

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

1) This July, our Multi-Ethnic Refugee Support Services (RSS) Team provided Employment-Related Interpretation services at PennDOT and other job sites to 22 needy refugees of various national origins, including:

1 from Burma, 1 from Burundi, 1 from Cuba, 3 from Democratic Republic of Congo, 1 from Eritrea, 7 from Syria, and 8 from Venezuela, to enable them to gain, retain, or upgrade their employment status.

Our RSS Team also provided Citizenship Assistance and needed Legal Assistance to 45 needy refugees, including: 3 from Columbia, 2 from Democratic Republic of Congo, 1 from Eritrea, 2 from Guatemala, 6 from Sudan, 7 from Syria, and 24 from Venezuela to enable them to adjust their immigration status and begin their integration into the mainstream American community.

2) This July, our Afghan Refugee Support Service (ARSS) Team provided various Case Management and Employment Mentoring services to a total of 75 Afghan refugees, including:

- 84 case management, referral, and follow-up services were provided to 35 needy Afghan refugees at various sites.
- 10 translation and interpretation services were provided to Limited-English-Proficient (LEP) Afghan refugees to help them interact with mainstream service providers.
- 54 employment mentoring services were provided to Afghan refugees to facilitate their achievement of self-sufficiency, resulting in two successful job placements.
- 31 Afghan refugees were provided with educational and vocational support services matching their career goals.

3) This July, our Ukrainian Refugee Support Service (URSS) Team provided various Case Management and Employment Mentoring services to a total of 78 Ukrainian refugees, including:

- 78 case management, referral, and follow-up services were provided to needy Ukrainian refugees at various sites.
 - 37 translation and interpretation services were provided to needy LEP Ukrainian refugees to help them interact with mainstream service providers.
 - 25 Ukrainian refugees received employment mentoring services, resulting in 5 job placements.
- And various legal immigration assistance to needy Ukrainian refugees, including:
- 5 clients assisted with filing for re-parole application (I-131),
 - 3 clients assisted in filing Fee Waiver Requests (I-912),
 - 2 clients assisted with legal related document translation,
 - 50 clients provided legal guidance on various immigration issues

- 2 clients received approval of their TPS applications.

4) This July, our Afghan Legal Support Service (ALSS) Team provided various GAPS services to a total of 67 at-risk Afghan refugees, including:

- 12 Afghan families consisting of 25 members received personalized case consultations regarding their immigration needs.
- 25 Afghan refugees received referrals and follow-ups on USCIS-related notices.
- 22 Afghan refugees assisted with translation and interpretation services related to immigration issues, and interpreted for 1 client's asylum interview at the USCIS Asylum Office in Newark, NJ.
- 14 Afghan refugees were assisted in filing for permanent residency (I-485), resulting in one client receiving an I-485 interview.
- 1 Afghan refugee was assisted in filing for asylum (I-589) by providing interpretation via a video call meeting with Rosina Law Office for the pre-asylum interview.
- Immigration guidance was provided to 15 Afghan refugees filing for AOS (I-485). As a result, 4 clients were assisted in completing the AR-11.
- 14 Afghan refugees were scheduled appointments to file their I-485 applications.
- 3 families totaling 9 Afghan refugees were assisted with the asylum case inquiry through USCIS.
- Translated the I-485 interview notice from USCIS office in Philadelphia for 1 Afghan refugee.
- Researched the latest immigration-related updates and translated them into Dari and Pashto, for dissemination among the Afghan community.

5) This July, our Ukrainian Parolee Support Service (UPSS) Team provided various GAPS services to a total of 92 at risk Ukrainian refugees, including:

- 88 case management, referral, and follow-up services were provided to needy Ukrainian refugees at various sites.
- 2 Ukrainian refugees were assisted with starting their WES applications and 2 clients were helped to follow up on previous WES applications.
- 6 translation and interpretation services were provided to needy LEP Ukrainian refugees to help them interact with mainstream service providers.
- 1 Ukrainian refugee was provided employment mentoring services, to enhance his employability.
- Immigration guidance was provided to 7 Ukrainian refugees in filing for employment authorization (I-765), and 8 clients in filing for re-parole status (I-131).

6) This July, our Refugee Entrant Assistance (REA) Team provided various GAPS services to a total of 3 at risk Cuban and 35 Haitian refugees, including:

- 25 case management, referral, and follow-up services were provided to needy Cuban and Haitian refugees at various sites.
- 1 interpretation service was provided to a Haitian refugee to help her interact with a health care provider.

- 12 Haitian refugees received employment mentoring services, resulting in 2 job placements.
- 28 Venezuelan refugees were assisted with interpretation for I-485 application with our legal assistance Team.
- 3 Venezuelan refugees were assisted with translation of 3 birth certificates and 1 marriage certificate.
- 1 Cuban refugee was provided with translation of his academic records.
- 6 Immigration guidance services were provided for 6 Haitian refugees filing for I-485 and 7 Haitian refugees were informed about their current legal status.
- 2 Cuban and 9 Haitian refugees received appropriate ESL referrals.

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

This July, our ISC Team engaged in a series of impactful activities focused on community engagement, employment support, and client orientation, including:

- a) Organized a coordinating meeting with the South-Central PA Works on 07/08/25 to discuss options for beneficial client initiatives and how the two agencies can more effectively work together to benefit refugee clients.
- b) Participated in the National Immigration Project (NIP) Advocacy Network with our national partners to plan strategies for maintaining services for refugees.
- c) Coordinated the Interpreters Training Workshop on 07/16/25 to train prospective interpreters to work within the ISC's Language Bank.
- d) Participated in an informational session discussing immigration pathways and legal options for Afghans and Ukrainians on 07/16/25 such as TPS, humanitarian parole, and asylum options available for Afghan and Ukrainian refugees.
- e) Attended the educational seminar "Defending Immigration Removal Proceedings" hosted by the Practicing Law Institute (PLI) on 07/24/25 to understand how attorneys defend immigrants in deportation proceedings.
- f) Conducted a community health outreach initiative in partnership with Penn State Health on 07/25/25, providing free health screenings, wellness education, and resources for immigrant and refugee families in the area.
- g) Participated in the virtual PIC 2025 Philanthropic Convening on Immigrant Rights on 07/29/25 to advocate for the rights of refugee, migrant, and immigrant populations.
- h) Participated in the national webinar hosted by CLINIC on Leveraging Community Health Workers to learn how to mobilize the provision of health-related services to our refugee clients on 07/31/25.
- i) Attended a public awareness event hosted by the PA Impact Forum and World Affairs Council of Harrisburg on 07/31/25 to learn about the potential impacts of federal budget cuts to Medicaid, SNAP, and educational programs.

**** 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 indicated families:

7/3/25. Transported Bibi Nazari and Shogofah Paghmani to the YMCA food pantry
 7/9/25. Met with John Luciew of Pine Street Church related to the Pine Street/Market Square Partnership working to help refugees. Pine Street is undecided as to continuing to help in this work. John reports that their Mission Committee hopes to make a decision at their September meeting.
 7/10/25. Transported Nazari and Paghmani families to the YMCA food pantry.
 7/11/25. Transported Nazari and Paghmani families to the ISC food pantry.
 7/14/25. Transported Rukhsana Salim to a medical appointment at Sadler Health.
 7/25/25 Transported Nazari and Paghmani families to the ISC food pantry.
 8/1/25. Transported Nazari and Paghmani families to the ISC food pantry.
 8/2/25. Took Mohammad Bayani and his mother to Harrisburg Recycle Bicycle where Mohammad was given an almost new “state of the art” bicycle.

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

This report describes the activities of the Harrisburg/Mechanicsburg volunteer group and the hours each volunteer spent supporting ISC clients in July 2025. In total, 250.5 hours of volunteer support.

Janet Bargh - 1 hr.

July 24. Drove Pashton Saeedi to ESL class.

Dianne Dusman - 14 hrs.

Researched resettlement funds; reviewed documents related to the Qudusi case. Communicated with Pennwood management, researched eviction cases. Met with ISC staff and Mr. Qudusi. Communicated with Rabbi Ariana.

July 28. Met with Dee Allen at Thrive Housing.

July 29. Enrolled in Practising Law Institute (PLI) as an ISC’ legal volunteer.

Keevin Graham - 12 hrs.

July 1, 2, 3, 8, 9, 10, 16, 17, 18, 23, 24, 25, 29, 30, and 31. Drove Zahra Bayat to and from work and an appointment.

Barbara Hamm - 16.25 hrs.

Multiple days. Communications with the volunteer coordinator, other volunteers, staff, and clients about client needs, donated items, and arrangements for delivery.

July 7 and 8. Drove to Mechanicsburg and Gettysburg to obtain/arrange for needed items.

July 12. Delivered donated items to Saeedi and Arab families.

July 13. Delivered donated items to Rakia and Nezil.

July 20. Delivered storage bin to Nezil and discussed needs.

July 27. Delivered clothing and bedding to Nezil family.

Kari Hultman - 3.25 hr.

June 17. Drove Mahaseba and children to a medical appointment.

July 15. Drove Shugofa Paghmani to and from ISC.

July 23. Drove Mahaseba and child to and from a medical appointment.

Marleen and Scott Karns - 9 hrs.

Support for Mujib Ahmadzai. (SK)

July 6. Assistance with a legal issue. (SK)
July 14. Drove to and from medical appointment. (SK)
July 21. Assistance with PPL OnTrack application. (MK)
July 31. Assistance with an automobile accident situation. (SK)

Emily Krebs - 6 hrs.

Driving practice for Amena Omid.
Hosted a trip to Chocolate World for Saeedi women.
Drove Amena to the bank.

Rich Krampe - 5.5 hrs.

July 29 and 31. Drove Bibi and family members, and Hadia to the dentist.

Bob Little - 7.5 hrs.

July 9. Drove Bibi to and from the county office.
July 16. Drove Saeedi family to and from ISC.
July 18. Drove Bibi to food bank.
July 22. Drove Pashton home from ESL class.
July 29. Drove Pashton to and from ESL class.
July 31. Drove Pashton and Bibi Aziza to dental clinic.

Julie Metzger - 0.75 hr.

July 31. Drove Pashton to ESL class.

Cheryl Martin - 5 hrs.

July 7, 14, 21, and 28. ESL instruction for Shahnaz Khetabi.

JJ Patterson - 10 hrs.

Support for Salim family.
July 2. Drove Rukhsana to and from the county assistance office.
July 24. Drove family members to and from Sadler clinic.
July 30. Drove Rukhsana to and from a medical appointment.

John and Susanne Robinson - 10.5 hrs.

Support for Bayani family.
July 2. Delivered children's clothing, games, and toys, assisted Mr. Bayani with turnpike charges and parking tickets.
July 9 and July 18. Delivered boys' clothing, sneakers, and a wastebasket.
July 26. Assisted Mr. Bayani with online school tax payment. Discussed housing options, rental applications, and a visit to New Digs.

Susan Rimby - 5.5 hrs.

July 17, 24, and 31. Driving lessons for Amena Omid.
July 23 and 30. Driving lessons for Velasquez.

Calvin Smith - 3hrs.

July 7 and 31. Drove Pashton to register for ESL classes and home from ESL class.

Ben Stokes - 5 hrs.

July 8. Picked up and delivered buffet to Arab family.
July 27. Picked up and delivered sofa to Arab family and crib to Nezil.

Barbara Sunderlin - 72.25 hrs.

July 1, 2, 3, 4. Drove Luba Baryshpolets home from work.
July 6. Hosted a picnic for Noori family.
July 7 and 8. Driving lesson and FAFSA assistance for Meena and Muska Sarwan.
July 9. Drove Mahaseba to PennDOT for driver's permit.

July 9, 16, 17, 18, 28. Driving lessons and driver test for Luba.

July 16. Drove Mahaseba to and from Philadelphia.

July 26. Discussed driving lesson future plans and HACC financial aid with Meena and Muska Sarwan.

July 31. Drove Meena to HACC and assisted with registration and financial aid issues.

July 31. Drove Mahaseba to and from the dentist. Collected donated items.

John Taylor - 4 hrs.

July 17. Drove Shogofa to and from YMCA food pantry.

July 18. Drove Shogofa to and from ISC food pantry.

July 22. Drove Pashton to ESL class.

Michael Varano - 5 hrs.

July 3 and 23. Drove Mrs. Popal to Project Share and a medical appointment.

Stuart and Jane Warren - 12 hrs.

Teaching ESL for Bayani family. Repairing child's bicycle,
Reviewing Switchboard blogs.

Maripat Wehman - 3 hrs.

July 7. ESL instruction for Amiri women.

Bill Wiegmann - 10 hrs.

July 3, 10, and 17. ESL and food shopping for Sultani family.

July 11. Drove family to and from ISC.

Vi Jean Yao - 5 hrs.

July 8,10,15,17, and 29. Driving lessons for Nazar.

Christine Filipovich - 25 hrs.

July 1-31. Coordination and communications to arrange volunteer activities and donations. Outreach to various community agencies to explore resources available for families expecting newborns. Facilitated Dept. of Health follow-up of Saeedi family. Onboarded 1 new volunteer.

July 3. Delivered baby clothes and blankets to Pierre.

July 24. Drove Pashton home from ESL

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

This month, 8 generous donors have dropped off 740 items, consisting of clothing, household supplies, kitchen utensils, and baby foods for the needy refugees. In addition, two air conditioners were delivered by caring Good Samaritans to two refugees' apartments during the hottest days of July. Due to storage space and manpower shortage, we will have to stop accepting drop-off donations. We are truly sorry, but as of September 2025, we can only accept donations on "as needed basis", at the request of the refugee families themselves.

This month, a check of \$300 from Mr. Michael Varano designated for Mr. Pierre Elisemene and Medjina Mars has been delivered to the grateful Haitian beneficiaries.

In July, the following donations were received from compassionate partners-in-mission on behalf of our needy Haitian refugees: Mr. Vi Jean Yeo: \$200; Mr. Karen & Calvi Smith: \$100; Mr. John & Mrs. Carol Taylor: \$100; Mr. Robert & Mrs. Anne Birch: \$50; Mr.

Scott & Mrs. Marleen Karns: \$200 (2 X \$100 Gift Cards); and Mr. Bill Wiegmann: \$100 (2 X \$50 Gift Cards). Our Haitian Team had delivered the total donations of \$450 cash and \$300 Gift Cards to the neediest Haitian refugees. On behalf of the fortunate refugee beneficiaries, we would like to express our most sincere gratitude to the generous Golden Hearts.

**** This month of July 2025, we would like to share the personal experience of Dr. Robert Little, one of our unsung heroes.***

Over the past year, I've been privileged to become acquainted with twelve immigrant families--mostly Afghan, but two Ukranian and one Syrian.

Last summer, I delivered some used furniture to a family of five living an hour away in Perry County. They were so happy to receive it that we sat down and had a cup of tea under the shade tree immediately.

I noticed that they had five kids and no bikes. So, I went to the recycle Bicycle shop on Chestnut Street in Harrisburg. After determining the proper sizes, they helped me to load five bikes into my van.

Back in Perry County the kids were very excited! In gratitude, the family harvested some fresh vegetables from their garden for me and treated me to a picnic lunch under the shade tree on the new furniture.

Bob Little



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

1) An Afghan Refugee Family

Mr. Qudusi is a 37-year-old husband and father of two from Afghanistan. For years, he served in the national security force, risking his life every day in the hope of building a safer future for his family and community. But when the U.S. withdrew from Afghanistan and the Taliban returned to power, everything changed. Mr. Qudusi knew his life - and

the lives of his wife, Sima, and their children, Hasibullah (15) and Nadia (13) were in danger. The only choice left was to flee the only home they had ever known.

In September 2024, the Qudusi family arrived in the United States through the sponsorship of the local resettlement agency Jewish Family Services (JFS). They were placed in an apartment in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, and received initial support from them. Still reeling from the loss of everything he knew, but determined to rebuild his life, Mr. Qudusi found work as a warehouse worker at Dorman Parts. Despite his limited English, he dedicated himself to supporting his family and meeting their basic needs.

But life in a new country, especially after such a traumatic past, is never simple. On June 2, 2025, Mr. Qudusi walked into the International Service Center (ISC), seeking help with immigration paperwork. He was enrolled in the Afghan Legal Support Services (ALSS) program, where staff began guiding him through the Green Card application process and helping his entire family navigate through the vaccination requirement hurdle. The very next day, he returned—this time with a more immediate concern. The water in his apartment had been shut off, and he did not know why or how to fix it.

As ISC staff helped translate the non-payment notice and contacted the water supplier company and landlord, a much more serious problem surfaced: Mr. Qudusi's rent had not been paid since January. Shocked and overwhelmed, he explained that JFS had assured him they would cover his rent for eight months. He did not know that the organization had since shut down in the wake of the federal funding pause. The Qudusi family was now six months behind on rent.

For a man working full-time on a modest income, the news was devastating. Still, he did not hesitate, he paid the overdue rent for June and July in full and began preparing to pay for the current month of August. It was hard for Mr. Qudusi to pay off a month of debt with just enough time to see his bill climb right back to the same amount within days. With more than \$9,000 in back rent owed, it became painfully clear that he could not recover from this on his own.

Recognizing the seriousness of the situation, ISC staff began assisting Sima, Mr. Qudusi's wife, to find a job for her as well, to support the household and ease the financial burden on her husband. Like many newly arrived women, Sima faces the dual challenge of adjusting to a new culture while trying to step into the workforce for the first time. Still, she is determined to help her family in any way she can.

Since June, the entire ISC's Afghan Refugee Support Services (ARSS) team has been mobilized to provide every form of support possible to stabilize the Qudusi family. ISC's ARSS Team stayed in contact with the landlord, and helped Mr. Qudusi understand his legal options and rights. The team shared information on the common practices of tenants and landlords, explained where to pay rent and when, and how to address problems arising on the property.

They referred the family to free legal aid in connecting them with Dianne; a local volunteer committed to helping them find affordable housing and avoid eviction. Mrs. Dianne thoroughly researched the case to ensure the Qudusi family knew exactly what was owed and what their options are. Dianne and the ISC staff recognized that the family could do better in a smaller apartment more suited to their family size and had begun searching for more appropriate accommodation. Meanwhile, Mr. Qudusi and Sima have remained deeply engaged in improving their situation.

Mr. Qudusi was assisted by the ARSS team in applying for and activating a credit card, learning how to build credit and manage finances in the U.S. The team coached Mr. Qudusi how to pay utility bills independently, gaining confidence in navigating unfamiliar systems. Both Mr. Qudusi and Sima were helped in enrolling in ESL classes so they can learn English and take steps toward better employment. The ARSS team continued to explore job opportunities and submit job applications on behalf of Sima. Despite their efforts, the financial weight of the rent debt remains crushing. As of July 31, the family owed \$9,175.29. Mr. Qudusi continued to work full-time, and Sima was actively seeking employment through the assistance of our ARSS Team. They are currently paying rent month to month so that no additional debt is being accrued, but between this payment and personal necessities there is nothing left to put towards addressing the financial burden weighing on them.

What makes this story heartbreaking is also what makes it hopeful: the Qudusi family is doing everything right. They are resilient, responsible, and deeply committed to building a better life. They show up. They work hard. They follow through. But sometimes, even doing everything right is not enough - especially when the system fails to catch those falling through the cracks. This family has a bright future in the United States that has been stifled by the debt they unknowingly accrued, once this burden is relieved this family is poised to flourish. To help them reach that point, we have decided to offer the recent contributions of \$4,400 to our ISC's refugee mission to help the Qudusi family reduce their debt. This providential gift came from the following Good Samaritans: \$300 from Mrs. Audrey Light; \$500 from Mr. David and Judge Gwendolyn Lehman; \$250 from Mrs. Margee Kooistra; and \$3,350 from Rabbi Ariana Captauber through the Harrisburg Beth El Temple. The total amount of \$4,400 has been paid to Mr. Qudusi's landlord to prevent eviction. We are now trying our best to help the Qudusis relocate to less expensive housing accommodation to prevent his future debt from piling up again.

2) A Ukrainian Parolee Family

Artem, a young professional from Ukraine, arrived in the United States in January 2023 with a clear vision for his future. Holding a master's degree in information technologies and project management, and with a strong command of English, he was optimistic about quickly entering the IT workforce in his new country.

However, reality proved more challenging than expected. Despite the demand for IT specialists, Artem struggled to secure a job in his field. Like many newcomers, he faced the complexities of the U.S. job market and the nuances of credential recognition.

Fortunately, a new friend introduced him to the ISC Ukrainian Team, where he was enrolled in the Ukrainian Refugee Support Services (URSS) Program. Through this program, Artem accessed a wide range of services. The Ukrainian team helped him apply for CAO public assistance benefits, guided him in creating a fee-exempted account with World Education Services (WES), and supported him through the diploma evaluation process—a critical step in validating his Ukrainian education in the U.S.

While actively searching and applying for job opportunities in IT field, Artem learned that ISC needed volunteers for its Food Pantry and for technical support to help create a media platform for the Ukrainian community. He eagerly stepped in and remained an active volunteer for over a year, engaging deeply with both the ISC and the wider Ukrainian community. His efforts were recognized at the national level when he was awarded the prestigious Presidential Volunteer Service Award.

Artem continued applying for IT jobs but also took the initiative to support himself by exploring other employment options. When he heard that ISC had launched a Commercial Driver's License (CDL) Training Program for Ukrainian men, he enrolled immediately. He completed the training successfully and was hired by the Avalon Logistics, a local company with headquarters in Illinois.

Throughout this journey, Artem not only adapted to a new country but also grew personally and professionally learning the culture, understanding the U.S. hiring system, and expanding his network.

The ISC became a truly special place for Artem—not only for the support and opportunities he received, but because it is where he met his future wife, Daria, a lonely young Ukrainian girl. At just 19 years old, coming to this country by herself just like Artem, Daria was recruited by the ISC as an intern, and quickly became a Program Assistant through her hard work and determination. While continuing her remote studies at her university in Ukraine and taking Web Design classes at HACC, she also maintained a full-time job at ISC, serving her less fortunate Ukrainian compatriots and other vulnerable refugees. Many Ukrainian clients and ISC staff admired her dedication and the conscientious care she provided. Not long after their meeting, Artem and Daria got married, solidifying their commitment to building a life together in the United States. Their future brightened even more when Artem applied for and won the Diversity Visa, also known as the Green Card Lottery. Both received their Green Cards and were ready to continue their journey side by side.

Thanks to the CDL training program at ISC, Artem was able to support his new family and become fully self-sufficient. Recently, his persistence paid off: he received a job offer from Chase Bank in Dallas, Texas, in the IT field he had long dreamed of returning to. Together with his wife, they are in the process of relocating to Texas, ready to embrace the next chapter.

Having worked side by side with Artem and Daria, we truly believe that for this young couple, the sky is going to be their limits.

3) A Venezuelan Asylee Family

Rosmary left Venezuela for Colombia in 2019 due to political and economic instability. A former polling station president for 10 years, she was sidelined for opposing the government. In Colombia, she and her family struggled during COVID-19, working as self-employed workers. She received a temporary work permit, but permanent residency required 10 years of residence. Rosmary applied to the Safe Mobility program and was approved for U.S. refugee status in July 2024. They arrived in August 2024 and received support from Jewish Family Services of Greater Harrisburg (JFS). However, when the agency closed in February 2025, they were left without guidance or resources, still facing language and financial barriers.

Then came a turning point in Rosmary's journey. One afternoon, while shopping at a local market in Harrisburg, she struck up a conversation with a fellow Venezuelan who had noticed her accent and warmly asked where she was from. As they exchanged stories of migration and survival, the woman mentioned a place that had changed her life—the International Service Center (ISC). Intrigued and hopeful, Rosmary took down the name and address.

On June 18, 2025, Rosmary walked through ISC's doors for the first time. There, she met with Mr. Andres, our Spanish-speaking caseworker with deep experience working with immigrant communities. He welcomed her with compassion, listened attentively to her story, and reviewed her family's immigration paperwork. For the first time in years, Rosmary felt seen—not just as a migrant, but as a mother, a former electoral leader, and a woman determined to rebuild her life.

Understanding the urgency and complexity of her situation, Mr. Andres immediately outlined a plan of action. He enrolled her in the ISC's immigration guidance program and helped schedule a legal consultation with Mr. Thanh, an immigration accredited representative for ISC. Rosmary was guided through every step of the process with care, from gathering documentation and completing medical exams to understanding her rights and responsibilities.

On July 30, 2025, after weeks of preparation and support, Rosmary and her family successfully submitted Form I-485, the Application to Register Permanent Residence or Adjust Status. It was a significant milestone, symbolizing not only legal progress but also hope for long-term stability in the United States.

The path has not been easy. Like many families navigating forced displacement, Rosmary has faced financial hardship, emotional stress, and the challenge of starting over in a new country. But through it all, her resilience has never wavered. The support she found at ISC became a vital anchor, offering her more than just legal help, it gave her a renewed sense of purpose.

Rosmary's journey is still unfolding. With her immigration process now underway, she has turned her attention to her eldest daughter, who is preparing to transition to college.

In the coming months, Rosmery will return to ISC to meet with Mr. Andres once again, this time to explore college admission options, scholarship opportunities, and financial aid applications. She is determined to ensure her daughter receives the education and opportunities she never had.

This new chapter, marked by courage and community, is a testament to what is possible when determination meets the right support. Rosmery's story is not just about survival—it is about transformation.

4) A Haitian Entrant Family

In the darkest corners of Haiti where sorrow is more common than smiles, where gunfire speaks louder than books, and where prayers often go unanswered that's where Medjina Mars was born. She came into the world on December 24, 1987 a day meant to bring light, but already clouded by hardship. The eldest of four siblings, she was raised with a simple dream: to become an office administrator and build a better future for her family. A modest dream. But in a country like Haiti, even the smallest dreams can feel unreachable.

In 2020, while the world trembled under the weight of the pandemic, Medjina took a bold step: she enrolled in administrative studies at University Lumière/MEBSH. It was a step forward — toward dignity, toward hope. That same year, life brought her both a blessing and a challenge: she became pregnant by her long-time boyfriend, Dieusinord Nezil, a man she had loved since high school. He was studying civil engineering at University G.O.C and teaching math in local schools to survive. Two young dreamers, trying to build a life with nothing but love and borrowed strength. They lived humbly sharing a small space, big dreams, and soon, a new life: their daughter, D'Isha-Reina Yamirha Nezil. A baby who lit up their home with laughter, even when their bellies were empty.

But Haiti is merciless to those who dare to hope. In 2021, Dieusinord lost his job. The schools had closed. Gangs occupied the streets. Young boys and girls killed each other. Swearing. Smoking weed. Armed. The streets were lawless. The family locked themselves in their bedroom with no food, no healthcare, no milk for the baby. Survival became strategy. Fear became routine.

With no income and no support, Medjina became the sole provider working as a secretary at Terminal Varreux in Port-au-Prince. Every day, she crossed dangerous streets, walked past armed men, even when she was trembling inside. And then... hell came home. One evening after work, as she was opening the office door, gunfire shattered the windows. A gang had opened fire. She ran back inside and stayed hidden with her coworkers until 8 PM, too afraid to leave. When she finally made it home, Dieusinord was waiting with tears in his eyes. Gunmen had come to their neighborhood. They killed seven people — including two young boys, a couple, three others — and even shot their dog. That day, something broke inside her. Not just fear — something deeper. She looked around and realized: "We're not living. We're just

trying not to die.” So, she made the most painful decision of her life: To leave Haiti — or lose everything.

On August 19, 2024, Medjina, Dieusinord, and their daughter began their journey of exile. They left behind everything: home, land, family and walked toward uncertainty. They crossed borders on foot. Sleeping on the ground with no mattress. Ate rotten food. Lost their travel tickets. Lost money. Lost dignity. But they never lost each other. After three months of walking through hell, they finally crossed into the United States on November 7, 2024.

But America did not mean safety, not right away. They stayed in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, in her sister’s small apartment. There was barely enough space. Food was scarce. Papers were nonexistent. She could not work, could not ask for help, could not see a future. A mother who could not feed her child. A woman who had survived everything — only to land in another kind of prison: limbo.

Until one day, she heard about a place called the International Service Center (ISC) At first, she hesitated. Too many promises had already failed her. But she tried. And that decision changed everything. She met the ISC’s Haitian team, people who did not just see her as “another immigrant,” but as a woman. A mother. A human being. Within weeks, they helped her apply for a work permit, Social Security number, food assistance, and ESL classes.

Dieusinord found a full-time job at Mastronardi Produce and enrolled at HACC to learn English. ISC even helped them find their own apartment not just walls and a roof, but a real home. With the help of compassionate volunteers, the Haitian team helped furnish it, connected the utilities, and created space for their family to breathe again. And just as life began to settle... came another unexpected chapter: Medjina is expecting another baby. She still cannot work during the pregnancy, but the ISC’s team continues to walk beside her, connecting her with donors, helping her prepare for the baby, and making sure she welcomes this child with dignity.

With tears in her eyes, Medjina says: “It’s not just that I survived hell — it’s that someone helped me rise out of it. If people could see the pain I carry, they’d understand that what ISC gave me... was not charity. It was salvation.”

Finally, we would like to end this monthly report by sharing with you the following update:

As of July 31, 2025, the National Refugee Resettlement Program (USRAP) remains indefinitely suspended under the current administration. President Trump signed an Executive Order on January 20, 2025, indefinitely halting refugee admissions and ending federal funding for the program. This included the termination of the Welcome Corps, a private sponsorship program, and the suspension of follow-to-join visas which enables refugees to be reunited with their immediate relatives in the United States. The

U.S. Department of State subsequently suspended all processing and refugee-related funding and terminated contracts with resettlement agencies.

The administration's actions are facing legal challenges, with the International Refugee Assistance Project (IRAP) filing a class action lawsuit challenging the suspension as illegal and seeking to restore funding. A federal judge in Seattle (WA) issued a preliminary injunction blocking the program's suspension, but a panel of judges on the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals put most of that decision on hold, at the request of President Trump. Currently, resettlement remains suspended except for a limited number of refugees with a "strong reliance interest" who had confirmed travel plans before January 20, 2025.

The reductions and suspension have significantly impacted the U.S. refugee resettlement infrastructure. Refugee resettlement agencies have lost millions in government contracts, laid off staff, and struggled to continue providing services. Some organizations, like the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and Episcopal Migration Ministries, have ended their long-standing work with the government on resettlement.

The future of the National Refugee Resettlement Program remains uncertain. Based on the past, some experts predict admissions to remain low for the remainder of the current administration. During President Trump's first term, from 2017 to 2021, the administration significantly reduced the annual refugee admissions cap, from 110,000 in 2017 during the final year of the Obama's administration, to a record low of 15,000 in 2021 during the last year of President Trump's first term. This has led to a drastic decrease in refugee admissions and created a substantial backlog of immigration cases, ever since.

Approximately three-quarters of the ISC's funding comes from government sources, and all of it is currently at risk. In the coming federal fiscal year starting on October 1, 2025, our reduced ISC team will have to tighten our belt and try to serve as many needy refugees as we possibly can.

On July 4, 2025, President Trump signed the tragically misnamed "One Big Beautiful Bill Act" (OBBBA) into law. OBBBA strips many lawfully present refugees from health insurance and nutrition aid while allocating a massive increase of the immigration detention and enforcement budget. The OBBBA includes \$126 billion for Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), with \$59 billion for Customs and Border Protection (CPB) personnel, vehicles, and facilities; and \$45 billion for family and adult detention.

OBBBA imposes new fees for immigration applications effective July 22, 2025, including employment authorization and asylum. Any USCIS form postmarked on or after August 21, 2025 without the proper filing fee will be rejected. Each of the fees as written in the law are minimums, and it provides for regular annual increases across the board. The following fees are included in the law:

- New asylum application: \$100, non-waivable (Starting on July 22, 2025)

- Annual asylum fee for pending applications: Asylum applicants will pay a yearly fee of \$100 for every year an application remains pending.
- Temporary Protected Status application: \$500, non-waivable (As of July 22, 2025)
- Humanitarian parole application: \$1,000, non-waivable (As of July 22, 2025)
- Initial employment authorization (EAD) for asylum seekers, TPS holders, and parolees: \$550, non-waivable, shortened eligibility period (As of July 22, 2025)
- Employment authorization renewal: \$275, non-waivable (As of July 22, 2025)

Public health benefits, including Medicare and Medicaid, will be terminated for refugees and other newcomers who have sought safety in the U.S. (e.g., TPS holders and asylum seekers).

As desperate refugees continue to come to our doors, the ability of our diminished staff to serve them will depend largely on the continued support of ISC's wonderful community volunteers like you - our most precious partners-in-mission.

As we move forward, it is certain that we will encounter formidable challenges. However, for the ISC, what remains constant are our humanitarian values and commitment in serving the disadvantaged and underprivileged people of the world. Since 1976, ISC has served as a lifeline for refugees of all national origins, offering critical support to help them thrive in their new homeland.

By the Grace of God, we hope that with the valuable support of our community volunteers, the ISC will be able to continue to provide not only essential services but also a place where needy refugees can find safety, dignity, and the support they need to rebuild their shattered lives.

Respectfully submitted.

Phuong N. Truong, Executive Director, ISC