

SUPPORT FOR SERVICES THAT EMPOWER REFUGEES AND IMMIGRANTS



In 2025 and beyond, Iowa has exciting opportunities to continue and expand our long legacy of welcoming and empowering immigrants in our state.

That's why LSI supports policies at the local, state, and national levels that lead to greater inclusion and integration of immigrants into our workplaces and communities. We must continue to invest in the services that support new Iowans with skills, education, and training to leverage their skills and entrepreneurship in Iowa communities.

We are a stronger Iowa when we are a welcoming, inclusive Iowa. That means expanding our definition of welcome to those who come to Iowa from all over the world: those arriving from Afghanistan, those seeking asylum at the U.S.-Mexico border, and refugees from many other countries who now call Iowa home.

IMMIGRANTS MAKE AN IMPACT



\$500,000 sales revenue
earned by Global Greens farmers
(former refugees farming in Central Iowa)



8% of workers
in Iowa's science, tech, and
professional services are immigrants



726 refugees
from Afghanistan and other countries
were welcomed to Des Moines, Sioux
City, and Waterloo in 2024



237 people
prepared to become U.S. citizens in
2023-2024 after completing LSI's
citizenship program



\$4.1 billion dollars
were contributed to Iowa's economy
by refugee- and immigrant-owned
businesses



50% increase
in Des Moines' foreign-born
population over the past decade
(the second-highest growth rate in the nation)

LSI trained 200+ childcare providers, allowing 150+ parents to be active in Iowa's workforce

LSI is currently working with 50 new childcare providers, helping them maintain their small businesses and ensure parents can continue to go to work or school.

LOCAL INITIATIVES

Land Access: Municipalities should ensure that land is available, accessible, and specifically zoned for urban agriculture to combat food deserts, including those in neighborhoods with high concentrations of immigrants. Access to fresh, healthy produce is a win for all of our community members.

Affordable Housing: Cities must create equitable planning, zoning, and usage policies that support affordable housing for both renters and home buyers. Cities, counties, and public-private partnerships can develop Individual Development Accounts and Matched Savings programs, like those that LSI provides, that promote home ownership for immigrants and former refugees.

STATE INITIATIVES

Childcare: Funding supporting childcare resources and options should be inclusive of individual childcare providers, like the ones LSI trains. LSI expands childcare capacity by helping former refugees become licensed childcare providers and open small businesses, allowing others from their ethnic communities and other community members to participate in the workforce, knowing their children are cared for. With additional funding, this program could be replicated throughout the state.

Education: We support increased per-pupil funding for English language learning for K-12 students, as well as adult learners to ensure that all new lowans are able to access critical information

Affordable Housing: Iowa's shortage of affordable housing disproportionately impacts our immigrant communities. We must do more to ensure all lowans have access to safe, affordable places to call home. Continue to invest in tax credits, rent caps for low-income workers, housing trust funds, down payment assistance programs, and other creative avenues for increasing Iowa's inventory of affordable housing.

Double-Up Food Bucks: We support a direct, annual \$1 million appropriation from the state of Iowa to support Double Up Food Bucks, a statewide nutrition incentive program, at Iowa farmers markets, like LSI's Global Greens market, which supports both Iowa residents and farmers by increasing access to healthy produce.

FEDERAL INITIATIVES

Refugee Resettlement: For over 45 years Iowa and the US has offered resettlement to refugees who put down roots in Iowa and contribute to our economies. Over a 15 year period refugees and asylees contributed over 120 billion dollars to US economies. We urge the new administration to resume refugee resettlement not only for the benefit of our economy but to uphold our commitment to Afghan allies and others in need of humanitarian relief.

Migration Policy: Temporary Protected Status should be used to its fullest extent to grant reprieve for populations in the U.S. facing exceptionally challenging circumstances in their countries of origin preventing their safe return. Long-term residents with established ties to the U.S. should be able to adjust their status and become permanent residents. A just solution for millions of the nation's undocumented immigrants includes the advancement of permanent protected status and avenues for adjustment as a matter of economic opportunity and for purposes of maintaining family unity.