

September 13, 2024

Senator Patty Murray  
Senate Committee on Appropriations,  
Chair  
154 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Senator Susan Collins  
Senate Committee on Appropriations,  
Ranking Member  
413 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Representative Tom Cole  
House Committee on Appropriations,  
Chairman  
2207 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Representative Rosa DeLauro  
House Committee on Appropriations,  
Ranking Member  
2413 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chair Murray, Chairman Cole, Ranking Member Collins, and Ranking Member DeLauro,

We write requesting your attention and action on an urgent matter facing Ukrainians arriving in the United States and the Americans who support them. On any continuing Resolution (CR) for Fiscal Year 2025, we urge Congress to authorize eligibility for benefits to newly arriving Ukrainians. In order to protect Ukrainians, Congress needs to pass the administration's "Benefits Extension for Ukrainian Arrivals" anomaly request, or another proposal that extends the authorities originally provided in the Additional Ukraine Supplemental Appropriations Act (AUSAA) to authorize access to public benefits for Ukrainians arriving in FY 2025. Without immediate<sup>1</sup> Congressional action, thousands of arriving Ukrainian families could be cut off from essential support and assistance in the United States, to the instant detriment of Ukrainian newcomers escaping the war as well as negative impacts on local communities, state agencies, and nonprofit volunteer, diaspora, and faith-based organizations. This is an incredibly important issue for our network, as 51 affiliates in 26 states are serving or have served Ukrainians displaced by the war.

While some Ukrainians have arrived in the United States as refugees, most war-displaced Ukrainians have entered through Uniting for Ukraine (U4U), a parole program established in April 2022 by the Department of Homeland Security. Unlike refugees, parolees do not have access to federal benefits or services through the Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) without explicit Congressional approval.<sup>2</sup>

Congress has graciously authorized federal support to Ukrainians displaced by the war in Ukraine on multiple occasions, most notably in May 2022 through the AUSAA and in April 2024 through the Ukraine

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<sup>1</sup> Future Congressional action to address a lapse in authorization will not immediately provide relief.

Organizations will need to wait for state authorities to receive, review, and follow Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) guidance to begin enrollments—as they needed to after the April 2024 supplemental.

<sup>2</sup> Congress can and has specifically authorized certain parole populations to access public benefits as refugees. For example, Congress authorized Afghans arriving through parole to receive access to refugee benefits after the August 2021 Taliban takeover, U.S. withdrawal, and non-combatant evacuation operation. These authorizations are an explicit recognition that populations in need of protection in the United States due to conditions in their home countries need access to integration support once they arrive.

Security Supplemental Appropriations Act. Federal benefits like SNAP and TANF have been instrumental in ensuring Ukrainians can successfully integrate and settle into their host communities. Additionally, through ORR programming, Ukrainians can access English classes, intensive case management, job training, and legal services. Currently, through section 301 of the Ukraine Security Supplemental Appropriations Act, Ukrainians paroled on or before September 30, 2024, have access to these benefits. Without additional action by Congress, Ukrainians arriving after that date will be ineligible.

As service providers, we know firsthand how harmful a lapse in this authorization language can be to traumatized Ukrainians and the American communities that welcome and integrate them: the September 2023 CR did not include an extension of these authorities in the AUSAA. For roughly seven months, from October 2023 to the April 2024 passage of the supplemental, arriving Ukrainians could not access these basic supports. Local nonprofits across the country had to [turn away](#) Ukrainians who sought to enroll in services, since they were not authorized for ORR-funded support. GR program staff reported families crowding into small apartments and in need of food, clothing, and hygiene items: “Most people only had what they could carry with them,” said Vice President for Resettlement and Integration Megan Bracy. “We saw children with medical needs like epilepsy go without care [and] pregnant women without care.” Another lapse in access to services will cause anxiety and confusion in the Ukrainian diaspora community—and could take months to resolve on the ground. Arriving Ukrainians—mostly women and children amid Ukraine’s conscription policies—will struggle to attain financial security in their new communities. U.S. citizen sponsors of arriving Ukrainians will be asked to shoulder responsibilities that only professional case managers are equipped to fully take on. State agencies and local nonprofits will bear the responsibility of communicating the ineligibility for thousands of new arrivals and will have to try to find work arounds to prevent instability for vulnerable new arrivals.

Due to Russia’s continued aggression, Ukrainians will continue to arrive in the United States in the coming months seeking refuge. In late August, Ukrainian cities endured some of the worst missile and drone attacks of the entire war, furthering damaging its energy infrastructure. Landmines continue to threaten civilian populations, particularly in the eastern part of the country. “Nowhere in Ukraine is really safe anymore,” said one humanitarian agency leader visiting Washington, D.C. this month.<sup>3</sup>

We urge Congress to once again stand with newly arriving Ukrainians—as it did in a bipartisan manner in May 2022 and in April 2024. Congress must pass the administration’s “Benefits Extension for Ukrainian Arrivals” anomaly request, or another proposal that extends the authorities originally provided in the AUSAA to authorize access to public benefits for Ukrainians arriving in FY 2025.

Sincerely,



Krish O’Mara Vignarajah  
President and CEO  
Global Refuge

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<sup>3</sup> Mercy Corps Ukraine Country Director Vicki Aken in September 10, 2024 presentation to Interaction members