

### **Helpful Definitions: Refugee, Asylum Seeker, Migrant**

**Refugee:** A refugee is a person who has been forced to flee their homeland due to persecution because of their race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group (i.e.: members of the LGBTQ community). The persecution a refugee experiences may include harassment, threats, abduction or torture. A refugee is often afforded some sort of legal protection, either by their host country's government, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) or both. In the United States, refugees are hand-selected by the U.S. government and are screened in advance. They are subject to background checks and security screenings by multiple U.S. agencies. Only after everything is approved are they brought to the United States to reside permanently.

**Asylum Seeker:** An asylum seeker is a person who has fled persecution in their home country and is seeking safe haven in a different country, but has not yet received any legal recognition or status. In several countries, including the U.S., asylum seekers can be detained while waiting for their case to be heard. The recent Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP), otherwise known as the Remain in Mexico program, require individuals seeking asylum in the United States to wait out their cases in Mexico.

**Migrant:** A migrant is a person who chooses to move from their home for any variety of reasons, but not necessarily because of a direct threat of persecution or death. Migrant is an umbrella category that can include refugees and asylum seekers but can also include people moving to improve their lives by finding work or education, those seeking family reunification, and others.