

IN THE OFFICE OF THE MAYOR OF SAN FRANCISCO

SAN FRANCISCO BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Initiative by:

UKRAINIAN REFUGEES COMMUNITY OF SAN FRANCISCO

Fiscal Sponsor:

LA RAZA COMMUNITY RESOURCE CENTER

**PROPOSAL FOR SPECIAL FUNDING FOR
THE UKRAINIAN RESOURCE AND CULTURAL CENTER**

Ukrainian Refugees Community
San Francisco
Contacts:
David Bogachyk (chairperson)
Phone: (415)301-9602
Email: Lbogachik@gmail.com

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|----|
| INTRODUCTION..... | 4 |
| I. Ukrainians in San Francisco | 4 |
| II. Demographics | 5 |
| III. Current Economic Situation | 5 |
| IV. Access to Essential Services Overview | 6 |
| THE CENTER OVERVIEW..... | 7 |
| IMPACT ON THE CITY BUDGET | 8 |
| PROGRAMS | 8 |
| INTEGRATION SERVICES | 8 |
| I. Our Approach | 8 |
| II. Integration Case Management | 9 |
| III. Civic Hub/Family Center | 10 |
| IV. Immigration Clinic | 10 |
| MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT | 11 |
| I. Access to Mental Health Care Crisis | 11 |
| II. Our Approach | 12 |
| III. Support Groups | 12 |
| IV. Therapy | 13 |
| SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT | 14 |
| I. Our Approach | 14 |

| | |
|---|----|
| II. Program Overview | 15 |
| 1. Business consulting and coaching | 15 |
| 2. Incubator # 1 | 16 |
| 3. Incubator # 2 | 16 |
| 4. Assets | 17 |
| WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT | 18 |
| I. Trainings | 18 |
| II. Consulting | 19 |
| III. Career Partnerships/Jobs Match | 19 |
| IV. Workshops | 19 |
| ESTIMATED BUDGET | 20 |

INTRODUCTION

Ukrainian Refugees Community of San Francisco unites Ukrainian war refugees who arrived to the City in the past two years. It is fiscally sponsored by La Raza Community Resource Center.

This request for special funding for Ukrainian Resource and Cultural Center comes out of an urgent need for stabilizing, integration, economic development, and mental health support for the Ukrainian Refugees Community of the City of San Francisco. The community has been in a crisis which requires an immediate intervention.

After Russia's full scale invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022, 6,5 millions of Ukrainians the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reported to become refugees (5% of total number of refugees worldwide). Women and children make about 90% of them. According to UNHCR, it is "the largest human displacement crisis in the world today."¹

Missile and rocket attacks continue to cause widespread death and destruction of homes and the entire cities and communities (Mariupol, Volnovaha, Bakhmut, and others). Energy infrastructures has been destroyed throughout the country. The UNHCR estimates 15.7 million people in Ukraine to be in urgent need of humanitarian assistance and protection². No World political leader or expert expects the war to end in the nearest future. And Ukrainians keep seeking refuge abroad.

Following President Biden's announcement in 2022 of the Uniting for Ukraine program to streamline the process of welcoming Ukrainian refugees in the U.S., 178,000 of Ukrainians were admitted by 2024 through U4U, and 319,000 have been processed outside of the program, according to the Department of Homeland Security.

I. Ukrainians in San Francisco

While before 2022 SF residents of Ukrainian origin, according to Census, was about 10,000³ people (1.23% of San Francisco population), besides very small Church communities with limited resources, there was and there is no Community Resource center where Ukrainian war refugees could have an access to essential services. A tremendous language barrier prevents them from using the services through other organizations.

Since February 2022, San Francisco has hosted **nearly 2510 Ukrainian war refugees**⁴. And they keep coming.

1 https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/94176#_ga=2.207318931.1420584911.1659614898-1025320086.1657213298

2 *Ibid.*

3 <https://www.sfpublicpress.org/ukrainians-in-sf-are-anxious-and-angry-and-refugees-need-homes/>

II. Demographics

The majority of the San Francisco Ukrainian community are women and children (up to 90%), also seniors and people with disabilities (men aged 18-60 are not allowed to leave Ukraine).

Education: Over 75 % have completed technical or university studies. About 60% have bachelor's, master's or doctoral degrees in economics, law, medicine, psychology, social science, education, art & humanities, environmental science, computer science, and other areas.

Occupation prior to resettlement: About 70 % of them had business ownership or working experience in small business entities in industries such as construction, manufacturing, management, marketing, retail, law, medicine, psychology, restaurants, entertainment, and technology. About 30 % had worked at Universities, colleges, research institutions, law enforcement, and governmental sector.

English level: More than a half does not speak English at all, and have learning difficulties at CCSE, as its courses are designed for students who at least approach a beginner level.

Mental status: Over 90% have personal experience of exposure to war traumatic events (bombing and rocket attacks in the big cities; hiding in basements while their cities, like Mariupol, were completely obliterated; being under occupation with genocidal war crimes committed against local population; deaths of family members, friends, neighbors, and been targeted and narrowly escaping deaths themselves). In the U.S., many suffer from adaptation difficulties, isolation, and PTSD.

Immigrant status: The majority entered the U.S. under humanitarian parole or U4U, there is a number of non-parolees but TPS holders, and a small number of undocumented immigrants.

III. Current economic situation

Ukrainian refugees community of SF has extremely high unemployment rate. Non-English speaking women with children use an opportunity in VIP program by SFHSA, handled by Arriba Juntos working part-time jobs for basic wage. It is available only for humanitarian parolees and not TPS (Temporary Protected Status). For participants, it does not cover their living/housing expenses. There is temporary relief through the State program providing six months 50% rental subsidy for U4U (Uniting for Ukrainians) beneficiaries. Some of them also resorted to the SF ERAP program. Many fear homelessness once rental assistance is exhausted.

4 San Francisco Human Services Agency processed 1004 cases of Ukrainian newcomers since February 2022 while one case often includes a mother and one or two children, rarely – three. (In average, Ukrainian family includes 1,5 children).

Local low-skilled job market previously available for immigrants from the post-Soviet countries – cleaning and caregiving in SF families of post-Soviet origin – is oversaturated after the flow of the Ukrainian refugees, and also from Russia, Belarus, etc. Currently, 30 applicants compete for each caregiving job in Ukrainian or Russian-speaking family. People with higher education or PhD work in factories. Many Ukrainian women produce food and, having no license, sell them among community or for coins to so-called Russian stores⁵. In addition, many Ukrainian refugees have fallen or were about to fall prey of job scams.

Some families reside in SRO's, often it's a mom with two teenagers in a tiny room. Ukrainians struggle to rent housing having no credit score and/or co-signer for the lease.

Despite all those difficulties, members of the Ukrainian community crave for social and economic integration, looking for any job opportunity. Many dream of starting small business.

IV. Access to Essential Services Overview

Due to language barrier, Ukrainians have almost no access to essential services in San Francisco. The limited opportunities at Arriba Juntos cover tiny percent of the Ukrainian refugees population. Mission Neighborhoods Center has recently hired the first Ukrainian-speaking housing/homeless prevention specialist.

Economic services normally available for San Franciscans like workforce or small business development, are not accessible for the Ukrainian-speaking community. In other words, Ukrainians, even if the majority prioritizes economic integration, have nowhere to go to implement these aspirations.

Legal department of the Jewish Family and Children Services successfully serves Ukrainian refugees, but limited capacity does not allow to cover even half of the community, nor to address urgent requests.

Refugee and Asylee Health Assistance Program at the Zuckerberg San Francisco General Hospital provides interpreters for medical appointments, but not for mental health treatment while the majority of Ukrainian refugees, adults and children, suffer from severe PTSD, psychosomatic and other war trauma related disorders. In private social groups mothers share their despair of having suicidal children and inability to find mental health care for them.

English training is available at Arriba Juntos, limited by capacity, immigration status (parolees, not TPS), and date of arrival (within the last eight months while the majority of the Ukrainian refugees came in the first year of the invasion). CCSF courses designed for English beginners, and many Ukrainians fall behind this level⁶, and after having already attended a few semesters have made no progress.

⁵ E.g., a 71 y.o. woman who works every day, buys products, prepare food and delivers it, makes roughly \$1,000/mo.

THE CENTER OVERVIEW

The Ukrainian Resource and Cultural Center is planned as an urgent response to the community crisis. We are seeking funding opportunity to create the Center to serve Ukrainian refugees in such programs as:

- Integration/resettlement services
- Mental health support
- Small business development
- Workforce development

The Center will function as a community space fostering self-organizing, mutual aid, hosting social clubs for youth, seniors, children, parents, entrepreneurs, etc., workshops (educational in social orientation, in local government structure; career; business), and cultural events.

Integration services and civic hub shall welcome every Ukrainian war refugee providing intensive case management, navigation, advocacy, immigration support.

Mental health support program will serve 50 clients a year in crisis intervention therapy cases, 50 clients in support therapy, and hundreds in peer-support groups.

Small business development program includes coaching and two incubators. Incubator # 1 will release two cohorts a year in traditional and technology intensive businesses. Incubator # 2 designed as a two-fold business model: grab-and-go restaurant and food business incubator. The model accommodates special needs of our mostly unemployed community. The restaurant sales revenue goes to stipends for students during the incubation process.

Workforce development will provide training in basic English sufficient to find simple jobs; basic digital literacy; support career development for people with higher education. We aim at employment assistance for at least 250 people a year.

In our programs we base on recommendations of the UN Refugee Agency, international organizations, and local organizations with outstanding experience in the related areas.

We've done preparatory work communicating with the City Departments, municipal agencies, and nonprofit organizations. We have already set arrangements, and continue to do so, with those departments and nonprofits for conducting workshops for Ukrainians (with translation we'll provide), and facilitating their access to the Ukrainian refugees population in other ways, which will contribute to the City programs efficiency.

⁶ <https://www.efset.org/cefr/basic-english/> "Students at a beginner English level have a foundation of basic English grammar and vocabulary. With understanding of basic English, you are on your way to building vocabulary and expanding comprehension of simple, daily topics."

IMPACT ON THE CITY BUDGET

We are aware of the City budget shortfall. The funding we request goes to support only essential services programs. Although important for the community, the Center's cultural component will be implemented on a volunteering basis. The biggest part of the requested funding goes to economic (workforce and small business) development programs which shall generate/employ 460 refugees in the first year of operation. It's 460 adults, mostly female, who also maintain their children. The job creation and employment will substantially cut the City expenses that otherwise would go to support those families in benefits, subsidies, and other assistance (only through SF ERAP program Ukrainian refugees would consume, in our estimation, \$6.777 M a year if people remain unemployed and having no income other than benefits). Economic development of our community, therefore, would cut these expenses for the City. Mental Health Support and Integration programs will also influence ability for economic integration. Ukrainians feel extremely uncomfortable of being an economic burden in the U.S. We are eager to achieve self-sufficiency and contribute to the local economy and development of our host community of the City and county of San Francisco.

PROGRAMS

INTEGRATION SERVICES

I. OUR APPROACH

For refugees resettlement, The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) outlines a model based on cultural competence and trauma-informed approach, and other specific components important for successful integration. Regular services may not work for the refugees, the recommendation reads⁷, for the several reasons:

- Resettled refugees have particularly intensive needs in the early integration period;
- Existing services available to citizen may have neither the expertise nor the resources to address the needs of resettled refugees following arrival (e.g. interpreting resources, cultural competence, trauma informed approach, etc.)
- In countries with a complex social service systems, there may be logistical difficulties in ensuring that resettled refugees are identified by service providers and that, etc.

Cultural competence and trauma informed approach, as well as individualized assessments, early integration support, and services provided in the refugees' language and are community-centralized (to overcome logistical problems) are critical components for refugee integration programs.

⁷ <https://www.unhcr.org/handbooks/ih/support-services/integration-case-management>

Analyzing municipal practices worldwide in finding solutions for refugees accommodation and social and economic integration, UNHCR concludes that “these solutions work best when refugees are fully included in their design and development. [...] Participatory approaches lead to smarter policies and more impactful programs.” Integration of refugees is a dynamic and complex two-way process, which requires efforts by both host society, public and private institutions and refugees themselves, their toolkit handbook⁸ for local authorities reads.

So, we believe that our integration services will work for Ukrainian refugees the best and will leave no one lost in the new society. Refugees-led, with intensive outreach through community networks, focused on individualized plans and supporting efforts of the refugees to participate in developing strategy for their integration, our services will allow us to achieve self-sufficiency for members of our community in the fastest terms possible.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

II. Integration Case Management

Case management department provides comprehensive support and implements strategies to build refugees confidence to independently navigate life in a new country. Our case managers are themselves Ukrainian refugees. Some of them have had experience with Ukrainian refugees in other San Francisco nonprofits. Some of them have working experience in Ukrainian governmental social services agencies.

Case managers’ work is focused on early integration, developing individualized plans based on clients’ background, educational level, and other specifics. Elaborating a plan with a client shall stimulate a refugee’s active participation and find the best application for her background experience. Case manager facilitates access to resources, provides learning resources and practical support – connecting, advocating, communicating on the client’s behalf with different institutions – governmental, municipal, educational, non-profits, landlords, medical providers, insurance, and others.

The combination of close accompaniment for traumatized refugees in making first steps in the new society, and encouragement of their own active participation will bring confidence and foster independent social orientation and welfare for every family.

One case manager with a law degree in Ukraine, will assist clients with immigration paperwork and counseling under supervision of a local immigration attorney (see more in Immigration Clinic).

8 <https://www.unhcr.org/media/municipalities-toolkit-handbook-english>

III. Civic Hub/Family Center

Civic hubs have already proven their effectiveness in Ukraine for integration of internally displaced persons. Ukrainian Civic Hubs initiatives were launched in collaboration with municipal authorities, and international organizations like Caritas and UNICEF.

Civic Hub shall be a social space operating 7 days a week, until 10 pm. It is a space where the Ukrainian community can come together, self-organize, create social clubs for adults, seniors, youth, and children, and by interests – parenthood, business, and others. The Center will support organizing through providing and navigating through resources, practically assist connecting people with organizations and communities. The Hub will host social and cultural events, and organize activities for youth, children and seniors, on-site and outside (e.g., participation of our youth in community gardening programs, art programs, recreational activities organized by San Francisco nonprofit organizations, etc.).

The Hub will support refugees’ aspiration for active social integration. We plan orientational workshops with the City municipal departments, local officials and politicians, and mix events with diverse communities of San Francisco. We also plan a “family match” program for setting up friendships between Ukrainian and San Francisco families.

Another program – a mutual aid network for responding to urgent needs of members of our community, especially seniors and youth, and people who just arrived in San Francisco – will bring a sense of basic safety for the Ukrainian war refugees.

IV. Immigration Clinic

As we mentioned (see Introduction) the only immigration services available for Ukrainian refugees have been provided by the Jewish Family and Children Services, and their legal department does an excellent job. At the same time, the number of our refugees greatly exceeds the JFCS capacity, and they may not respond to urgent needs of our community members. Also, there are more simple requests that do not require long standing appointments. It is often questions that may be addressed in up to 10-15 minutes.

Members of our community experience high anxiety level related to their immigrant status or timely submission of the documents to the USCIS. Some families fail to do it timely which leads to termination of their benefits and ineligibility for a row of programs (e.g., part-time employment at Arriba Juntos). For a mother with children it has devastating consequences.

For such urgent questions and orientation, we plan to invite an immigrant attorney for three hours once a week. She will supervise our case manager who would assist people with USCIS paperwork, will provide group workshops and individual consultations for up to 15 minutes.

MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT PROGRAM

ACCESS TO MENTAL HEALTH CARE CRISIS

The program addresses one of the most painful problem: **In San Francisco, Ukrainian refugees have no access to mental health care.**

As we mentioned in the Introduction, Refugee and Asylee Health Assistance Program at the General Hospital does not provide interpreters for mental health treatment. Crisis intervention focus therapy requires from 10 to 15 sessions, supportive therapy takes normally 52 sessions during a year. There is a statewide shortage of Ukrainian interpreters. There are very few health care specialists in San Francisco providing services in Russian (and not every Ukrainian speaks Russian), and they are fully booked. There is no Ukrainian-speaking specialist in the City. In addition, there are few even English speaking specialists trained to treat severe combat traumas.

One family, a mother and two children, were hiding in a cellar while occupiers deployed a genocidal campaign against civilians in their town, Bucha. Their neighbor was shot on a spot when he came out to smoke on his yard. The missile hit another neighbor's house, and shrapnel got to their yard. A sister's family in the neighboring town died from bombing. A schoolmate of a younger child was murdered, and his dismembered body was scattered throughout Bucha. Then occupiers came to their home, shot their dog, and promised they would be next. That day, they risked to escape driving through the streets littered with dead corps of their neighbors. They survived. The first months in San Francisco, they had been doing nothing but crying.

Among other war episodes our children and adults survived in Ukraine are: exposure to bombing and rocketing, destruction of their homes and entire cities, witnessing family members, neighbors and friends' death. Then, rapes and tortures. THESE TRAUMAS REMAIN UNCURED.

Chronic depression, suicidal thoughts among teenagers, psychosomatic disorders, flashbacks keeping awake at night, chronic fatigue, panic attacks, social isolation, self-destructive behavior, overwhelming guilt or shame paralyzing social activity do not exhaust the list of the symptoms members of our community suffer from.

They relocated to the safe place but their symptoms pull them back to the places where they experienced unendurable trauma. In addition many have in Ukraine family members and everyday fear their annihilation.

OUR APPROACH

The creation of the Center will itself have some therapeutic effect. And we elaborated programs addressing the shortfall of mental health care services for Ukrainian refugees.

We rely on experience of the mental health care and support groups for Ukrainian refugees that showed effectiveness in such countries as Poland, Romania, Germany, Spain, and others. A row of international and Ukrainian organizations⁹ have been also implementing their programs on de-occupied territories which population was subjected to the utmost traumatization, and providing care for internally displaced persons.

Such projects have proven effectiveness of support groups of different kinds – peer support groups, art therapy which was especially efficient for children. However, the severity of trauma requires therapy that shall be addressed in crisis intervention therapeutic models – focus therapy and supportive therapy.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The program includes three employees who do screening, facilitate peer support groups, organize therapeutic spaces for art therapy, relaxation groups, etc. The second part – it is the Ukrainian specialists who provide therapeutic sessions online.

Support Groups

Peer-led support groups, facilitator-led groups, groups for relaxation, yoga, art therapy for adults, children and youth.

A support group provides an opportunity for people to share personal experiences and feelings, coping strategies, and designing such strategies together. Formats of support groups may vary depending on emotional needs of the clients. Also, they may be peer-led or facilitator-led.

Our facilitators are psychologists and psychotherapists trained in Ukraine (some of them are trained also by the U.S. and European specialists through IPA (International Psychoanalytic Association) but are not yet licensed in the U.S.)). They plan to continue their training here and become licensed in the United States. So currently they do not work as psychologists but many of them have huge experience in group psychotherapy to be enough effective as facilitators. Groups are formed after the initial screening.

⁹ Cesvi Onlus; In collaboration with the UN Development Program (UNDP): National Psychological Association of Ukraine; UA-CARE/Development Foundation NGO; Center for Social Innovations; SpivDiia Charity Foundation;

Yoga groups, relaxation, breathing practices, and art therapy also proved effectiveness in treatment of the Ukrainian refugees in host countries.

Therapy

Application of the different psychotherapeutic modalities, such as focus or supportive therapy, depends on different psychodynamic factors and circumstances in the life of the patient. Focus therapy usually concentrates on one patient's problem. So its indication is for patients capable of determining the main problem they want to resolve, i.e., such a patient has enough integrated ego and advanced awareness of his/her/their problem. The therapeutic course consists of 13-15 sessions. Supportive therapy may be recommended for patients with deeper traumatization, e.g., when experienced trauma was so hard that it takes time to ensure safety and build strong rapport between the therapist and the client, and it takes more time to approach the moment when client will be capable of talking about what she survived. The recommended course is once or twice a week, and consists of at least 52 sessions. Both focus and supportive modalities are considered ideal for crisis intervention, according, e.g., to Otto Kernberg, a famous American psychiatrist and psychoanalyst, one of the author of DSM. Incidentally, as a child he was also a refugee fleeing with his Jewish parents from Nazi Germany.

Additionally, supportive therapy has prerequisites, like "a life situation that is not so chaotic or destructive that a modification of the patient's behavior rather than of an impossible environment is still a reasonable first task¹⁰." To guarantee safety and effectiveness of the therapy our program is based on complex approach and collaboration case managers from Integration Services department and therapists.

Therapists. Given that in the nearest future it is impossible for the Ukrainian refugees to access mental health services in San Francisco, the program involves Ukrainian specialists with experience in one of the projects organized with international organization in Ukrainian de-occupied cities (in our case, Bucha). Specialists in our office do screening and passes the case to a Ukrainian specialist for the focus or supportive therapy. We also have supervisions together with the Ukrainian therapists and act together to ensure well-being of our clients.

We plan to process 100 cases a year. 50 for focus therapy, i.e., 15 sessions (750 hours in general), and 50 for supportive therapy with 52 hours/year (2,600 hours in general).

Please note, that although part of the requested funding goes abroad for compensation to Ukrainian psychotherapists, it's (1) only 3,19% of costs; (2) Ukrainian specialists charge several times less than locals; (3) currently there is no alternative, Ukrainian refugees have literally nowhere to go; (4) mental stabilization of the deeply traumatized community will play crucial role in its capability of being economically integrated in the local society.

10 Kernberg O. (1984) Severe Personality Disorders/Psychotherapeutic Strategies. New Haven: Yale University Press

SMALL BUSINESS PROGRAM

OUR APPROACH

We base on the UNHCR (The UN Refugee Agency) roadmap¹¹ to refugee entrepreneurship, its experimental models of refugee small business incubators¹², experience of international orgs like Hello Future¹³ and of San Francisco prominent small business incubators programs like La Cocina and LGBTQ Community Center, deep understanding of the Ukrainian Refugees demographics, their current economic situation and cultural background, and our assets.

International and local organizations' experience

UNHCR (The UN Refugee Agency) points to small business incubators as to a powerful tool for refugees' integration. Bringing dynamism into the economically struggling refugees community, small business program shall open opportunities otherwise inaccessible for the newcomers.

Those inaccessible opportunities in our case are: small business training programs due to language barrier; access to assistance in starting a business¹⁴, for the same reason and poor orientation in the new society; access to business loans and other assets due to the lack of credit history; and access to jobs regardless their previous experience in Ukraine.

UNHCR conducted several experiments with small business incubators for refugees in different countries. They found it successful and outlining models specific to refugees. One of the particularities is a ***positive effect of combining small business incubators with social orientation and education***. This experience has shown that ***creating economic growth through small enterprise development generates employment, economic development, and increases local communities' capacity to continue to receive refugees***. (The latter is important since Ukrainian war refugees keep coming to San Francisco.) Thus, UNHCR calls for investing more in programs that support economic viability of refugees.

“Construction of small business development,” the article describing UNHCR business incubators experiments reads, “not only creating wealth for individuals but also delivering social goods and promoting the local integration of thousands of refugees.”

11 <https://www.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/legacy-pdf/63565bc94.pdf>

12 <https://www.unhcr.org/innovation/how-we-can-use-business-incubators-for-refugee-integration/>

13 <https://www.hellofuture.io>

14 Even Ukrainians with medium English level feel it's too complicated to digest important information in English (if it's training), or too risky in making steps in entrepreneurship for lack of confidence and credits in the U.S.

La Cocina Executive Director Leticia Landa strongly believes that “business ownership can be transformative, particularly for women, immigrant, and people of color.”

We second these beliefs and build our program considering experiences of aforementioned organizations and leaders, combining social services (through our Integration Services program) with strong educational and practical support in enterprise development to create economic and social break-through for our community. We aim at economic miracle built by human hands.

SMALL BUSINESS PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Our Small Business Program offers support to entrepreneurs in our community by providing business consulting and coaching, connecting them to the right resources, and equipping them with business knowledge through business incubators. We aim to help them achieve financial independence through entrepreneurship and create more jobs in our community through these businesses.

Through our two business incubators in which we’ll prioritize businesses that create employment opportunities for members of the Ukrainian refugees and local communities, we plan to assist 70 enterprises a year, and expect to create at least 210 jobs.

Business Consulting and Coaching

Our business consultants will meet with these entrepreneurs to discuss and refine their business ideas, develop business plans, connect them with local resources, providing interpreter’s assistance in communication with governments and nonprofit organization, and support them step by step in their efforts.

Entrepreneurs can schedule one-on-one consulting and coaching sessions whenever they have a challenge or need support.

Through our other programs, Integration Services and Mental Health Support, Small Business program participants will have an opportunities to share emotional and other challenges and find support in their efforts. Representatives of those programs will work closely with Small Business Program staff to ensure our students steadfast progress.

We’ll also provide practical support in marketing, access to low-interest loans (in partnership with local organizations).

Program Director Eddie Tang will provide mentorship and orientation in local small business process for members of our community with experience in small business development in

Ukraine; thus we'll develop our community's small business specialists capable of assisting more members of our community in our language.

Business Incubator # 1

This incubator will combine traditional local businesses and businesses with high specific gravity of technology. It includes training on bootstrapping that reduces reliance on external funding to start a business.

Through our business incubator cohorts, entrepreneurs will be working in a group in a mutually supportive environment to build their business from the ground up. We will equip them with business knowledge including finance, marketing, business operation, organizational development, and business presentation. They will also develop a comprehensive business plan with actual items they can implement during or after the program.

The training program will help participants develop technological skills to independently build a technology-intensive business or business which involves technology heavily, like online retailing, web design, travel agency, etc.

During the course, each student will acquire technology skills, and come up with, design and develop a working prototype of a unique product for their business platform.

In the first year, we plan to start with two cohorts of the business incubator, each cohort will have 20 participants.

During the course, the program will provide necessary equipment (laptops) for participants who may not be able to afford it.

Incubator # 2

Community Kitchen Incubator – Two-fold Business Model

The incubator will provide mentorship, practical assistance with marketing, licensing, operations, and access to professional kitchen and equipment to Ukrainian refugees who start food business.

Addressing specific situation of Ukrainian refugees, we designed a two-fold business model. According to Leticia Landa, Executive Director at La Cocina, participants of their kitchen incubators may be able to leave their jobs after a year of starting own enterprises. In our case with the majority of people unemployed, we need to provide our students with an opportunity to maintain their families while they make their first food business steps.

To achieve it, we designed a two-fold model which include a grab-and-go restaurant, and an incubator. It shall become a self-maintaining system in which students can work for the restaurant, are paid, while receiving mentoring and making first steps in their food enterprises. They also may receive stipends from the restaurant-generated revenue. The restaurant operates on a nonprofit basis, as all income goes to support participants of our small kitchen incubator though wages or stipends.

We plan to cover pre-incubation and early incubation stages and release two cohorts a year, 15 food enterprises every six months. Participants will be trained in basics in this industry in the U.S., operations, marketing, licensing, business plan development. We also provide practical support. For example, we'll create an online platform and market it, and our participants may experiment with their suggested menus, explore market, find their customer target groups, etc.

After completing this stage, our students may chose to proceed with incubators/accelerators, and we've already been setting partnerships to achieve it, or other models of their business development. We'll continue to support them through counseling, and assist them with access to capital and other resources.

Grab-and-go restaurant model was chosen because of its mobility, allowance of streamlined operations and quicker service (National Restaurant Association, 2021); convenience for customers and adjustment for changes of behaviors after the pandemics. We hope it will contribute to community and economic development of the city where the restaurant and food industry has not yet restored to the pre-pandemic level. It will also support our cultural identity which is important for refugees, and will become a great opportunity to share Ukrainian delicious food with San Franciscans.

Assets

Having no physical or monetary assets at the moment, we believe in success of our program relying on our non-physical assets:

- We secured Eddie Tang as our Small Business Program Director. Eddie manages the small business program at the SF LGBT Community Center and are involved in a few other small business development programs in the city such as the Kickstart Your Business at 50+ Program at SF Tech Council and the Entrepreneur Training Porgram at the LEATHER & LGBTQ Cultural District. He is well known in local communities for mentoring thousands of small businesses in San Francisco;

- High-level IT specialist with working experience on senior positions at big tech companies and educational projects in Stanford; he is of Jewish Ukrainian origin, understands both immigrant and cultural contexts of our refugees, and their language;
- For our kitchen incubator, we rely on mentorship by La Cocina, a prominent organization with decades-long experience in bringing to life thousands of enterprises in the food industry;
- Community members with substantial educational levels and experiences in business (see Demographics), and their strong desire to work hard for economic well-being for our community, and to become a part of local economy;
- Cultural competency of our staff, and the combination with other social and mental health programs which will contribute to sustainability of new enterprises.

“Refugees are often only seen through their vulnerabilities. Supports rarely match what they are capable of achieving,” Hello Future, international organization creating business incubators for refugees, remarks. “But they are producers, managers, entrepreneurs, they have talent and limitless potential.”

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Skill Training

We will offer training in basic English, digital literacy, and web design/basic programming.

Our program is based on our demographics’ specifics and designed for people with different levels of education/experience. One of the main problem, as we mentioned, is basic English which cannot be obtained through the City College courses as they are designed for those who already have a beginner level.

In our case, even people with PhD do not speak English, although they may be fluent in other European languages – German, French, Italian. The acquirement of the basic vocabulary and language structure will allow them to enroll with programs which support careers of immigrants with higher education. Another group of people needs basic English to be able to find simple jobs which are now not accessible to them. For the second group, training in basic digital literacy which is not available in San Francisco for the Ukrainian-speaking community, will also increase their employment chances.

For people who may advance in their career growth due to their educational level, there are also training in web design and basic programming. A woman with two children, PhD and professor of one of the Ukrainian Universities working here low-skilled job, may not afford to leave that job to pursue her career goals. At the same time, web design is low-entry job but compensated enough so such a woman may work part-time dedicating the rest of her time to additional training required for confirming qualification in her profession in the U.S.

Basic English training will initially be provided to 40 students – four groups two hours/day, during 6 months (80 students a year).

Digital literacy will be provided to 40 students – four groups twice a week during 3 months (120 students a year).

Web design/Basic Programming – 1 group of 15 students 6 hours a week, during 6 months (30 students a year).

Workforce development counseling

Workforce development specialist provides standard counseling and assistance with resume, cover letters; interview training; coaching and development of unique employment goals depending on client's skills and education; assists in participation in employment programs like Jobs Now! and others; orientation through the employment process in the U.S., and orient youth participants in their career orientation.

Career Partnerships/Jobs Match

The Center will develop collaboration with employers through employment events (career fairs), and will seek partnerships to promote refugees' employment.

Workshops

Introduction to different careers, what it takes to get a professional training/license for each. We plan to invite specialists in different spheres, from nonprofits and the municipal Career Center, for delivering introductory workshops for members of our community, assisting with translation. To embrace greater Ukrainian refugees audience, we plan to create tutorial videos recording such educational events.