

U.S. Pathways for Afghan Nationals



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The information below is for general information purposes only and does not serve as legal advice. Additionally, the current situation in Afghanistan, including the ongoing evacuation there, and the resettlement of Afghans in the United States are constantly evolving, so this information may not reflect all recent developments.

Special Immigrant Visa (SIV)

In the U.S. immigration system, a special immigrant is someone who qualifies for permanent residence (a green card) through one of several programs. The U.S. Congress has created a special immigrant visa program for Afghans who assisted the U.S. government in Afghanistan since 2001, along with their families, subject to certain requirements. Learn more about this pathway [here](#).

U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP)

There are three main pathways (priorities) to resettle in the United States as a refugee: Priority 1 (P-1); Priority 2 (P-2); and Priority 3 (P-3). This is known as the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program. In addition, some family members may be able to join their family already resettled in the United States through USRAP.

- **P-1 Individual Referrals:** P-1 referrals are cases referred directly by a U.S. embassy, UNHCR (the UN Refugee Agency), or a designated non-governmental organization (NGO) to USRAP based on an individual's circumstances and apparent need for resettlement. Contact information is available on UNHCR's [website](#).
- **P-2 Group Designations:** On August 2, the U.S. Department of State [announced](#) a P-2 designation granting USRAP access for certain Afghan nationals and their eligible family members (spouse and children of any age). Afghans eligible for the P-2 program include those who work/worked for the U.S. government but may not qualify for a SIV because they do not have qualifying employment, those who work/worked on U.S. government-funded programs or projects, and those who worked for U.S.-based NGOs and media organizations. Learn more about this pathway [here](#).
- **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 became a U.S. citizens. The P-3 program has also been expanded to include immediate family of Afghan SIV recipients in the United States. The P-3 program is accessed by submitting an Affidavit of Relationship (AOR) through a U.S. refugee resettlement agency. A map of all local resettlement agencies is available [here](#).
- **Follow-to-Join Family Reunification Petitions (Form I-730):** 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, known as "derivatives". Within two years of admission, the U.S.-based refugee may file a Form I-730 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 can access the USRAP and associated refugee resettlement benefits. Learn more about this pathway [here](#).

Family Reunification (Form I-130)

U.S. citizens and LPRs (also known as green card holders) can petition for certain family members to join them in the United States using a Form I-130. Citizens can petition for their spouse and children (married or unmarried of any age). If the petitioner (the family member in the United States filing the I-130) is at least 21-years-old, they can also apply for their siblings and parents. LPRs can file for their spouse and unmarried children of any age. Learn more about this pathway [here](#).

Humanitarian or Significant Public Benefit Parole

In the U.S. immigration system, parole is a mechanism that allows the recipient to enter and stay in the United States temporarily, based on humanitarian or significant public benefit reasons, subject to various conditions. During this time, parolees can apply for a longer-term solution. Under current law, parolees can apply for work authorization, but they do not have access to resettlement services or other benefits unless granted separate relief (such as asylum). Most of the Afghans currently being evacuated to the United States without SIVs will enter the country with some form of parole. Learn more about this pathway [here](#).

Asylum

A person can seek asylum in the United States if they meet the definition of a refugee and are already inside the country or at a U.S. port of entry. With certain limitations, asylum seekers can seek work authorization while waiting for a final decision in their case. Once they have been approved for asylum, they can receive services from a local resettlement agency. As with refugees, a person 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/asylee status. Please see the point above on “Follow-to-Join Family Reunification Petitions”. Learn more about this pathway [here](#).

Legal Assistance

The [Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc. \(CLINIC\)](#), maintains a [directory of affiliates](#) across the United States that serve migrants and refugees in need of legal assistance.

Evacuation Information

The U.S. Department of State has created a website for the evacuation in Afghanistan, available [here](#), as well as a centralized resources page with information for U.S. citizens, LPRs, and Afghan nationals, available [here](#).

