

CANOPY

NORTHWEST ARKANSAS

Breaking News:

Yesterday, a [memo](#) from U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) signaled a dramatic and unprecedented shift in refugee policy: refugees who have not yet adjusted their status to lawful permanent resident (“green card”) may now be subject to arrest and detention.

Refugees admitted to the United States go through years of the most thorough vetting in our immigration system, including repeated background checks, biometric screening, and in-person interviews across multiple federal agencies. To now treat these legally admitted individuals as if their status is uncertain, and to authorize detention if they have not yet received a green card, marks a serious break from decades of established practice.

At the same time, in November the federal government suspended green card processing for refugees from certain countries. That decision has already prevented some refugee groups from adjusting their status, through no fault of their own. Threatening detention while blocking access to permanent residency creates instability, confusion, and fear.

“We are learning about this policy the same way our clients are, through news reports,” said Joanna Krause, Executive Director of Canopy NWA. “There was no direct communication, no operational guidance, and no clarity about how or when this would affect people in our community. That uncertainty is destabilizing. The policy itself is alarming, and the way it has been rolled out only adds to the chaos and fear families are already carrying.”

This policy destabilizes families who have built their lives here and is sending shockwaves through communities that have welcomed refugees as neighbors, employees, students, and business owners.

At Canopy, we remain steadfast in our commitment to stand with refugee families in Northwest Arkansas. You are welcome here. You belong here. And we will continue to advocate for policies that reflect our nation’s values of due process, stability, and welcome.

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Joanna Krause, MPH
Executive Director, Canopy NWA