

SUPPORT FOR SERVICES THAT EMPOWER REFUGEES AND IMMIGRANTS



In 2022 and beyond, Iowa has exciting opportunities to continue and expand our long legacy of welcoming and empowering immigrants in our state.

That's why LSI supports policies at the local, state, and national levels that lead to greater inclusion and integration of immigrants into all our systems, workplaces, communities. We must continue to invest in the services that support new Iowans with skills, education, and training to adapt to our workforce and become enrichers and contributors to our shared communities.

We are a stronger Iowa when we are a welcoming, inclusive Iowa. That means expanding our definition of welcome to those who come to Iowa from all over the world: those arriving from Afghanistan, those seeking asylum at the U.S.-Mexico border, and refugees from many other countries who now call Iowa home.

IMMIGRANTS MAKE AN IMPACT



\$500,000 sales revenue

earned by Global Greens farmers
(former refugees farming in Central Iowa)



8% of workers

in Iowa's science, tech, and professional services are immigrants



450 refugees

from Afghanistan and other countries LSI expects to resettle in 2021-2022



23 people

became U.S. citizens in 2021 after completing LSI's citizenship program



\$4.1 billion dollars

were contributed to Iowa's economy by refugee- and immigrant-owned businesses



50% increase

in Des Moines' foreign-born population over the past decade
(the second-highest growth rate in the nation)

LSI trained 200 former refugee childcare providers, allowing 150+ adults to be active in Iowa's workforce. LSI is currently working with 50 new childcare providers, helping them maintain their small businesses during the COVID pandemic and ensure parents can continue to go to work or school.

LOCAL INITIATIVES

Community IDs: Like Johnson County, all Iowa counties should establish Community ID Card programs so people who do not have a drivers' license or state-issued ID can participate in the local economy and access healthcare and other community services.

Land Access: Municipalities should ensure that land is available, accessible, and specifically zoned for urban agriculture to combat food deserts, including those in neighborhoods with high concentrations of immigrants. Access to fresh, healthy produce is a win for all of our community members.

Affordable Housing: Cities must create equitable planning, zoning, and usage policies that support affordable housing for both renters and home buyers. Cities, counties, and public-private partnerships can develop Individual Development Accounts and Matched Savings programs, like those that LSI provides, that promote home ownership for immigrants and former refugees.

STATE INITIATIVES

Childcare: Funding supporting childcare resources and options should be inclusive of individual childcare providers, like the ones LSI trains. LSI expands childcare capacity by helping former refugees become licensed childcare providers and open small businesses, allowing others from their ethnic communities and other community members to participate in the workforce, knowing their children are cared for. With additional funding, this program could be replicated throughout the state.

Education: We support increased per-pupil funding for English language learning for K-12 students, as well as adult learners to ensure that all Iowans are able to access critical information

RefugeeRISE AmeriCorps Program: The RISE program connects refugees with job training, ensuring newcomers to Iowa are ready to be successful in the workforce. In 2022, we request \$500,000 to expand RefugeeRISE to more rural Iowa towns and companies. State funding of RefugeeRISE brings a 2:1 federal match.

Affordable Housing: Iowa's shortage of affordable housing disproportionately impacts our immigrant communities. We must do more to ensure all Iowans have access to safe, affordable places to call home. Continue to invest in tax credits, rent caps for low-income workers, housing trust funds, down payment assistance programs, and other creative avenues for increasing Iowa's inventory of affordable housing.

Double-Up Food Bucks: We support a direct, annual \$1 million appropriation from the state of Iowa to support Double Up Food Bucks, a statewide nutrition incentive program, at Iowa farmers markets, like LSI's Global Greens market, which supports both Iowa residents and farmers by increasing access to healthy produce.

FEDERAL INITIATIVES

Afghan Adjustment Act: We owe the Afghans who were evacuated to the United States a legal pathway to integration. Rather than adding tens of thousands of Afghans to an already overburdened asylum system, the Afghan Adjustment Act would allow evacuees to apply for legal permanent residence. This would make it easier for Afghans to apply for jobs and establish a life in this country.

Migration Policy: Temporary Protected Status should be used to its fullest extent to grant reprieve for populations in the U.S. facing exceptionally challenging circumstances in their countries of origin preventing their safe return. Long-term residents with established ties to the U.S. should be able to adjust their status and become permanent residents. A just solution for millions of the nation's undocumented immigrants includes the advancement of permanent protected status and avenues for adjustment as a matter of economic opportunity and for purposes of maintaining family unity.