



IWR response to Trump administration actions affecting refugees and immigrants



Image credit: devmaryna on Freepik

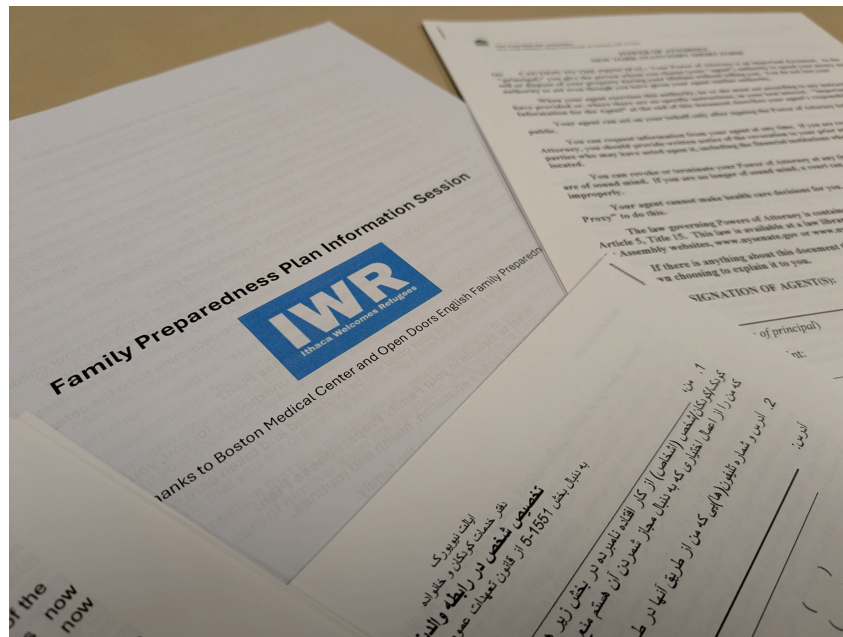
Since Inauguration Day ushered in a vastly different landscape for refugees and immigrants in the US, we at Ithaca Welcomes Refugees have strived to nimbly respond to, or at times try to anticipate, each new policy, executive order, and government memo which affect our refugee and immigrant friends and neighbors. The people we work alongside as they resettle in this community are feeling scared, uncertain, and anxious. In our [latest blog post](#), Executive Director Casey Verderosa shares an update on how IWR has been responding to this situation over the past few months.

Current Needs

We welcome donations of **gift cards from grocery stores** in the area that we can pass on to IWR families. We are currently in need of gift cards from **Aldi** and **ShurSave, Trumansburg**. Please note the amount on the face of the gift card.

If you are sorting items your family has outgrown, please consider donating **gently used baby and children's items** to the Mama Goose & Jillian's Drawers store on Clinton Street and asking them to add any store credit to IWR's account. From this account, we give vouchers to refugee and immigrant families with children. Our account is currently low and we would love to boost it to give vouchers to two newly arrived families! If you can help, please check the [Mama Goose schedule](#) for drop-off dates.

Family Emergency Preparedness workshop



On April 5, we held an information session for IWR families titled Family Emergency Preparedness, with the help of two local family law attorneys. Participants learned about options for placing children under the temporary guardianship of a trusted adult, should parents be detained or deported. Several people whom IWR has supported volunteered as translators to help deliver this information.

Dispatches from a Sanctuary City, featuring IWR

Executive Director Casey Verderosa recently featured in a local TV show titled 'Ithaca Politics 2025: Perspectives on Ukraine,' part of a discussion series titled 'Dispatches from a Sanctuary City.' The show aired on Pegasys Community Media on March 31 and can be watched [here](#). Casey discusses the situation of local Ukrainian refugees in the context of current US politics. The show also features interviews with Mayor of Ithaca, NY, Robert Cantelmo and scholars Zenon Wasyliv and John Weiss. Our thanks to Pegasys Community Media producers for spotlighting issues affecting refugees in our community.

Spring jewelry sale fundraiser



Jewelry Sale to Benefit
Ithaca Welcomes Refugees

"Find the perfect Mother's Day gift"
Affordable Gently used Items

April 26, 2025 10am - 3 pm
First Baptist Church
309 N Cayuga St Ithaca /Dewitt Park

The poster features a light blue background decorated with pink cherry blossom branches. It displays various pieces of jewelry: a pair of square earrings, a sun-like face pendant, a beaded bracelet, a necklace with a blue flower, a chain necklace, a beaded necklace, a long gold chain, a pair of teardrop earrings, a pair of green heart-shaped earrings, a pair of red circular earrings, a necklace with large blue beads, a necklace with orange and white beads, a necklace with red and white beads, and a pair of rings. A QR code is located in the bottom right corner.

Necklaces Pins Rings
Earrings Bracelets Pendants

Announcing IWR's 10 year anniversary photo competition



To mark 10 years of IWR's existence, we are holding a competition to create a community-sourced collection of pictures that convey Ithaca's spirit of welcome. With this initiative, we celebrate the grounding of our mission in the place where it began and in the community that lives it. The best twelve submissions will be showcased in a 2026 IWR calendar, and the wider collection will feature in IWR digital and print communications that support our work.

Anyone can enter! Send your photo to leilaw@ithacawelcomesrefugees.org with a signed photo release form by **June 16**. Form and more details available [on our website](#).

The top entries will receive one of the following prizes, kindly donated by local businesses:

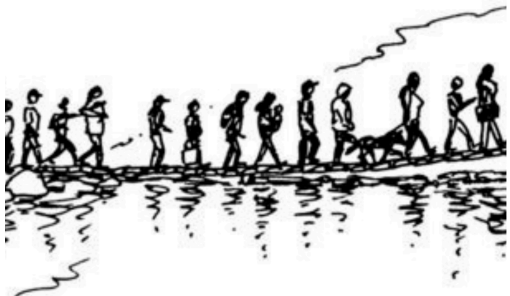
- Cruise for 2 aboard *The Teal* with [Discover Cayuga Lake](#): \$100 gift card
- Dinner at [Hazelnut Kitchen](#): \$75 gift card
- Beeswax goodies from [Sunbeam Candles](#): \$30 gift card

Coming soon... community mural in Ithaca celebrating refugees and immigrants

We are excited to announce a new partnership with local artist Hugo Medina to create a community mural in downtown Ithaca celebrating refugees and immigrants locally. We have been awarded two grants from the Community Arts Partnership and the Tompkins County Tourism Board to support this project, and the Southern Tier AIDS Program has kindly agreed to host the mural on their building opposite DSS on West State Street. We are also grateful to have


support from Ithaca Murals in taking forward this project. A series of community workshops will take place over the summer to gather inspiration for the mural design, and the artwork will be completed in the Fall, with a community paint day planned for September. Watch this space for details of how you can be involved!

Launch event: archive of Venezuelan migrant testimonies



**Archives in Transit:
Todosomos and the Venezuelan Migration Crisis**


Friday, April 18,
10 am - 7:30 pm
A.D. White House and Zoom



Access Program and Zoom Link Here

Latin American and Caribbean Studies Program
Einaudi Center for International Studies

Co-Sponsors: The President's Council of Cornell Women (PCCW), Department of Romance Studies, Migrations Program, and the Society for the Humanities



Join us at a [public symposium](#) launching the Todosomos archive at Cornell tomorrow, April 18th, 10-7.30! The event marks the opening of a unique collection of hand-written testimonies by Venezuelan migrants, collected in Colombia in 2018 - 2022. Hear talks by the founders of Todosomos, the library team in charge of the processing and transcription of the archive, Venezuelan artists and writers, scholars and IWR board member Pedro Molina. Includes lunch, reception and a pop-up exhibit from the archive. Not to be missed!

IWR in the community



From left to right, Laurie Konwinski (Catholic Charities) and Leigh Bacher (IWR) with Patricia Kinney, Pastor of St Mark's Episcopal Church, Candor, NY

IWR is increasing its advocacy activities to raise public awareness of the value of refugees and immigrants in our society, the challenges they face and avenues for support. On March 19, we took part in a panel on immigration alongside Open Doors English and Tompkins Learning Partners at McGraw House. On March 23, we joined Catholic Charities in presenting on these topics at St Mark's Episcopal Church in Candor, NY. Thank you to Mary Chapman at McGraw House and Pastor Kinney at St Mark's for hosting us!

Gratitude



Our special thanks go out to student teams at two Cornell clubs who recently organized fundraisers for IWR!

- Cornell Chavurah, for a fundraiser concert in celebration of the Jewish festival of Purim on March 14
- Cornell Pi Lamda Sigma (POLIS) for a bake sale fundraiser on April 14 (pictured)

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