



## **Summary: Immigration and Refugee Assistance in the Ukraine Funding Bill**

On May 21, President Biden signed into law the [Additional Ukraine Supplemental Appropriations Act](#), a law that provides nearly \$40 billion in additional military, economic and humanitarian aid to respond to the ongoing Russian invasion of Ukraine. Among [many other provisions](#), the bill provides humanitarian support for Ukrainians who have fled the country as the result of the invasion — including additional funding and benefits for those who have or will be resettled in the U.S.

### ***Background:***

Russia's ongoing invasion of Ukraine has produced the largest refugee crisis in Europe since World War II. As of June 2022, [approximately 7 million Ukrainians have fled](#) their homes. Most of these forced migrants have found safety and temporary protections in bordering countries and throughout the EU, although as more and more are displaced it has put host countries and local refugee support organizations under severe stress to provide shelter and basic services. In response to this need, in March the Biden administration committed [to welcome 100,000 Ukrainians](#) fleeing the invasion and donated \$1 billion to assist European countries with the humanitarian crisis.

Rather than rely on the [sluggish refugee resettlement](#) system, in April the administration launched the [Uniting for Ukraine \(U4U\)](#) private sponsorship initiative to follow through on its commitment to protect displaced Ukrainians. While the program has been effective at getting Ukrainians to safety, parolees [were not initially afforded](#) the same access to benefits and case management as refugees and private sponsors have been required to shoulder the financial and administrative burdens of resettlement largely on their own.

Over [40,000 Ukrainians](#) have already been paroled into the U.S. as of June 21, and many more are likely to arrive soon through the U4U program. These parolees are provided with access to work authorization and two years of temporary protection from deportation, but they lack a clear pathway to permanent status and — prior to Congressional action — they were ineligible for most public benefits typically offered to refugees, including medical and food assistance and employment preparation.

### ***Refugee and Parolee Provisions in the Additional Ukraine Supplemental Act:***

- **The bill provides access to a series of additional benefits to certain Ukrainian parolees.** Ukrainians who have been or will be paroled into the U.S. between February 24, 2022, and September 30, 2023 will now have access to cash assistance through the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI); health insurance through Medicaid; and food assistance through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). The bill also provides access to certain [Office of Refugee Resettlement \(ORR\) benefits](#), including cash assistance, medical assistance, employment preparation, job placement, and English language training.

Despite this expansion of benefits, the bill does *not* provide Ukrainian parolees eligibility for assistance through the Department of State's [Reception and Placement Program](#). U4U sponsors will still be required to assist Ukrainians with housing and with applications for the various benefits for which they are now eligible.

- **The bill authorizes \$900 million for the Refugee and Entry Assistance (REA) account to support Ukrainian refugees and parolees.** The [REA](#) account provides grants to states and qualified organizations to deliver services and assistance to refugees and parolees. This funding is likely to be used in part to help provide the additional benefits listed above.
- **The bill authorizes \$350 million for the Migration and Refugee Assistance Account (MRA) to support displaced Ukrainians who remain overseas.** The [MRA](#) account provides urgent support, health services, and food assistance to displaced Ukrainians who remain in the country and those who have found temporary shelter in neighboring European states. Some MRA funds may also be used to support the admission, reception, and placement of Ukrainians in the U.S.

*The National Immigration Forum would like to thank policy intern Gilberto Calderin for his extensive contributions to this summary.*