



Welcoming Afghans To King County

11/2021

Refugee Resettlement in WA:



JEWISH **FAMILY** SERVICE



Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) Program

- The SIV Program was launched in 2009
- Visas granted to Afghan & Iraqi nationals that worked for the U.S. Government for more than 2 years, and the application process is lengthy
- SIV holders receive the same benefits as refugees
- 4,166 SIV arrivals were welcomed in WA during 2010-2020, and most arrivals settled in King County



“Humanitarian Parolees”

- People from Afghanistan that were evacuated through Operation Allies Welcome are being processed at 8 military bases “Safe Havens” in the USA
- They will be welcomed in the U.S. as SIV, SIV parolee, or humanitarian parolee
- As of Oct. 1st, 2021, all Afghan evacuees are eligible to receive resettlement services and benefits, to the same extent as refugees



“Humanitarian Parolees”

- Washington state is expected to be in the top five states to welcome Afghan arrivals
- 95,000 people have arrived in the USA, and 75,000 are still on military bases
- Since July 29, Washington has already welcomed over 855 people from Afghanistan
- Our office would normally resettle 150-200 people in one year: we have already received over 200 people since August





Resettlement Services

- Airport reception
 - Cultural orientation
 - Furnished apartment
 - Food and clothing
 - Enrollment in DSHS cash and food assistance
 - Health screening and services
 - School enrollment
 - English classes (ESL)
 - Employment search assistance
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Support throughout King County

- ❖ MAPS Muslim Community Resource Center - <https://mapsredmond.org/mcrc/>
- ❖ Refugee Women's Alliance - <https://www.rewa.org/>
- ❖ Afghan Health Initiative - <https://afghanhealth.org/>
- ❖ Undaunted Women - <https://www.undauntedwomen.org/>
- ❖ Welcome Home Refugees FB group (mainly household item donations) - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/45706467449641>
- ❖ Turkcha - <https://www.turkcha.org>

Challenges

- ❖ Resettlement Agencies are overwhelmed and beyond capacity

Number of refugee admissions in the U.S. from the fiscal year of 1990 to the fiscal year of 2021



Sources

US Department of State; RPC
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Additional Information:

United States; US Department of State; RPC; fiscal years 1990 to 2021

Challenges

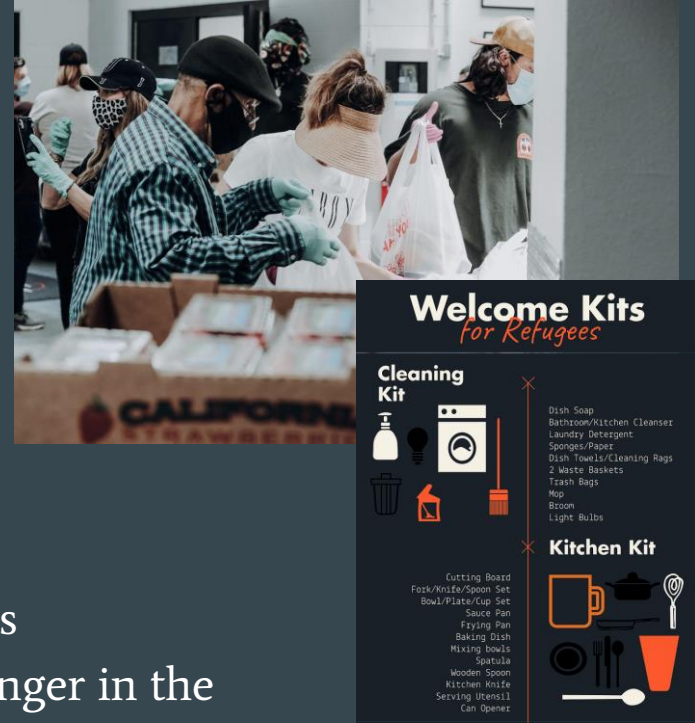
- ❖ Resettlement Agencies are overwhelmed and beyond capacity
- ❖ Affordable housing
- ❖ Delays/errors in receiving Social Security card
- ❖ Delays in starting work
- ❖ English level
- ❖ Technology
- ❖ Trauma
- ❖ Transportation

Looking forward: what do we expect?

- ❖ More arrivals - these Afghan arrivals do not impact the 125,000 refugee cap for this year.
- ❖ Immigration Legal Support: We also anticipate a need to assist humanitarian parolees in applying for asylum
- ❖ Drop-off in volunteers and donations

Ways to Help

- ❖ Donate funds
 - ❖ Put together Welcome Kits or Kitchen Kits
 - ❖ Donate items through Amazon wishlist or in person
 - ❖ Gift cards
 - ❖ Volunteer
 - ❖ Holiday gift drive
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- ❖ Collaborate as a community to overcome barriers
 - ❖ Look for ways to help when Afghanistan is no longer in the news



Resources and Links:

Presenter:

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[DSHS - Welcoming Afghans to Washington State](#)

[DHS - Operation Allies Welcome Factsheet](#)

<https://www.dioceseroseattle.org/>