



GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY
LANSING

SUSAN CORBIN
DIRECTOR

April 19, 2024

The Honorable Winnie Brinks, Senate Majority Leader
The Honorable Joe Tate, Speaker of the House
The Honorable Aric Nesbitt, Senate Minority Leader
The Honorable Matt Hall, House Minority Leader

Sent Via Email

Dear Leaders of the Michigan Legislature:

We thank you for your service in the legislature and are eager to answer any questions you may have regarding the important work of the Office of Global Michigan (OGM).

Our team of experts at the OGM can serve as a valuable resource to answer any questions with factual information and debunk disinformation or other conspiracy theories. If members have questions or are unsure of the accuracy of their claims, we are happy to connect with them to ensure they have accurate details on our efforts.

It's important to remember that the State of Michigan has responsibly welcomed people from all over the world for a century or more. From the Finns who settled in the Upper Peninsula, to the Dutch who came to Holland and other areas in west Michigan, to Arab Americans who proudly call Dearborn and other cities in southeast Michigan home, our state is comprised of generations of Michiganders with a wide variety of ancestry.

That's why these efforts have transcended partisan lines in presidential administrations, congressional terms, gubernatorial administrations, and in the state legislature. Both Democratic and Republican lawmakers at all levels of government have supported these efforts.

Our office is over 90% federally funded. These federal investments date back to the 1980 Refugee Act as the United States' ongoing diplomatic response to global needs. The federal funding comes with strict mandates for eligibility.

People who come to Michigan legally go through an extensive federal vetting process by the Department of Homeland Security prior to their arrival. These newcomers are strong contributors to our economy and local communities – spending more than \$18 billion annually and representing over 15% of small business owners. They also consistently maintain a 90% retention rate for employment. Michigan employers are among the strongest partners in OGM's work to integrate newcomers, recognizing their importance in our economy.

Like many other states who are utilizing federal resources to deal with housing issues, including Arizona, Ohio and Florida, Michigan implemented the Newcomer Rental Subsidy to ensure the successful resettlement of newcomers coming into our state legally.

OGM adheres to specific eligibility requirements, which include lawful status in the country, proof of employment, and proof of income. To receive the subsidy, applicants must work with a landlord who is approved in the State of Michigan's vendor system to accept payment directly on behalf of the applicant. Applicants must also submit to a review of their eligibility every three months to continue receiving the subsidy. All employed recipients have provided documentation of their income. No waivers for the work requirement have been provided.

We want to be clear: the Newcomer Rental Subsidy is only available to people who come to the country through legal pathways. See fact checks below...

- *The Detroit Free Press: No, Whitmer is not subsidizing 'illegal aliens' in Michigan as Trump claims*
- *The Detroit News: Michigan rental aid program has mostly helped refugees despite claims suggesting otherwise*

All of OGM's service populations have lawful presence, and include refugees supported by local resettlement agencies, humanitarian asylees (i.e. Ukrainian, Haitian, Cuban, and Afghan), and asylum seekers who are lawfully present and awaiting work authorization.

The majority of people admitted into this program come from war-torn areas overseas, not the southern border. In fact, roughly half of the refugees approved under this program are Afghans who aided our brave U.S. servicemembers overseas, an effort that has been supported by both Republicans and Democrats in our congressional delegation, including Congressmen Jack Bergman and John James.

Since the program launched, we have approved 245 of 485 applications, impacting 1,242 household members. The numbers below include all household members impacted by the subsidy – all of whom have met the eligibility requirements.

- 537 Refugees
- 504 Afghans arrived under Operation Allies Welcome
- 69 Special Immigrant Visas (individuals from Iraq or Afghanistan who worked for U.S. government)
- 61 U.S. Citizens (children born to immigrant families after arriving to the U.S. No primary applicants are U.S. Citizens)
- 35 Ukrainian Humanitarian Parolees
- 24 Asylees (asylum approved and legally in the country)
- 7 Haitian Entrants
- 5 with Lawful Permanent Residence

We appreciate your attention to this responsive letter. Please feel free to reach out to us in the future.

Respectfully,
Poppy Sias Hernandez
Executive Director, Office of Global Michigan
Chief Equity & Inclusion Officer, Governor's Office

CC: Rep. Joseph Aragona