

Presidential Determination

The annual Presidential Determination on Refugee Admissions is set after input from communities, resettlement agencies, and consultation with Congress and is generally issued at the end of the fiscal year for the upcoming year. The Fiscal Year 2024 [Presidential Determination on Refugee Admissions](#) was signed on September 29, 2023, setting a target of 125,000 refugee admissions into the United States. The 125,000 target for admissions represents **less than half of one percent** of the world’s refugees, or those forcibly displaced who have crossed a border. While the U.S. has set an ambitious target for refugee admissions, it is also important to note that low- or middle-income countries host three-fourths of the world’s refugees (76%).¹ In FY24, the U.S. expects to resettle the following numbers of people from the below regions:

Africa	30,000-50,000
East Asia	10,000-20,000
Europe and Central Asia	2,000-3,000
Latin America/Caribbean	35,000-50,000
Near East/South Asia	30,000-45,000

The U.S. expects to mirror FY23 resettlement trends where the larger numbers expected are refugees from the Democratic Republic of Congo, Syria, and Afghanistan. President Biden’s Administration has identified the resettlement of LGBTQI+ individuals, human rights activists, Rohingya refugees, and those persecuted for religious beliefs to be a priority for resettlement.

Resettlement Impact

The increased number and diversity of new arrivals and the increased variety of humanitarian pathways can make it more difficult for service providers to know the best ways to serve and support newly arriving children and families. Here are five things that you can do:

1. **Increase Your Knowledge** – Elevate your understanding of new arrival groups by reading [Backgrounders](#) prepared by the Cultural Orientation Resource Exchange. These Backgrounders give readers a brief historical overview, country conditions, cultural considerations, language, and caseload composition information.
2. **Mainstream Mental Health Support** – Newly arrived refugees need to learn English, get a job, and learn to navigate their new environment very quickly as the goal of the U.S. government is rapid self-sufficiency. In the first months and even years of resettlement, this can precede other considerations like mental health concerns. Consider integrating psychoeducation and skills building with case management to support stabilization while providing mental health education and promotion.

¹ 1. <https://reliefweb.int/report/united-states-america/irc-welcomes-fy24-refugee-admissions-target-and-urges-continued-innovations>

3. **Coordinate Services** – [Resettlement agencies](#) are often a central touchstone for new arrivals in the first few months or years after arrival. If a client is connected to a resettlement agency, seek their permission to coordinate services with their resettlement agency for collective impact.
4. **Consider Barriers** – People starting over in the new U.S. often do not speak English, nor have reliable transportation, social capital, or an understanding of U.S. systems. This can make it incredibly difficult to access and engage in services. When working with new arrivals, at a minimum you will need to ensure language access through professional interpretation services, and you may also have to provide transportation and navigation support such as providing-bus tickets or vouchers.
5. **Be Curious** – While much may be written about a culture, conflict, religion, or ethnic groups, that still does not tell you about that individual or family. Be curious about their unique and collective needs, priorities and worldview while guarding against assumptions and internal biases.

Additional Considerations: Humanitarian Parole Eligibility Changes

As of October 1, 2023, Ukrainian and Afghan Humanitarian Parolees entering the U.S. are not eligible for federal benefits, including Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) benefits, with a few [limited exceptions](#). Afghan and Ukrainian Humanitarian Parolees will still be eligible to work in the U.S. but those who arrive after 9/30/2023 are not considered work authorized incident to parole so they will need to apply for and receive work authorization before they are legally allowed to work. This change in eligibility is because the funding bill passed by the U.S. Congress that provides temporary funding to run the federal government until early 2024 did not extend September 30, 2023, the cut-off date for benefits eligibility that was provided in prior appropriations legislation and did not provide additional funding for this purpose.

Eligibility, as well as corresponding funding for benefits, may or may not be extended to those who were paroled after 9/30/2023 when Congress passes a long-term spending bill. Afghans and Ukrainians granted or pending re-parole or extension of parole (i.e. with a pending application for asylum or LPR status) after October 1, 2023, will still be eligible for federal benefits if they entered the U.S. with parole:

- Afghans - between July 31, 2021 and September 30, 2023
- Ukrainians – between February 24, 2022 - September 30, 2023

Impact

This change in eligibility should have minimal impact on Afghans currently entering the U.S., as the vast majority are entering through the Refugee Admissions Process or as Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) holders. The largest impact will be with new arrival Ukrainians entering through the *Uniting for Ukraine* (U4U) program. All Ukrainians entering through U4U have sponsors who agree to support arriving humanitarian parolees. However, the lack of eligibility for federal benefits creates significant access barriers for basic needs such as food and medical care and

puts additional stress on sponsors who may not have the same proficiency in navigating systems and connecting to resources as staff at resettlement agencies.

Ukrainians entering through U4U after October 1, 2023, may have additional feelings of stress and frustration due to the lack of government support and may need additional support navigating systems and getting connected to services. Because they may live in communities where some Ukrainians have benefits and some do not, this may also contribute to feelings of injustice and inequity.

While forcibly displaced people have often gone through many traumatic events, it is important to remember that strength and hope have propelled them forward into seeking a new life in the U.S. Finding these strengths and places of hope is equally as important as addressing traumatic impacts and is needed to help newly arrived families sustain themselves during what is often a pressured and stressful resettlement process. If you need training or technical assistance in supporting new arrivals, CARRE is [here](#) to help you!

Responding to Children and Adults Affected by the War in Gaza and Israel

For the last two months, many of us have watched in grief and dismay at the escalating violence, destruction, and death in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian territories. As of December 15th, over [695 Israelis](#) and [19,667 people](#) in Gaza have been killed and 52,586 wounded, with the vast majority being civilians and over a third being children. A humanitarian catastrophe continues to unfold in Gaza, with organizations such as IRC warning of imminent disease outbreaks and food shortages (See IRC statements [here](#) for further context on the crisis unfolding). According to [UNICEF](#), Gaza is currently the most dangerous place in the world to be a child.

The witnessing of difficult events by members of our community and the clients that we serve has broad psychosocial impacts that may have an impact on providers, clients and communities. Those with loved ones in the region or who are connected to the events may be experiencing strong emotions such as anger, sadness, helplessness, numbness, and prolonged unresolved grief for losing loved ones or facing unconfirmed death. Others who have been forcibly displaced or who come from communities that have faced or continue to face violence and conflict may also experience symptoms of vicarious trauma, survivor guilt, and retriggering of their own experiences. The events have also exacerbated incidents of Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia with some clients expressing valid and legitimate fears for their and their family's safety. Check out the numerous [NCTSN resources](#) for diverse ways children and caregivers respond. As we continue to recognize this time, **it's important as a provider to:**

1. **Validate your client's emotions, fears, and experiences, even if you may not agree with their perspective.** This conflict brings up many emotions, fears, and pains stemming from multigenerational histories of trauma for many people, including those

of us who provide services. Our responsibility as providers is to offer an empathetic non-judgmental safe space to validate all types of emotions expressed. Be mindful of “correcting” or challenging these emotions. Providing a safe space and validating emotions can be an incredibly powerful form of support. Even if you may not agree with your client’s perspectives on the conflict, bearing witness to their feelings is an essential component of service delivery at this time.

2. **Highlight your client’s strength, resilience, and culturally aligned forms of healing.** Support your clients’ ability to tap into their inner strengths and previous ways of coping and healing that have worked for them. If they cannot recall any, use open questions to guide them to explore what inspires them or where they derive strength from. This can be stories, elders, historical and faith-based figures that overcame oppression, or their parents who were able to secure safety for themselves and for their children in the past.
3. **Support the return to routine and daily activities.** During times of crisis, grief and uncertainty, our lives can feel unpredictable and we can feel helpless. In these times, it can be helpful to encourage clients to focus on matters that are within their control such as sticking to a routine, and caring for themselves. This can also include caring for others through advocacy or collecting donations for humanitarian causes. If clients are unable to maintain activities of daily living, additional specialized support and referrals to higher levels of care may be needed and should be explored.
4. **Seek support for your own resilience and mental health.** It is crucial for service providers to seek support for their own mental health if they feel that they have been affected by witnessing or hearing of violent and distressing incidents. By actively addressing emotional well-being, providers can enhance their sense of confidence, model healthy behavior for clients, build a strong support system, maintain boundaries and objectivity, and ensure long-term career sustainability.

Situation in Sudan

Since April 15, 2023, when [fighting](#) between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) began in Sudan’s capital city Khartoum, mass displacement, death and destruction have rapidly spread throughout the country, including the western region of Darfur. More than six million people have been forced to flee their homes, with 1.2 million seeking refuge in neighboring countries. Prior to this, Sudan was already facing an ongoing humanitarian crisis caused by social and political unrest, inflation, and food insecurity, fueled by extreme weather shocks due to climate change. As the war has continued, there have been widespread reports of infrastructure damage, indiscriminate civilian deaths, and sexual and gender-based violence, which the limited access to healthcare and safety services, safe drinking water, food, and fuel has exacerbated. Unprecedented levels of basic needs remain unmet, and targeting of first responders and aid workers has contributed to a further constricting of available resources and aid. **Considerations for service providers include the following:**

1. Civilians in Sudan continue to face the direst consequences of the conflict, experiencing widespread violence, exploitation and scarcity. The scale and nature of this ongoing displacement and conflict has local, regional, and global implications.
2. The historical trauma from the genocide in Darfur in the early 2000s, compounded with the proliferation of targeted violence against some of the same communities in this current conflict can exacerbate feelings of distress among families in the U.S.
3. The anguish of monitoring the uncertainty, violence and loss in Sudan can contribute to feelings of survivor guilt and the resurfacing of past traumatic and highly stressful experiences.
4. Many families in the U.S. who are navigating accessing their own safety, security and basic needs may require additional supportive services during this time, including comprehensive case management and mental health and psychosocial support.
5. Supporting and facilitating access to cultural, religious and/or ethnic appropriate communities and services can be particularly supportive at this time. When connecting clients to such services, be sure to do so from a client-centered approach, listening to and following the lead of what clients want, need, and prefer.

Recommended Resource: IRC 2024 Emergency Watchlist

The IRC's [2024 Emergency Watchlist](#) provides additional contextual background you may consider consulting as you continue to support children and families impacted by war and crisis. This annual report provides IRC's assessment of the 20 countries at greatest risk of new humanitarian emergencies.

The countries profiled on the 2024 Emergency Watchlist include: Sudan, Palestine, South Sudan, Burkina Faso, Myanmar, Mali, Somalia, Niger, Ethiopia, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. An estimated "299.4 million people are in humanitarian need in 2024 and 86% of them (258 million) are in Watchlist countries." You can also find key findings and recommendations of the report in "[At a Glance: 2024 Emergency Watchlist](#)," including but not limited to, the following themes:

"Armed conflict and climate change are increasingly converging in the same places at the same time"

"Civilians are caught between states and the growing influence of armed groups- whether organized along political, communal, criminal or any other lines"

"Regional and global powers are intervening to drive and intensify conflicts, not calm them"