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INDEX DEPARTMENT

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

MAY 26 2023

**IN THE OFFICE OF
SECRETARY OF STATE**

SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS

Gubernatorial Disaster Proclamation

WHEREAS, on August 31, 2022, with little to no notice, the State of Illinois and City of Chicago received and welcomed the first buses sent by the State of Texas, transporting individuals and families from Central and South America seeking asylum in the United States; and,

WHEREAS, between August 31, 2022, and May 26, 2023, thousands seeking asylum, including both families and individuals, have arrived in Chicago from Texas with little to no notice; and,

WHEREAS, it is expected that individuals and families seeking asylum will continue to be transported to Illinois from Texas and, potentially other states, by governmental entities and the State and local partners will need to continue to work together to directly and indirectly fund and/or provide necessary services, including, but not limited to, supporting shelter capacity, resettlement case management, and permanent housing; and,

WHEREAS, Illinois is a welcoming state, which has long been enriched and sustained by a thriving community of immigrants, and has resettled over 125,000 refugees from more than 60 countries since 1975; and,

WHEREAS, State agencies, in close coordination with the City of Chicago and other local governments, are continuing to take action to ensure that the individuals and families arriving here receive the assistance they need, both to protect their welfare and the overall welfare of the State of Illinois and its residents; and,

WHEREAS, the asylum-seeking families and individuals who have arrived in Illinois continue to require specific and immediate support, including emergency shelter and housing; food; health screenings, medical assessments, and treatment; case management services to assist them in accessing critical services (including legal services and job readiness support) and benefits (potentially including benefits to Victims of Trafficking, Torture, and Other Serious Crimes (VTTC), under the Violence Against Women Act, and/or the Victims of Crime Act); enrollment in public schools; and longer-term housing and housing assistance; and,

WHEREAS, because these families and individuals are arriving after a very long and difficult journey from their homes, many of them also require medical care, including pre-natal care for pregnant women; treatment for malnourishment, dehydration, and asthma in children; foot injury and wound care; vaccinations; and chronic health condition management. Many of the adults, children, and infants arriving in Illinois also are in need of mental health assessments and care to begin to recover from the trauma experienced on their journey; and,

WHEREAS, the State of Illinois and many local governments throughout the State routinely engage in planning to ensure sufficient capacity to meet the needs of vulnerable populations, including families and individuals who are seeking refuge or asylum in the United States; and,

WHEREAS, families and individuals seeking asylum are arriving in Illinois with no advance notice as to when they will arrive and with no coordination with the State of Illinois or the City of Chicago, thereby contributing to the need for this proclamation; and,

WHEREAS, to date, the State of Illinois and local governments have worked to meet the needs of the asylum-seeking families and individuals, both directly and by coordinating closely with non-governmental organizations and volunteers; and,

WHEREAS, the normal capacity to provide all necessary services for the health and welfare of these vulnerable families and individuals has been exceeded, and immediate and continuing steps are needed to maintain the increased capacity required to meet the needs of the current asylum-seeking families and individuals; and,

WHEREAS, without urgent and ongoing action, capacity shortfalls will occur in critical services, including short-, intermediate-, and longer-term shelter and housing for the asylum-seeking families and individuals; wrap-around services such as food, health care, legal advocacy, and job readiness support; case management staff to assist in accessing other necessary services; and operational staffing required at all levels to provide these services; and,

WHEREAS, to continue to meet the significantly increased needs for emergency shelter and housing capacity, as well as staffing and services, and to continue to prevent a threat to the health, safety, and welfare of the asylum-seeking families and individuals and communities throughout Illinois, the State must urgently procure and maintain contracted assistance, requiring the use of the Governor's emergency powers; and,

WHEREAS, emergency steps are necessary to continue staffing the interagency and intergovernmental effort required to handle this evolving situation while ensuring that critical services for existing Illinois residents are not interrupted; and,

WHEREAS, the circumstances of the present situation give rise to a threat to the health, safety, and welfare of these vulnerable families and individuals and to the State, require immediate action, and constitute a disaster as provided in Section 4 of the Illinois Emergency Management Agency Act requiring emergency action by the State; and,

WHEREAS, due to the threat to health, safety, and welfare caused by these circumstances, I have declared all counties in the State of Illinois as a disaster area every month since September 2022; and,

WHEREAS, it is the policy of the State of Illinois that the State will be prepared to address any disasters and, therefore, it is necessary and appropriate to make additional State resources available to ensure public health, safety, and welfare; and,

WHEREAS, these conditions provide legal justification under Section 7 of the Illinois Emergency Management Act for the issuance of a proclamation of disaster; and,

WHEREAS, the Illinois Constitution, in Article V, Section 8, provides that "the Governor shall have the supreme executive power, and shall be responsible for the faithful execution of the laws," and states, in the Preamble, that a central purpose of the Illinois Constitution is "provide for the health, safety, and welfare of the people";

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NOW, THEREFORE, in the interest of aiding the people of Illinois and the local governments responsible for ensuring public health, safety, and welfare, I, JB Pritzker, Governor of the State of Illinois, hereby proclaim as follows:

Section 1: Pursuant to the provisions of Section 7 of the Illinois Emergency Management Agency Act, 20 ILCS 3305/7, I find that a disaster exists within the State of Illinois and declare all counties in the state as a disaster area. The proclamation authorizes the exercise of all the emergency powers provided in Section 7 of the Illinois Emergency Management Agency Act, 20 ILCS 3305/7, including but not limited to those specific emergency powers set forth below.

Section 2. With the Illinois Department of Human Services serving as the lead agency, the following State agencies are directed to continue cooperating with the Governor, as well as with other State agencies, local authorities, and the Illinois State Board of Education, and to continue coordinating with each other with respect to the development and implementation of strategies and plans to respond to the impacts of the present situation, including meeting the needs of the asylum seekers coming to Illinois: the Illinois Department of Human Services (which houses the Bureau of Refugee and Immigrant Services and employs the State Refugee Coordinator and State Chief Homelessness Officer); the Illinois Department of Public Health (which employs the State Refugee Health Coordinator); the Illinois Emergency Management Agency; and the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services.

Section 3. The Illinois Emergency Management Agency is directed to continue the activation of the State Emergency Operations Plan and coordination of State resources to support State agencies and local governments in disaster response and recovery operations.

Section 4. To aid with emergency purchases necessary for response and other emergency powers as authorized by the Illinois Emergency Management Agency Act, the provisions of the Illinois Procurement Code and the Illinois Governmental Joint Purchasing Act that would in any way prevent, hinder, or delay necessary action in coping with the disaster are suspended to the extent they are not required by federal law. To aid with emergency grant-making necessary for response and other emergency powers as authorized by the Illinois Emergency Management Agency Act, the provisions of the Grant Accountability and Transparency Act and of the Illinois Administrative Code effectuating the same, which require State agencies to publish a notice of funding opportunity (NOFO) and to conduct a merit based application review and that would in any way prevent, hinder, or delay necessary action in coping with the disaster, are suspended to the extent they are not required by federal law. The remaining provisions of the Grant Accountability and Transparency Act remain in effect. If necessary, and in accordance with Section 7(1) of the Illinois Emergency Management Agency Act, 20 ILCS 3305/7(1), the Governor may take appropriate executive action to suspend additional statutes, orders, rules, and regulations.

Section 5. Pursuant to Section 7(3) of the Illinois Emergency Management Agency Act, 20 ILCS 3305/7(3), this proclamation activates the Governor's authority, as necessary, to transfer the direction, personnel, or functions of State departments and agencies or units thereof for the purpose of performing or facilitating emergency response programs.

Section 6. Pursuant to Section 7(10) of the Illinois Emergency Management Agency Act, 20 ILCS 3305/7(10), this proclamation activates the Governor's authority, as necessary, to make provision for the availability and use of temporary emergency housing.


Section 7: This proclamation can facilitate a request for federal disaster assistance if a complete and comprehensive assessment of damage indicates that effective recovery is beyond the capabilities of the State and affected local governments.

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Section 8: This proclamation shall be effective immediately and remain in effect for 30 days.



JB Pritzke
Governor

Date: May 26, 2023

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