

# JEN SMYERS

(b)(6)

Seasoned expert in refugee resettlement, immigration policy, and congressional relations with in-depth experience growing and managing a team. Dedicated to positive policy and programmatic changes to improve the lives of refugees and immigrants. Proven track record of visionary leadership, effective collaboration, mission-driven strategy, proactive work ethic, and successful results.

## CAREER EXPERIENCE

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### **Voice for Refugee Action Fund**

Co-Founder and Interim Director, Policy & Advocacy 2019-Present

- Conceptualized the first national 501(c)4 organization to build political power in support of refugees
- Led outreach and partnership efforts to raise \$300,000, hire a Political Director, and stand up a c(4)organization
- Developed first ever scorecard ranking all U.S. Senators and Representatives on their commitment to refugees
- Created process for endorsing former refugees and pro-refugee candidates running in the 2020 election
- Oversaw training and compliance with legal and regulatory frameworks among all staff and activities

### **Church World Service, Immigration and Refugee Program**

Director, Policy and Advocacy 2017-Present

Associate Director, Immigration and Refugee Policy 2011-2016

Associate for Immigration and Refugee Policy 2006-2010

- Strategized with congressional staff, think tanks, and coalition partners to introduce, track, and enact legislation
- Spearheaded congressional relations to successfully increase bipartisan support for refugee resettlement
- Led and attended meetings with administration officials, including DPC, NSC, DHS, PRM, ORR, and OMB
- Prepared congressional testimony, resources for hearings and briefings, and Questions for the Record
- Wrote and mobilized support for congressional oversight letters to government agencies
- Engaged media outlets via interviews, press conferences, opinion editorials, events, and speaking engagements
- Raised and managed an annual budget of \$1.5 million including multiple grants
- Built and led a team of 15 policy, communications, and grassroots professionals, including remote staff
- Facilitated strategy and coordination of 34 offices and partners' outreach to local, state, and national officials
- Organized frequent conferences and events to demonstrate public support for refugees and immigrants

### **The Migration Policy Institute**

Research and Communications Assistant 2006

- Tracked legislation and researched migration, development and integration issues for policy proposals
- Coordinated promotional events for report releases and forums, updated data and edited web publications

### **The Genesis Group LLC**

Legislative Fellow 2004-2006

- Met with officials to secure funding for clients through congressional appropriations and government contracts
- Researched appropriations process, technological innovations, political climates and impacts of legislation

### **Border Action Network**

Public Relations and Grassroots Events Fellow 2004

- Compiled research on cultural, political and economic climates on the southern U.S. border
- Drafted successful grant requests and facilitated fundraisers for human rights oversight programs
- Coordinated affiliate and volunteer efforts, public relations events and meetings with local officials

## COALITION LEADERSHIP & COLLABORATIONS

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**Refugee Advocacy Lab:** Advisor and Strategic Partner 2019-Present

- Provided guidance, liaised with partners, and participated in Advisory Group on messaging research

**We Are All America:** Founding Partner and Advisor 2017-Present

- Guided framework, fundraising, partnership management, and the building of a grassroots infrastructure

**Refugee Congress:** Presenter and Advisor 2011-Present

- Created and facilitated trainings on congressional meetings, policy analysis, advocacy, and communications

**Refugee Council USA:** Advocacy Committee Chair 2008-2010 & 2018-2020

- Coordinated government relations strategies among partners to increase appropriations, procure emergency housing funding, secure buy-in from state and local officials, and mobilize bipartisan support for refugees

**The Linking Communities Project:** Founding Partner 2012-2016

- Developed seed-grant system to resource local refugee resettlement offices in community outreach efforts

**Interfaith Immigration Coalition:** Policy Chair 2011-2016

- Successfully built consensus, coordinated congressional outreach, and developed grassroots initiatives

**Reform Immigration for America:** Management Team Partner 2009-2012

- Represented refugee resettlement and faith-based constituencies in decision-making on immigration reform

## SPEAKER AND PANELIST

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[Berkley Center for Religion, Peace & World Affairs](#), [Center for Global Development](#), [Center for Global Policy](#), [Georgetown University](#), [Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees](#), [The Wilson Center](#), [University of Denver](#)

## MEDIA APPEARANCES

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[Fox News](#), [Fox Business](#), [MSNBC](#), [NPR](#), [PRI The World](#), [Christian Broadcasting Network](#), [Kojo Nnamdi Show](#), [Virginia NPR](#)

## PUBLISHED

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[What You Don't Know About Migrant Children May Kill Them](#), [Roll Call](#)  
[Welcome, New Congress! Here's 5 Things You Need to Know About Refugees](#), [The Hill](#)  
[The Faith Community's Role in Refugee Resettlement in the United States](#), [Oxford Journal of Refugee Studies](#)  
[Immigration & Security: Public Policy and Christian Ethics](#), [The Review of Faith and International Affairs](#)  
[Christians Must Embrace Responsibility to Refugees](#), [The Christian Citizen](#)

## QUOTED IN

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[Associated Press](#), [Austin Statesman](#), [Center for American Progress](#), [Christian Century](#), [Christian Post](#), [CNN](#), [Fort Worth Star Telegram](#), [Lancaster Online](#), [LA Times](#), [National Catholic Reporter](#), [New York Times](#), [Politico](#), [Religion News Service](#), [Reuters](#), [Salt Lake Tribune](#), [The Guardian](#), [The New Yorker](#), [Washington Post](#), [Washington Times](#)

## ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE

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Board of Directors, **Literacy Volunteers Winchester Area** 2015-2017

Board of Directors, **National Justice for Our Neighbors: Methodist Immigration Legal Services** 2011-2016

Instructor, U.S. Immigration Policy in the Modern Era Certificate Course, **Nyack College** 2010

## EDUCATION

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**American University**, Washington, DC

Master of Public Policy, Concentration in International Development and Migration 2008

B.A. Law and Society, B.A. Public Communication 2006