



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COOPERATIVE SAVINGS AND CREDIT UNIONS

PRESIDENT

*Rafał Matusiak*

June 2022

## Polish American Credit Union Support Fund

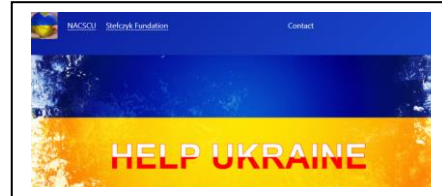
<https://pacus.skok.pl/>

### Our Story

#### Dear Friends,

On February 24, 2022 Russia invaded Ukraine.

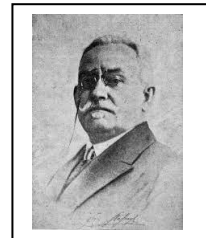
Missiles targeted not only military installations but also civilian sites. Many of our credit union colleagues, that we have with for more than 30 years, sent their families to Poland for safety. Polish colleagues took many into their homes.



As Russian forces drove on Kiev, refugees fled Ukraine to Poland and other countries in Western Europe. To date 3.4 million Ukrainian refugees remain in Poland. These are largely women, elderly and small children. Many stay in Poland as they wish to be near Ukraine where their men remain fighting.

#### The Power of Community

Poland shares a long border with Ukraine. Large areas of Western Ukraine were Polish territory before Stalin redrew borders. We share history, cultural traditions and family ties. We shared the long struggle for democracy under the Soviet Union. At the end of communism, our shared legacy of credit unions re-emerged. Credit unions championed financial freedom in Poland and Ukraine. Poland was one of the first to provide assistance to Ukraine.



This included credit unions. Since the beginning of the war, credit union donated materials needed at the battle front such as sleeping bags, blankets, bandages, flashlights, mats, batteries, stretchers, means of communication and thermal clothing. Polish credit unions contributed funds to provide ambulances to evacuate pregnant mothers, ill and handicapped persons to Polish hospitals.



There will be no refugee camps. As Polish citizens, we all commit to receiving and hosting refugees from Poland into our homes and into our hearts. Volunteers at all bus and train stations provide arriving refugees with water, food, clothing and blankets. Communities provide a constant flow of these materials and medicines to be ready for incoming refugees. Volunteers help refugees find shelter or housing. The government has authorized conditions for the entry of Ukrainian citizens to Poland for simple and rapid registration and access to state health,



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education and welfare assistance. It has helped schools prepare for the influx of Ukrainian students. Refugees and students receive free Polish language classes.

### **Polish American Credit Union Support Fund**

Our American credit union colleagues came to Poland in March to identify how best to support the work Polish credit union were doing to assist the Ukrainian refugees arriving in Poland. The Polish American Credit Union Support Fund was created to serve as an aid hub to channel financial assistance to the most urgent needs: (1) the evacuation of the ill and injured from Ukraine to Polish hospitals and (2) the settlement and economic stability of Ukrainian refugees in Poland. This includes:

- Medical supplies and ambulances for evacuation of sick and injured Ukrainians,
- Relief supplies to refugees arriving in Poland,
- Assistance to help refugee families find housing and schools for children,
- Credit union membership access to savings, payments and loans for longer term financial and economic stability of refugees and host communities.

The Polish American Credit Union Support Fund supports the strategic and unique credit union mission for financial and economic integration of Ukrainian refugees in Poland. It works within the credit union network and provides a credit union-to- credit union direct delivery vehicle for immediate impact for Ukrainian refugees, delivers all funds for program purpose and grows credit union membership.

### **Evacuation to Polish Hospitals**

At the request of the Polish Secretary of State, American credit unions contributed funds to acquire additional ambulances to continue evacuating Ukrainians to Polish hospitals. We were also



able to donate portable medical equipment to save the lives of the injured in the field. Some of this is the same equipment found in the ambulances. Franciszka Blachnickiego credit union provides specialized drugs and medical supplies to where they are most needed in coordination with local governments in Poland and Ukraine.



### **Support to Refugees**

Polish credit unions are community-based institutions which respond to the call of our communities. As our communities were initially focused on receiving and embracing



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refugees, we provided financial and material donations for relief supplies. As the numbers grew to 1.5 million, 2.3 million and now 3.4 million, some city populations have increased 20%.

As the term and the scale of the challenge has increased, we identify with our communities' concerns to find longer term solutions for the economic and financial stability of our Ukrainian guests and our communities. Our hearts are large. Yet we worry how long this can continue before communities are overwhelmed and refugees are discouraged. Refugees tell us that they want to work. We began to build for the future ... as credit unions do.

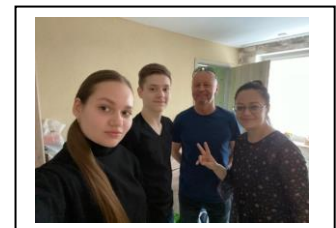


How can we provide an economic path for greater stability for the refugees and for our communities? Polish credit unions continue to support the immediate humanitarian response but also to leverage the uniqueness of credit unions for longer term economic integration of the refugees. Chmielewski credit union led the way in providing relief to arriving refugees and then, with your support, settling them into homes where their

children can go to school, mothers can find work and share with each other the responsibility for childcare. Kwiatkowski credit union provides support for a group of children from an orphanage destroyed in the conflict zone. Stefczyk credit union led the opening of savings accounts for Ukrainians and website in Ukrainian. They also hired Ukrainians to support the day-to-day service of refugees in branches and in call center.

In April Russian forces pulled back from trying to take Kiev. The number of refugees coming to Poland dropped initially and then resumed as atrocities in previously Russian held territory were revealed.

The Russians redeployed to the East and Southern regions to occupy the Donetsk and Luhansk regions, attacking Mariupol, Odessa. The bulk of new refugees began arriving from the Southeastern regions. Ziemi Rybnickiej credit union, again with your support, helped a family from Maripul who had lost their husband/father acquire a home in Poland. In May Mariupol fell.



The scorched Earth practice of the invaders have displaced 10 million within Ukraine. We expect more refugees.



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We support the work of credit unions and their communities to provide stable housing, schools and employment for Ukrainian refugees as an alternative to continued relief dependency of the refugees and overwhelmed capacity of communities. We provide savings accounts for the refugees so they can plan for their future and payments systems access to do their transactions. Their financial and economic stability enhances the bond between the arriving and the host communities and the economic/social stability of our country.

Our challenge is how to integrate 3.5 to 5 million refugees in a society of 37 million. Our credit union network can make a difference for the refugees and for our communities towards this goal. We are heartened by the support we have received from US credit unions and we sleep secure at night knowing the commitment of NATO and US forces here on the ground with us in Poland.

### **Grain for the World**

As the Russian occupation blocks Ukrainian ports, Ukraine has not been able to ship out its grain, prompting a food crisis in parts of Africa, Europe and Asia. The governments of Poland and Ukraine have established an agreement to use Poland infrastructure as a transportation hub to ship Ukrainian grain through Polish ports.

Thank you for the friendship and support that you have given to your colleagues in Poland and Ukraine on our road to freedom. Please consider giving or encourage others to give directly from their credit unions to the Polish American Fund as we assist those who are victimized by this war from the East.

From Poland,

Rafał Matusiak

President & CEO

National Association of Credit and Savings Unions (NACSCU)



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### American CU Colleagues – Here is Our Ask

The goal for the Polish America Credit Union Support fund is \$500,000 to assimilate the Ukrainian refugees into Poland. To meet our goal, we need **\$200,000**. Help us hit the mark!

GOAL: \$500,000



**4 credit unions to donate at \$50,000 each**

Join Kinecta FCU as a PACUS fund Founder.

**20 credit unions to donate at \$10,000 each**

Join Santa Cruz Community CU & Eagle Community CU as a PACUS fund Believers.

**We Need You! Be Bold. Be Strong. Let's do this!**

<https://bit.ly/PACUSFund>

