in 2015 as a flexible higher-education initiative at Guilford College in North Carolina. More than a decade later, ECAR now operates nationally as a non-profit 501(c)(3). To date, more than two dozen campuses across the U.S.[3] have adopted ECAR, operating as resettlement campuses and building and sustaining their resettlement ecosystems. These campuses have hosted hundreds of individuals. Most hosted guests remain connected to the campus communities long after moving into permanent housing, and some return to campus to support others through mentorship, volunteering, and interpretation services.

[2] جدلية, Jadaliyya- "Reimagining the University in a Time of Crisis – Every Campus a Refuge Campaign." Jadaliyya - جدلية.. https://www.jadaliyya.com/Details/32522; United Nations. "Resettlement Campuses are the Future of Higher Education | Nations Unies." United Nations. Accessed December 30, 2025. https://www.un.org/fr/node/164217.

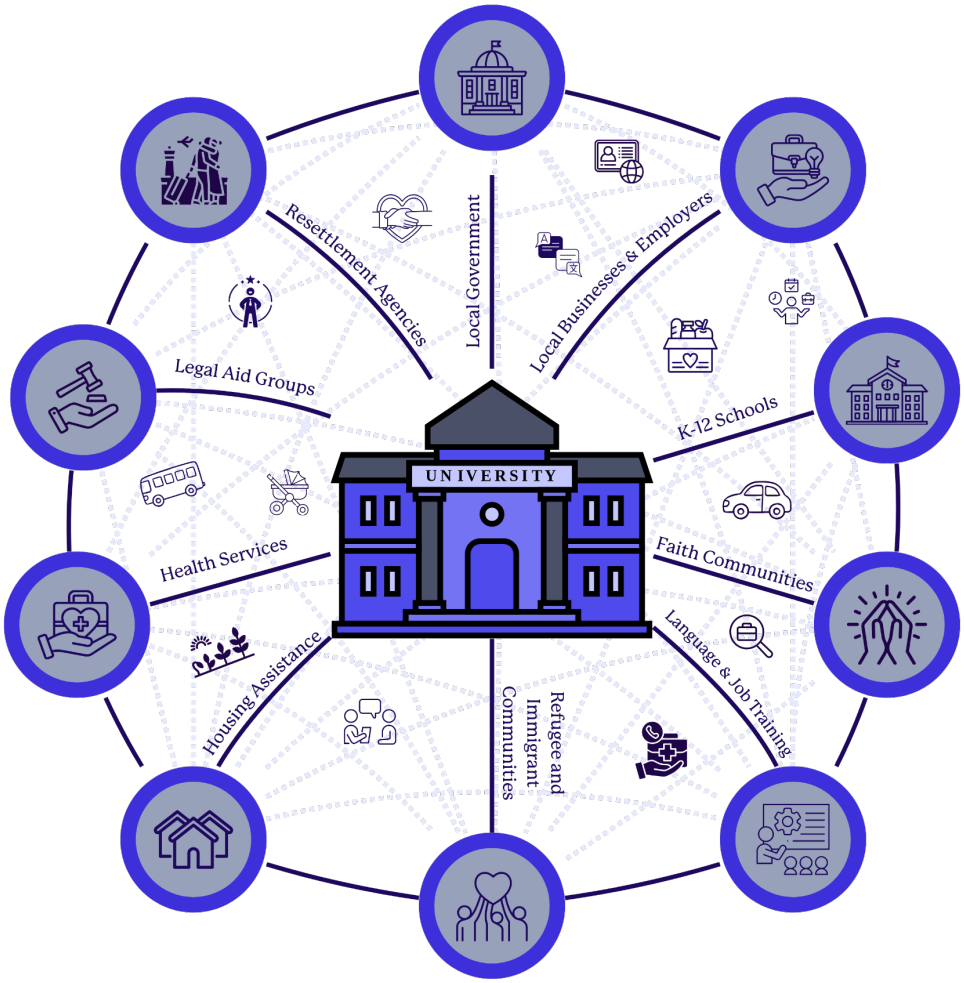
[3] https://everycampusarefuge.org/ecar-chapters-interested-campuses/.

ECAR defines a “resettlement campus” and a “resettlement campus ecosystem” as follows:

Resettlement Campus	A campus that provides housing, facilities, and personnel to enrolled and non-enrolled newcomers, and serves as sponsor or co-sponsor site for initial to medium-term resettlement providing integration support while transforming educational experiences of local students. In the process, resettlement campuses deepen local community ties and educate the public about refugee issues (e.g. ECAR).

Resettlement Campus Ecosystem	A hyperlocal constellation of organizations, agencies, and individuals (including refugees) that are either already providing support and services to newcomers, or poised to do so if they are brought into a mutually beneficial partnership, with a higher education institution as a central actor in that constellation.

Resettlement Campus Ecosystem



Executive Summary

Problem Statement

The lack of widespread, coordinated engagement between U.S. higher education and domestic refugee resettlement is detrimental to both, and it is urgent that leaders of higher education institutions, resettlement agencies, local governments, and philanthropic organizations understand and take action to build, expand, and protect a connected infrastructure between these two public sectors that are crucial components for a viable democracy.[4]

Purpose

To date, more than two dozen campuses that have adopted ECAR (referred to here as "ECAR Chapters") have hosted hundreds of refugees, providing them with a softer landing and stronger beginning in the U.S. and supporting them in their initial resettlement and long-term integration.[5] Most hosted refugees remain connected to the campus communities long after moving into permanent housing, and some return to campus to support others through mentorship, volunteering, and interpretation services.

Meeting the Moment (MtM) is a Real-Time Rapid Impact Evaluation (RTRIE) designed to collect, analyze, and report data that illustrates the impact and significance of ECAR Chapter activities in a particular moment of crisis for domestic resettlement agencies and partners. Fourteen (14) ECAR Chapters participated in this evaluation.

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[4] Consider Lee Bollinger's framing of higher education institutions as the "fifth branch of democracy." For a summary of Bollinger's work: Maimon, Elaine. "The Citizen Recommends: Lee Bollinger at the Free Library." *The Philadelphia Citizen*, 21 Jan. 2026, https://thephiladelphiacitizen.org/the-citizen-recommends-lee-bollinger-free-library-author-series/. For a brief analysis of the relevance to resettlement and higher education see Appendix A.

[5] Abdo, Diya, and Krista Craven. "Every Campus A Refuge." *Migration and Society* 1, no. 1 (2018): 135–46. https://doi.org/10.3167/arms.2018.010112.

The Moment

On January 20th, 2025 the White House issued a series of Executive Orders indefinitely suspending operations of the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP), and declaring it the policy of the United States, "…to admit only those refugees who can fully and appropriately assimilate."[6] Acting on these orders, federal agencies halted processing of refugees who were already in the pipeline to resettle in the U.S. and stripped the domestic resettlement infrastructure of funding.[7] Under duress, resettlement agencies furloughed and laid off staff, reduced and closed programs, and conducted triage responses to redirect refugees and asylum seekers to other possible supports and services – few of which are readily accessible and holistically beneficial to them.[8]

This is a moment in which U.S. Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are also a primary target of efforts to erode the economic, political, and cultural foundations of education.[9] Colleges and universities face a spike in accusations that research, academic courses, and teaching methods are based in anti-American biases.[10] Anti-democracy organizations persist with demands to eliminate diversity, equity, and inclusion programs that counteract inequities – notably for populations that are often falsely criminalized.[11]

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[6] The White House. "Executive Order 14163–Realigning the United States Refugee Admissions Program." January 20, 2025. https://www.govinfo.gov/app/details/DCPD-202500130; National Immigrant Justice Center. *Leading with Cruelty: Eight Impacts of Trump's First Day Executive Orders*. January 22, 2025. https://immigrantjustice.org/blog/leading-with-cruelty-eight-impacts-of-trumps-first-day-executive-orders/.

[7] "Analysis of Trump Day 1 Executive Orders: Unconstitutional, Illegal, and Cruel." National Immigration Law Center, January 27, 2025. https://www.nilc.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Analysis-of-Trump-Day-1-Executive-Orders.pdf.

[8] USAHello. "Immigrant Benefits and Refugee Services." https://usahello.org/life-in-usa/money/public-benefits/.

[9] *Political Attacks on Higher Education | AAUP*. Issue Updates and Resource Directory. https://www.aaup.org/issues-higher-education/political-attacks-higher-education. The Association of American University Professors (AAUP) actively monitors political attacks on U.S. higher education and maintains an online directory of incidents, analyses, responses, and resources. For additional information about attacks on HEIs in the U.S. and globally see: *FREE TO THINK 2025: Report of the Scholars at Risk Academic Freedom Monitoring Project*. Scholars At Risk Network, https://www.scholarsatrisk.org/resources/free-to-think-2025/.

[10] Salajan, Florin D., and Tavis D. Jules. "US Education in the Age of Trumpism, Project 2025, American Isolationism, and the Global Polycrisis: Charting a New Role for Comparative and International Education." Comparative Education Review, vol. 68, no. 4, Nov. 2024, pp. 519–37. *DOI.org (Crossref)*, https://doi.org/10.1086/734036.

[11] Ibid.

Key Results and Findings

During this time of crisis for domestic refugee resettlement and despite pressures on higher education institutions, ECAR Chapters have stepped up to support refugees and resettlement agency partners in myriad ways, including through new activities that have effectively expanded how ECAR Chapters operate:[12]

- **People are Stepping Up** – 100% of participating Chapters (n=14) reported that new people have stepped up to support ECAR Chapter efforts, and that these new people are from both the populations that have already been involved (e.g. students) and from new and different populations (e.g. neighbors of faculty).
- **ECAR Chapters are Providing Services and Offering Key Support Off-Campus** in their hyperlocal Resettlement Campus Ecosystem to families and other newcomers who are not hosted by the ECAR Chapter in question.
- **ECAR Chapters are Adapting to Provide and/or Coordinate Supports and Services Previously Provided by Resettlement Agencies** in the form of Housing, Volunteer Support, Transportation, Off-Setting Other Costs for Families, Employment / Career Services, and in other ways.

[12] Important Note: ECAR is not a replacement for the domestic resettlement infrastructure. ECAR has always worked closely in partnership with resettlement agencies and, in fact, the ability of ECAR Chapters to pivot and fill in gaps in supports and services is in large part due to ECAR's long-time and mutual work with agency partners. When national resettlement efforts are fully restored (either in their previous or in a newly reimagined form), ECAR will continue to support resettlement agency partners.

Key Areas of Impact

More specifically, in this moment, ECAR Chapters are continuing to transform resettlement, higher education, and surrounding communities by:

1.	Delivering Rapid Responses	Providing housing, sponsorship, reception and placement services, and responding to emergency requests from individuals and agencies.
2.	Expanding Influence and Widening Infrastructure of Refugee Support	Onboarding new members, leveraging campus and community resources, raising funds, and ECAR Chapter members personally hosting refugees.
3.	Continuing to Build Long-Term Resilience and Capacity	Training local community organizations and members, providing employment opportunities, adapting campus programs for broader community engagement.
4.	Educating, Informing, and Encouraging	Hosting and contributing to community events, increasing visibility, educating and crowdfunding via social media, and cultivating new partnerships.
5.	Reframing Narratives, Strategic Engagement, and Advocacy	Addressing misinformation with principled and practical knowledge, proactively leveraging connections, and maintaining a focus on both immediate needs and long-term strategies.
6.	Affirming Community and Spreading Joy	Engaging children and families in sports, art, music, food, culture, rest – the many ways joy emerges when we share our differences and commonalities with one another.

Methods

Primary data for this Real-Time Rapid Impact Evaluation (RTRIE) was collected between April and June of 2025 through voluntary online informational interviews with representatives of 14 ECAR Chapters (n=14, 66%).[13] Interviewees provided quantitative and qualitative data about organizational activities for the purposes of reporting transferable knowledge about organizational impact and the benefits of inter-organizational partnerships.[14] Transcripts were de-identified, coded, themed, and analyzed to categorize and evaluate the activities and impacts of ECAR Chapters.

Study Population

The large representative sample size (66%) bolsters the situational importance of results and findings, which are further enhanced by the range of institutional enrollments (sizes), diversity of organizational missions (charters), and the variety of unique populations, infrastructures, and geographic areas (settings and surroundings):[15]

- **Sizes:** 4 small campuses, 5 medium campuses, and 5 large campuses
- **Charters:** 7 public institutions, 7 private institutions
- **Settings and Surrounding Infrastructure:** 4 in Midsize Cities, 2 in Large Cities, 2 in Small Cities, 2 in Large Suburbs, 1 in a Midsize Suburb, 2 in Distant towns, and 1 in a Remote Town

Considerations: Scope, Limitations, Risks, and Mitigation Strategies

To protect newcomers, campus and community partners, and contributors, and to ensure data integrity, this study addressed several low-level risks through comprehensive mitigation strategies.

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[13] There were 21 active ECAR Chapters during the data collection phase of the study.

[14] Data collection and analysis for this study was not for the purposes of deductive, generalizable knowledge about specific populations. Important Note: We make no claims to generalizability and/or statistical significance. We present the strength of key metrics including sample size, diversity, and uniqueness of locations to illustrate the extraordinary impact of ECAR Chapters in the context of resettlement and higher education – and in the midst of a moment of escalating crises.

[15] Profile data primarily sourced from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), Integrated Post-Secondary Education Data System (IPEDS). Additional profile data sourced from institutional websites. To maintain the anonymity of newcomers, participating Chapters, and campus partners this report includes only select institutional classification data.

Scope of Impact:

Meeting the Moment (MtM) serves to document the hyperlocal activities of ECAR Chapters, illustrate their remarkable efficacy in response to a particularly volatile and risky historical moment, and illustrate the scope of the broader ECAR resettlement movement at the following different levels of impact:

1. **Individual and Family-Level:** meeting immediate needs
2. **Neighborhood and Community-Level:** civic joy and social trust
3. **Coalition-Level:** mutually beneficial partnerships between organizations
4. **Institutional-Level:** leveraging existing resources in hyperlocal ecosystems
5. **National, Societal-Level:** cross-sector integration of resettlement, higher education, and civic ecosystems
6. **Global-Level:** actor and model in the broader global resettlement infrastructure

Risks, Limitations, and Mitigation Strategies:

To maintain high ethical standards and data integrity, the study addressed minimal risks of participant re-traumatization and accidental identification through strict anonymization, CITI-certified study personnel, and the use of de-identified data related to campus partners and geographic locations. The size and diversity of the sample for this project minimizes risks of selection biases. We mitigated potential analytical biases – such as overgeneralization or data magnification – by employing advanced staff training, cross-verifying findings against raw transcripts, and incorporating substantive and corrective feedback from independent peer reviews. Going forward, a follow-up evaluation that includes perspectives from refugees and newcomers, as well as the perspective of resettlement agency personnel, would afford an opportunity to address some of the current limitations through a comparative and retrospective update to this study (i.e. triangulation).[16] In accordance with our guiding principles, ECAR refrains from interviewing newcomers currently hosted or supported by an ECAR Chapter to ensure the integrity of our support and prevent false-positive results in our research.

[16] Sawt: An Oral History of Resettlement Campuses (Ṣawt) is an oral history project ECAR conducted prior to this evaluation that that seeks to record, share, and amplify the voices and experiences of refugees hosted by colleges and universities under unique circumstances – not as students, but as community members. Transcripts and study materials were analyzed and sourced (within the terms of the proposal and IRB review), rendering insights and resources that have informed ECAR operationally. The analyzed data could feasibly be compared with the data in this evaluation in order to refine and reissue updated results, findings, and recommendations.

Recommendations

Based on these findings, the following strategic actions are recommended to guide higher education institutions in expanding their campus and community ecosystem of support for refugees, asylum seekers, and all newcomers to the U.S.

General Recommendation: Adopt ECAR, Advocate for ECAR:

- ➔ **Advocate for and promote ECAR**: Champion the initiative to join the growing resettlement campus movement in your institutional networks and professional organizations.

Get to know more about ECAR

Visit: https://www.everycampusarefuge.org/about/

- ➔ **Adopt and Implement ECAR**: Establish an ECAR Chapter at your institution / in your community.

Get started with Resources for Building an ECAR Chapter
Visit: https://www.everycampusarefuge.org/resources/

Recommendations for Strategic Action:

1) **Support Rapid Response**: Redistribution of a portion (%) of the core workload (FTE) of one or more campus personnel to incorporate direct work with ECAR (by establishing an ECAR Chapter on campus and/or sustaining an existing Chapter's work) into their regular duties.

2) **Expand Campus Influence and Widen Infrastructure of Refugee Support:** Tasking a mid-level and/or senior administrator (Deans, VPs) with executive-level resettlement advocacy, seeking potential partnerships with public and private sector organizations.

3) **Advance Long-Term Resilience and Capacity:** Dedicating a portion (%) of the required workload (FTE) of personnel in advancement / development roles to explore donor funding and financial partnerships that integrate educational and resettlement priorities.

4) **Refresh the Educational Mission of the Campus:** Increasing support for existing curricular and co-curricular opportunities related to forced migration and resettlement, and/or establish initiatives to create such opportunities, including incentives to modify existing courses and/or create new course offerings, certificates, minors, independent studies, graduate assistantships, fellowships, service-learning projects etc.

5) **Prepare Leadership for Reframing, Strategic Engagement, and Advocacy:** Committing meeting time among senior-level / executive administrators for an initial one-hour training session with ECAR staff focused on executive partnership and advocacy.

6) **Affirm Community and Spread Joy:** Developing formal and informal acknowledgements and affirmations of the activities of students, staff, faculty, and alumni involved with ECAR Chapters and broader resettlement efforts – e.g. during awards and recognition ceremonies, in formal remarks at internal and external events, in memos and communications highlighting campus activities and impacts.

Introduction

Imagine yourself waking up on a cold January morning and turning to your mobile phone or television for the daily news only to find out that the White House had issued an Executive Order simultaneously mandating immediate closure of all public K-12 schools, ceasing of operations of all public transportation systems, closing the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), implementing a market-driven rental price index for government owned housing, and issuing advanced eviction timelines concurrent with a longer-term plan to sell off all federal and state low-income housing assets.

The moment. On January 20th, 2025 the hypothetical scenario above became all too real for refugees as the White House issued a series of Executive Orders indefinitely suspending operations of the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP), and declaring it the policy of the United States, "...to admit only those refugees who can fully and appropriately assimilate."[17]

Early warning of problematic scenarios had already circulated in organizational networks and mainstream media. By August 2024, many organizations engaged in support of newcomers were monitoring the 2024 Presidential election and discussing contingency plans in anticipation of predicted reductions and elimination of federal funding and other governmental support for resettlement agencies.

When that moment arrived, the federal government stripped the domestic resettlement infrastructure of funding, resettlement agencies furloughed and laid off staff, reduced and closed programs, and conducted triage responses to redirect refugees and asylum seekers to other possible supports and services – few of which are readily accessible and holistically beneficial to them newcomers.[18]

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[17] National Immigration Law Center. "Analysis of Trump Day 1 Executive Orders: Unconstitutional, Illegal, and Cruel." National Immigration Law Center, January 27, 2025. https://www.nilc.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Analysis-of-Trump-Day-1-Executive-Orders.pdf.

[18] USAHello. "Immigrant Benefits and Refugee Services." https://usahello.org/life-in-usa/money/public-benefits/; https://www.rescue.org/article/how-have-trump-policies-impacted-refugees.

At the same time, campus chapters of Every Campus A Refuge (ECAR) pivoted – that is, they *sustained, adapted, and/or expanded activities, taking on the roles previously played by resettlement agencies.*

- **Sustaining:** As they have since ECAR was established in 2015, ECAR Chapters continued to host refugees on campus grounds and support them in their resettlement.
- **Adapting:** ECAR Chapters around the country are meeting the moment by providing solutions at the intersection of a **set of multifaceted problems** and **gaps in the domestic resettlement infrastructure** in the form of rapid responses, leveraging existing resources, coordinating with new partners, and using strategies such as reframing narratives and strategic engagement in response to challenges.
- **Expanding:** ECAR Chapters are working with new populations of newcomers, forming new partnerships, taking on different roles, adding new activities, trying new strategies, addressing misinformation, educating, advocating, and joyfully creating new resources.

Problem Statement

The lack of widespread, coordinated engagement between higher education and refugee resettlement is detrimental to both, and it is urgent that leaders of higher education institutions, resettlement agencies, local governments, and philanthropic organizations understand and take action to build, expand, and protect a connected infrastructure between these two public sectors that are crucial components for a viable democracy

It is not only the resettlement sector that is under threat. This is a moment in which U.S. Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are also a primary target of efforts to erode the economic, political, and cultural foundations of education *writ large* as a social sector – to privatize or eliminate the broad spectrum including K-12 schools, technical and vocational programs, community colleges, public and private colleges and universities, graduate and professional programs, accreditation organizations, public research, etc.[19]

HEIs and resettlement organizations face similar threats and challenges resulting from:

1. Ethnocentrism and Nationalism[20]
2. The Myth of Scarcity and Privatization[21]
3. Scapegoating and Authoritarianism[22]
4. Sectoral Fragmentation and Silo Effects[23]

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[19] Kamola refers to the threats listed here as "national-level political machine" that began unleashing attacks on higher education and other public serving institutions in 2021 (Kamola Ibid.). Perhaps the current intensity of these threats began to escalate in 2021, That may not be accurate. It may seem accurate given the overt disregard and/or contempt for laws and public policies as it is now carried out in full public view where once it was somewhat hidden. Even so, the groundwork for *coordinating* these attacks began as early as 1960, and likely well before that. For more information see the timeline in Pharr, S., Matheis, C., and Terrana, E. "In the Time of the Right: Reflections on Liberation – a zine." 2025, https://www.suzannepharr.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/Zine-In-the-Time-of-the-Right-Reflections-on-Liberation-2025-2nd-Edition.pdf

[20] The phrasing for these terms varies depending on the methodological backgrounds of researchers. In addition to Kamola's analysis (Ibid.), see Scot Nakagawa's analysis and predictions related to "ethnic nationalism" in Nakagawa, Scot. "Navigating the Ultranationalist Trap." Substack newsletter. *The Anti-Authoritarian Playbook*, 22 Sept. 2025, https://antiauthoritarianplaybook.substack.com/p/navigating-the-ultranationalist-trap.

[21] Privatization refers to the transfer of public resources and services over to control of private corporations and other organizations that operate on political, financial, and/or cultural agendas without public accountability (Pharr 6, 30, 79. 86). This is based on the unfounded rationale that businesses are the most efficient types of organizations, and that if public benefits services are offered by businesses they will provide greater value at lower costs. In reality, privatization most frequently results in lower standards and diminished quality at higher costs to individuals. Pharr, S. *In the Time of the Right: Reflections on Liberation*. Virginia Tech Publishing, 2025, https://doi.org/10.21061/in-the-time-of-the-right.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Some of the most advanced research related to sectoral fragmentation and silo effects can be found in the work of activists and scholars in fields of climate crisis and in public health, particularly those who study public policy and public

In broad sweeps, the resettlement infrastructure is accused of harboring and aiding people with violent goals ("terrorists" and "criminals"), throwing away taxpayer funds on non-citizens, and watering down the true values and culture of America.

HEIs, similarly, face a spike in accusations that research, academic courses, and teaching methods are based in anti-American biases, neoliberal austerity measures enacted on the basis of (largely failed) corporate finance as the defining standard of economic viability, and demands to eliminate diversity, equity, and inclusion programs that counteract inequities – notably for populations that are often falsely criminalized. Because these strategies systematized, we can make the mistake that they are natural occurrences in an evolving society rather than historical consequences of carefully calculated, routine exercise of elite private authority set against public interest and accountability.

It is at this point of crisis and transition that the two sectors – higher education and resettlement – have an immediate opportunity to unite and coordinate a response at scale that is mutually beneficial, long-term, and transformative. Partnerships between Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), Every Campus A Refuge (ECAR), and other resettlement organizations can resolve four interrelated problems:

1. Lack of resettlement opportunities for refugees.
2. Refugees experience significant socio-economic challenges when they do resettle.
3. Fringe groups, think tanks, and politicians perpetuate xenophobic myths and misconceptions about refugees in order to negatively influence public opinion, policies, and practices related to refugee admissions and resettlement.
4. The need for more meaningful engagement from higher education in these issues.

The results and findings of this study demonstrate that Every Campus A Refuge (ECAR) Chapters offer higher education institutions (HEIs) and their surrounding communities a transformative blueprint for efficient, value-driven, mutually beneficial partnerships that emphasize:

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sector silos. A relatively recent case study analysis by Peiris, et al. (2024) may be a helpful place to start since it includes demonstrations of tools for detecting, evaluating, and addressing sectoral fragmentation and silos in public health – tools that seem transferable to use in many other contexts such as refugee resettlement and higher education. See Peiris, David, et al. "Overcoming Silos in Health Care Systems through Meso-Level Organisations – a Case Study of Health Reforms in New South Wales, Australia." *The Lancet Regional Health – Western Pacific*, vol. 44, Mar. 2024, p. 101013. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lanwpc.2024.101013.

1. **Equity & Opportunity** to prevent and displace Ethnocentrism and Nationalism
2. **Financial Accountability & Economic Security** to replace The Myth of Scarcity and counteract unchecked Privatization
3. **Intercultural Humility & Democratic Pluralism** as antidotes to Scapegoating and Authoritarianism
4. **Leveraging Existing Resources & Cross-Sector Partnership**s where Sectoral Fragmentation and Silo Effects have undermined both resettlement and post-secondary education

Higher education institutions can address challenges faced by refugees and counteract xenophobic narratives through targeted initiatives and coordinated engagement with the resettlement sector. By leveraging their resources and expertise, HEI's can support refugees while simultaneously expanding and enhancing curricular, co-curricular, and research opportunities, promoting informed public discourse and advocating for policy changes that strengthen democratic institutions.[24]

Methods and Analysis

Meeting the Moment (MtM) is a Real-Time Rapid Impact Evaluation (RTRIE). It was designed to quickly collect recent and/or emerging data, incorporate it into an iterative process of analyses that can help detect initial focal points for quick response and closer monitoring, inform intermittent insights for continuous improvements, ground impact reports, and illustrate the significance of ECAR Chapter activities in a particular moment of crisis for domestic resettlement agencies and partners.

In March 2025 a research team comprised of three members of the ECAR Staff contacted representatives of all ECAR Chapters by email with an invitation to participate in this study on an entirely voluntary basis. The research team observed the principles of human subjects research (i.e. respect for persons, beneficence, and justice), and exceeded best practices in accordance with ECAR's commitment to respect the dignity, agency, and privacy of newcomers and by extension anyone supporting them. Contributors were

[24] Sapra, Sonalini, Christian Matheis, and Diya Abdo. "Seeking Justice, Seeking Hope: Refugee Resettlement Campuses and Transformative Pedagogy in Higher Education." Metropolitan Universities 34, no. 2 (2023): 43–69.https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1394808.

provided with a detailed informed consent disclosure, and all participation was opt-in voluntary.[25]

Between April-June 2025, the research team hosted and recorded one-on-one informational interviews with representatives from 14 of the (then) 21 ECAR Chapters.[26] Interview questions focused on seven topics of inquiry to ascertain the extent to which ECAR Chapters were:

- Affirming commitments and stepping up to support resettlement agencies (RAs).
- Supporting case management services beyond their usual roles.
- Providing services and supports beyond formal partnerships with RAs – and specifically for a) families hosted by ECAR Chapters as well as for b) families off-campus, not hosted by ECAR Chapters.
- Encountering different people stepping up to volunteer and support ECAR Chapters, and/or the same people (already involved) were stepping up more.
- Serving as network connectors – building mutual aid networks to help pool resources, volunteer time, broker / develop new partnerships, etc.
- Engaging in advocacy a) in response to pushback / resistance to partnerships with ECAR and/or resettlement agencies, and b) in general.
- Making the case to administrators for ECAR.

Interview transcripts and recordings served as the primary data source. The research team used a mixed-methods analysis, blending a quantitative tally and inventory of reported ECAR Chapter activities with qualitative coding and theming to identify indicators of impact and significance.

The diversity of the campuses represented in this study (Table 1: Profile of Campuses Partnering with Participating ECAR Chapters) is one of the most important pieces of data and context for understanding study results and findings. ECAR can happen anywhere there is a campus willing to partner, leverage existing resources, and problem-solve. The flexibility of ECAR to operate in different campus environments and broader hyperlocal

[25] The decision to focus the study on Chapter activities and organizational impact without seeking data from refugees and newcomers, 1) follows from ECAR's commitment to the dignity, agency, and privacy of newcomers, as well as 2) responds to a critical gap in research focused on the operational features of refugee supporting organizations, such as partnerships with campuses, and 3) adheres to the principle of beneficence–the more clearly we understand ECAR's operational features the more carefully we can enhance ECAR's impact to the benefit of newcomers.

[26] Since then, ECAR has grown and expanded to 23 Chapters.

ecosystems contributes to their effectiveness in meeting the moment.

Table 1: Profile of Campuses Partnering with Participating ECAR Chapters[27]			
Campus # (study ID)	**Undergraduate Enrollment**	**Public, Private**	**Campus Setting**
#1	Small	Private	City: Midsize
#2	Small	Private	City: Large
#3	Small	Private	Town: Remote
#4	Large	Private	City: Small
#5	Small	Private	Suburb: Large
#6	Medium	Public	City: Small
#7	Large	Public	Town: Distant
#8	Large	Public	Suburb: Midsize
#9	Large	Public	City: Midsize
#10	Medium	Public	City: Midsize
#11	Medium	Private	City: Midsize
#12	Medium	Public	Suburb: Large
#13	Large	Public	Town: Distant
#14	Medium	Private	City: Large

[27] Profile data primarily sourced from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), Integrated Post-Secondary Education Data System (IPEDS). Additional profile data sourced from institutional websites.

The large representative sample size (66%) bolsters the situational importance of results and findings, further enhanced by the range of institutional enrollments (sizes), diversity of organizational missions (charters), and the variety of unique populations, infrastructures, and geographic areas (settings and surroundings).[28] We make no claims to generalizability and/or statistical significance. We present the strength of key metrics including sample size, diversity, and uniqueness of locations to illustrate the extraordinary impact of ECAR Chapters in the context of resettlement and higher education – and in the midst of a moment of escalating crises.

Disclosures: Study Dynamics and Ethics, Benefits, Risks, and Mitigation Strategies

- **Study *Dynamics and Ethics:*** This impact study was conducted under the auspices of Every Campus A Refuge (ECAR) for the purposes of quality improvement. All phases of study design, implementation, monitoring, analysis, and reporting adhere to standard definitions and criteria distinguishing it from human subjects research requiring approval by an institutional review board.[29] Best practices and standards for human subjects research were followed and in some ways exceeded. The Co-Primary Investigators (Abdo & Matheis) are employed by ECAR. Under their supervision, study activities were carried out by staff, interns, and volunteers who are immediately affiliated with ECAR, including the Chapter coordinators and volunteers who provided the primary sources of data through informational interviews. This study dynamic involves substantial benefits as well as potential risks and limitations.

- **Potential *Risks & Limitations:*** The study faces minimal risks regarding participant well-being, specifically concerning potential re-traumatization or accidental re-identification. Data integrity may be limited to internal validity by in-group biases

[28] Profile data primarily sourced from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), Integrated Post-Secondary Education Data System (IPEDS). Additional profile data sourced from institutional websites. To maintain the anonymity of newcomers, participating Chapters, and campus partners this report includes only select institutional classification data.

[29] Determinations informed in part by Bass, Pat F 3rd, and John W Maloy. "How to Determine if a Project Is Human Subjects Research, a Quality Improvement Project, or Both." *Ochsner journal* vol. 20,1 (2020): 56-61. https://doi.org/10.31486/toj.19.0087; and Carroll, Alison R et al. "Designing and Conducting Scholarly Quality Improvement: A Practical Guide for Improvers Everywhere." Hospital pediatrics vol. 12,10 (2022): e359-e363. https://doi.org/10.1542/hpeds.2022-006717.

that result in magnification, minimization, or overgeneralization of results, as well as the risk of inaccurate evaluative labeling during analysis. Expanding the study to invite previously hosted/supported refugees and newcomers (to align with ECAR's principle of not interviewing refugees and newcomers currently hosted or supported by an ECAR Chapter) and resettlement agency staff who have engaged with ECAR Chapters to share their perspectives, and comparing with the current data (i.e. triangulation) would likely have enriched the impact of this report, as well as broadened the applicability of results and findings. That remains a possibility as a next stage of inquiry and along with its own insights would allow a retrospective review of this evaluation.

- **Benefits*:*** Externally, this study may be used to support improvements to the ECAR organization, including ECAR Chapter operations and, therefore, improved supports and services for newcomers. Internally, the study was enhanced by the group of ECAR-affiliated subject matter experts (SMEs), an in-group with internal, shared knowledge and mutual understanding of the contexts, risks, and benefits for contributors, newcomers, organizational partners, etc., Overall, these are features of a study under the close watch of those who have both an interest in its legitimacy (justification and conduct), and the immediate expertise needed to make sound and reliable determinations about its integrity (ethics and accountability).

Results and Findings: How are Every Campus A Refuge Chapters Meeting the Moment?

Since the shuttering of the U.S. refugee admissions and resettlement program in January, ECAR Chapters across the country continued the work of welcome despite the shutdowns, attrition, and layoffs many organizations in the resettlement sector are facing. ECAR Chapters have stepped up to support refugees and resettlement agency partners during this time, including taking on new roles and activities that expand how ECAR Chapters operate and who ECAR Chapters support.

Here we begin by detailing some of the specific problems and challenges that occurred following the January 2025 Executive Orders, highlight four critical insights into the ways that ECAR Chapters pivoted by sustaining, adapting, and expanding their impact, and then review these impacts in closer detail and in the voices (quotes) of contributors on the ground working directly with ECAR Chapters.

Problems and Challenges

The shutdown of many resettlement agencies in January left refugees and their families to figure out their next steps without the supports and services to which they are entitled by law. Across the country, the ripple effect resulted in a broad range of immediate and secondary problems and challenges. A summary of the origination / sources of some of the problems contributors discussed in their interviews is presented below in Table 2: Problems and Challenges ECAR Chapters Encountered – Additional Details from Interviews. These additional details establish important context for the realities facing ECAR Chapters while illustrating that ECAR Chapters can maintain operational continuity through a decentralized organizational structure, leveraging localized networks of students, faculty, and community volunteers when institutional support is withdrawn or absent, allowing them to bypass traditional administrative bottlenecks and respond to immediate humanitarian needs.

Table 2: Problems and Challenges ECAR Chapters Encountered — Additional Details from Interviews[30]	
Origin	**Problem / Challenge**
Federal Government / USRAP	Funding sources diminished or altogether ended fundraising efforts.
Federal Government / USRAP	• Immediate loss of funding for housing • Sudden absence of coordinated welcome teams after local resettlement agency disbanded
Federal Government / Subcontractor	Key online resources were stripped from websites.
Local / Regional Government	Attempts by public officials to deny housing to migrants, including refugees and other newcomers
Campus Administration Executive Leadership	• No senior leaders to advocate, no one to appeal to after the sudden departure of president and provost, and no information about a leadership transition plan. • Administrators exploited recent leadership transitions, would not honor previous commitments to ECAR Chapter, refused to dedicate housing for hosting newcomers.
Campus Administration Division-Level / College-Level	Actively discouraging events and activities that are supportive of the ECAR Chapter.
Campus Advancement Development / Foundation	Foundation denied access to funds, ceased normal operations for accessing funds, issued a false determination, ceased communications.
Campus Media, Marketing, and Communications	Refusal to publish / distribute any news related to ECAR Chapter Activities

[30] Please note that these details were volunteered and were not directly solicited during interviews. Further, these details are presented in thematic and topical format to provide an additional layer of de-identification and, therefore, greater protection to all involved at the local level.

ECAR Chapters met these problems and challenges by sustaining, adapting, and expanding:

- **Sustaining:** As they have since ECAR was established in 2015, ECAR Chapters continued to host refugees on campus grounds and support them in their resettlement.
- **Adapting:** ECAR Chapters around the country are meeting the moment by providing solutions at the intersection of a **set of multifaceted problems** and **gaps in the domestic resettlement infrastructure** in the form of rapid responses, leveraging existing resources, coordinating with new partners, and using strategies such as reframing narratives and strategic engagement in response to challenges.
- **Expanding:** ECAR Chapters are working with new populations of newcomers, forming new partnerships, taking on different roles, adding new activities, trying new strategies, addressing misinformation, educating, advocating, and joyfully creating new resources.

Highlights: ECAR Chapters Pivoted by Sustaining, Expanding, and Adapting

The selected results below reflect how ECAR Chapters are sustaining, adapting, and expanding supports and services for newcomers.

Highlight #A: ECAR is Sustaining and Expanding — People are Stepping Up	
Commitment is growing among the already committed. **100% of participating Chapters (n=14) reported that support is on the rise from familiar populations that have already been involved (e.g. students, staff, faculty).**	36.4% reported YES, many of the same people have stepped up.

Highlight #B: ECAR is Expanding – New people are Stepping Up	
People who have not previously been involved are committing their time and energy. **100% of participating Chapters (n=14) reported that new people have stepped up to support ECAR Chapter efforts, and that these new people are from both the populations that have already been involved (e.g. students) and from new and different populations (e.g. neighbors of faculty).**	63.6% reported YES, new people have stepped up.

Highlight #C: ECAR is Adapting and Expanding – ECAR Chapters are Offering Key Support Off-Campus in their Hyperlocal Resettlement Campus Ecosystems	
Chapters are providing services and support to off-campus families and other newcomers in the following ways:	• Housing • Volunteer Support • Transportation • Gift Cards, Food, and Other Supplies • Legal Referrals and/or Services • Use of Crowdfunding Platforms to Raise Emergency Funds • Employment / Career Services • Access to healthcare, medical appointments • Off-setting other costs for other families (e.g. rent, utility bills) • Additional in-kind services (e.g. collecting and distributing donated items) • Used social media to coordinate support or collect donations

Highlight #D: ECAR is Sustaining – ECAR Chapters are adapting to provide and/or coordinate supports and services previously provided by resettlement agencies.	
Original Scope of Activities / Operations	**Expanded Activities / Operations**
• Housing (to currently hosted family) • Volunteer Support (to currently hosted family)	• Housing (to additional families) • Volunteer Support (increased in quantity and to additional families) • Transportation • Off-Setting Other Costs for Families • Employment / Career Services

Faculty, staff, students, and community members involved with ECAR Chapters around the country strategized and took action to affirm their commitment to assist newcomers and resettlement agencies. Analysis of study data reflects **six major themes representing trends in ECAR Chapter activities since January 2025**. Below, the major themes are interwoven with quotes from informational interviews with contributors[31]

1 Delivering Rapid Responses

ECAR Chapters provided rapid response support to refugee families and resettlement agency partners at risk. Specifically, ECAR Chapters have housed additional families, directly sponsored Afghan evacuees, and provided Reception and Placement services to additional refugee families, responding to local resettlement agency partners' emergency requests for help.

1.1 Providing Rapid Response

ECAR Chapters adapted quickly and responded by meeting the needs of different populations and expanding partnerships throughout their communities.

"It feels like there are two really critical kinds of populations of newcomers whose needs are a little different, but wherever we can we step in and help. We need witnesses for ICE encounters, we need "know your rights" workshops. We need volunteers who speak all these languages to have eyes on the street. How do we provide that? I don't know if this is a universal term, but around here they're calling it rapid response." – Campus 4

[31] Most of the quotes included in this section are reported as they were stated during informational interviews. Some were revised and/or abridged to provide clarity while maintaining the original meaning and intention.

1.2	Adapting to Provide Reception and Placement Services + Mobilizing Community
While the needs grew and federal resources stopped, ECAR Chapters cultivated resources and coordinated with new community members who stepped up to support refugee families.	***"We've had what we call Every Campus A Refuge student teams that work with [Resettlement Agency #1] here in [City Name]. We started in spring 2024, and we had a Syrian family of seven that our team was working with, then in the fall we had a Haitian family of five then for this for the spring semester we were assigned an Afghan family of six. When everything happened at the end of January, our team, instead of having one family, we ended up with four families. Our team really did step up with it."*** – Campus 10

1.3	Responding to Emergency Requests + Aiding a Broader Network + Hosting Events and Activities
ECAR Chapters sustained the support they were already providing to refugee families, adapted campus programs, expanded their activities to aid a broader network of teachers, tutors, and former case managers, and expanded efforts by hosting events and activities.	***"In January 2025 the local resettlement office was closed, and so a lot of the coordination changed between us and the resettlement agency. The case managers are continuing to work mostly on a volunteer basis. But we've done a number of concrete things. One, we continue to support [the agency's] English language classes by serving as teachers along with community volunteers. We also continue to do the work that we had done as a Chapter. So that means a lot of in-home, like home visits, tutoring, grocery, store shopping, different kinds of activities. We've hosted some picnics and other kinds of activities in that way that we've done as a Chapter and then we have continued to coordinate with the former case manager to continue working with the families that we'd been working with. We work with about seven families, and then we teach. You know we're there for anybody who needs bus orientation or the English classes."*** – *Campus 8*

1.4	Supporting at-Risk Newcomers and Agency Partners
ECAR volunteers rose above the challenge, coming to an agreement to continue to support and work with refugee families regardless of what happened in January.	*"Certainly, our team of people have talked and discussed and decided – regardless of what has happened since January – that we are going to do what we can to continue to support the families that we have and the students (ECAR students, our Welcome Corps on Campus students) and support [our local resettlement agency partner] the best way that we can from an institutional perspective. There were a dozen or more families that arrived in November and December 2024. The resettlement agency asked community groups, and this is probably happening everywhere, to take on a family or two themselves to be able to provide some of that support." –* Campus 9

1.5	Housing and Sponsoring Additional Families, Including Afghan Evacuees
ECAR Chapters housed additional families and directly sponsored Afghan evacuees	***"We had a Nicaraguan family of three. We had a Guatemalan family of three. We had a Venezuelan family of three and then, in addition, we had the Afghan family of six who was initially assigned to us. Our team was spread out a little more thinly, and there was a reduction in support from the [refugee resettlement agency]. But I will say, WOW, our team was able. I don't know what it was. You know they just took it on. I think one thing that made it a little bit easier for our students was because we have more Spanish speaking families and our team members were bilingual. It was just a lot easier to take on those three families, and one had been here. I mean, one family that our team took on was kind of a separate family. Supporting the Nicaraguan family was a little bit different in that my husband and I had taken them as renters in an [auxiliary dwelling unity] above our garage, and I had sort of gotten my retired neighbors involved – they had started kind of taking care of that family, and then our ECAR team sort of adopted them as well – I should say, my student team. Then, at the end of January when there was a stop work order and funds were completely cut for all refugee services, including any funds for housing that refugees would normally receive, my husband and I actually took in the Venezuelan family of three into our house, into our guest room, and they lived with us for about a month. So the Venezuelan family became a part of our lives, and our student team immediately adopted them as well. But ironically, it was just easier to work with that Venezuelan family just because we were all living together. We could talk over coffee about their needs and you know what the next steps were in terms of resettlement tasks, and then I could just go to my team and just say, is there anybody who could do X, Y, And Z for the family?"*** – Campus 10

2 Expanding Influence and Widening Infrastructure of Refugee Support

ECAR Chapters expanded their circles of influence and widened their infrastructure of refugee support. Specifically, many ECAR Chapters onboarded new volunteers, leveraged additional resources offered by individual campus and community members, applied for grants, and raised local funds from on-campus and off-campus partners. Campus community members followed ECAR's model by personally hosting refugee families.

2.1 Expanded Mutual Aid + Mitigating Financial Burdens Placed on Refugee Families

ECAR Chapters expanded mutual aid throughout their hyperlocal ecosystems to mitigate financial burdens placed on families.

"I am a member of the community outreach subcommittee for our faculty union and I asked my colleagues, 'is it possible for us to have the faculty and the staff contribute some money to send the family as they leave [campus]?' And so we had a meeting with our provost and we shared the idea with her. The provost bought the idea. She wrote a letter that was shared within the university community. And we were able to raise more than $5,000 – immediately it was raised so quickly, just within a few days." – Campus 12

2.2	Accepting New Cases + Organizing Fundraisers
To help reduce the workloads of resettlement agencies, ECAR teams continued accepting new cases, organized fundraisers to support resettlement efforts, secured funding to assist families, and leveraged existing resources.[32]	***"To alleviate the agency's workload, we continued accepting cases, conducted fundraisers for our resettlement agencies, and sought internal funding for families without imposing financial pressure on them. These efforts were significant for our mission."*** – Campus 9

2.3	Joyfully Developing New Resources + Pivoting to New Strategies + Onboarding New Volunteers
ECAR Chapter volunteers can quickly and joyfully develop new resources and pivot to new strategies because of the unique flexibility of partnerships between ECAR Chapters, campuses, and communities. By their nature, HEIs are multigenerational, and ECAR Chapters are predominantly supported by student volunteers. At this ECAR Chapter, a student volunteer demonstrated how Chapters become mutual aid hubs by leveraging partnerships to bring services together for mutual advantages.	***"The three of us, I see in kind of these more creative, nimble roles where we don't have a specific job description in refugee resettlement that is tied to a program, budget, fund, you know, reporting criteria. We can be really flexible and creative and fill in wherever needed. So [Name of Student Volunteer] took the initiative to make a – coordinated across organizations – way for volunteers to sign up to be transport, to be drivers for newcomers, because we were hearing asylum seekers need a ride to the ICE office, not accessible by bus. And refugees need a ride to their medical appointments... their case manager is gone. It was like both groups were saying 'We need volunteers who are willing to drive these, uh, clients or newcomers.' So [Name of Student Volunteer] put together a way for volunteers to sign up as a volunteer driver in a nice form like, 'When are you available? How many seats do you have? What radius are you willing to drive?' All that and a form for organizations to type in, 'Here's what we need. Here's the days and times, here's how we operate...' So this initiative across organizations, I think that's something that we can do as part of ECAR. We can be kind of the network builder and bring services together in a way that strengthens everybody's ability to meet their mission."*** – Campus 4

[32] No One Left Behind partnered with two ECAR Chapters to sponsor newcomers with Special Immigrant Visas (SIVs).

2.4	Applying for Grants + Developing Training Resources
ECAR Chapters responded by widening infrastructure within their hyperlocal resettlement campus ecosystems. For example, one chapter submitted a grant proposal to fund the development of a shared training resource for organizations supporting refugees and asylum seekers. Partnering with a resettlement agency and community groups, the initiative addressed volunteer shortages and staff turnover while strengthening collaboration across the refugee support network.	*"Last year I applied for a grant to create a training. Since Covid, so many volunteer organizations in general have been working to rebuild their volunteer base. And then on top of that all of the organizations in the area that work with either refugees or asylum seekers also have a high turnover in their own staff. There are organizations that rely a lot on volunteering. So I put together a grant proposal to create a training resource that would support all of them, that they could all use. I'm working closely with a resettlement organization and two other community organizations. I'm really happy that the grant, it also includes funds to pay the community organizations for their time working on it."* – Campus 6

3 Continuing to Build Long-Term Resilience and Capacity

ECAR Chapters continued to build long-term resilience and capacity. Specifically, ECAR Chapters are intentionally building local capacity by training additional local community organizations and members and providing employment opportunities to refugees. Uniquely, ECAR Chapters are providing employment opportunities to resettlement agency partners staff who have been laid off. ECAR Chapters have a keen understanding of how to build resilience in the resettlement sector, especially by sustaining the knowledge and experience of resettlement agency staff, many of whom are former refugees.

3.1 Adapting, Filling Infrastructure Gaps + Innovating, Helping in Joyful Ways

ECAR Chapters worked to fill in critical gaps after the defunding of the domestic resettlement infrastructure.

"I think that as it was with the 2016-2020 decimation, we started to fill in those gaps the way we did back then. Supports and services slowly rebuilt back up. We were less necessary in those core service ways. That's when we make the coloring book and find these other awesome, innovative ways to help. But now we're back to all hands on deck: Let's have our career center offer a workshop for job-seeking clients. Let's open our weekly intercultural cafe to families so that adults, teenagers, and kids can come to campus for English language learning." – Campus 4

3.2	Providing Employment Supports and Services to Former Resettlement Agency Staff and Newcomers
To expand the influence and infrastructure of refugee support, ECAR Chapters supported furloughed and unemployed resettlement staff, many from refugee backgrounds.	***"[We…] employed or helped find employment for staff who had been laid off from resettlement organizations, many of whom are from refugee backgrounds. Essential to keep these experienced staff in the work/resettlement ecosystem."*** – Campus 4

3.3	Building Long-Term Capacity + Skilling-Up Volunteers in Cultural Humility + Enhancing Resilience
ECAR Chapters addressed the need for cultural humility as a skill and commitment among volunteers and community members in resettlement work. Providing volunteers with the language to talk about the communities they're serving ensures respect and clarity, and it increases the effectiveness of ECAR's advocacy.	***"Even if you've had a volunteer who's been a volunteer forever, if we can also help them learn the words they need to talk about what they're doing and why they're doing it, then they can be better advocates… helping people realize this is what it means to be culturally sensitive. This is the resettlement process. These are the vulnerabilities of different communities you might work with depending on their legal status. We want volunteers to have more general information that helps them contextualize the work they're doing. … that's one of the biggest things I've taken on."*** – Campus 6

4 Educating, Informing, and Encouraging

ECAR Chapters used this moment of challenge as an opportunity to educate and inform. At a time of great fear and misinformation, ECAR Chapters are creating opportunities for learning, dialogue, and advocacy to replace myths with lived experience and fear with facts. By replacing falsehoods with evidence and meeting misinformation with testimonies based on lived experiences, ECAR Chapters are generating encouragement and emboldening hope.

4.1 Bringing Together Refugee Families, Members of Hosting Communities, and Local Professionals for Informal Dialogue

Through community focused events, ECAR Chapters convey the real impact for families and communities when higher education and resettlement are integrated – what it looks like to open the doors for professionals to spread knowledge and awareness amongst different people and non-profit organizations. The informal dialogue creates a sense of community impact and awareness of what it means to uplift refugee and immigrant families during this time.

"And so [faculty member] had a class that [the Director of ECAR the national organization] had come to speak to – I think it was special topics in sociology, and it was ECAR specifically, and a student group formed out of that in the fall. The students working with ECAR had a clothing drive, like a winter coat drive, and then in the spring we helped them to organize an evening of information and engagement. There were speakers, and there were tables set up. . . It was really an excellent event. A local immigration lawyer spoke. A professor spoke. People from different nonprofit organizations and resettlement agencies spoke. And there was "know your rights" information provided there as well." – Campus 9

4.2	Offering Students Experiences to Gain and Practice Skills, Develop a Lifelong Expansive Mindset
Students who are involved with ECAR Chapters have the opportunity to practice new skills and gain new knowledge in ways that, overall, promote a lifelong expansive mindset. They have opportunities to grow a sense of collective leadership, practice adaptive communication skills, and contribute to mutually beneficial problem-solving that prepare them to share these skills in ways that have a broader, long-term impact.	***"I do plan for us to have [Know Your Rights trainings]. But right now what they are focused on is introducing students to what refugee resettlement is. At the same time, they're out building this network of support on campus. Students have presented work at conferences and they've developed a lot of this work with experiential and learning as well."*** – Campus 9

4.3	Stepping Up Social Media Presence + Crowdfunding + Improving Visibility + Enacting the Goals and Values of ECAR in Other Refugee Support Efforts
ECAR Chapters are stepping up their social media presence to optimize resources, incorporate crowdfunding into mutual aid efforts, improve visibility, and draw on the goals and values of ECAR to enhance other programs. For example, one ECAR Chapter coordinated unified outreach with and for Ukrainian refugees to support and serve them over the summer.	***"I'm leading a group of students to serve Ukrainian refugees this summer. And we've done a lot of social media. That's not directly related to people who live in our community, but it is work with refugees in a certain country who are of a certain origin. And so we did a lot of crowdfunding and fundraising on social media. We have an institutional campus Day of Giving, and that was my unit's ask to the campus community for the Day of Giving. We raised quite a nice chunk of dollars to help with that effort."*** – Campus 9

4.4	Strengthening Partnerships + Promoting Dialogue + Leveraging Networks for Advocacy + Boosting Small Businesses
ECAR Chapters show how the focus on strong partnerships and dialogue allows them to advocate by leveraging networks within hyperlocal ecosystems—and in ways that can boost the role of small business. When Welcome Corps was discontinued, this ECAR Chapter quickly and seamlessly shifted its partnership to another translation service that is able to provide supportive services and continue to fulfill ECAR's mission of dialogue and advocacy.	***"So, we were working with Welcome Corps, and when Welcome Corps on Campus (WCC) was discontinued, our contact with [the private sponsorship organization] ended as well because they're over in Connecticut and we're here in upstate New York. We were working – we still do work for, to a certain degree – the center in [neighboring city] because they're much closer to us. We work with them for translation services because they offer that as a side business. Actually, now it's probably become the main business because they aren't resettling anyone. And we've been working with the Community Sponsorship Hub currently to welcome – we've now – we've welcomed one family, and we're going to welcome another family next week."*** – Campus 3

5 Reframing Narratives, Strategic Engagement, and Advocacy

As they have always done, ECAR Chapters advocate within their ecosystems, affirm connections with former hosted families, and meet challenging questions and concerns with proactive strategies. Recognizing that refugee integration is a long-term journey, ECAR Chapters are continually reaching out to families they have hosted in the past while also serving newcomers who have just arrived. Chapter team members and volunteers are actively reframing how they describe their work to illustrate the vital community connections and benefits of hosting, welcoming, and supporting newcomers.

5.1 Reframing + Responding with Strategic Engagement

ECAR Chapters are ideally positioned to respond to initial reluctance some government and community leaders may have about welcoming migrants.

One ECAR Chapter leveraged their connections with local county officials and presented resettlement work as both a humanitarian effort and as a benefit to the whole community. By highlighting the need to repopulate the county, the Chapter was able to continue its work in supporting this population.

"I asked the county board chair if I could give a presentation, and he said yes, at his invitation. So I presented something at the county board, basically saying, 'We welcome refugees, they've been vetted. They come at the invitation of the U.S. government. These are people who are coming here on visas, and we're doing this because it's humanitarian but also because we're trying to repopulate the county,' and that was a well-received message." – Campus 3

5.2	Acting as Intermediaries Between Refugee Families, Community Partners, and Government Agencies
After resettlement came to a halt in January, many ECAR Chapters began working with local resettlement agencies following massive budget and staff cuts. While continuing to provide support to previously hosted families, some ECAR Chapters also acted as vital intermediaries with public agencies.	***"At one point, we were having trouble getting [Name of U.S. State] state IDs for our refugees and [...] then it got complicated because when we welcomed our first group [the resettlement agency] was recognized by [Name of U.S. State] as a resettlement agency, but then when I brought my next group, which was an individual, to the county DMV to get a state ID they said '[that agency] is not on the list we can't work with that.' It turned out that they were only working with organizations that were in [Name of U.S. State]. We had to make a couple of calls, and then they finally figured out a way to make it happen, and so then we got our person with a state ID."*** – Campus 3

5.3	Advocating by Leveraging Flexibility to Sustain Support
ECAR Chapters are highly effective at filling in gaps in existing infrastructures and ecosystems, due in part to their flexibility. When the usual methods of hosting families were interrupted, this ECAR Chapter focused on meeting the needs of refugees who were no longer receiving external support.	***"We usually take on a family that comes straight from the airport, and since there were no families coming in, we talked to the resettlement agency, and kind of figured out a way that we could still help a family here that just needs, you know, more support. So we took on a family that was likely going to face eviction pretty soon, and...has struggled a bit more since arriving, and kind of came at the worst time when things were starting to shift in the infrastructure."*** – Campus 5

6 Affirming Community and Spreading Joy

ECAR Chapters are spreading joy! ECAR Chapters are staying committed to an abundance mind-frame that centers dignity, agency, compassion and joy. Specifically, ECAR Chapters are engaging children in refugee families through fun activities and sports, joining in community events, and reminding one another of the power of their shared commitments to play, art, music, food, culture, rest, and the many ways joy emerges when we share our differences and commonalities with one another.

6.1 Celebrating the Alliances Created by Empathy and Compassion

ECAR Chapters have been able to spread joy by celebrating students' hard work and reminding them that their efforts matter, are seen, and will be remembered and greatly appreciated. Findings from the study illustrate the empathy and compassion ECAR Chapters can build, and the alliances it creates with individuals who share similar struggles. ECAR is proud to uplift these incredible individuals as they continue to thrive and give back to their communities.

> ***"And so our students are really actually wonderfully made for this kind of work because they've sometimes experienced it themselves. These are students who are experts at using the bus. They're experts at figuring out medical [services]. They're experts at knowing county services and that kind of thing. So I think our community college students are really well suited for this kind of work. But at the same time [some students] are extremely time and, and money poor. And so I have for example a single mom of 3 who's trying to go through school and to be able to give her, you know, gift cards so that she can go to Costco and get gas and groceries and and home supplies. That's a huge deal."*** – Campus 9

6.2	Organizing Celebrations + Engaging in Youth Mentoring + Welcoming and Sharing Experiences
Students involved with ECAR Chapters spread joy and connection. At this Chapter, students organized a refugee ESL graduation party that celebrated the hard work and achievements of families building new lives. They partnered with the local YWCA to provide youth mentoring, boosting feelings of belonging and confidence among all involved. They held an online meeting with the new cohort for Welcome Corps on Campus (WCC) to discuss what it is like to be a student on a campus in the United States, fostering visibility and an acknowledgement of these unique experiences.	***"This semester, the only other things we've done, some students helped set up for a refugee ESL graduation party. They helped with youth mentoring. A couple of our students were doing youth mentoring through the YWCA.... The students, they're not refugees in [city], but the students met with the new cohort of Welcome Corps on Campus students. About 15 of them. They met online to talk a little bit about what it's like to be a college student in the US."*** – Campus 14

6.3	Integrating Fun + Sustaining and Expanding Joy + Enhancing Intercultural Engagement and Civic Well-Being
ECAR Chapters and community partners are integrating physical activities, interactive sports, and other fun activities that sustain and expand joy, strengthening community and enhancing intercultural engagement as part of ECAR's commitment to overall civic well-being	***"[...] we've really dug into creating a space for refugee kids in our community to play soccer regularly. And the [Interviewee's ECAR Chapter Institution] soccer coach helped me reserve one of the fields really inexpensively. And we played all throughout the semester and [we have] plans to continue that."*** – Campus 11

To further illustrate the cumulative impact of ECAR Chapters, some of the key activities listed above are aggregated in the table below (Table 3: Summary of Activities Indicating How ECAR Chapters are Meeting the Moment).

Table 3: Summary of Activities Indicating How ECAR Chapters are Meeting the Moment

Activity Types	Number of Chapters and Activity Details
Housing	• 5 Chapters providing on campus housing to newcomers • 1 chapter is providing housing to newcomers, one family on campus and one family off campus
Volunteers	• 5 Chapters providing volunteers for hosted guests and newcomer families in the community • 2 Chapters providing volunteers for hosted guests • 2 Chapters providing volunteers for newcomer families in the community
Transportation	• 4 Chapters provided transportation for guests staying on campus • 1 chapter provided transportation for newcomers in the community
Additional in-kind services (e.g. collecting and distributing donated items)	• 6 Chapters provided additional in-kind services for guests staying on campus • 1 chapter provided additional in-kind services for newcomers in the community • 1 Chapters provided additional in-kind services for guests staying on campus and also newcomers in the community
Used social media to coordinate support or collect donations	• 2 Chapters used social media to coordinate support or collect donations for guest staying on campus • 1 chapter used social media to coordinate support or collect donations for newcomers in the community • 3 Chapters used social media to coordinate support or collect donations for guests staying on campus and also newcomers in the community

Table 3: Summary of Activities Indicating How ECAR Chapters are Meeting the Moment	
Used Crowdfunding Platforms to Raise Emergency Funds	• 3 Chapters used crowdfunding platforms to raise emergency funds for guests staying on campus • 1 chapter used crowdfunding platforms to raise emergency funds for newcomers in the community • 3 Chapters used crowdfunding platforms to raise emergency funds for guests staying on campus and also newcomers in the community
Gift Cards, Food, Supplies	• 4 Chapters provided gift cards, food, and/or supplies for guests staying on campus • 2-3 Chapters provided gift cards, food, and/or supplies for guests in the community not staying on campus
Off-setting other costs for other families (e.g. rent, utility bills)	• 5 Chapters off-set housing costs for guests staying on campus • 1 chapter off-set housing costs for guests staying on campus and also newcomers in the community
Employment / Career Services	• 5 Chapters provided employment/career services for guests staying on campus, and also newcomers in the community • 4 Chapters provided employment/career services for guests staying on campus • 1 chapter provided employment/career services for newcomers in the community
Access to Healthcare / Medical appointments	• 4 Chapters provided access to healthcare, medical appointments for guests staying on campus, and also newcomers in the community • 3 Chapters provided access to healthcare, medical appointments for guests staying on campus

Impact and Implications

Suspension of the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) *accelerated* the subsequent decimation of the domestic resettlement infrastructure. The January 2025 Executive Order did not *initiate* or *cause* the crisis for refugees and asylum seekers. Rather, it exploited the relative isolation of resettlement from the rest of the public sphere, hastened the use of xenophobic sentiments as a basis for public policy, and worsened an ongoing domestic and global crisis. Despite these deteriorating conditions and the suspension of traditional programs, ECAR continues to expand, transforming college and university campuses into vital sites of sustainable resettlement and support.

Impact

ECAR is building / sustaining: Since 2015 Every Campus A Refuge (ECAR) and the national resettlement campus movement have been mobilizing colleges and universities to host refugees on campus grounds and support them in their resettlement.

ECAR is responding / adapting: As this study shows, ECAR Chapters around the country are meeting the moment by providing solutions at the intersection of a **set of multifaceted problems** and **gaps in the domestic resettlement infrastructure** including:

1. Limited opportunities for refugees to enter the U.S.
2. Insufficient socio-economic support for arriving refugees
3. Widespread xenophobia and misinformation about refugees, and
4. The conspicuous, historical lack of engagement between higher education and refugee resettlement.

ECAR is growing / expanding: In addition to the ways that ECAR Chapters adapted, what is distinctive about the response is that it occurred *operationally* – that is, as a feature of ECAR's design and not as a result of contingency planning.

By leveraging the untapped resources of higher education, the ECAR model does more than fill service gaps – it redefines the civic responsibility of the American university. The current crisis in refugee resettlement is not merely a policy failure; it is a challenge to our collective commitment to democratic and humanitarian values. As the traditional infrastructure continues to face systemic erosion, U.S. colleges and universities – the resource rich "small cities" of our society – possess the untapped potential to become the new frontline of welcome.

Implications

This study serves as grounding to raise some challenging existential questions about the history, present, and future of refugee resettlement and higher education in the U.S– and to consider the urgent implications for both.

Questions and Considerations:

1. **What explains the partnership void between these two neighboring titans of democracy?** How have these two key sectors with mutual and complementary roles in societal and global democracy operated side-by-side for nearly a century while simultaneously lacking *systematic* cross-sector partnerships prior to the emergence of ECAR's resettlement campus movement?
2. **How has the partnership void between refugee resettlement and U.S. colleges and universities hindered if not also weakened each sector?** For comparison, a new wave of advocacy has emerged in recent years following studies that demonstrate the detrimental impacts of siloes and partnership voids related to public health, medical practitioners, community engagement, and other public agencies.[33] What are the roles of current leaders of higher education institutions, public agencies, philanthropies, and resettlement organizations in addressing similar silos?
3. **In light of the findings of this study, what will it mean to consider ECAR's relatively rapid and thorough successes in bridging the partnership void using the model of**

[33] Peiris, David, Anne-Marie Feyer, Justine Barnard, et al. "Overcoming Silos in Health Care Systems through Meso-Level Organisations – a Case Study of Health Reforms in New South Wales, Australia." *The Lancet Regional Health – Western Pacific* 44 (March 2024): 101013. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lanwpc.2024.101013; Abir, Mahshid, Laurie T. Martin, and Anita Chandra. "*Breaking Down Health Care and Public Health Silos – Once and for All.*" 2025. https://www.rand.org/pubs/commentary/2025/02/breaking-down-health-care-and-public-health-silos-once.html

hyperlocal ecosystems? It is no longer simply speculation that there must be new organizational and institutional models to update and replace our current societal and global infrastructure, which were largely envisioned and established in the 19th Century under an elitist and outdated worldview.[34] Given the past and current of ECAR's unique operational features, and the simultaneous targeting of educational and resettlement organizations, is this Moment the catalyst for a greater transformative change that begins with our partnerships?

4. **How might colleges, universities, and other organizations adopt and adapt ECAR's model of Civic Joy and Community Transformation as a blueprint for the realization of democratic principles?** Will higher education survive the assault on refugees and asylum seekers? Will refugees and asylum seekers survive the assault on higher education? If there is any critical truth to the long-standing claim that democratic citizenship and higher education are inoperable without one another, then resettlement of refugees and asylum seekers must be understood as a defining priority – and ECAR Chapters thrive at the intersection.

[34] Sen, Soumyasanto. "The Next Generation Organizations." *Beyond Thinking*, July 19, 2018. https://medium.com/beyond-thinking/the-next-generation-organizations-60688e8b34e2.

Recommendations

This study exceeds our goals of illustrating and affirming the impact of ECAR Chapters in supporting refugee resettlement. *Colleges and universities are uniquely positioned and resourced to meet the moment by partnering with ECAR to lead a unification of resettlement and higher education.*

Based on these findings, the following strategic actions are recommended to guide members of higher education institutions and their communities in expanding their campus and community ecosystem of support for refugees, asylum seekers, and all newcomers to the U.S.

General Recommendation: Adopt ECAR, Advocate for ECAR:

- **Advocate for and promote ECAR:** Champion the initiative to join the growing resettlement campus movement in your institutional networks and professional organizations.

  Get to know more about ECAR

  Visit: https://www.everycampusarefuge.org/about/

- **Adopt and Implement ECAR:** Establish an ECAR Chapter at your institution / in your community..

  Get started with Resources for Building an ECAR Chapter

  Visit: https://www.everycampusarefuge.org/resources/

Recommendations for Strategic Action

- **Recommendation #1: Support Rapid Response**

  Redistribution of a portion of the core workload (FTE) of one or more campus personnel to incorporate direct work with ECAR (by establishing an ECAR Chapter on campus and/or sustaining an existing Chapter's work) into their regular duties.

- **Recommendation #2: Expand Campus Influence and Widen Infrastructure of Refugee Support**

  Tasking a mid-level and/or senior administrator (Deans, VPs) with executive-level resettlement advocacy, seeking potential partnerships with public and private sector organizations.

- **Recommendation #3: Advance Long-Term Resilience and Capacity**

  Dedicating a portion of the required workload (FTE) of personnel in advancement / development roles to explore donor funding and financial partnerships that integrate educational and resettlement priorities.

- **Recommendation #4: Refresh the Educational Mission of the Campus**

  Increasing support for existing curricular and co-curricular opportunities related to forced migration and resettlement, and/or establish initiatives to create such opportunities, including incentives to modify existing courses and/or create new course offerings, certificates, minors, independent studies, graduate assistantships, fellowships, service-learning projects etc.

- **Recommendation #5 Prepare Leadership for Reframing, Strategic Engagement, and Advocacy**

  Committing meeting time among senior-level / executive administrators for an initial one-hour training session with ECAR staff focused on executive partnership and advocacy.

- **Recommendation #6: Affirm Community and Spread Joy**

  Developing formal and informal acknowledgements and affirmations of the activities of students, staff, faculty, and alumni involved with ECAR Chapters and broader resettlement efforts – e.g. during awards and recognition ceremonies, in formal remarks at internal and external events, in memos and communications highlighting campus activities and impacts.

This study is more than an analysis of impact; it is an invitation to any and all campus constituents to take direct action.

Conclusions

Working in partnership with colleges and universities, ECAR gained more Chapters. ECAR formed new partnerships. ECAR leveraged existing resources. ECAR housed families, created community, and helped newcomers meet needs. Together, ECAR Chapters hosted, welcomed, supported, celebrated, and promoted joy.

In a moment of decimation and ongoing crisis, what explains the relatively uninterrupted, seamless operational response and positive growth of ECAR Chapters?

Significance and Imperative

The Moment initiated rapid system destabilization throughout the domestic refugee resettlement infrastructure – which was not firewalled against institutional decline.[35] This evaluation provides detailed information and examples of what ECAR Chapters did in response – the activities and strategies they sustained, adapted, and expanded to support newcomers. Analysis of study data further illustrates that Chapters leveraged their unique operational design to bridge critical gaps in the resettlement framework. By **Meeting the Moment,** ECAR Chapters have also illuminated more about distinctive features of ECAR's organizational design and operational model – *how* ECAR responded *operationally.*

To fully understand the significance of what ECAR Chapters and the resettlement campus movement represent, consider three facets of ECAR's unique operational model:

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[35] Despite the widespread use of the term "partnerships" to refer to the dynamic between domestic resettlement agencies and federal institutions, it is a landscape structured by federal funding allocations to non-governmental agencies and organizations that, in turn, fulfill regulatory agreements (i.e. memorandums of understanding, sometimes contracts). See guidance from the Administrative Conference of the United States Committee on Regulation: *Public-Private Partnerships | Administrative Conference of the United States.* https://www.acus.gov/projects/public-private-partnerships.

1. **ECAR is a rapid-responder and the lead organization operating in familiar and unfamiliar ways** with the combination of partnerships, knowledge, skills, and strategies to effectively document, analyze, report, and make recommendations.
2. **ECAR operates as a transformative actor and role-maker, creating and expanding infrastructure, culture, and resources that have never before existed** – ECAR is not merely operating as a bridge within and across established sectors of resettlement and higher education; ECAR is generating the new interstitial sector.
3. **ECAR demonstrates proof of concept for the viability of cross-sector integration of resettlement with various sectors,** consistent with both **ECAR's Mission:** To mobilize colleges and universities to host refugees on campus, support their resettlement, and build sustainable campus ecosystems for successful integration – and – **ECAR's Vision:** To transform the landscape of refugee resettlement and higher education.

Borrowing terminology from industrial and technical fields, ECAR can be understood as a prototype for ***Next Generation Civic Coalition Organizations*** that innovate at the ecosystem level by seamlessly forming and leveraging hyperlocal partnerships.[36] This perspective is supported by emerging research that shows why resettlement campus ecosystems are the enabling environment for innovation.

In her newly published study, "ECAR's Innovative Ecosystems: Analyzing Higher Education Tools, Resources, and Collaborative Partnerships in Refugee Resettlement," (2026, Palgrave Macmillan), Shytance Wren shows why ECAR is a leading innovation activator and the means by which higher education institutions can leverage existing

[36] Sen, Soumyasanto. "The Next Generation Organizations." *Beyond Thinking*, 19 July 2018, https://medium.com/beyond-thinking/the-next-generation-organizations-60688e8b34e2. Traditional public institutions, non-profits, and businesses have already begun to confront the limitations of their operational designs, and decades-old calls for new organizational models are now no longer a curiosity or a task for some future generation to take on. Organizations nearing or already past end-of-lifespan (EOL) rely on operational models that have three features in common. First, EOL organizations do not pivot (i,e, sustain, adapt, expand) to navigate uncertainties because they define their optimal operating condition as one that eliminates uncertainty, which stifles strategic imagination and mistakes hyper-vigilant error detection for leadership. Second, EOL organizations avoid innovation (i.e. creative, joyful sharing of values, resources, and finances), relying instead on a repeating-decaying loop that cycles (spirals) between resource depletion, increasing surveillance of human labor, and right-sizing (fail-sizing, clear-cutting) their own stated missions. Third, these declining EOL organizations rely on a core decision-making process fueled by "world-historic self-defeat" – the false premise that human value is ultimately hierarchically differentiated.

resources to meet humanitarian needs, accelerate innovation, and infuse the domestic workforce with new energy that promotes long-term stability.[37]

Wren explains, "The ECAR initiative leverages a range of resources within university ecosystems, which encompass human capital (e.g., volunteer time and expertise); social capital (e.g., networks and community engagement); financial resources (e.g., rent and utilities); and infrastructure (e.g., campus housing facilities)."[38] That is, ECAR Chapters act at the hyperlocal level by adapting and replacing rigid institutional silos that drain resources and accelerate stagnation with unburdened on- and off- campus partnerships (i.e. resettlement campus ecosystems). Wren recommends,

> Policymakers should consider creating targeted grants or funding mechanisms to support initiatives like ECAR. [...]. The strategic utilization of campus resources by ECAR for housing and support services highlights how higher education institutions globally can repurpose their existing assets to promote refugee educational and labor pathways. [...]The emphasis on collaboration, resource optimization, and volunteer engagement within the ECAR framework underscores the importance of multi-stakeholder partnerships in addressing refugee resettlement [...] Moreover, the extensive use of trained volunteers specifically suggests that formal frameworks for volunteer engagement in refugee assistance could be developed. These frameworks could establish guidelines for training, roles, and responsibilities, ensuring volunteers are effectively utilized. [...] Higher education institutions need to be recognized and supported as official partners in refugee resettlement and integration initiatives on a national and international level.[39]

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[37] Wren, Shytance. "ECAR's Innovative Ecosystems: Analyzing Higher Education Tools, Resources, and Collaborative Partnerships in Refugee Resettlement." *Higher Education and Migration Pathways*, edited by Anita Gopal, Springer Nature Switzerland, 2026, pp. 133–52. *DOI.org (Crossref)*, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-92236-7_7.

[38] Ibid. 144.

[39] Ibid. 144, 148-149,

Features of ECAR as an organization

The activities of ECAR Chapters as reported in this study illustrate key features of ECAR as an organization with operational features that are rooted in and affirming of the benefits and endurance of partnerships established hyperlocally by ECAR Chapters.

ECAR is Organizationally Anti-Fragile: Despite the complicated origins of this term "fragility," in times of crisis and decline ECAR "levels-up" and demonstrates enhanced and improved activity.[40]

ECAR is Operationally Regenerative, Reparative: Organisms that thrive in *and* repair toxified environments tend to be those that respond to crises and threats with "bioremediation" by rebalancing disrupted chemical and physical processes in their ecosystems.[41] In terms of social, cultural, and economic responses to crises and threats, ECAR Chapters respond by rebalancing resources, strategically implementing values, and activating partnerships based on allyship between newcomers and host communities.

ECAR is Infrastructure-Building and Sustainable – AND the Resettlement Infrastructure Needs HEIs to Step up: While this study is about ECAR Chapters and how they are meeting the moment, it also affirms ECAR is a builder of sustainable long-term hyperlocal campus-community infrastructure**,** some of which is ongoing in fulfillment of ECAR's Mission. The study also reveals that ECAR builds capacity to pivot, sustain, adapt, and expand infrastructure in moments of opportunity and – *when needed* – moments of crisis. ECAR's sustainability and pivotability must be understood within its context: rapid response to opportunities and crises. The need for partnerships with ECAR and the broader resettlement sector remains, and is more pressing.

ECAR is Antidotal to Institutional Decline and Social Distrust:

- **ECAR Chapters counteract Silo Effects:** ECAR demonstrates the ability to dissolve silos at various levels of impact, and in generative ways that do not reflect traditional forms of consolidation, collapse, reduction, down-sizing, etc.[42]

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[40] Directory, Sustainability. "Organizational Anti-Fragility → Term." *Pollution → Sustainability Directory*, https://pollution.sustainability-directory.com/term/organizational-anti-fragility/.

[41] "A People's Orientation to a Regenerative Economy." *Climate Justice Alliance*, https://climatejusticealliance.org/regenerativeeconomy/.

[42] Scott, Ian, and Ting Gong. "Coordinating Government Silos: Challenges and Opportunities." *Global Public Policy and Governance*, vol. 1, no. 1, 2021, pp. 20–38. *PubMed Central*, https://doi.org/10.1007/s43508-021-00004-z.

- **ECAR Chapters initiate and promote repair and replacement of fragmented supports and services with:** ECAR offers a framework for resolving gaps in social services and supports by establishing mutual aid hubs.
- **ECAR Chapters reduce inefficiencies**: by leveraging existing resources and weaving together hyperlocal resettlement ecosystem partnerships, ECAR functionally converts what would otherwise be "waste" and "loss" into opportunities and activities.

ECAR is Value-Activating and Value-Generating: through its particular methods (e.g. civic joy, leveraging existing resources, building partnerships, establishing infrastructure for mutual aid, etc). ECAR both provides opportunities for the expression and activation of values, and generates value systems that enhance the broader spectrum of resettlement and higher education.

Every Campus A Refuge (ECAR) is what the future of resettlement and higher education will look like.

Throughout the course of 2025, as ECAR Chapters were adjusting to the altered terrain and meeting the moment, the landscape continued to shift. Whether or not there are new arrivals in the next 3-5 years, ECAR will continue to build hyperlocal ecosystem infrastructure and all of the benefits that go along with it. The long arc of resettlement and the work of welcoming newcomers continues as a throughline, as will the integration needs of newcomers.

Now, we need higher education institutions to work with us to scale up, to partner with us as we build the proven infrastructure.

It is understandable Higher Education Institution leaders are nervous. Colleges and universities are undergoing attacks outlined in a different chapter of the same playbook used to target newcomers.

Administrations (whether it's the US government or chief executive bodies at colleges and universities) come and go, as do heightened political tensions and moments of infrastructure failure. Students, staff, faculty, administrators, alumni, labor organizations, and many other supporters of HEIs – *including ECAR* – are meeting the anti-HEI moment. When we meet the moment together, the landscape shifts can be confronted, redirected, and built upon.

Institutions of higher education are uniquely positioned to offer a safe, resource-rich environment that helps newcomers navigate legal systems, access essential services, and build stable lives. As there are over 4,000 institutions of higher education in the U.S., even a 10% one-time engagement (i.e 400 campuses) could mean the supportive resettlement of thousands of refugees.

Erica Chenowith argues that 3.5% sustained active engagement of a population creates serious change. If we collectively aim and work for 3.5% higher education engagement in ECAR (which is a more than feasible number of approximately 140 colleges or universities), we can create lasting and meaningful change that *empowers us all*.[43]

Meet us in this moment; help build what comes next.

[43] Chenowith referenced in McIntyre, Iain. "Civil Resistance and the 3.5% Rule: An Overview." *The Commons,* 7 July 2025, https://commonslibrary.org/chenoweth-3-5percent-rule/. In Chenowith's research the unit of analysis is "the individual campaign," referring to the organized and coordinated efforts that mobilize populations to respond collectively and non-violently to particular concerns. Researchers using a range of rigorous methods have attempted to validate, corroborate, problematize, and refute Chenowith's work related to the 3.5% metric (such as Dworschak 2023). Interestingly, few if any studies seem to seriously investigate similar social change impacts at the level of ecosystems, organizations, partnerships, etc. – such as the hyperlocal resettlement campus ecosystems ECAR Chapters form. Substituting ECAR Chapter hyperlocal resettlement campus ecosystems as the unit of analysis (instead of individual campaigns) could yield insights into new strategies for partnerships with HEIs as well as other institutions, organizations, networks, systems, etc.

Resources

1) ECAR Cheat Sheet: Talking Points for Understanding and Explaining ECAR to Others
2) ECAR PERC MAPallows resettlement agencies and universities to find each other within a 100 mile radius of each other.
3) Resources for Building an ECAR Chapter
    - ECAR Template Memorandum of Understanding between a university and resettlement agency
    - *AHLAN: A Manual For Establishing Resettlement Campuses Together*
4) Ṣawt: An Oral History of Resettlement Campuses (Ṣawt) is an oral history project that seeks to record, share, and amplify the voices and experiences of refugees hosted by colleges and universities under unique circumstances – not as students, but as community members.
5) Impact Studies
    - ECAR Impact on Refugee Families
    - ECAR Impact on Participating Students
    - ECAR Impact on Innovation
6) ECAR Chapters & Interested Campuses

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Appendices

Appendix A: Extended Problem Statement and Situation Analysis

The lack of widespread, coordinated engagement between higher education and resettlement is detrimental to both (Diagram 1), and it is urgent that leaders of higher education institutions, resettlement agencies, local governments, and philanthropic organizations understand and take action to build, expand, and protect a connected infrastructure between these two public sectors that are crucial components for a viable democracy.

On January 20th, 2025 the White House issued Executive Order 14163–"Realigning the United States Refugee Admissions Program," indefinitely suspending operations of the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP), and declaring it the policy of the United States, "...to admit only those refugees who can fully and appropriately assimilate."[44] On the same day, the White House issued Executive Order 14165–"Securing Our Borders" and Executive Order 14159–"Protecting the American People Against Invasion."[45]

Acting on this order, federal agencies halted processing of refugees who were already in the pipeline to resettle in the U.S., and stripped the domestic resettlement infrastructure of funding.[46]

A detailed policy analysis by the National Immigrant Justice Center (NIJC) published on 22 January 2025 summarizes the impact of these and other concurrent orders:

> These orders demonstrate the administration's brazen disregard for law and fact, and their inflammatory language signals an overtly adversarial approach toward all immigrants and refugees, including families and children. [...] These attacks systematically violated decades of U.S. and international law and placed asylum seekers – including small children – directly in harm's way, resulting in a series of court battles and bicameral

[44] The White House. "Executive Order 14163–Realigning the United States Refugee Admissions Program." January 20, 2025. https://www.govinfo.gov/app/details/DCPD-202500130.

[45] The White House. "Executive Order 14165-Securing Our Borders." January 20, 2025. https://www.govinfo.gov/app/details/DCPD-202500132; The White House. "Executive Order 14159 – Protecting the American People Against Invasion." January 20, 2025. https://www.govinfo.gov/app/details/DCPD-202500126.

[46] National Immigration Law Center. "Analysis of Trump Day 1 Executive Orders: Unconstitutional, Illegal, and Cruel." National Immigration Law Center, January 27, 2025. https://www.nilc.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Analysis-of-Trump-Day-1-Executive-Orders.pdf.

> opposition from Congress. [...] Remember: It is unlawful to return people fleeing persecution and torture to harm. The United States joined the international community in developing asylum laws as a direct response to genocide and persecution during World War II. The United States then incorporated these principles into domestic law through the Refugee Act of 1980.[47]

Under duress, resettlement agencies furloughed and laid off staff, reduced and closed programs, and conducted triage responses to redirect refugees and asylum seekers to other possible supports and services – few of which are readily accessible and holistically beneficial to them.[48]

To understand the urgency and benefits of a deliberate alignment between HEI's and ECAR it is necessary to consider four interrelated problems facing refugees and asylum seekers.

Problem 1
Lack of resettlement opportunities for refugees.

Even though there are an estimated 42.5 million refugees eligible for resettlement in the world today, the U.S. accepts a miniscule fraction of that astronomical number. The U.S. admitted no more than 125,000 refugees annually under the Biden administration (2021-2024), for example. Our highest refugee admissions year was 1981 under Reagan when the U.S. resettled 150,000 individuals; there were nearly 10 million refugees worldwide at that time.

Sadly, despite these low admission numbers, the U.S. is actually considered a leader in refugee resettlement. Indeed, very few countries offer refugees a pathway to citizenship, which is what refugee resettlement is meant to do. Even though the U.S. is resource-rich, local capacity is cited as an important reason for increases or decreases in refugee admission numbers.

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[47] National Immigrant Justice Center. *Leading with Cruelty: Eight Impacts of Trump's First Day Executive Orders*. January 22, 2025. https://immigrantjustice.org/blog/leading-with-cruelty-eight-impacts-of-trumps-first-day-executive-orders/.

[48] USAHello. "Immigrant Benefits and Refugee Services." Accessed December 30, 2025. https://usahello.org/life-in-usa/money/public-benefits/.

Impact: 99% of the 40 million (and growing) refugees will continue to live in refugee camps, urban and rural, without hope for a future and without access to rights – their dreams, talents, gifts, passions, and even personhood undermined and devalued.

Problem 2
Refugees experience significant socio-economic challenges when they do resettle.

Refugee resettlement in the United States is administered by the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP), which was established by Congress through The Refugee Act of 1980. USRAP provides refugees welcomed for resettlement in the U.S. with a one-time stipend that fluctuates around $1,200 per refugee and social services case management for 90 days; URSAP expects refugees to accept the first job they are offered and become financially self-sufficient 90 days after their arrival to the U.S. regardless of their trauma history or language proficiency. While it serves important purposes and offers a variety of effective services, USRAP relies heavily on local infrastructure and community-based resettlement networks in counties, cities, and smaller municipalities across the country. As a result, refugees being resettled in the U.S. need additional integration support and financial help beyond what USRAP is able to offer; in other words, the program is highly dependent on local capacity (which might or might not exist) in order to successfully integrate refugees into the community.

Impact: Because USRAP provides minimal financial support and requires refugees – including 18-year-olds – to work, almost all working-age refugees begin work immediately in jobs not commensurate with their skills and credentials; as a result, they have little time to learn English, pursue higher education, or look for more favorable employment opportunities. Additionally, because refugees arrive with no Social Security Numbers, credit backgrounds, or pay stubs showing eligibility for rent, they experience significant housing challenges upon arrival. They also experience cultural and linguistic difficulties in navigating social and human services systems. All of this presents obstacles to their successful integration and sense of belonging.

Problem 3
Fringe groups, think tanks, and politicians perpetuate xenophobic myths and misconceptions about refugees in order to negatively influence public opinion, policies, and practices related to refugee admissions and resettlement.

Despite the magnitude of global forced displacement, the intrinsic importance of immigration and resettlement as hallmarks of democracy, the age of USRAP (45 years), and its long-time bipartisan support from Republicans and Democrats alike, both public policy and broader public sentiments about refugees are under the influence of rampant negative discourses and false narratives about refugees.

Opportunists who use their spheres of influence as a platform to perpetuate myths and misconceptions about refugees do so in order to polarize Americans around a broader range of issues and direct negative attention toward newcomers by falsely accusing and associating them with unrelated social problems. By manipulating public sentiments about refugees through strategies such as scapegoating and othering, refugees become the targets of distrust, hostility, and violence.

We saw this very clearly most recently in the Trump-Vance administration's Executive Order on Realigning the United States Refugee Admissions Program which conflated different displaced populations and statuses with each other and the general public's lack of understanding about those differences.

It is only possible to use stereotypes to achieve polarization by targeting and weakening our social fabric where two things intersect: knowledge and information and community involvement.

Impact: Misunderstanding and lack of knowledge about refugees and their experiences as well as limited community involvement due to the "professionalization" of refugee resettlement under USRAP – where refugee resettlement was professionally carried out by the ten national resettlement agencies – result in a fear of refugees as well as lack of engagement in advocacy efforts for refugees and refugee resettlement.

Problem 4

The need for more meaningful engagement from higher education in these issues.

Historically, higher education institutions have engaged with forced displacement and refugee resettlement in a few specific ways. Most of these focus on research, community service/service learning off-campus, or providing educational or professional support to refugee students or scholars. However, very rarely do higher education institutions open their doors and provide sustained access to their resources to refugee community members, acting as a *site* for resettlement and integration support.

Impact: While higher education is largely removed from direct resettlement and integration efforts – thus depriving refugees of available valuable resources that can change the trajectories of their lives, and the campus and wider community of meaningful and practical learning experiences that can change hearts and minds – most colleges and universities are already poised to quickly become central partners in addressing this global crisis.

Diagram 1: ECAR-HEI Partnerships Diminish Threats to Resettlement and Higher Education		
Resettlement Sector	Intersecting Threats vs. Partnerships	Higher Education Sector
Lack of resettlement opportunities for refugees.	Ethnocentrism & Nationalism vs. Equity & Opportunity	Worsening access and reducing opportunities for underrepresented populations—eliminating affirmative action strategies, and diversity, equity, and inclusion programs.
Refugees experience significant socio-economic challenges when they do resettle.	Myth of Scarcity & Privatization vs. Financial Accountability & Economic Security	Privatization of the public educational and research infrastructure. Replacing grants and subsidies for tuition with high-interest loans and for-profit budgeting practices.
Fringe groups, think tanks, and politicians perpetuate xenophobic myths and misconceptions about refugees in order to negatively influence public opinion, policies, and practices related to refugee admissions and resettlement.	Scapegoating & Authoritarianism vs. Intercultural Humility & Democratic Pluralism	Students, faculty, staff, administrators portrayed as "woke," anti-American to discredit education and its interconnections with democracy.

Diagram 1: ECAR-HEI Partnerships Diminish Threats to Resettlement and Higher Education		
The need for more meaningful engagement from higher education in these issues.	**Sectoral Fragmentation** **&.** **Silo Effects** **vs.** Leveraging Existing Resources & Cross-Sector Partnerships	The need for comprehensive engagement across sectors to innovate and U.S. higher education in resettlement and other targeted social sectors.

Appendix B: Study Design and Methodology

Meeting the Moment (MtM) is a Real-Time Rapid Impact Evaluation (RTRIE). The RTRIE approach allowed us to 1) analyze and evaluate organizational activity during a crisis response on a large, national scale, 2) conduct data collection during and as relevant activities occurred, 3) source quantitative and qualitative organizational activity data from first-person accounts (i.e. interviews) and supplemental sources (e.g. Chapter reports, websites), and 4) filter the broader analysis through deductive elements (i.e. ECAR Mission, Vision) in order to rapidly generate pertinent results and findings with minimal room for error and/or bias.

Formulating the Real-Time Rapid Impact Evaluation (RTRIE) involved the use of different methodological strategies borrowed from i) real-time reviews, ii) rapid evaluations, and iii) program impact and evaluations.[49] The hybrid evaluation methodologies were selected in order to gain transferable knowledge by documenting and illustrating the ways in which *ECAR Chapters pivot during a crisis situation that impacts the core functions of the organization* (i.e. The Moment), and the ways that *ECAR Chapters expand and thrive under these circumstances rather than fail, falter, reduce activities, and/or cease operations*.[50] It is also crucial for RTRIE offers the following features:

- Speed of study design
- Flexibility to adjust and adapt study design
- Action-Oriented focus on learning and informing programs
- Participatory engagement with participants
- Mixed Methods use of qualitative and quantitative data

The RTRIE approach allowed us to 1) analyze and evaluate organizational activity during a crisis response on a large, national scale, 2) conduct data collection during and as relevant activities occurred, 3) source quantitative and qualitative organizational activity data from first-person accounts (i.e. interviews) and supplemental sources (e.g. Chapter

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[49] *Conceptual Framework for Real-Time, Rapid and Early-Stage Evaluations | Ecg*. https://www.ecgnet.org/document/conceptual-framework-real-time-rapid-and-early-stage-evaluations. Roberton, Timothy, and Talata Sawadogo-Lewis. "Building Coherent Monitoring and Evaluation Plans with the Evaluation Planning Tool for Global Health." *Global Health Action*, vol. 15, no. Suppl, p. 2067396. *PubMed Central*, https://doi.org/10.1080/16549716.2022.2067396.

[50] Drisko, James W. "Transferability and Generalization in Qualitative Research." *Research on Social Work Practice* 35, no. 1 (2025): 102–10. https://doi.org/10.1177/10497315241256560.

reports, websites), and 4) filter the broader analysis through deductive elements (i.e. ECAR Mission, Vision) in order to rapidly generate pertinent results and findings with minimal room for error and/or bias.

The study process proceeded as follows (Table B1: Overview of RTRIE Process):

Table B1: Overview of RTRIE Process		
■	Identify Focal Point(s) of Evaluation:	ECAR Chapter Activities and Impact – sustained, adapted, expanded, enhanced
■	Ground Focal Point(s) of Evaluation in Relation to the Program:	Activities and Impact indicate consistency with ECAR's Mission, success given ECAR's Vision, and efficacy of ECAR's strategies
■	Define the Problem(s) / Counterfactual(s):	Reduction / elimination of supports and services from resettlement agencies.
■	Inventory Relevant and Available Sources of Data:	Chapter representatives and volunteers, Chapter reports.
■	Conduct Iterative Data Collection and Iterative Analysis:	Interviews and Analysis, March-December 2025
■	Share Results, Findings, and Recommendations	Distribute, January 2026

Goals

Our intentions were for study Results, Findings, and Recommendations to:

1) Show how ECAR can and does create mechanisms that fill in the gaps when resettlement infrastructures and ecosystems are undermined (i.e. how does ECAR contribute to the local ecosystem and create or bolster existing infrastructure).

2) Demonstrate the specific activities ECAR Chapters engage in to sustain immediate, beneficial interventions for newcomers and their broader communities through campus-community partnerships in hyperlocal ecosystems.

3) Continue to make the case for ECAR – to raise funding, apply for grants, persuade university administrators to take on the initiative, speak about the role of HEIs with local governments, with resettlement agencies and support organizations.

4) Describe how higher education institutions and ECAR support gaps in Resettlement Agency and Support Orgs activities (pre, during, and post arrival).

5) Share strategies that strengthen and expand the resettlement campus movement as a transformative force for civic joy and social trust.

Researcher Positionality

The respective life histories, commitments, and identities of the two co-primary investigators are also important influences on this study.

- *Diya Abdo, Ph.D., Co-Primary Investigator:* I am a second-generation Palestinian refugee born and raised in Jordan. I came to the U.S. on an F1 International Student Visa in 1996 to continue my graduate education at a small liberal arts university in New Jersey. In 2003, I returned to Jordan after challenging experiences in post-9/11 America. After a violation of my academic freedom at my university in Jordan, I decided to leave for the U.S. again. I joined the faculty of Guilford College in 2008. In 2015, I founded ECAR, and in 2017 developed the minor Every Campus A Refuge and then the Forced Migration and Resettlement Studies in 2019.

- *Christian Matheis, Ph.D., Co-Primary Investigator:* I grew up in the United States in both Texas and Oregon. I identify as white, queer, intergenerationally low-income, and a first-generation U.S. citizen child of a refugee (my father). In 2018, I joined the Community and Justice Studies faculty at Guilford College to teach courses in areas such as public policy, direct-action organizing, and immigration justice. I was particularly drawn to Guilford College for the opportunity to work with ECAR. I joined Every Campus A Refuge full-time in January 2025 as Director of Monitoring, Evaluation, and Training Development.

Potential Risks and limitations:

At the same time, in addition to the risk of potential harm to participants, there is potential for in-group biases to result in errors and/or limitations such as the following, which were carefully considered during study design, throughout the course of the project, and in development of this report:

A. Potential very low risk for re-traumatization of study participants and/or the populations they support
B. Potential very low risk of identifying or implicating study participants and/or the populations they support
C. Magnification (exaggerated emphasis) and minimization (diminished perception and/or representation) when interpreting data and reporting results and findings,
D. Overgeneralization of key factual and contextual details, and
E. False labeling with negative and/or positive evaluations.

Risk-Mitigation Strategies: The following mitigation strategies were used:

1. Observing the principles of human subjects research in addition to using study instruments that only solicited ECAR Chapter activity data (to mitigate risks A, B);
2. Adhering to relevant best practices such as requiring staff and interns involved in data analysis and reporting to earn and hold current certifications from the CITI Human Subjects Research Program (to mitigate risks A, B);[51]
3. De-identifying and anonymizing contributor identities and locations, named campuses, named resettlement agencies, and other data that could potentially be used to re-identify contributors (to mitigate risks A, B);
4. Requiring and providing involved staff and interns with advanced training in community engaged data collection and analysis (to mitigate risks A, B, C, D, E);
5. Grounding the study in ECAR's ethical priorities–dignity, agency, and privacy of refugees and newcomers (to mitigate risks A, B, C, D, E);
6. Counter-checking initial results against transcript data before interpreting to formulate findings (to mitigate risks A, B, C, D, E), and
7. Circulating a draft of this report to independent reviewers (i.e. not immediately affiliated with ECAR) who have relevant expertise in subject matter and/or organizational evaluation and assessment (to mitigate risks A, B, C, D, E).

Recruitment & Sampling

In March 2025 ECAR staff contacted representatives of all ECAR Chapters by email with an invitation to participate in this study on an entirely voluntary basis. Prospective respondents were provided with framing such as the purpose and goals of the study, guidance related to voluntary and confidential participation, informed consent for this type of program impact evaluation, and ECAR's intentions for use of study data.[52] While voluntary, responses were required even if that response included answers such as "unknown" / "not applicable." Interviews were conducted between April-June 2025. A total of 14 of the (then) 21 ECAR Chapters participated in the study (Table B2: Table B2: Profile of Participating ECAR Chapters, Campuses).

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[51] Human Subjects Research (HSR): https://about.citiprogram.org/series/human-subjects-research-hsr/. Certification records on file with Every Campus A Refuge (ECAR).

[52] Interviewees provided quantitative and qualitative data about organizational activities for the purposes of reporting transferable knowledge about organizational impact and the benefits of inter-organizational partnerships.

Table B2: Profile of Participating ECAR Chapters, Campuses[53]	
Total Sample Size	14 responding campuses **(n=14)**
Total Population Size	There were 21 ECAR campus Chapters at the time of the study **(N=21)**
% of Total Pop. Invited	100% (21/21) campuses were invited to participate.
% of total Pop. Recruited	67% (14/21) of campuses participated.
Campus Settings	• 14% (2) =City: Large • 28% (4) =City: Midsize • 14% (2) =City: Small • 14% (2) =Suburb: Large • 7% (1) = Suburb: Midsize • 14% (2) =Town: Distant • 7% (1) =Town: Remote
Recent Hosting *Percentages and numerical data omitted for purposes of confidentiality.*	At the time USRAP was dismantled, ECAR Chapters were hosting newcomers from the following countries: • Islamic Republic of Afghanistan • Republic of the Congo / Democratic Republic of the Congo • Republic of Guatemala • Republic of Haiti • Republic of Honduras • Republic of Iraq • Republic of Nicaragua • Islamic Republic of Pakistan • Republic of Rwanda

[53] Profile data primarily sourced from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), Integrated Post-Secondary Education Data System (IPEDS). Additional profile data sourced from institutional websites.

Table B2: Profile of Participating ECAR Chapters, Campuses[53]	
	• Federal Republic of Somalia • Syrian Arab Republic • Ukraine • Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela • Republic of Yemen
Undergraduate Enrollments	• 36% (5) =Large • 36% (5) =Medium • 28% (4) =Small
Public, Private	• 50% (7) =Public • 50% (7) =Private
Levels	• 93% (13) =4 or more years • 7% (1) =At least 2 but less than 4 years
Carnegie Classifications	• 21% (3) =Baccalaureate Colleges: Arts & Sciences Focus • 21% (3) =Doctoral/Professional Universities • 37% (5) =Doctoral Universities • 7% (1) =Associate's Colleges: Mixed Transfer / Career & Technical-Mixed Traditional / Nontraditional • 7% (1) =Baccalaureate/Associate's Colleges: Associate's Dominant • 7% (1) =Master's Colleges & Universities: Larger Programs
Award Levels: **Certificates and Degrees Offered*** *Total exceeds 100% because categories are not exclusive.*	• 92% (13) =Bachelor's degree • 79% (11) =Master's degree • 64% (9) =Postbaccalaureate certificate • 64% (9) =Post-master's certificate • 58% (8) =Doctor's degree - research/scholarship • 50% (7) =Doctor's degree - professional practice • 43% (6) =Associate's degree

Table B2: Profile of Participating ECAR Chapters, Campuses[53]	
	• 43% (6) =Less than one year certificate • 43% (6) =One but less than two years certificate • 7% (1) =Doctor's degree - other
Research Activity	• 64% (9) =research activity not listed • 14% (2) =Very High • 7% (1) =High • 7% (1) =Higher • 7% (1) =Highest

Data Collection

Chapter representatives reported activities and impact data by participating in an informational interview facilitated by ECAR staff, held online in Zoom. Interviews were recorded while Zoom automatically generated an initial transcript. Interviewers simultaneously took notes and entered key data in a Google Form (for simplified data storage and retrieval). Concurrent with the purpose and goals of the study, data collection (informational interview questions) focused on the following topics and themes (Table B3: Focal Points of Data Collection):

Table B3: Focal Points of Data Collection
• ECAR Chapters affirming commitments and stepping up to support resettlement agencies, post-USRAP decimation.
• ECAR Chapters supporting case management services beyond their usual roles.
• ECAR Chapters providing services and supports beyond Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) and formal partnerships with resettlement agencies (RAs) – and specifically for a) families hosted by Chapters as well as for b) families off-campus, not hosted by Chapters.
• New and different people stepping up to volunteer and support ECAR Chapters, and/or the same people (already involved) were stepping up more.
• ECAR Chapters serving as network connectors – building mutual aid networks to help pool resources, volunteer time, broker / develop new partnerships, etc.
• ECAR Chapters engaging in advocacy a) in response to pushback / resistance to partnerships with ECAR and/or resettlement agencies, and b) in general.
• Making the case to administrators for ECAR.
Respondents were also prompted to: • Share anything else they would like. • Propose ways that ECAR (the non-profit organization) could support Chapters in meeting the moment. • Provide contact information for specific personnel at partnering resettlement agencies in the event this study expanded to include gathering data from them as well.

Analysis

The mixed-method analysis incorporates both a quantitative inventory of Chapter activities, a qualitative thematic investigation to detect indicators of impact, and a cumulative model of response by ECAR Chapters nationwide. Quantitative data includes the different types of activities – typical and/or new – reported by representatives. Simple counting and sorting of activity details (e.g. type, frequency, populations served, on-/off-campus, etc.) reflects whether the activities were part of normal, sustained operations, or expanded in scope.

ECAR staff supervised a team of student interns from the Humanities at Work program at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro to conduct the initial preparation and analysis of transcripts. Although this study did not involve human subjects research regarding human communities / populations, original transcripts and other data regarding the activities of ECAR Chapters included sensitive details about targeted / marginalized populations. Before obtaining access to study data, interns were certified for human subjects research (CITI) and provided with additional advanced training in best practices related to community engaged research, evaluation, and assessment.[54]

Prior to working with study data, transcripts were de-identified and quality checked, closely compared with corresponding audio/video recordings, and edited to remove transcription errors. The research team used a hybrid model, blending deductive and inductive approaches to coding, theming, and interpreting data.[55] The inductive aspects involved an initial round of theming transcript data with a focus on documenting specific examples of chapter activities and other significant emergent themes. In a second round, transcripts were reviewed to identify themes that aligned with three deductive elements: 1) ECAR's Mission and Vision statements, 2) Purpose and Goals of the study, and 3) ECAR's Civic Joy and Community Transformation Strategy.[56] Then, the initial set of (round 1) Chapter activities and emergent themes from inductive analysis were synthesized with themes identified as aligning with (round 2) elements of the deductive analysis–this produced the final codebook used to discern and organize results and findings.

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[54] CITI Human Subjects Research (HSR): https://about.citiprogram.org/series/human-subjects-research-hsr/.

[55] This was based on a similar approach used in Shaw, Louise, Meg Perrier, Kasra Tahmasebian, et al. "Developing a Codebook to Characterize Barriers, Enablers, and Strategies for Implementing Learning Health Systems from a Multilevel Perspective." *Learning Health Systems* 9, no. 2 (2024): e10452. https://doi.org/10.1002/lrh2.10452.

[56] For additional details see Appendix C: Selected Study Materials.

Appendix C: Selected Study Materials

Study Description and Informational Interview Questions

Study Description

Scot Nakagawa, movement organizer with The 22nd Century Initiative wrote recently, "The moment calls for creativity, collaboration, and unwavering commitment to the rights and dignity of refugees. The work of resettlement has never been solely the responsibility of the government – it has always been a collective effort. Now more than ever, we must rise to the challenge." How has ECAR risen to the challenge?

Goals - why are we collecting this information? The information you share will help us to...

- Show how ECAR can and does create mechanisms that fill in the gaps when resettlement infrastructures and ecosystems are undermined (i.e. how does ECAR contribute to the local ecosystem and create or bolster existing infrastructure).
- Describe how higher education institutions and ECAR support gaps in Resettlement Agency and Support Orgs activities (pre, during, and post arrival).
- Continue to make the case for ECAR – to raise funding, apply for grants, persuade university admins to take on the initiative, speak about the role of HEIs with local governments, with RA agencies and support orgs.

Which questions require responses?

All questions require responses. Please enter the most accurate information you can. You may enter N/A if the question does not apply to your chapter and/or you do not wish to respond.

Who will have access to the information you share?

The information you share and your identity will be known only to ECAR staff.

What will we do with the information you share?

Study Description
Our plan is to aggregate and thematize responses and then provide a summary description of the ways that ECAR Chapters support RAs. Your identity will not be attached to your responses. **Who can I contact if I have questions or comments about the survey?** For questions or comments about the survey please email [ECAR Staff]: [Email Address]

Informational Interview Questions
1. **How has the ECAR Chapter affirmed their commitments and stepped up to support their RAs during the decimation of the USRAP infrastructure ?** □ Example: ECAR Chapters have taken on more responsibility with core services, such as employment, and provided services to other families/individuals not residing on campus. □ Example: https://sauthebuzz.com/st-ambrose-university-fights-funding-loss-to-stay-a-campus-refuge/ *[open text response]*
2. **How has the ECAR Chapter supported with case management services beyond their usual role?** □ Example(s): ECAR staff and volunteers are providing hosted families with employment services (e.g. building a resume, filling out job applications, preparing for interviews, transportation to/from interviews, etc.) *[open text response]*

Informational Interview Questions

3. Which of the following have you provided for other families or currently hosted families beyond your current MOU with RAs / current expectations of the partnership? (Note: "other families" refers to…)

[matrix response options]	Currently hosted guests / families	Other non-hosted guests / families	Both hosted and non-hosted guests / families	Neither	N/A - Not Applicable
Housing	•	•	•	•	•
Volunteers	•	•	•	•	•
Gift cards, food, supplies	•	•	•	•	•
Legal referrals and/or services	•	•	•	•	•
Used crowdfunding platforms to raise emergency funds for RA's, other families, unmet needs, etc.	•	•	•	•	•
Employment/Career Services	•	•	•	•	•
Access to healthcare, medical appointments	•	•	•	•	•
Transportation	•	•	•	•	•
Off-setting other costs for other families (e.g. rent, utility bills)	•	•	•	•	•
Additional in-kind services (e.g. collecting and distributing donated items)	•	•	•	•	•
Used social media to coordinate support or collect donations	•	•	•	•	•
Other - explain below, leave the checkboxes in this row blank	•	•	•	•	•

□ Other - Explain more about your responses to the previous question / #3?

Informational Interview Questions
[open text response]
4. **Have new and different people at your institution stepped up? And have the same people at your institution stepped up more?** *[multiple choice, select any]* • Yes - new people have stepped up • Yes - many of the same people have stepped up • No - no new people have stepped up • I'm not sure • Other: *[open text box]*
5. **Has your campus served as a network connector or hub above and beyond your usual chapter operations? This includes building mutual aid networks where people can pool resources and/or volunteer time, brokering or developing new community partnerships?** □ Example: Russel Sage College created a Welcome Team comprised of off-campus community members. *[open text response]*
6. **Advocacy -- What kind of push-back / resistance have you encountered, and how have you reframed it to make resettlement more palatable?** *[open text response]*
7. **Advocacy -- What kind of advocacy has your chapter been involved in? Have you been invited to participate in advocacy efforts in your resettlement ecosystem? If not, has your chapter explored joining advocacy efforts?** *[open text response]*
8. **How have you made the case for ECAR with your administration in this moment?** □ Example: 1) The Guilford College ECAR chapter follows and contributes to a regional Signal group, Immigrant Advocacy Coalition. Contributors are lawyers, teachers, educational administrators, service providers, etc. 2) Some Chapters are participating in and contributing to community Know Your Rights (KYR) trainings. *[open text response]*
9. **What else would you like to share?** *[open text response]*
10. **How can ECAR the non-profit support your chapter in rising to the challenge? What can we do to help you do more, better, different?** *[open text response]*
11. **Is there a staff member at your partner RA that you would be willing to connect with to invite them to take a similar, brief survey? If so, enter YES below and we will send you the survey link. There will not be a request to schedule a virtual meeting.**[57] *[open text response]*

[57] Due to the impact of The Moment on resettlement agencies and support organizations, including furloughs and layoffs, we did not conduct interviews with RA staff.

Framework for Analysis

Overview: Coding and Theming Study Data

Sources of Top-Level Coding for Study Design

- ECAR Mission: Mobilize colleges and universities to host refugees on campus grounds and support them in their resettlement.
- ECAR Vision: Transform the landscape of refugee resettlement and higher education by creating thousands of sustainable resettlement campus ecosystems.
- Purpose of the Study: to collect, analyze, and report data that illustrates the impact and significance of ECAR Chapter activities in a particular moment of crisis for domestic resettlement agencies and partners.
- Goals of the Study:

1) Show how ECAR can and does create mechanisms that fill in the gaps when resettlement infrastructures and ecosystems are undermined (i.e. how does ECAR contribute to the local ecosystem and create or bolster existing infrastructure).

2) Describe how higher education institutions and ECAR support gaps in Resettlement Agency and Support Orgs activities (pre, during, and post arrival).

3) Continue to make the case for ECAR — to raise funding, apply for grants, persuade university admins to take on the initiative, speak about the role of HEIs with local governments, with RA agencies and support orgs.

Round 1 Themes

- Student involvement
- Educational & Student Access
- Ethical Responsibilities
- Providing Housing
- Supporting resettlement agencies/filling the gaps
- Role Expansion
- Adaptability / Flexibility
- Innovative Resources
- Community Involvement
- Assisting with Employment
- Collaborating with other Community Partners
- ECAR teams Holistically Supporting team members
- Transition Planning

- Strategizing
- Suppression / Discouragement
- Presenting Information (to administrators, students, and/or communities in the hyperlocal ecosystem)
- Student involvement
- Student advocacy
- Open Informational and Educational Events
- Community Partnership
- Keeping Under The Radar
- Demonstrating Partnerships and Support On- and Off- Campus
- Student Advocates and Researchers
- Hope and Uncertainty
- Finding next steps / Building off of Momentum

Sources of Mid-Level Coding for Round 2: Deductive/Concept-Driven Theming

- ECAR Mission: Mobilize colleges and universities to host refugees on campus grounds and support them in their resettlement.
- ECAR Vision: Transform the landscape of refugee resettlement and higher education by creating thousands of sustainable resettlement campus ecosystems.
- Civic Joy and Community Transformation Strategy:
  - Resources: ECAR leverages existing resources where resources are inefficiently coordinated.
  - Values: ECAR Chapters center refugee agency, dignity and privacy in service provision where deeply held values have no opportunity for realization, are not strategically integrated.
  - Partnerships: ECAR brings colleges / universities and their communities into coalition and allyship with newcomers where partnerships remain unactivated.
  - Mutual Aid: ECAR bridges class divides between receiving communities and refugees (who typically arrive in the U.S. with nothing) and establishes local mutual aid hubs where mutual benefits are unimagined.

Round 2 Themes

- Affirmed their commitments and stepped up to support their RAs
- Supported case management and services beyond the chapter's usual role
- Serving as a Network Connector
- Responded to Resistance, Reframed, Pushed Back
- Advocacy
- Made the Case to Administration

- Miscellaneous & Uncategorized

Codebook—Synthesis of Round 1 Themes and Round 2 Themes	
Round 1 Themes	Round 2 Themes
Affirmed their commitments and stepped up to support their RAs	• Student involvement • Educational & Student Access • Ethical Responsibilities • Providing Housing • Supporting resettlement agencies/filling the gaps
Supported case management and services beyond the chapter's usual role	• Role Expansion • Adaptability / Flexibility • Innovative Resources • Community Involvement
Served as a Network Connector	• Assisting with Employment • Collaborating with other Community Partners ECAR teams Holistically Supporting team members
Responded to Resistance, Reframed, Pushed Back	• Transition Planning • Strategizing • Suppression / Discouragement • Presenting Information (to administrators, students, and/or communities in the hyperlocal ecosystem)
Advocated / Advocacy	• Student involvement • Student advocacy • Open Informational and Educational Events Community Partnership
	• Keeping Under The Radar

Made the Case to Administration	• Demonstrating Partnerships and Support On- and Off- Campus
Miscellaneous & Uncategorized	• Student Advocates and Researchers • Hope and Uncertainty • Finding next steps / Building off of Momentum

Overall Themes

1) Delivering Rapid Responses
2) Expanding Influence and Widening Infrastructure of Refugee Support
3) Continuing to Build Long-Term Resilience and Capacity
4) Educating, Informing, and Encouraging
5) Reframing, Strategic Engagement, and Advocacy
6) Affirming Community and Spreading Joy

Appendix D: Detailed ECAR Chapter Campus Profiles

Campus Profiles of Participating ECAR Chapters[58]				
Campus # (study ID)	**Undergrad. Enrollment**	**Carnegie Classification; Level; Award Levels**	**Public, Private**	**Campus Setting**
#1	Small	Doctoral/Professional Universities; 4 or more years; Bachelor's degree; Master's degree; Post-master's certificate; Doctor's degree - research/scholarship; Doctor's degree - professional practice;	Private	City: Midsize
#2	Small	Baccalaureate Colleges: Arts & Sciences Focus; 4 or more years; Bachelor's degree; Postbaccalaureate certificate; Master's degree;	Private	City: Large
#3	Small	Baccalaureate Colleges: Arts & Sciences Focus; 4 or more years; Bachelor's degree; Master's degree	Private	Town: Remote
#4	Large	Doctoral/Professional Universities; 4 or more years; Associate's degree; Bachelor's degree; Postbaccalaureate certificate; Master's degree; Post-master's certificate; Doctor's degree - research/scholarship; Doctor's degree - professional practice;	Private	City: Small
#5	Small	Baccalaureate Colleges: Arts & Sciences Focus; 4 or more years; Bachelor's degree	Private	Suburb: Large
#6	Medium	Associate's Colleges: Mixed Transfer / Career & Technical-Mixed Traditional / Nontraditional; At least 2 but less than 4 years; Less than one year certificate; One but less than two years certificate; Associate's degree	Public	City: Small
#7	Large	Doctoral Universities: Very High Research Activity; 4 or more years; Bachelor's degree; Postbaccalaureate certificate; Master's degree;	Public	Town: Distant

[58] Profile data primarily sourced from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), Integrated Post-Secondary Education Data System (IPEDS). Additional profile data sourced from institutional websites.

Campus Profiles of Participating ECAR Chapters[58]				
		Post-master's certificate; Doctor's degree - research/scholarship; Doctor's degree - professional practice		
#8	Large	Doctoral Universities: Very High Research Activity; 4 or more years; Less than one year certificate; One but less than two years certificate; Bachelor's degree; Postbaccalaureate certificate; Master's degree; Post-master's certificate; Doctor's degree - research/scholarship;	Public	Suburb: Midsize
#9	Large	Doctoral Universities: High Research Activity; 4 or more years; Bachelor's degree; Postbaccalaureate certificate; Master's degree; Post-master's certificate; Doctor's degree - research/scholarship	Public	City: Midsize
#10	Medium	Baccalaureate/Associate's Colleges: Associate's Dominant; 4 or more years; Less than one year certificate; One but less than two years certificate; Associate's degree; Bachelor's degree	Public	City: Midsize
#11	Medium	Doctoral/Professional Universities; 4 or more years; Less than one year certificate; One but less than two years certificate; Associate's degree; Bachelor's degree; Postbaccalaureate certificate; Master's degree; Post-master's certificate; Doctor's degree - research/scholarship; Doctor's degree - professional practice; Doctor's degree - other	Private	City: Midsize
#12	Medium	Master's Colleges & Universities: Larger Programs; 4 or more years; Less than one year certificate; One but less than two years certificate; Associate's degree; Bachelor's degree; Postbaccalaureate certificate; Master's degree; Post-master's certificate; Doctor's degree - professional practice;	Public	Suburb: Large
#13	Large	Doctoral Universities: Highest Research Activity; 4 or more years; Less than one year certificate; One but less than two years certificate; Bachelor's degree; Postbaccalaureate certificate; Master's degree; Post-master's certificate; Doctor's degree -	Public	Town: Distant

Campus Profiles of Participating ECAR Chapters[58]				
		research/scholarship; Doctor's degree - professional practice;		
#14	Medium	Doctoral Universities: Higher Research Activity; 4 or more years; Bachelor's degree; Postbaccalaureate certificate; Master's degree; Post-master's certificate; Doctor's degree - research/scholarship; Doctor's degree - professional practice;	Private	City: Large

Appendix E: ECAR Gathering Questionnaire Responses

In September 2025, the ECAR Chapter at Lafayette College in Easton, Pennsylvania hosted the Annual ECAR Gathering. ECAR staff posed the question below to attendees and collected their responses in an online survey platform. The selected responses below have been de-identified and associated with the major themes identified in this study. While Meeting the Moment primarily focused on the collective activities of ECAR Chapters, it is important to note both that the responses below represent the activities and impacts of individual newcomers, and that they are contributing substantially to many communities in different parts across the country.

Question to ECAR Gathering Attendees: "Tell us about a refugee you've worked with who is now making a positive impact in their community. In what context did you work with that individual? What are they doing now to create positive impact?"

Attendee Responses:	Meeting the Moment Themes (T#)
• There is a general spirit of community and compassion for others. I had a member of my conversation club who started as a student and became a volunteer. He invites newly arrived people to join the group, provides them rides to the meetings.	• T1: Delivering Rapid Responses • T2: Expanding Influence and Widening Infrastructure of Refugee Support
• [A.B.] arrived to [City, State] as a young man from DRC - two years after arriving, learning English at a rapid pace, I hired him as a case aide. He quickly became an avid advocate for the Congolese community, became a case manager, and now leads in advocacy as the grassroots organizer at the local resettlement office, telling his story and uplifting the needs of refugees in his community with state, local and federal representatives. He is fierce and savvy in calling representatives to support welcoming.	• T1: Delivering Rapid Responses • T2: Expanding Influence and Widening Infrastructure of Refugee Support • T3: Continuing to Build Long-Term Resilience and Capacity • T4: Educating, Informing, and Encouraging: • T5: Reframing, Strategic Engagement, and Advocacy • T6: Affirming Community and Spreading Joy
• Years ago, I worked with a woman who was a Syrian refugee who arrived in the city of [City Name] after the city declared itself a safe haven.	• T2: Expanding Influence and Widening Infrastructure of Refugee Support

I was case manager for the ESL program and she, having newly arrived, was taking English classes while waiting for her work visa. Now, she's a quiet refuge for the Syrian community in the valley. She's "paying it. forward" by welcoming and helping others.	• T3: Continuing to Build Long-Term Resilience and Capacity • T4: Educating, Informing, and Encouraging: • T5: Reframing, Strategic Engagement, and Advocacy • T6: Affirming Community and Spreading Joy
• [B.C] is a young Afghan man who was supported through the [Title of Youth Program] at [Organization Name] in [City 1]. After completing trades education, he now provides auto mechanic services and has multiple businesses in [State 2] where he is able to keep folks' cars running, including traveling to [City 1] and [State 3] to assist clients, and mentor other forcibly displaced youth on his experiences becoming an auto technician and entrepreneur.	• T1: Delivering Rapid Responses • T2: Expanding Influence and Widening Infrastructure of Refugee Support • T3: Continuing to Build Long-Term Resilience and Capacity • T4: Educating, Informing, and Encouraging: • T6: Affirming Community and Spreading Joy
• I worked with a young woman who was preparing to attend college. I helped her with college preparation and practicing her reading, writing, and conversation skills. She earned a bachelor's degree and is now completing her master's degree. She works as a translator, helps community members navigate various systems, complete legal and medical forms, and wants to use her degrees to create biomedical equipment!	• T1: Delivering Rapid Responses • T2: Expanding Influence and Widening Infrastructure of Refugee Support • T3: Continuing to Build Long-Term Resilience and Capacity • T4: Educating, Informing, and Encouraging: • T5: Reframing, Strategic Engagement, and Advocacy • T6: Affirming Community and Spreading Joy
• One of our case managers from the local resettlement agency originally came to the U.S. as a refugee. They are now working to help other refugees by drawing on their own experiences.	• T4: Educating, Informing, and Encouraging: • T6: Affirming Community and Spreading Joy
• [B.C.] (who is here too!) He cofounded [Organization Name] in [City], and is rallying his community to fight deportations.	• T2: Expanding Influence and Widening Infrastructure of Refugee Support • T3: Continuing to Build Long-Term Resilience and Capacity • T5: Reframing, Strategic Engagement, and Advocacy

PO Box 19752
5704 W Market St
Greensboro, NC 27409

Every Campus A Refuge

@everycampusarefuge

@everycampusarefuge.bsky.social

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www.everycampusarefuge.org

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