



July 5, 2023

Local, State, and Special District leaders:

“Brother, will you grant my last wish and help my family get back to San Diego?”

These were my friend Lucky's last words to me as he texted from atop a mountain in Orgun, about 8 hours outside of Kabul – or so I thought. He and his friends were running out of ammunition, surrounded by the Taliban, and were sure they were going to lose their lives.

Lucky made it out of Kabul and to the United States, but he was one of the fortunate ones. All over the world, Afghans who supported U.S. and allied forces during our longest war continue to reach out to friends and colleagues asking for help. That's how #AfghanEvac was born, and this is why we continue our work.

Today – as we near the two-year anniversary of the fall of Kabul – we are reaching out to government entities at the local, state, and special district levels, including yours, to ask that you take three simple actions to help Afghans still in need.

#AfghanEvac is a non-profit, non-partisan organization that brings together more than 200 organizations working around the clock to help Afghans who stood with the U.S. to realize their own American dream. Our member organizations span the full spectrum of support, from relocation from Kabul to resettlement in new homes in the U.S. Our membership is composed of veterans, frontline civilians, intelligence community professionals, and a cross-section of everyday Americans representative of all parts of our great country. Although our members' personal political ideology spans left, right, and center, we are united in zealously avoiding partisan politics and election-year gamesmanship.

My friend Lucky found his way home to the U.S. after talking his way through ten Taliban checkpoints, and now he lives in Fort Worth, TX where he owns and operates an Afghan Halal Market. All of his employees are recent arrivals from Afghanistan. **There are two particular challenges highlighted by Lucky's struggle that are still being faced by countless other Afghans — and we need your help to address them.**

First: the relocation process, while helpful to many, faces serious challenges. One of the most significant is creating the housing, benefits, and services capacity at the local level to successfully welcome those arriving.

Afghan communities all over the country have carried much of the load in these efforts, and oftentimes local leaders don't know *how* to help or engage. Please visit our website at afghanevac.org/policy and expand the State and Local government tab to learn more about what you might do in your local areas to do your part in welcoming Afghans into your community.

You can help by making sure the welcoming process for our Afghan allies is warm and efficient. Not only does this ease the transition for those arriving, it helps those left behind get here faster.


Second: we know how hard local leaders, as well as Afghan communities in the U.S., have worked for the past 24 months to welcome arriving Afghans; and the burden you have shouldered is immense. Despite progress, to date these efforts have largely been localized, with each community struggling alone.

Here are four ways you can help to honor the sacrifices made by our allies and show that local communities across the U.S. stand together in **honoring the promises made by our service members, veterans, frontline civilians, and the more than one million Americans who served in Afghanistan over our 20 year conflict.**

- **Pass a resolution calling on Congress to pass the Afghan Adjustment Act.** We've drafted a template for you, [available on our website](#).
- **Recognize with an award or letter residents from your region who have stepped up as volunteers to help Afghan allies relocate and resettle.** We have lists of volunteers from each state and can help you to identify your constituents among the thousands of Americans who stepped up.
- **Light your civic infrastructure in honor of Afghans and those we've lost during the 20 year conflict.**
 - August 14th (15th in Kabul) marking the fall of Kabul and honoring Afghans all around the world
 - August 19th marking Afghan Independence Day
 - August 25th (26th in Kabul) honoring the Afghans and U.S. service members we lost at the Abbey Gate bombing on August 26, 2021
 - August 30th (31st in Kabul) acknowledging the thousands of Afghans left behind following withdrawal of all U.S. and allied forces on August 31, 2021
 - The color scheme should be black, red, and green honoring the Afghan flag. If the lighting scheme doesn't support black, please use blue, red, and green to represent the special relationship between Afghans and Americans.
- **Check in with newly arrived Afghans and the resettlement affiliates helping them restart their lives in your local community.** You can visit USAHello.org to track down the affiliates in your region.

If you'd like to help, please let us know by [filling out this form](#) or by replying to this letter.

Thank you and we hope to hear from you soon.

Sincerely,

Shawn VanDiver
President and Founder
#AfghanEvac