

We Are All America

Annual Report 2025



**WE ALL
ARE
AMERICA**

Building an America where we all belong.



Dear Partners and Friends of WAAA,

In 2025, We Are All America (WAAA) strengthened its role as one of the nation's largest refugee and immigrant-led organizing initiatives. Across nearly all fifty states, the Refugee and Immigrant Leadership Table (RILT), our state organizers, local and national partners, and community leaders built power in a year marked by uncertainty, xenophobia, and shifting federal policies. Indeed, our communities continued to rise with courage, strategy, and the resilience that has always defined our movement.

This year, we deepened our commitment to centering the leadership of those who have experienced displacement firsthand. Through our Refugee and Immigrant Leadership Development Program, **we invested in leadership pipelines and trained over 2,000 immigrant and refugee leaders across the country.** We launched new capacity-building and organizational development programs for Ethnic Community-Based Organization (ECBO) leaders in 12 states and expanded both state and local advocacy efforts to strengthen coalitions and build long-term organizational sustainability.

Together with our local and national partners, **we mobilized thousands through our Together We Rise campaign, a national advocacy and narrative effort that unites the refugee and immigrant rights movement** to push back against anti-immigrant rhetoric and policies. The campaign builds collective action around key moments and lifts up a unified voice for justice and dignity by bringing together community leaders, allies, and advocates across the country. Furthermore, through our WAAA National Refugee Advocacy Days, we mobilized more than 300 leaders and held 76 congressional meetings to advance the priorities of our communities and defend humanitarian protections.

As we reflect on the past year, one truth remains clear: our movement is strongest when those closest to the issues are leading the solutions. I am deeply grateful to every organizer, partner, and community leader who continues to shape this work with vision, perseverance, and an unwavering belief in a more just future for all of us.

With determination and hope,

Fatima Saidi
WAAA Director



Fatima Saidi
Campaign Director



Nejra Sumic
Senior National Field Manager



Isabel López
Digital and Narrative Manager



Daoud Malikyar
Afghan Community and Housing Navigator, CHIRLA



Anahita Panahi
Deputy Director of Refugee Affairs, CHIRLA



Ruben Torres
Advocacy, Communications, and Policy Manager, MIRC



Jacqueline Mugwaneza
Multicultural Relations Lead, MIRC



Pierre Uwimana
FL Refugee Organizer, FLIC



Kawser Amine
Northern CA Refugee Organizer, CHIRLA



Fereshteh Ganjavi
Founder and ED, Elena's Light



Modupe Adewunmi
Director of Coalition Building, PatchworkIndy

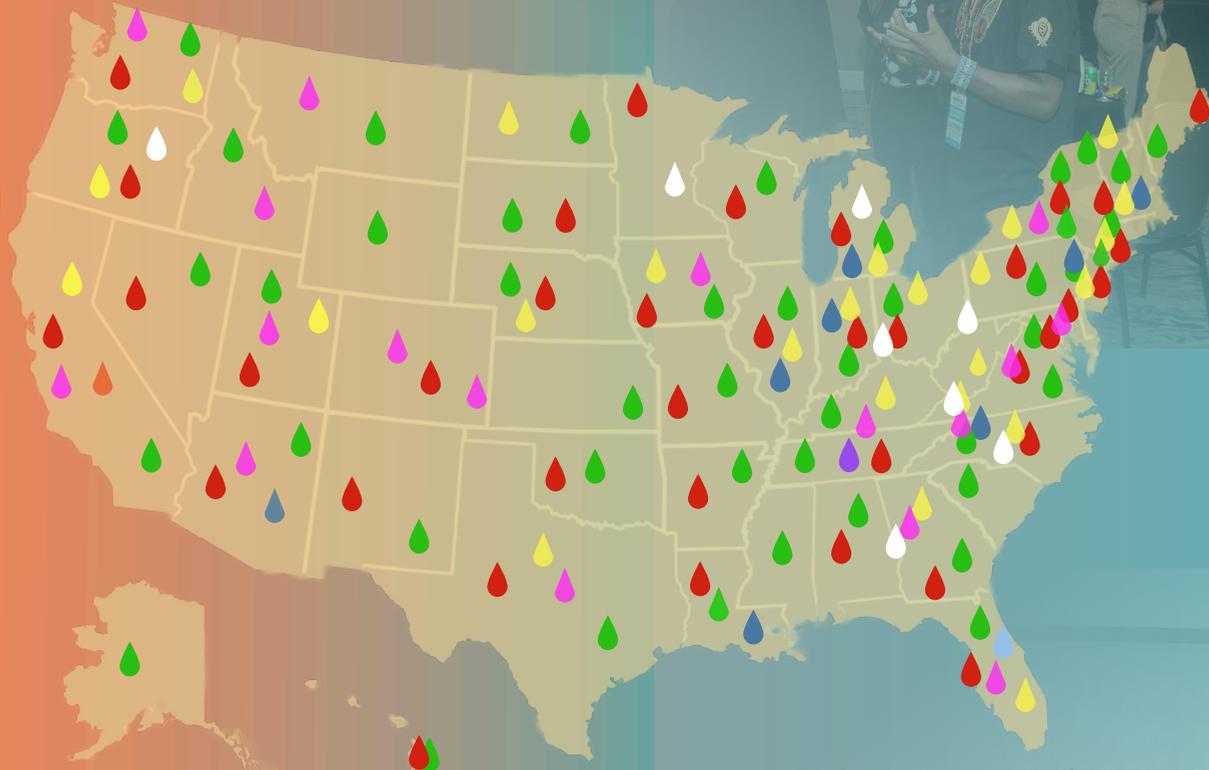


Achiri Atanga
Project and Community Development Manager LORI

About our Coalition

We Are All America is a national coalition led by immigrants and refugees, grounded in lived experience and collective action for justice and inclusion. We work to counter anti-immigrant and anti-refugee sentiment by advancing inclusive narratives, policies, and practices at the federal, state, and local levels. Our movement is led by organizers with firsthand experience as refugees and asylees, representing communities across the Middle East, Africa, Asia, and South America.

Through the dedication of our national Advisory Committee partners, our local partners, and the members of our National Refugee and Immigrant Leadership Table, WAAA now has a presence in nearly all fifty states. Their leadership has been essential in expanding our collective work, making WAAA the largest national grassroots initiative for refugees and immigrants in the country.



Our work is guided by 3 pillars

Centering the Leadership of Forcibly Displaced People



The heart of our mission lies in empowering individuals with lived experience and building an infrastructure that amplifies the power of immigrant and refugee voices.

Promoting State and Local Welcoming Policies and Inclusive Initiatives



WAAA partners with grassroots organizations and ethnic community-based organizations (ECBOs) to advance pro-refugee and pro-immigrant policies at the state and local level.

Strengthening Our Federal Protection System



We support comprehensive federal priorities to expand and protect refugee resettlement and asylum. Our focus is to build organizing power by uniting leaders, advocates, and national partners in a shared action space



- *Alianza Americas is an individual membership organization.
- *RCUSA is a national organization
- *Human Rights First is a global organization.



PILLAR ONE

Centering the Leadership of Forcibly Displaced People



Our first pillar centers on elevating the leadership of immigrants and refugees by investing in long-term leadership pipelines that include mentorship, skill-building workshops, and ongoing accompaniment. We create spaces that amplify lived experience, support emerging leaders, and ensure forcibly displaced people are equipped, resourced, and supported to lead advocacy, shape narratives, and drive solutions rooted in their communities.

This pillar is designed as a leadership pipeline, moving immigrant and refugee leaders from participation to leadership, and from leadership to sustained influence.

Key initiatives include:

- **Refugee and Immigrant Leadership Table**
- **Leadership Development Program**
- **Ethnic Community Based Organizations Cohort**
- **Women’s Community Catalyst Award**

REFUGEE AND IMMIGRANT LEADERSHIP TABLE (RILT)

Led by a diverse cohort of refugees and immigrants, **RILT empowers grassroots leaders to actively participate in decision-making processes, offering them resources, training, funding, and support** to navigate policy complexities and advocate effectively for our communities. Our members are making tangible differences in their community, such as by hosting summits for diverse business owners in Ann Arbor, MI; commemorating the Rohingya genocide with the community in Houston, TX; and organizing rapid response networks in Chicago, IL.

Our Impact in 2025:

<p>29 Countries</p> <hr/> <p>33 Languages Spoken</p> <hr/> <p>21 States Represented</p>		<p>Uplifted 31 World Refugee Day Events across the country</p>
	<p>9 New leaders joined in 2025</p>	
<p>“Being part of RILT makes me feel like my voice is heard and respected among like-minded people committed to protecting our communities and families. This space allows us to reflect on our progress and see the real goodness we’re creating together.”</p> <p>ITEDAL SHALABI RILT Member, Co-Founder/ Executive Director of Arab American Family Services</p>		

Leadership Development Program

The Leadership Development Program equips grassroots immigrant and refugee leaders and staff from movement organizations with the tools to organize locally, advance their campaigns, and sustain their missions over time. **This year, our curriculum included our signature workshops in Organizing, Decoding U.S. government, Storytelling, and Fundraising, and new ones on Public Speaking and Climate Justice & Migration.**

Trained over
2,047
refugees and
immigrants

Hosted
6
Workshops

94%
Of participants
increased their
knowledge
significantly

Women’s Community Catalyst Award



The Women’s Community Catalyst Award honors and uplifts one of the most vital yet often overlooked forces in our movement: immigrant and refugee women leading change at the grassroots level. The winners of the 2nd annual Women’s Community Catalyst Award were **Eréndira Rendón** (Vice President of Immigrant Justice, The Resurrection Project), **Mariam Sy** (Organizing Director, Ohio Immigrants Alliance), and **Fereshteh Ganjavi** (Executive Director and Founder, Elena’s Light).

Ethnic Community-Based Organizations Cohort

Our inaugural ECBO Cohort is the first national organizational development program designed specifically for immigrant- and refugee-led organizations, ensuring their work is sustainable, visible, and community-centered. Running from September 2025 to March 2026, the cohort brings together leaders from 15 organizations across 12 states for monthly sessions focused on strengthening their capacity, leadership, and long-term organizational stability.

Throughout the program, participants engage in workshops on Building Sustainable Organizations, Navigating Funding Challenges, Community Organizing and Advocacy, and Enhancing Digital Presence, Brand Awareness, Narrative, and Storytelling. At the conclusion of the cohort, each participating ECBO leader will receive a \$1,000 stipend for their time.



Learn About the Inaugural ECBO Cohort Organizations



“Participating in the Ethnic CBO Leadership Cohort has been transformative for both me and the Immigrant Welcome Network of Johnson County. The cohort provided us with practical tools, strategic guidance, and a powerful community of leaders who understand the realities faced by immigrant- and refugee-led organizations. It strengthened our capacity, expanded our partnerships, and affirmed the importance of immigrant and nonimmigrant communities leading their own solutions.”

Mazahir Salih
Immigrant Welcome Network of Wayne County



Our People—The Heart of Our Movement

PILLAR TWO

Promoting State and Local Welcoming Policies and Inclusive Initiatives



Our second pillar focuses on supporting immigrant and refugee organizers working to advance pro-refugee and pro-immigrant policies at the state and local levels. As immigrants and refugees themselves, our WAAA State Organizers bring firsthand experience, deep community trust, and powerful lived expertise to their work.

Their efforts—ranging from organizing community events to advancing inclusive legislation—strengthened community belonging, expanded visibility for refugee and immigrant leaders, and helped shift public narratives in the states we serve. Our state network remains a powerful force driving equity, strengthening grassroots leadership, and building welcoming communities nationwide.

In 2025, WAAA provided training, mentorship, funding, and organizational development resources to organizers in California, Connecticut, Maine, Louisiana, and Indiana.

Connecticut – Elena’s Light

From hosting Know Your Rights sessions in English, Dari, and Pashto, and holding a press conference to demand protections for Afghan families in commemoration of the fall of Kabul, Elena’s Light continues to fearlessly defend immigrant and refugee communities in the state. Their new Advocacy Coordinator worked closely with WAAA’s National Field Manager to build a strategic plan for advancing refugee-focused policies in the state.



Louisiana – Louisiana Organization for Immigrants and Refugees

LORI made the voices of immigrants and refugees heard at the Louisiana State Capitol, testifying against anti-immigrant bills. Their efforts included civic engagement campaigns, Know Your Rights sessions, and fostering ECBO participation in advocacy. Their goal remains to empower refugee and immigrant communities to support each other in the face of the anti-immigrant climate in Louisiana.



Maine - Maine Immigrant Rights Coalition

MIRC achieved significant legislative impact by testifying on 26 bills and securing victories on healthcare access, emergency shelter funding, and farmworker wages, while defeating efforts to restrict immigrant benefits. MIRC strengthened community engagement through the Maine Immigration Forum, launched a statewide resource hotline, and expanded education on federal immigration policy impacts across Maine organizations. The coalition also assumed leadership roles in child care, tax, and healthcare policy development and joined RCUSA and Fair Share America for federal advocacy days.



Indiana – Patchwork Indy

Patchwork Indy emerged as a leader in advocacy, taking a prominent role in WAAA’s Advocacy Days. This year, they worked to establish a robust statewide refugee and immigrant advocacy coalition, bringing together more than 20 community partners. Their Director of Coalition Building worked closely with WAAA’s National Field Manager to identify and advance advocacy initiatives in the state.



California – CHIRLA

In the midst of ICE raids and the deployment of the National Guard to Los Angeles, CHIRLA held the frontline for immigrant and refugee communities in California and across the country. As part of the CA Welcomes Coalition, CHIRLA convened legislative staff, community leaders, service providers, and advocates for Refugee Town Halls and hosted Advocacy Days with over 100 participants.



PILLAR THREE

Strengthening Our Federal Protection System



Pillar 3 focuses on advancing comprehensive federal priorities for refugee resettlement and asylum seekers while reshaping the national narrative around the contributions of refugees and immigrants in the United States. In 2025, we continued to advocate for stronger protections at the federal level, working alongside refugee and immigrant leaders, national partners, and policy experts to defend humanitarian pathways. Through coordinated national advocacy, strategic communications, and close collaboration with federal agencies and congressional offices, we sought to ensure that policies uphold dignity, due process, and the core values of welcome.

Through these efforts, Pillar 3 continues to unify and activate our national community:

- National Refugee Advocacy Days
- Together We Rise Campaign
- Refugee Matters
- National Webinars
- RCUSA Advocacy Days

NATIONAL REFUGEE ADVOCACY DAYS

Each summer, We Are All America trains and mobilizes grassroots refugee and immigrant leaders to become powerful advocates for their communities through our National Refugee Advocacy Days. **This year, more than 300 refugee and immigrant leaders, advocates, and allies across 31 states held virtual meetings with congressional offices** to advocate for the protection and strengthening of refugee resettlement, asylum, due process, and protections for TPS holders.

In addition to our preparatory training, we partnered with **Mehran Sorourian, Founder of Youth Speakers Labs** and member of our Refugee and Immigrant Leadership Table (RILT), to offer two additional Story Lounge sessions.

76
congressional meetings held

Over **300** leaders, advocates, and allies participated

31 states represented



[Read our 2025 Advocacy Days Impact Report](#)

Together We Rise

In response to the harmful Executive Orders and anti-immigrant policies announced by the Trump administration on Day One, We Are All America launched Together We Rise, a national movement building, advocacy, and narrative campaign. The program brings together immigrant rights, refugee resettlement, and broader social justice movements to build collective power, stand in solidarity with impacted communities, and push back against harmful policies and anti-immigrant rhetoric.

As a movement building initiative, Together We Rise centers grassroots leadership, strengthens cross movement alignment, and creates shared strategies for action rooted in dignity, justice, and belonging. **With more than 100 partner organizations**, the campaign generated sustained momentum through 10 coordinated peaks of action, offering national opportunities for storytelling, advocacy, and collective mobilization.



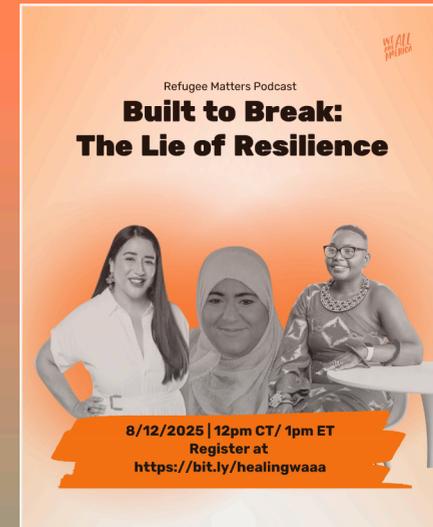
The Working and Loving Hands of Immigrant Mothers

[Watch the Video](#)



Refugee Matters

The Refugee Matters podcast series amplifies the voices and expertise of refugee and immigrant leaders within our movement. In 2025, we released three episodes in partnership with **Corazón Norte**, the **Russian-Speaking Communities Council**, the **Asian Community Development Council**, and the **Healing Trauma Institute**. These conversations explored critical topics including protecting mental health and cultivating emotional flexibility, as well as the nuanced relationships that immigrant and refugee communities have with U.S. citizenship. Through these partnerships, Refugee Matters deepens community understanding of lived experiences while building bridges to allied communities invested in our collective work.



Built to Break: The Lie of Resilience

8/12/2025 | 12pm CT / 1pm ET
Register at
<https://bit.ly/healingwaaa>

[Listen to the Podcast](#)

National Webinars

We partnered with **Refugee Council USA** and **Church World Service** to host quarterly National Webinars that provided immigrant and refugee communities with timely updates on federal priorities directly from policy experts. **With more than 4,600 participants engaged**, these webinars played a critical role in aligning state and local organizations with national initiatives and keeping our communities connected, informed, and united. For many grassroots groups, these webinars are the only reliable source to understand changing policies and respond to calls to action in real time.



RCUSA Advocacy Days

For the fourth year, We Are All America supported the coordination of RCUSA's National Advocacy Days, held in Washington D.C.. Our team played a key role in organizing the **Refugee Leadership Forum**, where refugee participants strengthened their leadership and advocacy skills through curated training, discussion, and peer learning. We also captured the stories and reflections of participants to integrate into our broader national narrative work.

To ensure refugee leaders had meaningful opportunities to build connections and expand their networks, we partnered with **Mobile Pathways** and **Human Rights First**, and the office of **Rep. Summer Lee** to host a special networking event for congressional staffers and refugee leaders. This gathering created a dedicated space for relationship-building, mentorship, and deeper engagement in federal advocacy.



2026: Our Leaders, Our Strength

As we prepare for the year ahead, we extend our deepest gratitude to our funders, partners, Advisory Committee, Refugee and Immigrant Leadership Table members, state organizers, ECBO Cohort, and every local partner who has stood with us. Your commitment has carried our movement through one of the most challenging periods for immigrant and refugee communities in recent memory.

This year demanded courage and collective resilience. Amid unprecedented policy rollbacks and targeted attacks on immigrant and refugee families, you helped ensure that directly impacted leaders remained supported, visible, and heard. Together, we trained thousands of immigrant and refugee leaders, strengthened organizing infrastructure across the country, and fortified the foundation of a movement that refuses to back down.

As we enter 2026, we do so with clarity and resolve. The political landscape will require vigilance, bold strategy, solidarity, and deep investment in community power. **With your continued partnership, we will expand leadership pipelines, strengthen state and local organizing capacity, defend legal pathways, and uplift the voices of directly impacted people who are shaping the future of this nation.**

Onward, with hope and strength, The WAAA Family



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