



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

August 26, 2021

To our valued refugee resettlement partners,

In the past week, events have amplified attention on and the necessity for refugee resettlement services. The catastrophic earthquake in Haiti and the fall of the Afghanistan government both create dire and urgent humanitarian crises that underscore exactly why refugee resettlement programs exist and why so many are called to be helpers, provide resources and protect displaced people.

Pennsylvania was founded on the ideals of peace, tolerance, and safety for all people. It is incumbent upon us to model these ideals and uphold the values we stand for. As the people of Afghanistan and Haiti face destabilization, crisis, and danger, it is incumbent on each of us to be a resource and a safe, welcoming home for any who seek safe refuge in the United States.

As our indispensable partners in refugee settlement in your local communities, I know you are all prepared to stand with us in this urgent and vital work to help refugees placed in Pennsylvania. We have begun working with the federal government to assess the scope of need, and we will continue to keep you informed as the situation evolves. You are our eyes, ears, and boots on the ground in communities across the commonwealth and we are grateful for your flexibility and understanding in the coming weeks and months.

We are also asking that local leaders in communities that may soon become home to new Pennsylvanians resettled in our commonwealth exercise flexibility as this process moves forward. If there is anything that I or the Department of Human Services can do from the state level to assist in your work or help coordinate with local governments or other officials, we want to be a resource to you as you perform this life-saving service.

We are all witnessing the trauma and danger that individuals and families coming from Afghanistan and Haiti are escaping; however, we know that observing does not compare to the first-hand effects and pain of trauma. Your work and the relationships you offer to people and families new to Pennsylvania will provide a sense of safety and community as they experience a tumultuous and traumatic period.

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

The work you and your organizations do over the coming weeks will be a defining moment in the lives of those you touch. Refugee resettlement services and the work you do exemplify the best and kindest of service to others. It is my hope that we can assist in making that moment one of compassion, humanity, and meaningful aid. Thank you for your passion, commitment, and courage this day and all of those to come.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Meg Snead". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Meg" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Snead".

Meg Snead
Acting Secretary