

Utah non-profit sending team to Poland-Ukraine border to help with refugees

SALT LAKE CITY (KUTV) —



A Utah non-profit organization is sending a team to the Poland-Ukraine border to help with the flood of refugees.

According to the United Nations refugee agency, [1.7 million people have fled Ukraine](#) since Russia invaded the country.



Refugees that fled Ukraine from the war arrive at the train station in Zahony, Hungary, Sunday, March 6, 2022. The number of Ukrainians forced from their country increased to 1.7 million. (AP Photo/Darko Vojinovic)

Amid the desperation and steady flow of Ukrainians leaving the country, [August Mission](#) – a group organized last year amid the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan – is sending an initial team of two people to Poland to help out.

But they're planning to do more than just deliver supplies.

"This first trip is going to be identifying the need and identifying where we can have the greatest impact," said Bruce Roberts, CEO and founder of August Mission. He points to on-the-ground coordination as the area where his team can do the most.

Roberts said most of the organization's members are veterans or private sector workers with experience in emergency management, and they have lived and worked in challenging locations.

“These supplies have been flown in and trucked into eastern Europe, and they’re there on the ground, but it’s getting them to the population – getting them to the border areas – that’s the greater need right now,” Roberts said.

Nick Fowler, director of operations for the non-profit, is one of the two team members flying to Poland Tuesday afternoon. The group has been coordinating with logistical contacts in that country ahead of their trip.

“Our ultimate goal is to support those refugees,” Fowler told KUTV 2News. “We’re in it for the long haul.”



Refugees who fled the Russian invasion from neighbouring Ukraine sit inside a ballroom converted into a makeshift refugee shelter at a 4-star hotel & spa, in Suceava, Romania, Friday, March 4, 2022. At 4-star hotel & spa some 50 km from the border with Ukraine, wedding parties and conferences have been canceled and the ballroom converted into a makeshift refugee shelter where those who have escaped the Russian invasion come to rest and warm up before continuing their journey. (AP Photo/Andreea Alexandru)

Fowler and his travel companion will begin in Warsaw and then head east toward the border. Fowler is a former firefighter with experience in incident

management. He's packing supplies for the next 11 days.

He showed KUTV 2News a small tent with a sleeping bag that he'll be taking with him for his time near the border.

"This'll be home," Fowler said. He's also packing a box with supplies such as food, lanterns, and satellite communication devices.

After this first trip, August Mission leaders say, they will be able to determine what needs exist and decide how to best utilize additional teams on the border.

Fowler is ready to do what he can to help.

"The impact that we're looking to make is a big one," he said.