



Will Texas Be Allowed To Refuse New Refugee Resettlement?

By [KIM JOHNSON](#) & [DALLAS WILLIAMS](#) · JAN 28, 2020

The Trump administration issued an executive order in September that required organizations that help resettle refugees in the U.S. to get permission from states and local governments to do so within their boundaries.

Ahead of the Jan. 21 deadline, Governor Greg Abbott informed the U.S. State Department that [Texas would opt out](#) of the federal refugee resettlement program for the 2020 fiscal year, making it the first state to do so. Abbott said Texas had already done its fair share for refugees and that resettlement organizations should instead focus their efforts on those already living here.

Soon after, a federal judge [temporarily blocked Trump's initial order](#) that had allowed states and local governments the option of refusing refugees, saying the policy had no rationale and was in conflict with the 1980 Refugee Act.

How does the federal refugee resettlement program work and who qualifies?
How many refugees have previously been allowed to resettle in Texas since the program was established?

How has the Trump administration defended this executive order and how did Gov. Abbott justify his decision for Texas to no longer participate? What happens next?

What is the potential impact of Texas' opting out, if the courts permit it? What implications could these actions have for refugee resettlement rules moving forward?

Guests:

- **Ruth Wasem, Ph.D.**, clinical professor of policy practice in the [Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs](#) at the University of Texas at Austin
- **Julián Aguilar**, immigration and border security reporter for the [Texas Tribune](#)

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**This interview was recorded on Monday, January 27.*