

GLOBAL REFUGEE SPONSORSHIP INITIATIVE AT A GLANCE

Launch of Welcome.US Website to Help Resettle Afghan Refugees to the United States



Afghan refugees arrive at an airport in the United States.
© USA Today/Jack Gruber

A group of former US Presidents, First Ladies, and administration officials from the Clinton, Bush, and Obama administrations have launched a new non-profit, non-partisan initiative called “Welcome.US” to galvanize private sector support and resources for arriving Afghans and harness the goodwill of American people. Launched on September 14, Welcome.US has the involvement of more than 250 NGOs, businesses, and leaders of diverse faiths, politics, and backgrounds as well as partnership with the Department of State. The website includes information on how to become a community sponsor, and highlights what community sponsorship involves and how it benefits both communities and refugees. GRSI partners, including the Open Society Foundations and The Shapiro Foundation, are involved in the Welcome.US initiative.

Are you a policymaker or civil society leader
designing a refugee sponsorship program?
Download the GRSI’s policy design workbook.

Launch of the Advisory Panel on Australia’s Resettlement of Afghan Nationals

Australian Minister for Immigration, Citizenship, Migrant Services and Multicultural Affairs (under Homes Affairs), Alex Hawke, announced the

formation of the Advisory Panel on Australia’s Resettlement of Afghan Nationals, to be co-chaired by humanitarian settlement expert Paris Aristotle and Commonwealth Coordinator-General for Migrant Services Alison Larkins. The Advisory Panel, which is composed of twelve individuals and is set to operate for twelve months (to be extended if required) has a three-fold mandate: plan to support the Government’s commitment to provide an initial 3,000 humanitarian places in the offshore Humanitarian Program to Afghan nationals; ensure appropriate settlement and integration supports for new Afghan arrivals and the communities into which they will settle; and harness the high level of community commitment and interest in welcoming newcomers and supporting the successful settlement and integration of this cohort.

International pledges from mayors to support Afghan Refugees

Mayors from around the world have opened their doors to host Afghan refugees in their cities and towns. A group of over 50 mayors from Australia, Brazil, Cameroon, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Nepal, The Netherlands, Palestine, Portugal, Scotland, Sierra Leone, Switzerland, Uganda, the UK, and the US have signed a statement, coordinated by the Mayors Migration Council (MMC), to “immediately open their doors to Afghan refugees and provide the resources needed to facilitate resettlement, while encouraging donors and other mayors to take steps needed to provide humanitarian support to refugees and asylum seekers.”

In the United Kingdom, [mayors in Manchester, West Yorkshire, Liverpool and the Sheffield city region welcomed refugees to their cities](#). Steve Rotherham, the mayor of Liverpool, declared that refugees were welcome in Liverpool with “no caveats.”

Meanwhile, in Toronto, Canada, mayor John Tory met with community leaders and organizations to ask how the city could “step up” to help Afghans. Tory proclaimed, “This is an opportunity for Torontonians and all Canadians to once again show their compassion and commitment to helping others and to work together to support the sponsorship and resettlement efforts.”

Check out the Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative on Twitter!

Follow @theGRSI on Twitter for more updates on #communitysponsorship

840 Portuguese families ready to sponsor Afghan refugees



An Afghan woman walks in an airport while holding a child's hand.

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Over the course of three days in August, 840 Portuguese families contacted the High Commission for Migration (ACM) in Portugal, offering to receive and help Afghan refugees. 350 families offered accommodation, while others offered essential items and other assistance. NGOs have also volunteered their support, including employment solutions. Like many other nations in the world, Portuguese citizens are eager to lend a hand to Afghans in need.

Canadian CEO to Sponsor and Support 50 Afghan Refugee Families

Jim Estill, CEO of Danby Products Ltd., plans to resettle 50 Afghan families to Guelph, Ontario, five years after he sponsored over 50 Syrian refugee families to the city through the Government of Canada refugee sponsorship mechanisms. Guelph has an existing Afghan community, and in order to sponsor these refugees, Estill has collaborated with local organizations, Government of Canada agencies, and volunteers to support families, both financially and socially. He has partnered with a local organization representing the Hazara community. Mental health support and staff will be available to the refugees via Immigrant Services Guelph-Wellington, and many employers in the area are looking for workers.

Enthusiasm from Australians Who Want to Sponsor Refugees

Lisa Button, the chief executive of Community Refugee Sponsorship Australia, has assembled a group of communities in Australia that want to sponsor refugees. The volunteers help refugees by paying for their resettlement and helping with everyday tasks, like opening bank accounts or enrolling their children in school. Stanley Yeo, a CRSA volunteer, said, “We want to try and persuade the government of the highly successful and beneficial aspects of community sponsorship of refugees.”

What is the GRSI?

The Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative is a partnership of six organizations – the Government of Canada, UNHCR, the Open Society Foundations, The Giustra Foundation, The Shapiro Foundation, and the University of Ottawa. It aims to help other countries set up their own community-based refugee sponsorship programs, strengthening local communities and improving the narrative on refugees in the process.

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