

Operation Allies Welcome Minnesota

Final Update (2-9-22)



Hundreds of Afghans are arriving this month. Read more [here](#).

Last September, The Minnesota Council on Foundations partnered with the Minnesota Department of Human Services and GiveMN to launch Operation Allies Welcome Minnesota. In the subsequent five months, our joint effort has raised \$1.4 million in private contributions. This support helped state officials proactively secure two hotels to provide transitional housing to new arrivals – a resource that has now welcomed over 800 Afghan newcomers.

The expanded resettlement capacity powered by generous foundation and individual gifts is now being sustained by new federal funding. This means Operation Allies Welcome Minnesota can sunset. As we wind down this exceptional partnership, please know that your generosity made all the difference for hundreds of stranded Afghan evacuees. With transitional housing secured, Minnesota doubled its initial resettlement capacity from 800 to 1,500 individuals.

Here's a note of thanks from Jodi Harpstead, the Commissioner of the Department of Human Services:

The MN Council on Foundations support was just what was needed at the critical beginning moments of Operation Allies Welcome to get it off the ground...On calls across many states, federal officials pointed to the way Minnesota has rallied the private sector to respond to federal efforts and encouraged other states to follow suit.

The federal government has since stepped in with additional federal support to get families off of military bases and into communities across the country. This in turn has allowed us to increase the number of arrivals Minnesota believes we can receive.

Your support made this happen! Grateful for the catalyst that MCF has become with your leadership.

Even as Operation Allies Welcome comes to a close, there are still opportunities to support the ongoing needs of new arrivals. Read on for an updated list of suggestions.

By the Numbers: Arrivals, Demographics, Health and Housing

- **976 Afghan evacuees have arrived in Minnesota** as of 1/31/22. The pace of arrivals is increasing. By the end of February, Minnesota is expected to receive at least 400 additional Afghan newcomers.
- **514** (53%) of arrivals to date are children.
- **Only 7% of these new arrivals are over the age of 40.** Less than 2% are more than 50 years old.
- **72% have received health screenings since arriving in Minnesota.** Over half of those screened were referred on for additional specialty care. Dental care and mental health services are two most common referrals.
- **786 individuals - 81% of all recent Afghan newcomers - received transitional housing at a local hotel funded by your OAW donations.** While at the hotels, families also receive three meals a day and begin working with resettlement case managers to transition to permanent homes.
- **Transitional hotel housing continues to work well!** Families stay an average of 16 days before moving to permanent homes.
- **Families are finding permanent housing throughout the Twin Cities.** Of those who have moved into homes and apartments, 59% live in Hennepin County, 24% live in Ramsey County, 7.4% live in Anoka County and 5.1% live in Olmstead County. Here are a some of the most popular new “hometowns” for Afghan arrivals:

City	New Afghan Residents
Minneapolis	185
St. Paul	122
Bloomington	45
Richfield	35
Rochester	28
Anoka	16
Maple Grove	16

- **Over \$1.4 million raised so far.** All funds have now been disbursed to pay for hotel costs and immigration legal services.

Ongoing Needs

Federal funding is now available to help with many of the needs that OAW initially supported. But the Department of Human Services has identified a few ongoing concerns that could be alleviated by private funding.

Rental Assistance

Families use federal resettlement funds to pay for their first few months of rent. Once these funds are used up, they may need additional help until their earnings from work catch up to the high cost of housing. DHS is partnering with ZACAH, a local Islamic charity, to distribute rental assistance funds for

new Afghan arrivals. **Please consider making a contribution to [ZACAH](#) to help keep new arrivals in their homes.**

Immigration Legal Aid

Afghan evacuees face a complicated path to receiving their citizenship. Each individual or family will need careful individual help to file successful applications for green cards and eventually citizenship. Nonprofit legal service providers are the go-to legal help for many families. [Advocates for Human Rights](#) has served as the lead legal services provider thus far. **Additional donations to the Advocates are much appreciated.**

Partners in OAW Coordinated Services

In addition to the two mentioned above, these organizations continue to provide ongoing supports for new Afghan arrivals:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Alight (apartment set-up)○ Bridging (furnishings)○ CAPI (case management)○ Salvation Army (volunteer coordination)○ SEWA-AIFW (transition to perm. Housing)○ Somali Community Resettlement Services (transition to perm. Housing) | <p>Local Resettlement Organizations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Arrive Ministries▪ Minnesota Council of Churches▪ International Institute of Minnesota▪ Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota▪ Catholic Charities of Southern Minneso |
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News Coverage

- Star Tribune (2/9/22): [State to resettle 700 Afghan arrivals in February](#)
- Sahan Journal (1/20/22): [Alight and other organizations prepare for Afghan arrivals](#)
- SW News Media (2/4/22): [Organizations prepare for large number of arrivals in February](#)
- Star Tribune (1/6/22): [New AmeriCorps program focused on helping Afghan arrivals](#)

Learn More

- [Council on Asian Pacific Minnesotans](#)
- [Minnesota Department of Human Services](#)
- [U.S. Department of Homeland Security](#)