

Update on Afghan Allies Resettlement

Through the Afghan Placement and Assistance program (APA), over 63,000 vulnerable Afghans who worked alongside the U.S. military or with other U.S. governmental or affiliated organizations have been resettled into communities across the country. The APA program provides initial resettlement services including housing, household goods and furnishings, clothing, financial assistance, and linkages to health care and education. Federal, nonprofit, and private stakeholders are collaborating on a national scale to increase local communities' ability to welcome Afghan arrivals into their new homes.

Tennessee has served approximately six hundred Afghans through the APA program with the support of refugee resettlement agencies, faith communities, donors, housing providers, mainstream service providers and benefit dispensing agencies, volunteers, city and county governments, and countless others.

[For more information about the local and national efforts involved in providing safety to this vulnerable population, visit our website.](#)

Volunteer Guide

Interested in volunteering your time, skills, or resources to welcome refugees as our neighbors in Tennessee? Check out our new resource to connect new volunteers with the local resettlement network!

VOLUNTEER GUIDE

What to know about engaging with refugees

- 1 Partner with a refugee resettlement agency or trusted refugee-serving group**
Resettlement agencies are your best point of contact to get involved in welcoming refugees. These agencies are the experts in resettlement in your community and are contracted to provide required services. By partnering with them, you will be joining a coordinated network of services with the best access to information and ability to provide education and support in your work.
- 2 Know how to protect the confidentiality and safety of refugees**
Refugees arrive in the U.S. vulnerable to miscommunication and misuse of their information. It is extremely important that you are educated about how to protect any sensitive information that you may learn about a refugee and their family. Resettlement agencies are equipped to provide volunteer training and request background checks to protect the interests of refugees.
- 3 Take precautions to protect the health of yourself and clients**
When volunteering, please follow state, local, and CDC guidelines for mask usage when in close contact with others. As a condition of receiving resettlement services, Afghans complete vaccinations for COVID-19 and other age-appropriate vaccinations. Additionally, they receive medical exams and health screenings during initial resettlement services.
- 4 Use interpreters**
Unless you can communicate proficiently in the refugee's preferred language, the services of an interpreter is advised. The primary goal of resettlement services for refugees is to become self-sufficient and to successfully integrate in their community. Offering help without engaging them in the process denies refugees the ability to self-advocate and self-determine how they start their life in their new home.
- 5 Be patient**
Resettlement agencies are busier than ever. Please be patient with them as they field the needs and requests of both refugees and volunteers. If you don't hear from them right away, it is not because those questions or concerns are insignificant. Integration is not the work of weeks or months, but years. By coordinating efforts, now, we can build a network of support to respond to needs in Tennessee's resettlement network today towards the long-term stability and comfort of those rebuilding life in their new home.
- 6 If you have concerns...**
If you are concerned that a refugee client is not receiving services for which they are eligible, it is important to refer to the resettlement agency's grievance policy. These policies lay out clear terms of accountability based on the rights and the responsibilities of clients and ensure that concerns are responded to and documented. A client's well-being and safety is always the primary priority.

Tennessee Office
for Refugees

2021

Year in Review

Have you seen our annual Year in Review yet? Get the data on the populations we served in Tennessee last year, read about the distinguishing moments of the year, and look forward with us to the possibilities in store for 2022.

[Read more: 2021 in Review](#)

A Look Inside the Youth Mentoring Program

You've heard us talk a lot about the new Refugee Youth Mentoring Program this past year. Last year's State Refugee Youth Mentoring Program Coordinator reflects on his experience of guiding the first cohort of AmeriCorps VISTA members as they built this program from the ground up. Click the link below to read more.

[Read more: A Look Inside the Youth Mentoring Program](#)



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