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First-Ever Partnerships Created Among Service Organizations and Resettlement Agencies to Resettle Afghan Families

Program creates new pathway for service and relief organizations to expand reach of resettlement agencies and support Afghan newcomers

Welcome.US and Church World Service (CWS) to partner with diverse service and relief organizations, including Islamic Relief USA, Lions Clubs International, and Samaritan’s Purse to resettle thousands of Afghans

WASHINGTON, DC – Today, Welcome.US, Church World Service (CWS), and iconic service and relief organizations with reach across the country announced a groundbreaking new program that will expand opportunities for Americans to participate in the resettlement of Afghan newcomers. This first-of-its-kind program creates a new pathway for service organizations that are not currently part of the United States Refugee Resettlement Program to respond to the urgent needs of Afghan refugees by resettling refugees through national partnerships with one of the nine national refugee resettlement agencies.

As part of Welcome.US efforts to expand opportunities for Americans to participate in the resettlement of Afghans and all newcomers, Church World Service (CWS) is the first resettlement agency to serve as an anchor partner to diverse service and faith organizations with national reach, including Islamic Relief USA, Lions Clubs International, and Samaritan’s Purse. Each organization will individually work with CWS to directly resettle Afghan refugees through their unique initiatives and community networks, including local clubs, churches, and community-based organizations. These trailblazing partners will bring entirely new communities into the work of welcoming newcomers.

“Welcome.US is working to mobilize and empower a greater number of American service organizations and everyday Americans to resettle newcomers, beginning with the urgent need to resettle Afghan newcomers safely and with dignity,” said Nazanin Ash, CEO of Welcome.US. “Lions Clubs International, Islamic Relief USA, and Samaritan’s Purse each have thousands of members ready to serve as a sponsor, and the outpouring of support from these groups and others like them will help ensure our newest neighbors have what they need to rebuild their lives and thrive as new Americans.”

“With tens of thousands of Afghans in need of urgent resettlement to restart their lives in the U.S. it is time to think creatively about expanding our capacity for welcome. This new program is a unique opportunity for service organizations to bring their deep networks and decades of experience improving the lives of people in their communities to support Afghan families,” said CWS CEO Rick Santos. “For more than 75 years, CWS has partnered with local communities and congregations to welcome refugee families into our communities and give them a great start. This new approach to co-sponsorship allows us to bring these partnerships to scale, and
will provide relief and service organizations with robust resources to mobilize and train their networks to welcome Afghan families and help them begin their new lives in safety."

Each of these faith and service organizations will recruit, vet, and train local co-sponsor groups within their networks who will commit to providing key services and financial support to newly arriving Afghans in their communities for at least the first 90 days after they are resettled.

“We are grateful for the opportunity to work with Welcome.US and Church World Service to address the critical needs of refugees from Afghanistan,” said Islamic Relief USA CEO Sharif Aly. “Being forced to leave your homeland and adapting to a new country is undeniably challenging. Through this collaboration, our respective organizations can share best practices and guidance that will help the refugees transition to their new communities in a dignified manner. Together, we will strive to make refugees feel welcome and help them reach economic and social stability so that they can begin making meaningful contributions to their communities.”

“For more than a century, Lions have been called upon to take on some of the greatest challenges facing our world,” said Douglas X. Alexander, International President for Lions Clubs International. “These moments of great need bring out the best in us as volunteers, as neighbors, and as people. Lions here in the United States are proud to be working with our resettlement partners to help these Afghan families restore their hope and restart their lives.”

“Samaritan’s Purse is glad to be able to help Afghan families who have been evacuated to the United States get resettled here in partnership with local churches. Our forefathers welcomed people from every nation, tribe, and tongue. It is my hope and prayer that as these Afghans come to live in this country, they will come to know the values this nation was founded on,” said Franklin Graham, president of Samaritan’s Purse.

Welcome.US is actively recruiting national organizations to answer the call to service by assisting refugees who are rebuilding their lives in American communities.

For more information, please contact partners@welcome.us.

About Welcome.US
Welcome.US is a new national initiative built to unite, inspire, and empower the American people to welcome and support those seeking refuge here, starting with our new Afghan neighbors. In partnership with local and national resettlement agencies, Afghan-American organizations and leaders, refugees, community sponsorship groups, nonprofits, businesses, faith-based institutions, veterans, universities, three former Presidents and three former First Ladies, Welcome.US is the single point of entry for Americans who want to get involved and support those who are starting new lives in the United States.

To learn more about Welcome.US, please visit welcome.us.

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