

GMS Flash Alert

Immigration Edition

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United States – *Uniting for Ukraine*: New Program Welcomes Ukrainian Citizens

On April 21, 2022, U.S. President Joseph R. Biden announced a new program called *Uniting for Ukraine*, a streamlined process of humanitarian parole that would allow Ukrainian nationals who have been displaced during recent conflicts in their country to enter the United States for a temporary period.¹

According to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS),² *Uniting for Ukraine* would allow Ukrainian citizens and their immediate family members who are outside the United States to seek humanitarian parole due to the unsafe conditions facing their country.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Starting on April 25, 2022, U.S.-based individuals may start submitting applications online to DHS for the program.³ President Biden had previously pledged to welcome up to 100,000 Ukrainian nationals as a result of the ongoing Russia-Ukraine crisis.⁴ Those approved under the *Uniting for Ukraine* process will be able to travel to the United States and be considered for parole on a case-by-case basis, for a period of up to two years.⁵ Once paroled into the United States under the program, Ukrainians will be eligible to apply for work authorization.⁶

Eligibility

Ukrainian citizens may qualify for the *Uniting for Ukraine* program if they:

- have been residents in Ukraine as of February 11, 2022;
- pass rigorous security vetting, (including biographic and biometric screening), complete vaccinations, and other public health requirements; and
- have a sponsor in the United States.

Information Regarding Sponsors

The DHS has clarified that sponsors in the United States seeking to welcome Ukrainian nationals will undergo rigorous security checks. No limit has been placed in terms of the quantity of Ukrainians a single sponsor can oversee, but immigration officials will vet the means of support a sponsor claims to have as a way to prevent exploitation and abuse of Ukrainian citizens. Sponsors must be willing and able to receive, maintain, and support the beneficiary. U.S.-based sponsors need to file Form I-134 online; there is no filing fee for the form. An individual who holds lawful status in the United States and passes security and background vetting may be a sponsor under the program. Examples of eligible U.S.-based individuals are: U.S. citizens, lawful permanent residents, nonimmigrants in lawful status, TPS holders, DACA holders, and Deferred Enforced Departure beneficiaries, among others.

According to DHS, immediate family members of Ukrainian citizens may also be considered for parole under the *Uniting for Ukraine* program, along with the principal applicant. Immediate family members include the spouse or common-law partner of a Ukrainian citizen and an unmarried child under the age of 21.

At this time, children under 18 traveling without their parent or legal guardian are not eligible for parole under the *Uniting for Ukraine* program.

The *Uniting for Ukraine* humanitarian parole program is not open for Ukrainian citizens who are presently in the United States. However, Ukrainian citizens currently in the United States may qualify for Temporary Protected Status (for related coverage, see [GMS Flash Alert 2022-091](#), April 25, 2022).

Department of State Expands Operations to Support Ukrainians

In addition to the *Uniting for Ukraine* program, the Department of State (DOS) will expand its operations in Europe to provide Ukrainian nationals greater access to resettlement and referrals to the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) under a previously-established resettlement program for refugees known as “the Lautenberg program.”⁷ According to DOS, the USRAP, along with other European partner organizations, would identify and aim their aid at vulnerable Ukrainian populations including women, older persons with special needs, members of ethnic and religious minorities, members of the LGBTQI+ community, persons with disabilities, medically-fragile individuals, and stateless persons.

DOS will also expand, to the extent possible, the number of nonimmigrant visa appointments available in European embassies and consulates, as well as access to the expedited visa appointment program.⁸

KPMG NOTE

KPMG Law LLP in Canada is tracking this matter closely. We will endeavor to keep readers of *GMS Flash Alert* posted on any important developments as and when they occur.

FOOTNOTES:

1 See The White House, Briefing Room, "[Remarks By President Biden Providing an Update on Russia and Ukraine](#)" (April 21, 2022).

2 Department of Homeland Security, "Uniting for Ukraine" [webpage](#) and "[President Biden to Announce Uniting for Ukraine, a New Streamlined Process to Welcome Ukrainians Fleeing Russia's Invasion of Ukraine](#)" (April 21, 2022).

3 *Id.*

4 The White House, Briefing Room, "[FACT SHEET: The Biden Administration Announces New Humanitarian, Development, and Democracy Assistance to Ukraine and the Surrounding Region](#)" (March 24, 2022).

5 See *supra* note 1.

6 See DHS's "[Uniting for Ukraine](#)" webpage.

7 See *supra* note 1.

8 *Id.*

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