

Refugee Awareness Month June 2022

Refugees who seek safety, liberty, and basic human rights for themselves and their families have been given a safe haven in our country. Historically, the United States has been a global leader in resettling refugees from many countries including but not limited to the Democratic Republic of Congo, Burma, Iran, Afghanistan, and Ukraine. California follows suit as the leading state to resettle refugees, as reflected in Department of State data, along with Los Angeles County as a top destination for refugee arrivals in California. According to the California Department of Social Services, over 4,000 individuals eligible for refugee services from nearly 30 different countries arrived in Los Angeles County within the past five years.

Notwithstanding that we continue to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, our nation continues to embrace a commitment of compassion, generosity and support for refugees and their families who have been forced to flee their homelands due to religious and political persecution, war, and civil turmoil. This compassion is reflected in Los Angeles County’s proposals, such as the recent Board motion that initiated the Los

MOTION

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Angeles County Afghan Refugee Task Force (ARTF) to identify and coordinate all available resources for evacuated Afghan refugee allies and a separate motion to assist war-stricken Ukrainian nationals. The ARTF is comprised of over 70 members including several counties, state and federal departments, philanthropy, and local refugee resettlement and community-based organizations who have impressively partnered to heal and strengthen the social welfare of refugees, to ultimately empower them. Local refugee service organizations include but are not limited to:

- Interfaith Refugee and Immigration Service;
- International Institute of Los Angeles;
- International Rescue Committee;
- Jobs Vision Success SoCal; and
- Refugee Forum of Los Angeles.

Together, these agencies and the Los Angeles County Chief Executive Office's Office of Emergency Management and the Departments of Consumer and Business Affairs' Office of Immigrant Affairs, Public Social Services, Public Health, and Workforce Development, Aging and Community Services have created pathways for the resolution of many refugees' language, social integration, medical, and housing needs, while providing culturally and linguistically sensitive services. In turn, refugees have made valuable social and economic contributions to our County as they have pursued trades, professions, and established entrepreneurship.

As the California Department of Social Services annually declares June as "Refugee Awareness Month" and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees annually proclaims June 20 as "World Refugee Day," the Board of Supervisor welcomes

and celebrates the invaluable contributions that refugees make to Los Angeles County.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the Board of Supervisors:

1. Proclaim June 2022 as “Refugee Awareness Month” to increase awareness of refugees’ valuable contributions to the County of Los Angeles; and
2. Applaud the vital efforts and collaboration of local refugee service organizations and County of Los Angeles departments dedicated to assisting refugees.

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