



Immigrant ARC (I-ARC)'s Afghan Resettlement Project

Community Need

The crisis in Afghanistan has created a crisis at home for New York's Afghan communities. Residents of New York and throughout the United States know family members, friends, neighbors, staff and others who are either trapped in an unwelcome country or who are here in New York with no path permitting them to remain out of danger. [Women and children are especially at risk](#), as are [those who served as interpreters and contractors for US troops](#) during the twenty-year conflict.

[New Yorkers overwhelmingly want to help respond to this urgent crisis](#). Once the evacuation is over on August 31st, we'll need to quickly shift to a longer term strategy of getting as many people out of Afghanistan and recovered from the trauma and integrated in their new communities. Many who arrived on temporary solutions won't qualify for longer term status or won't go through resettlement services. Without these resources thousands of New Yorkers will find themselves at risk of having to return where they fear for their lives or remain in the United States without documentation.

Utilizing Business and Humanitarian Pathways

Assisting as many Afghans in immigrating to the US will require coordination and expertise across a wide variety of fields. While many non-profit organizations excel at executing specialized humanitarian pathways, not all Afghan refugees will qualify for these visas. Other refugees will benefit from business visas, many of which are only accessible to people who can afford immigration attorneys who specialize in this work. Some will go to Canada instead. I-ARC is screening Afghans for all of the possible avenues and connecting refugees not just with humanitarian and familial visas, but also with business immigration attorneys and other concerned New Yorkers who don't typically get involved in large scale pro bono efforts. We are also establishing a network with Canadian attorneys to ensure information and resources are shared across the continent and we are able to evaluate all best possible options for our clients. Finally, We are connecting these professionals to refugees in need and providing support to those offering their services and expertise pro bono. In addition, I-ARC has been engaged in a process to facilitate and systematize connections between legal services and social services, and collect data to analyze and illustrate needs in the process for advocacy and educational purposes.

We are collaborating with the business and non-profit world to use every tool available on immigration law to save a maximum number of Afghans. This approach is unique because the two spaces are rarely brought together in this way.

Coordinating Outreach in New York

I-ARC has already built relationships with law firms, academics, and other skilled professionals who indicate a willingness to handle these cases pro bono. A lot of resources are being developed to promote welcoming and integration in New York communities around the State, such as with local government programs, mental health programs, social services and other key needs. At the same time, through our

work on the steering committee of the [Evacuate Our Allies](#) coalition, we are connected to the relevant national organizations leading this work and are able to inform national strategies with New Yorkers' needs.

New York needs an organization to provide the overarching coordination of all of these services to ensure each Afghan refugee is screened for all available relief and then connected to any required services so they can fully integrate into our communities.

While advocacy is happening at the federal legislative and administrative level to create better programs for Afghan refugees, we need to ensure that as the programs are designed they are informed by the affected voices. I-ARC's model is to use qualitative and quantitative data obtained through our service coordination efforts in order to better inform policy and legislative fixes.

[Most Americans agree it's important to support Afghan refugees displaced because of this crisis.](#) This moment is an opportunity to reframe the conversation on immigration. Now is the time to leverage this support and demonstrate our immigration system can be used for good, changing the dialogue as we help as many people as possible.

Why I-ARC

[I-ARC](#) is committed to access to justice for all. This access includes a connection to a continuum of legal care, often with lawyers acting as the liaison to other critical services. I-ARC is uniquely positioned in New York State because of our relationships with all the non-profit organizations providing legal services to immigrants around the state. [I-ARC was created in response to a humanitarian crisis.](#) We are uniquely positioned to be able to replicate our coordinated responses from the past and get results.

I-ARC has the connections that will be critical in ensuring a well-organized response to this crisis. We are on the steering committee of the [Evacuate Our Allies coalition](#) - a group of organizations coordinating civilian efforts to advocate and effectuate the evacuation and is now shifting to support resettlement. We've been working with a broad coalition of allies including veterans, national non-profits, resettlement groups, local and federal elected leaders. We see this as an opportunity to help not just New Yorkers, but to build a program that could be replicated nation-wide when other humanitarian crises occur. **I-ARC plans to lead the charge by sponsoring an Afghan Refugee to work as a paralegal on this Project.** We believe his or her experience is key to building strong coalitions and demonstrating how New York can lead the way in changing the narrative around immigration.

Need

I-ARC is seeking to raise \$500,000 to build out this program. [A preliminary budget for the first year of the Project \(which would be housed under I-ARC\) is here.](#)

For inquiries or to make a donation, please contact Megan Eiss, our Director of Operations, at meiss@immigrantarc.org