

December 2, 2024

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer
Hart Senate Office Building, 322
Washington, DC 20510

House Speaker Mike Johnson
568 Cannon House Office Building
Washington DC 20515-1804,

Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell
Russell Senate Office Building, 317
2433 Washington, DC 20510

House Minority Leader Hakeem Jefferies
Rayburn House Office Building,
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senate Majority Leader Schumer, House Speaker Johnson, Senate Minority Leader McConnell, and House Minority Leader Jefferies:

We write urging you to stand with newcomers and local communities that support them by supporting a \$1.56 billion request for the Refugee and Entrant Assistance (REA) account within the Labor and Health and Human Services (LHHS) on the upcoming Continuing Resolution (CR) package that will fund the government into the 2025 calendar year. Current funding levels are low, stemming in part from continuing resolutions, and would have negative impacts on the local communities and states that welcome refugees. Benefits from these programs stay in local communities and help populations who are already present become legally employed and contributing to local economies.

Refugee Support Services (RSS), within the REA account, supports states, local communities, faith-based organizations, and nonprofits that partner with the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) to provide job training and placement, English classes, and case management to refugees, and human trafficking survivors. ORR services are cost-effective and aim to quickly achieve self-sufficiency and integration into American communities. Employment programming helps refugees working legally, fill critical gaps in our labor force. According to a study conducted by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) over a 15-year period, refugees had a positive net fiscal impact on the American economy of \$123.8 billion dollars, which included approximately \$92.3 billion to state and local governments.

As the nation's largest faith-based nonprofit serving immigrant communities, Global Refuge and our partners work directly with local communities engaged in the work of welcome. We encourage your offices to draw on the expertise of our direct service and our national nonprofit network of over 75 partners operating in 50 states who work with newcomer communities fleeing violence and persecution around the world.

With the support of ORR funding, eligible populations are connected to case managers who help them secure the documents they need to successfully work and resettle in the United States. Caseworkers play a key role in connecting clients to essential resources. For example, in Minnesota, our case managers have successfully taught clients how to submit their own paystubs to the county, read mail, and pay rent online. Our office in Colorado Springs started a new partnership with a local school that provides on-site childcare, supporting improved long-term employment outcomes for all cases.

Global Refuge recently surveyed our partners across the country regarding a reduction in RSS funding levels which would impact the most vulnerable of refugees and other populations they serve. Our partner agencies responded that RSS fund reduction or elimination would impact thousands of clients receiving essential services including employment assistance, English classes, legal services, and case

management. RSS funds reduction would create challenges to client early self-sufficiency, potentially resulting in housing insecurity, and reliance on limited local resources. The loss of access to language acquisition and services for job placement would create barriers for their contribution to the federal and local economies. U.S. employers including national and local companies who partner with Global Refuge and other providers would lose a primary source of recruitment and support services for an employee talent pool of refugees, who are legally authorized to work and are on the pathway to becoming U.S. citizens. These companies have come to rely upon the support of RSS providers. This critical programming provides a pathway for refugees to become contributing members of their communities, by removing life-saving barriers to self-sufficiency.

We urge you to support an ask of \$1.56 billion in REA funding to ensure continued support to refugees and the local communities that welcome them.

Thank you.

Sincerely,



Krish O'Mara Vignarajah
Global Refuge CEO and President