



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Gulf Coast JFCS Stands Ready to Assist Ukrainian Refugees**

(CLEARWATER, FL – February 28, 2022) -- In response to the crisis in Ukraine, Gulf Coast JFCS stands ready to assist with the anticipated influx of Ukrainian Refugees to the Tampa Bay region.

For nearly 40 years, Gulf Coast JFCS has resettled Refugees from countries across the globe, including Ukraine, fleeing war and persecution. Most recently, the organization resettled hundreds of Afghan Refugees to the Tampa Bay region, assisting them with temporary housing, childcare, schools, jobs, and overall cultural integration. These same resources and support will be provided to Ukrainian Refugees designated to Gulf Coast JFCS to assist.

“Gulf Coast JFCS Refugee Services Division remains steadfast in our commitment to “welcome the stranger” by assisting Ukrainians fleeing the bloodshed in their homeland and connecting these Refugees with their families in Tampa Bay.” States Elke Cumming, Vice President of Programs and Administration, Gulf Coast JFCS.

Gulf Coast JFCS partners with HIAS and the United States Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) to assist individuals and families with Refugee status from all over the world to resettle successfully and safely. It is still too early to predict how many Ukrainian Refugees may be resettled in Tampa Bay. However, given the estimated million people fleeing Ukraine to neighboring countries, it is highly likely Gulf Coast JFCS, and our community will soon be receiving the request for help. Previously, approximately 100 Refugees from Ukraine were resettled by Gulf Coast JFCS.

Refugee assistance provided by Gulf Coast JFCS exemplifies the Jewish value of “welcoming the stranger” from which the organization was founded nearly fifty years ago. Prior to the Ukrainian crisis, demand for Gulf Coast JFCS Refugee Services was increasing rapidly due to the current Administration’s increase in the Refugee admissions ceiling. As is the case with most critical emergencies, the most pressing immediate need is financial support. The Refugee Assistance Fund directs philanthropic contributions to help these Refugees settle and find safety, comfort, and happiness in their new communities. Finding affordable, safe housing is especially a challenge in this current housing market as cost of living continues to rapidly increase to unprecedented levels. Contributions to this fund will additionally help fill gaps in funding immediate vital resettling expenses.

Those who wish to contribute to the Gulf Coast JFCS Refugee Assistance Fund or assist in some other capacity, please visit <https://gulfcoastjewishfamilyandcommunityservices.org/refassist/> or contact Sue Farley, Vice President for Development, [Susan.Farley@gcjfcs.org](mailto:Susan.Farley@gcjfcs.org).

**ABOUT GULF COAST JFCS:** Protecting the vulnerable, strengthening families, and empowering individuals throughout the state of Florida since 1974, Gulf Coast Jewish Family and Community Services (Gulf Coast JFCS) is a 501(c)3 supporting nearly 37,000 diverse individuals and families of all backgrounds annually through its numerous programs and across 40 Florida counties. Within Refugee Services are multiple programs ranging from job training, case management, interpreter services, and micro-enterprise/business development. Learn more about Gulf Coast JFCS at [www.gcjfcs.org](http://www.gcjfcs.org).

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