



Ukraine Information for Coloradans

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How is the State of Colorado responding to the Russian invasion in Ukraine?

Governor Polis took swift action to condemn Russian aggression and to stand with Ukraine and her people. State actions include:

- Thursday February 24: Governor Jared Polis signed an [Executive Order](#) on new state actions in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine
- Friday, February 25: Governor Polis informed the federal government that Colorado is ready to welcome refugees and is prepared to provide support to Ukrainians. Read the Governor's [letter](#) to Secretary Blinken.



- Friday, February 25: In a [letter](#) to the Ukrainian Embassy and Consulate, Governor Polis pledged to welcome refugees to Colorado, writing “Colorado stands at the ready to embrace Ukrainian refugees should this conflict continue.”
- Friday, February 25: In a [letter](#) to the Russian Embassy and Consulate, Governor Polis severed diplomatic ties with Russia.
- Friday, February 25: In a letter to Colorado PERA, Governor Polis [applauded](#) Colorado PERA’s quick action to divest \$7.2M from a Russian bank and urge the complete divestiture of the PERA Trust Fund from any and all Russian state-owned institutions.
- Friday, February 25: The Governor, staff members from offices of Colorado’s federal delegation, and the Office of New Americans met with Ukrainian Coloradans and other community leaders, such as in the faith and nonprofit sector.
- Wednesday, March 2: Governor Jared Polis wrote a [letter](#) this week to Colorado’s Institutions of Higher Education urging them to examine ways to divest from Russian state-owned assets.
- Monday, March 14: Governor Polis announced that the state collected more than 1,000 ballistic helmets and nearly 840 complete sets of surplus body armor from over 25 local law enforcement agencies to send to the Ukrainian people in their fight for freedom and democracy. Learn more [here](#).
- Thursday, March 24: Governor Polis applauded the Biden administration’s decision to welcome Ukrainians to the United States and Colorado. See the press release [here](#).
- Friday, April 7: The Governor’s Ukrainian Migrants Task Force had its first meeting to establish how the state will allocate and compile resources and information for Ukrainians coming to Colorado.
- Friday April 22: The Governor’s Ukrainian Migrants Task Force released the first version of the [Ukrainian Welcome Packet](#) on the Office of New Americans website. It is available in both English and Ukrainian [here](#).

You can find information about additional recent actions by visiting Governor Polis’s press release news site [here](#).

How can Coloradans support Ukraine and Ukrainians?

This is a dynamic and fluid situation. Most of the support needed right now is in Europe, but the Ukrainians of Colorado organization is also hard at work here in the state. Check them out [here](#) and on [Facebook](#). In addition, you can find relevant information, including a myriad of ways to learn and engage, at the Department of State’s United with Ukraine website, found [here](#).



The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) encourages cash donations to reputable relief and charitable organizations on the ground. Here are some ideas of places to support:

- From the United States Agency for International Development: <https://www.cidi.org/disaster-responses/war-in-ukraine/>
- From the Obama Foundation: <https://www.obama.org/updates/help-ukraine/>
- From CNN: [here](#)
- From Oprah: [here](#)

The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) Connecting Business Initiative has developed a [business guide for Ukraine](#) on how the private sector can responsibly plug into the crisis. For the provision of in-kind support you may contact OCHA's Private Sector Engagement Advisor at ocha-ers-ps@un.org. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation hosts a Ukraine Humanitarian Response webpage that provides a list of partners responding to the crisis for potential financial contributions. The [webpage](#) also provides a link whereby companies can provide information on what services they are providing. We would encourage you all to utilize this tool to ensure a better understanding of the support that is going to Ukraine.

Additionally, the World Health Organization (WHO) has created a [webpage](#) for medical supply donations that includes a list of specific commodities they are in need of and would accept. Offers that comply with the request list can be sent to WHO HQ at hqoslquality@who.int.

How are European countries providing safety and sanctuary?

Most Ukrainians and others who fled the war are in Europe. The European Union extended protection to Ukrainians. A Temporary Protection Directive - activated on March 3rd - allows protection, residency, access to employment and education. This is key for Ukrainians; it allows Ukrainian refugees to travel, work and live in the European Union for the next three years. This type of protection is unique to the Ukrainian situation and will greatly assist the humanitarian crisis Russian aggression has created.

How can I connect my family or friends who fled Ukraine to services available to them in Europe?

Registration with the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) can be a key way to ensure your loved one's short and longer-term protection. UNHCR works with all those who have been displaced, including those recently by war. Find more [here](#). There are many more organizations on the ground in host countries (countries currently hosting Ukrainians and



others displaced by the war) and the situation is fluid. Social media can be a powerful tool in situations such as these.

President Biden announced that the United States would accept up to 100,000 individuals who fled the war. What does this mean?

On March 24th, the Biden Administration announced their intent to welcome up to 100,000 individuals fleeing Russian aggression. See that announcement [here](#). That plan has been further detailed via the recently announced *Uniting for Ukraine* strategy, detailed on the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) website, [here](#).

What are the key elements of the *Uniting for Ukraine* effort?

More comprehensive details are on the DHS [website](#). This effort outlines a streamlined process for Ukrainian citizens who have been displaced by Russia's aggression to apply for humanitarian parole in the United States. Humanitarian parole is a temporary status that provides people with protection and the ability to gain work authorization. U.S. citizens or individuals can sponsor Ukrainian applicants. Sponsorship requires clear financial support for the applicant. Key security and health checks are built into this process.

Explore [this explainer](#) from Welcome.us to learn more about how sponsoring a Ukrainian for Humanitarian Parole works.

Humanitarian Parole is the immigration pathway that the Biden Administration is prioritizing to support Ukrainians. Note that *Uniting for Ukraine* does outline efforts to strengthen existing legal pathways, such as through the United States Refugee Admissions Program. The conventional refugee resettlement process is often a prolonged one. As such, these efforts are anticipated to complement the priority strategy of prioritizing Humanitarian Parole with sponsorship for Ukrainians.

How can I sponsor a Ukrainian to come to the U.S. under Humanitarian Parole?

There is robust community support to welcome Ukrainians in Colorado. The vast majority of interested sponsors are Ukrainians and Ukrainian Americans who are interested in sponsoring family and friends. The Department of Homeland Security's [website](#) is where interested sponsors can apply. Sponsors will need to identify the individual or families to be sponsored at the time of application. There may also be an opportunity for prospective sponsors to welcome an unknown Ukrainian.



What kind of immigration statuses might Ukrainians and others seeking refuge from the war have?

Following the announcement of *Uniting for Ukraine*, it's clear that the majority of Ukrainians entering the U.S. will arrive under Humanitarian Parole, a temporary legal status that provides work authorization. Since Ukrainian Humanitarian Parolees will have U.S.-based sponsors who have been required to indicate their financial sponsorship, access to a broad array of public benefits may be limited.

As in all migration situations, individuals fleeing similar circumstances may have different legal statuses. Ukrainians have entered the U.S. as asylum seekers. The Biden Administration is discouraging seeking asylum as a primary strategy for Ukrainians and encouraging use of Humanitarian Parole. Individuals present in the U.S. as of April 11, 2022 and continuously residing in the U.S. since April 19th are eligible to apply for Temporary Protected Status (TPS). Ukrainians may also be present under student, tourist, employment, or other family-based visas. Finally, we may see a small number of the most vulnerable arrive through the refugee process and be served by the traditional refugee resettlement system.

Will Colorado see Ukrainian asylum seekers?

Yes. Asylum seekers are those individuals who make their own way to the U.S. border and claim asylum to Customs and Border Patrol personnel. This happens through self-directed, rather than federally-coordinated, processes. See more from the Bipartisan Policy Center [here](#). Asylum seekers will more than likely be joining family here in the US.

Asylum seekers, should they pass a credible fear interview, should be able to stay in the US while their asylum case proceeds in federal court. Asylum seekers must apply for asylum within one year of arrival and are encouraged to meet with a qualified immigration attorney. Asylum seekers are not eligible for refugee services or many public benefits until their asylum case has been approved in federal immigration court. However, they can apply for work authorization. Note that Title 42 remains in effect at our southern border with Mexico, and this affects the ability of asylum seekers to enter the U.S. through that land border. Learn more about this policy [here](#) from the American Immigration Council.

How does Uniting for Ukraine impact Colorado?

Colorado's Ukrainian community will have more opportunities to reunite with their family members, and other affected communities, such as Russian Coloradans, will also be able to provide refuge for their loved ones. Because the Biden Administration is focusing on the ability to offer refuge to those who have family in the United States, states with larger Ukrainian populations, such as Washington, Oregon and Illinois, may see larger numbers than



Colorado. It is too soon to tell how many Ukrainians will come to our state as a result of the policies enacted under this announcement.

Governor Polis directed the Office of New Americans to prepare for Ukrainian refugees and serve Ukrainian Coloradans. What does this mean?

The [Office of New Americans](#) supports Coloradans by connecting immigrants to resources and opportunities and works closely with the [Colorado Refugee Services Program](#), which oversees the resettlement infrastructure in the state. Because this response is different than the traditional refugee resettlement process, these two entities are pulling together expertise from across the state to ensure that Ukrainians, no matter their immigration status, have access to important information and services. These two entities worked closely together in response to our Afghan arrivals and collaborated with other state and local partners. These recent partnerships will help us provide welcome to all newcomers, including those fleeing the war in Ukraine. The Office of New Americans worked to establish the Governor's Ukrainian Migrants Task Force that established how the state will allocate and compile resources and information for Ukrainians coming to Colorado; the Task Force released the first version of the Ukrainian Welcome Packet on the Office of New Americans website. It is available in both English and Ukrainian [here](#).

I have family members and loved ones who fled Ukraine. How can I bring them to Colorado as fast as possible?

Explore the [Department of Homeland Security's](#) Uniting for Ukraine program to sponsor family members or friends to come to the U.S. via Humanitarian Parole. While Humanitarian Parole is the priority pathway the Biden Administration has identified for Ukrainians, there may be other legal pathways that are the best fit for your family and friends.

To explore additional legal pathways, we suggest that you reach out to an expert in immigration law. You can find low cost immigration legal services by connecting with a Department of Justice accredited agency. Find the list of agencies in Colorado [here](#). You can also search for an immigration lawyer affiliated with the American Immigration Lawyers Association [here](#). If you are connecting with an immigration representative, please educate yourself on how to spot immigration fraud (also called Notario Fraud), which unfortunately can occur in times such as this. Learn more [here](#), and if warranted, seek a second opinion from another immigration attorney before paying large sums of money.

Members of Colorado's federal delegation can assist in certain cases. Find your Congressperson [here](#).



You may also contact the offices of Senators Bennet and Hickenlooper; both have offices throughout the state. Find contacts for Bennet's office [here](#) and Hickenlooper's [here](#).

- For Senator Hickenlooper, you may email Casework@Hickenlooper.Senate.gov.
- For Senator Bennet, please contact eva_serenil@bennet.senate.gov

I am from Ukraine, and I was in the United States as a student, tourist, or otherwise without immigration status on or before April 11, 2022. How can I access protection in the U.S.?

Secretary Mayorkas announced that the U.S. will provide Temporary Protected Status (TPS) to Ukrainians who have been residing in the U.S. since April 11, 2022. Visit the DHS site for Ukrainian TPS [here](#). Here is a fact sheet about TPS from the [American Immigration Council](#).

I have a loved one in Ukraine or I have been in war before.

The last couple of months have been challenging for many Coloradans, and we want to remind you that taking care of yourself is important too. It can help to talk about your feelings. You can reach someone who will listen and help you work through your feelings, for free, at 1-844-493-8255. Interpretation is available.

What information and help is there available for US residents who need emergency assistance from the Department of State as a result of the war?

Here is a list of resources for U.S. citizens who may need emergency assistance from the [U.S. Department of State](#). State Department emergency assistance request form: [here](#); Travel Advisory & Alerts Enrollment: [here](#); Latest security updates & emergency assistance information: [here](#); U.S. Embassies consular services: [here](#); and the Welcome Center for U.S. citizens evacuating Ukraine to Poland: [here](#)