

ISC's Refugee Support Services Activity Report For the month of October 2025

In this new federal fiscal year starting on October 1, 2025, having lost 17 members of our Refugee Assistance Program, the few of us remaining have been trying our best to produce the following outcomes.

1.A) This October, our Refugee Support Services (RSS) Team provided various Case Management and Barrier Removal services to a total of 8 needy refugees of all national origins, including 1 from Afghanistan, 1 from Bhutan, 4 from Democratic Republic of Congo, and 2 from Sudan. Case Management services provided this month consisted mainly of medical appointments, PennDOT driver's licensing requirements, employment/job upgrading, public transportation, and housing and landlord/tenant responsibilities.

1.B) Our RSS Team also provided various Immigration Assistance and Naturalization services to a total of 48 needy refugees, including: 10 from Afghanistan, 2 from Democratic Republic of Congo, 2 from Somalia, 33 from Syria, and 1 from Venezuela. Most of those clients were assisted in applying for the following immigration benefits: USCIS Form I-485: Application for Permanent Residence, USCIS Form N-400: Application for Naturalization, and USCIS Form I-912: Application for Fee Waiver.

1.C) This month, our RSS Team also provided culturally and linguistically appropriate Employment services to a total of 14 needy refugees, all of them were from Afghanistan. Those customized Employment Services have resulted in 7 job placements in permanent fulltime positions.

2.A) This October, our Ukrainian Refugee Support Services (URSS) Team provided various Case Management and Barrier Removal services to a total of 30 needy Ukrainian refugees. Case Management services provided this month consisted mainly of: medical appointments, housing and landlord/tenant responsibilities, PennDOT driver's licensing requirements, employment/job upgrading, public assistance/other government benefits, schooling/adult education and foreign credentials evaluation, immigration laws and processes, elderly and children protective services, consumer's education, and starting/developing small business.

2.B) Our URSS Team also provided various Immigration Assistance to a total of 21 needy Ukrainian clients. Most of those clients were assisted in applying for the following immigration benefits: USCIS Form I-131: Application for Re-Parole, USCIS Form I-94: Arrival Record, USCIS Form I-821: Application for Temporary Protected Status (TPS), USCIS Form I-765: Application for Work Permit, and USCIS Form I-912: Application for Fee Waiver.

2.C) This month, the URSS Team also provided culturally and linguistically appropriate Employment services to a total of 10 needy Ukrainian clients. Those customized Employment Services have resulted in 2 job placements in permanent fulltime positions.

3) Outreach, Linkage, Networking, Coordination, and Collaboration Events

This October, our ISC Team engaged in a series of impactful activities focused on community outreach, employment linkage, community networking, and agency collaboration, including:

A) On 10/01/25, Phuong and Tuan participated in the “Community Power Social Event: Rooted in Resilience” organized by the Pennsylvania Immigration Coalition (PIC) in Harrisburg to strengthen our mutual assistance relationships with other regional community organizations.

B) On 10/02/25, our URSS team participated in the community event “Taste of the Nations” organized by Hope Within Ministries at the Star Barn in Elizabethtown. This event brought together religious leaders, community advocates, and local residents to promote their support for the Ukrainian asylees.

C) On 10/08/25, Zahra represented the ISC at the “IEP Best Practices for Interpreters and Cultural Liaisons” hosted by the Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network (PaTTAN) in Harrisburg to promote the mission of fostering cultural understanding, language access, and equitable communication through the ISC Language Bank program.

D) On 10/09/25, our RSS-URSS team attended the virtual “22nd Immigration Law and Policy Conference” webcast coordinated by the Practising Law Institute, to learn more about current and impending national immigration legislation.

E) On 10/16/25, our RSS-URSS team attended the virtual “National Refugee Assistance Program Updates” webinar offered by Welcome.US, to be updated on the status of the national refugee assistance program.

F) On 10/21/25, our RSS-URSS team participated in the PennLive’s “2025 Peace and Justice in PA Award Ceremony” at the Penn State Kulkarni Theatre of Penn State Harrisburg that brought together community, business, and religious leaders to share their support for immigrant communities.

G) On 10/22/25, Zahra spoke at a the “Crossing the Line: Finding America in the Borderlands,” Conference led by Dr. Sarah Towle, to discuss on current immigration realities and the important roles of community organizations in the region. The event took place at the Harrisburg Grace Methodist Church and included representatives from the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission, Pennsylvania Immigration Resource Center, Pennsylvania Immigrant Refugee Women’s Network, etc.

H) On 10/24/25, the RSS-URSS team hosted a Penn State Health community health initiative to provide free flu vaccinations to everyone interested, including ISC clients and local residents from the surrounding community.

I) On 10/28/25, the RSS-URSS team attended the webinar on “Legal Options for Afghans and Ukrainians” webinar offered by Catholic Legal Immigration Inc., to be updated on the status of the national refugee assistance program.

J) On 10/29/25, RSS-URSS team participated in a Job Fair hosted by New Hope Ministries. This event brought together refugee job seekers, community partners, and 19 local employers with a shared goal of connecting people to meaningful work opportunities.

K) On 10/30/25, the RSS-URSS team attended the Zoom Meeting on “SNAP Changes and the local Food Bank Network Response” coordinated by the Central PA Food Bank, to be prepared for the impending shortage of supplies in our food pantry.

**** Mrs. Christine Filipovich, our Volunteer Coordinator for the Capital Region, shared the following contributions from her wonderful group.***

The below report summarizes the volunteer activities of the Harrisburg/Mechanicsburg group of the ISC. Each volunteer who contributed in October 2025 is listed with the hours they spend aiding ISC clients.

The total combined number of hours of volunteer support was 260.75

David Castonguay - 2 hrs.

Drove Rakia home - 10/6

Drove Rukhasana to ESL class - 10/29

Jady Conroy - 4 hrs.

Drove Pashton to ESL class - 10/2

Drove Sheba to ESL class - 10/15, 10/21

Becky Cotich - 2 hrs.

Drove Hemedah to ESL class - 10/3

Drove Hemedah to ESL class - 10/3

Pat and Justin Donnelly - 1.5 hrs.

Drove Sheba and Meena home from HACC campuses - 10/22

Christine Filipovich - 37 hrs.

Facilitated communication and coordination related to client needs, donations, and volunteer activities - 10/1-10/31

Drove Meena Sarwan to food bank from HACC - 10/20

Drove Aminullah Noori and his daughter to and from appointment - 10/24

Drove Mahasiba home from food bank - 10/31

Keevin Graham - 3 hrs.

Drove Zahra Bayat to appointment - 10/2

Assisted Zahra Bayat with driving - 10/17, 10/24

Barbara Hamm - 4.5 hrs.

Communicated with families about needs and assisted in providing help - 10/1-10/23
Delivered donated items to Nezil family and made calls about diaper bank and medical insurance - 10/3

Kari Hultman - 4 hrs.

Drove the Noori Family to and from an appointment with the ISC - 10/21

Drove Noori and her daughter to and from an appointment - 10/30

Marleen and Scott Karns - 6.25 hrs.

Assisted Wranga Ahmadzai with state form - 10/14

Dropped off needed paperwork to Mujib Ahmadzai - 10/15

Drove Sheba Sadat home from ESL class - 10/16

Drove Rukhsanna Salim to and from ESL class and drove Sanan Salim home from school - 10/22

Gathered employment information for Mujib Ahmadzai - 10/26

Emily Krebs - 5.5 hrs.

Saeddi family - 10/22

Pashton Saeddi - 10/28

Richard Krampe - 7.5 hrs.

Delivered donated furniture to Mahasiba - 10/12

Drove Laiqa Sarwan and Sheba Sadat to ESL class - 10/24

Drove Khaleda Bayani to ESL class - 10/31

Robert Little - 18 hrs.

Drove Noori to market - 10/1

Drove Pashton and Bibi to appointment and drove Bai Nasari to work - 10/2

Took Aminullah shopping - 10/3

Drove Sheba to ESL class and drove Mahaseba to and from CWS food bank - 10/6

Drove Mahaseba to Dauphin co - 10/7

Picked up meds for Poshton - 10/17

Drove Bibi Khaldar to appointment and drove Sheena to HAAC - 10/20

Drove Mahaseba to the ISC - 10/21

Drove Meena to HAAC - 10/22

Drove Aminullah to Concentra and drove Mahaseba to lab - 10/29

Olivia Long - 2.5 hrs.

Communicated with volunteer coordinator and volunteers, contributed to construction of volunteer progress report, and logged volunteer hours - 10/15-10/31

Cheryl Martin - 3.5 hrs.

Assisted Shahnaz Khetabi with leasing, utilities, English, and school registration - 10/6, 10/20, 10/27

JJ Patterson - 22 hrs.

Drove Rukhsana Salim to ELL class - 10/10

Drove Sanan Salim to appointment - 10/13

Delivered furniture to Bayani family from New Digs Ministry - 10/15

Drove Rukhsana Salim to ELL class - 10/17

Drove Rukhsana Salim to ELL class - 10/24

Drove Rukhsana Salim to appointment - 10/28

Susan and John Rimby - 29.5 hrs.

Assisted Amena Omid with vehicle search and driving assistance - 10/4, 10/11, 10/25

Driving lessons for Rukshana and Sasson - 10/6, 10/13
 Driving lessons for Selim - 10/20, 10/27
 Driving lessons for Dani, Enia, and Orlando Velasquez - 10/7, 10/8, 10/15, 10/16, 10/21, 10/28
 Driving test for Dani and Enia - 10/22
John and Susanne Robinson - 22.5 hrs.
 Drove Mrs. Bayani to and from ESL class - 10/8
 Tutored Bayani daughter and returned shoes for Mr. Bayani - 10/10
 Took Bayani phone in for repair - 10/14
 Delivered shoes to Mr. Bayani and assisted him in resolving various issues - 10/17
 Tutored math for Asma Bayani - 10/19
 Drove Mrs. Bayani and Mrs. Sarwan to and from ESL class - 10/22
 Drove Mrs. Bayani to and from ESL class - 10/29
Calvin Smith - 9 hrs.
 Drove Pashton home from ESL class - 10/2
 Drove Noori to work - 10/6
 Drove Saeedi sisters to and from appointment - 10/15
 Drove Noori to appointment, home, and to work - 10/22
Ben Stokes - 3 hrs.
 Delivered furniture to the Paghmani family - 10/14
Barbara Sunderlin - 48.5 hrs.
 Drove Noori to and from appointment, drove Laiqa to and from ESL class, and picked up and dropped off household donations - 10/1
 Drove Noori to and from appointment - 10/2
 Drove Khaleda, Sarwan, and Sedat to and from ESL class - 10/3
 Drove Sheba Sedat to school and assisted and drove Noori to work - 10/7
 Drove Meena to HACC and to DMV - 10/8
 Drove Noori to appointments and helped with car issues - 10/9
 Drove Khaleda, Sarwan, and Sedat to and from ESL class - 10/10
 Drove Noori to lab, repair shop, and work - 10/13
 Assisted Nori with auto shopping - 10/14
 Drove Sarwan to and from HACC - 10/15
 Drove Noori to appointments and store - 10/16
 Drove Sarwan and Sedat to and from ESL class - 10/17
 Assisted Nori with auto shopping and drove Sedat to appointment - 10/27
 Assisted Nori with SNAP - 10/28
 Drove Sarwan and Sedat to and from ESL class - 10/29
John Taylor - 4 hrs.
 Drove the Saeedi sisters and Sima Qudusi to and from ESL class - 10/3
Michael Varano - 5 hrs.
 Drove Ms. Salim to ESL class and her son to school - 10/3
 Drove Ms. Popal to Project Share - 10/22
Stuart and Jane Warren - 11 hrs.
 ESL with the Biani family - 10/5, 10/12, 10/19, 10/26
 Moved furniture with the Biani family - 10/15
Maripat Wehman - 3 hrs.

Practiced English with Ameri family - 10/13, 10/20, 10/27

Vi Jean Yeo - 2 hrs.

Driving lesson for Nazar - 10/7 and 10/16

**** Dr. Roger Olson and Mrs. Becky Cotich, our Volunteer Coordinators for the Market Square and Pine Street Presbyterian Churches shared the following contributions from their wonderful group.***

The following activities took place with the referenced families. This work is being done by the volunteers of Market Square Presbyterian Church.

10/3 Volunteered at ISC Friday Food Pantry

10/11 Transported Ayman AlMesleh to the ISC for employment counseling and to stock up from the Friday Food Pantry offerings.

10/15 Two pickup trucks driven by volunteers delivered furniture and household goods from the New Digs charity to the Afghan Bayani family in New Cumberland.

10/26 We met the newly acquired Afghan Tekhnekyar family of Enola. They arrived in the Harrisburg area in October 2024 sponsored by Church World Service. We helped the family fill out an application for furniture and household items from New Digs. They also asked about driving instructions for the mother, Be Be. They wondered if a laptop computer could be obtained for use by their school-age youngsters. We plan to again meet with the family on 11/9 to discuss their wants.

10/31 Transported Be Be Tekhnedyar and her month-old daughter Kawsar and daughter Bi Bi to the Friday Food Pantry at the ISC.

**** Kudos to the following Golden Hearts***

This month, 5 generous donors contributed 83 items, including clothing and household supplies for refugees in need. Due to storage space and manpower shortage, we had to stop accepting drop-off donations at the end of October. We are truly sorry, but from now on, we can only accept donations on "as needed basis", at the request of the refugee families themselves.

In October, generous donations were received from the following compassionate partners-in-mission to support our refugee mission: on 10/02/25: \$100 from Mr./Mrs. Thomas & Joanne Castner, on 10/06/25: \$40 from Mr. Douglas Kremer, on 10/06/25: \$50 from Mr./Mrs. William & Sharen Carson, on 10/09/25: \$150 from C. Hamel, on 10/09/25: \$500 from Mr./Mrs. James & Elizabeth Terry, on 10/14/25: \$100 from Ms. Allison Spooner, on 10/14/25: \$25 from Mr. Andrew Herring, on 10/14/25: \$ 5,000 from Rev. Thomas M. Johnston, on 10/14/25: \$620.80 from Mrs. Lucinda J Sproat, on 10/21/25: \$100 from Ashley Robinson, on 10/24/25: \$300 from Mrs. Margaret Kooistra,

on 10/29/25: \$20 from Ms. Connie Wonder, on 10/29/25: \$150 from Mr. Wilmer Henninger, and on 10/29/25: \$9,245.79 from Mrs. Sandy Jones.

On behalf of the fortunate refugee beneficiaries and the ISC, we would like to express our most sincere gratitude to all the above-mentioned Golden Hearts.

**** This month of October 2025, we would like to share the volunteer experience of Mr. Scott and Mrs. Marleen Karns, two of our unsung heroes.***

In August of 2021 my husband and I watched with the rest of the world as Kabul, Afghanistan, fell to the Taliban. We saw images of men and women, families and babies, old and young, flocking to the airport, hoping for a ride to safety. I began to cry as I witnessed horrifying chaos and fear on the other side of the world. I knew then that I would have to do something to help these people.

Eventually in the spring of 2022, I turned to the Internet to search “Afghan Refugees Harrisburg, PA,” and I found information on the International Service Center. One short email inquiring about volunteer opportunities was all it took; the ISC welcomed my husband and me and opened our eyes to a world we had seen only on television and in magazines. Our volunteer activities with the ISC introduced us to many wonderful people, most of whom came from Afghanistan—the country that initially touched our hearts. We have found the Afghan people to be so warm and hospitable, truly caring and kind. One lovely family in particular, the Ahmadzai family, has become like a second family to us. We have been welcomed into their homes and their lives, and our own lives are so much richer because of them.

Never did my husband and I imagine that we would have a firsthand look into a culture so different, yet so beautiful, from our own. We have grown immensely through our experience with the International Service Center, we are better people because of it, and we hope to continue to be of service to the newcomers to our country.

**** This month of October 2025, we would like to share the beneficial impact of our assistance effort on some of our refugee families.***

A) The Journey of the Noori Family

Mr. Noori, the head of an Afghan family of six including four young children, arrived in the United States on September 30, 2024, after enduring a long and uncertain journey from their homeland.

Before arriving in America, Mr. Noori was working in Afghanistan as a child psychologist at a nonprofit organization called Women for Women International. His work focused on helping children overcome trauma and emotional challenges. However, following the political changes in Afghanistan, the organization facilitated the opportunity for its senior Afghan staff to apply for the Priority 2 (P-2) refugee program. This P-2 status would provide a path to safety for those at risk of retaliation from the Taliban, the new rulers of

Afghanistan. To complete their P-2 status application, the Noori family had to relocate to Qatar, where they had to undergo a month-long vetting process before finally being approved for resettlement in the United States.

Mr. Noori recalls that before the fall of Afghanistan, both he and his wife had stable jobs and a peaceful life. *"We never imagined,"* he said, *"that one day we would have to leave everything behind for the sake of our safety."* Arriving in a completely new country, with an unfamiliar culture and language, was an overwhelming experience for the family. Yet their determination and the comprehensive support they received from the ISC turned their challenges into a success story.

Upon arrival, the Noori family initially received assistance from Church World Service (CWS) and were soon referred to ISC by a member of the Afghan community. Once connected with ISC, the Afghan Refugee Support and Services (ARSS) Team conducted an in-depth assessment of the family's situation. The assessment identified their most urgent needs, including employment, interpretation, ESL classes, transportation, and basic household support. From that moment on, ISC became the central source of guidance and support for the family.

The ISC's Afghan team began working closely with Mr. Noori to prepare him for the American job market. The team assisted him in completing job applications, provided job readiness and interview training, and offered translation and interpretation support during the hiring process. Through this dedicated assistance, Mr. Noori successfully secured a stable and well-paying position with Dorman Warehouse, where he continues to work diligently. Meanwhile, ISC staff also supported Mrs. Noori in finding suitable employment near their home, enabling both parents to contribute to their family's financial security.

ISC's involvement extended far beyond employment. The family was introduced to ISC's dedicated volunteers, who became a vital part of their support network. These volunteers provided needed transportation, offered household donations such as furniture, clothing, and other essential items, as well as helping the Noori family engage in social activities. To alleviate stress and support their mental well-being, volunteers invited the family to community picnics and recreational gatherings, helping them connect with other local residents and develop a sense of belonging.

The dedication of ISC volunteers was extraordinary. Mrs. Barbie supported the family like a true family member herself. She stayed overnight in the hospital during one of the children's surgeries, provided personal financial assistance whenever needed, helped with transportation to various scheduled medical appointments, hosted community picnics for the family, and continued to support the family even while she was unwell, prioritizing their needs above her own. Similarly, Mr. Bob, another wonderful Good Samaritan, assisted the family during car repairs, coordinating with the mechanic to

resolve any potential issue, and even bought new shoes for the children using his personal funds. Their selfless actions reflected the compassion and commitment that define ISC's volunteer network.

ISC staff also provided ongoing practical support for the family's daily critical unmet needs. They assisted with the renewal of the family's government benefits, offered interpretation and guidance regarding tax issues with the IRS, and consistently provided interpretation support during medical appointments, ensuring the family could communicate effectively and access services confidently.

When the Noori family's car broke down, ISC staff and volunteers stepped in immediately. The team helped in towing the vehicle to a mechanic and coordinated financial donations (\$1,000) to cover repair costs. Understanding the family's financial strain during that period, ISC also provided a one-month rent donation (\$1,595), ensuring they could remain stable and avoid the burden of facing an unpaid bill. This timely intervention reflected ISC's commitment to standing by its clients at every step of their adjustment process.

Language development was another key component of ISC's support. To strengthen their communication skills and facilitate greater integration into American society, the Noori couple was assisted with their enrollment in the appropriate English as a Second Language (ESL) classes. Thanks to consistent participation, they began to improve their English proficiency and confidence, which further supported their progress toward self-sufficiency.

In addition to their economic and social development, ISC played a critical role in ensuring the family's legal stability. After reviewing their case, the RSS team determined that the Noori family was eligible to apply for Permanent Residency (Green Card). RSS staff guided them through the completion of the required medical examinations and submission of their Green Card applications. This milestone marked a major step toward long-term security and peace of mind, protecting them from the fear of deportation and helping them feel truly settled in their new community.

Through continuous support, careful coordination, and genuine care, the ISC was able to help them achieve both self-sufficiency and legal stability.

Reflecting on their experience, Mr. and Mrs. Noori shared their heartfelt gratitude:

"We are deeply thankful to the International Service Center and its staff for their tireless support. When we arrived in this country, everything was new and difficult, the culture, the language, and the systems. But the ISC team and their volunteers stood by us every step of the way. They listened to our problems, guided us patiently, and helped us rebuild our lives. Today, we are safe, working, and hopeful for the future. We truly

believe that organizations like ISC are essential for new immigrants and refugees who arrive in this country seeking a fresh start.”

(Written by: Rakia Rasoli)

B) A New Beginning for the Kolisnichenko Family

Andrii and Nataliia Kolisnichenko arrived in the United States with their young daughter Iryna in June 2023, escaping the war in Ukraine and seeking a safe future.

The first months in America were hard. Every day brought new challenges — an unfamiliar language, a different culture, and complex immigration paperwork. But their lives changed the day they walked into the International Service Center (ISC) in December 2024. From that moment, they were no longer alone.

The ISC team surrounded the family with care and guidance. Staff helped translate important documents, prepare resumes, and apply for benefits to meet their basic needs. The Job Developer encouraged Nataliia to apply for jobs and supported her through each step, while the Vocational English instructor provided eight full vocational English training sessions to prepare her for interviews and job readiness. Volunteers provided Nataliia with driving lessons to help her gain independence and mobility, an essential skill for daily life and employment. When she secured her first job at Synergy Homecare, ISC went a step further by arranging transportation for her first day, ensuring she could arrive on time and start her new position confidently despite not yet having a driver's license. This support exemplified ISC's hands-on approach to removing barriers and helping clients succeed in both work and daily life.

A few months later, Nataliia applied for new positions, including one at Lindt Factory, with ongoing support from ISC staff, who provided language assistance during phone calls and followed up with employers to advance her applications. Soon after, she secured a full-time position at Patriot Homecare, which offered more favorable working hours and a higher pay rate, allowing her to achieve greater financial stability and balance work with family responsibilities.

In addition to employment support, ISC staff provided educational mentoring for Nataliia's school-age daughter, Iryna, helping identify resources for scholarships and learning opportunities. For Nataliia, ISC offered information about ESL courses at HACC and future programs that could expand her skills and open doors to higher-paying jobs. She is planning to start in the Spring semester, taking another step toward long-term self-sufficiency and career advancements.

In 2025, the family's perseverance was rewarded when they won the Diversity Visa Lottery. With ISC's recommendation, they worked with an immigration attorney to complete their Green Card process — and just weeks later, they proudly became permanent residents.

Today, the Kolisnichenkos are building a new life filled with hope, hard work, and gratitude. They will never forget the kindness and dedication of the International Service Center — the people who stood by them and helped turn fear into a new beginning.

(Written by: Olena Ivashchuck)

Although we are very proud of those success stories that have been produced by the entire ISC Team before our dramatic downsizing. But now, as a remaining portion of our original ISC Team, we will have to learn how to do more with much less to assist as many needy refugees as we can.

Finally, we would like to end this monthly report by sharing with you these humble thoughts:

Due to the continued suspension of the national Refugee Assistance Program, we had to end our ECDC-funded refugee resettlement program on September 30, 2025, and lost seventeen of our colleagues in the process. We began the new Federal Fiscal Year on October 1st with a reduced State fee-for-service contract to provide critical Case Management and Employment services to Ukrainian asylees and eligible refugees of all national origins. Our diminished Refugee Assistance Team of six staff and three interns are trying our best to address the needs of nearly 700 needy refugees, with the ardent support of over 30 committed community volunteers.

Many people in this country are also facing a looming challenge. The open enrollment period for health insurance started on November 1st in most states. However, on the last day of October, Congress remains at a standstill over extending the enhanced tax credits for the Affordable Care Act (ACA) Marketplace, which expires at the end of this year. The enhanced tax credits greatly improve health insurance enrollment and make insurance more affordable for millions of individuals and their families. By allowing these tax credits to expire, more than 24 million Americans will see their premiums rise by thousands of dollars or more.

As the government shutdown continues, more families will also lose access to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Full SNAP funding ceases on November 1st and is only restored when Congress funds and reopens the government.

Federal workers, who have dedicated their careers to public service, have also been unable to perform critical functions to keep our communities safe and are working without pay or are being illegally fired. Meanwhile, on top of the expiring tax credits, many vulnerable refugees and immigrants will soon lose access to health care when the eligibility changes that Congress passed in July's reconciliation law begin.

It is unconscionable that the health, safety, and survival of communities across America are threatened because the White House and Congressional leadership refuse to ensure millions of Americans have affordable access to health care. In our humble opinion, the health and wellness of our children and families should not be up for

negotiation. Additionally, the Federal government should not let our communities go hungry because it cannot find a resolution to the shutdown.

Rather than pouring excessive funds into ICE and CBP operations that harm our communities and terrorize our new refugee neighbors, we should urge our President to redirect this money to help ensure families in America can meet their basic needs, especially in terms of food security.

We should pray that this Administration and Congress will find enough goodness in their hearts to pass a funding bill that reopens the government, protects access to health care, and supports the recovery and well-being of our communities.

Please do not forget us in your prayers.

Respectfully submitted,

Phuong N. Truong, Executive Director, ISC