



Pathways to Relocate to the United States for Afghan Nationals

This document provides information on pathways of migration and relocation to the U.S. for Afghans. The situation in Afghanistan is rapidly evolving and pathways are being impacted, therefore, this is meant as a guide and reference document only. The information provided here does not constitute legal advice.

Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) Program

A special immigrant is a person who qualifies for lawful permanent residence under one of several programs. Section 602(b) of the Afghan Allies Protection Act of 2009, as amended, is a special immigrant program, which authorizes the issuance of SIVs to Afghan nationals who meet certain requirements and who were employed in Afghanistan:

- by or on behalf of the U.S. government in Afghanistan, or
- by the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), or a [successor mission](#), in a capacity that required the applicant to serve as an interpreter or translator for U.S. military personnel while traveling off-base with U.S. military personnel stationed at ISAF or to perform sensitive and trusted activities for U.S. military personnel stationed at ISAF.

The SIV program requires applicants to have been employed for a minimum of one year, between October 7, 2001, and December 31, 2022. Applicants must also have experienced or be experiencing an ongoing serious threat as a consequence of their employment. SIV Principal Applicants may include their spouse and unmarried children under 21 years of age on their case. Processing is available at any US embassy with consular processing.

More information about applying for a Special Immigrant Visa can be found [here](#).

U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP)

There are three main pathways (called priorities) to resettle in the U.S. as a refugee. In addition, some family members may be able to join their family already resettled in the U.S.

Priority 1 (P-1) Individual Referrals

P-1 allows consideration of refugee claims from persons of any nationality, usually with compelling protection needs, for whom resettlement appears to be the appropriate durable solution. P-1 cases are identified and referred for resettlement by a U.S. embassy, UNHCR, or a designated non-governmental organization (NGO). Afghans may receive a P1 referral in any country outside of Afghanistan. Most Afghans currently access the USRAP via P1 referral in Turkey.

Contact information for UNHCR by location can be found [here](#).

Priority 2 (P-2) Group Designations

Under the new Afghan P2 program, U.S. government departments and agencies, and U.S.-based NGOs or media organizations with operations in Afghanistan, may submit P-2 referrals for Afghans who fall into any of the following three categories:

1. Afghans who do not meet the minimum time-in-service for a Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) but who work or worked at any time as employees of contractors, Locally Employed (LE) Staff, interpreters/translators

for the U.S. government, United States Forces Afghanistan (USFOR-A), International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), or Resolute Support;

2. Afghans who work or worked at any time for a U.S. government-funded program or project in Afghanistan supported through a U.S. government grant or cooperative agreement;
3. Afghans who are or were employed in Afghanistan by a U.S.-based non-governmental organization (NGO) or media organization.

Afghans in the above categories and their eligible family members (spouse and children of any age, whether married or unmarried) can be referred to the P-2 program. Referrals can be made on behalf of those still in Afghanistan, but case processing will not be initiated until the applicants move to another country where P-2 processing is available. P-2 processing is not currently available in Iran or Turkey. P2 applicants who move to another country will have to do so on their own without US government assistance.

Afghans cannot refer themselves directly to the P2 program. The referral must come from a U.S. government official or the senior-most U.S. citizen in the organization. Current and former IRC staff can contact IRC about a referral by emailing Afghanistan_Resettlement_Info@rescue.org. This is for current and former IRC staff ONLY. IRC will not be able to support individuals who did not work for IRC.

More information on the Afghan P2 can be found [here](#).

Priority 3 (P-3) Family Reunification

P-3 provides USRAP access to those who have immediate family members in the United States who entered as refugees or were granted asylum within the last five years (with some exceptions due to COVID), even if they subsequently gained Lawful Permanent Resident (LPR) status or naturalized as U.S. citizens. The P-3 program was recently expanded to include immediate family of Iraqi and Afghan SIV recipients in the US.

The P3 program is accessed by submitting an Affidavit of Relationship (AOR). AORs can only be submitted through a refugee resettlement agency. U.S.-based asylees, refugees, and SIV recipients from Afghanistan can file for parents, spouses, and unmarried children under the age of 21 who are outside of Afghanistan and registered as refugees.

A directory of local resettlement agency offices can be found [here](#).

Follow-to-Join Family Reunification Petitions (Refugee I-730 / V93)

A refugee admitted to the United States may request “follow-to-join benefits” for his or her spouse and/or unmarried children under the age of 21 who were not previously granted refugee status. Within two years of admission, the refugee may file a Form I-730 Refugee/Asylee Relative Petition with USCIS for each eligible family member. Beneficiaries of I-730 petitions may be processed within their country of origin or in other locations. Refugee derivatives are eligible can access the USRAP and associated refugee resettlement benefits.

More information on Form I-730 can be found [here](#).

Additional Pathways

Follow-to-Join Family Reunification Petitions (Asylee I-730 / V92)

An individual granted asylum in the United States may request “follow-to-join benefits” for his or her spouse and/or unmarried children under the age of 21 who were not previously granted refugee status. Within two years of status being granted, the asylee may file a Form I-730 Refugee/Asylee Relative Petition with USCIS for each eligible family member. Beneficiaries of I-730 petitions may be processed within their country of origin or in other locations. Asylee derivatives are not eligible for refugee resettlement benefits and will have to arrange their own travel to the US.

More information on Form I-730 can be found [here](#).

Family Petitions (I-130s)

U.S. citizens and LPRs (green card holders) can petition for certain family members to join them in the U.S. U.S. citizens can petition for their spouse and children (married or unmarried of any age). If the petitioner, or family member in the US filing the I-130, is at least 21 years of age, they can also apply for their siblings and parents. LPRs can file for their spouse and unmarried children of any age.

More information and Form I-130 can be found [here](#).

Humanitarian Parole

Individuals may apply for humanitarian parole if they have a compelling emergency and there is an urgent humanitarian reason or significant public benefit to allowing them to temporarily enter the United States. Humanitarian parole requires a financial sponsor in the U.S. and recipients will not be able to get public benefits. Anyone can file an application for humanitarian parole by filing Form I-131. Most applications are rejected.

Parole is a temporary stay in the U.S., and does not lead to permanent residency. After entering the U.S., a parolee can apply for another immigration status, including for asylum. If the application for another immigration status is not successful, the parolee may be required to leave the U.S.

More information about humanitarian parole can be found [here](#).

Other Resources

U.S. Citizen and LPR Family Members in Afghanistan

The U.S. Embassy in Kabul is collecting information from U.S. Citizens and LPRs who may need assistance returning to the United States. The evacuation request form can be found [here](#). Spouses and minor children of U.S. citizens in Afghanistan who are awaiting immigrant visas should also complete this form if they wish to depart.

Congressional Support for Pending Immigration Applications

Across the country, members of Congress maintain staff in their home state or district who are available to help constituents work through any challenges they may experience with a federal agency, including immigration matters. These staffers are trained to provide emergency response as needed and have access to unique contacts within federal agencies. This means they can bypass the general public contact information in order to obtain rapid responses on questions regarding immigration cases.

Individuals wishing to request assistance with a pending immigration case for family in Afghanistan, or who are concerned about the safety of a relative in Afghanistan can contact their local Constituent Services staff to request assistance, such as confirming the case status and expediting processing. Constituents can find their member of Congress by entering their zip code [here](#).