



# Local Guide to Welcoming Resources: Cleveland

**These Guides are specific to Ukrainians arriving with humanitarian parole under Uniting for Ukraine and Haitians and Cubans with humanitarian parole.**

Congress granted these populations additional eligibility for refugee benefits and a wider array of federal benefits than are available for other humanitarian parolees such as those from Venezuela or Nicaragua. However, some information may be relevant for all newcomers, regardless of their immigration status.

**Update October 1, 2023; Ukrainians who arrive under U4U after October 1, 2023, are currently ineligible for refugee and many federal benefits, pending additional legislative action.**

*Sponsors of Ukrainians who arrive after October 1, 2023, and sponsors of Nicaraguans and Venezuelans can also refer to this [guide](#) for additional information. .*

## ABOUT WELCOME.US

Welcome.US is a national initiative that serves as a single point of entry for individuals, corporations, and institutions who want to welcome and support newcomers to the United States. Since our founding in the fall of 2021, Welcome.US has helped to build the largest coalition in refugee resettlement history. We began by welcoming our Afghan allies and have now expanded our efforts to welcome our new Ukrainian neighbors as well.

Our partners include, among others, local and national resettlement agencies, community organizations and leaders, refugee and diaspora organizations, community sponsorship groups, nonprofits, businesses, faith-based groups, veterans, universities, four former U.S. presidents, and four former first ladies.

## What We Do

### Mission

Welcome.US inspires and empowers people from across divides to unite in common purpose and welcome newcomers, meet their essential needs, and help them thrive.

### Vision



Every American community—and the nation as a whole—has the resources and willingness to welcome newcomers, now and in the future.

### **Theory of Change**

We operate on the evidence that direct participation with newcomers transforms both the Welcomer and those being welcomed. By making it easier for Americans from all walks of life to participate in the work of welcoming and to tell their stories, we will build a broader, more diverse, and more durable capacity to help refugees resettle and thrive in the United States.

### **A message to sponsors and sponsors support organizations**

Thank you for being a sponsor and welcoming Ukrainians to Ohio and the Cleveland metro area. Ohio has a rich and vibrant Ukrainian American community and a deep history of welcoming and supporting newcomers as they establish their homes and build new lives. Over the past several months, a strong outpouring of support from individuals, families, faith-based organizations, municipalities, state government, philanthropy, and community-based organizations worked together to provide new opportunities to newcomers and their families in this great city and state.

As newcomers transition to life in the US, we know that they will lean on you as their sponsor while they face challenges in navigating new systems and their new life. Coupled with the significant hardships they have experienced, the loss of their home and possessions, and the people they had to leave behind, they will face a new set of challenges as they seek to integrate into their new communities. We are grateful for the ways that you have and will step up to provide support and direction. As you start your sponsorship journey, remember you are not alone. We are eager to partner with you and provide information, tools, and support along the way.

We believe that by supporting you, we will help ease some of the many duties of being a sponsor, which will help our newcomers find firm footing more quickly. We thank you for your compassion and for playing a significant role in helping make our community more inclusive and welcoming to the Ukrainian newcomers who will make Ohio their new home.

## **Using this Toolkit**

We have assembled a set of resources intended to help sponsors and Ukrainians newcomers navigate life in Ohio and the Cleveland metro area. This toolkit will help sponsors and community members understand various processes in the region to better support new Ukrainian neighbors as they set up their life in our community.

This guide aims to be thorough but not comprehensive. It is to be used as a starting point, and we anticipate that sponsors, sponsor groups and sponsor supporting organizations may adapt and add to it to make it more comprehensive and relevant as additional resources are identified and become available. The resources, services, and benefits mentioned are subject to changes. Please review the relevant government website(s) for the most updated guidance. In addition, specific details and resources may vary depending on where an individual may choose to resettle.

In this guide, you will find the following information:

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## **Accessing Benefits and Services**

### **What are Public Benefits?**

When people think about public benefits, they often think about food assistance (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program or SNAP), cash assistance (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) and Medicaid. The table below includes key benefits/programs and whether or not Ukrainian newcomers may be eligible for them. Eligibility depends on a number of factors, including income and household composition.

Please note that while policy and legislation indicate that Ukrainian newcomers are eligible for the benefits noted below, it may take time for state and local governments to receive guidance from the federal government and implement the processes to review applications and distribute benefits.

Ohio has developed [Ohio Benefits](#): a tool which allows Ohio residents to locate and apply for state and local resources all in one place. Ohio Benefits offers a tool which screens eligibility for medical, cash, and food assistance online and then starts you in the enrollment process.

Enrolling for and receiving benefits and services is often a lengthy process and it may take several phone calls, emails, and office visits for processing. Sponsors do not need to become benefit eligibility experts, but they can help newcomers apply for programs for which they may be eligible by working with benefit navigators at local community-based organizations or [local resettlement agencies](#).

You can also visit [211](#) for more information on services and benefits in Ohio.

**Some benefits newcomers are eligible for include in the table below:**

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Program	Description	Ukrainian parolee eligibility
<a href="#"><u>Medicaid</u></a>	Health insurance for residents who meet income qualifications.	
<a href="#"><u>Ohio Works First</u></a> <a href="#"><u>(Temporary Assistance for Needy Families-TANF)</u></a>	<p>Cash assistance to newcomers and their families that meet a “gross income test” for up to 36 months with a potential extension.</p> <p>Eligible applicants must have a dependent child under 19 or six months pregnant and meet income qualifications. Requires adults to sign a self-sufficiency contract and usually requires adults to be participating in work activities.</p>	
<a href="#"><u>Food Assistance / Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)</u></a>	Helps newcomers in Ohio obtain more nutritious diets and increase their food purchasing power at grocery stores and supermarkets.	
<a href="#"><u>Ohio Healthy Start</u></a> <a href="#"><u>(Children’s Health Insurance Program - CHIP)</u></a>	Health coverage for uninsured children and teens who are not eligible for or enrolled in Medicaid.	
<a href="#"><u>Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA)</u></a>	Provides cash assistance for refugees who do not qualify for Ohio Works First, granted up to twelve months after entry or date asylum was granted. Recipients must participate in employment services.	
<a href="#"><u>Refugee Medical Assistance (RMA)</u></a>	Provides medical assistance for refugees who do not qualify for Medicaid up to twelve months after entry.	

<a href="#">Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP)</a>	<p>Provides assistance with home energy bills with eligibility based on income.</p> <p><b>Find information on how to apply <a href="#">here</a>.</b></p> <p>See more utility assistance programs, including modified payment plan options, <a href="#">here</a>.</p>	
<a href="#">Child Care Assistance Program</a>	<p>Covers a portion of childcare costs based on income.</p>	
<p><b>Supplemental Security Income (SSI)</b></p>	<p>A federal program that provides monthly payments to people who have very limited income and resources.</p> <p><b>How to apply:</b> To apply for SSI, please fill out <a href="#">this form</a>, providing basic personal and contact information. It will take 5-10 minutes. Once you complete this process, a Social Security representative schedules an appointment to help you apply for benefits.</p>	

## How to apply

The chart below contains information about the different ways that you can apply for public benefits. There are a number of tools available to help you navigate the application process. Ohio has developed an online application system that determines eligibility for a number of public benefits.

Cuyahoga County partners with local libraries to support applications. You can visit any of [these library locations](#) to receive help applying online, over the phone, or by fax.

Ways to apply:



## Apply online

You can apply for medical, cash, and food assistance online. To apply online, please visit: [Ohio Benefits](#).

[Here](#) is a tutorial which can aid you in applying online.

## Apply in-person

You can find the necessary documents to apply in-person for all assistance programs at a Neighborhood Family Service Center (NFSC). The general aid application forms are available online in [English](#) and [Ukrainian](#). However, documents for applying for refugee assistance are not in the online version of the forms.

Each location has all forms available and a secure drop-box for submitting the forms. [Here](#) are the NFSC locations in Cuyahoga county.

## By phone

You can apply by phone by calling 844-640-OHIO (6446).

Tips for applying by phone from Cuyahoga county:

- Virtual hold is available for all programs and will hold your place in line and call you back when it's your turn to speak to a worker. (Note: If you call later in the day, you may receive your return call on the following business day, depending on call volume.)
- Mondays tend to be higher volume days, lunch hours on any day of the week tend to be the busiest times for our Eligibility Contact Center as well. You may find wait times are lower at other times.

## With the help of a nonprofit or resettlement agency

[Resettlement agencies:](#)

- [US Together, Inc.](#) Cleveland
- [Cleveland Catholic Charities Migration and Refugee Services](#)
- [U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants Cleveland](#)
- [International Institute of Akron](#)
- [Community Refugee & Immigration Services](#)
- [Catholic Charities Southwestern Ohio](#)

- [Catholic Social Services of the Miami Valley](#)

After submitting the application, the applicant may be called with a request for an interview in order to receive benefits. This may require verification documents including:

- **Proof of identify**, which may be an I-94 document<sup>1</sup> from the Department of Homeland Security and/or travel authorization document and/or State ID
- **Proof of residence**, such as a lease, piece of mail, or potentially a letter attesting residence from a homeowner or landlord
- **Proof of Social Security numbers** for all people on application or proof of application to the Social Security Administration for a Social Security number
- **Other types of documents**, as the caseworker instructs

Be sure to ask during the scheduling call what documents will be needed.

You can also learn more at the [Office of Refugee Resettlement](#).

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<sup>1</sup> You can print a I-94 document by visiting the Department of Homeland Security's [website](#)



## Applying for Key Documents

### Introduction

To access many services, resources, and systems in the United States, newcomers will need to have identifying documents that are recognizable and accepted at federal, state, and local levels. In this section, we will outline some of the most common forms of identification: a social security card, Employment Authorization Document, Ohio identification card, and Ohio Driver's License.

### Social Security Number

A Social Security Number (SSN) is a unique identifier assigned to U.S. citizens and residents with lawful status. This document may be required to obtain credit, open bank accounts at large institutions, obtain government benefits, and apply for jobs.

Under Uniting for Ukraine and humanitarian parole in general such as for Haitians and Cubans,, newcomers are eligible to apply for social security numbers and work authorization (EAD).

Newcomers can apply for a SSN card when they submit their application for employment authorization. Learn more about how to apply for a SSN while applying for an EAD card here:

[Apply for a Social Security Number While Applying for a Work Permit \(ssa.gov\)](https://ssa.gov).

### Employment Authorization Document

Newcomers arriving under U4U are eligible for employment upon arrival for 90 days, but all arrivals should still apply for employment authorization by completing [Form I-765](#) for an Employment Authorization Document (EAD) with the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).

USCIS provides [Form I-765](#) through their website.

Before applying, sponsors should help newcomers compile the following:

- Copy of Travel Authorization
- Copy of government-issued identity document (e.g., passport) with picture, name, and date of birth
- Two identical color passport-style photographs (2"x2")
- USCIS online account number

By creating an account and filing online, newcomers have the benefit of:

- Case status alerts and secure messages
- Visibility into all case correspondence
- Ability to check case status and update personal information
- Ability to upload evidence



Before filing, an applicant can download the application from the [“Forms and Document Downloads”](#) tab found under “Form Details” to ensure that they have all required information.

After filing, newcomers should expect to receive a receipt notice with confirmation that their application was submitted, a biometric services notice (if applicable), a notice to appear for an interview (if required), and a notice of the USCIS decision once available.

As noted, USCIS may require newcomers to appear for an interview or provide biometrics (fingerprints, photograph, and/or signature) at any time to verify identity, obtain additional information, and conduct background and security checks. If an appointment is necessary, the notice will provide the location of a USCIS Application Support Center (ASC) and the date and time of the appointment.

**Note: Humanitarian parolees under U4U are not required to pay a filing fee. Newcomers arriving on humanitarian parole from Cuba and Haiti can file a paper fee waiver to eliminate the costs associated with EAD applications.**

Additional details and instructions for employment authorization can be found here - [Instructions for Application for Employment Authorization](#).

### **Ohio Identification Card**

A state identification (ID) card provides identification but does not provide any driving privileges. Newcomers cannot have a state ID and a driver's license at the same time. If they intend to drive, we recommend applying for a driver's license. Find a Secretary of State office location [here](#).

#### Standard or Photo ID Card

All Ohio residents are eligible to obtain an identification card, which verifies the holder as an Ohio resident. The ID costs \$10.

To apply for a Photo ID, newcomers will require proof of :

- Full legal name
- Date of birth
- Social Security number
- Legal presence
- Ohio residency

You can see the list of acceptable documents for each category [here](#) or use [this interactive checklist](#) to make sure each requirement is met.



After compiling the necessary documents, newcomers can submit these documents to apply for a Photo ID at an [Ohio deputy registrar license agency](#).

### **Driver's License - [Getting a Driver's License](#)**

A driver's license is another form of state identification and is required for driving privileges.

First, newcomers need to obtain a temporary instruction permit identification card (TIPIC) to practice driving. To obtain a temporary permit, newcomers must:

1. Download and review the [Ohio Digest of Motor Vehicles](#).
  - a. Newcomers can find a [Sample Knowledge Test here](#).
2. Visit an [Ohio driver exam station](#) to take and pass the knowledge and vision tests.

Newcomers have the option to request an interpreter for their knowledge test. In order to obtain their TIPIC after passing newcomers must present documentation of:

- a. Full legal name
- b. Date of birth
- c. Social Security number (if assigned)
- d. Ohio residency
- e. Citizenship or legal presence

You can see the list of acceptable documents for each category [here](#) or use [this interactive checklist](#) to make sure each requirement is met.

\*Newcomers can also choose to take [the knowledge test online](#), then complete the vision test and submit their documents at a deputy registrar license agency.

After practicing with a licensed driver 21 years of age or older occupying the seat next to them, newcomers can schedule their [driving skill's test online](#). They can find the specifics of the test [here](#) under "Driving and Skills Test." After passing their skills test, newcomers will be issued a driver's license. See driver license fees, which change depending on age, [here](#).

## Getting Connected with Phone & Internet Service

Accessing a mobile phone and reliable internet are important steps to receive information, request support, and apply for programs and services. There are a variety of providers available.

### Phone

Before a newcomer selects a cell phone plan, consider these questions:

☐ **What level of service and coverage do you need?**

Cell phone plans vary based on the level of call, text, and data requirements. They also have different coverage areas, meaning that some mobile phone networks provide greater connectivity outside of major metropolitan areas than others. For newcomers who arrive with their own smartphones, they may only need access to WiFi. When selecting a phone and a plan, ensure that it meets individual service and coverage requirements.

☐ **Will a contract or no contract plan work better for you and your family?**

Often no contract phone services are quick and easy to access from a local big box store that sells electronics. Users can purchase minutes, texts, and data and can buy additional minutes online. Some contracts come with signing bonuses and incentives; ensure that the contract does not contain any onerous terms and conditions.

☐ **Check their eligibility for free monthly data, unlimited texting, and free monthly minutes through Assurance Wireless, a federal government assistance program.**

Learn about this program [here](#). Enrollment is available to individuals who qualify based on federal or state-specific eligibility criteria. Newcomers may qualify based on household income or if they participate in one of the following assistance programs:

- [Medicaid](#)
- [SNAP](#)
- [Supplemental Security Income](#)
- [Federal Public Housing Assistance](#)

*How to help a newcomer avoid common mistakes when purchasing a phone plan*

- Make sure that the newcomer you support is not locked into a plan longer than they need. Help them read the fine print carefully.
- Make sure they make a careful assessment of their data usage since going over data limits can be costly.
- Compare phone plans. The best deal is not always from the best known carriers.



## Internet

There are many high-speed, low-cost home internet services available for eligible households.

- The Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) provides eligible households with discounts of up to \$30 per month for broadband internet service. They can also receive discounts on equipment to use the internet. You can [review eligibility](#) and [enroll in ACP](#) online.
  - Many high-speed home internet services may be available under ACP. For a full list of providers offering connected devices under ACP in Ohio, check [here on the FCC website](#).
- [Lifeline](#) is a federal program that lowers the cost of internet and phone service.
- Computer access and internet service are also available to public library patrons. Please see [this list for public libraries in Ohio](#).
- Newcomers may also be eligible for low-cost internet service and a low-cost computer through [Xfinity's Internet Essentials](#).

## Enrolling Children in School

As Ukrainian newcomers settle into their new communities, they will need to enroll their school-aged children in the local school district. As a sponsor, you can help newcomers navigate the requirements for school enrollment and understand how to best help their child succeed. The United States provides free public education from kindergarten through grade 12 for all students in the United States. Some communities offer preschool for children as young as three years old.

### Enrollment

Before enrolling, sponsors should help parents compile the following documentation:

- Proof of child's age
- Immunization Record (local public health agencies or community health care centers often work with school aged children and their parents on this need!)
- Proof of residency (often 2 Documents)
- Parent/guardian ID

Enrollment guidelines and requirements vary by school district. You can find out what district you're in [here](#), although some districts have open enrollment. Here is enrollment information for several school districts in Cuyahoga County:

- [Cleveland Metropolitan School District](#)
- [Parma City School District](#)
- [Lakewood City School District](#)
- [East Cleveland City School District](#)
- [Shaker Heights City School District](#)
- [Orange City School District](#)
- [Berea City School District](#)

Cuyahoga County has a [Universal Pre-K Program](#) which offers free, quality pre-K at a number of locations throughout the county.

### Immunizations

Now, more than ever, we are conscious of the health of individuals and our community. Ensuring that students have their vaccinations is a key component of keeping them safe, and it is required by Ohio law. Students that DO NOT have the required vaccines may be EXCLUDED from school until they have received the appropriate vaccines or an exemption form has been submitted to the school nurse.



Students can receive free or lost-cost immunizations through the Vaccines for Children (VFC) Program at the Cuyahoga County Board of Health. Vaccines can be scheduled through calling 216-201-2041 or making an appointment online on the [county website](#), which also shows the immunizations available.

Additionally, students may be able to receive free or low-cost vaccinations at a [Federally Qualified Health Center](#).

### **Ensuring that students receive the support they need to succeed**

When helping a Ukrainian newcomer enroll their student in school, ask the following questions to know what services to request from the school:

1. *Does the student have special needs, including physical, mental, or emotional needs that may require additional support or intervention?*
  - They may be eligible for [Individualized Education Programs \(IEP\) or a 504 plan](#).
2. *Is the student an English language learner?*
  - They may be eligible for support through the school's [English as a Second Language program](#). Every district supports English Language Learners differently.
3. *How can a student access free meals at school?*
  - Students may be eligible for free or reduced cost meals at school under the [National School Lunch Program](#), which requires registration in Ohio. However, some districts (including Cleveland Metropolitan School District and East Cleveland City School District) participate in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) meal plan which guarantees students free breakfast and lunch.

### **Helping students succeed in school**

As you help a Ukrainian beneficiary support their student, you may want to encourage them to -

- Request a meeting with the student's teacher(s) to learn more about what will be taught, student expectations, and classroom supports available.
- Request a school supply list.
- Request a meeting with the student's guidance counselor to discuss transfer of credits, standardized testing, graduation requirements (if applicable), and mental/emotional supports available to the student.



## Accessing Adult English Language Programs

There are many virtual and in-person English Language programs available for adults. Listed below are programs for newcomers, some programs are free while others require a fee.

### State Programs - Ohio

- [ESL providers](#) - A directory of ESL programs across Ohio.

### Local Programs - Cleveland

- [Catholic Charities](#) - In-person ESOL classes integrating cultural orientation and self-sufficiency and job-readiness skills.
- [Cleveland State University](#) - A number of ESL offerings, including classes customized to the workplace and intensive options.
- [Cuyahoga Community College](#) - Largest ESL program in the state of Ohio, requires placement testing to determine course level.
- [Cuyahoga County Public Library](#) - Free ESOL classes at the beginner, intermediate and advanced-levels hosted at the Cuyahoga County Public Library, available in the daytime, in the evening, or on weekends.
- [Polaris Career Center](#) - In-person and online free ESOL classes, requires orientation and assessment sessions.
- [Shaker Library](#) - Free weekly online ESOL class geared towards students with intermediate to advanced knowledge of spoken English.
- Cleveland State University -

[Cleveland Language Access Program](#) - Cleveland is committed to ensuring access to services and engagement regardless of language and as a federally funded agency is required to provide meaningful access to resources.

### Additional resources

Apps and programs such as [Tarjimly](#), [Duolingo](#), [Udemy](#), and [USA Learns](#) are also available (often with free options) for self-directed learning.



## Accessing Immigration Legal Services

As newcomers begin their new life in Cleveland they may need immigration legal assistance to better understand their immigration legal status and options, to pursue family reunification, and more. The United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) is the government agency that administers lawful immigration to the US. Visit the [USCIS website](#) to learn more about US immigration laws and humanitarian parole programs.

### Organizations Offering Free or Low-Cost Legal Assistance

Legal service organizations provide pro-bono services on a case-by-case basis. Please connect with the organizations directly to request pro-bono assistance.

- The American Immigration Lawyers Association also maintains a [searchable database of immigration lawyers](#).
- [The Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc. \(CLINIC\)](#) also provides several resources and a list of legal affiliates in different localities.
- You can find additional free and low cost immigration legal services by visiting the United States [Department of Justice](#).
- [The Immigration Advocates Network](#) operates an immigration legal services directory.
- [The Legal Aid Society of Cleveland](#) is a legal resource center providing no-cost services to clients with low-income.
- [U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants Cleveland](#) offers low-cost, professional legal representation to low-income refugees in a variety of legal areas.
- [Catholic Charities](#) offers affordable legal counseling and representation and its fees may be reduced or waived depending on need.
- [International Institute of Akron](#) offers low-cost legal services throughout Northeast Ohio.

Unfortunately, notario fraud, or the unauthorized practice of law, is rampant in communities across the United States, including Cleveland. Immigrants, and well meaning sponsors, can sometimes meet individuals and businesses who provide legal services without requisite training or license. Be wary of individuals that approach newcomers with promises that sound too good to be true.

## **Employment and Workforce Development Support**

As Ukrainian newcomers settle into their communities, they will need support when reconnecting with their careers and educational opportunities. As a sponsor, you can help newcomers navigate these next steps.

### **Sourcing Employment Opportunities**

Even before newcomers receive their work authorization, sponsors can help them prepare for the world of work in the United States. One of the best ways to help a newcomer reconnect with their career is to assist them in developing a professional network. Find out what kind of jobs or careers may be of interest then help them connect with individuals in that particular field. Informational interviews can help newcomers understand what types of jobs might be available to them here in the United States, while simultaneously serving as interview practice. Other ways to prepare newcomers for work include enrollment into English classes (if warranted) and local job training programs, such as for commercial truck drivers!

Once newcomers have their EAD cards, sponsors can help newcomers find jobs by visiting sites with local job opportunities, such as:

- [USAHello](#)
- [Welcome's employment exchange](#)
- [Upwardly Global](#)
- [Ohio Means Jobs](#)
- [OhioJobNetwork](#)

Other common job search sites include [Indeed](#), [LinkedIn](#), [SnagAJob](#), and [CareerBuilder](#).

Many of [Ohio's refugee resettlement agencies](#) offer employment support services.

### **Workforce Development Support**

Depending on the program, a newcomer may be able to take advantage of career training before they have their Employment Authorization Document (EAD). Community colleges, including [Cleveland Community College](#) and [Cuyahoga Community College](#), offer job skills training to assist in reskilling and upskilling for in-demand jobs and industries.

Many local organizations provide services to support newcomers on the path towards long term self sufficiency. Ukrainian newcomers are eligible for employment services offered to refugees, and many programs across Cleveland supporting workforce development. Programs to consider:



- [The Cuyahoga Works program at the Cuyahoga County Public Library](#) offers free career services including career counseling and coaching, interview preparation, and resume help.
- [Esperanza Threads](#) hosts free sewing training classes as a job preparation opportunity.
- [Global Cleveland](#) offers a number of job services tailored towards immigrants and refugees and collects resources for career training programs across Cleveland.
- [Ohio Means Jobs](#) has a number of career skills resources, including training for career certifications.
- [Towards Employment](#) houses a number of job services, including career readiness training and technical skills building.
- [Ohio City Farm](#) is an urban farm partly run by the Refugee Response that trains and hires refugees.

Likewise, local workforce centers, also called [American Job Centers](#), offer employment and career training services. There are over 80 American Job Centers across Ohio and you can search centers by location. Some services, such as resume writing and interview practice, can be accessed before the newcomer even receives their work authorization. A number of these centers have resources specifically for refugees.

Another training program newcomers can explore is apprenticeship opportunities. Apprenticeships and other work-based learning opportunities provide newcomers the space to earn an income while they learn on the job. Learn more about the federal government [programs here](#). Examples of local apprenticeship programs include [ApprenticeOhio](#).

Newcomers, like other residents of Ohio, may encounter employers who refuse to pay wages or otherwise take advantage of workers. Learn more about the employment rights in Ohio [here](#).

## Accessing Health Services, Health Insurance, & COVID-19 Information

Part of being a sponsor will be to connect newcomers to healthcare. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services offer a [guide](#) to help you explain key aspects of choosing the optimal healthcare plan to newcomers.

### Health Services

#### Local free and/or low cost health care resources

Ohio has a variety of resources available to people who are uninsured, underinsured, or economically disadvantaged. Those listed below may provide or help cover a range of medical, dental, pharmacy, vision, and/or behavioral health services:

- [National Association of Free and Charitable Clinics](#) - search free or charitable health clinics in Ohio under the national association.
- [Charitable Healthcare Network](#) - Ohio network of organizations providing free and charitable healthcare.

Additionally, following their arrival, [USCIS requires newcomers to get screened for Tuberculosis](#) and upload the results to their MyUSCIS account within 90 days of arrival. The below table outlines a few clinics offering testing.

Center	Location	Ukrainian Newcomer Eligibility	Price
Cleveland Clinic	<a href="#">Various</a>	Yes	\$83

Newcomers are eligible for refugee health screenings, which include the TB test and more robust options for continued care. All Cleveland-area refugee medical examinations take place at 3569 Ridge Road, Cleveland, OH, 44102 through [Neighborhood Family Practice](#).

Note: Doctors and agencies receiving federal money should make language services available to individuals who do not speak or understand English well enough to access medical services.

#### Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC)



Federally funded health centers are community-based health care providers that receive funds from the HRSA Health Center Program to provide primary care services in underserved areas. They must meet a stringent set of requirements, including providing care on a sliding fee scale based on ability to pay. Learn more about federally qualified health centers here: [HRSA Health Center Program](#).

FQHCs also often have health insurance enrollment specialists who can help newcomers determine their insurance options. FQHCs have interpretation available, as needed, usually through a language line.

Find an FQHC near you using this [tool](#).

## **Health Insurance**

Newcomers may be eligible for Medicaid, Children's Health Insurance Plans, and Refugee Medical Assistance.

Medicaid is a state and federally funded program that provides healthcare for eligible, low-income groups, including pregnant women, children, and disabled individuals. Individuals can apply online using [Ohio Benefits](#), over the phone, in person, or on paper. Please visit the [Ohio Department of Medicaid](#) for additional information.

The Ohio Healthy Start health insurance program provides free or low-cost health coverage for children under the age of 19 who meet certain family income requirements. To apply, newcomers will need to know income amounts, social security numbers and birthdates, daycare expenses, and work transportation expenses. Individuals can apply online using [Ohio Benefits](#), over the phone, or on paper. Please visit the [Ohio Department of Medicaid](#) for additional information.

Refugee Medical Assistance, which is available for eight months after entry or the date asylum was granted, is assistance for refugees who do not qualify for assistance through Medicaid. See more information on the [Ohio Department of Job and Family Services page](#) and apply through [Ohio Benefits](#).

In addition, newcomers may be eligible for health insurance plans under the Affordable Care Act (ACA). Ohio runs its ACA enrollment through [Healthcare.gov/800-318-2596](#). Newcomers have the option to apply for ACA plans within 60 days post arrival. Newcomers can also wait for open enrollment which runs from November 1 to January 15 in Ohio.

You can also locate agents/brokers and assisters to help with the application process through [this page on Healthcare.gov](#).



When reviewing different plans with your newcomers, it is important to consider:

- The monthly payment (premium)
- Co-pays, deductibles, co-insurance, and maximum out-of-pocket limits

### *Enrolling*

1. Compile all the necessary documents and information before starting your application using [this checklist from Healthcare.gov](#).
2. Choose an [enrollment method here](#) to start and complete an application.
3. Get [help filling out an application](#) here if needed.  
After submitting their application, newcomers will know what plans they are eligible for.
4. Use resources, including the [“How to pick a health insurance plan” guide](#), to help you make a plan selection.
5. After making a selection, you can see your monthly premium on your Marketplace account by looking under "Your Existing Applications," and clicking "Pay Your First Health Insurance Monthly Premium." If available, you can click "Pay for Health Plan Now" to make your online payment.

Note: Not sure what a newcomer is eligible for? Don't worry, once newcomers apply for an ACA plan, they will also be screened for other low and no cost health insurance programs. All hospitals are required to treat patients that have a medical emergency regardless of ability to pay.

Newcomers, like most Americans, may also eventually receive health insurance from their employer. The availability of benefits is an important factor to consider when searching for a job!

### **COVID-19 Resources**

Newcomers arriving under Uniting for Ukraine and humanitarian parole such as for Haitians and Cubans will have received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine, but they may need additional protection. You can search vaccine provider locations across Ohio [here](#).

There are a number of free options to access COVID-19 testing in Cleveland and Ohio. These include:

- Ordering rapid antigen test kits from [Project ACT](#) through the mail.
- Ordering rapid antigen tests from [USPS](#) through the mail.
- Finding a location to either pick up a take-home test or take a test on-site using the state's [online locator tool](#).

You can find community level updates on COVID-19 in Ohio through the [state's website](#).

## Accessing Crisis & Emergency Support

### Emergencies

Acclimating to a new city can be daunting. Sponsors should support newcomers to ensure they are fully prepared in case of a crisis or emergency. Newcomers who are involved in an emergency situation anywhere in the U.S. should immediately dial 9-1-1 on a phone to access emergency services such as fire, police, and paramedics. Of note, 9-1-1 should only be called in an emergency that requires an immediate professional response, such as: fires, a person who is choking, passed out, or who is having a hard time breathing, a serious car accident, a crime (such as a break-in) in progress. Interpretation is available. Some additional resources include:

- [Crisis services](#) from the Alcohol, Drug Addiction and Mental Health Services Board of Cuyahoga County.
- [Community mental health resources](#) in the Greater Cleveland area from the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI).
- [Ohio Alliance to End Sexual Violence resources](#), including a sexual violence hotline (1-800-656-4673) and locations of rape crisis centers across Ohio.
- Starting July 16, 2022, the National Lifeline launches. 9-8-8 will connect the public to mental health crisis counselors who are part of the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline network. People can call, text, or chat when they need emotional support, are thinking about suicide, or are worried about a friend or loved one.

Sponsors can help set newcomers up with [ReadyNotify](#) for emergency and severe weather notifications in Cuyahoga County. [ReadyCuyahoga](#) from the Cuyahoga County Office of Emergency Management offers further information on emergency preparedness in the county.

Look at emergency options for meeting basic needs through [211](#).

## **Your Local Government Resources: Municipal Services and Transportation**

As residents within Cleveland's Local Government, newcomers can access public services within their municipality and county. Services provided by municipalities vary, but typically include programs and resources for newcomers, low-income residents, and other populations.

### **Municipal Services**

Some key aspects of Cleveland's services include:

- **City services** - such as city buildings and payment centers
- **Trash and Recycling** - including sanitation centers
- **Public Health** - such as COVID-19 helplines, COVID-19 testing sites, city health centers, cooling centers, and mental health and addiction services
- **Public Safety** - such as 311 non-emergency service requests, fire departments, police, ambulance services, and courts
- **Food or Shelter Access** - including COVID-19 food distribution sites and homeless services
- **Utilities** - such as water, electric, and gas

Additionally, recreational and cultural activities are provided locally in Cleveland.

- [Find a Cleveland Metropark near you](#)
- [See seasonal activities at City of Cleveland Recreation Centers](#)
- [See list recreation centers and pools](#)
- [See list of parks and playgrounds](#)

### **Local Transportation**

The Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority (GCRTA) provides transportation around the Cleveland area and runs 45 million rides annually. GCRTA runs a number of transportation modes, including HealthLine, bus, Paratransit, light rail, heavy rail, and vanpools. For many newcomers, navigating this combined system may be difficult. Your support in helping them understand how it works will equip them to move around the city more easily.

*Note:* Public transportation is available seven days a week, with rides available as frequently as every few minutes, helping newcomers to navigate their daily schedules.

#### ☐ **Where can a newcomer find information about fares?**

Information on GCRTA fares can be found [here](#). Newcomers can pay using cash on the bus, purchase fares in ticket vending machines and kiosks at Red Line stations,





HealthLine stations and the Customer Service Center at Tower City, get all-day passes at the farebox, ticket vending machines, and at retail agents, or use the [EZfare app](#).

☐ **How can a newcomer track DDOT and SMART buses?**

Newcomers can use [GCRTA's NextConnect tool](#) to get live departure times online.

☐ **Where can a newcomer find a map of the transit network?**

Numerous transit maps are available to support newcomers in planning out route options.

- [Interactive GCRTA System Map](#)
- [Full GCRTA Map](#)
- [Rapid Transit System Map](#)
- [HealthLine & Cleveland State Line BRT Map](#)
- [Downtown Bus/Rapid Map](#)
- [University Circle Area Map](#)

☐ **A newcomer has a driver's license and is looking to park in the city - where can they go?**

Newcomers can find parking options ahead of time online at [Parking.com](#).

☐ **What if a newcomer needs to travel outside of the DDOT/SMART network?**

There are a number of options connecting to the DDOT/SMART network to access the area surrounding Cleveland and offer alternative routes within the city.

- [GoBus](#) - Travels city-to-city in Ohio.
- [MegaBus](#) - Operates from Toledo to Chicago with a location at the Stephanie Tubbs Jones Transit Center.
- [Amtrak](#) - Serves points nationwide from Downtown Cleveland.
- [Greyhound](#) - Offers trips throughout the U.S. with a stop in Downtown Cleveland.



Additionally, ride sharing and transportation rentals are available across Ohio.

Search [here](#) to learn more about city services in Cleveland.

### Identifying a Cultural Community

Cleveland is a major center of immigration in the United States and cultural centers are critical for newcomers to feel comfortable and welcomed in their new home.

The information below is specific to the Ukrainian population. There are like communities in Cleveland for Cubans and Haitians; use the below as an example of the type of organizations you might search for to help you support a newcomer to our country.

Local Ukrainian American Organizations			
#	Name	Address	Map
	<a href="#">Ukrainian Village</a> (Neighborhood in Parma)	State Road between Tuxedo Avenue and Grantwood Drive in Parma, Ohio	
	<a href="#">Ukrainian Cultural Arts Association Cleveland</a> (Houses the <a href="#">Zorya Ukrainian Female Vocal Ensemble</a> and the <a href="#">Kashtan School of Ukrainian Dance</a> )	5720 State Rd, Cleveland, OH 44134	 Ukrainian Cultu...
	<a href="#">Ukrainian American Youth Association Cleveland (CYM)</a>	7425 W Pleasant Valley Rd, Parma, OH 44130	 UAYA
	<a href="#">Ukrainian Museum-Archives</a>	1202 Kenilworth Ave, Cleveland, OH 44113	 Ukrainian Muse...
	<a href="#">St Vladimir Ukrainian Cultural Center</a> (Houses <a href="#">the Hryhory Kytasty Cleveland School of Bandura</a> )	3425 Marioncliff Dr, Parma, OH 44134	 3425 Marionclif...
	<a href="#">Cleveland Selfreliance Federal Credit Union</a>	6108 State Rd, Cleveland, OH 44134	 Cleveland Selfr...
	<a href="#">Ukrainian Federal Credit Union - Osnova Branch</a>	5602 State Rd, Cleveland, OH 44134	 Ukrainian Feder...

	<a href="#">Plast National Scout Association of Ukraine Cleveland</a>	5740 State Rd, Parma, OH 44134	📍 5740 State Rd
	<a href="#">United Ukrainian Organizations of Ohio (UZO)</a>	5909 State Rd, # B Parma, OH 44134	📍 41° 24' 7.6133" ...
Local Faith-based Organizations with Ukrainians Affiliations			
	Name	Address	Map
	<a href="#">St. Vladimir Ukrainian Orthodox Cathedral</a>	5913 State Rd, Cleveland, OH 44134	📍 St. Vladimir Ukr...
	<a href="#">Saint Josaphat Ukrainian Catholic Cathedral</a> (Houses <a href="#">the Taras Shevchenko School of Ukrainian Studies</a> )	5720 State Rd, Cleveland, OH 44134	📍 Saint Josaphat ...
	<a href="#">St. John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Cathedral</a> (Houses <a href="#">Ridna Shkola school of Ukrainian studies</a> )	1900 Carlton Rd, Parma, OH 44134	📍 St. John the Ba...
	<a href="#">Pokrova Ukrainian Greco-Catholic Church</a>	6812 Broadview Rd, Parma, OH 44134	📍 Pokrova Ukraini...
	<a href="#">Sts Peter &amp; Paul Ukrainian Church</a>	2280 W 7th St, Cleveland, OH 44113	📍 Sts Peter & Paul...
	<a href="#">St. Andrew Ukrainian Catholic Church</a>	7700 Hoertz Rd, Parma, OH 44134	📍 St. Andrew Ukr...
	<a href="#">New Life Ukrainian Baptist Church</a>	7840 State Rd, Parma, OH 44134	📍 New Life Ukrain...
	<a href="#">Holy Trinity Ukrainian Orthodox Church</a>	6822 Broadview Rd, Cleveland, OH 44134	📍 Holy Trinity Ort...
	<a href="#">Holy Ghost Ukrainian Catholic Church</a>	1866 Brown St. Akron Ohio 44301	📍 Holy Ghost Ukr...
	<a href="#">Holy Trinity Ukrainian Catholic Church</a>	526 W Rayen Ave, Youngstown, OH 44502	📍 Holy Trinity Ukr...

	Holy Trinity Ukrainian Orthodox Church	9672 State Rd, North Royalton, OH 44133	📍 Holy Trinity Ukr...
	<a href="#">St Mary's Ukrainian Catholic Church</a>	27275 Aurora Rd, Solon, OH 44139	📍 St Mary's Ukrai...
	<a href="#">St. Anne Ukrainian Catholic Church</a>	4310 Kirk Rd, Youngstown, OH 44511	📍 St. Anne Ukrain...
	<a href="#">St. John the Baptist Ukrainian Catholic Church</a>	3038 Charleston Ave, Lorain, OH 44055	📍 St John the Bap...
	<a href="#">St. Mary's Ukrainian Orthodox Church</a>	2304 E 34th St, Lorain, OH 44055	📍 St. Mary's Ukrai...
	<a href="#">St Michael's Ukrainian Catholic Church</a>	135 Walnut St, Rossford, OH 43460	📍 St Michael's Ukr...
	<a href="#">St. Nicholas Ukrainian Orthodox Church</a>	2101 Quail St, Lakewood, OH 44107	📍 St. Nicholas Ukr...
	<a href="#">Sts Peter &amp; Paul Ukrainian Orthodox Church</a>	1025 N Belle Vista Ave, Youngstown, OH 44509	📍 Sts Peter & Paul...

### **Additional Resources**

- [CLINIC's New Relief Options for Ukrainians](#)

#### **Cultural centers, community centers, and immigrant focused nonprofits**

- [Refugee Services Collaborative of Greater Cleveland Services](#) - A list of services and providers of refugee assistance in the Greater Cleveland area.
- [Global Cleveland](#) - A nonprofit organization supporting international newcomers to Cleveland and Cuyahoga County.
- [Building Hope in the City](#) - A nonprofit organization operating a number of supports for refugees and immigrants.
- [The Refugee Response](#) - A nonprofit organization offering a number of resources for new refugees, including youth mentoring and agricultural training and employment.

#### **Benefits and additional supports**

- [“Resources for Ukrainians in Northeast Ohio,” Global Cleveland](#) - A number of local resources geared specifically towards Ukrainian newcomers.
- [Ohio Refugee Services](#) - Information on state programs that support refugees.
  - [“Resources for Ukrainian Humanitarian Parolees in Ohio,” Ohio Department of Family and Job Services](#) - Information on state programs gathered for and geared towards Ukrainian newcomers.
- [Ohio Services Fact Sheets](#) - A list of fact sheets about services and benefits offered by the state of Ohio.
- [Invest in Children](#) - A resource hub by Cuyahoga County focused on supporting prenatal through kindergarten children and their families.

Thank you!

Welcome.US would like to recognize Ohio's [State Refugee Office](#) and the local resettlement agencies in Cleveland for helping to review this guide.