

Sponsors for Afghan families

FAQs

- **What is the ask?** For people of goodwill in St. Louis to come forward and provide basic financial documentation as a surety to immigration authorities who can then authorize entry into the United States for Afghani families fleeing the Taliban. Each family has connections to other family members in the St. Louis area with whom they will live and from whom they will receive actual monetary support. We also ask for your patience and understanding as this is an ever-evolving situation.
- **Why is this important?** Without a US sponsor, many of these individuals will not have a chance to come to the US. This process is called Humanitarian Parole and is another avenue for people fleeing conditions in Afghanistan to seek protection and safety in the US. Some people are also fleeing the country and seeking refugee status from a third country and seek to be processed as refugees. Resettlement agencies, like the International Institute in St. Louis, receive federal funding to support those individuals and/or families for a limited period of time. Individuals/families we are asking you to sponsor are processed through a totally separate channel and are considered “immigrants” and not “refugees” under US law, even though they are fleeing the same conditions.
- **What documents are needed?**
 - Proof of U.S. Citizenship (birth certificate or passport) or Permanent Residence (green card).
 - 2020 federal tax return
 - Proof of current income
 - Signature on form I-134
- **What if I file taxes jointly?** It would be ideal if your spouse was able to also sign an I-134
- **Do I have to include asset info?** The more financial resources documented on a form I-134, the stronger the chances of approval. However, it is not required to disclose any particular assets nor every asset you hold.
- **What will happen to my financial info/social security number?** If we file a request for humanitarian parole, those documents will be receipted and kept by the government. Anything copied or left with our office will be safeguarded and disposed of under strict confidentiality.
- **Is this a contract?** Yes. By signing form I-134, a sponsor makes a promise to the U.S. government to support the beneficiary of the petition for humanitarian parole. On the

form, we can specify that the sponsor's involvement will be as "backup" to other family members of the refugees. In practice, co-sponsors are not sued by the US government for noncompliance with any sort of regularity. In short, you should feel morally comfortable and on board with providing financial support, but unless you choose to do so, we do not foresee this being necessary.

- **For how long does this obligation last?** Humanitarian Parole is generally issued for one year. The situation in Afghanistan is volatile and affects so many people, so it is impossible to be sure parole will be for one year, but that is what experience tells us. Each of them will seek other lawful status once they are here (family-based green cards or asylum, for example).
- **When do you need a commitment and documentation from us?** ASAP. We have several families already preparing and others who are attempting to be allowed on to emergency evacuation flights but who may try this process if that is unsuccessful.
- **Will I know who I'm sponsoring?** Absolutely. Right now, we are rushing to make sure we're covering all of the bases. Once we know who is willing to sponsor and what the most urgent needs are, we will assign individuals/families to each sponsor given their income/resources. We will provide you with a copy of the finalized form (with beneficiary info) and can keep you posted about progress as our capacity permits. Depending on the circumstances, there may be a possibility to create community together, which we would certainly support and facilitate. However, in the short term, the sponsor and the beneficiary will only "know" each other by name on the paperwork. It is possible that a sponsor may never have direct contact with the beneficiary, which might be the best way to honor each person's dignity - including yours.

<https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/humanitarian-or-significant-public-benefit-parole-for-individuals-outside-the-united-states>