



2022 ANNUAL REPORT

A Message from LIRS Leadership

With the help of our vast network of partners and supporters, LIRS has continued to meet the moment.

The past few years have been a whirlwind for Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS)—of massive growth as our staff shot from 80 to over 300, of responding to global events from the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, of navigating a hybrid world post-pandemic, of a brand new slate of impactful programming, and beyond.

It seems that every day brings both a new challenge and a new opportunity. But agility suits us. With the help of our vast network of partners and supporters, LIRS has continued to meet the moment—and, in many ways, to exceed it. Thanks to eight decades of experience in immigration and refugee resettlement, we're veterans with a vision. We believe that a better system for New Americans is not just possible,

but necessary, and much of 2022 was dedicated to bringing that vision into reality.

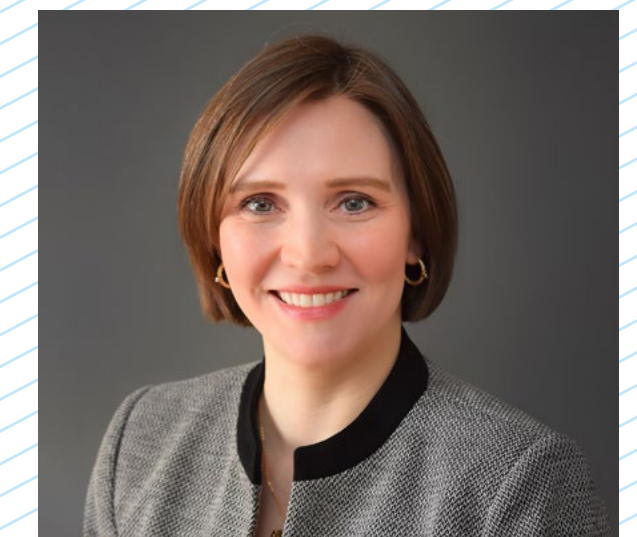
The pursuit of the empowered living experience for immigrants and refugees shines through in the pages of this report—in an ever-growing range of on-the-ground programming, in the compassion of welcoming communities and congregations, in the generosity of donors and corporate partners, and in the tireless work of our staff and affiliate network.

We hope that you will continue to walk (and sometimes run!) alongside us as we transform the work of welcome—but for now, we invite you to join us in celebrating the successes and stories of the past year. We look forward to an exciting 2023.



Krish Vignarajah

Krish O'Mara Vignarajah
President & CEO



Elizabeth B. Wagner

Elizabeth Wagner
Board President

2022 At-a-Glance






Our work of welcome continues to grow at a record-breaking pace. In 2022, LIRS walked alongside tens of thousands of immigrants and refugees as they began their new lives in the United States...and surpassed fundraising, media, and staff-growth goals along the way.

8,454 CHILDREN
REUNITED WITH FAMILY IN THE U.S.

1,216 NEW AMERICANS
SERVED THROUGH INNOVATIVE PROGRAMMING

4,966 REFUGEES
RESETTLED

18,261 ASYLUM SEEKERS
WELCOMED AND SUPPORTED

	1,821 CHILDREN SERVED THROUGH FOSTER CARE
	14,500 AFGHANS RESETTLED IN COMMUNITIES ACROSS THE COUNTRY
	354 STAFF IN 21 STATES
	\$15 MILLION RECEIVED AS THE LARGEST SINGLE DONATION IN LIRS HISTORY
	9,052 MENTIONS IN LOCAL AND NATIONAL MEDIA



2022 Reach

LIRS is proud to offer services for immigrants and refugees all over the country—from our vast partner network to our newest venture: field offices in four strategic cities.



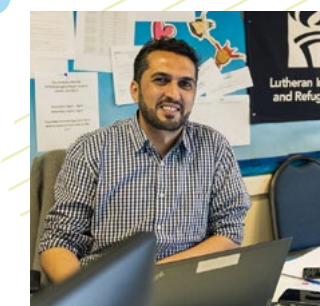
FARGO, NORTH DAKOTA

LIRS North Dakota welcomed 128 people in 2022. The office's community connections continue to grow, with exciting initiatives like specialized services for seniors, social and experiential travel opportunities for refugees, and more.



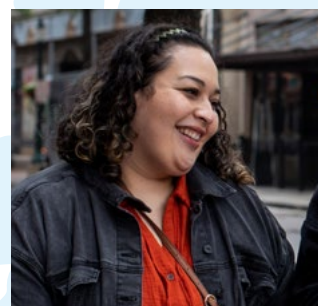
BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

Though LIRS has been headquartered in Baltimore for decades, our office recently expanded to include mental health services for immigrant children and families and career opportunities through New American Cities.



ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA

Since its establishment in November 2021, the Afghan-led Northern Virginia office has resettled 1,387 individuals through the Afghan Placement and Assistance (APA) and refugee resettlement (USRAP) programs.

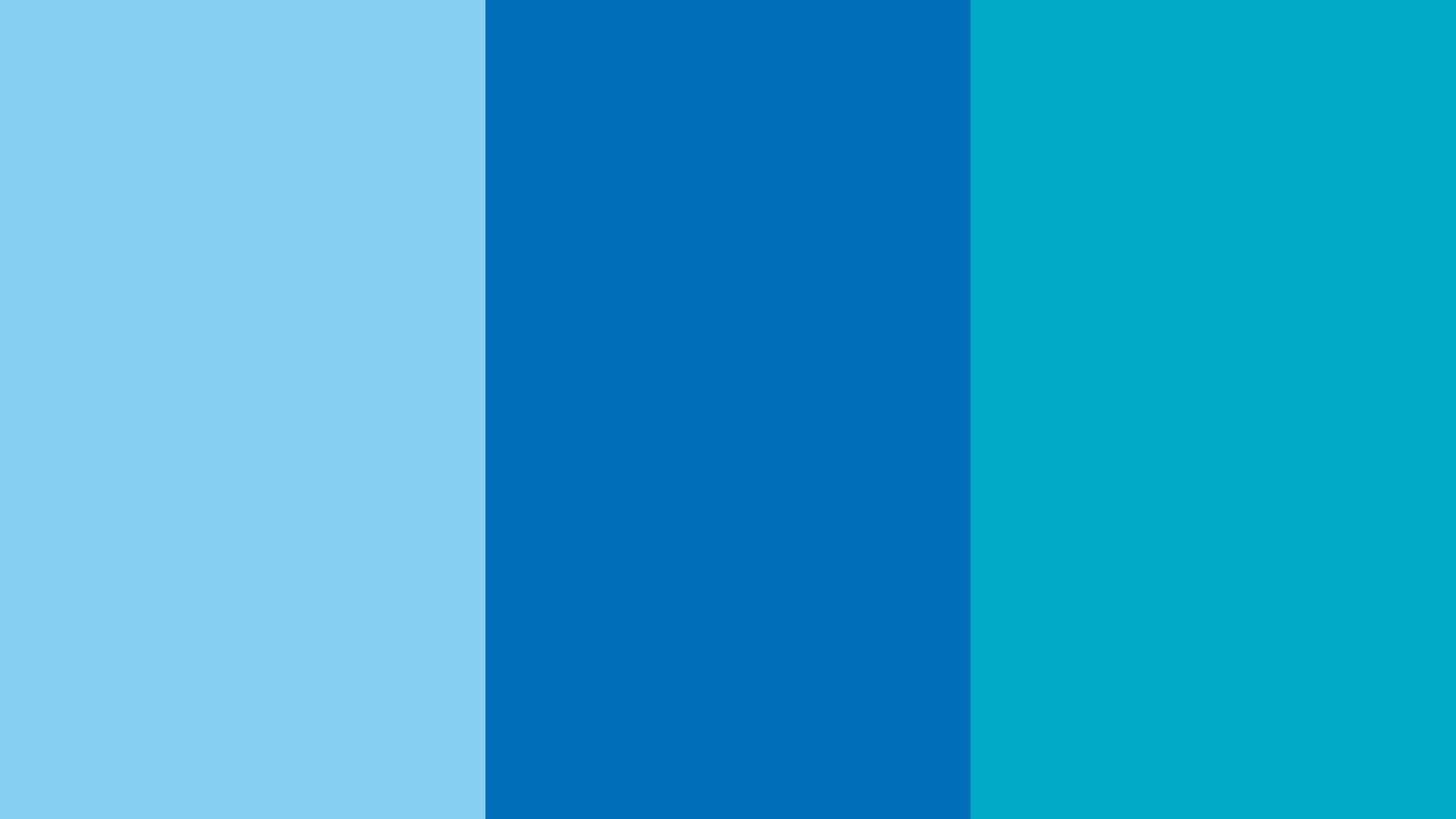


SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

Our San Antonio office opened in April and began implementing a two-year, \$293,000 city-funded program to provide case management and employment services to asylum seekers, humanitarian parolees, and other immigrants who aren't eligible for federal benefits—our first-ever grant of this kind!

- RESETTLEMENT AND INTEGRATION
- ASYLUM SERVICES
- NEW AMERICAN CITIES
- WELCOME CENTERS
- MENTAL HEALTH FACILITIES
- LIRS FIELD OFFICES
- CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

Photo Credit:
Kaylee Greenlee Beal (San Antonio)
Theresa Keil (Baltimore)



The Empowered Living Experience

The Long Welcome

Arrival in the United States is only the beginning for immigrants and refugees. Our distinguished service model goes beyond the basics to support what we call “the long welcome”—an empowered living experience that helps New Americans to not only survive, but thrive.



The Crisis in Ukraine

After news broke of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, our team sprang into action. The *Neighbors in Need: Ukraine* emergency response campaign supported urgent needs for Ukrainians fleeing to our southern border, and we were at the ready to provide support for Ukrainians who were deemed eligible for humanitarian parole. We continue to support Ukrainians at our Welcome Centers and in partner offices around the country.

SERVICES FOR UKRANIANS

- ➔ Emergency housing support
- ➔ Medical screening
- ➔ School enrollment
- ➔ Cultural orientation
- ➔ Work authorization application
- ➔ Mental health support



378

UKRAINIAN REFUGEES
RESETTLED IN THE
LIRS NETWORK



CRISIS RESPONSE IMPACT

A Family Reunited

The Yemelianova family had been waiting for years to reunite with family in the United States when the war in Ukraine broke out. With the help of the LIRS network, they were resettled in Massachusetts and can begin their new lives together in safety.




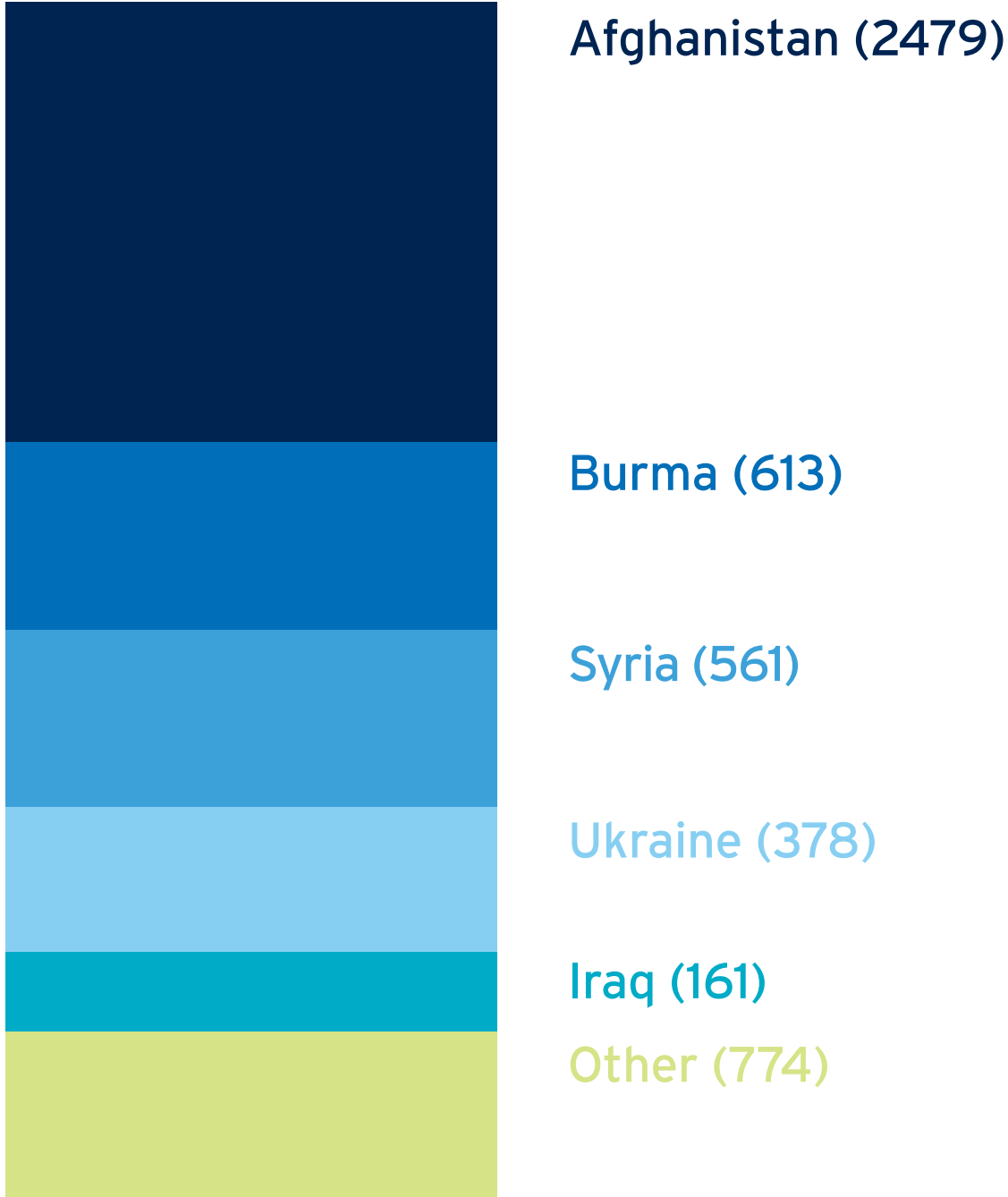
“We came here and I thought ‘No, this is perhaps just a dream.’”

LIUDMYLA YEMELIANOVA

Refugee Resettlement

At LIRS, welcoming newcomers is what we do—from picking refugee families up at the airport to furnishing their first apartment to helping them build connections in the community. In 2022, we resettled thousands of refugees from across the globe.

COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN



**4,966 REFUGEES
RESETTLED THROUGH
THE LIRS NETWORK**

Individual and community sponsors walk alongside refugee families as they start their new lives.



A New Home

Muzhgan Azizy came to the United States from Afghanistan just weeks before the fall of the Afghan government to the Taliban. She soon found a home at LIRS, where she worked on both the Programs and Development teams. "This was a second home for me always," she says. "I got my a Fulbright scholarship and came for my studies here. I'm grateful for that, but now it's my first home."

"The taste of freedom, safety, and security hit us differently."

MUZHGAN AZIZY



12,021

AFGHANS SERVED
THROUGH THE AFGHAN
PLACEMENT AND
ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Innovative Programming

The immigrant and refugee experience does not end after initial resettlement. That's why LIRS continues to invest in an empowered living experience: programs that go beyond the basics and help New Americans to find fulfillment and success in the United States.

NEW AMERICAN CITIES

The New American Cities program supports economic empowerment and social mobility by providing career guidance and training opportunities for refugees and immigrants, operating in six cities throughout the country.

- ➔ 341 refugees and immigrants served by program
- ➔ 85% placed in better job
- ➔ \$10/hour increase in wages on average

PREFERRED REFUGEE EMPLOYERS (PREs)

A good job offers New Americans stability, independence, and a sense of purpose and belonging. But the advantages don't stop there. Through our new Preferred Refugee Employers program, PREs become proven pipelines for hiring and retaining refugee talent—strengthening their companies and inspiring a culture of welcome.



PROGRAMMING IMPACT

Finding Meaningful Work

Norma, an immigrant from Kenya, had struggled to find meaningful, lucrative work in the United States despite her education and experience. With the help of the New American Cities program, she worked with a Pathway Builder to improve her resume and make critical connections—helping her land a great marketing job at a company that pays her what she’s worth and allows her to work remotely. “What was different about this program for me is that they were keen at utilizing my strengths and my potential to get me something that would really fit into what I had envisioned,” she said. “The quality of life that we have now is completely different.”

“The quality of life that we have now is completely different.”

NORMA



Asylum Services

At LIRS, we believe everyone should be welcomed with dignity and open arms. Seeking asylum and protection is a right under both U.S. and international law for people of all nationalities, races, religions, and political affiliations.

Our asylum services help those seeking safety navigate the often difficult, overwhelming asylum process and find hope and stability in their new lives. Through Welcome Centers and respite services, we help with everything from a fresh change of clothes and a warm meal to school enrollment, legal assistance, and more.

WELCOME CENTERS

LIRS Welcome Centers provide protection-centered and trauma-informed case management services to asylum seekers and those arriving through humanitarian parole.

- ➔ Phoenix, AZ
- ➔ Las Cruces, NM
- ➔ San Antonio, TX
- ➔ Seattle, WA
- ➔ Portland, OR
- ➔ New York, NY



8,507 ASYLUM SEEKERS RECEIVED RESPITE SERVICES

8,946 MEDICAL KITS DISTRIBUTED

A Dangerous Journey

The Perez* family had lived a stable life in Venezuela—but when they voted against the current administration in a recent election, their lives were forever changed. Soon, they found themselves with their food and water supplies cut off, forced to go into hiding or face imprisonment or death. With two young children in their arms, they embarked on a dangerous journey through Latin America before arriving at the United States' southern border. There, they were met with help from the LIRS network, who provided support and a warm welcome. Their future is uncertain, but they remain optimistic that they will be able to build their new lives in safety.

**Names changed for privacy.*

“What we wanted was to work, continue our lives, and have a better future for our children.”

PEREZ PARENTS

1,113

ASYLUM SEEKERS SERVED
THROUGH WELCOME CENTER
PROGRAMMING

Children and Family Services

When unaccompanied children arrive in the United States, the LIRS network is there to welcome them with open arms. Our family reunification services helped 8,454 children and families safely unite in 2022, while our foster care services provided a loving home to 2,325 children. For those that needed extra support, our new mental healthcare services offered a chance to process and heal in a safe, trauma-informed environment.



“If it’s on your heart, go for it.”

KOREY AND JAMES, WHO HAVE WELCOMED 28 CHILDREN INTO THEIR HOME THROUGH THE LIRS TRANSITIONAL FOSTER CARE NETWORK



5,911 FAMILIES SERVED THROUGH SAFE RELEASE SUPPORT



FOSTER CARE IMPACT

A Welcoming Home

Bridget and Chris were inspired to become foster parents for unaccompanied immigrant children after witnessing the family separation crisis of 2018. Since then, the couple has welcomed 15 children into their home, providing a safe and loving place to land until they can be reunited with their families. Bridget and Chris will never forget the first child they fostered: a four-year-old little girl who was pulled from her grandmother's arms at the border and cried for the first two weeks in their care. In time, she was united with her father—the first of many reunions the couple would witness in their foster journey. "There are tears and hugs," as Bridget says, "and you know in that moment that a very difficult chapter in the family's story is over."



"The LIRS program handles the education and the case work and any appointments. We just have to treat them like one of our family members."

BRIDGET & CHRIS, FOSTER PARENTS

A Life-Saving Mission

Many immigrants and refugees carry trauma with them long after they flee their home countries, but mental healthcare is often not readily accessible or available. In response to this gap, LIRS piloted Mental Health Services programming in 2021 and continues to offer essential care for individuals and families.

Among the beneficiaries of these services this year have been two children from Afghanistan, Zahra (age 11) and Abdul (age 16).* Zahra came to the U.S. alone, spending nearly seven months in LIRS care as she awaited reunification with her family. While in our care, she received counseling to help process separation anxiety and feelings about leaving Afghanistan and adjusting to the United States, in addition to engaging in educational and cultural activities.

Abdul also arrived in the U.S. as an unaccompanied child. The events he witnessed in Afghanistan following the Taliban takeover traumatized him, and he came to an LIRS mental health program in January 2022 following a stay in a residential treatment center.

LIRS was able to offer therapeutic services to meet Abdul's mental health needs. Right away, his clinician worked with him to develop coping skills and strategies that he has been able to use to self-regulate and avoid self-harm. With the help of LIRS, Zahra and Abdul were both reunited with their families and are now adjusting well to their new lives.

**Names changed for privacy.*



Engaging Our Community

A Culture of Welcome

At LIRS, we know that we are far more powerful together than we are alone. That's why we're proud to work with a robust national community of advocates, volunteers, faith groups, and other supporters to make the empowered living experience a reality for New Americans.



Advocacy and Public Policy

We advocate for policies that recognize the rights and promote the well-being of immigrants and refugees. Our advocacy is rooted in our faith, inspired by those we serve, informed by our team of experts, and guided by our vision that all immigrants and refugees should be protected, embraced, and empowered in a world of just and welcoming communities.



WORLD REFUGEE DAY

Our annual World Refugee Day Advocacy Day invites constituents from across the country to meet with Congressional offices and advocate on behalf of policies that are humane, fair, and respect the human dignity of all who seek shelter and refuge from war, disaster, and persecution.

- ➔ 136 advocates from 32 states plus DC
- ➔ 84 legislative meetings



LIRS AND PRESIDENT & CEO KRISH O'MARA VIGNARAJAH WERE IN THE MEDIA ADVOCATING FOR REFUGEES AND IMMIGRANTS 9,052 TIMES.



Supporting our Afghan Neighbors

As a principal member of the Evacuate Our Allies Coalition, LIRS continues to lead advocacy efforts alongside Afghans displaced by Taliban violence. Chief among our priorities is the passage of the Afghan Adjustment Act, which would provide a roadmap to lawful permanent status for Afghans who arrived via humanitarian parole. In 2022, LIRS hosted virtual fly-ins with 500+ attendees, led recommendation letters to the administration and Congress with 150+ sign-ons, and held 1,000+ legislative meetings to press for the passage of the bill after its introduction in August 2022. Though the bill has not yet passed, we successfully advocated for resumption of pro bono legal services for SIV-eligible Afghans and a streamlined, efficient, and accessible re-parole process to ensure the continuity of temporary protection and work authorization for Afghan evacuees.



OUR ADVOCACY

**7,241 MESSAGES SENT FROM CONSTITUENTS
IN SUPPORT OF REFUGEES AND IMMIGRANTS**

**384 MEETINGS WITH CONGRESSIONAL OFFICES
IN SUPPORT OF REFUGEES AND IMMIGRANTS**

Mobilization and Communities of Faith

The Mobilization and Faith Relations team works with congregations, communities, and corporate partners around the country to foster meaningful engagement with the work of welcome. Through opportunities for training, service, learning, and fellowship, LIRS encourages connection and collective action on behalf of our refugee and immigrant neighbors.



HOPE FOR THE HOLIDAYS

Hope for the Holidays™ continues to be LIRS's largest mobilization program and, in 2022, distributed a record-breaking number of holiday cards to people seeking safety in the United States. Additionally, 1,879 gifts were shared this holiday season with young children and families who receive direct services through LIRS's Children and Family Services network.



25,200 HOLIDAY CARDS DISTRIBUTED

CARDS CAME FROM 38 STATES ACROSS THE COUNTRY

Photo credit: Philip Laubner

LIRS Ambassador Network

The LIRS Ambassador Network is a community of 100+ advocates, volunteers, and leaders from all walks of life, united by their passion and commitment to stand in solidarity with LIRS and the newcomers we serve. From organizing awareness campaigns and advocacy actions to hosting prayer vigils and community discussions, the LIRS Ambassador Network equips leaders to use their unique gifts in the work of welcome. Here are just a few of our 2022 Ambassadors.



**SUSAN LYKE,
MARYLAND**

Susan hosted her own Hope for the Holidays party with local friends and later attended a Hope for the Holidays celebration at LIRS headquarters. Here, she's wrapping gifts that will be distributed to children receiving mental health services at LIRS.



**NICK NEMPHOS,
MARYLAND**

Nick participated in the LIRS World Refugee Day Virtual Advocacy Fly-In in June. As a student of social work researching unaccompanied refugee minors, Nick's expertise and passion make him an excellent Ambassador, advocate, and community leader.



**SISTER PHYLLIS COX,
VIRGINIA**

Sister Phyllis Cox serves as an ELCA Deaconess and LIRS Ambassador. Sister Phyllis has intentionally connected her networks to opportunities that support the people LIRS serves, inviting faith communities across the US to participate in programs like Hope for the Holidays and [Fresh Change](#).



**BILL RADATZ,
CALIFORNIA**

In May 2022, Bill organized a tour for local faith leaders to witness what is happening at the southern border and to invite them to inspire action in their communities. He has since gone on to lead advocacy efforts in his region for faith communities in support of the Afghan Adjustment Act and ending private immigration detention. His congregation is also working with other faith communities in the San Diego area to co-sponsor an Afghan family.



**KIRAN PYDI AND
NATALIA GHILASCU, ILLINOIS**

After the war broke out in Ukraine, Ambassadors Kiran and Natalia welcomed two Ukrainians, Oleksandr and Anna, into their home in Chicago through the Uniting for Ukraine program. They provided them with housing, groceries, assistance with job and driver's license applications, and more, and are helping them gain the firm footing they need before starting their lives in a new home.

Strangers Become Family Over Tea

Tessa K. shares the story of her congregation's sponsorship of an Afghan family as part of the [LIRS Circle of Welcome program](#).

When I first met the Afghan family my community was sponsoring—11 in all—they were staying with relatives in the US, waiting for their new apartment to be ready. They had just arrived from a refugee camp in Qatar. I was part of a group of strangers who were going to help them, but they didn't know that. I'm sure they were as apprehensive as I was.

I removed my shoes and was ushered into a special room just for guests.

"Tea?" the father asked.

All my fears subsided over the warmth and hospitality of that first cup of tea.

Soon after, we helped the family move, enroll six children in school, find ESL classes, and see doctors. We relied on Google Translate to make sense of

everything—and one another. They served amazing meals and poured a lot of tea.

Chatting back and forth on our smart-phones one night, the eldest daughter confided her sadness that she had left her husband behind.

On another night, we discussed Afghan culture and current events without concern for mistakes in translation. We were no longer strangers; we'd become friends.

I asked if it would be okay to share their story with our congregation.

The father said, "Of course, we trust our story with you."

"Are you sure?" I asked.

They all nodded, and the teenage son smiled and said, "You are family."



Ensuring the Future of Welcome

Life-Changing Generosity

Our work wouldn't be possible without the support of our donors, partners, and thoughtful advisors. Your compassionate dedication makes the future a brighter place for immigrant and refugee neighbors and helps to sustain our commitment to welcome.



Development

The incredible generosity of our donors and partners makes a real difference in the lives of those we serve. In 2022, LIRS raised \$21,779,036 in private funding—a meaningful combination of individual one-time and sustained donations, corporate partnerships, and major gifts. And with 34 new households joining our [Bernthal Legacy Society](#), we know that this critical work will continue for years to come.

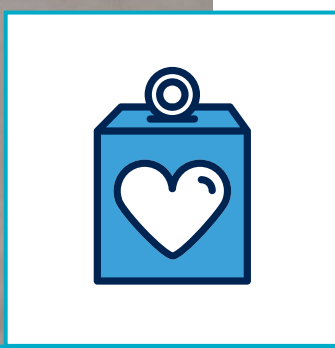
CORPORATE GIVING COLLECTIVE

LIRS is made stronger every day by the generous support of our corporate partners. This year, we invited companies to take the next step in their commitment to the work of welcome through our new Corporate Giving Collective (CGC), open to all corporations currently supporting LIRS with gifts over \$50,000—including our phenomenal friends at Airbnb, Bank of America, and Walmart.

The CGC serves as both an opportunity for volunteerism and an inside look into the work of LIRS, providing an answer to that often-asked question: “How can we get more involved?”



With the support of donors, New American Cities participant Julianne landed meaningful, gainful employment.



\$356,529 RAISED ON GIVING TUESDAY, THE MOST EVER

Philanthropist MacKenzie Scott Donates \$15M to LIRS

In November 2022, LIRS received a \$15 million gift from billionaire philanthropist MacKenzie Scott. The donation is the single largest contribution in our organizational history and comes on the heels of the historic Afghan refugee resettlement mission, Ukrainian displacement following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and record arrivals of asylum-seeking children and families at the U.S. southern border.

Ms. Scott's donation will be used to accelerate our new privately funded empowered living programs, including trauma-informed mental healthcare, the expansion of Welcome Centers for asylum-seeking families, our New American Cities workforce development program, and more.

"Ms. Scott's contribution is game-changing for our organization... We can live up to our legacy as a city and country welcoming of immigrants, and we can position communities to benefit from the economic and cultural contributions our newest neighbors are poised to make."

KRISH O'MARA VIGNARAJAH

(Photo by Evan Agostini/Invision/AP, File)

Nelly Simmons (left) with her older sister Helen Hoehl.



“Our family was very grateful for your service.”

NELLY SIMMONS

DEVELOPMENT IMPACT

Welcomed in 1952

14-year-old Nelly Simmons, her 23-year-old sister Helen Hoehl, and their parents, Jacob and Anna Gurguing, arrived in the U.S. from Poland in 1952 and after spending time in a German refugee camp post-WWII.

LIRS paid for their passage, and the family was sponsored by a Lutheran congregation and the community of Mifflin, Ohio.

In a letter to LIRS, Nelly shared that Helen had such a passion for LIRS that her last wishes included a special gift for the organization, as well as that a portion of her estate was designated to express her gratitude for the opportunity to come to the United States.

She credits LIRS as instrumental in her family's long-term welcome and in making their lives of abundance and grace possible.

2022 Financial Report

LIRS is a careful steward of the private donations and public funds that allow us to carry out our work of welcome.

*Statement of Financial Position
as of December 31, 2022*

*Based on audited financial
statements*

*Statement of Activities &
Changes in Net Assets for the
year ended December 31, 2022*

Dollars in thousands

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

ASSETS	2022	2021
Cash & Cash Equivalents	\$14,594	\$18,231
Investments	28,799	14,923
U.S. Govt Receivable	41,832	29,235
Other Assets	3,255	4,178
Investment In Lutheran Center Corp	3,318	3,407
Total Assets	\$91,798	\$69,974
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	2022	2021
LIABILITIES		
Accounts Payable & Other Liabilities	\$33,707	\$31,005
Long-term Debt	\$1,570	1,883
Total Liabilities	\$35,277	\$32,888
NET ASSETS		
Without Donor Restrictions	\$53,880	\$32,818
With Donor Restrictions	2,641	4,268
Total Net Assets	\$56,521	\$37,086
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$91,798	\$69,974

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES & CHANGES IN NET ASSETS

SUPPORT & REVENUE	2022	2021
Contributions-Private Sources	\$28,143	\$23,170
U.S. Government and State	179,864	93,189
Fees and Other Revenue	1,564	1,909
Total Support and Revenue	\$209,571	\$118,268
EXPENSES	2022	2021
Expenses	\$177,876	\$94,808
Program Services	8,601	5,642
Management and General	2,425	1,724
Total Expenses	\$188,902	\$102,174
<i>Change in Net Assets</i>	<i>\$19,435</i>	<i>\$16,038</i>
<i>Net Assets, Beginning of Year</i>	<i>37,086</i>	<i>21,048</i>
Net Assets, End of Year	\$56,521	\$37,086

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Hansen and Associates

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Lever for Change

Ed Hatcher

The Hatcher Group

Daya Khalsa

Prosperity Works

Donna Kinzer

DK Healthcare Consulting

Sean Long

Exodus Crossing LLC

Lori Lovelace

The Vessel

Bill McKibben

350.org; Schumann Distinguished Scholar at Middlebury College

Paul C. Miles

We Raise Foundation

Evan Moilan

GSB Fundraising

Bryn Parchman

Port Discovery Children's Museum

Joanna Peña-Bickley

UberEats; Designed by Us

LeRoy Pingho

Great Elm Solutions (GES)

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Kristin Taylor

Community Leader

Jose Antonio Tijierno

Hispanic Heritage Foundation

Laurel Vicklund

Peregrine Global Services

David Warnock

Camden Partners

Debbi Weinberg

Girls Empowerment Mission: GEM

Reinhard Ziegler, PhD

The Vessel

Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS) welcomes newcomers who seek safety, support, and a share in the American dream.

LIRS HEADQUARTERS

700 Light Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21230

E lirs@lirs.org
T 410-983-4000
F 410-230-2890

Thank you for your support!

To help LIRS continue our work of welcome, please visit