



## *School Law FYI*

# ***The New “Welcome Corps at Work” Program***

NICOLE S. SCHRAM | 09.30.24

In today’s competitive job market, many employers — including school districts — are struggling to fill open positions. [The Welcome Corps at Work program](#), run by the U.S. Department of State, offers a unique solution by introducing employers to a pool of talented refugees from around the world. Thanks to the dedicated teams at the [International Rescue Committee](#) and [Talent Beyond Boundaries](#), this initiative allows refugee families to resettle with dignity, addresses pressing U.S. labor shortages, and enriches workplaces and communities with diverse perspectives.

### **KEY BENEFITS OF THE WELCOME CORPS AT WORK PROGRAM**

Some of the positions that school districts are struggling to fill require specialized skills that are not easily found in the local job market. Welcome Corps at Work helps bridge this gap by connecting employers with skilled and experienced refugee workers. This approach helps refugees rebuild their lives while providing employers with access to a previously untapped talent pool.

Employers who participate in the program not only address their immediate staffing needs but also contribute to building a more dynamic and innovative workplace. The unique experiences and viewpoints that refugees bring can lead to new ideas and approaches, driving innovation and better decision-making.

**The Welcome Corps at Work program is available for free, with no fees to participating employers or refugee candidates.**

## HIRING PROCESS

The Welcome Corps at Work hiring process is easy for employers, but it can take more than a year to complete. Employers begin by reviewing resumes, conducting interviews, and offering employment, all facilitated by the program's support network. After a candidate is selected, they undergo a thorough background and security check required by the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP). After the refugee employee is admitted in the U.S., they are supported by a local sponsor group.

Employers interested in participating in the Welcome Corps at Work program can follow these steps:

1. **Contact the Program:** Send an email to the Welcome Corps at Work team: [Work@WelcomeCorps.org](mailto:Work@WelcomeCorps.org) to express your interest and learn more about the program.
2. **Discuss Hiring Needs:** Share details about your available positions and minimum education and experience requirements. The team will answer any questions and provide guidance on the hiring procedure and timeline.
3. **Interview Candidates:** The Welcome Corps team will review its database of resumes from *thousands* of refugees and send you a shortlist of qualified refugee candidates. You can then conduct remote interviews to assess their suitability for the roles.
4. **Offer Employment:** If you find a suitable candidate, extend a job offer. The refugee candidate will sign a contract if they accept the position.
5. **Candidate Navigates the Admissions Process:** The Welcome Corps team assists the candidate in navigating the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP), which includes thorough vetting and security screenings. This step can sometimes take more than 12 months to complete.
6. **Identify Sponsors:** Encourage your company or community members to form a sponsor group to support the refugee and their family during their initial months in the U.S. If you're not successful, the Welcome Corps team will find local community sponsors.
7. **Prepare for Arrival:** The Welcome Corps team will provide cultural awareness training to your company. If you formed a sponsor group, the team can provide resources to help your sponsor group find housing, fundraise, and identify local resources for the refugee family.

After the employee has arrived, the Welcome Corps at Work program offers continuing support, including language assistance and help with the legal and

logistical aspects of hiring refugees. These resources facilitate a smooth transition for both the employer and the new employee.

## ***Conclusion***

The Welcome Corps at Work program offers a win-win solution for employers and refugees. By providing access to a diverse and skilled talent pool, the program helps employers fill hard-to-fill positions while offering refugees the opportunity to rebuild their lives and contribute to their new communities. As more employers embrace this initiative, the potential for positive change and growth continues to expand. If you are interested in hiring an educator through The Welcome Corps at Work program, email [Work@WelcomeCorps.org](mailto:Work@WelcomeCorps.org) or please reach out to a member of Boardman Clark's [Immigration Law Practice Group](#).

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