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Catholic Charities Maine to Administer Federal Afghan Placement and Assistance Program in Maine

Portland, ME – Catholic Charities Maine announced today it will administer the new Afghan Placement and Assistance (APA) Program through the U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM). The new program was created by the federal government to assist with the resettlement of people from Afghanistan here in the U.S.

While there is currently no schedule for the projected arrivals here in Maine, Catholic Charities has been approved to re-settle 67 – 100 people from Afghanistan through March 30, 2022.

Afghans entering the U.S. through the APA program do not have refugee status; however, they are being granted entrance for their support of and work with the U.S. during its time in Afghanistan.

Upon arrival in the U.S. they will have to apply for asylum – however, they differ from traditional asylum seekers in that they will:

- Have already undergone a complete medical screening
- Arrive with expedited work authorization papers

Catholic Charities Maine is contracted to provide 90 days of services to APA program participants to facilitate their resettlement in Maine, including housing, education, and employment support.

As CCM awaits notice from the Federal government on when to expect arrivals, the Agency has already begun preparations by holding a meeting today with key stakeholders in the community who provide additional supports and services to refugees and immigrants.

“We’re fortunate to have a robust network of dedicated partners here in Maine who provide a wide variety of services to help ensure New Mainers feel welcome and acclimate more easily to their new hometown,” says Hannah DeAngelis, Director of Refugee and Immigration Services at Catholic Charities.

Attendees at the meeting included representatives from the State of Maine DHHS, DOL and DOE, Afghan Community Organization, Welcoming our New Neighbors, Maine Immigrant Rights Coalition, Westbrook Adult Ed, Westbrook Public Schools, Portland Public Schools, Portland Adult Ed, Maine Access Immigrant Network, Maine Multicultural Center, CEI, Prosperity Maine, United Way of Southern Maine, IRC of Maine, Greater



Portland Chamber of Commerce, Gateway Community Services, Lewiston Public Schools Greater Portland Health, City of Portland, SMCC, USCRI, representatives from Senators Angus King's and Susan Collin's Offices, Chellie Pingree's Office, City of Portland Family Shelter, Maine Equal Justice, Immigrant Welcome Center, Maine Initiatives, MECASA, USCIS, City of Lewiston Police Department, and the New England Arab American Association.

“Ever since this humanitarian crisis began, our phones have been ringing with people wanting to help,” notes CEO Steve Letourneau. “I’m thankful we live in a state that recognizes the value of welcoming the most vulnerable among us and that we can all come together to make the best of a worst situation.”

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Frequently Asked Questions

Who are the Afghans being resettled in Maine?

Afghans resettled under the Afghan Placement and Assistance (APA) Program do not hold Special Immigrant Visas (SIVs) nor are they classified as refugees. They are persons who may have worked for a non-governmental organization, in the media, or for a non-profit whose alliance with the United States makes it too dangerous for them to remain in Afghanistan.

While they will have to apply for asylum, they differ from traditional asylum seekers in that they will arrive with work authorization papers and have completed a medical screening at one of the U.S. military bases.

How many people from Afghanistan will be resettled in Maine?

Catholic Charities Maine expects to resettle 67-100 people from Afghanistan through March 2022.

The United States overall has approved 50,000 people from Afghanistan for resettlement through March 2022. Once resettled in the United States, any citizen is free to move as they wish i.e. to reunite with family or pursue career opportunities.

What services will Catholic Charities provide through the APA program?

Catholic Charities will provide 90 days of services to APA program participants to facilitate their resettlement in Maine, including housing, education, and employment support.

When will the people from Afghanistan arrive in Maine?

At this time CCM has not been given a projected timeline for arrivals. Typically CCM is notified 10 days in advance of refugee arrivals.

Where will the people from Afghanistan be resettled in Maine?

CCM expects to resettle Afghanistan arrivals in areas with affordable housing, job opportunities, public transportation and access to English language education such as Augusta and Biddeford.

How many people from Afghanistan are currently living in Maine?

While CCM has no way of knowing who from Afghanistan currently resides in Maine, the Agency has resettled 105 refugees from Afghanistan since 2013.

How Can I Help?

While Catholic Charities greatly appreciates the outpouring of support, until we know who is arriving (ages, families, etc.) it is challenging for us to sort and store goods such as clothing and furniture as our office space is limited. Gift cards are always appreciated as it enables us/clients to purchase the sizes and season needed for clothing or to assist in setting up a new household with essentials like bedding and cleaning products.

Please mail any in-kind donation of gift cards or checks to:

Catholic Charities Maine
Attention: Development Office
P.O. Box 10660
Portland, ME 04104

*In the Memo line please note the Refugee & Immigration Services (RIS) Program

Volunteers support our Refugee & Immigration Program with tasks such as:

- Tutoring in basic English skills
- Helping craft resumes and prepare for job interviews
- Accompanying to various appointments
- Mentoring a family or individual

For more information on volunteer opportunities at Refugee and Immigration Services, please contact Karen Brewer at kbrewer@ccmaine.org