

Sponsorship FAQs

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How The Expanded USCIS Sponsorship Programs Work

What is this expanded program for Cubans, Haitians, and Venezuelans, Nicaraguans seeking safety?

USCIS launched a streamlined process that allows eligible families and individuals seeking safety from violence and oppression in Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua, and Venezuela to apply for humanitarian parole in the United States. This program is similar to Uniting for Ukraine, which offered safety to nearly 100,000 Ukrainians between April and December 2022.

Under these USCIS sponsorship programs, the U.S. government allows people fleeing from violence, oppression and strife in certain countries to seek refuge in the United States on a temporary basis known as humanitarian parole, with the support of a sponsor in the United States. The sponsor will provide financial support to meet the basic needs of newcomers, particularly before a newcomer secures a job, and may also provide additional support, such as assistance enrolling in educational or training programs or securing employment.

This humanitarian program represents a streamlined process to help individuals and families find safety in the United States through the support of a sponsor, like you.

For more information, visit [USCIS.gov](https://uscis.gov).

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How are these new programs different from Uniting for Ukraine?

Uniting for Ukraine (U4U) laid the foundation for the programs for Cubans, Haitians, Nicaraguans, and Venezuelans. The programs are very similar. Whether a sponsor supports an individual or family from Ukraine, Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua, and Venezuela, they will fill out the same I-134 application form with the same type of information. Sponsor responsibilities, such as providing financial support or help with navigating



employment and housing, are the same, and beneficiaries will have the same immigration status of humanitarian parole, which will last for two years post arrival.

Sponsors have the exact same eligibility requirements under all programs, including lawful presence and the ability to pass security and background checks. Sponsors must show that they can support the newcomer financially upon arrival, if needed, or submit information that shows that an organization, institution, or employer will help them with financial or in-kind (such as housing) support.

Beneficiaries from Ukraine, Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua, and Venezuela must meet eligibility requirements, including vaccinations for diseases such as measles and COVID-19. Eligible beneficiaries must have a valid passport, though children under 18 may be able to travel with their lawful guardians. Eligibility requirements for beneficiaries can be found on the [USCIS website](#).

In addition, Ukrainians who arrived under U4U were granted eligibility for a larger set of public benefits and refugee services by Congress in May 2022. At this time, individuals and families arriving under other programs do not have the same eligibility for benefits as those under U4U. However, all of those who arrive through humanitarian parole are eligible to apply for work authorization, which means they will be able to support themselves soon after arrival.

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How are USCIS sponsorship programs like Uniting for Ukraine and programs for Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua, and Venezuela different from refugee resettlement?

Refugee resettlement is a long, protracted, and complex process that can take years, even decades. There are over 27 million refugees in the world, only 1% of which will ever become eligible for resettlement in a country. To become eligible for refugee resettlement, individuals and families must be outside their home country, meet the [international definition of a refugee](#), be determined to be eligible for resettlement by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees and apply to be resettled. Refugees cannot choose the country they would like to be resettled in. In recent years, less than 75,000 refugees have been resettled through the Department of State's United States Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP), which is the program that coordinates refugee arrivals through its partnerships and cooperative agreements with resettlement agencies like the International Rescue Committee. Learn more at [UNHCR](#) and the [Office of Refugee Resettlement](#).



USCIS is part of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and the USCIS sponsorship programs use humanitarian parole, which provides a fast and safe entry process into the United States. In 2022, close to 100,000 Ukrainians have found their path to safety through Uniting for Ukraine, a USCIS sponsorship program. These USCIS sponsorship programs don't rely on UNHCR or national and local resettlement agencies. **Instead they rely on sponsors like you!** That's why it's so important for sponsors to participate in this program; for individuals and families seeking safety through humanitarian parole, a sponsor in the U.S. is required.

There are many and varied immigration processes that are available for immigrants, including employment-based visas. It is not uncommon for diaspora communities (and even immigrant families) in the U.S. to have a variety of immigration statuses. As an example, Venezuelans and Ukrainians, depending on their individual circumstances, may be eligible for refugee resettlement, but that can be a very long process with many hurdles and relatively low chance for resettlement in the U.S. Learn more about UNHCR's programs for Venezuelans [here](#) and Ukrainians [here](#).

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I have heard a lot about Venezuelan migrants in recent weeks and months. How does USCIS sponsorship respond to those needs?

Venezuelans represent the second largest displaced population in the world, and 6 million Venezuelans have been forced to flee their homes in recent years due to violence and instability. Millions of Venezuelans have moved to neighboring countries like Colombia in search of safety and stability. Others have made the difficult decision to risk their lives to find safety in other countries, including the United States. Many Venezuelans attempt dangerous journeys on foot, often for months on end, with few resources or protections, making them susceptible to crime, human, sex and labor trafficking, cartel violence, and exploitation. In recent months, thousands of Venezuelans have made their way to the United States, many crossing our southern border to lawfully seek asylum in the United States. As of October 12, 2022, the U.S. government created Process for Venezuelans, a different lawful process for those seeking refuge that requires a sponsor in the U.S. to file a sponsorship application with USCIS to directly support a Venezuelan and bring them to safety here through humanitarian parole. This program has since been expanded to include Cubans, Haitians and Nicaraguans.

Venezuelans who enter through the USCIS sponsorship process will be granted humanitarian parole and will be eligible to apply for work authorization (and for a fee waiver for that work permit!).

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Why are individuals and families fleeing Cuba, Haiti, and Nicaragua?

The in-country dynamics in each of these countries is fluid, and each person seeking safety may be doing so for different reasons. However, there are commonalities across these countries that have caused massive displacement in recent years, including rampant violence, political oppression and upheaval, gang violence, challenging economic conditions, and the effects of climate change on livelihoods. To quote the British poet Warsan Shire, “...*no one leaves home unless home is the mouth of a shark.*”

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What is humanitarian parole?

Humanitarian parole allows individuals in urgent need of refuge to enter the United States and temporarily stay in the United States. While USCIS sponsorship uses humanitarian parole to respond to humanitarian crises in Ukraine, Venezuela, and Haiti (as examples), humanitarian parole itself is not new. It can be used on a case-by-case basis for other populations.

Humanitarian parole provides:

- An efficient path to safety and refuge
- Temporary immigration status (two years)
- Ability to apply for work authorization
- Access to certain benefits, such as Health Exchange Marketplace insurance plans

Humanitarian parole does not provide:

- A pathway to permanent residency and citizenship
- Automatic work authorization
- Automatic access to refugee benefits and services (which must be granted by Congress, as it did for Ukrainians arriving under Uniting for Ukraine in May 2022).



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Who is eligible for sponsorship?

To be eligible for USCIS sponsorship programs, individuals and families must have a supporter in the United States like you, pass background checks, and complete vaccination requirements, such as for measles and COVID-19.

For more information about requirements, visit [USCIS.gov](https://uscis.gov).

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Who can be a sponsor?

Sponsors may be U.S. citizens, permanent residents, or other lawfully present individuals. This includes Americans who are part of diaspora communities, immigrants who have Temporary Protected Status (TPS), recently arrived refugees, and other everyday Americans, like you!

Nonprofits, educational institutions, faith congregations, and employers can also help sponsor and be the bridge to safety for individuals and families who seek refuge here in the U.S. You can also sponsor as part of a group, such as through partnering with your friends, extended family, colleagues, members of your congregation or the friends and family of newcomers seeking safety. If you don't know somebody who needs a sponsor, reach out to diaspora community organizations, chambers of commerce, faith communities where diaspora communities congregate, or immigrant-service organizations to learn more or [sign up here](#) for more information as we develop tools to help.

For more information, visit [USCIS.gov](https://uscis.gov).

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Do I need to be a family member to serve as a sponsor?

No. USCIS sponsorship through humanitarian parole allows anyone to serve as a named sponsor, including extended family, employers, friends, or anyone else interested in welcoming those seeking refuge. You just have to have lawful presence in the U.S. and successfully submit an I-134 application for parole. [Sign up here](#) for more information as we develop tools to help sponsors connect with beneficiaries.



As part of their humanitarian parole I-134 application, sponsors will undergo background checks conducted by the Department of Homeland Security. Beneficiaries will also be fully vetted and screened as part of the approval process.

For more information, visit [USCIS.gov](https://uscis.gov).

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Can I sponsor with a group of people?

Yes. While not required, your sponsorship experience can be strengthened by working together with a group — be it with friends, family, work colleagues, congregation members, or other networks. One person will be the lead sponsor on the I-134 application, but your group can submit a letter that details the level of financial and other types of support each can provide to the newcomer.

There are many reasons to sponsor as part of a group — it makes the work easier, can be deeply rewarding, and helps the arriving family to meet more people in the community. With a group effort, you can share in the joy and responsibilities of helping newcomers thrive in their new communities.

[This guide](#) shows how sponsor groups are typically structured. Our in-depth [Humanitarian Parole Application Guide](#) details how to submit an application as a group.

Our partner, **Community Sponsorship Hub**, also provides support to groups of sponsors, including access to technical assistance and resources, such as temporary housing through AirBnB. Learn more [here](#).

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Can I sponsor as part of an organization?

Yes. You can sponsor as a part of an organization, such as church groups, community organizations, or other nonprofits. Sponsorship is often most successful, and most rewarding, when done with others. Sponsoring as a group allows you to share the work, and cost, of sponsorship. It also introduces the newcomer to more people in your community, enabling them to grow their own networks more quickly.



As with any other sponsor group, one person will be the lead sponsor and fill out the sponsor application. The sponsor group will need to show that together, they have the resources to support a newcomer while they seek stability and independence in the U.S.

[This guide](#) shows how sponsor groups are typically structured. Our in-depth [Humanitarian Parole Application Guide](#) details how to submit an application as an organization.

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What are a sponsor's responsibilities?

Sponsors create the support systems that ensure newcomers can thrive. Sponsors are neighbors, cheerleaders, and guides for people starting on a long, difficult, and exciting journey.

More specifically, sponsors are responsible for finding safe and appropriate housing for newcomers. They support newcomers in ensuring health needs are met, kids are enrolled in school, and adults find work, among other factors.

Sponsorship is a deep commitment, but a transformative one for both you and those you welcome. You are changing lives and strengthening your community and country. You don't have to do it alone. Sponsorship can be most successful, and most joyful, when it is done in a community of friends, family, and colleagues.

Learn more about a sponsor and their story in [this video](#) and follow Welcome.US on social media for more.

Learn more about sponsorship through our [interactive tutorials](#).

[This sponsor check-list](#) outlines key sponsor tasks and responsibilities. Our in-depth [Humanitarian Parole Application Guide](#) includes more details on sponsorship requirements.

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Do I need to host a beneficiary in my home?

There are no requirements to host a beneficiary in your home. However, housing can be a challenge in communities across the U.S., and this may be a temporary option deployed. Sponsors are encouraged to remember that many newcomers may be suffering from years of financial instability due to government oppression or daily violence, and some will be looking for a sponsor specifically to help them join family, friends, or diaspora communities in the U.S. Each beneficiary will have different perspectives, needs, and desires, and it's important to determine housing arrangements together before their arrival.

This [Budget Template](#) template can be used by sponsors, or groups of sponsors, to understand what newcomers may need financially after they first arrive, including the cost of housing in your area.

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I have a job that I need filled. Can I sponsor in order to find an employee?

Humanitarian parole is not an employment program. While many newcomers may be looking for a job once they receive work authorization, linking a newcomer's sponsorship to a particular job or employer can lead to the potential exploitation of a newcomer, even if that is not the intention of the sponsor. Newcomers may feel that they must take a job, and stay at a job, in exchange for their safety and security, and this can put them in a very vulnerable position.

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What are a sponsor's financial obligations?

There is no fee for filing the humanitarian paperwork, and the I-134 is not meant to be legally binding. However, sponsorship carries with it some basic financial responsibilities. As part of the application process, you will sign a Declaration of Financial Support form, in which you assure the U.S. government that, if needed, you will financially support the newcomers you seek to sponsor for the two-year duration of their parole. While the Declaration of Financial Support is not meant to be legally binding in most cases, it's important to recognize that beneficiaries will likely need your help, including financially, as they work to rebuild their lives. What would you need if you were forced from your home because your life was in danger?



While there is no specific required amount you must dedicate to sponsorship, we know that you want to do what's right! You and your group should plan to raise at least \$3,000 for each person sponsored. This money will help the family get settled in the first 90 days after their arrival in the United States.

These resources will help you plan:

- [Fundraising Tips and Tools](#). Sponsors may need help meeting the initial needs of newcomers. These tips will help you raise funds to support newcomers as they integrate into their new community.
- [Budget Template](#). This budget template can be used by sponsors, or groups of sponsors, to understand what newcomers may need financially after they first arrive. Tailoring a template to the individual circumstance of a sponsor and beneficiary will help determine how much money a newcomer might need to get on their feet.

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How will I communicate with someone I hope to sponsor if I don't speak their language?

Spanish, spoken widely in Cuba, Nicaragua, and Venezuela,, is the second most common language in the United States! Many communities across the United States have systems that serve Spanish as well as English speakers. That being said, part of the fun of sponsorship is coming up with creative solutions to unexpected problems and learning more about other cultures. And maybe it's time to dust off your high school Spanish or French!

If you do not speak the same language as the newcomer you seek to sponsor, your first impulse may be to turn to Google Translate. That's an excellent resource and can be used for both interpretation (oral) and translation (written) needs! But you could also reach out to community groups, churches where diaspora communities congregate, or local Latino or immigrant organizations. They may be able to help you find people willing to help and may be able to refer you to interpreters and translators. Social media, such as local Facebook groups, local government, United Way's 2-1-1 and USA Hello are also great resources!

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How The Expanded USCIS Sponsorship Programs Work

What are the steps to become a sponsor?

Our in-depth [Humanitarian Parole Application Guide](#) will help you navigate the sponsorship process, from start to finish or approval. At a glance, the steps are:

- Step 1: Confirm your eligibility. Sponsors can be U.S. citizens, permanent residents, or other lawfully present individuals, such as those with Temporary Protected Status (TPS) and refugees. Nonprofits, educational institutions, and employers can also help to sponsor people fleeing violence from eligible countries like Venezuela and Haiti.
- Step 2: Identify an individual or family in need. Sponsors must name a beneficiary as part of the process. The diaspora communities in the United States are large, and if you don't know someone seeking safety, you may be able to connect with a local community organization who can help match you with a beneficiary. Welcome.US will soon re-launch its Uniting for Ukraine tool, Welcome Connect, to connect Cubans, Haitians, Nicaraguans, and Venezuelans with sponsors, but at this time, it is not yet able to do so. [Sign up here](#) to learn more.
- Step 3: Fill out the Humanitarian Parole Application. Collect the necessary information and documentation for yourself and your beneficiary, and fill out your online sponsorship application on [U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services' \(USCIS\) web site](#).
- Step 4: Await approval. **The U.S. government is solely responsible for approving sponsor applications.** While you wait, you can track your application, and both you and the beneficiary may need to respond to any requests for further information. USCIS will send messages to your USCIS account and your email, but we strongly suggest checking your USCIS account regularly for updates.

Again, please see this [Humanitarian Parole Application Guide](#) for more details.

You can also find more information and the application on the [USCIS website](#).

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How can I be matched with a family or individuals to sponsor?

If you aren't connected to someone in need of support, national diaspora and local community organizations can help match you with someone entering the United States who meets the beneficiary requirements. Welcome Connect will also soon be available (January 2023) to support these populations; it is a platform that introduces potential sponsors to beneficiaries in need.

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What materials do I need to collect in order to sponsor?

USCIS wants to understand who you are and whether you can support the beneficiary during their time in the U.S., should that be something that the beneficiary needs.

Below are some of the key documents to prepare. Before starting the application, we suggest converting each document into a format that is easy to upload, such as a PDF or JPG.

Financial documents:

- Statement(s) from your employer on business stationery showing:
 - Date and nature of employment;
 - Salary paid; and
 - Whether the position is temporary or permanent
 - You can find [an employer statement template](#) in the Appendix of this guide.
- Statement from an officer of the bank or other financial institutions with deposits, identifying the following details regarding the account:
 - Date account opened;
 - Total amount deposited for the past year; and
 - Present balance
- Copy of last U.S. federal income tax return filed (tax transcript); or
- List containing serial numbers and denominations of bonds and name of record owner(s).

Organization or institution information:

- Organizations and institutions can help sponsors support a beneficiary, in lieu of an individual's financial support. If this is the case, organizations and institutions can prepare information that conveys the type, amount, and duration of financial



and in-kind support, such as housing or assistance navigating services upon a newcomer's arrival.

Citizenship or immigration status

- A U.S. citizen or U.S. national may submit a copy of a birth certificate, certificate of naturalization, certificate of citizenship, consular report of birth abroad to U.S. parents, or a copy of the biographic data page on your U.S. passport.
- Proof of lawful permanent resident status includes a photocopy of both sides of the Permanent Resident Card or Alien Registration Receipt Card (Form I-551), or a photocopy of an unexpired temporary Form I-551 stamp in either a foreign passport or DHS Form I-94 Arrival Departure Record.
- Proof of lawful nonimmigrant status may include a copy of an unexpired visa in a foreign passport.

You'll also need to collect background material from your beneficiary. For more information on all the materials required, please see the [Humanitarian Parole Application Guide](#).

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What material do I need to collect from my beneficiary?

The USCIS wants to understand who is coming to this country and what resources beneficiaries have that could contribute to their support while they are in the United States.

Sponsors must work with beneficiaries to gather the following information:

- Identification and contact information
 - Other names since birth (including aliases, maiden name, etc.)
 - Phone and email contact information
 - Current mailing and physical address
 - Date of birth
 - City, state, and country of birth
 - Gender
 - Marital status
 - Total number of dependents
- Travel information

- Country of citizenship or nationality
 - Country of most recently issued passport
 - Passport number and expiration date. *Check eligibility for beneficiary passports at USCIS's website; expired passports may suffice.*
 - A-number (not required and only if applicable)
 - Anticipated period of stay in the U.S. - individuals arriving with humanitarian parole under USCIS sponsorship can stay in the U.S. for 24 months
- Financial information
 - Total value of assets
 - How much income will the beneficiary's dependents contribute to the beneficiary annually
 - These numbers can be zero, as USCIS will look at both the beneficiary and the sponsor's income and assets

You'll also be asked to submit information about your own financial status or information related to the organization or institution that will assist your sponsorship. For more information on all the materials required, please see the [Humanitarian Parole Application Guide](#).

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What financial information do I need to submit?

USCIS needs information to determine whether you or the organization supporting you have the financial resources to support the beneficiary(ies) upon their arrival to the United States. But they are not asking for a complete listing of every single asset.

Here's a list of the financial documents you'll be asked to submit with your humanitarian parole I-134 application. We suggest converting each document into an acceptable format, such as a PDF or JPG, before starting the application.

- Statement(s) from your employer on business stationery showing:
 - Date and nature of employment;
 - Salary paid; and
 - Whether the position is temporary or permanent
 - An employer statement. You can find a template in the Appendix to the [Humanitarian Parole Application Guide](#)
- Statement from an officer of the bank or other financial institutions with deposits, identifying the following account details:

- Date account opened
 - Total amount deposited for the past year; and
 - Present balance
- Copy of your last U.S. federal income tax return filed (tax transcript); or
- List containing serial numbers and denominations of bonds and name of record owner(s).
- Proof of sponsor assets that can be used to support the beneficiary
 - For example, sponsors looking to claim their home as an asset are asked to provide documentation demonstrating that you own the home, a recent appraisal by a licensed appraiser, and evidence of the amount of all loans secured by a mortgage, trust deed, or other lien on the home.

If an organization is supporting your application, you do not need to complete the financial information for you as an individual. Instead, submit information about how the organization commits to supporting the newcomer, including financial details. Learn more about this process at [USCIS](#).

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How do I fill out the USCIS sponsorship application?

Once prepared with the above information, documents, and proof of eligibility, you are ready to fill out the application or the form I-134 on the USCIS' website. The I-134 is the actual application.

- Visit the sponsorship page on the [USCIS website](#).
- Find and click the 'File Online' button.
- Create an account (or log in if you've already done so).
- You will be taken to an introductory page for the application.
- Read through the two pages of information provided, clicking 'Next' and then 'Start' to advance through them.
- Once here, you will have arrived at the starting point of the application.

The online workflow to fill out the application is flexible:

- You can advance through the full application in order to understand the materials, where to upload evidence, and the format required.
- You can save your application and come back to it at a later date if necessary.
- Prior to application submission, you can change the information in the form, such as fix the spelling of the beneficiary's name.



- Once you submit an application, you cannot change the information in the form, but you can call USCIS Contact Center OR upload a signed document into your USCIS account specifying the change requested and sending a message to USCIS alerting them of the request.

If you need support after reviewing the forms and instructions, or after walking through the online application form, you may call the USCIS Contact Center at 1-800-375-5283. For TTY (deaf or hard of hearing), dial 800-767-1833.

You must fill out an I-134 form for each beneficiary you will be sponsoring.

For more information, please see the [Humanitarian Parole Application Guide](#).

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How do I apply for joint sponsorship?

Multiple sponsors may partner together to support a beneficiary. In this case, a sponsor should file an I-134 and include supplemental evidence of the identity and resources of the partnering sponsors and attach a statement explaining the intent to share responsibility to support the beneficiary. Sponsors' ability to support a beneficiary will be assessed collectively.

You must fill out an I-134 form for each beneficiary you and your partners will be sponsoring.

For more information, please see [Humanitarian Parole Application Guide](#).

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How do I apply for an organizational sponsorship?

One individual sponsor (potentially an employee of the organization – e.g., church or nonprofit) must submit information about themselves. The sponsor may include supplemental information and evidence of the supporting organization explaining the organization's intent to support both the sponsor and the beneficiary. If the organization will support the beneficiary financially, the sponsor may not need to fill out all the financial information. Learn more at [USCIS](#).



You must fill out an I-134 form for each beneficiary your organization will be sponsoring.

For more information, please see the [Humanitarian Parole Application Guide](#) where you will also find a sample organizational letter appended.

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What happens after I apply to be a sponsor?

The U.S. government is solely responsible for approving sponsor applications. The process includes vital steps to ensure the safety and protection of newcomer beneficiaries and sponsor applicants, including background checks and review of your ability to provide initial financial support. Some applications may move more quickly than others, depending on application-specific information.

Sponsors can track the application's status online using their USCIS account. We recommend that you check your online account daily for messages, as well as monitor your email for information from USCIS. (Note: be sure to check spam and junk folders for important messages from USCIS). Beneficiaries will also receive messages from USCIS about steps they may need to take, such as uploading attestations of vaccination statuses.

USCIS might reach out with a request to appear in person for an interview or biometric checks at a nearby USCIS application center. USCIS application centers are commonly located in larger cities and while this may be challenging for some sponsors, it helps protect beneficiaries from exploitation and harmful risks, such as labor or human trafficking.

While your application is processing, we encourage you to connect with national and local organizations who are dedicating resources and expertise to help you in your journey. See this [Guide to Connecting with Local and State Services](#).

We also encourage you to learn about the benefits that may be available to individuals granted humanitarian parole, such as health insurance plans through state or federal exchanges, particular to your state and to review the obligations sponsors have on the [USCIS website](#).

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How long until I hear back from the government about my application?

Some applications may move more quickly than others, depending on application-specific information. In October 2022, most applications were approved within days.

Sponsors can track the application's status online using their USCIS account. We recommend that you check your online account daily for messages, as well as monitor your email for information from USCIS. (Note: be sure to check spam and junk folders for important messages from USCIS). Beneficiaries will also receive messages from USCIS about steps they may need to take, such as uploading attestations of vaccination statuses.

While your application is processing, we encourage you to connect with national and local organizations who are dedicating resources and expertise to help you in your journey. See this [Guide to Connecting with Local and State Services](#).

We also encourage you to learn about the benefits that may be available to individuals granted humanitarian parole in your state, such as health insurance plans through state or federal exchanges and to review the obligations sponsors have on the [USCIS website](#).

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What happens if I make a mistake on the application?

If you make a mistake, and find it after the application has been submitted and approved, you can submit a request to USCIS to change the information by logging into your online account and uploading a letter with a handwritten signature to their Form I-134 case as “unsolicited evidence.” The letter must explain which submitted information is incorrect and request that USCIS complete the correction. The letter must identify both the incorrect (previously submitted) and the correct information. After uploading the letter, send a secure message from your online account and select “a case I already filed” option from the dropdown menu; then select the I-134 receipt number; and send a brief message stating that the specific information needs to be corrected.

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What are the next steps after my application is approved?

Sponsors and beneficiaries can expect a written decision about the application.

If the application is deemed sufficient, beneficiaries will also receive an email from USCIS with instructions on how to set up an account on the USCIS website and other next steps. Travel authorization granted for beneficiaries will be sent to the beneficiary; sponsors will get a message stating that travel authorization has been granted.

You and your beneficiary should continue to check email daily, including spam and junk folders, for important messages from USCIS.

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What does my beneficiary need to do after the application is approved?

If the application is sufficient, the beneficiary will receive an email from USCIS with instructions on how to set up an account on the USCIS website, and other next steps.

The beneficiary will be asked to confirm their biographic information on the USCIS website. They'll also be asked to:

- Certify that they understand the family relationship requirements for children under 18; and
- Confirm they have completed vaccine requirements or are eligible for an exception to vaccine requirements for measles, polio, and the first dose of an FDA approved or authorized COVID-19 vaccine or a WHO-Emergency use listed (EUL) COVID-19 vaccine.

You and your beneficiary should continue to check your myUSCIS account and your email, including spam and junk folders, for important messages from USCIS.

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How is travel to the U.S. arranged?

After confirming their biographic information and vaccine status, beneficiaries will receive a decision about their travel authorization to their USCIS account. Sponsors will get a message that travel authorization has been approved or denied, but only the beneficiary



will actually receive the travel authorization document. If approved, their travel authorization will be valid for 90 days.

Travel authorization is not a guarantee of parole. The travel authorization enables airline carriers to facilitate generation of a boarding pass and allows the airlines to board the individual for a flight to the United States. Individuals must comply with existing travel requirements and, where applicable, immigration exit requirements of the country that they will be departing from.

Sponsors and beneficiaries should work together to coordinate travel arrangements to the United States within this window. Beneficiaries will need to meet CDC travel requirements.

Upon the beneficiary's arrival, they will be inspected by U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) at the port of entry. At that time, they'll be considered for humanitarian parole for a period of up to two years. They may have conditions placed on their parole, such as for a tuberculosis (TB) screening.

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Can my beneficiary bring their pet?

Newcomer beneficiaries may be able to bring their animals to the United States. But these animals will be subject to regulation by the USDA APHIS as well as other federal agencies. Depending on your destination state, your pet may need to meet additional health requirements.

It's the responsibility of the pet owner to fully understand these regulations and ensure they are able to meet requirements before arriving in the U.S. with their animal.

[Please visit the USDA website](#) and the [CDC website](#) for more information.

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How can I contact USCIS directly?

The best way to contact USCIS is [through their website](#).

If you prefer to speak to someone directly, and are within the United States, the toll free



number is 800-375-5283 (TTY 800-767-1833) and the hours of operation are Monday to Friday, 8am to 8pm Eastern. For callers outside of the U.S, please call +1-212-620-3418.

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Supporting Newcomers

What documents and benefits might I need to help a beneficiary apply for?

Sponsors will help beneficiaries apply for critical documents for life in the U.S., including Social Security cards, their State IDs, and their first U.S. Driver License. You'll also help them open up a new bank account and assist them in applying for Employment Authorization – all critical steps to establishing a stable foothold in their new home.

Newcomers may also need help applying for benefits and services that may be available to them, including healthcare, employment and educational opportunities, and career training. Newcomers on humanitarian parole may not be eligible for some government benefits unless or until Congress passes legislation (such as they did in May 2022 for Ukrainians arriving under Uniting for Ukraine), such as Medicaid or refugee services, but **this will vary state by state or individual by individual**. Some states, like California, Illinois or New York, have health and other social service programs that everyone, regardless of immigration status, are eligible for, but the social safety net in the United States can be fragmented, confusing, and hard to access. Sponsors should connect with local immigrant-serving organizations or United Way's 2-1-1 to learn more. Sponsors and beneficiaries should apply for Employment Authorization as soon as possible after a newcomer's arrival to mitigate financial stress over the long term. Immigrants arriving on humanitarian parole, such as through the CHNV process, can apply online and can apply for a fee waiver for work authorization.

To find out what the types of services might be available for beneficiaries – and learn how to research and access them in your area – see this [Guide to Connecting to State and Local Services](#).

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How long does it take for Social Security and Employment Authorization to process?

Sponsors should try to help newcomers apply for both a social security card and employment authorization soon after they arrive. In July 2022, USCIS launched an [online application system for the I-765](#) application for certain noncitizens, including individuals on humanitarian parole (such as Ukrainians, Afghans, Cubans, Haitians, Nicaraguans, and Venezuelans). New applicants are encouraged to use the online filing system, as EAD (Employment Authorization Document) approval through this system may be approved in less than 6 weeks! Humanitarian parolees are considered in the C-11 immigrant category and as such can apply for a [fee waiver](#) through a paper process alongside the web-based EAD application. Beneficiaries must be in the United States to apply for these documents.

Note, Ukrainians arriving under Uniting for Ukraine are eligible for employment upon arrival resulting from a change in policy initiated by Congress. Those arriving under CHNV are not (as of 1/5/23) automatically granted work authorization upon arrival and must apply in order to be permitted to legally work in the United States.

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What can a beneficiary do while they wait for employment authorization?

While the wait for employment authorization can create short-term financial stress for newcomers, there are many ways that sponsors and newcomers can use this time productively. Sponsors should start networking with career training agencies and potential employers. Newcomers can start learning English as soon as they arrive – even before they receive work authorization.

Sponsors can help newcomers build professional networks, do mock interviews, prepare resumes, and learn about the U.S. work culture, all before they receive their Employment Authorization Document (EAD).

Newcomers may also be able to join career training programs at local community colleges. Depending upon their skills, newcomers may consider learning how to start a business, such as construction or website design.

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How do I help with housing?

Sponsors can help newcomers secure temporary housing so they have a safe and affordable place to stay in the United States. Hosting a newcomer in your home is not a requirement, but it can be a short-term option. Make sure that such an arrangement works for your household and the beneficiary if this is a path you want to explore. Get started by researching your local housing market and individual apartment buildings to find out about availability, unit sizes, and lease agreement details.

Potential temporary or short-term housing options may include:

- Hotels
- [Airbnbs](#)
- Separate living space attached to a private home
- Hosting within the sponsor's home

Most newcomers will need a short-term option, as they will need to be present in the United States to sign a lease. It is best practice to have the newcomer as the lessee to minimize the dependence of the beneficiary on the sponsor, although a sponsor may co-sign a lease. Many newcomers do not have credit history or a job on date of application for a rental unit, which can make finding a place difficult. Individual landlords may have greater flexibility when it comes to requirements, and many newcomers find rental units through their sponsors' networks. Don't be afraid to ask around!

You can also find housing options by:

- Consulting online search tools like [Zillow](#), [Apartments.com](#), and [Craigslist](#)
- Using your networks and contacts
- Working with a local real estate professional

For more information and best practices, see our [Tips for Securing Housing](#).

Many beneficiaries seeking a sponsor through the USCIS sponsorship process for Cubans, Haitians, Nicaraguans, and Venezuelans may be hoping to join family and friends already working and living in the U.S. If this is the case for the individual or family you decide to sponsor, we encourage you to understand the availability and adequacy of housing that their family and friends can provide. It's important for sponsors and beneficiaries to be on the same page about expectations!

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What other types of day-to-day support will arriving families need?

Sponsors provide support to make sure newcomer individuals and families have the resources they need to start a new life in the United States. Most importantly, sponsors help newcomers feel at home by being the friend they can rely on when they have questions and by introducing and including them in their new community.

Day-to-day support might include:

- Meeting newcomers at the airport and providing initial transportation
- Finding housing and furnishing the new home
- Acquiring household supplies, clothing, and groceries
- Helping identify healthcare providers, find employment, and enroll kids in school
- Connecting families with local public health agencies for vaccinations

You can use these resources to help you prepare:

- [Interactive Sponsorship Trainings](#). This resource can help educate you, or your sponsor group, on a wide variety of topics.
- [Guidance for Sponsoring Newcomers](#). This resource offers some best practices in creating a successful sponsor relationship.
- [Initial Sponsor Service Checklist](#). Use this checklist to keep track of the initial services that newcomers typically need when they arrive.
- [Sponsor Group Structure & Roles](#). Sponsoring as part of a group can make the experience easier and more enjoyable. This guide reviews recommended roles and responsibilities for a sponsorship group.
- [Budget Template](#). Newcomers may need help with financial planning. This budget template helps track initial estimated living costs.
- [Fundraising Tips and Tools](#). At first, newcomers may need financial support to get on their feet. These tips will help you raise money to support newcomers as they integrate into their new community.
- [Tips for Securing Housing](#). These strategies will help you find and secure housing for newcomers.
- [Home Supply Checklist](#). Help make a house a home! This checklist will help you prepare a home for newcomers.
- [Pantry Checklist](#). Ideally, these items will be part of a newcomer's pantry upon arrival.

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Where can I find employment opportunities for newcomers seeking refuge in the U.S.?

Sponsors can help newcomers find secure, safe, and dignified employment. They can also seek out programs and resources that provide job coaching, personal finance tutoring, and networking for job opportunities.

To get started:

- Use our [Welcome Employment](#) page to search available job listings.
- Check [local job centers](#) for employment and career training services.
- Research [apprenticeship opportunities](#) to help newcomers earn income while they learn on the job.
- Connect with local diaspora communities or community organizations.

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How do I help with schooling and education?

Sponsors can help newcomers enroll themselves or family members in school and English classes. These are important steps in helping newcomers adjust and communicate with confidence as they become part of their new communities.

Every resident, regardless of immigration status, can enroll in the local public school system for kindergarten through high school. Some school districts may have newcomer centers or community school programs that help students transition to a new learning environment.

More specifically, sponsors can support newcomers by:

- Researching and communicating with the local school district
- Collecting the paperwork needed for enrollment, such as proof of address and vaccination records
- Finding [community colleges](#) that serve first-generation students and may be used to seeing foreign transcripts
- Helping them enroll in English Language Learner (ELL) classes through your state's adult education programs

See our [Guidance for Connecting to Local and State Services](#) resource for more information.

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How do I help newcomers with healthcare?

Sponsors can help newcomers access basic health care services and navigate the complex U.S. health system by:

- Familiarizing newcomers with healthcare resources in their communities, such as [Federally Qualified Health Care Centers](#) and pharmacies
- Researching [health insurance options](#), such as Affordable Care Act plans or employer-sponsored programs
- Setting up healthcare appointments. Humanitarian parolees may have health requirements that are a condition of their parole. Sponsors can find screenings, and information about local screening options, at [local health departments](#).

See our [Guidance for Connecting to Local and State Services](#) resource for more information.

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How do I support language needs?

The Spanish-speaking community in many locations across the United States is vibrant and diverse, and this may help newcomers from Spanish speaking countries navigate their new community with relative ease. However, many jobs and transactions require English language skills, and sponsors should acknowledge that learning a new language is hard. Imagine being in a new country and unable to communicate clearly. Language learning can be tedious and frustrating!

Visit your state's adult education program online to get a list of providers with English Language Learner (ELL) classes. Also, identify additional resources and partners that can help with tasks and issues related to education and language. There may be language learning assistance at local community organizations, faith communities, or the local library, and apps like Duolingo can make language learning easy!

See our [Guidance for Connecting to Local and State Services](#) resource for more information.

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What resources and technical assistance are available to help me be a successful sponsor?

While the sponsor program for Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua, and Venezuela is new, there are resources that have been developed for other newcomer communities that may be valuable no matter the country of origin of the newcomer.

Our partner, Community Sponsorship Hub, also provides support to groups of sponsors, including access to technical assistance and resources, such as temporary housing through AirBnB. Learn more [here](#).

[Switchboard](#), funded by the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR), has a useful list of [resources](#).

[USAHello](#) offers practical information and resources for people coming to the United States. Find information on U.S. immigration, jobs, daily life, American culture, laws, money, health, and education. Use the FindHello app to connect to local services in cities across the U.S.

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