



U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

Virginia Afghan Support Center Stakeholder Briefing



Falls Church, VA

Feb. 1, 2024

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Afghan Support Center Northern Virginia

- 13th Afghan Support Center
- Scheduled from Jan. 31-Feb. 3.
- USCIS will brief on:
 - Re-parole and extension of parole
 - Family reunification options
 - Policy-related updates
 - Temporary Protected Status
 - Asylum
 - Refugee processing
 - Humanitarian parole



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Photo taken from the Afghan Support Center in San Antonio, TX, Oct. 25-28, 2023.
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Reminders



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- Send questions from media to media@uscis.dhs.gov.
- Send questions from congressional offices to usciscongressionalinquiries@uscis.dhs.gov.
- Questions
 - For in-person questions, come up to the mic.
 - If joining virtually, submit a question through the Q&A box.
- Submit any questions after today's engagement to public.engagement@uscis.dhs.gov.



Afghan Support Centers



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- Helped over 10,000 Afghan nationals at 12 Afghan Support Centers.
 - Phoenix, Tucson, Sacramento, Pittsburgh, Seattle, Oklahoma City, Tulsa, Denver, San Antonio, Atlanta, Chicago, Raleigh-Durham
- Anticipate helping over 3,000 Afghan nationals this week from Jan. 31-Feb. 3.
 - On our first day alone, we assisted 765 Afghan nationals.
- Offering a wide range of services and information from the federal government and local service providers.

Re-Parole and Extension of Initial Parole for Afghan Nationals in the U.S.



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- June 2023 - New streamlined process for Afghan nationals under Operation Allies Welcome (OAW) to apply for re-parole to remain in the United States and continue working.
 - Received over 24,800 re-parole applications and completed 24,000
 - Approved 15,900 re-parole requests
 - Administratively closed 8,100 applications
- USCIS has exercised discretion to extend 46,000 initial parole periods.

Afghan Minors in the U.S.



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- In Oct. 2023, USCIS announced extending initial periods of parole for Afghan minors under 14 years old.
 - Extensions done on a case-by-case basis.
 - Minors paroled into the U.S. between July 30, 2021, and Sept. 30, 2022, with OAR or PAR class of admission.
- Minors between 14-17 years old as of Sept. 26, 2023, with no pending asylum or Green Card application need to file a request for re-parole.
 - If they have a pending asylum or Green Card application, we will consider extending their initial parole period.

Family Reunification Options for Afghans



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- The Form I-130, Petition for Alien Relative, is available to U.S. citizens or lawful permanent residents to petition for certain eligible relatives. Visit uscis.gov/i-130.
- The Form I-730, Refugee/Asylee Relative Petition, is available to principal asylees and principal refugees to obtain follow-to-join status for eligible family members. Visit uscis.gov/i-730.
 - Notify USCIS or the Department of State as soon as possible if the contact information or location of the beneficiary or petitioner changes after Form I-730 has been filed.
 - For more information, see “Special Instructions” at uscis.gov/i-730.
- Department of State’s CARE Program (DS-4317)
 - Afghan minors paroled before their 18th birthday can petition for parents and siblings under 21.

Policy Updates



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- Sept. 29, 2023, USCIS announced continued fee exemptions and expedited processing for certain forms and services including:
 - Form I-131, Form I-765, Form I-485, and Form I-130, among others.
 - Fee exemptions and expedited processing for these forms, including asylum applications, will be in place through Sept. 30, 2024.
- Visit uscis.gov/news for more information.

Policy Updates - TPS



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- On Sept. 21, 2023, DHS announced extension/redesignation for Temporary Protected Status.
 - Extension allows 3,100 current beneficiaries to retain TPS through May 20, 2025; USCIS extended EAD validity through Nov. 20, 2024
 - Redesignation allows estimated 14,600 additional Afghan nationals or certain other individuals to obtain TPS, if eligible. Number includes Afghan nationals under OAW.

TPS for Afghanistan Data



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- As of 01/28/2024, received 18,000 TPS applications from OAW Afghan nationals.
 - Completed: 6,800
 - Pending: 11,000
 - Approved: 6,600
 - Denied: 200
- Median processing time: 190 days
- File online at [myUSCIS.gov](https://myuscis.gov) to avoid common mistakes.
- Fee waiver available for TPS applications or for required biometrics.
 - Applications with a fee waiver can only be submitted to USCIS by mail.

TPS & Benefits



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- TPS is only temporary. Does not lead to a permanent immigration status.
- TPS holders are not eligible for most public benefits unless they have another immigration status or category, such as parole.
- Afghans need to maintain parole to continue to receive benefits under the 2022 Afghanistan Supplemental Appropriations.

Asylees/Refugees Applying for Adjustment of Status



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- Asylees and refugees must be physically present in the U.S. for one year after being granted asylum or after initial admission as a refugee when USCIS adjudicates their adjustment of status for a Green Card.
- They start accruing physical presence on the date the asylee was granted asylum or on the date the refugee was initially admitted as a refugee.
- Asylees and refugees who file before accruing one year of physical presence in the U.S. will not, at the time of filing, be able to demonstrate a full year of physical presence in the United States.
- Early filers may need to submit additional evidence to demonstrate they have met this eligibility requirement. This may result in delays in the adjudication. Additionally, USCIS may deny the application if we adjudicate it less than one year after the grant of asylum.

OAW Afghan Asylum Data



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- As of Jan. 30, 2024, USCIS received 20,300 asylum applications from OAW Afghan nationals, representing more than 40,100 individuals.
 - Completed more than 13,300 cases
 - Less than 7,100 cases pending
- Arlington Asylum Office:
 - Received approximately 4,400 cases
 - Completed over 3,000 cases
- Committed to timely adjudicating OAW Afghan asylum cases per the congressional mandate. Making progress with scheduling interviews and case completions.

Refugee Processing Data



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- As of Jan. 30, 2024, conducted over 6,800 refugee interviews for Afghan nationals in Qatar at Camp As Sayliyah (CAS). Started refugee processing at CAS in Mar. 2022.
 - Goal is to complete processing within 30 days.
 - Currently, about 1,700 individuals in refugee pathways at CAS. New arrivals continue to arrive at CAS.
- USCIS continued processing Afghan nationals in Pakistan, United Arab Emirates, Albania, Kyrgyzstan, Turkey, Tajikistan, Poland, and other locations in smaller numbers.
- Since FY 2022, interviewed over 20,900 Afghan refugees worldwide.
- Approximately 37,000 more Afghan refugee applicants in initial prescreening or awaiting interview.

Parole Data for Afghans Outside the U.S.



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- Since Aug. 1, 2021, USCIS received over 53,300 Form I-131 parole requests for Afghan nationals outside the United States.
 - Adjudicated roughly 18,750 cases
 - 34,500 cases remain pending
 - USCIS cannot complete parole processing if beneficiary is in Afghanistan or another location with no U.S. embassy or consular presence; we cannot help beneficiaries leave Afghanistan.
 - Petitioners should immediately notify USCIS when beneficiaries relocate to a third country with a U.S. embassy or consulate or other changed circumstances.
 - USCIS online account available for petitioners with a pending Form I-131 to better track parole request and send USCIS additional information, including updating addresses.



CARE's Mission

The Office of the Coordinator for Afghan Relocation Efforts in the State Department's Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs (SCA/CARE) is the centerpiece of the U.S. government's interagency effort to relocate Afghan allies to whom we have an enduring commitment.

CARE works to relocate eligible Afghan allies, including those who qualify to apply for Special Immigrant Visas (SIV), Immigrant Visas (IV), and approved U.S. Refugee Assistance Program (USRAP) cases.

Evolution of CARE



Biden Administration unveiled
Operation Allies Refuge (OAR)

July 14, 2021

July 19, 2021

DOS activated the Afghanistan
Coordination Task Force

First group of Afghan special
immigrant applicants arrived in
the U.S.

July 30, 2021

August 29, 2021

President Biden directed the
Department of Homeland Security
to lead Operation Allies Welcome
(OAW)

Last military transport aircraft
departed Kabul, ending largest
Non-Combatant Evacuation
Operation (NEO) in U.S. history

August 30, 2021

Operation Allies Welcome (OAW)
began transition to Enduring
Welcome (EW)

October 2022

CARE became a permanent office
under the Bureau of South and
Central Asian Affairs

October 2022



Past, Present
& Future

The White House has an **enduring commitment** to our Afghan allies and **will continue relocation operations** for eligible Afghans who qualify for relocation to the United States under Enduring Welcome for as long as is needed to complete **this vital mission.**



CARE Relocation Eligibility

The following are eligible categories for relocation under Enduring Welcome:

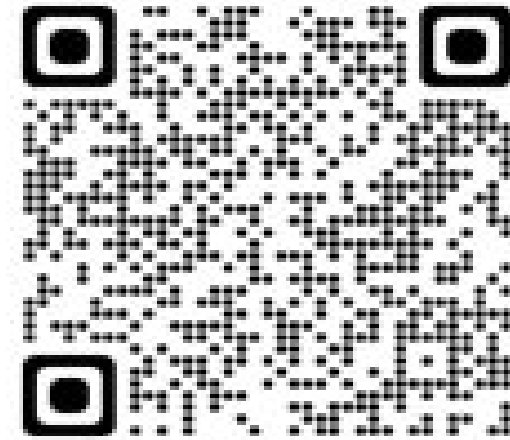
- U.S. citizens and immediate relatives (spouse, unmarried children under 21, and parents) who are Interview-Ready
- U.S. Lawful Permanent Residents and certain relatives (spouse, unmarried children under 21) where there is no numerical limitation or where a visa is currently available
- Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) applicants who have received Chief of Mission approval and are Interview Ready, including spouse and unmarried children under 21 on the case.
- Individuals referred to the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) through a P1 referral or P2 group designation referral and in imminent risk of refoulement or serious, targeted harm. [Note: State/PRM Refugee Coordinators will apply pre-existing expedite criteria on a case-by-case basis to make this determination.]
- Family members (spouse, unmarried children under 21) who are following-to-join an asylee or refugee already in the United States
- Immediate relatives of Afghans previously relocated to the United States through OAW (spouse, unmarried children under 21, and, in the case of unaccompanied minors relocated as part of OAW, their primary caregiver, including but not limited to a parent or legal guardian, and the spouse and children under 21 of the primary caregiver.) [Note: HHS/ORR will apply pre-existing criteria on a case-by-case basis to make determinations as to who qualifies as a primary caregiver.]



Family Reunification

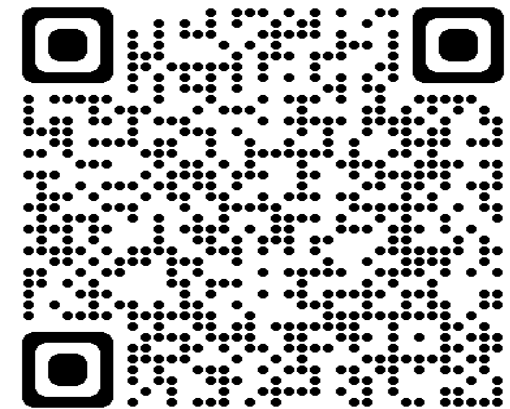
Family Reunification information and details can be found in Dari & Pashto.

here: <https://www.state.gov/afghanistan-inquiries/>.



DS-4317 Application Status Inquiry

Parolees who have applied to the Department of State for family reunification using Form DS-4317 may use this form to send an inquiry to CARE to ask about the status of their case.





Policy Developments

- **Women and Girls Support:** OEW provides life-skill courses and mental health resources to help ease the transition of women and girls to life in the United States. We provide ESL and other skill-building classes, mental and health facilities, and safe spaces for women and girls at our platforms.
- **Deepening partnerships with allies:** Our veterans, frontline civilians, and other fellow Americans who were the cornerstone of OAW remain essential partners in welcoming Afghans into communities across the country as part of Enduring Welcome.
- **Expanding platforms:** We have expanded overseas platforms to expedite visa and refugee processing, relocate more Afghan allies, and streamlining overall CARE relocation efforts.
- **Streamlined SIV and refugee case processing:** We continue to improve SIV and refugee processes and have substantially increased the number of staff processing SIV applications.



Achievements

- CARE prioritizes women and girls' needs in all programming.
- 320 unaccompanied minors evacuated to the U.S. have been reunited with their families.
- CARE built a Cultural Orientation Center at each of our platforms.
- We issued more Afghan SIVs in FY 2023 than in any other year.
 - From September 1, 2021, to January 1, 2024, we issued approximately 35,800 SIVs to principal applicants and their eligible family members.





Please visit us at
<https://www.state.gov/afghanistan-inquiries/>

Contact us at
U.S. Citizens: AfghanistanACS@state.gov
Lawful Permanent Residents (LPRs):
CARETravelData@state.gov
SIV Applicants: NVCSIV@state.gov
IV Applicants: ASKNVC@state.gov
Refugee Applicants:
USRAPAfghanInquiries@state.gov

Concluding Remarks



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- For additional questions, please email public.engagement@uscis.dhs.gov.
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