



**ECUMENICAL
MINISTRIES**
— OF OREGON —

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Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon stands with Church World Service in lawsuit challenging executive order suspending U.S. refugee resettlement program

Feb. 24, 2025 (Portland, Ore.) – As a long-time affiliate of Church World Service (CWS), Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon (EMO) stands with CWS as they navigate a lawsuit filed by the International Refugee Assistance Project (IRAP) on behalf of CWS, HIAS and Lutheran Community Services Northwest (LCSNW). A preliminary injunction hearing will be held tomorrow in U.S. District Court-Western District of Washington.

The lawsuit is in response to Executive Order 14013 issued on Jan. 24, 2025, which suspended the U.S. Refugee Resettlement Program (USRAP), limiting new arrivals and withholding congressionally appropriated funds for refugee service providers. “This lawsuit speaks to the values of moral leadership that the United States exemplifies in how we ‘welcome the stranger,’” said Frank So, EMO Executive Director. “When we welcome and support new Oregonians who have faced unimaginable challenges in their journey to Oregon—including those who served with our armed forces in Afghanistan or are fleeing war in Ukraine—we make our communities better.”

Withholding funds is creating challenges for USRAP programs across the country that provide services for recent refugee arrivals. EMO’s resettlement program, Sponsors Organized to Assist Refugees (SOAR), has resettled refugees in Oregon for nearly 45 years and continues to provide services for recent arrivals. Refugee resettlement programs like SOAR support refugees in their first 90 days in the United States, setting them up for success in their new home. Funds have not been released to resettlement programs for services delivered before the executive order was put in place, leaving programs scrambling to support new arrivals, pay staff, and otherwise work to welcome and support new arrivals.

“We will stand with our refugee and immigrant siblings who have always made the United States prosperous in so many ways,” said Frank So.

Remote access for the hearing can be accessed via the IRAP website (refugeerights.org), and a post-hearing press conference and rally will be livestreamed. We encourage concerned individuals to watch and follow this lawsuit as it progresses through the courts.

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon is a statewide association of faith partners working together to improve the lives of Oregonians through direct service programs, education and dialogue, creation justice, and public policy advocacy.

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