



Sponsor Circles

Sponsor Circle Program for Afghans FAQs

[Sponsor Circles](#) website

[State Department Announcement](#) (10/25/21)

[CNN Exclusive](#): White House makes massive change to the resettlement program to help Afghan refugees (10/25/21)

Why was the Sponsor Circle Program Created?

Afghan newcomers are served through a network of community-based organizations called resettlement agencies through a program called the Afghan Placement and Assistance Program (APA).

Resettlement agencies are experts in welcoming newcomers; however, given the speed with which Afghan newcomers have arrived in the United States, resettlement agencies and the communities in which they work may lack the staffing and resources necessary to provide immediate welcome.

The Sponsor Circle Program for Afghans is an emergency response launched by a coalition of partners to expand the United States' capacity to welcome. Through the program, groups of five individuals can come together to form a certified sponsor circle and be matched with a newcomer, welcoming them to their community and providing them with initial reception and integration services.

Why form a Sponsor Circle?

- You urgently want to be reunited with a friend or family member currently at a military base
- You want to respond to a human need
- You want to connect with those in your community
- It is aligned with your values
- You or your family was welcomed to the United States as immigrants
- It supports refugee integration

How do you become a certified Sponsor Circle?

To become a certified sponsor circle, applicants must complete a six-step process:

- Find four friends in your community who are 18 or older to form a circle
- Each member of the circle must complete a mandatory background check
- Pass a knowledge check after completing the Sponsorship Guide
- Complete a Welcome Plan sharing how the circle will support the Afghan newcomer



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- Begin fundraising \$2,275 per Afghan newcomer
- Submit the application

What are the responsibilities of Sponsor Circles?

Groups of five individuals who become certified Sponsor Circles are responsible to support the Afghan newcomer(s) with the following:

- Secure housing
- Provide basic necessities
- Provide time bound income support
- Assist in completing required changes of address
- Connect to legal assistance
- Support in obtaining a social security card
- Support newcomer in selective service registration as appropriate
- Support in accessing medical services
- Support in accessing available benefits
- Enroll children in school
- Provide English language support
- Provide job search advice and support
- Provide community orientation
- Complete 30 and 90-day reports

What support will Sponsor Circles receive?

Application support is provided to Sponsor Circles as they navigate through the certification process. Post approval and matching, AirBnb.org has made credits for temporary housing available to Afghan newcomers supported by certified Sponsor Circles. And, once you are matched with an Afghan newcomer, you will be connected with an organization that can provide you with ongoing guidance, answering questions that you may have as they come up.

What are some of the federally-funded benefits Afghans newcomers might be eligible to receive?

- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), also known as food stamps
- Medicaid
- Refugee Cash Assistance
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Refugee Medical Assistance
- Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)
- Matching Grant Program (employment services), offered through resettlement agencies



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How does the Sponsor Circle program differ from the Afghan Placement and Assistance (APA) Program?

Afghan newcomers remain eligible for all other federal, state, and local benefits regardless of whether they are welcomed through the Sponsor Circle or APA program. The difference between the two programs is strictly with who is responsible to support the Afghan newcomer's initial welcome and integration, either the local resettlement agency or a certified Sponsor Circle.

How long is the Sponsor Circle commitment period?

Sponsor Circles commit to providing critical welcome support to an Afghan newcomer or family for a minimum of 90 days. During that time, you will need to connect the family to ongoing support available in your community.

What is the fundraising commitment to become a certified Sponsor Circle?

Newcomers served through the Sponsor Circle Program for Afghans elect not to receive Afghan Placement and Assistance Program financial support and services offered through resettlement agencies. Instead, they agree to receive financial support and services from a certified Sponsor Circle. The Sponsor Circle's financial responsibility is to raise a minimum of \$2,275 per newcomer. These funds are to be spent on behalf of the newcomer you are serving. As part of the certification process, you must demonstrate that you have raised a minimum of 60% of the total funding needed to sponsor your newcomer family. The remainder may be raised through continued fundraising efforts or provided through direct Sponsor Circle committed contributions .

Where can I find more details about how to become a certified Sponsor Circle?

Please visit www.sponsorcircles.org. The process is laid out in a step-by-step format and application support is available.