DHS Provides Guidance about Afghan Evacuees’ Eligibility for Public Programs

TOPIC
This bulletin provides updated information about when sponsorship applies, public assistance eligibility, how to help Afghan evacuees find their I-94 records, and what to expect about the status of social security numbers. This bulletin explains that Afghan evacuees who were evacuated from Afghanistan by the U.S. military between July 31, 2021 and August 31, 2021, are eligible for public programs to the same extent as people with refugee status.

PURPOSE
To provide guidance for eligibility workers about Afghan evacuees’ eligibility for public programs.

CONTACT
County and tribal agencies should submit:

- Cash and food policy questions to PolicyQuest.
- Health Care Programs policy questions to HealthQuest.
- MAXIS related questions to the TSS Help Desk.
- METS related questions to the County Relations Resource Center.

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TERMINOLOGY NOTICE
The terminology used to describe people we serve has changed over time. The Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) supports the use of "People First" language.
I. Background

This bulletin references eligibility for public programs for people who were evacuated from Afghanistan by the U.S. military between July 31, 2021, and August 31, 2021. These people are “Afghan evacuees”.

Throughout the duration of United States military action in Afghanistan, thousands of Afghan people have assisted the U.S. military as translators, interpreters, or worked for the U.S. government or U.S. organizations. As a result of this work, Afghan people and their families have faced persecution and danger in their home country.

Due to the recent crisis, the United States (U.S.) government has evacuated people out of Afghanistan and to safety in the U.S. and granted various emergency immigration classifications to quickly get at-risk individuals, their spouses and children into the U.S. All Afghan evacuees passed extensive security checks by the U.S. government before they entered the U.S.

The U.S. government is granting Afghan evacuees four different types of immigration statuses/classifications:

1. Special Immigrant Visa Holders (Lawful Permanent Resident status)
2. Special Immigrant Conditional Permanent Residents
3. Special Immigrant Parole (SQ Parole or SI Parole)
4. Humanitarian Parole (The “parole” immigration classification means that people are granted a special permission to enter the United States.)

This bulletin describes the most commonly associated immigration documents and provides information about public programs’ eligibility for Afghan evacuees. See Appendix A, Afghan Evacuee Classifications and Public Program Eligibility for a quick reference, and the Afghan Evacuees Guide for Eligibility Workers which is located on SIR under Worker Resources.

The information in this bulletin is effective immediately.

Updated information in this bulletin is in bold text.

II. Eligibility for Public Benefits, Programs, and Services

Afghan evacuees with the above immigration classifications are eligible for federal and state benefits to the same extent as refugees.

This includes:

1. Cash Assistance Programs:
   • Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP)
   • Diversionary Work Program (DWP)
   • Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA)
   • General Assistance (GA)
   • Minnesota Supplemental Aid (MSA)
   • Housing Support
2. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
3. Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP)
3. Health Care programs
   • Medical Assistance (MA), all populations and sub-programs
   • Minnesota Care
   • Minnesota Family Planning Program,
   • Alternative Care

To connect people to Office of Refugee Resettlement Programs and Services, see Refugee Resettlement Program Overviews, Refugee Resettlement Network Agency Contact List 2019-2021.

Use this bulletin for instruction. The Department of Human Services will update Combined Manual Section 11.03.18 (Non-Citizens – People Fleeing Persecution), and the Eligibility Policy Manual (EPM) Sections 2.1.2.2.2 (Medical Assistance Immigration Status) and EPM 3.2.1.2. (MinnesotaCare Lawful Presence), to reflect all four categories of immigration status/classifications.

Families may include members who are U.S. citizens and members with different immigration statuses. Eligibility for public programs is determined based on each person’s citizenship or immigration status. For Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) benefits, the child is the beneficiary.

III. Afghan Special Immigrant Visa Holders

Special Immigrant Visa Holders assisted the U.S. military or worked for the U.S. government in Afghanistan. The U.S. government created this status in 2009 and continues to grant it to people today. Afghan Special Immigrant Visa Holders are Lawful Permanent Residents once they arrive in the United States.

A. Common Immigration Documents for Afghan Special Immigrant Visa Holders

Common evidence of Afghan Special Immigrant Visa status is a Lawful Permanent Resident card or a Special Immigrant visa in a passport. If people provide other immigration documents, do not refuse them. Do not expect a person to have several forms of evidence of their immigration status. For cash and food programs, verify the immigration documents through Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (SAVE).
1. 2010 Version of Lawful Permanent Resident Card

![2010 card image]

2. Current Version of Lawful Permanent Resident Card

![Current card image]

The yellow letters on the Lawful Permanent Resident Card above correlate to the instructions below:

a) The “USCIS#” is the same as the A# (or Alien Number).

b) The “Category Code” reflects the path a person went through to receive their green card. Afghan Special Immigrants will have a category codes that begins with SQ or SI and is followed by a number or numbers, for example: SQ3.

c) The “Resident Since” date is the status date.
3. Special Immigrant Visa

Above is an example of an Immigrant Visa that looks similar to the Special Immigrant Visa. Visas are in a person’s passport and take up an entire page. The yellow letters on the Immigrant Visa above correlate to the instructions below:

a) The passport number is to the bottom right of the person’s photograph.

b) The “IV Category” code reflects the path a person was sent through to receive their Special Immigrant Visa. Afghan Special Immigrants will have a category codes that begins with SQ or SI and is followed by a number or numbers, for example: SQ3.

c) The visa number is in red lettering in the bottom right-hand corner of the visa.

IV. Afghan Special Immigrant Conditional Permanent Residents

Afghan Special Immigrant Conditional Permanent Residents assisted the U.S. military or worked for the U.S. government in Afghanistan. They are Lawful Permanent Residents once they arrive in the United States, and have certain conditions placed on their status. These people
A. Common Immigration Documents for Afghan Special Immigrant Conditional Permanent Residents

Common evidence of Afghan Special Immigrant Conditional Permanent Resident status is a Lawful Permanent Resident card. If people provide other immigration documents, do not refuse them. Do not expect a person to have several forms of evidence of their immigration status. For cash and food programs, verify the immigration documents through Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (SAVE).

1. Current Version of Lawful Permanent Resident Card

![Lawful Permanent Resident Card](image)

The yellow letters on the Lawful Permanent Resident Card above correlate to the instructions below:

a) The “USCIS#” is the same as the A# (Alien Number).

b) The “Category Code” reflects the path a person went through to receive their green card. Afghan Special Immigrant Conditional Permanent Residents have one of the following category codes: CQ1, CQ2, or CQ3.

c) The “Resident Since” date is the status date.

V. Special Immigrant Parolees

Afghan Special Immigrant Parolees assisted the U.S. military or worked for the U.S. government in Afghanistan. They are in a temporary “parolee” classification when they arrive in the United States.
A. Common Immigration Documents for Special Immigrant Parolees

Common immigration documents for an Afghan Special Immigrant Parolee include an I-94 Arrival/Departure record, or an Employment Authorization Document. A person may provide another type of immigration document that indicates Special Immigrant Parole status. Do not expect a person to have several forms of evidence of their immigration status. For cash and food programs, verify the immigration documents through Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (SAVE).

1. I-94 Arrival/Departure Record

![I-94 Arrival/Departure Form]

The yellow letters on the I-94 Arrival/Departure Form above correlate to the instructions below:

a) The I-94 Record Number.

b) The stamp explains the person’s immigration classification. The code will begin with either SQ or SI and be followed by number(s). This stamp is the key information to look for on an I-94 record to know if a person is a Special Immigrant Parolee:

SPECIAL IMMIGRANT STATUS (SQ/SI) PAROLE
Sec 602(8)(1) AAPA / Sec 1059(a) NDAA 2006
Date:______________ USCIS Officer:__________

Date Stamped

Date:____________

The date stamped is the status date.
2. Employment Authorization Document

![Employment Authorization Document](image)

The yellow letters on the Employment Authorization Document above correlate to the instructions below:

a) The “USCIS#” is the same as the A# (or Alien Number). SAVE will request the Alien number.

b) The Category Code is the person’s immigration classification. Afghan Special Immigrant Parolees may have a category code that begins with SQ or SI and is followed by number(s), for example: SQ3. Special Immigrant Parolees also may have code C11.

VI. Humanitarian Parolees

Afghan evacuees who are granted Humanitarian Parolee classification in the United States were evacuated from Afghanistan by the U.S. military between July 31, 2021 and August 31, 2021. Afghan evacuees who are granted Humanitarian Parolee classification in the United States are being granted a temporary two-year stay in the United States.

A. Common Immigration Documents for Humanitarian Parolees

Common immigration documents for an Afghan evacuee who has Humanitarian Parole is a Humanitarian Parole stamp in an Afghan passport, I-94 Arrival/Departure record, Employment Authorization Document, or an Employment Authorization Document Application Receipt Notice. If people provide other immigration documents, do not refuse them. Do not expect a person to have several forms of evidence of their immigration status. For cash and food programs, verify the immigration documents through Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (SAVE).
1. Humanitarian Parole stamp in Afghanistan Passport

The red letters on the Humanitarian Parole stamp above correlate to the instructions below:

a) The stamp will say “PAROLED” at the top.

b) The Category Code is the person’s immigration classification. This might say “DT”, “OAR”, “OAW”, or “PAR”.

c) The date is the date of entry into the U.S.
2. I-94 Arrival/Departure Record

d) The red letters on the I-94 Arrival/Departure records above correlate to the instructions below: The I-94 Arrival/Departure record number.

e) The Category Code is the person’s immigration classification. This might say “DT”, “OAR”, “OAW”, or “PAR”.

f) The Country of Issuance is Afghanistan.

The yellow letters on the Employment Authorization Document above correlate to the instructions below:

a) The “USCIS#” is the same as the A# (Alien Number).

b) The Category Code is the person’s immigration classification. Humanitarian Parolees’ Employment Authorization documents will have category code C11.

c) The “Valid From” date is the status date.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RECEIPT NUMBER</th>
<th>CASE TYPE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EAC-</td>
<td>1765 APPLICATION FOR EMPLOYMENT AUTHORIZATION</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| RECEIVED DATE | PRIORITY DATE | APPLICANT |
|---------------|---------------|
| April 1, 2020 |               | A         |

Notice Type: Receipt Notice
Amount received: $380.00 U.S.
Class requested: A12

The yellow letters on the Employment Authorization Document above correlate to the instructions below:

a) The nine-digit number that begins with A is the same as the A# (Alien Number).

b) The “class requested” is the person’s category code that reflects the person’s immigration classification. Humanitarian Parolees’ Employment Authorization documents will have category code C11.
c) The “Receipt Number” can be used as a numeric identifier to verify the person’s immigration classification.

VII. Verification of Immigration Status

Verify immigration status or classification of non-citizens and naturalized or derived citizens.

For cash assistance, SNAP, and health care, verify the immigration documents through Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (SAVE). When the eligibility worker should run a SAVE report is different for cash assistance and SNAP than it is for health care.

For the Child Care Assistance Program, verification relies on the documents submitted by families.

A. Cash Assistance and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

Run a SAVE report AFTER both of the following have occurred:

- All other conditions of eligibility have been met
- U.S. immigration documentation has been submitted.

If an Afghan evacuee does not have U.S. immigration documentation, give them the website to find their I-94 record: [https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/i94](https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/i94).

- If the person has a passport, the I-94 record should be retrievable on Customs and Border Patrol’s public facing website by entering the person’s complete name and passport number or wristband number.
- If the person does not have a passport, the I-94 may be obtained by entering the person’s complete name and A# or wristband number in the passport number field.
  - For A#s sometimes it is necessary to add the letter ‘A’ at the beginning of the line of numbers.

Do not deny an application where an Afghan evacuee does not have their immigration documents.

- Send an encrypted e-mail to Immigration Law Specialist, Teri Guhl at teri.guhl@state.mn.us, or
- Call Teri at (651) 262-3171. Leave a voicemail with a detailed explanation of your question.

This instruction applies to the following programs:

- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Cash assistance programs:
  - Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP)
  - Diversionary Work Program (DWP)
  - Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA)
  - General Assistance (GA)
  - Minnesota Supplemental Aid (MSA)
  - Housing Support
See Combined Manual Section 0010.18.11.03 (Systematic Alien Verification (SAVE)).

B. Minnesota Health Care Programs

Immigration status must be verified electronically.

The county, tribal, or state agency must attempt and exhaust all trusted electronic sources, including SAVE, prior to requiring paper documentation from the enrollee.

- Applicants and enrollees whose immigration status cannot be verified electronically must be provided a 95-day post-eligibility reasonable opportunity period to submit documents or resolve discrepancies to verify immigration status.

For more information, see:

- EPM, Section 2.1.2.2.2 MA Immigration Status
- EPM, Section 3.2.1.2 MinnesotaCare Lawful Presence.

C. Child Care Assistance Program

When child care is provided in a setting that is not subject to public educational standards, the CCAP agency must verify the citizenship or immigration status of the child for whom assistance is sought.

- Use documentation provided by the family to verify the child’s immigration status.

When child care is provided in a setting that is subject to public educational standards, citizenship or immigration status does not need to be verified.

For more information see CCAP Policy Manual:

- 4.15 (Child’s Citizenships and Immigration Status), and
- 7.12 (Verifying Citizenship and Immigration Status).

VIII. Sponsor Deeming

A. Cash and Food Programs

Run a SAVE report on each unit member to determine if a person has a legal financial sponsor based on their current immigration status.

- Run a SAVE report each time a person reports a change or renewal in their immigration status.
Afghan Evacuees who were evacuated by the U.S. military between July 31, 2021, and August 31, 2021 and who are currently in one of the immigration statuses/classifications below, do not have a legal financial sponsor and sponsor deeming does not apply to their cases:

1. Special Immigrant Visa Holders (Lawful Permanent Resident status)
2. Special Immigrant Visa Holders (Conditional Permanent Residents)
3. Special Immigrant Parole (SQ Parole or SI Parole)
4. Humanitarian Parole

B. Minnesota Health Care Programs

For Medical Assistance, sponsor deeming only applies to non-pregnant immigrants 21 and older with sponsors who have signed the I-864 Affidavit of Support. There is no sponsor deeming for MinnesotaCare.

For more information, see Eligibility Policy Manual Sections:

- 2.2.3.2.1 MA-FCA Sponsor Deeming,
- 2.3.3.2.1.2 MA-ABD Sponsor Income Deeming, and
- 2.3.3.2.2.1 MA-ABD Sponsor Asset Deeming.

IX. Social Security Numbers

Due to processing delays, most Afghan evacuees in the U.S. have not received their Social Security Numbers (SSN) at the time that they apply for public benefits.

Afghan evacuees in the U.S. who were evacuated from Afghanistan between July 31, 2021, and August 30, 2021, and processed through a U.S. military base have applied for a social security number. The U.S. federal government helped people apply for a Social Security Number while they were still on the base. Afghan evacuees who did not fully process through a U.S. military base probably have not applied for a Social Security number. Ask clients whether they fully processed through a U.S. military base and if they did not, fill out form DHS-5937A.

X. PolicyQuest and HealthQuest

If a local agency has a question about an Afghan evacuee’s status or eligibility:

- Submit a policy question (PQ) through PolicyQuest or HealthQuest.
- Include a detailed description of the question, a copy of the immigration document, and a copy of the SAVE report.
- Do not deny an application for confusing or incomplete information about immigration status.

For any emergency questions:
XI. Public Charge

Some of the people we serve may be confused and concerned about whether the public charge rule applies to them. Eligibility workers may receive questions about how the receipt of benefits affects an applicant’s or recipient’s immigration status. The public charge rule does not change who is or is not eligible for public assistance programs. Do not consider the public charge rule when making an eligibility determination. See Combined Manual Section 0011.03.17 Non-Citizens – Public Charge.

Eligibility workers should never try to advise people about the public charge rule. Instead:

- Direct people to seek legal advice from an immigration attorney if they have questions about how the public charge rule affects them or their family. This will allow people to make an informed decision about receiving benefits and understand whether they or their family may be impacted in the future.
- Inform people who ask about the public charge rule to contact a Legal Aid office at 1-800-292-4150 from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday – Friday, (https://www.lawhelpmn.org/), or a private immigration attorney.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Advisory

This information is available in accessible formats for people with disabilities by calling (651) 431-4049 (voice) or toll free at (800) 657-3739, or by using your preferred relay service. For other information on disability rights and protections, contact the agency’s ADA coordinator.