Talking Points and Resources on Afghans Relocated to the U.S.
Updated: September 7, 2021

- The U.S. government is requiring thorough security screenings of all Afghans bound for the U.S. who aren’t U.S. citizens or legal permanent residents (LPRs) prior to their arrival in the U.S. This is occurring at intermediary locations outside of the U.S. and again when they arrive at a port of entry.

- Generally, Afghans being relocated to the U.S. who were part of the U.S. military-led evacuation have been vetted/screened at least three times: (1) upon entering the airport in Kabul/before boarding an evacuation flight; (2) at intermediary points in third countries; and (3) by U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) upon entering the U.S. at ports of entry. Additionally, those who worked for the U.S. government, U.S. allies, and/or U.S.-based NGOs in some capacity while in Afghanistan were typically vetted for those roles also.

- Afghans relocated by the U.S. government have the opportunity to go to one of multiple U.S. government facilities (which of those someone goes to is determined by the government), though this varies, depending on the status of each individual (e.g., legal permanent residents would travel home and SIV holders on to their final destinations). The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) and other NGOs are assisting with various services and operational needs at these facilities.

- These Afghans are offered transportation to one of the U.S. government facilities, where they are expected to receive housing and meals at no cost, receive required medical vaccinations and screenings, and will be given an opportunity to complete work authorization paperwork. They are also expected to be enrolled in temporary medical insurance and receive medical care, if needed. This processing will satisfy the medical requirements detailed below.

- Under U.S. immigration law, parolees have freedom of movement, so they are not required to go to the U.S. government facilities or remain there. If they choose not to go to the facilities or leave before receiving the abovementioned services, they generally forego those services.

Populations

- In this larger population, there are a number of groups facing different circumstances, including a small number of full Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) holders. Members of this group are assured resettlement in the U.S. and can go to their final resettlement locations and access full refugee benefits.

- A second group is those completing their SIV processing who receive parole to enter the U.S. This group will have the opportunity to go to U.S. government facilities for further processing, including adjustment of status as an SI/SQ (special immigrant) parolee, before being sent to their final destinations, where they can access full refugee benefits through local resettlement agencies. Those who opt out of this processing will also lose the opportunity to adjust their immigration status to SI/SQ parolee and will not be eligible for refugee resettlement benefits, including public benefits. Instead, they will be processed and have access to the same benefits as the third group listed below.

- The third group is those without SIV applications (or who didn’t get far enough in the SIV process) who were granted parole to enter the country because of their vulnerability—e.g., they meet the requirements of the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) or the Afghan SIV program. They will then have the opportunity to go to U.S. government facilities for further processing. This group will generally be expected to apply for asylum, but that process can take years, especially with the
current backlog of cases. There is the potential for action by Congress that would provide a special status for this population, similar to what was done for Cuban nationals through the Cuban Adjustment Act. This group will be eligible to apply for work authorization, but this group is not currently eligible for resettlement services provided to refugees under current law. Asylum seekers are not eligible for such services until/unless they are granted asylum, so Congress would likely have to act to ensure members of this group can receive the same services offered to refugees resettled in the U.S. through USRAP. Otherwise, resettlement agencies and other entities are supporting the resettlement of these Afghans through the new short-term Afghan Placement and Assistance program funded by the Department of State that provides resettlement benefits for up to 90 days, private donations, volunteers, and already limited resources.

- There are many mixed-status families included among these groups.

**Parole and Related Requirements (Including COVID-19 Vaccination)**

- Generally, receiving advanced parole into the U.S. requires an application from the prospective parolee, but many Afghans currently being resettled in the U.S. are instead receiving parole from CBP at ports of entry (i.e., the airport).

- Parole is being granted for two years (in most cases) for the two populations described above receiving parole and is pursuant to 8 U.S.C. §1182(d)(5). Parole is contingent upon compliance with certain conditions, including:
  - Within seven days of being granted parole, parolees must:
    - Get vaccinated for MMR and polio and receive one dose of the COVID vaccine, absent proof of prior vaccination;
    - Undergo tuberculosis testing and take appropriate isolation and treatment measures if the tuberculosis test is positive; and
  - Provide every change in address to USCIS as soon as possible and no later than 30 days after each change of address ([www.uscis.gov/addresschange](http://www.uscis.gov/addresschange)).
  - Comply with all public health directives, comply with requests for additional information from the Department of Homeland Security and federal law enforcement, and comply with local, State and Federal laws and ordinances.
  - Additional conditions on a case-by-case basis.

- Failure to comply with these conditions could lead to termination of parole, detention, and removal from the U.S. and could interfere with one’s ability to become an LPR and/or obtain other benefits and immigration relief to which one might otherwise be entitled.

**Additional Resources**

- President Biden has officially designated the U.S. Department of Homeland security (DHS) as the lead federal agency to vacillate the entry of Afghans into the United States. The related effort is being referred to by the U.S. government as “Operation Allies Welcome”. DHS has created a page on its website for Operation Allies Welcome, available at [www.dhs.gov/allieswelcome](http://www.dhs.gov/allieswelcome), and a fact sheet is available [here](http://www.dhs.gov/allieswelcome).
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) has created a website with information for Afghan nationals who are currently outside of the U.S. and seeking parole: [https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/humanitarian-parole/information-for-afghan-nationals-on-parole-into-the-united-states](https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/humanitarian-parole/information-for-afghan-nationals-on-parole-into-the-united-states).

USCIS also has a page with more general information about humanitarian/significant public benefit parole and the normal process: [https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/humanitarian-or-significant-public-benefit-parole-for-individuals-outside-the-united-states](https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/humanitarian-or-significant-public-benefit-parole-for-individuals-outside-the-united-states).

The Secretary of State has also put a call out to mobilize community support: [https://www.state.gov/office-of-global-partnerships-partnerships-for-afghan-response/](https://www.state.gov/office-of-global-partnerships-partnerships-for-afghan-response/).

The USCCB has created an Afghanistan resource page on its Justice for Immigrants website: [https://justiceforimmigrants.org/afghanistan/](https://justiceforimmigrants.org/afghanistan/).

A helpful explainer on humanitarian parole and the Afghan evacuation, which touches upon the vetting procedures involved, is also available from the National Immigration Forum here: [https://immigrationforum.org/article/explainer-humanitarian-parole-and-the-afghan-evacuation/](https://immigrationforum.org/article/explainer-humanitarian-parole-and-the-afghan-evacuation/).

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*Unless a child under the age of 18 or one of several other conditions apply.

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