



CWS Private Sponsor Groups – *Uniting for Ukraine*

Who Is CWS?

Church World Service (CWS) is a national resettlement organization that was formed in 1946, in the aftermath of World War II. Seventeen denominations came together to create an agency "to do in partnership what none of us could hope to do as well alone." The mission: Feed the hungry, clothe the naked, heal the sick, comfort the aged, shelter the homeless. Seventy years later, CWS remains a faith-based organization transforming communities around the globe through just and sustainable responses to hunger, poverty, displacement, and disaster.

CWS currently supports a network of 38 offices across the country. Each of those offices offers community sponsorship support for newcomers, including partnering with local faith and community groups for individual volunteer opportunities and co-sponsorship.

Uniting for Ukraine

What Is *Uniting for Ukraine*?

Uniting for Ukraine (U4U) is a US program established in March 2022 to respond to the mass displacement of Ukrainians due to Russian invasion. Under this program, groups and individuals in the United States can apply with the federal government to privately sponsor Ukrainians who are still overseas.

What Do Ukrainian Newcomers Receive in This Program?

The U4U program is designed to provide both an immigration pathway into the US and the security that a sponsor will be waiting to support beneficiaries when they arrive. If the sponsorship application is approved, visas are issued for beneficiaries to travel to the United States. Beneficiaries have humanitarian parole status, which is a legal, temporary immigration status that allows parolees to live and work in the US for up to two years.

CWS U4U Private Sponsor Groups

The Role of Sponsor Groups

Unlike other refugee populations, Ukrainian humanitarian parolees are not eligible for certain resettlement services that local agency offices provide. Instead, private sponsors provide these services, which includes help with finding housing, benefits applications, school enrollment, and making appointments, among other tasks. Private sponsors agree to provide both financial and social/integration support for Ukrainian humanitarian parolees as they adjust to life in the United States.



The Role of CWS

The federal government approves *Uniting for Ukraine* sponsor applications and runs a background check on applicants, but the government does not provide training or ongoing support for sponsors. To fill this gap, CWS offers to partner with sponsors and provide remote staff support for the first six months after a beneficiary arrives. Sponsors affiliated with CWS are known as CWS Private Sponsor Groups (PSGs). Groups or individuals do not need to partner with CWS to be approved to sponsor Ukrainians, but CWS provides this service to ensure a safer, smoother welcoming process for both groups and newcomers.

CWS offers training, onboarding, and ongoing coaching to each PSG. CWS U4U staff will help the PSG to ensure that services are delivered effectively to Ukrainian newcomers and assist with troubleshooting, managing expectations, and navigating sponsor group dynamics.

The Sponsorship Process

Preparing to Welcome

PSGs will move through these steps:

1. Gather a group (5+) of community members interested in sponsoring a Ukrainian family or individual
2. Fill out the [U4U PSG Interest Form](#)
3. Receive an onboarding invitation from CWS staff
4. Complete a basic service plan and sign a Memorandum of Agreement
5. Receive PSG approval from CWS staff
6. Begin fundraising
7. Complete background checks and training (4-hour self-guided, 1-hour Zoom)
8. Create a sponsor profile with Welcome.US and match with a beneficiary
9. Fill out an I-134 form with USCIS and wait for approval (approx. 1-2 weeks)
10. Prepare for arrival

Sponsors who have recently welcomed Ukrainians beneficiaries can also become CWS Private Sponsor Groups after completing background checks and signing a Memorandum of Agreement.

Financial Commitment

US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) manages the application for private sponsorship, known as Form I-134. (Instructions about completing this form can be found [on the USCIS webpage](#).) In order to approve an application, USCIS requires evidence that a sponsor can financially support a Ukrainian newcomer for the duration of parole based on [federal poverty guidelines](#). This evidence (via paystubs, tax returns, bank statements, or other records) can come from one individual, a group, or an organization. However, because of the employment and benefits eligibility for Ukrainian newcomers, it is not anticipated that sponsors will need to financially support a newcomer for the entire two-year period. Additionally, many Ukrainians come with financial resources that offset the support they need from sponsors.



Uniting for Ukraine beneficiaries can begin work immediately upon arrival using their I-94 document. This is a valid work authorization for 90 days, after which point an Employment Authorization Document (EAD) is required. However, sponsors should still be prepared to cover living expenses such as rent and utilities for up to six months, particularly if the beneficiary does not have their own financial resources. Sponsors will be advised to help beneficiaries apply for eligible public benefits soon after arrival.

Unlike those with refugee status, Ukrainian parolees do not receive government resettlement funds or funded airfare. Travel costs will need to be covered either by the sponsor or the beneficiary.

Matching with Beneficiaries

After completing CWS onboarding, PSGs will be ready to be matched with Ukrainian beneficiaries on the [Welcome Connect](#) platform. Welcome Connect is a matching platform supported by Welcome.US, an organization committed to empowering Americans to welcome and support people seeking refuge in the United States. The Welcome Connect platform hosts sponsor profiles that beneficiaries can search and select from based on their resettlement preferences. Through a CWS partnership with Welcome.US, each Private Sponsor Group will create a Welcome Connect profile with a badge that will indicate the group is supported by CWS, providing additional reassurance to beneficiaries.

Providing Services

U4U PSGs commit to providing resettlement tasks to support Ukrainian newcomers. CWS staff will be working with PSGs remotely, while PSGs provide on-the-ground services for newcomers, including:

- Securing housing and completing a home safety check
- Furnishing housing
- Meeting beneficiaries at the airport with appropriate interpretation
- Providing a ready-to-eat meal upon arrival
- Conducting a home orientation
- Providing pocket money (as needed)
- Providing seasonally appropriate clothing (as needed)
- Supplying groceries until benefits and/or employment are secured
- Facilitating cultural orientation
- Assisting beneficiaries with the following (as applicable):
 - Employment Authorization Document (EAD) application
 - Public benefits application
 - Selective Service application
 - School enrollment
 - Change of address forms
 - Medical appointments
 - English Language Learner (ELL) enrollment
 - Employment services enrollment
 - Transportation



A comprehensive guide for completing these services, plus weekly technical assistance, will be provided by CWS staff.

Duration of Sponsorship

The timeline of support from sponsors will vary based on individual beneficiary needs, community resources, processing time for government forms, and other factors. Generally, a PSG should expect to financially support a beneficiary until after the beneficiary is able to begin working.

However, even after reaching financial stability, many newcomers still need social integration support for up to a year or more. Sponsors should be prepared to assist with more complicated aspects of life in the US, such as navigating the healthcare system or renewing public benefits, as needed for this longer duration. CWS staff work with PSGs to create a self-sufficiency plan that can guide service delivery even after hands-on staff support ends.

Additional Support

After arrival, CWS staff will facilitate enrollment for Ukrainian beneficiaries into the Preferred Communities (PC) program. Though not intended to replace service delivery from sponsors, the PC program provides beneficiaries with supplemental support from additional agency staff who can assist with certain services as needed. This support is available for the first 90 days.

Questions and Information

For more information about the program, or to begin the U4U Private Sponsor Group process, email U4U@cwsglobal.org or visit our [Welcoming Ukrainians website](#).