



WHAT TO KNOW AND HOW TO HELP AFGHAN REFUGEES

Across the world, at U.S. embassies, consulates and beyond, the United States relies on support from foreign nationals to fill critical support roles that help advance U.S. interests. This is also true where U.S. troops are stationed in times of war.

Afghan men and women have worked alongside the U.S. government in Afghanistan since 2001. They have served as translators, logisticians, interpreters, clerks, cultural advisors and security guards. Through their service they saved American lives.

Now, as the United States withdraws from Afghanistan, [attacks from the Taliban on Afghan nationals who supported the U.S. mission have increased](#), and [violence against Afghan women and children is at an all-time high](#).

Other Afghans are at risk, too. Journalists, women's rights advocates, human rights defenders, nongovernmental organization staff, religious and ethnic minorities, LGBTQ+ people, and families just trying to live their lives are fleeing their homes because of the Taliban.

We gave these Afghans our word that we would protect them. With their own country no longer safe for them and their families, it's time to keep our promise by bringing them home to the United States.

How are we getting Afghan refugees to safety?

Over a decade ago Congress passed the Afghan Allies Protection Act of 2009, which offers these men and women a pathway to securing Special Immigrant Visas (SIVs). These visas allowed our allies to resettle in the United States, but there were limited amounts and the application process often took years. Sadly, because of delays and lots of bureaucracy, many lost their lives waiting. While the program still exists and should be used today, more needs to be done.

On August 2 of this year, the State Department announced a [Priority 2 \(P-2\) designation](#) for certain Afghan refugees and their families to access the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP). This type of direct access program is designated for groups of special humanitarian concern to the United States in need of protection and resettlement. Again, this is a good start, but time is not on our side if we want to keep our promise to our allies.

What should the United States be doing?

As the U.S. withdraws from Afghanistan, the United States needs to expand access to the refugee admissions program. This access should

be available to, at minimum, U.S. government employees and their families, U.S. government employees not covered by the Afghan SIV program, and other at-risk populations such as activists, journalists, religious and ethnic minorities, and humanitarian workers.

But as resettlement and the applying for visas can take time—something that is very much in short supply—it is especially important that the administration simultaneously and urgently evacuate all Afghan refugees, and their loved ones, to a U.S. territory, such as Guam. There they can be safe, secure and far from the reaches of the Taliban as they wait for resettlement in the United States.

Importantly, despite an arbitrary withdrawal deadline, the Biden administration must ensure the urgent evacuation of Afghans in danger for as long as it takes to get people to safety.

How can I help?

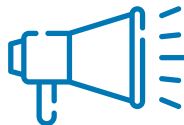
When they ultimately arrive in the United States, our allies will begin building a future for themselves and their families. Church World Service has sent staff to the joint operation on military bases to aid in the arrival and processing of Afghan refugees. CWS resettlement offices and affiliates will also continue to welcome these Afghan families and individuals in the United States, providing housing, employment and other social services so that they can thrive in their new communities. But we need your help.

Volunteers are vital for helping refugees rebuild their lives in the United States. Whether by tutoring our new neighbors in English, showing them where the local supermarket or post office is, or by helping them understand the customs and tradition of the community, your time can go a long way towards them feeling at home.



Community sponsorship

Fill out the [“Sponsor a family arriving to your community”](#) form to let your local office know how you can support.



Advocate

Use [CWS action alerts](#) to urge the administration to expand refugee protections for Afghans fleeing violence and persecution. Read our alerts and connect with your member of Congress to urge them to act.



Housing

We are in need of housing for newly arriving Afghan SIVs. If you are a landlord and are willing to rent to one of our newly arriving families please fill out the [“Sponsor a family arriving to your community”](#) form to let your local office know and check off that you are a landlord.



Donate

Give financially to assist Afghan SIVs as they resettle to their new communities. [Please make financial gifts here.](#)



Subscribe

For monthly action alerts, updates on Afghan SIVs, refugees, and migrants subscribe to our monthly [Immigration and Refugee Community Engagement Newsletter](#).

For more information on CWS efforts to welcome Afghan refugees, visit our [Protecting Afghan Refugees at Risk](#) page or [our FAQ document about Afghan refugees](#).

