



Dear Friends and Supporters of IWR,

As 2025 comes to an end, we reflect on ten years since Ithaca Welcomes Refugees first began its work. There is much to celebrate, especially the 226 refugee and immigrant partners we – and you - have assisted in rebuilding their lives in a new home over the last decade. Many have remained in the area and continue to be part of our community. From an all-volunteer movement, IWR has developed into a significant community organization with 8 part-time staff, supported by a base of dedicated volunteers. As IWR's capacity has grown, we have stayed rooted in strong local partnerships. To everyone who has helped, your generosity and care is the bloodline of IWR and we are truly grateful for your support.

Of course, there have also been challenges created by immigration policy changes, especially over the last year. After the 2024 presidential election, IWR prepared to resettle fewer newcomers in anticipation of new federal administration policies. To our surprise, though paths to entry and resettlement have been reduced, requests for our services have increased. While in 2024 we welcomed 27 new arrivals, this year we have already assisted 30 new refugee partners. Most entered the country in late 2024 but reached out to IWR this year. In 2025, we are proud to be serving a total of 160 people through all of our programs, more than in any previous year.

Make a donation

Along with this growth, our current refugee partners have greater need for support in their resettlement journeys than we are used to seeing. We have spent much of the year helping people manage obstacle after obstacle designed by the Trump administration to make it harder for immigrants to survive in America. We have drawn on our Crisis Fund to cover legal fees

enabling people to apply for asylum, as well as a new \$550 fee imposed by the administration to apply for work permits. Some newcomers who had previously secured steady employment have had their work permits revoked under policies ending temporary statuses for numerous countries. We have responded by covering basic needs such as food, rent, and utilities while people await new, asylum-linked permits. We have been relieved to witness a few families regain their work permits and we are committed to supporting the remainder into 2026. At the same time, the administration's policies have caused uncertainty over whether newcomers can stay in their new country. The original promise of refuge here has been greatly diminished. This has exacerbated trauma for families for whom return to their country of origin would mean danger, persecution, or even death.

We have been able to do all we have thanks to a surge in support from you, our community. You have helped keep families afloat through periods of dire need. Along with this, the growing needs have meant that for the first time we are operating with a budget deficit. Drawing from reserves, we have been able to support every eligible newcomer who asked for IWR's help, including with unanticipated needs. A fresh example is our provision of vital food aid to families affected by the delay of SNAP payments during the government shutdown we have just experienced. Looking ahead, we are poised to allay the costs of future legal fees, provide essential aid for those between work permits, and alleviate other basic needs that our displaced neighbors may face in the second year of this federal administration, as well as continuing our core programs of support to them.

We ask you for your help to start the year in a strong position to do what it takes for people thrown into crisis at each policy turn to resettle with dignity. **We have an ambitious goal to raise \$70,000.** Please give as generously as you can and help us show refugees and immigrants in our community who are struggling that they are not alone.

Sincerely,

Casey Verderosa
Executive Director

Doug Stayman
Board Chair

Give today

Your support helps us provide a range of services to displaced people in our community:

- \$50 provides a starting supply of groceries for a newly arrived family or sheets for a family of 4
- \$260 provides 4 driving lessons to help one adult become mobile and access work and services
- \$500 provides a housing subsidy for an IWR family for a month
- \$750 provides a Global Roots scholarship for one child for a month
- \$1,600 provides one month's full rent to a family awaiting new work permits

Any amount you can give will be gratefully received and make a difference to people's lives.

Please consider becoming a monthly donor to help support our programs on an ongoing basis. To set this up, toggle the donation schedule to 'monthly' when you make a gift via our [donation page](#).

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