



It's  
NICE  
to  
have  
you  
in Nashville.



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Through programs run by our dedicated staff, assistance by our passionate volunteers, and support from our funders and community partners – **we're making Middle Tennessee a little NICER for our new neighbors from around the world.**

## Mission

The Nashville International Center for Empowerment is made up of a diverse group of staff and volunteers who have come together with a mission to ensure refugees and immigrants achieve their full potential now and for generations to come. We have developed a deep understanding of the needs and long-term aspirations of refugees and immigrants because of our own professional and lived experiences. NICE is an Ethnic Community Based Organization (ECBO), composed of a board and staff who are primarily refugees and immigrants. Through a multidimensional social services approach, we aim to make Middle Tennessee a welcome home for New Americans.



# A Statement from Our Founder & CEO



Before the start of each new year at NICE, our team takes time to diligently make plans for the coming 12 months. **Our strategic planning is fundamental to the success of our work, and more importantly – to the lives of incredible people we serve.**

But no matter how much we take care to plan ahead, the volatile nature of the world often presents us with a completely different set of challenges to overcome on behalf of our communities.

NICE exists to serve our new neighbors coming to Middle Tennessee – people from around the world who have been displaced from their homes and who have fled to the United States **in hope of peace, stability, and better opportunities** for themselves and their families.

The world's refugee crisis continues to worsen. War, natural disasters, and catastrophic events are causing unspeakable horrors to unfold, and our hearts are broken by the suffering of our brothers and sisters – a pain we know all too well.

On the heels of the resettlement of over 70,000 of our Afghan allies who were evacuated to the United States, we watched the shocking scenes of Russian forces invading Ukraine on February 24th, leading to a scale of war not seen in Europe since World War II.

After the federal government developed a new pathway for displaced Ukrainians to enter the United States, NICE took proactive measures to create a new program dedicated to serving the hundreds of Ukrainians arriving in Middle Tennessee.

**I am ceaselessly inspired to be part of this NICE community. As an organization, our solid foundation allows us to be nimble and adapt** to the emerging needs of the people who come through our doors.

In 2022, NICE was able to continue serving our Afghan allies, welcome displaced Ukrainians, and provide quality support to refugees and immigrants from all over the world.

**We are immensely grateful to our community partners, volunteers, donors, and funders for their investment.** Our work quite literally would not be possible without this critical support.

**We know that we may not be able to change the whole world all at once, but we can change it little by little, starting within our own community, one new neighbor at a time.**



# 2022 by the Numbers



**4,763**  
Total served



**336**  
People resettled



**643**  
Adult  
Education



**225**  
Youth  
Education



**2,193**  
Health  
Education



**53**  
Health Intensive  
Case Management



**585**  
Employment-Based Cash  
Assistance Programs



**728**  
Immigration

# Resettlement


Over 100 million people around the world are currently displaced from their homes. Each year, only a tiny fraction (less than 0.1%) of those refugees are resettled in the United States. After a long process of vetting by government agencies in the US and abroad, **NICE empowers refugees in Nashville with the resources they need to become self-sufficient.**

We do this by walking alongside our new neighbors from the moment they arrive at the airport through their journey to self-sufficiency, providing resources and opportunities to prosper in their new community.

During their first 90 days in Nashville, the NICE resettlement department does the critical work of providing basic needs and case management through our Reception and Placement Program. Even before a refugee family arrives in Nashville, NICE secures and furnishes their housing.

**After picking a family up from the airport, we provide a warm welcome and meal, and then get to work helping our new neighbors access and navigate their benefits, healthcare, English language classes and more.**

**In 2022, the NICE Reception and Placement Program welcomed 336 refugees from 19 different countries to Middle Tennessee.**

A portrait of Simon Tang, a man with short dark hair, wearing a grey suit, white shirt, and patterned tie. He is looking slightly to the right with a gentle smile. The background is dark and out of focus.

When he was just a teenager, civil war forced Simon Tang to flee his home in South Sudan. He spent the next two decades in Egypt, where he and his wife had five children. Finally, in 2021, the UN referred the Tang family for resettlement in America. NICE was honored to serve as the refugee resettlement agency for Simon and his family – securing their first apartment, their first jobs, and helping them establish this next, peaceful phase of their lives.

Simon is effusive about his life in Tennessee:

**“We have friends from America, from Europe, from Asia, all different places. We are so happy. Tennessee is a good place. We love Tennessee!”**





**336**

**Total resettled**

**27**  
Egypt

**10**  
Jordan

**3**  
Iraq

**92**  
Afghanistan

**5**  
Pakistan

**6**  
Burma

**7**  
Thailand

**5**  
Vietnam

**5**  
Malaysia

**12**  
United Arab Emirates

**19**  
Qatar

**3**  
Sudan

**8**  
Ethiopia

**27**  
Rwanda

**16**  
Burundi

**27**  
Zambia

**31**  
Uganda

**6**  
Kenya

**27**  
Tanzania

# Co-Sponsorship

In 2022, the unprecedented effort to resettle our evacuated Afghan allies in the United States continued. Due to the influx of arrivals in Nashville in such a short period of time, **NICE developed a program wherein dedicated groups of volunteers had the opportunity to co-sponsor newly-arrived Afghan families.**

Co-sponsor teams worked alongside NICE to welcome refugee families by providing important resettlement services, cultural orientation, financial support, and friendship. **Co-sponsorship through NICE is a partnership and relationship that can have a profound impact on the lives of both refugee families and community volunteers.**

NICE provided each co-sponsor team with in-depth training prior to working with a family and continued support throughout their 9 month service period.

Reflections from the St. George's Episcopal Church co-sponsorship group on their experience working with the Haidari family from Afghanistan:

"The opportunity to give and receive friendship from the Haidari family has been one of the most rewarding experiences I have been blessed with. **We seem to have truly become family!**"

"It has been a privilege and a joy to work with NICE, St. George's and the Haidari family from Afghanistan. We started as strangers, and now we are like family. **The Haidari family has inspired us all with their incredible grit and graciousness.**"

"Being a part of the Haidari family's life is a privilege and honor plus an experience of a lifetime. They are wonderful people. I get excited to see them because **their joy, love, and appreciation of all is contagious.**"

"Personally, this experience has changed me. I now more fully understand the struggles refugees and immigrants go through (they are my friends). **I feel more compassion now.**"



**14**

Co-Sponsor  
Teams

**100+**

Co-Sponsor  
Volunteers

**80+**

individuals  
served



# Ukrainian Support Program

In response to the Biden Administration's launch of the Uniting for Ukraine Program (U4U) – a new pathway for displaced Ukrainians to enter the United States for two years – NICE quickly mobilized a response and created a new system to support the influx of Ukrainian refugees arriving in Middle Tennessee. **NICE took a proactive approach, conducting outreach efforts with the local Ukrainian community, and soon became the leading agency serving U4U arrivals in and around Nashville.**

When displaced Ukrainians arrived at our office, our staff helped them find employment opportunities, access to healthcare and benefit programs, and cash assistance. All the while, Ukrainians were also receiving case management and connection to other support services.



“At 4:30 in the morning on February 24th, the airstrikes started in our hometown of Kharkiv. There wasn’t any time to think. We left everything behind, and at 6:00am, we got into our car and started driving west. We crossed the border into Slovakia, and then to Poland. After a few months, we were able to reunite with our daughter here in Nashville. **We have felt so welcomed and supported here.**”

– Viktor and Olena Cherednichenko,  
NICE clients


# The Path to Self-Sufficiency

**The cornerstone of our resettlement work at NICE is empowering refugees to be self-sufficient.** When refugees first arrive in the United States, they are entering an entirely new environment, with a plethora of obstacles to be overcome and new paths to be traversed. Our two Cash Assistance programs help our clients maintain steady footing and provide a crucial safety net while they're working hard toward their goal of financial independence.

NICE's Employment Program focuses on removing barriers to employment for our refugee clients by building relationships with local employers who can offer job opportunities that will lead to self-sufficiency. **We have high standards for our employment partners,** and require employers to pay our clients a living wage of at least \$15/hr, in addition to providing advancement opportunities, benefits, and other training to support New Americans in their careers. We are proud to partner with employers who are invested in the success of our clients.

Our team secured meaningful employment for over **100 clients**

**\$17.79**  
average starting wage



"I count it as a blessing. Having been a refugee and having gone through this same process, the same life experience, these same emotions, I put myself in their shoes, and that helps me understand them and know how to help solve the issues they face. **In one word - it is a blessing** - to be able to serve those who need my help."

- Eric Bishonda, Reception and Placement Case Manager

NICE is especially proud of being a preferred employer for the refugee and immigrant community in Nashville. Numerous members of our staff are former clients of NICE and their passion for our mission and lived experiences contribute to creating strong relationships with the diverse communities we serve.

Eric Bishonda came to the US as a refugee from the Democratic Republic of Congo. For the past several years, he has served as a case manager at NICE, working with refugees (often from his home country) when they first arrive in Nashville.



## The Path to Self-Sufficiency



Inna Shulkina came to Nashville as part of the Uniting for Ukraine program after her world was torn apart by the war. When she came to NICE, our staff quickly fell in love with Inna's energy, wit, and wisdom. Inna was a school teacher in Ukraine for over 30 years, and we are proud that she is able to continue her passion for teaching as an Education Support Specialist at NICE, working with both youth and adult students.

"Back home in Ukraine, I had a happy childhood. I started learning English, and fell in love with languages. I had always wanted to be a teacher because my mom, my aunt, and my uncle – they all were teachers. **When I am teaching, I forget where I am and what's going on, because the process of teaching inspires me, especially when I see fire in the students' eyes.**"

– Inna Shulkina, NICE Education Support Specialist

# Immigration

The NICE Immigration Department provides affordable services to our community in Middle Tennessee. We assist clients by filing immigration forms, providing providing interpretation and consultation, conducting immigration case follow-ups, and public notarization.

This year, NICE expanded our immigration team to serve the emerging needs of our Afghan and Ukrainian communities. **We continued our partnership with the Vanderbilt Legal Clinic and Tennessee Justice for Our Neighbors to file asylum cases for our Afghan allies and were able to work with our federal partners to schedule asylum interviews in Nashville instead of in New Orleans.**

**79**

Citizenship  
Applications

**111**

Green Card  
Applications

**77**

Employment  
Authorization  
Applications

**39**

Family Reunification  
Applications

**442**

Travel  
Documents

**130**

Asylum Application  
Referrals



Our advocacy efforts also helped expedite the processing of employment authorization documents for displaced Ukrainians who were originally facing significant delays.

**NICE hosted a group of newly-arrived Ukrainians, their sponsors, and Mayor John Cooper to advocate for expediting their Employment Authorization Documents.**



# Adult Education

English language education is at the heart of our work at NICE.

**Since our founding in 2005, we have prioritized breaking down this primary barrier that is faced by newcomers.**

NICE English literacy and citizenship classes help our adult students achieve their goals such as employment, higher education, naturalization, and improved family health. As part of our curriculum, NICE integrates community-minded workshops designed to create avenues of access to resources such as public libraries, public transportation, police assistance, and medical care.

NICE citizenship classes teach civics, American history, English, and interviewing skills to prepare New Americans for the process of becoming a new US citizen.

## Adult Education Sites

Donelson Fellowship

Glenclyff High School

Woodmont Hills Church

STEM Prep Academy

## Students Served

**337**

English Language

**28**

HiSET

**175**

Citizenship

**96**

Workforce Development

## Adult Education Classes

**2**

Citizenship  
Classes

**3**

HiSET Classes

**6**

Levels of English Language  
Classes

**2**

Workforce Development  
Classes

## Student Success

**40**

NICE Students passed the  
Citizenship Test in 2022

**10**

New graduates of the Bilingual  
Banking Certification Program  
*(partnership with Bank of America,  
Catholic Charities and Unidos)*

“My HiSET classes reopened a dream I once had to have a professional qualification. A year or two ago, when I was living outside of the USA, with my age, that dream was not possible. **I get all the support I need from everybody at my school from teachers to office people.** I even bother them on weekends sometimes, yet they give me all the assistance I need.”

– Willy, NICE HiSET Student from Burundi



**“It’s that feeling that you are part of a community.**

It’s always been really nice to be here, but with the right to vote, you feel that you really count.”

– Katherine Romero, graduate of NICE Citizenship class and new voter

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# Youth Education

The NICE Youth Impact Program serves New American students of all ages from around the world – both in the classroom and outside the classroom.

This year, NICE continued to emphasize social/emotional learning in our youth education programing and focused on empowering our students to self-advocate.

Our “Impacting Diversity and Equity through Advocacy” (NICE IDEA) is a new civic engagement program designed to support diverse student populations in impacting equity, inclusion, and access. Participating students learned how to advocate for themselves, their families and their community in both social discourse and political systems.

**Over the course of the year, NICE was able to serve 225 students across our After-school, Youth Mentorship, School Impact, and Summer Camp programs.**

**74**

Refugee School  
Impact Program

**36**

Youth Mentorship

**41**

Summer Camp

**38**

After-school

**50**

Students with Interrupted Formal Education

## NICE Youth Impact Program Offerings

### Middle School

Our after-school programs meet at McMurray and Margaret Allen Middle Schools. Through art therapy, academic interventions, and English as a Second Language lessons, our program staff work to mitigate the effects of interrupted education and cultural/language-based barriers.

### High School

During the school day, our Youth Program Coordinators join classrooms throughout Nashville alongside Metro Nashville Public School teachers to provide direct support services. While our primary purpose is to aid often under-resourced teachers, NICE further enriches the learning process with our English as a Second Language, civics, and literacy curriculum.

Through our **Refugee School Impact Grant (RSIG)**, NICE is able to provide an overview to all eligible students soon after they arrive in Nashville by introducing them to US-based schooling and equipping them with the required resources to be successful in K-12 education.

Our **Culture Exchange Program** provides cultural awareness training designed to equip teachers and school administrators with background information about specific cultural groups from the refugee/immigrant communities.

## Youth Education

### Youth Mentorship Program

NICE's community-based youth mentoring program is designed to encourage and support mutually beneficial, long-standing relationships between adult role models and New American children ages 6 to 18.

"My time as a youth mentor with the Shabrak family has been wonderful because it is incredibly fulfilling to play even a small supporting role in their transition to life in America. As I continue to build my relationship with the Shabrak family, **I get to observe the academic and social progress of my mentees in real time.** With this, I also notice myself becoming a more compassionate, empathetic, and understanding person. The mutual benefits of the youth mentorship experience makes it all the more rewarding."

- Margaret Victory, NICE Youth Mentor





# Health

## Access to healthcare is a fundamental human right.

The NICE Intensive Case Management program offers culturally and linguistically competent services that help clients access medical and mental health services, social adjustments, and health screening and referrals. Our clients include people who are elderly, people with disabilities, survivors of violence and torture, and those experiencing psychological issues stemming from living through war and conflict.

Our case management team works closely with Centerstone, our mental health care provider, to connect clients to care and to troubleshoot issues as they arise.

NICE's Health Program provides culturally sensitive COVID-19 preventative education focusing on vaccine hesitancy, health system barriers, and distrust in western medicine.

"In my community, if I tell someone to get vaccinated they might suspect I am only doing this because I am being paid to tell them this. But after I tell them that I am vaccinated and my children are vaccinated, they begin to listen. I had concerns about the vaccine at first as well so I read more information and did my research. **Now that I know the facts it's really important to share them with my community and help protect them.**"

- Amiira Ahmed, NICE Trusted Messenger

## Individuals Served

**53**

Intensive Case  
Management Program

**2,193**

Health Education  
Program



# Community Partners

1 Hotel Nashville  
12 South Neighborhood  
ABC Technologies  
Acklen Avenue Church of Christ  
Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.  
American Automobile Association  
American Job Center  
American Muslim Advisory Council  
American Red Cross  
Belmont University  
Bruce Buchanan  
Catholic Charities  
Center for Nonprofit Management  
Centerstone  
Christ Church Cathedral  
Church at Pleasant Grove  
Church of Jesus Christ Latter Day Saints  
Community Resource Center  
Commute with Enterprise  
Councilwoman Zulfat Suara  
Cross Point Church  
Crown Bakeries  
Dollar General  
Elmahaba Center  
Enfield Management  
Frist Art Museum

Glenclyff High School  
Goodwill Industries of Middle Tennessee  
Greater Nashville Regional Council  
Hands On Nashville  
Hattie B's Hot Chicken  
Inspiritus  
Jewish Federation and Jewish Foundation of Nashville and Middle Tennessee  
Just Serve  
Kroger  
Law Offices of Steven J Simerlein  
LEAD Southeast  
Lentz Public Health Center  
McGruder Family Resource Center  
Meharry Medical College  
Mental Health Cooperative  
Metro Human Relations Commission  
Metro Nashville Police Department  
Metro Nashville Public Schools  
Metro Office of Family Safety  
Midtown Fellowship West Nashville  
MJ Morgan  
Mother to Mother  
Music City Soccer Club  
Nashville Adult Literacy Council  
Nashville Children's Theatre

Nashville Diaper Connection  
Nashville Pan-Hellenic Council  
Nashville Predators  
Nashville Public Library Foundation  
Nashville Public Radio  
Nashville Public Television  
Nashville St. Thomas Hospital  
Nashville Zoo  
Nashville Software School  
National Healthcare Corporation  
Neighborhood Health  
Newroz Market  
Project Redesign  
Redpepper  
Second Harvest Food Bank  
Sewanee, The University of the South  
Shade Tree Clinic  
Share Mobility  
Siloam Health  
Soles for Souls  
Southern Word  
St. George's Episcopal Church  
STEM Preparatory Academy

Tennessee Department of Human Services  
Tennessee Foreign Language Institute  
Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition  
Tennessee Justice Center  
Tennessee Justice for our Neighbors  
Tennessee Office for Refugees  
Tennessee Resettlement Aid  
Tennessee State University  
The Donelson Fellowship  
The Nashville Food Project  
The Temple  
Thriftsmart  
Tyson Foods  
Under Armor  
United Way of Greater Nashville  
Vanderbilt Law School Legal Clinic  
Vi-Jon  
Woodmont Hills Church  
Workforce Essentials  
World Central Kitchen



# Funders



# NICE Neighborhood

The NICE Neighborhood is a group of dedicated individuals committed to empowering Nashville's refugee community by donating monthly. By joining the NICE Neighborhood, these individuals make a commitment to be a supportive neighbor to newcomers in our Nashville community. **NICE Neighbors ensure that their New American neighbors can thrive in Nashville by lending a helping hand.**

Allison Chan  
Amanda Adams  
Andrea Flores  
Annette Calloway  
Ashley Panas  
Benjamin Haynes  
Carolyn Heinrich  
Charles O'Dell  
Christoph Zeller  
Claire Hampton  
Corey Spicer  
David Foster  
Delani Pecchioli  
Donna Davis  
Farris Smith  
Fletcher Prouty  
Garth Barlow  
Georganne Ross  
Isabelle Speed  
James Walters

Jonathan Niconchuk  
Joshua Grahe  
Kaitlyn Kownacki  
Kathy MacLachlan  
Kristen Ingebretson  
Laura Henkhaus  
Lynne Maynor  
Margaret Lane  
Martha Henley  
Quin Evans Segall  
Rebeca Bell  
Ryoko Suzuki  
Samantha Lee  
Sharon Kozy  
Shawn Reilly  
Steven Christman  
Sydney Mathieu  
Travis O'Guin  
William Stout

# Analysis of Operations



Entity	Income	% of Total
Federal	\$2,029,667	42.0%
State & Local Gov't	\$1,440,610	29.8%
Foundations	\$433,709	9.0%
Individuals	\$313,563	6.5%
Program Revenue	\$81,253	1.7%
Organizations	\$531,318	11.0%
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$4,830,120</b>	<b>100.0%</b>



Entity	Income	% of Total
Program	\$4,011,618	86.3%
Admin & Fundraising	\$636,768	13.7%
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>\$4,648,386</b>	<b>100.0%</b>





# What in the World?!

"What in the World?!" was our reimagined annual fundraising event on October 27th, 2022 at Plaza Mariachi. The evening was centered around a fun team trivia competition featuring questions that challenged our attendees' knowledge of world geography and culture. Guests enjoyed stunning musical performances by Nya JJ of South Sudan and Nataliia Shahin, one of NICE's Ukrainian clients.

**Our tradition of recognizing those who have made a significant impact on the lives of refugees and New Americans in our community continued in 2022 at the What in the World?! event.**



## Program Sponsors



DOLLAR GENERAL

McKesson

## Welcoming Sponsors



MARS

## Trivia Team Sponsors



CROWN BAKERIES



mjmorgan GROUP  
People Built. People Strong.

## 2022 NICE Community Award Winners

### The Sonrisa Trippe Volunteer of the Year Award

Awarded annually to an outstanding volunteer.

**Presented to KC Smythe**

### Donna Pack Community Empowerment Award

Awarded to the person or group that has had a significant influence on the lives of refugee and immigrant families during the year.

**Presented to Cross Point Church**

### New Arrival Award

Awarded to a person, group, or entity that has made it possible for newly arrived refugees to find a home with opportunities and to become empowered through access to social services.

**Presented to Community Resource Center**

### The Genesis Award

Presented to a person, group, or entity that has had a long-time, significant impact on the lives of refugees in Middle Tennessee.

**Presented to Councilwoman Zulfat Suara**



# NICE Board of Directors

## **CHAIR**

Muna Muday, PhD Can. MPH | Vanderbilt University

## **CHAIR/SECRETARY**

John Ujwok, MA, MPH, PhD Can. | University of Tennessee

## **TREASURER**

Lelan Evans | Lelan for President, LLC

## **PAST CHAIR**

Rosemary Lokule | Self-Employed

Beatrice Gatebuke, MA | FASHA

Nawzad Hawrami | Salahadeen Center of Nashville

Alex Sekwat, PhD | Tennessee State University

## **PRESIDENT/CEO**

Dr. Gatluak Ter Thach | NICE



Each family  
who comes to

**Nashville**

has a unique story.

At

**NICE**

we're helping  
our new neighbors  
write their next  
chapter.



NASHVILLE INTERNATIONAL  
*Center for Empowerment*

[www.empowernashville.org](http://www.empowernashville.org)