In September 2019, the administration announced two drastic shifts for FY2020’s Presidential Determination (PD) for refugees: the admissions goal has been slashed to an all time low of 18,000 and the categories used to admit refugees have been fundamentally restructured. Now, instead of refugees being admitted based on their region of origin, they are to be admitted based on four priorities as determined by the administration:

- Refugees who faced religious persecution (5,000)
- Iraqis who had assisted US missions abroad (4,000)
- Refugees who were from, or were habitual residents of the "Northern Triangle" - El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras (1,500)
- All others (7,500)

In Q3, USRAP welcomed a total of 371 refugees including: 163 refugees who faced religious persecution, 4 Iraqi P-2s, 94 refugees from the Northern Triangle, and 110 refugees who did not meet one of the aforementioned categories. By this point in the fiscal year, 13,500 refugees should have been admitted in order to be on track to meet the full 18,000. The US has only resettled 2.25% of the allotted places for Iraqi P-2s, and 19.5% of the allotted places for those from the Northern Triangle. Even with the arrivals pace of those facing religious persecution and "others," the US is not on pace to welcome the full 18,000 refugees in FY2020. Data from WRAPSNET.

Resumption of refugee resettlement
In response to the spread of COVID-19, UNHCR and IOM temporarily suspended resettlement-related travel in March with limited exceptions for the most vulnerable protection needs. As governments have worked to respond to COVID-19, public health experts have regularly provided updated knowledge to prepare for resettlement to safely resume. UNHCR and IOM restarted in June, though the United States began only on July 30. We can – and should – safely resettle more refugees and reunite families - and do everything we can to meet the historic-low FY 2020 refugee admissions goal of 18,000.

Throughout the pandemic, already-settled refugees have been helping to keep all of our communities running, serving as essential workers in grocery stores, factories, hospitals, and more. Refugees are working on the frontlines and in important industries that keep us safe, including 175,000 working in healthcare and 175,000 in the food supply chain. They participate in mutual aid, sew masks, and deliver groceries.

Our communities are still prepared to welcome refugees, with community organizations and resettlement offices amending their programs to be in alignment with stringent public health guidance while ensuring that refugees will still receive the support they need to settle in safety. The communities with storied histories of welcoming refugees benefit doubly during the pandemic, refugees are vital to the US. For more information on the protocols and resources being provided to refugees and affiliates, visit coresourceexchange.org.