

Gov. Pritzker Announces Additional Funding to Municipalities to Support Asylum Seekers

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A total of \$17 million will go toward building capacity outside of Chicago, Illinois Welcoming Centers, and the Immigrant Family Resource Program

Governor JB Pritzker and the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) announced \$17 million in additional funding for municipalities to support asylum seekers. This is in response to the more than 38,000 new arrivals sent to Illinois by Texas since 2022. These funds will be utilized to build capacity in municipalities outside of Chicago that are welcoming asylum seekers. The State is continuing to support the City of Chicago with direct funding as well as funding to support the overall asylum seeker response and is launching this latest round of funding to advance our shared goal of increasing capacity outside of the City.

The funds will come from the previously announced \$160 million in additional State investment to support the asylum seeker response. Funds will make it possible for municipalities to provide direct services to new arrivals who have fled their homes to escape violence, political instability, and other threats. The funds will be used for emergency needs – such as food and winter clothing – as well as supports that guide new arrivals on the path to independence.

“This new funding builds on our commitment to support Illinois cities that are stepping up to help asylum seekers,” **said Governor JB Pritzker.** “As we continue to call for further federal support, and as Illinois takes a stand against the callous ways Texas Gov. Abbott is using human beings as political pawns, these grants will lend support where it is needed throughout the state.”

The wraparound services this funding will cover includes temporary shelter, emergency triage, case management, legal services – including work-permit and temporary protective status application submission, health screenings and immunizations, interpretation and translation services, workplace readiness, school enrollment, basic orientation on self-sufficiency options, and strategies on how to become self-sufficient.

Additional Funding for Municipalities

Another round of Supporting Municipalities for Asylum Seeker Services (SMASS) funds, totaling \$11 million, will be available exclusively to municipalities outside of Chicago to welcome and support recent arrivals living in their communities. Funds must be used to support asylum seekers within the applicant municipality and cannot be used to transport new arrivals to another municipality.

To distribute the funds, IDHS is partnering with the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus (MMC), which provides management oversight in the form of a competitive solicitation process.

This \$11 million for municipalities is in addition to the more than \$40 million the State invested in 2023. The MMC will continue to provide management oversight of this program on the State’s behalf.

Previous awardees of SMASS grants include the City of Chicago, City of Elgin, Lake County, City of Urbana, and the Village of Oak Park.

“We are thankful the State is supporting Illinois cities that are meeting the needs of asylum seekers,” **said Neil James, Executive Director, Metropolitan Mayors Caucus.** “The MMC appreciates the opportunity to play an important role in guiding the implementation of this latest round of investments.”

Illinois Welcoming Centers & Immigrant Resource Program

Of the \$17 million investment, \$4 million will support 13 Illinois Welcoming Centers, allowing them to expand vital services, like case management, crisis intervention, and guidance to current and new resident of Illinois.

In addition, \$2 million will go to Immigrant Family Resources Program (IFRP) providers – to offer additional support in helping meet existing needs and building capacity for future needs. IFRP partner organizations provide new arrivals with interpretation and translation services, information about public benefits, and advocacy as they settle into their new communities.

“We at the Illinois Department of Human Services are so grateful for the ongoing work being done in local communities throughout the state to support immigrants and help them be self-sufficient,” **said Dulce M. Quintero, IDHS Secretary Designate.** “This administration continues to grow and foster these partnerships, providing care for and support to our new Illinoisans.”

A link to the application for the latest round of SMASS funding is at <https://forms.office.com/r/s4TaqX7dCf>.