

What to Know: Culturally Appropriate Community Responses

CARRE has recently changed the Crisis Spotlight section of the quarterly newsletter to highlight emerging issues that may be of interest to service providers, as access to services and resources may vary among communities in the U.S.

U.S. Government Announces “Welcome Corps”

There are exciting new ways for U.S. communities to meaningfully welcome and resettle refugees. In January 2023, the Biden administration announced a goal of 10,000 Americans sponsoring 5,000 refugees this year via a private sponsorship program named [Welcome Corps](#). The U.S. Department of State has said, “Welcome Corps will build on Americans’ generosity of spirit by creating a durable program for Americans in communities across the country to privately sponsor refugees from around the world.” The State Department calls the Welcome Corps the “boldest innovation in refugee resettlement in four decades.”

This innovative program allows groups of at least five individuals to band together in a Private Sponsors Group (PSG). PSGs must make a 90-day commitment, submit a welcome plan, pass a background check, and raise or donate \$2,375 for every refugee sponsored. Private sponsors groups must complete early resettlement services in partnership with the family they sponsor. Some of these services include securing and preparing initial housing, greeting refugee newcomers at the airport, enrolling children in school, and helping adults to find employment.

Prospective sponsors are invited to ask questions and inquire about opportunities by contacting <https://welcomecorps.org/> to learn more.

Expanded Use of Humanitarian Parole

Recently, the US government announced expanded use of humanitarian parole for Cubans, Haitian, Nicaraguans and Venezuelans (see [here](#)), continuing a dramatic increase in the use of humanitarian parole as demonstrated by its use with Afghans who experienced rapid evacuation and relocation under Operation Allies Welcome and Ukrainians under [Uniting for Ukraine](#). Humanitarian parole is granted to a foreign national who is otherwise inadmissible to the US allowing them to enter the U.S. for urgent humanitarian reasons or significant public benefit. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has the exclusive authority to grant parole through one of its component agencies: US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), Customs and Border Protection (CBP), or Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)

[What’s important for providers to know?](#)

- Humanitarian parole can be granted for anywhere from a few weeks to one or more years. Documentation provided to parolees varies depending on which agency (USCIS, CBP or ICE) has granted parole, and under what circumstances. Individuals who have been granted humanitarian parole are normally not eligible for federal benefits, however under special legislation passed by Congress, certain categories of parolees such as Afghans, Ukrainians, Haitians and Cubans, may be able to receive benefits to the same extent as refugees.
- The increased use of humanitarian parole, and the selective eligibility of parolees for public benefits has caught many service providers unaware. They may be unfamiliar with the documentation provided to parolees, and the specific benefits that certain categories of parolees may be eligible to receive under different laws passed by Congress. This can lead to confusion and inappropriate denial of benefits, increasing frustration of parolees and their own uncertainty about benefit eligibility.
- Humanitarian parole does not offer a path to legal permanent residence or citizenship. For those who wish to remain in the U.S., this can contribute to great uncertainty and fear about the future.
- You can reference [this](#) link here to understand the eligibility for employment authorization and ORR-funded benefits for certain immigrant categories.

Cubans and Haitians

Due to deteriorating conditions in Cuba and Haiti, the number of individuals from Cuba and Haiti who were encountered by US Customs and Border Protection (CBP) at the US-Mexico border has increased significantly¹. The number of reported encounters with Cuban nationals nearly tripled from 14,015 in FY20 to 39,308 in FY21, which in turn increased nearly six-fold in FY22 to 224,607. For individuals from Haiti, there was a more than ten-fold increase in encounters with CBP from FY20 (5,291) to FY21 (48,727) and FY 22 (56,596) with the increase between FY21 and FY 22 more than all encounters in FY 20.

What's important for providers to know?

- Cubans and Haitians recently arrived to the U.S. will be in different immigration legal circumstances depending on whether they have been admitted or paroled in to the US, placed into removal proceedings, applied for asylum, or issued a final order of removal, for instance. In addition, individuals may or may not be able to apply for work authorization and may or may not qualify as "Cuban/Haitian Entrants" for the purpose of receiving public benefits, depending on their immigration status and circumstances. If clients or service providers need help understanding their

¹ CBP Encounters Definition: Beginning in March FY20, OFO Encounters statistics include both Title 8 Inadmissibles and Title 42 Expulsions. Inadmissibles refers to individuals encountered at ports of entry who are seeking lawful admission into the United States but are determined to be inadmissible, individuals presenting themselves to seek humanitarian protection under our laws, and individuals who withdraw an application for admission and return to their countries of origin within a short timeframe.

immigration legal status and options, they can reach out to a local resettlement agency for support. Resettlement agencies often have immigration attorneys or DOJ-accredited legal representatives on staff who can provide individual legal consultations. A list of resettlement agencies can be found [here](#).

- The Cuban population is experiencing increasing difficulty in meeting basic needs due to the COVID-19 pandemic and sanctions. This, along with a continued campaign of repression against dissidents (see [here](#)), is causing a large number of people to seek safety and opportunity in the U.S.
- Nearly five million people in Haiti are facing acute hunger needs, there is a current cholera outbreak, and average citizens fear unprecedented targeting and violence from gangs (see [here](#)). This unprecedented gang violence and political instability in Haiti is causing widespread terror and deprivation across the island (see [here](#)), which is causing people to flee.
- Many Cuban and Haitians have experienced recent traumatic events, as well as multiple generations of trauma that can be traced all the way back to Colonialism and slavery. These traumatic events may be combined with significant uncertainty about permanency in the U.S. adding a layer of profound stress. Most Cuban and Haitians will also have significant need across a wide variety of areas beyond mental health, including housing, legal, employment, medical, and more. Service providers should seek to connect them to a comprehensive case management, which might be available through a local resettlement agency or a mutual aid society.

Marking the second year of the Ukraine invasion

On February 24, 2022, Russia invaded Ukraine marking a massive escalation in the Russo-Ukrainian War, which began in 2014. As of January 23, 2023, there have been over 7,000 civilian deaths with close to 500 of them children (see [here](#)). There has also been extensive bombing of civilian areas and infrastructure, as well as torture, rape, and widespread violence (see [here](#)).

Many in the U.S. Ukrainian community, longstanding and recently arrived, are understandably distressed by the prevalence of violence and terror in Ukraine. They may have friends and family members injured or killed or worry about loved ones who remain in danger. Some may feel a sense of guilt for being safe while others suffer or worry that they are not doing enough to assist their community. The events in Ukraine may also re-ignite painful personal or family memories of past experiences of repression and violence under the Soviet Union.

The Cultural Orientation and Resource Exchange (CORE) developed this important [Ukrainian Backgrounder](#) to provide historical, political, and cultural information to increase service provider's general understanding of Ukrainians who are arriving in the U.S. Service providers may also find the following resources helpful when supporting Ukrainian clients:

- Coping After Coming to a New Country – [English](#) / [Ukrainian](#)

- Helping Children Cope After Coming to a new country – [English](#) / [Ukrainian](#)
- [Age Related Reactions to a Traumatic Event](#) (multiple languages available at link)
- After a Crisis: Helping Young Children Heal: [English](#) / [Ukrainian](#)
- Talking to Children About War: [English](#) / [Ukrainian](#)
- Parent Tips for Helping Adolescents after Disasters – [English](#) / [Ukrainian](#)
- Psychological First Aid Tips for Adults – [English](#) / [Ukrainian](#)

IRC Watchlist

Each year the International Rescue Committee (IRC) produces a global [watchlist](#) of humanitarian crises expected to significantly worsen over the course of the coming year. The Watchlist draws on 66 quantitative and qualitative measures, including insights from the IRC's 30,000 staff and volunteers in over 40 countries globally. The IRC's Watchlist serves as a warning to policymakers, government leaders, and concerned citizens around the world about the impact of humanitarian neglect, the costs of diplomatic inertia, and the danger of failing to prepare for crises on the horizon.