

DR. MATT HEINZ
Supervisor
District 2



33 N Stone Ave., 11th Floor
Tucson, AZ 85701
(520) 724-2702
district2@pima.gov

Pima County Board of Supervisors

To: Melissa Manriquez, Clerk of the Board

From: Matt Heinz, Supervisor, District 2

Date: December 15, 2025

RE: December 16 Addendum Agenda item #4: Short-Term Crisis and Emergency Resources (STCER) Grant Program Funding Recommendations – PROPOSED AMENDMENT

Please add this memo to the 12/16/25 Addendum item #4 for consideration by my colleagues, and please distribute to all supervisors and their staff.

Community and Workforce Development

Short-Term Crisis and Emergency Resources (STCER) Grant Program Funding Recommendations -- PROPOSED AMENDMENT:

I propose a friendly amendment to these recommendations from staff and the Outside Agency Citizens' Review Committee (OACRC), as follows:

RECEIVED
COMMUNITY AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
DEC 16 2025
mm

- 1) Approve the awards as recommended; but ADD:
- 2) An additional \$140,000 in one-time STCER Grant Program funding (taking the overall total for the STCER Funding Program from \$838,390 to \$978,390), as follows:
 - a. **Food Assistance Service Category:** Award an additional \$25,000 to IRC Arizona for their work organizing and providing emergency food box pick-ups for Refugees, Asylees, Humanitarian Parolees, and others in Pima County, in coordination with Lutheran Social Services, the Community Food Bank of So Arizona, and others. **In Pima County alone, more than 4,000 men, women and children have now lost eligibility for all federal food assistance**, including 3,122 Refugees, 104 Asylees, 543 Afghan Humanitarian Parolees, 143 Ukrainian Humanitarian Parolees, and others. IRC and LSS have jointly organized three emergency food box distribution events so far, with hundreds of families representing thousands of men, women and children participating. The food crisis is real and growing for these vulnerable populations. This would bring IRC's Emergency Food Assistance STCER grant from \$25K to \$50K.
 - b. **Housing and Utility Support Service Category:** Award IRC Arizona \$40,000 for emergency rent and utility support for eligible clients in Pima County, to prevent an escalation of homelessness. The IRC is the primary refugee-serving organization in

Pima County, responsible for more than 50% of all refugees living here. With the loss of SNAP benefits and the need to spend scarce household resources on compliance with USCIS's recently announced "re-vetting" processes, these families are now more vulnerable to extreme housing cost burden and therefore potentially falling behind on rent and/or utilities.

- c. **Multiple Service Categories:** Award IRC Arizona \$75,000 for their Case Management, Employment Services, and Economic Self-Sufficiency work, including providing refugees help with Legal Permanent Resident applications, follow-up on pending cases, and financial help with application fees. IRC helps remove key barriers to stability and supports refugees on their path to long-term safety and self-sufficiency. The program lost \$350,000 in federal funding this year, reducing staff and capacity. IRC will use 82% of Pima County grant funds in this category to provide direct support to refugees and asylees applying for LPR status, including professional referrals and assistance with fees, interpretation, and medical costs. Additionally, this funding would help IRC guide local refugee communities in how to navigate "the new normal" federal landscape, helping Pima County refugees specifically to navigate the new Trump administration mandates issued 11/21/25, 11/27/25, and 12/2/25, to among other things mandate "re-review" of all refugees and others admitted to the United States during the Biden administration, to potentially strip Green Card holders of their legal permanent resident status, and more. (See below, "New Trump Administration Policy Announcements")

BACKGROUND:

IRC Arizona serves more than 1 out of every 2 refugees in Pima County (Catholic Community Services and Lutheran Social Services together serve the rest), and 3 out of every 4 Afghan Humanitarian Parolees in Pima County — providing full case management for 1,941 men, women and children who've arrived in the past five years. Additionally, as the Refugee Social Services (RSS) grant awardee for Pima County, IRC serves more than 3,400 Pima County residents with refugee or related statuses with economic self-sufficiency and employment-related services and support. They serve those populations named above, as well as Ukrainian Humanitarian Parolees, Special Immigrant Visa holders, Asylees, and others in our community. Forty-two percent of the refugee and related populations in Pima County are children.

IRC Arizona was the first to alert us to the fact that refugees and other special immigrant groups were about to lose SNAP eligibility, Medicaid eligibility, CHIP, Medicare and more, because of the passage of the "One Big Beautiful Bill Act" in July. These groups were 100% dopped from SNAP eligibility effective October 1st and will lose remaining benefits over the next 12-18 months. [See attached OBBBA explainer.]

This whole OA emergency funding process came about because my office originally brought forward proposals for emergency funding of \$750,000 to help refugees, asylees and others in our community grapple with lost benefits and the need to adjust status in order to regain access to benefits, and \$800,000 for emergency food assistance programs to serve these vulnerable populations and others

Supervisor Heinz

RE: Short-Term Crisis and Emergency Resources (STCER) Grant Program Funding Recommendations –

PROPOSED AMENDMENT

December 15, 2025

Page: 3 of 6

communitywide for whom food shortages were an imminent threat. In the meantime, the Federal Government Shutdown happened, affecting many more people in our community.

Regardless of the government shutdown though, refugees in our community need our additional support, now and going forward. **The federal government – who after rigorous vetting invited these refugees and other displaced people into the United States in the first place – has now completely turned their backs on them. WE CANNOT DO THE SAME.**

While this Short-Term Crisis and Emergency Resources Grant Program certainly serves the purpose of supporting lower-income members of our community who were temporarily made more vulnerable by the Federal Government Shutdown, **it does NOT YET adequately meet the needs of refugees and others in our community whose very survival is on the line now that H.R. 1 is the law of the land.** And, since I first brought my emergency funding proposals forward, the Trump administration has gone even further to destabilize and terrorize these communities as much as possible, as outlined below. **That is the reason for my proposed amendment.**

Until Congress acts to reverse or amend these terrible provisions of the new law, we must stand up as a community and ensure that these most-vulnerable neighbors – folks who suffered tremendously before being granted entry to the United States and who simply are trying to rebuild their lives here in America – are not allowed to just fall through the cracks. ***We must act.***

New Trump Administration Policy Announcements Late November-Early December:

(Information compiled and analyzed by IRC National and IRC Arizona)

Re-Review of Refugees, Asylees, and other immigrants

1. On November 21, 2025, USCIS issued a [memorandum](#) directing an unprecedented review of all refugees admitted to the US under the prior administration. The memo directs agency personnel to hold all pending adjustment of status applications for refugees admitted between January 2021 and February 2025. Recently admitted refugees, including those who have already been granted their green card, resettled during this time are also subject to review and potential reinterview to determine whether they qualified as refugees at the time of their admission, despite often years of prior interviews and vetting to establish their eligibility for refugee protection.

And over the Thanksgiving holiday and last week a series of new policies were released apart from the benefits cuts and refugee re-review above. **The policies outlined in the November 27 and December 2 memos below constitute one of the most profound sets of immigration restrictions in US history. Pausing asylum claims and diverting USCIS resources to re-vetting already approved cases will inevitably exacerbate the already significant backlog. Impeding the adjustment of status, naturalization, and other benefits for hundreds of thousands of**

nationals from travel ban countries will impede integration and harm refugee and immigrant communities and families across the country.

2. Suspension of immigration processes for Afghans

In a November 27 [tweet](#), USCIS announced it would suspend all immigration requests related to Afghan nationals. In a separate [tweet](#) on November 28, the State Department announced it would pause visa issuances for anyone with an Afghan passport. A leaked official government email instructs consular officers to refuse all immigrant and non-immigrant visas relying on Sec. 221(g) of the INA and previews that further guidance will be released on enhanced vetting. This action apparently suspends the SIV program, which was the only available form of admissions for most vulnerable Afghans following the refugee and travel bans.

3. Increased vetting for people from travel-ban countries

On November 27, USCIS [published a notice](#) implementing increased vetting requirements for nationals from the 19 countries on the June 4 [travel ban](#) list.^[1] A [Policy Alert](#) that day instructs USCIS officers to consider “country-specific facts and circumstances” when adjudicating discretionary benefits for people from travel ban countries, including certain adjustments of status, extensions of non-immigrant stay, or changes of non-immigrant status. Whereas the previous travel ban generally applied only to people outside of the US and not holding a valid visa at the time of issuance, **this new guidance will also impact people from travel ban countries inside the US when they adjust status or seek other benefits, including extensions of non-immigrant stay, or changes of non-immigrant status.**

- It is unclear exactly how officers will weigh the “significant negative factor” of coming from a “travel ban country” against other discretionary factors, but it seems likely that this order will make it much harder for nationals of travel ban countries to successfully obtain discretionary adjustment.
- “Travel ban countries” include Afghanistan, Chad, Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Haiti, Iran, Libya, Myanmar, Somalia, Sudan, Yemen, Burundi, Cuba, Laos, Sierra Leone, Togo, Turkmenistan, Venezuela.

4. Reviewing Green Cards

On November 27, USCIS Director Edlow [tweeted](#) that he has “directed a full scale, rigorous reexamination of every Green Card for every alien from every country of concern.” It appears this review is covered by the December 2 policy memo detailed below.

5. Pausing asylum applications and USCIS adjudications and re-vetting travel ban entrants

^[1] These countries include Afghanistan, Chad, Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Haiti, Iran, Libya, Myanmar, Somalia, Sudan, Yemen, Burundi, Cuba, Laos, Sierra Leone, Togo, Turkmenistan, Venezuela.

Supervisor Heinz

RE: Short-Term Crisis and Emergency Resources (STCER) Grant Program Funding Recommendations –
PROPOSED AMENDMENT

December 15, 2025

Page: 5 of 6

USCIS reportedly [issued an internal memo](#) pausing the processing of all asylum applications from all nationalities. While the memo has not been made public, USCIS Director Edlow [tweeted](#) on November 28 that all asylum decisions would be halted “until we can ensure that every alien is vetted and screened to the maximum degree possible.” At a [press conference](#) on November 30, President Trump said there was “no time limit” on the pause and that it should last “a long time.”

On December 2, USCIS issued a [Policy Memo](#) instructing personnel to:

- Place a **hold on all affirmative I-589 applications** for asylum or withholding of removal, regardless of country of origin
- **Place a hold on all benefits requests for people from travel ban countries**
- Conduct a **comprehensive “re-review” of all approved benefits for anyone from a travel ban country who entered the US on or after January 20, 2021**
 - o This review includes potential re-interviews and case-by-case assessments of all relevant information and facts. Within 90 days USCIS will prioritize a list for review and reinterview.

Across the IRC national network of offices, including in Arizona, dozens of IRC clients from Afghanistan, Burundi, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, El Salvador, Eritrea, Iran, Myanmar, Sudan, Ukraine, and Venezuela have had naturalization oath ceremonies, green card interviews, and citizenship interviews abruptly cancelled without explanation. One refugee family has received a notice re-opening their case.

These policies are likely to have a significant impact on refugee serving organizations’ capacity to meet urgent needs of their clients, including the need for mental health services to address the confusion, concern, and re-traumatization of refugee clients; increased resources for legal and information services staff to respond to client questions about the security of their status, risk of deportation, and other potential consequences of these policies; a significant expansion in need for legal services (legal representation/prep for re-interviews); and potential need for immigration court representation (removal defense) for clients whose legal status is terminated.

Resources:

- USCIS Nov. 27, 2025, Memo on vetting for travel ban countries:
<https://www.uscis.gov/newsroom/news-releases/uscis-implements-additional-national-security-measures-in-the-wake-of-national-guard-shooting-by>
- USCIS Dec. 2, 2025, Memo pausing asylum, benefit adjudication, and ordering re-vetting:
<https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/document/policy-alerts/PM-602-0192-PendingApplicationsHighRiskCountries-20251202.pdf>

Supervisor Heinz

**RE: Short-Term Crisis and Emergency Resources (STCER) Grant Program Funding Recommendations –
PROPOSED AMENDMENT**

December 15, 2025

Page: 6 of 6

- IRAP explainer:
<https://refugeerights.org/news-resources/lkt-irap-explainer-on-recently-announced-trump-administration-policies-impacting-refugees-asylum-seekers-afghan-nationals-and-immigrants-from-countries-listed-in-travel-ban>

- ACLU explainer:
https://drive.google.com/file/d/14ruHrFYTf2K6B_9SwHgBfnE72R8yRh72/view

cc: Jan Leshar, Pima County Administrator
Carmine DeBonis, Jr., Deputy County Administrator
Steve Holmes, Deputy County Administrator
Daniel Sullivan, Director, Community and Workforce Development Department



Impacts of OBBA

Overview

The One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBA), a sweeping piece of funding-related legislation, was signed into law by President Trump on July 4, 2025. This bill includes a historic increase in funding for immigration enforcement and deep cuts to federal benefits for the IRC's clients, including health insurance and food assistance

Elimination of Eligibility

OBBA drastically reduces eligibility for federal benefits for certain immigrants, including **Medicaid** (Sec. 70104), the Children's Health Insurance Program (**CHIP**) (Sec. 70104), Affordable Care Act (**ACA**) subsidies (Sec. 71301), **Medicare** (Sec. 71201), and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (**SNAP**) (Sec. 10108). The benefits eligibility changes in OBBA do not include expiration dates. Unless repealed or replaced by future legislation, these provisions will remain in effect indefinitely.

Key

✓	eligible
✓	eligible with restrictions
✗	ineligible

Federal Benefit Eligibility by Immigration Status:

Pre- and Post- OBBBA

Note: This chart reflects eligibility for federal benefits only. It does not account for state-funded programs or state-specific eligibility expansions. Some states may use their own funds to provide benefits to populations excluded at the federal level, including certain immigrants and children regardless of status. Eligibility rules can vary widely by state.

	<i>Medicaid</i>	<i>Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)</i>	<i>ACA Subsidies</i>	<i>Medicare</i>	SNAP
<i>Date effective</i>	<i>Effective October 1, 2026</i>	<i>Effective October 1, 2026</i>	<i>ACA premium tax credit eligibility changes will be effective in taxable years</i>	<i>Effective immediately upon passage of the law, but people already enrolled in the</i>	Effective immediately upon passage

	<i>Medicaid</i>	<i>Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)</i>	<i>ACA Subsidies</i>	<i>Medicare</i>	SNAP
			<p><i>beginning December 31, 2026</i></p> <p><i>Access to the ACA exchanges for lawfully present immigrants earning less than 100% of the federal poverty level will be effective in taxable years beginning December 31, 2025</i></p>	<p><i>program on the date of enactment may remain in the program for 18 months from July 4, 2025</i></p>	<p><i>of the law (July 4, 2025)</i></p>
<i>US citizens</i>	<p>✓ <i>pre</i></p> <p>✓ <i>post</i></p>	<p>✓ <i>pre</i></p> <p>✓ <i>post</i></p>	<p>✓ <i>pre</i></p> <p>✓ <i>post</i></p>	<p>✓ <i>pre</i></p> <p>✓ <i>post</i></p>	<p>✓ <i>pre</i></p> <p>✓ <i>post</i></p>
<i>Lawful Permanent</i>	<p>✓ <i>pre</i></p> <p>✓ <i>post</i></p>	<p>✓ <i>pre</i></p> <p>✓ <i>post</i></p>	<p>✓ <i>pre</i></p> <p>✓ <i>post</i></p>	<p>✓ <i>pre</i></p> <p>✓ <i>post</i></p>	<p>✓ <i>pre</i></p> <p>✓ <i>post</i></p>

	<i>Medicaid</i>	<i>Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)</i>	<i>ACA Subsidies</i>	<i>Medicare</i>	SNAP
<i>Residents (LPRs)</i>					
<i>Cuban & Haitian Entrants</i>	✓ pre ✓ post	✓ pre ✓ post	✓ pre ✓ post	✓ pre ✓ post	✓ pre ✓ post
<i>Refugees and asylees (before adjustment to LPR), and withholding of removal</i>	✓ pre ✗ post	✓ pre ✗ post	✓ pre ✗ post	✓ pre ✗ post	✓ pre ✗ post
<i>Trafficking survivors (T visa), VAWA self-petitioners</i>	✓ pre ✗ post	✓ pre ✗ post	✓ pre ✗ post	✓ pre ✗ post	✓ pre ✗ post

	<i>Medicaid</i>	<i>Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)</i>	<i>ACA Subsidies</i>	<i>Medicare</i>	SNAP
Humanitarian parolees (with some differences for Afghan and Ukrainian parolees)	✓ pre (5-yr ban) ✗ post	✓ pre (5-yr ban) ✗ post	✓ pre ✗ post	✓ pre ✗ post	✓ pre (5-yr ban) ✗ post
TPS/DED holders	✗ pre ✗ post	✗ pre ✗ post	✓ pre ✗ post	✓ pre ✗ post	✗ pre ✗ post
Asylum seekers/CAT applicants	✗ pre ✗ post	✗ pre ✗ post	✓ pre (with <u>limitations</u>) ✗ post	✓ pre (with <u>limitations</u>) ✗ post	✗ pre ✗ post

	<i>Medicaid</i>	<i>Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)</i>	<i>ACA Subsidies</i>	<i>Medicare</i>	SNAP
<i>People granted deferred action (e.g., DACA)</i>	<i>X pre</i> <i>X post</i>	<i>X pre</i> <i>X post</i>	<i>✓ pre (with limitations)</i> <i>X post</i>	<i>✓ pre (with limitations)</i> <i>X post</i>	<i>X pre</i> <i>X post</i>
<i>Undocumented people</i>	<i>X pre</i> <i>X post</i>	<i>X pre</i> <i>X post</i>	<i>X pre</i> <i>X post</i>	<i>X pre</i> <i>X post</i>	<i>X pre</i> <i>X post</i>
<i>Unaccompanied children (UCs)</i>	<i>X pre (but covered under ORR-funded care)</i> <i>X post (but covered under ORR-funded care)</i>	<i>X pre</i> <i>X post</i>	<i>X pre</i> <i>X post</i>	<i>X pre</i> <i>X post</i>	<i>X pre</i> <i>X post</i>
<i>Notes</i>	<i>States retain the option to cover lawfully present</i>		<i>Coverage for the Affordable Care Act is administered primarily</i>		<i>Other provisions may create barriers</i>

	<i>Medicaid</i>	<i>Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)</i>	<i>ACA Subsidies</i>	<i>Medicare</i>	SNAP
	<p><i>children and pregnant immigrants</i></p> <p><i>Emergency Medicaid continues to cover certain otherwise-ineligible groups</i></p> <p><i>New work requirements may create barriers to access even for those who are eligible</i></p>		<p><i>through an Advanced Premium Tax Credit (APTC) that allows individuals to enroll in private health insurance through state marketplaces with subsidies</i></p>		<p>to access even for clients who are eligible. For example, OBBBA reduces funding for SNAP by around \$186 billion through 2034 and imposes new work requirements on adults aged 55-64 and to parents whose youngest child is at least 14 years old</p>

Refugee children who do not have LPR/Green Cards are no longer eligible for SNAP. For clients who are no longer eligible for SNAP, the cuts will mean a total loss of food assistance, increasing hunger and financial strain. For clients who remain eligible, many will still experience significant benefit reductions, with some losing \$25 to over \$200 per month depending on the state. Families with children, working parents, and even full-time workers are among the

hardest hit, facing average annual losses of up to \$1,752. These changes will deepen hardship for low-income immigrant households and strain local support systems, particularly in states with large immigrant populations.^[1] The elimination of SNAP eligibility for clients will also make them **ineligible for the SNAP Education and Training (E&T) programs**. This means that refugees and other impacted clients will not have access to workforce training programs that support their path to self-sufficiency.

[1] <https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/2025-07/How-the-Senate-Budget-Reconciliation-SNAP-Proposals-Will-Affect-Families-in-Every-US-State.pdf>

How SNAP Cuts Increase Food Insecurity for Vulnerable Communities

H.R.1 cuts SNAP funding by \$186 billion through 2034, with the most significant impacts on:

- **Eligibility:** Entire categories of legal immigrants—including refugees, asylum seekers, and humanitarian parolees—are now excluded from benefits.
- **Work Requirements:** Stricter rules for "able-bodied adults without dependents", including mandatory work or volunteer hours, place vulnerable clients at risk of benefit loss.
- **Reduced Payments:** Limits on adjusting SNAP benefits for inflation and cost-of-living increases may lead to declining purchasing power over time.
- **School Meals:** Fewer children will qualify for free school meals due to the SNAP-linked certification process, impacting child nutrition.
- **Administrative Burdens:** States are being asked to shoulder more of SNAP's administrative costs, creating an incentive to restrict access further—especially in under-resourced areas.
- **Program Elimination:** SNAP-Ed, the nation's largest nutrition education program that runs across all 50 states and partners with many IRC programs, will be defunded after FY2025.

These policy changes create a perfect storm of food insecurity—particularly for newcomers navigating resettlement, legal uncertainty, language barriers, and poverty.