

Quick-Start Guide to Talking about Refugee Resettlement

Framing is the process of making choices about what to say—and what to leave unsaid. Here's a quick tour of themes to avoid and alternatives to advance.

Instead of:	Try:
Stories that describe individuals' discrete experiences	Stories that answer people's primary questions: Why does this matter to me? How does it work? Who is responsible?
Appealing to sympathy	Appealing to Human Dignity : "This is about treating all people with respect"
Focusing on how refugees will benefit	Appealing to Shared Prosperity : "We all benefit from successful refugee resettlement"
Leaving mechanisms, structures, and processes out of the picture	Use the Sail metaphor to explain: Like wind in our sails, refugees contribute energy and labor that push Minnesota forward.
Ladder, climbing, or safety net metaphors	The Constructing Well-being metaphor: Refugee resettlement programs help to build people's well-being
Rationalizing refugees' presence with demographic data about the workforce crisis brought on by an aging population	Fostering optimism about the future by explaining how strong refugee resettlement programs boost Minnesota's vitality
Referring abstractly to solutions without offering details	Concrete examples that illustrate how resettlement programs work effectively