



Refuge America



# 2023 Annual Report



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[www.refugeamerica.org](http://www.refugeamerica.org)

# A WORD FROM THE FOUNDER

Dear stakeholders,

I am pleased to present our annual report, covering April 2022 to December 2023, highlighting the progress achieved by Refuge America in supporting and empowering refugees, asylum seekers, and displaced individuals. As the Founder of Refuge America, I am honored to share our story with you.

My story is not unique, as countless others continue to grapple with similar hardships. Therefore, Refuge America remains steadfast in our commitment to promoting diversity, inclusion, and equity for all LGBTQ-displaced individuals in the United States. Our mission is to provide a platform for refugees, asylum seekers, and displaced LGBTQ individuals to thrive in American society, notwithstanding the numerous challenges they encounter.

We firmly believe that everyone deserves an opportunity to forge a purposeful and dignified life. To this end, we tirelessly strive to offer capacity-building opportunities, raise awareness, and garner support for the LGBTQI-displaced community.

Despite the progress made, we acknowledge that much work remains ahead. The integration process for refugees and asylum seekers in the United States necessitates review, and we must implement policies that foster diversity and inclusion. We must persist in our pursuit of a more just and equitable society, where everyone is afforded the opportunity to rise and no one is left behind.

Thank you for your unwavering support of Refuge America. We eagerly anticipate sharing further progress in the years to come.

**EDAFE OKPORO**  
FOUNDER



2023





## ABOUT US

Refuge America equips diverse stakeholders to end discrimination and accelerated understanding of LGBTQ Displaced people, and refugees. With a vision of "Strengthening America as a place of welcome for LGBTQ displaced people."

### Programs:

#### Community Engagement:

- We leverage media platforms to raise awareness about the specific issues and hardships encountered by LGBTQ refugees.

#### Capacity building:

- We extend invitations to organizations and communities to participate in training and capacity building programs.

#### advocacy:

- We advocate for the implementation of favorable policies that protect the rights and well-being of LGBTQ refugees.



“

*If you are scared and alone, don't worry. We have all been through things, and we will get through this together.”*

”

*Tiffany Munroe, Trans Justice Organizer..*



# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

2022 - 2023



**ANTHONY OLWENY**

**EMILY KULLMAN**

**CRAIG LEMLEY**

**EDAFE OKPORO**



**DOROTHY WETZEL**

2023 - 2024



**BRIAN MERLANO**

**DOMINIC RAMON-LUIZ**

**EDAFE OKPORO**

**DAN FRIEDMAN**

**DOROTHY WETZEL**

**TIM CECI**



**CRAIG LEMLEY**



# IMPACT REPORT 2022-2023

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# PUBLIC POLICY & COMMUNITY EDUCATION



At Refuge America, our mission is to empower and support LGBTQ-displaced people in rebuilding their lives in new communities in the United States. We strongly believe in the power of storytelling and human connection to bridge gaps and create inclusive communities. As an organization, we recognize the critical need for policy and capacity building to address the core issues faced by the LGBTQ community.

Refuge America equips diverse stakeholders to end discrimination and accelerate LGBTQ Refugee and displaced people acceptance.

Community Education.

We are using the data gathered from interaction with clients who have requested for help to create a guide for welcoming LGBTQ displaced people. Helping organizations understand how to create a welcoming space for displaced LGBTQ people and making them feel welcomed.



**NYU Law School Forum on Asylum, Border Politics, and NYC**

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# ADVOCATES



Refuge America

## CROSSING A BORDER DOES NOT ALWAYS END THE DISCRIMINATION LGBTIQ+ PEOPLE EXPERIENCE.



ANIERY ZAPATA



TIFFANY MUNROE



EDAFE OKPORO



SEEKING ASYLUM IS NOT A CRIME

RISE AND RESIST

RISEANDRESIST.ORG



SEEKING ASYLUM IS NOT A CRIME

RISE AND RESIST



PROTECT LGBTQ+ ASYLEES

# COMMUNITY



18K+

We created educational program for more than 18,240 people in 8 U.S. States. Through community enegagement events and capacity building programs.







# AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

Multimedia Awareness campaign: Using storytelling to create awareness on the struggles faced by LGBTQ displaced people in America.

5

Communication channels

1000+  
Subscribers

150K+  
Engagement

The collage features several key elements:

- Top Left:** A woman in a white dress and red cape walking in a parade.
- Top Right:** A group of people sitting in a music room, with a sign that says "his is Bronx Music".
- Middle Left:** A social media post from 'refugeamericahq' celebrating a friend from Bintang at pride in New York City.
- Middle Right:** A video thumbnail for a one-man show by Nigerian actor Gbenga Akinagbe, titled "He's Gay. We Will Kill Him: Nigerian-American Actor Performs One-Man Show...".
- Bottom Left:** A social media post from 'refugeamericahq' about anti-ICE advocates calling on state officials to end immigration detention facilities.
- Bottom Center:** A woman in a rainbow dress walking in a parade.
- Bottom Right:** A social media post from 'NewThis' featuring Edafe Okporo, founder of 'refugeamericahq', discussing the barriers faced by LGBTQIA+ asylum seekers.
- Bottom Center:** A video thumbnail for "World Refugee Day 2023: ..." featuring a man in a blue shirt.



## IMPACT REPORT

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A YEAR LIKE NO  
OTHER

### IMPACT SNAPSHOT

18,240

#### **Community Engagement**

Number of people  
trained through  
community event.

8

#### **States visited**

Chicago  
Idaho  
Washington D.C.  
Virginia  
Denver  
California  
New Jersey  
New York

150k

#### **Awareness Campaign**

NowThis Media  
Documented  
Youtube  
Instagram  
Twitter  
Facebook  
LinkedIn

# CHALLENGES

As a team working tirelessly to address LGBTQ challenges within the United States and reshape the landscape of LGBTQI refugee resettlement, we wanted to take a moment to reflect on the challenges we encountered during our efforts. Throughout this reporting year, we have faced numerous hurdles that have impacted the depth and reach of our work. We would like to highlight some of these challenges and acknowledge their significance:

## The Global Crisis

1/74

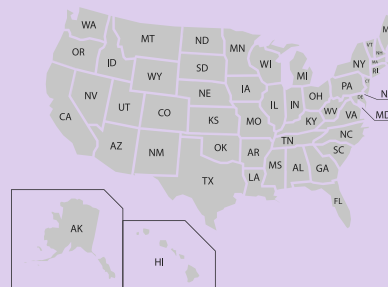


1 in 74 people on earth are currently displaced from their home.

2.3%



Self Identify as LGBTQ



Our focus solely on the United States, restricts our ability to capture the diverse experiences and challenges faced by LGBTQ individuals in other parts of the world.

1. **Intersectionality:** LGBTQ individuals who belong to multiple marginalized groups, such as LGBTQ immigrants or people of color, face unique challenges. Acknowledging and addressing the complexities of these intersecting identities in our report has been a significant undertaking. We recognize the importance of considering these dynamics to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the resettlement and integration experiences.
2. **Limited Resources:** As a small team, we have faced constraints in terms of time, personnel, and financial resources. These limitations have impacted the breadth and depth of our research, as well as the overall reach and impact of our report. Nevertheless, we remain committed to maximizing the effectiveness of our resources and continuously seeking opportunities for growth.

100%

*pendency on Third-Party Organizations: Refugee America service delivery model relies on the collaboration and support of organizations serving refugees. While this partnership has been instrumental, it has also introduced coordination challenges.*



# REFUGE 25 CAMPAIGN

Refuge America is launching the Refugee 25<sup>2</sup> Campaign, an awareness campaign designed to support LGBTQI refugees seeking asylum and refuge in the United States. With the changing landscape of refugee support and the introduction of welcome corps as a new sponsorship pathway, we aim to assist at least 625 LGBTQI individuals in finding safety, protection, and a sense of belonging by December 2025.



Empower LGBTQI Refugees



Thank you to all our donors  
and volunteers.



[www.refugeamerica.org](http://www.refugeamerica.org)  
[admin@refugeamerica.org](mailto:admin@refugeamerica.org)

# We couldn't have done it without your generous support.

## FOUNDATION SUPPORT

5-10K

\*THE LEON LEVY FOUNDATION

## INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT

\$2500 - \$5000

Craig Lemley

Fauzia Zaman-Malik

Elliot Page

\$500 - \$1000

Jody Ryan

Ira Gilbert

Bindia Malhotra

James McCoy

Ndudi Oparaeché

\* THE CLEVELAND FOUNDATION

\$50 - \$499

Olugbenga Akinwuntan

Beck Bailey

Peter Marchese

Amie Bishop

Marjorie Markus

Dorothy Wetzel

Charlotte Bennett Schoen

John Buehrens

Scott Langdoc

Sepideh Moafi

Brian Merlano

Linda Petros

Shimon Attie

Cat Yezbak

Carlene Jadusingh

Michael J Mallon

Michael Krochak

Bernadette Smith

Kathy Spillman

Ramzy Masri

Flora Sugarman

Robert Calderisi

Nicolas Boyon

John G

# NUMBERS

FUNDS  
RAISED **\$28,420**

PROGRAM  
EXPENSES **\$24,780.09**

ADMINISTRATION **\$2950.04**

EXCESS OF REVENUE  
OVER EXPEDITURE **\$689.87**

April 2022 - June 30, 2023.