

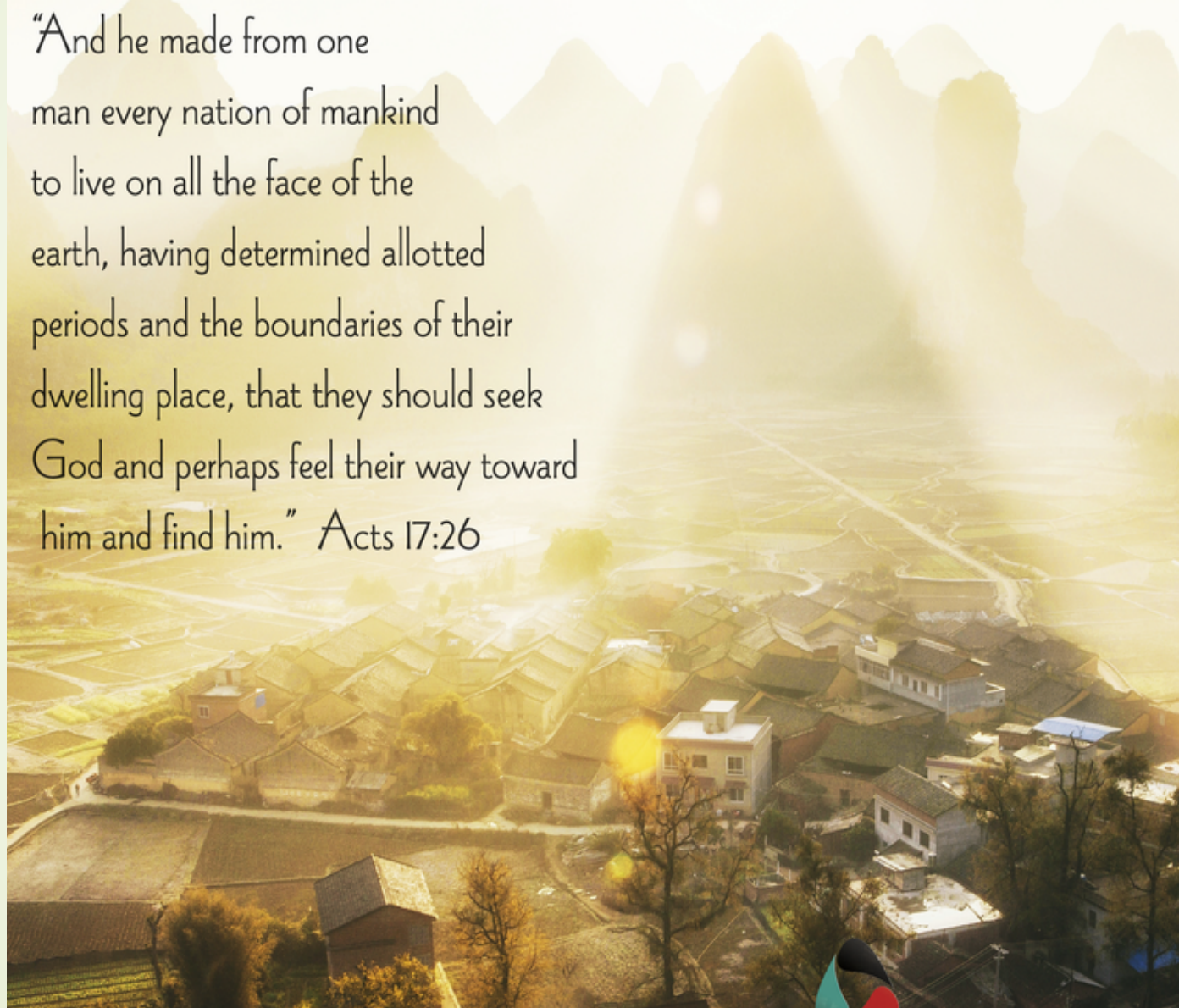
The Big Picture: Afghan Refugees Arriving



Presented by Mission to North America (MNA) Refugee and Immigrant Ministry
Director, Pat Hatch and Mission to the World's Kay Burklin (MTW)
<https://pcamna.org/ministry/refugee-and-immigrant-ministry/>

What does Scripture say?

“And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, that they should seek God and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him.” Acts 17:26



How are refugees different from other immigrants?



- Forced to flee their country because of persecution, war or violence. Cannot safely return home.
- Have well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group.



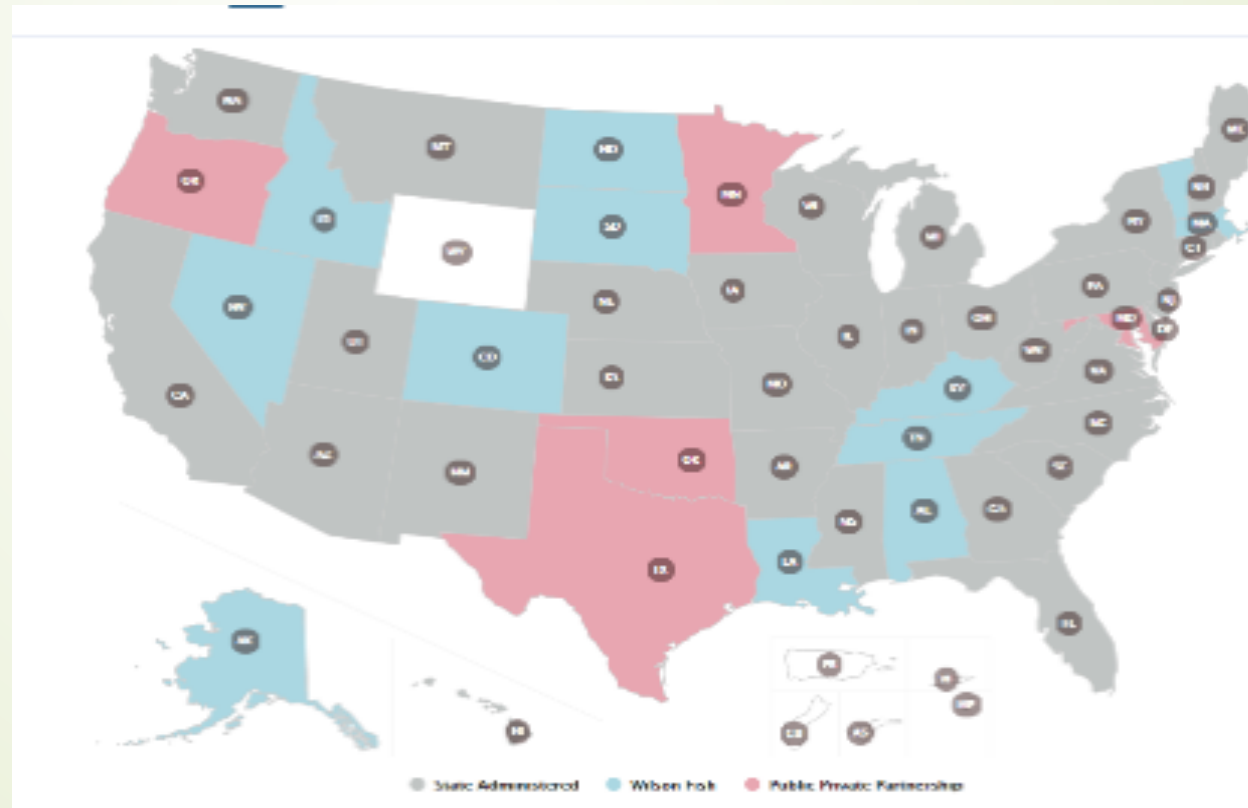
How does the US resettle refugees?

US Dept of State contracts with nine national non-profit voluntary agencies (VOLAGS) to resettle refugees.

- Church World Service (CWS)
- Episcopal Migration Ministries (EMM)
- Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS)
- Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services (LIRS)
- US Catholic Conference of Bishops (USCCB)
- **World Relief (WR) (affiliated with NAE)**
- Ethiopian Community Development Council (ECDC)
- The International Rescue Committee (the IRC)
- The US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI)

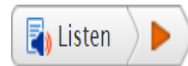


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For example, for South Carolina:

State of South Carolina - Programs and Services by City



Publication Date: November 24, 2015

Resource or Service Questions?

Contact the agencies below directly, or get answers from the State Refugee and Health Coordinators, listed under [Key Contacts](#).

Local Area Affiliates

CITY	LOCAL AFFILIATE	TELEPHONE
Columbia	Lutheran Services Carolinas	803.750.9917
Spartanburg	World Relief Spartanburg	864.336.3166

Last Reviewed Date: April 17, 2021



How do these refugee agencies receive most of their funding?

- On a per-refugee **REIMBURSEMENT** basis

Why does this matter?

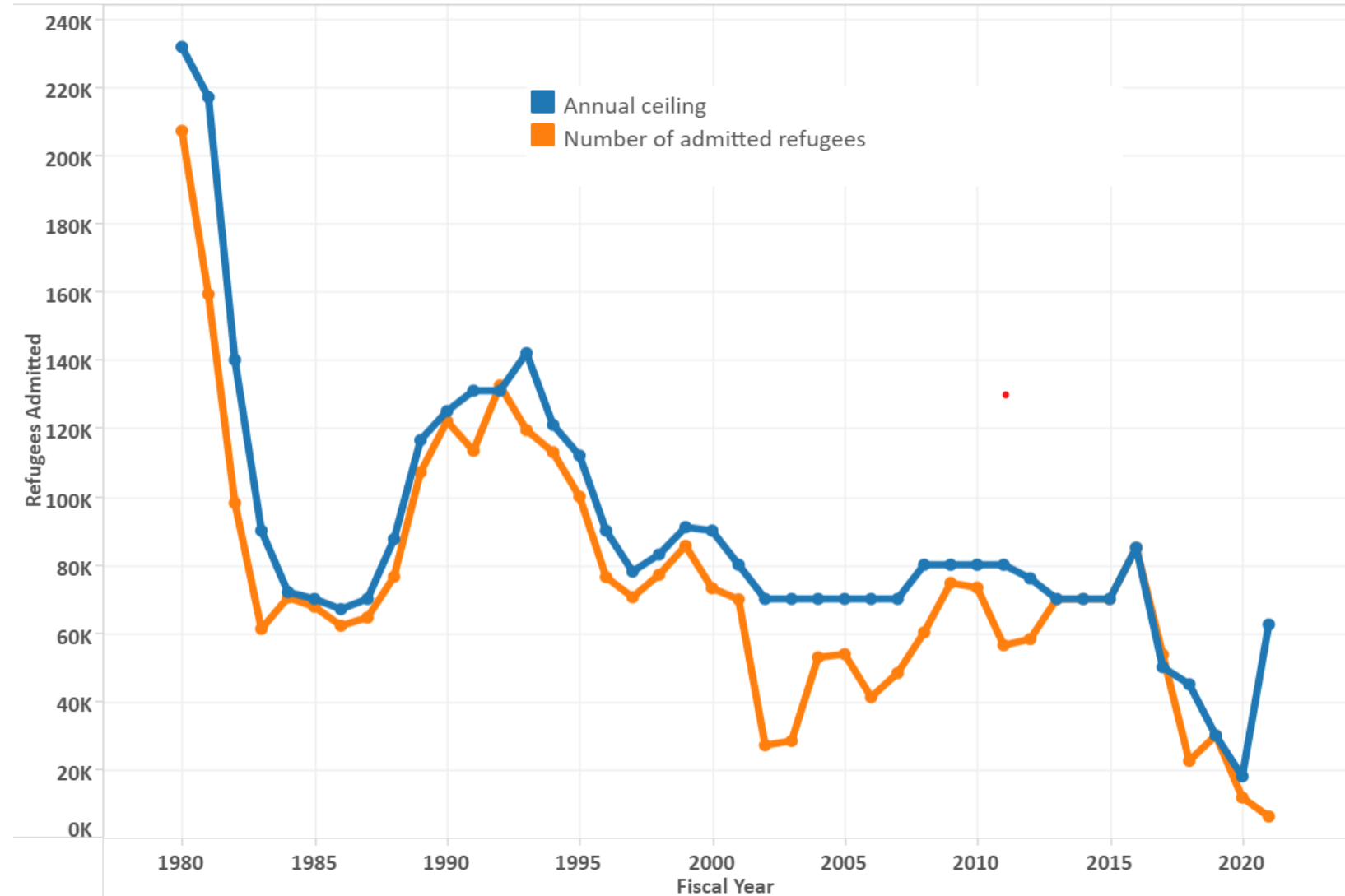
- The capacity and staffing of the agency is based on the past year's #s of refugees resettled rather than the year ahead

How does this affect current situation?

- Because refugee arrivals last year were a historic low, staffing this year has been very low. More than 100 local offices closed; others are at lowest staffing level in years

Refugee ceilings (blue) and Arrivals (orange)

U.S. Refugee Admissions & Refugee Resettlement Ceilings, FY 1980-2021 (thru July 2021)






What essential services do local resettlement agencies usually provide?

- **Services designed to provide stability until first job**
- Rent and furnish **housing**; sec dep, 1st mo rent
- Provide **orientation** to life in US and local area
- Assist in **obtaining key documents** (Soc. Sec. card, Employment Auth Doc, possibly state ID)
- **Link with key services**, i.e. Temp Cash Assist/TANF, Medical Assistance, Food Stamps/SNAP
- Arrange for **medical appointments, vaccination**
- Enroll children in **school**, adults in **ESL**

These orgs and the state refugee offices are gvt's main conduit for crucial start; **no plan B**



What other assistance to refugees does the government provide that builds on foundation of resettlement agency services?

- The Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) in HHS, provides funding through State Refugee Offices for **short-term transitional cash assistance** and **medical assistance** for refugees, usually administered through Social Services offices; it also offers the Match Grant program that can benefit many
- States also receive funds that can be used for refugee **ESL** and **job counseling/placement**
- Competitive grants are awarded for a small number of other programs such as *mental health services*


➤ What is DIFFERENT with the sudden arrival of 30,000-50,000 Afghan allies?

- Usually, refugees flee first to a neighboring country where they apply and may wait years to be interviewed; those who are approved come to US in controlled flow
- Due to the sudden fall of Kabul, thousands of Afghans were airlifted directly, in a matter of days







EFFECTS ON RESETTLEMENT AGENCIES

- Very little notice to rent and furnish housing
 - Instead of usual arrival of a few families a month, now may be sent 4 or 5 times as many each month, with fewer staff
 - Critical shortage of affordable housing near public transportation and jobs
 - Little time or funds to “staff up” to meet rapidly expanding need
- 

Most Afghans are being admitted as either:

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- 
- **Special Immig Visa (SIV)** – for those who assisted US troops or contractors for at least two years – Green card granted immediately here
OR
 - **SQ/SI Parolee** – SIV status not yet complete
OR
 - **Humanitarian Parolee (HP)** – other vulnerable persons not qualified for SIV; must apply for asylum to stay in US longer than 2 years
OR
 - **Refugee** – fled first to a nearby country; were interviewed and met refugee criteria

Initial contrast of SIV and HP eligibility

Benefit	Description	Refugees	SIVs	Parolees
Refugee Support Services	Employment services, English Language Classes, Transportation, Childcare	✓	✓	✗
Supplemental Security Income	Financial assistance for individuals	✓	✓	✗
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families	Financial assistance for families	✓	✓	✗
Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program	Food assistance for families	✓	✓	✗
Medicaid	Healthcare	✓	✓	✗
Refugee Cash Assistance	Financial assistance if ineligible for SSI/TANF	✓	✓	✗
Refugee Medical Assistance	Healthcare if ineligible for Medicaid	✓	✓	✗
Matching Grant Program	Case management, cash assistance	✓	✓	✗

Evolving difference in eligibility for benefits

	Refugees and SIVs	SQ/SI Parolees	All Other Parolees
Immigration status conferred	SIVs immediately receive a green card; refugees are eligible after one year. Both groups can apply for citizenship after five years.	Receive a green card if the SIV application is approved; could then apply for citizenship after five years.	No path to a green card unless they can establish another basis, such as qualifying for asylum.
Reception and Placement Services	Yes	Yes	Afghan Parolee Support Program is intended to be substantial equivalent.
ORR Social Services	Yes	Yes	No
ORR-funded Cash and Medical Assistance	Yes	Yes	No
Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP)	Yes	Yes	Only children are eligible.
Medicaid	Yes	Yes	Only for pregnant women and children and youth under 21 at state's option.
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI)	Yes	Yes	No
Child Care	Yes	Yes	Yes
Head Start; Early Head Start; Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program (MIECHV); Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Workforce services under <i>Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes for Title I services if individual is work authorized Yes for Title II services whether or not work authorized, unless restricted by state.



What does this mean on a practical level?

- ➡ Unless Congress acts to make humanitarian parolees eligible for refugee benefits and appropriates funds, they will qualify for NO cash or social service benefits after the first month or so.
- ➡ More than half of the Afghan arrivals would not qualify for crucial safety net benefits that would allow safety/stability while learning English and finding jobs.

Whether or not Congress acts, Christ's church needs to reach out in compassion

world relief

Our “neighbor” includes anyone who is in need, not just those who share our ethnicity, our religion, or our zip code.

From the book, *Seeking Refuge*
SeekingRefugeBook.com



Where are most of the refugees now?

Wisconsin at Volk Field & Fort McCoy

New Jersey at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst

New Mexico at Doña Ana Range / Holloman Air Force Base

New Mexico / Texas at Fort Bliss

Virginia at Quantico

Virginia at Fort Pickett

Indiana at Camp Atterbury

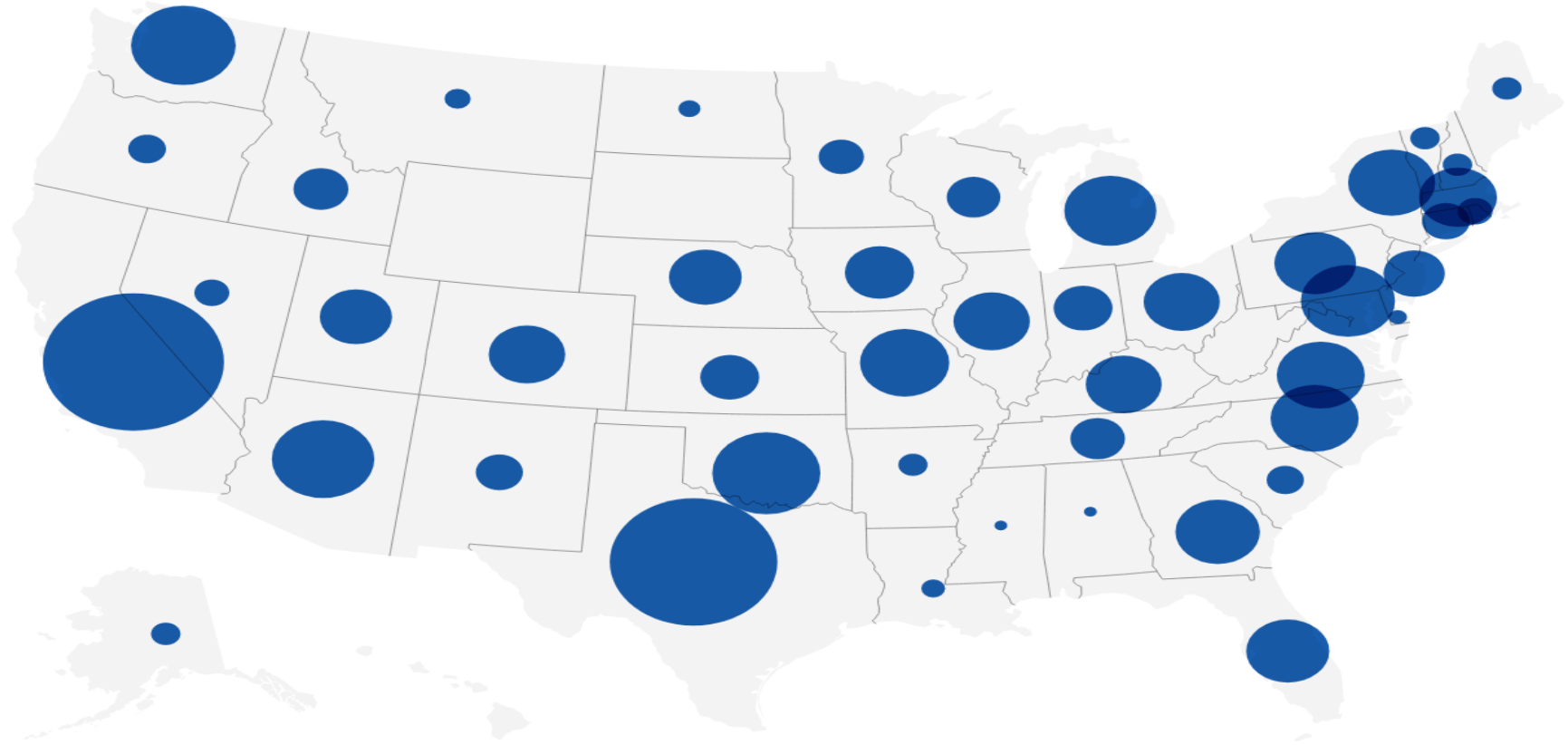
Where are they expected to resettle this year?

(from <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/afghan-refugees-resettled-by-state/> 9/21)

Largest dots = 5,200 (CA and TX) Smallest dots = 10 (AL and MI)

The states receiving Afghan refugees

The first resettlement phase is expected to include 37,000 Afghan evacuees.




Map: CBS News • Source: U.S government data




UNPRECEDENTED OPPORTUNITY FOR THE CHURCH TO DEMONSTRATE CHRIST'S LOVE TO THOSE WHO DON'T YET KNOW HIM

- Tens of thousands of persons from Unreached People Groups now within reach of our local churches
- At a time when resettlement agencies are understaffed and underresourced
- Will we come alongside these new neighbors in love as Scripture commands?
- Many may come to know Him if we persist in loving them in long-term authentic friendships



How can I and my church help these Afghan newcomers?

- ➡ PRAY
 - ➡ ADVOCATE
 - ➡ ACT
 - ➡ GIVE
 - ➡ PREPARE
- 



PRAY alone and with others

- For each arriving Afghan to be welcomed and befriended by Christians demonstrating the love of Christ, and “in for the long haul” not “one and done”
- For the Holy Spirit to make clear how you can respond with your time, skills, and gifts
- For the local resettlement agency staff
- For government decision makers, and local communities
- For the church of Christ to respond with God’s own compassion and purpose, starting with each of us, today
- For members of the Taliban to turn to Christ

ADVOCATE

- *“Speak out on behalf of the voiceless,
and for the rights of all who are vulnerable.” Prov.
31:8*
- The bi-partisan WELCOMED Act, HR 5168, would provide all arriving Afghans with access to crucial refugee benefits.
- Our elected representatives need to hear from those who support it or it may not have momentum to meet this URGENT need
- See “Equip Communities to Support Afghans” on the World Relief website for an easy way to indicate your support:
- <https://worldrelief.org/advocate/>
- Or, this equally easy tool from LIRS - [https://
www.votervoice.net/LIRS/campaigns/87977/respond](https://www.votervoice.net/LIRS/campaigns/87977/respond)



ACT

- Go to <https://welcome.us/> and consider signing up to be kept informed
 - Go to the website of your closest resettlement agency and use their “contact us” info to indicate specifically what you are willing to do
 - Find your closest resettlement agency by clicking on your state or a neighboring state at <https://acf.hhs.gov/orr> (scroll down for map)
 - Be patient. The resettlement agency may be overwhelmed with volunteers, and have only a single coordinator
- 

PREPARE

As you **pray** about this, you may want to:

- Take MNA's 12 hour **ESL training** by Zoom or in person: <https://pcamna.org/ministry/esl-ministries/> No expertise needed; just heart for immigrants
- Learn a few **phrases in Dari**, one of the key Afghan languages. One video tool: <https://tinyurl.com/n5sencs>
- Read a **book** about Afghanistan such as The Land of the Blue Burqas by Kate McCord
- Do a **small group Bible study** on refugees, such as A Better Country by Cindy Wu

HUMILITY, RESPECT, and an attitude of patient LEARNER
are best tools for cross-cultural ministry


GIVE

- **World Relief**, the 1 out of the 9 national refugee resettlement organizations that is associated with the National Association of Evangelicals.
- Consider a generous one-time gift or a monthly gift to 1 of their 16 local offices: <https://worldrelief.org/sacramento/for-clients/afghan-allies/>
- **MTW work among refugees in Clarkston, GA** <https://mtw.org/projects/96214>
- In your community, your **closest local refugee resettlement organization** from map at <https://acf.hhs.gov/orr>
- To a Christian organization serving refugees

SOME LOCAL CHRISTIAN ORGANIZATIONS SERVING REFUGEES WELL in VARIOUS CITIES

- In Baltimore: thesalaamcenter.com
- In Boise, ID: <https://glocalboise.org/>
- In Dallas, TX: <https://ftnro.org/>
- Also in Dallas, TX: <https://www.gatewayofgrace.org/>
- In Knoxville, TN: <https://bit.ly/3u3Pyv7>
- In Lincoln, NE: <https://www.juniperrefuge.org/>
- In Nashville, TN: <https://servantgroup.org/>
- In northern VA/DC: <https://oneheartdc.org/afghans/>
- In several cities: <https://globalgates.info/gateway-city/gateway-city-location-type/primary-locations/>

These organizations provide opportunities to develop long-term authentic relationships of trust and redemptive friendships with refugees. Support them! And let us know about others, please!



What can I do to help if there is no resettlement office near us?

- **PARTNER** with another church in an area that is receiving many refugees, to expand their capacity to serve
- **PRAY** for refugees and those resettling them, individually, or with a small group by “add caller” on your cell, or by Zoom, regularly
- **ADVOCATE** with elected officials for essential services for Afghan arrivals
- **GIVE** as generously as possible to World Relief or a local organization serving refugees



What is PCA Mission to North America (MNA) Refugee Ministry doing?

- Providing information and recommending resources to local churches and Presbyteries
- Making connections to enable them to respond in their local communities, where ministry happens
- Please share this presentation with others in your church or Presbytery who may be interested
- For further information, please contact phatch@pcanet.org or osman@pcanet.org

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

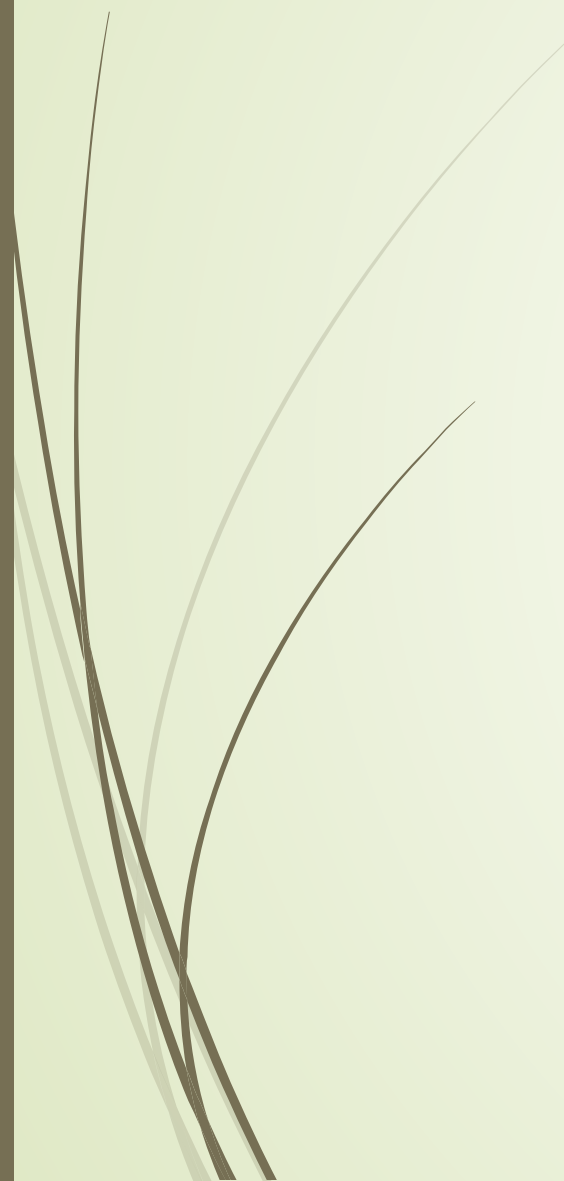

- Free from We Welcome Refugees: <https://bit.ly/3sMKXNn>
- Refugee Highway Partnership North America suggests these resources: <https://www.rhpna.com/mobilize>
- Loving the Stranger book; easy, practical: <https://tinyurl.com/dbftrn5b>
Blog: <https://lovingthestrangerblog.com/>
- No Longer Strangers book; sharing faith with refugees and immigrants – what is effective and what is counterproductive: <https://tinyurl.com/4chy6fu6>
- Ten Million to One: Refugee Resettlement – How To Guide. Committed to starting a church refugee team? Get this! <https://tinyurl.com/4exrj3f2>
- Great overview by World Relief's staff: Seeking Refuge: On the Shores of the Global Refugee Crisis <https://tinyurl.com/wrvsh7hx>

MORE RESOURCES

- Podcast interview with MNA's Pat Hatch by MTW's Kay Burklin and Carolyn Morris: "The Afghan Refugee Crisis: Building the Plane While Flying It" episode: <https://podbay.fm/p/refugees-what-you-dont-hear-on-the-news/e/1631542282>
- (Get "Refugees: What You Don't Hear on the News" in your app store and find other episodes you'll want to hear, also!)
- Free, downloadable "Welcoming the Stranger bookmark" with 40 verses of Scripture on God's heart for the stranger: <https://evangelicalimmigrationtable.com/iwasastranger/>
- Xplore: Welcoming the Nations Among Us is a 6-lesson study for small groups or adult SS, invites believers to welcoming others for God's glory: <https://tinyurl.com/xw6eu8nf> Good starting point in laying a Biblical foundation for any refugee or immigrant ministry.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- ➡ Pat Hatch, MNA Refugee Director
phatch@pcanet.org
- ➡ Osman, MNA Refugee Church Engagement Specialist
Osman@pcanet.org
- ➡ MTW'S refugee specialist, Kay Burklin kburklin@icloud.com



It takes the church
in every part of the
world working
together to address
the refugee crisis.

From the book,
Seeking Refuge
Get yours at
SeekingRefugeBook.com





How we respond to these Afghan arrivals is of major importance.





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