

Supporting Newcomers with a Rental Subsidy So They Can Make It in Michigan

Michigan State Housing Development Authority

Special Needs Housing: Housing for Persons with Special Needs

HFA Staff Contact

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INTRODUCTION

The Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) led a series of meetings to better inform and partner with five commissions overseen through the Office of Global Michigan (OGM), a sibling agency that like MSHDA is housed under Michigan's Department of Labor & Economic Opportunity (LEO).

These five commissions are the Hispanic/Latino Commission of Michigan, the Michigan Immigrant and Refugee Council, the Michigan Asian Pacific American Affairs Commission, the Michigan LGBTQ+ Commission, and the Commission on Middle Eastern American Affairs.

MSHDA's goal through this process was to incorporate feedback from the commissions in all new housing program design and use OGM's networks of community-based organizations to increase participation in our programs by marginalized communities.

INNOVATION

Through our outreach process we identified significant gaps in housing programs for refugees and other immigrant populations. We learned that households of newcomers typically gain employment quickly but have difficulty obtaining housing near their place of employment.

Affordability was also a concern for many of the groups with whom we engaged.

In addition to implementing new policies and tweaks to existing MSHDA programs, we designed a new program to address this serious need.

The Newcomer Rental Subsidy program is a shallow subsidy that pays between \$300-500 per month, depending on household size, for up to 12 months.

The subsidy was designed to help families secure housing that meets their needs while they improve their earned income so that at the end of the 12-month period they can sustain housing without continued assistance.

Services are provided by local refugee service agencies to help the families with employment, education, and health care access.

ACHIEVING INTENDED RESULTS

Since the program officially launched in October 2023, more than 1,200 new Michigan families have received the monthly subsidy.

Nearly half of the families are refugees, and 43% are Afghani and came to the United States through a federal effort called Operation Allies Welcome.

RESPONDING TO AN IMPORTANT STATE NEED

We knew at the conception of this collaboration that we were responding to an important state need, and the results have already started to prove we were correct.

This program seeks to address the critical housing challenge that many newcomers are facing. It focuses on increasing access to better and more affordable housing opportunities, expanding the areas of residence, creating more employment opportunities while maintaining dignity and supporting more rapid social integration.

Immigrants make up a growing share of the state's population, and Michigan is welcoming an increasing number of refugees each year. Federal data show the state's share of new refugees was 10th per capita among states in 2022, the most recent year for which data is available.

PROVIDING BENEFITS THAT OUTWEIGH THE COSTS

Although conceived by MSHDA, more than half of the funding for the program was provided by the federal Office of Refugee Resettlement, which has amplified the already profound funding impacts from MSHDA.

To participate in the program, newcomers must work with OGM to evaluate and determine continuation of support quarterly. They also must attend a financial empowerment session and provide a full household assessment and survey at the conclusion of the program.

The critical support targeted at families at or below 60% of Area Median Income and residents of Qualified Census Tracts helps ensure that participating families will be set up for future stability and economic success, mitigating future burdens on state and federal assistance programs.

CONCLUSION

Affordable housing is a critical need for newly arriving refugees and for local community partners and sponsors who provide resettlement support. The Newcomer Rental Subsidy program has provided needed financial support to refugees, asylees, and other new populations from parts of the world impacted by violence and war like Afghanistan, Ukraine, Syria, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The program addresses a pressing barrier to refugee resettlement by meeting housing needs while setting families up for success with increased employment and opportunity.

MSHDA is very proud of the early success of the program and will continue to work with OGM to ensure a sustainable future for the program and the newcomers it supports.



LEO MSHDA

MSHDA Board supports Newcomer Rental Subsidy program and development projects to increase affordable housing statewide

April 21, 2023

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MSHDA Board supports Newcomer Rental Subsidy program and development projects to increase affordable housing statewide

Lansing, Mich. – The Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) Board approved a Newcomer Rental Subsidy (NRS) program that will provide temporary support for refugees and other immigrant populations coming to the state. MSHDA also authorized funding for rehabilitation projects for two multifamily properties in New Baltimore and Eaton County, during its April meeting.

Affordable housing is a critical need for newly arriving refugees and for local community partners and sponsors who provide resettlement support. The NRS program will give refugees, asylees and other new populations from areas such as Ukraine, Cuba, Haiti and African countries the opportunity to apply for up to 12 months of rental subsidy assistance, helping ensure families successfully integrate to communities, become self-sufficient, and thrive.

The program will be financed through the Michigan Housing and Community Development Fund (HCDF), administered by MSHDA, with \$4 million designated to the Office of Global Michigan (OGM) to manage over a two-year period. The amount of

financial support per eligible household will range from about \$300 to \$500 a month depending on household size.

"In line with the Statewide Housing Plan, one of our key goals at MSHDA is to increase access to safe and affordable housing across Michigan for everyone – including those seeking to build a new life here," said Amy Hovey, executive director of MSHDA. "This program is truly a win-win, as it addresses the most pressing barrier to refugee resettlement by meeting housing needs while setting up families for success with increased employment and opportunity."

Beneficiaries must be enrolled in an OGM-funded or equivalent employment placement program, if not already employed. Households' eligibility will be evaluated periodically to determine continuation of assistance under the program. During evaluations, the beneficiaries will also receive financial and budget education to ensure continuity of rent once the program ends.

In other action, the board approved a \$9.2 million loan for the acquisition and rehabilitation of 101 senior units at New Baltimore Place in New Baltimore. The interiors of all 101 units will receive new windows, showers, lighting, and energy-efficient fixtures/appliances and more. Ninety percent of the units will be reserved for tenants who earn 60% of the area median income, while the remaining units will be targeted toward households at 40% or less.

Butternut Creek, a rehabilitation of an existing 100-unit family and senior development in Charlotte, will receive a \$9.7 million loan to implement extensive interior improvements alongside exterior improvements. This includes roofing, landscaping and parking repairs. The renovations will allow Butternut Creek to meet Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards and Americans with Disabilities Act accessibility requirements. The project is expected to create 25 temporary construction jobs.

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LEO | Newcomer Rental Subsidy Program Launches To Increase Affordable Housing Statewide

Michigan Business Network
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Global Michigan, MSHDA encourage refugees, newcomers to apply

LANSING, Mich. — Today, the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity (LEO)'s Office of Global Michigan launched the Newcomer Rental Subsidy program that will provide temporary support for refugees and other newcomer populations coming to the state, thanks to support from the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHA) and the Office of Global Michigan's investment.

"We are thrilled to couple funding from Michigan's efforts to support one comm



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all **people, businesses and communities** have the economic means and personal freedoms to reach their full potential,” said **Susan Corbin, LEO director, and MSHDA Board chair.**

Affordable housing is a critical need for newly arriving refugees and for local community partners and sponsors who provide resettlement support. The subsidy program will give refugees, asylees and other newcomer populations the opportunity to apply for rental subsidy assistance, to help families successfully integrate into communities, become self-sufficient and thrive.

“The Newcomer Rental Subsidy program will increase access to better and more affordable housing opportunities while supporting a more rapid social integration for refugees and other newcomer populations in Michigan,” said **Poppy Hernandez, Office of Global Michigan director.** “Global Michigan is committed to providing support that builds welcoming, inclusive communities for those who choose our state as their new home.”

The program provides refugees and other newcomer population-eligible households with monthly rental assistance for up to 12 months, with eligibility heavily based on immigration status and household income. The amount of financial support per eligible household will range from \$300 to \$500 per month depending on household size.

Beneficiaries must be enrolled in an OGM-funded or equivalent employment placement program, if not already employed. Households’ eligibility will be evaluated periodically to determine continuation of assistance under the program. During evaluations, the beneficiaries will also receive financial and budget education to ensure continuity of rent once the program ends.

The program will be financed in part through the Michigan Housing and Community Development Fund, administered by MSHDA, with \$4 million designated to the Office of Global Michigan to manage over a two-year period.

“In alignment with the Statewide Housing Plan, one of MSHDA’s key priorities is increasing access to safe and affordable housing for everyone,” said **Amy Hovey, MSHDA executive director.** “This program addresses the most pressing barrier to refugee resettlement, housing need, and sets up families for success with increased employment and opportunity.”

The program is also supported in part by federal award number SLFRP0127 awarded to the state of Michigan by the U.S. Department of the Treasury and in part by the Office of Global Michigan through allocation of federal Office of Refugee Resettlement awards.

Visit Michigan.gov/NewcomerRentalSu eligibility criteria and to apply.



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Michigan Newcomer Rental Subsidy Program

The Office of Global Michigan (OGM), in partnership with Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA), is addressing the critical housing challenge that many newcomers are facing by creating the Newcomer Rental Subsidy program. This program focuses on increasing access to better and more affordable housing opportunities, expanding the areas of residence, creating more employment opportunities while maintaining dignity and supporting a more rapid social integration.

PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for the program, the applicant must not be enrolled in or receive additional rental assistance (this includes enrollment in the Matching Grant Program) by the date of their application or during their time enrolled, and must meet the following requirements:

1. Eligibility based on Immigration Status

- **Refugees** - To qualify for the program as a refugee, a beneficiary must have an eligible immigration status as defined by the [Office of Refugee Resettlement](#) which includes:
 - Refugees
 - Asylees
 - Special Immigration Visa (SIV)
 - Victims of Human Trafficking
 - Cuban and Haitian entrants
 - Afghan Nationals
 - Ukrainian Humanitarian Parolees
- **Other Newcomer Population** - Other immigration statuses include:
 - Individuals who arrived under the Cuban, Haitian, Nicaraguan and Venezuelan (CHNV) program
 - Individuals who arrived under the Family Reunification Parole Process for El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Colombia
 - Individuals with a pending asylum application
 - Other immigrant individuals

2. Eligibility based on income:

- Renting individuals or households that are experiencing housing instability; and
- Are under 185% of the Federal Poverty Limit (see table on right), or
- Live in [Qualified Census Tract](#) (QCT) area, or have an income at or below [60% of Area Median Income](#) (AMI) and receive any of the following federal assistance:
 - Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
 - Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
 - Free and Reduced-Price Lunch (NSLP) and/or School Breakfast (SBP) programs
 - Medicare Part D Low-income Subsidies
 - Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
 - Head Start and/or Early Head Start
 - Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women Infants, and Children (WIC)
 - Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)
 - Pell Grants

Family Size	Income Limit
1	\$26,973
2	\$36,482
3	\$45,991
4	\$55,500
5	\$65,009
6	\$74,518
7	\$83,694
8	\$93,536

3. **Eligibility based on area of residence:** Renting individuals or households must live in the State of Michigan.

4. **Eligibility based on employment status:**

- Adult household members must be employed, enrolled or willing to enroll in an OGM-funded or equivalent employment readiness or placement program such as a Michigan Works! program. Acceptable reasons to not be enrolled in an employment program can be found on page 3 under "Verification of Enrollment in an Employment Program".
- Individuals must have, be eligible for, or filed for Employment Authorization Document (EAD)
- If an adult individual becomes unemployed during participation in the program, that adult individual must become re-employed or enroll in an employment program within 30 days.

DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED TO DETERMINE ELIGIBILITY

To enroll in the NRS Program the applicant(s) must provide **at least 1 document from each category listed below:**

- **Photo Identification (for adult applicants only)**

- Driver's License or State Identification Document
- Government Issued Identification Document
- Permanent Residence Card (green card)
- Passport
- Immigration Card or Document
- Employment Authorization Document (EAD)
- Alternate Identification Document

- **Verification of Michigan Residence**

- Written and signed lease document
- [Rental Verification Form](#)
- Government Identification Document that includes current address
- Official Mail (mail from a government entity)
- Utility Bill

- **Verification of Eligibility Based on Immigration Status**

- I-94, arrival/departure record
- I-766, Employment Authorization Document
- DHS Form I-571, Refugee Travel Document
- Form I-589, Application for Asylum
- Form I-551, Permanent Resident Card (green card)
- United States issued visa
- Asylum Approval Letter or written decision from an Immigration Judge granting asylum or the Board of Immigration Appeals
- Other legal documents stating eligible immigration status

- **Verification of Income**

Provide all available verification of monthly earned and unearned income for household members that live in the same household that are age 18 or older. If verification of income is not available, the applicant must submit written explanation of why there is no documentation (ex. cash payment).

- Pay stubs or employer statement
 - Copy of submitted IRS form 1040 (first two pages) for the previous calendar year
 - Government Benefits Statement (Social Security, TANF, etc.)
 - Unemployment Benefits
 - Child or other Alimony Support
 - Income attestation if self-employed
- **Verification of Enrollment in an Employment Program**

If unemployed, verification of enrollment in an employment program may be required. Acceptable reasons to not be enrolled in an employment program are as follows:

- Full Time High School Student
- Working 40 Hours per Week
- Postpartum (2 months)
- Lack of Child Care
- Pregnancy Complications
- Domestic Violence
- VISTA, Job Corps, or AmeriCorps (minimum required hours)
- Disabled [recipient of Retirement, Survivors, and Disability Insurance (RSDI)]
- Short Term Incapacity
- Long Term Incapacity
- Aged 65 or Older

TIMELINE AND AMOUNT OF ASSISTANCE

An individual or household can be in the program for a period up to 12 months. Maximum per-month amount is based on the number of household members:

- Single individual or households of 2 individuals: up to \$300 per month.
- Households of 3 to 5 individuals: up to \$400 per month.
- Households of 6+ individuals: up to \$500 per month.

Households' eligibility will be evaluated at three, six, and nine months to determine continuation of assistance under this program. During these evaluations, the beneficiaries will be provided financial and budget education opportunities. At the end of participation in the program, a full household assessment will be performed.

PRIORITIZATION OF HOUSEHOLDS

Prioritized processing will be in place based on the following criteria:

- Individuals or households who are homeless or facing homelessness.
- Individuals or households with income at or below 50% AMI.
- Households consisting of a single parent with one or more minor children.
- Individuals or households with one or more members with disabilities or health concerns deeming them unable to be employed.
- Individuals or households in which at least one member arrived in U.S. 24 months or less prior to submitting the application.
- Individuals or households with one or more adult members whose employment ended at least 90 days prior to submitting the application.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Applicants must complete all parts of the Newcomer Rental Subsidy application form and provide **copies** of the required documents to prove eligibility for the program. Applicants can choose one of three methods to complete their application: an online form, a fillable PDF, or a paper copy. *Applications will not be approved without required eligibility documents.*

Online Application

- The online application can be found on the OGM website: Michigan.gov/NewcomerRentalSubsidy
- Applicants must email **copies** of required eligibility documents to LEO-refugeeservices@michigan.gov

Fillable PDF Application

- Applicants can complete the fillable PDF application form found online at: Michigan.gov/NewcomerRentalSubsidy
- Applicants must email both their completed PDF application form and **copies** of required eligibility documents to LEO-refugeeservices@michigan.gov

Paper Application

- Applicants may submit a paper copy of their application by printing the application and filling it out by hand. The application form can be found online at: Michigan.gov/NewcomerRentalSubsidy
- Both the completed application and **copies** of required documents can be emailed to LEO-refugeeservices@michigan.gov or mailed to Office of Global Michigan, 105 W. Allegan St., Lansing MI 48933.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

To be eligible for the full allowable time of the program, the participant must agree to meet the following requirements:

- Work with the Office of Global Michigan to evaluate and determine continuation of assistance under this program at three, six and nine months.
- Attend a financial empowerment session.
- Inform the Office of Global Michigan of any changes in address, phone number or email address.
- Inform the Office of Global Michigan of any changes in the number of household members.
- Provide a full household assessment at the end of the allowed 12-month period in the program.
- Complete a survey on how participating in the program has impacted your and/or your family's lives.

This program is supported in part, by federal award number SLFRP0127 awarded to The State of Michigan by the U.S. Department of the Treasury and in part by the Office of Global Michigan through allocation of federal Office of Refugee Resettlement awards. In accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Office of Global Michigan will not deny benefits or services or discriminate on the basis of race; color; national origin, including limited English proficiency; disability; age; or sex, including sexual orientation and gender identity.



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PUBLIC INTEREST

Michigan offers up to \$500 in monthly rent aid to refugees, other immigrants

Updated: May. 09, 2023, 9:28 a.m. | Published: May. 09, 2023, 8:58 a.m.



A "for rent" sign outside an apartment building on Madison Street in Ann Arbor on July 22, 2021. Ryan Stanton | The Ann Arbor News



LANSING, MI - The Michigan State Housing Development Authority rolled out a program last month that offers resettlement support to refugees and other immigrants.

The Newcomer Rental Subsidy provides refugees, asylees and immigrants from areas like Ukraine, Cuba, Haiti and African countries about \$300 to \$500 a month in rental subsidies. Assistance is available for up to 12 months.

Amy Hovey, executive director of the Michigan State Housing Development Authority, said the program aligns with a goal to increase affordable housing across the state for everyone “including those seeking to build a new life here.”

“This program is truly a win-win, as it addresses the most pressing barrier to refugee resettlement by meeting housing needs while setting up families for success with increased employment and opportunity,” Hovey said in a statement.

The two-year program is being funded by the Michigan Housing and Community Development Fund with \$4 million designated to the Office of Global Michigan.

Households need to apply for rental aid and eligibility and will be evaluated periodically, a news release said. Eligible recipients must be enrolled in an Office of Global Michigan-funded or similar employment program. They will also receive financial and budget education.

The United States resettled 24,645 refugees in the last fiscal year – falling below a 125,000 cap – [according to the Refugee Council USA](#). Michigan was ranked No. 4 for welcoming 713 refugees behind California, Texas and New York.

Most refugees arrived from the Democratic Republic of Congo, Syria, Sudan, Burma and Ukraine.

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MICHIGAN'S VISIONARY NEW HOUSING SUBSIDY PROGRAM HARNESSES THE PROVEN COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION POWER OF IMMIGRANTS

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On October 23, 2023, the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity (LEO)'s Office of Global Michigan launched the *Newcomer Rental Subsidy* program.

This visionary program aims to boost immigrant-based community economic revitalization, which is one of the most reliable “cures” for shrinking cities, as documented in the 2020 book, [*RECONOMICS: The Path To Resilient Prosperity*](#).

The Newcomer Rental Subsidy program will provide temporary support for refugees and other newcomer populations coming to the state, thanks to support from the Michigan State Housing Development Authority's (MSHDA) *Housing and Community Development Fund* and the Office of Global Michigan's investment of federal **Office of Refugee Resettlement** funding.

“We are thrilled to couple funding from MSHDA together with our Office of Global Michigan's efforts to support one common goal – making Michigan a place where all people, businesses and communities have the economic means and personal freedoms to reach their full potential,” said **Susan Corbin**, LEO director, and MSHDA Board chair.

Affordable housing is a critical need for newly arriving refugees and for local community partners and sponsors who provide resettlement support.

The subsidy program will give refugees, asylees and other newcomer populations the opportunity to apply for rental subsidy assistance, to help families successfully integrate into communities, become self-sufficient and thrive.

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“Global Michigan is committed to providing support that builds welcoming, inclusive communities for those who choose our state as their new home,” she added.

The program provides refugees and other newcomer population-eligible households with monthly rental assistance for up to 12 months, with eligibility heavily based on immigration status and household income.

The amount of financial support per eligible household will range from \$300 to \$500 per month depending on household size.

Beneficiaries must be enrolled in an OGM-funded or equivalent employment placement program, if not already employed. Households’ eligibility will be evaluated periodically to determine continuation of assistance under the program.

During evaluations, the beneficiaries will also receive financial and budget education to ensure continuity of rent once the program ends.

The program will be financed in part through the Michigan Housing and Community Development Fund, administered by MSHDA, with \$4 million designated to the Office of Global Michigan to manage over a two-year period.

“In alignment with the Statewide Housing Plan, one of MSHDA’s key priorities is increasing access to safe and affordable housing for everyone,” said **Amy Hovey**, MSHDA executive director.

“This program addresses the most pressing barrier to refugee resettlement, housing need, and sets up families for success with increased employment and opportunity,” she concluded.

The program is also supported in part by federal award number SLFRP0127, awarded to the state of Michigan by the **U.S. Department of the Treasury** and in part by the Office of Global Michigan through allocation of federal Office of Refugee Resettlement awards.

Photo (by [Storm Cunningham](#)) shows a restaurant in Detroit’s revitalized Mexicantown neighborhood, which is enjoying a lasting rebirth thanks to (primarily Mexican) immigrants.

[Learn more about the Newcomer Rental Subsidy program here.](#)

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POLITICAL AND PUBLIC POLICY INFORMATION

Michigan launches new refugee assistance program to help with rent



by **Nushrat Rahman**

October 24, 2023 6:30 am



The city and nonprofit partners are hosting two resource days to help people complete applications. (BridgeDetroit file photo)

A new statewide program will offer temporary rent aid for eligible refugees and asylees in Michigan.

The initiative, led by the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity's Office of Global Michigan, is meant to help new arrivals resettle and find affordable housing.

Detroit Free Press

This story also appeared in Detroit Free Press

It provides rent aid from \$300 to \$500 a month, based on immigration status and household size, to applicants for up to 12 months.

“The Newcomer Rental Subsidy program will increase access to better and more affordable housing opportunities while supporting a more rapid social integration for refugees and other newcomer populations in Michigan,” said Poppy Hernandez, director of the Office of Global Michigan, in a news release Monday.

The program received \$4 million from the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) for two years and federal funds from the U.S. Department of the Treasury.

Refugees, asylees, those with special immigration visas, victims of human trafficking, Cuban and Haitian entrants, Afghan nationals and humanitarian parolees, in the U.S. temporarily, from Ukraine, qualify for the program, according to the state. It also includes those who arrived through the Cuban, Haitian, Nicaraguan and Venezuelan (CHNV) program and family reunification parole process from El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Colombia and individuals with pending asylum cases.

The program is available for low-income renters, households experiencing housing instability, or receiving federal assistance, such as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

Applicants, who must live in Michigan, have to be employed or part of a job readiness or placement program, such as Michigan Works!, a workforce development network.

The application form is currently only available in English. Those who need help completing it can contact the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity at LEO-RefugeeServices@michigan.gov.

For more information about the program requirements and to complete an application, go to Michigan.gov/NewcomerRentalSubsidy.

More than 2,400 refugees arrived in Michigan from October 2022 through September 2023 from countries including Afghanistan, Syria and Burma, according to the U.S. state department's Refugee Processing Center. In 2016, Michigan was the fourth largest state for refugee resettlement, taking in more than 30,000 arrivals over the last decade, Global Detroit, an economic development organization, reported.

After the Taliban took over Afghanistan in 2021, hundreds of Afghans arrived in Michigan as agencies scrambled to house families, amid an already short supply of affordable housing. Last year, a new coalition launched in Detroit to help Ukrainians and Afghans find jobs, housing and transportation.