

## A message from the CEO



**NEW ENGLAND IS HOME** to one of the largest Haitian diasporas in the U.S. As challenges continue to mount for Haiti, many of its people are coming to our region because of the rich and robust community of Haitians already living and working here. We have been moved to see beautiful Haitian flag raising ceremonies at Boston City Hall and in communities throughout New England during a year in which IINE is on track to welcome and provide services to 5,000

Haitians. Due to support from both public and private fundraising and dedicated advocacy efforts, we have built resources to hire Haitian staff, intake hundreds of Haitians into our services each week, support basic needs, and help individuals and families access benefits, support basic needs, and connect to available resources.

But you may have seen the news—the entire Commonwealth of Massachusetts is facing a growing homelessness crisis for arriving Haitian families. Haitian families are being sent from emergency rooms to Logan Airport and back to emergency rooms in an effort to keep adults and children from sleeping on our streets. No one organization has enough resources to support their needs.

The arrival of Haitian families is exposing the depth of our region's affordable housing crisis and the weaknesses in our emergency shelter system. In response, IINE has led a coalition of likeminded groups advocating for more state funds for vulnerable immigrant populations, easier access to serve people in emergency shelters, and streamlined processes for connecting immigrants with

the benefits to which they are entitled. We are also working at the state and federal levels to advocate for more equitable resources for all refugee populations as Haitians and other Black refugee populations continue to enter the U.S. with fewer benefits than other groups.

We hear very clearly from our Haitian clients that they are here to work and build a life for their families, and they need temporary support to get started. As Haitian families continue to deeply enrich our communities culturally, they are also poised to make tremendous contributions to our economy. Right now, they need our help. This edition of *Spotlight* focuses on our services to Haitian clients and the crisis they face. Thank you for reading and for all you do to support refugees and immigrants in New England.

With gratitude,



**Jeffrey Thielman, President and CEO**



**The Cadiche family: Berline, four-year-old Martin, and two-year-old Ryan fled Haiti and have sought safety in New England**

# The Challenge

**FROM FOREIGN EXPLOITATION** dating back to colonialism, to relentless earthquakes and tropical storms, to political upheaval—a devastating combination of disasters has made Haiti one of the most economically disadvantaged nations in the world. Between 1990 and 2015, the Haitian immigrant population in the U.S. tripled. It has now reached more than 1 million, and with continued instability in Haiti, the rise of violent gangs, and changing immigration laws, the number of Haitians seeking safety and a more hopeful future in the U.S. is again surging.

This wave of immigration enriches U.S. communities and has the potential to greatly strengthen our economy, but its speed and scale—together with the U.S.’s own political divisions and systemic vulnerabilities—has led to tremendous challenges for new arrivals and those helping them stabilize and integrate.

Haitians have often been the targets of discriminatory treatment within the U.S. immigration system, from baselessly shifting legal rights, to brutal enforcement tactics. Current-

ly, most are arriving without any clear path to housing; the lucky ones end up within the overcrowded shelter system, while many more are left out on the street. Uncertain about how long they can remain in the country, Haitian parolees need immediate support from a resettlement agency like IINE to obtain the limited financial assistance and basic benefits to which they are entitled and to prepare for and enter the workforce as quickly as possible.

## Welcome And Support

Through outreach and community partnerships, IINE is working to help as many Haitian clients as we can. So far this year we have reached more than 3,000 new Haitians in need. Thanks to the support of our donors, we have hired five new Haitian Case Specialists who assess needs and then work with each family to obtain modest federal cash assistance, food assistance, and healthcare. We are working with sponsored Haitians and those in emergency shelters to enroll their children in school and apply for the documents needed to get a job. We have just introduced a driver’s education class in Haitian Creole. These essential services and supports help arrivals get a foothold in their new community.



**IINE Senior Program and Contract Manager Sabyne Denaud at an intake clinic for Haitian clients. A Haitian immigrant herself, Sabyne has personally provided intake and support for hundreds of new Haitian clients this year**



### 1995-2015

A wave of immigration triples the Haitian-born population in the U.S.



### 2010

An earthquake strikes Haiti, displacing 1.5 million people.

Haitians in the U.S. are granted Temporary Protected Status (TPS) allowing all to remain in the country regardless of previous legal status.

### 2017

TPS status is revoked for Haitians living in the U.S.

### 2018

Agricultural and seasonal visas are blocked for Haitians wishing to enter the U.S. temporarily.

## BEING A PART OF THE RESPONSE

# Reflections from IINE Case Specialist Rodeney Pierre

**Q You've been conducting hundreds of intakes for Haitian clients over the past few months. What are some common needs, concerns, and experiences you've heard?**

**A** From what I've gathered, most of our clients do not have a place to stay, a place they can call their own. Most have been living in shelters, others with family and friends. Privacy is not something that they currently have. They don't even have a place to cook their own food; they are deprived of that and so much, which leads me to believe that they can't really evolve as human beings. Another thing is the education aspect—ESOL. The waiting list is long, which creates a sentiment of anxiety as they cannot really communicate. No personal space, no money, no food and not being able to speak the language is tough. On top of that, it takes what feels like decades before they can receive their Employee Authorization Card [to be able to work].

**Q We have witnessed an increase in the intensity of needs and the number of desperate Haitian families arriving. What's kept you going in the face of such hardship?**

**A** First and foremost, I am an immigrant myself. I worked hard to be the person that I am today; I know how it is to come from one country to another and not being able to properly function. I know how it is to be on both sides of the line.



IINE Case Specialist Rodeney Pierre with his clients, a Haitian family

When I came here, things weren't that hard [in Haiti], but now it is unimaginable. Gang violence is everywhere, people are running away from their own homes. It is a lot, and it takes courage to leave what you've known all of your life to come here to the unknown.

When I chose IINE, I wanted to be part of a change. I wanted to help people and make a difference. I believe in the mission, and I believe in helping people. Change requires a lot of work, and together, I believe that we can make it work. Seeing gratitude on my clients' faces is enough for me to keep going and fighting for them all.

**Q Based on your conversations with Haitian clients, what has it meant to them to be able to turn to IINE for help?**

**A** It is safe to say that IINE has been one of the biggest supports within the Haitian community. IINE has brought joy and hope among all of them.



## Legal Statuses

### REFUGEE

A status for individuals who have crossed an international border and have a well-founded fear of persecution. Eligible for benefits and to be placed in housing by a resettlement agency. (Not currently afforded to Haitians)

### TEMPORARY PROTECTED STATUS (TPS)

A status allowing designated foreign-born residents who are not citizens to temporarily remain in the U.S. while it is deemed unsafe to return to their country of origin. Does not include eligibility for benefits or housing which require applying for a different status.

### PAROLEE

A status that allows individuals to come to the U.S. temporarily for urgent humanitarian reasons.

### CUBAN/HAITIAN ENTRANT (CHE)

Haitians with this status are allowed into the U.S. for up to two years and are eligible for benefits but cannot be placed in housing by a resettlement agency.

### CUBAN/HAITIAN/NICARAGUAN/VENEZUELAN (CHNV) PAROLEE

Under this new status, Haitians can enter the U.S. for two years if they have sponsors in the U.S. who commit to providing housing and financial support for this period.

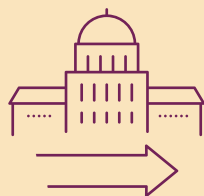
#### 2021

An earthquake strikes Haiti, quickly followed by a violent tropical storm. Thousands are displaced.

Haitian president Jovenel Moïse is assassinated, enflaming political unrest, which still persists.

#### 2022

TPS is extended for Haitians living in the U.S.



#### 2023

A new federal program allows Cuban, Haitian, Nicaraguan, and Venezuelan nationals to enter the U.S. if they can secure a sponsor.

IINE is on track to welcome 5,000 Haitians into our services—more than other any nonprofit in the region.



# Teaming Up To Increase Support

## A KEY PARTNER

One way IINE has been able to reach so many Haitians in need of our services is through our strong partnership with the **International Family Services Institute (IFSI)**. Headquartered in Boston’s Mattapan neighborhood, IFSI is a destination for arriving Haitians, and serves clients through a “Village Model,” which integrates children, parents, grandparents, and other stakeholders into program delivery. Our partnership has included service clinics to help thousands of clients apply for public benefits and services as well as joint advocacy efforts to secure enough resources to meet demand.

“We are stronger when we work together,” says IFSI’s Executive Director, Dr. Geralde Gabeau, “and our clients depend on us all working together to bring them hope for a better tomorrow.”



IINE staff members Baktash Yusufzi and Schaid Thelot staff an all-day intake event organized by IFSI

### HOW YOU CAN HELP

- [Donate support funds](#)
- [Donate household goods](#)
- [Volunteer to help in our offices](#)
- [Sponsor a family through our Resettle Together Program](#)



### Impact Metrics

- **3,008** new Haitian clients served since October 1, 2022
- **2,338** Haitian clients received Refugee Cash Assistance through IINE
- **170** Haitian clients have participated in IINE education programs
- **291** Haitian potential clients are on IINE’s ESOL waiting list



## Turning Crisis to Hope: Responding to the Arrival of Thousands of Haitians in Massachusetts

VIRTUAL TOWN HALL | JULY 26, 2023 | 5-6 PM



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