

UNITING FOR UKRAINE

WELCOME CIRCLES

In response to the war in Ukraine, the US Government has created the Uniting for Ukraine (U4U) program. This pathway allows individual US residents to support displaced Ukrainians to come to the US and receive two years of humanitarian parole, which means they can live and work in the US for up to two years. St. Joseph and Holy Spirit Parishes are looking to sponsor a Ukrainian family, and needs a core group of individuals to make this happen. We already have four volunteers ready to dedicate efforts, personal skills, and resources to help with the preliminary steps needed for the application process. We are looking for six more members to join our core group, can you help?

UKRAINIANS NEED YOUR HELP!

USCCB's Department of Migration and Refugee Services is launching a new initiative to support Ukrainians -- **Welcome Circles**.

Welcome Circles are groups of adults who agree to financially support Ukrainians through the U4U program and to help them navigate their new community in the US.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT:

www.stjosephavonlake.org/welcomecircles

<https://www.uscis.gov/ukraine>

<https://ukraine.welcome.us>

<https://www.sponsorcircles.org/program>

READY TO TAKE THE NEXT STEP?

Donna Dugan at ddcorita@aol.com or 440-785-8051

scan to learn more,
and for updates on
the status of our parish
welcome circle!



HOUSING

Arrange housing for Ukrainian newcomers, provide furniture and essential items.



PUBLIC BENEFITS

Assist newcomers in applying for public benefits like SNAP, TANF and Medicaid.



HEALTHCARE

Make connections to access necessary healthcare.



EMPLOYMENT

Help adults find employment in their new community.



SCHOOL ENROLLMENT

Enroll children in school, enroll interested adults in English classes



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WELCOME CIRCLE INFORMATION

Introduction

As the war continues in their country, millions of Ukrainians have been forced to flee their homes to escape the violence. With the end of the fighting not yet in sight, the United States government has responded by creating Uniting for Ukraine (U4U), a unique opportunity for those residing in the US to help provide a pathway for Ukrainians to find safety in the United States.

The U4U program allows for individuals in the US to financially sponsor Ukrainians to come to the US and temporarily reside here. Ukrainians entering under this program will receive two years of humanitarian parole, allowing them to live and work in the US for this period of time. Supporters agree to financially provide for these Ukrainians, as well as assist them with finding housing, accessing medical care, and navigating public systems.

To apply, supporters must know Ukrainian beneficiaries **or** be matched up with Ukrainians through an online system in order to list the beneficiaries on the application. Supporters submit financial forms to the US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) for vetting and USCIS conducts background checks on the supporters and beneficiaries. Then, if everything is approved, Ukrainians are provided with authorization to enter the US.

Given the great need for support for Ukrainians at this time and the nature of the U4U program, USCCB's Migration and Refugee Services (MRS) is issuing an appeal to parishes and other organizations to consider serving as Welcome Circles for Ukrainian families. Welcome Circles will either financially sponsor a family through the U4U program and provide community support for the family's needs after arrival or they will assist with Ukrainian parolees who have already arrived through the U4U program and are in need of additional assistance. Circles would be supported nationally by MRS and regionally by staff within the USCCB network. But parishes and organizations will work independently of the refugee resettlement program operating across many cities.

U4U is a chance for organizations to put a desire to help Ukrainians into action. Our organization will lead through steps and considerations of the U4U program to help empower us to welcome Ukrainian parolees to our community.



**Migration and
Refugee Services**

Renewing Hope. Seeking Justice.

UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS

Tips for forming a Welcome Circle

- Have people with a variety of backgrounds in your Circle, as the family will benefit from your diverse expertise.
- Be sure that at least some of the members of your Circle have daytime availability to take the family to appointments.
- Tap into any cross-cultural experiences your members may have, as these may be useful in patiently approaching any cultural differences that arise with the family.
- Remember that you will be working with a vulnerable population. Be sure your Circle members are committed to confidentiality and healthy boundaries.



What is a Welcome Circle?

Welcome Circles are groups of volunteers committed to helping support Ukrainian parolees who have come through the U4U program. Unlike refugees who come through the US refugee resettlement program, Ukrainian parolees are not assigned to local resettlement offices for assistance. This means that your Circle is meeting the immediate needs of the family on your own. Without your help, these families would have a more challenging time making their home in the US.

How many people should be part of the Circle?

Your Welcome Circle should be made up of 5-10 people but can include a few more if you have additional dedicated volunteers willing to join. One or more should be willing to complete the USCIS process and serve as the financial supporter(s) for the Ukrainian parolees, if your group is wanting to help Ukrainians who do not otherwise have contacts in the US to sponsor their U4U application.

Who can be part of the Circle?

Anyone over 18 is welcome, so long as they complete a background check.

How long is the time commitment?

The humanitarian parole the Ukrainians will be receiving is for two years, so Circle members should expect to be involved in helping the family for this amount of time. The needs of the family will be greatest in their first few months to a year, but there may be some continued needs through the family's second year.

Should the Circle have a leader?

Yes, and this is exactly who are are looking for right now! Welcome Circles should have one designated leader who agrees to be the main point of contact for USCCB and regional coordinators. If there is a need to communicate something to the Circle, this person would be the one contacted and responsible for sharing information with the rest of the Circle.