

Following the White House's [supplemental](#) and [continuing resolution](#) requests to Congress, Refugee Council USA (RCUSA) reiterates our strong support for a possible Fiscal Year (FY) 24 Continuing Resolution (CR) with accompanying anomalies and a supplemental funding package that reflects the needs of refugee, displaced, and vulnerable populations. We call on Congress to include the following anomaly priorities as part of such a package:

#1. International Assistance: We support the White House's supplemental request of **\$1.232 billion for the Migration and Refugee Assistance (MRA) account** to support overseas refugee support and processing and the domestic Reception and Placement (R&P) program. Without this funding, there would not be adequate resources available to the Department of State for these operations. MRA funds have been stretched to respond to increased displacement due to the emerging conflict in Sudan, ongoing conflict in Ukraine, the expansion of refugee processing in the Western Hemisphere, and the ongoing resettlement of Afghans. We further support the White House's supplemental request of **\$1.3 billion for the International Disaster Assistance (IDA) account** administered by the Bureau of Humanitarian Assistance within USAID that funds humanitarian assistance in displacement crises, preventing displaced people from fleeing their home countries and becoming refugees.

In addition to the funding requested by the White House, **we further recommend \$100 million for the Emergency Refugee and Migration Assistance (ERMA) account**, an emergency draw-down account that provides an important safety valve that allows the U.S. to respond quickly to unforeseen humanitarian needs. This would return the account to its historically-funded level, as drawdowns in February (earthquakes in Turkey and Syria) and May (addressing forced migration in the Western Hemisphere) fully depleted the account.

#2. Office of Refugee Resettlement: We support the White House's anomaly request of **\$1,853,000,000 to fund the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR)** for the refugee resettlement and unaccompanied children programs. Given the escalation of monthly refugee arrivals, as well as the increased number of Cuban and Haitian Entrants, with similar and higher patterns projected for FY 2024, this funding would ensure sufficient resources to provide direct assistance, medical assistance, and integration services. We further endorse the White House's supplemental request of **\$100 million** to provide resettlement assistance to Ukrainians arriving through the *Uniting for Ukraine* program, including time-limited cash and medical assistance, case management, English language education, job training, and other support services. It is also imperative that ORR has the authority to **expand flexibility for use of its funds that support legal representation** to cover more forms of immigration relief, such as defensive asylum claims (not just affirmative), and cover all ORR-eligible nationalities (not just Afghans).

#3. Extend ORR Eligibility for Ukrainian Parolees Arriving Beyond FY 2023 and Provide REAL ID Eligibility to All Ukrainian Parolees: The [Ukraine supplemental](#) passed last spring included language that authorized Ukrainian parolees arriving during FY 2023 for ORR integration services. We support the White House's request for Congress to include language in a CR or supplemental that extends this authorization for citizens, nationals, and habitual residents of Ukraine who are paroled into the U.S. after September 30, 2023 to ensure new Uniting for Ukraine (U4U) beneficiaries continue to receive the same level of support.¹ In addition, current regulations in [29 states](#) exclude U4U Ukrainian parolees from eligibility for REAL ID-compliant state-issued driver's licenses, creating significant challenges around accessing transportation and securing and maintaining employment. The September CR for FY 2022

¹ The White House requests the following language: Sec. ____ (a) Section 401(a)(1)(A) of the Additional Ukraine Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2022 (Public Law 117-128) is amended by striking "September 30, 2023" and inserting "September 30, 2024". (b) Amounts provided by this section are designated by the Congress as an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, as amended: Provided, That such amounts shall be available only if the President designates such amount as an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A).

included language clarifying that similarly-situated Afghan parolees were eligible for a REAL ID. We request that similar language be used in the FY 2024 CR for Ukrainian parolees, as is provided in the bipartisan [RIDE for Ukraine Act](#) (H.R.3259).

#4. Extend Authorization of Afghan Parolees' Eligibility for Resettlement Services and Afghan Adjustment: The [September 2021 continuing resolution for FY 2022](#) authorized refugee resettlement benefits for Afghans paroled into the United States between July 31, 2021, and September 30, 2022, as well as those paroled into the United States after September 30, 2022, who are also either the spouse or child of such a parolee or the parent or legal guardian of an unaccompanied child paroled during that period. Last year, Congress [further extended this authorization](#) for certain Afghan parolees who arrive through [September 30, 2023](#). This authorization has been instrumental and a critical lifeline in ensuring Afghan newcomers have the reception and placement assistance, medical care, housing support, and other integration services they need to thrive in their new homes. Afghans continue to arrive in the U.S. under parole, and, without authorization language extending the eligibility window, they will not be eligible for resettlement assistance, entitlement programs such as Medicaid and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program food assistance, and other benefits. We urge Congress to extend authorization for arrivals during FY 2024. In addition, the thousands of Afghan parolees who are here continue to be stuck in legal limbo without a clear path to permanent status. We strongly recommend the inclusion of the Afghan Adjustment Act ([S.2327](#) / [H.R.4627](#)) in any upcoming funding package.

#5. U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services: Absent from the White House's supplemental and CR requests was needed-funding for U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) to address refugee and asylum processing and backlogs and to respond to other backlogs for work authorization requests, adjustment of status applications, and more. While the request included funding for several humanitarian efforts, including the continuation of *Uniting for Ukraine*, it fails to consider the vital role of USCIS in adjudicating not only humanitarian cases but those of many other newcomers as well. USCIS needs **\$600 million** in additional resources to sustain its efforts to hire, onboard, and deploy critical refugee and asylum officers and continue instituting technological advancements in processing. This funding would help address backlogs, increase processing speed, reunite families, and provide employers access to additional workers amid crippling labor shortages.

#6. Legislative Authorization to Strengthen Housing Access: The Afghanistan Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2022 (ASA) [authorized](#) ORR to provide Refugee Support Services (RSS) base awards to states and communities that needed additional resources to adequately meet resettlement housing needs (as well as appropriating supplemental funds for that purpose). To ensure that [all ORR-eligible populations](#), such as refugees resettled through USRAP, Cuban/Haitian entrants, asylees, Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) holders who assist U.S. missions overseas, and others, Congress should provide ORR with the authorization to fund housing assistance for all populations ORR serves. This should be done as part of all appropriations legislation, including a CR.

Finally, we express our deep concern at the prospect of a federal government shutdown that may result from a breakdown in negotiations. The U.S. Refugee Admissions Program is among the many federal initiatives that could suffer devastating impacts from even a short term pause in operation. Previous shutdowns have resulted in stalled refugee resettlement, canceled flights, and cascading impacts across the system. At the same time, we strongly oppose the inclusion of provisions in any compromise that would limit key pathways to humanitarian protection for those in need. Reported [efforts](#) to include harmful border and immigration restrictions, such as H.R. 2 or portions of it, would place vulnerable people in danger by undermining critical asylum and parole programs. Such provisions would tarnish any deal of which they are a part and should be categorically rejected.

For more information about RCUSA's FY 2024 funding priorities, please visit:

<https://bit.ly/FY24USCISFunding>
<https://bit.ly/FY24StateUSAID>
<https://bit.ly/FY24ORRFunding>
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Short link to this document: bit.ly/RCUSAFY24CRPriorities