



INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF BUFFALO

**JRC Comments for TRC Press Conference Announcing the TRP Crisis Response Fund
Friday, February 7, 2025**

Imagine being in a country you've never been before. You don't understand the language, the layout of your new city, the transit system, the school system, the healthcare system, the banking system, or how the job market works.

For over a century, the International Institute of Buffalo has solved this problem by helping foreign-born people become part of the fabric of the City of Good Neighbors, including providing the integration services I just mentioned. Providing this quick on-ramp to American life helps newly arrived refugee families get settled, become self-sufficient, and contribute to the local economy as taxpaying workers without delay. The non-profits of The Refugee Partnership doing this integration work certainly beats the alternative of refugees trying to figure things out by themselves.

However, don't be confused, we are not here today to discuss that value proposition. Simply put, today, the issue is that the federal government made a promise and then broke that promise.

The State Department promised refugee families (and the nonprofits that resettle them) it would pay for clients' basic needs and case management support for three months so that these newly arrived refugees could get their bearings and integrate into our community. Now, it has defaulted on the funding it owes to us for work already performed and to be performed for the families already here.

We have a moral obligation to complete the work that the United States government promised when it accepted these fully vetted refugee families to resettle here.



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So, the federal government is renegeing on this promise and leaving the nonprofits holding the bag to the tune of \$1.5 million.

Forget that refugee families coming to America legally are some of the most vetted people in the world.

Forget that Republican and Democratic presidents accepted refugees in the past because they recognized the overwhelming contributions to America's economic vitality and our unique legacy of being 'a land of immigrants.'

Forget that for four decades, the US funded integrating refugees because it made sense to help these refugee families get a lay of the land, set the course of their American dream, and give them a better chance of success.

But don't forget that, without warning, the federal government halted integration regardless of whether the families were fully integrated, partially integrated, or integrated at all. That is setting them up for failure.

Don't forget that the federal government left the nonprofits of The Refugee Partnership to complete the work.

And don't forget that the federal government left us with an unpaid bill of \$1.5 million.

Regardless of your politics or who you voted for, that is wrong and beneath our great nation's dignity. Not living up to previous commitments is terrible public policy and un-American.

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