

THREE ADVOCACY PRIORITIES IN 2025

Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) accompanies, serves, and advocates with refugees and other forcibly displaced persons throughout the world, with the goal of helping them to “heal, learn, and determine their own future.” JRS/USA’s advocacy work has focused on three priorities in 2025.

1

First, it has offered a vision of refugees and migrants, rooted in its Jesuit identity and Catholic social teaching at a time of great polarization over refugee protection and immigration.

To that end, JRS/USA organized a successful conference on March 24, featuring Cardinal Robert McElroy of the Archdiocese of Washington, DC and Cardinal Fabio Baggio of the Vatican’s Dicastery for Integral Human Development, which 250 persons attended. In addition, C-Span broadcasted the event live and it received more than 1,300 views on YouTube. Cardinal McElroy’s **presentation** can be found on the JRS-USA website. CMS also co-sponsored conferences in 2025 with the Catholic University of America (CUA), the US Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), and the Center for Migration Studies of New York.



Cardinal McElroy speaking at March 24 Conference.

 250 Attendees
 1,300 Views

In addition, JRS/USA produced a special issue of the Journal on Migration and Human Security on an area of Catholic social teaching, which past popes have called the “freedom” or “right” to stay or not to have “to emigrate.” This teaching speaks to the need to create conditions that allow human beings to thrive in their own communities or, if impossible, to move to a better situation. On July 8, JRS/USA also offered a “theology on tap” event on Catholic social teaching at St. Peter’s on the Hill in Washington, DC, meant to educate Hill staffers.

2

Second, JRS/USA has sought to expand its network of “JRS/USA advocates.” It has done so by articulating policies, which offer an alternative to the Administration’s disastrous mass deportation, anti-family and anti-refugee policies.

Its weekly calls to action – 19 of them through late June – have addressed roughly 50 policy issues. Its Action Alerts – supported by a strong communication effort – have generated a remarkable increase in new “JRS advocates” (users taking a first-time action through JRS/USA). During the first six months of 2025, compared to the same period in 2024, JRS/USA experienced:



Advocacy Day 2025



*increase
in new
advocates*



*increase in advocacy actions,
accounting for roughly **21,000**
interventions with elected officials*

JRS/USA also organized an “advocacy day” in which 313 persons participated in nearly 100 meetings with Congressional offices. JRS/USA also joined in the advocacy days of the USCCB and the Refugee Council USA. In addition, it appealed to key individual Members and select groups of Members of Congress, including those educated by Jesuit colleges and universities. JRS also participated in webinars and other processes organized by USCCB and CUA.

3

Third, partnerships represent a centerpiece of JRS/USA’s advocacy work. To that end, the agency has worked steadily to broaden and deepen its collaborations with Jesuit universities, other Catholic institutions, and non-traditional partners. **We invite you to join our advocacy network!**

Over the long-term, it hopes to build – through these partnerships – more political influence and a stronger evidence-base for its advocacy and programs. The latter might include timely human rights reporting, better data, documentation of successful programs, and person-centered research on the needs and ideas of refugees. JRS/USA would particularly benefit from greater engagement with Jesuit universities in meeting these needs.



Rugby Match at Gonzaga College High School