

# Afghan refugees to resettle in Alaska

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**Catholic Social Services** will resettle in Alaska up to 100 Afghan refugees fleeing persecution by the Taliban in their home country.

The recent evacuees to the United States include translators and other individuals who assisted the military during America's 20-year war and occupation in Afghanistan. They also are women, children and senior citizens deemed vulnerable by the U.S.

More than 116,000 people trying to escape Afghanistan were evacuated by the U.S. and its allies in a massive airlift before the American military exited the country on Aug. 31. Many of the refugees are living at temporary locations on American military bases before moving to permanent housing in communities across the U.S.

Refugees will begin arriving in Alaska this month, with resettlement efforts scheduled to continue to March 2022, Catholic Social Services said.

Most of the refugees coming to Alaska will reside in Anchorage, though some people may live elsewhere in the state, Catholic Social Services said this week. Afghans with family ties may decide to move to different parts of Alaska, the agency told the News-Miner. The agency does not know of any Afghans at this time seeking to move to the Fairbanks area.

## **Refugee resettlement for 25 years**

Catholic Social Services is the only refugee resettlement agency in Alaska, where it has operated for 25 years. The agency's Refugee Assistance and Immigration Services assists people who have fled their home countries due to war and persecution.

The agency's services are a bridge for individuals seeking to acquire skills and learn about American culture. They receive tutoring in English and assistance finding jobs.

"These are the 'go to' people if you need help with a wide variety of services," wrote Thomas Larabee on Google business reviews about Catholic Social Services. "They also operate a food bank, and even have helped out several veterans I know with the security deposit on an apartment. They do a lot of good in the community."



The nonprofit agency now is reaching out to the public for help with mentoring, volunteering and donations for the new arrivals. Catholic Social Services has put out a call for assistance in the following areas:

- **Welcome cards and letters:** Mail greetings and messages to Afghan Evacuees, c/o Catholic Social Services, 3710 East 20th Ave., Anchorage, AK 99508
- **Donations:** Catholic Social Services is a 501(3)c organization that accepts donations. People are encouraged to give online at [www.cssalaska.org/donate](http://www.cssalaska.org/donate).
- **In-Kind Donations:** Individuals and organizations may purchase items to help refugees with basic necessities by going to the agency's Wishlist on AmazonSmile, an affiliate of the online retailer for charitable giving. Search for Catholic Social Services — Alaska after accessing [Smile.Amazon.com](http://Smile.Amazon.com).
- **Volunteers:** The agency needs community-based move-in teams, family mentors, and meals teams to purchase or cook meals to be frozen and handed out to families in Anchorage. The volunteer application form is online at [www.cssalaska.org/get-involved/volunteer/current-opportunities/volunteer-application](http://www.cssalaska.org/get-involved/volunteer/current-opportunities/volunteer-application)