



# Welcome.US

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Welcome Fund Announces \$5.6 Million in Funding for 143 Organizations Helping Welcome Afghan Allies**

*67% of recipients are Afghan American, Muslim, Veteran, or refugee-led organizations*

*\$14M in total donated to 172 organizations since Welcome Fund launch in September 2021*

**WASHINGTON, D.C.**—The [Welcome Fund](#), a project of [Welcome.US](#) and administered by GoFundMe.org, is awarding just over \$5.6 million to [143 organizations](#) engaging Americans in the resettlement of Afghan newcomers. This round of awards exceeds Welcome.US' original goal of dispersing \$3 million, due to both increased contributions to the Fund and the high volume of quality applicants.

The funding lifts up community-based efforts outside of the traditional nine U.S. resettlement agencies, and prioritizes historically underfunded organizations in communities across the country. Nearly two-thirds of the grantees are Afghan American, Muslim, Veteran or refugee-led organizations. Applications reflect diverse ways community organizations are stepping up or expanding efforts to support the resettlement process, including providing translation services, securing housing, finding employment, and helping children enroll in schools. Collectively, these efforts will mobilize more than 10,000 volunteers to help over 45,000 Afghan newcomers.

Since last August, more than 75,000 Afghans have arrived in the United States and relocated from military bases to over 140 communities. In response, hundreds of nonprofits across the country have stepped up to support their transition. These frontline organizations are involving community members as Welcomers to meet a whole host of needs that range from securing permanent housing and food supplies to teaching English and mentoring jobseekers. Continued

support of these community-based efforts will be critical as Afghan newcomers establish roots in their new communities.

“What we know from the work of our grantees is that Americans from all corners have been stepping up to welcome newcomers across the country and are ready to expand their efforts. Our goal is to support these remarkable community organizations, many of which are Afghan American, Muslim, refugee or veteran-led, to help ensure newcomers have what they need to thrive and that our communities are strengthened and united in welcoming their new neighbors,” **said Nazanin Ash, CEO of Welcome.US.** “This goal clearly resonated with Americans, as more than \$5.6 million was raised from corporations, philanthropy and everyday Americans in support of this effort.”

The Welcome Fund has raised more than \$16.5 million since its founding in September, and has distributed \$14.2 million to 172 organizations supporting the arrival, housing, and welcome of Afghan newcomers. Welcome.US is appreciative of the generous donations from the hundreds of donors to the fund, including substantial contributions from The Shapiro Foundation, the Kaufer Family Fund, The Schmidt Family Foundation, PAR Capital Management, Target, the Tripadvisor Foundation, Walmart, and United Airlines.

**Some examples of organizations receiving support from the Welcome Fund today include:**

- [Fresh Start Refugee Assistance Center](#) is led by Afghan American women who are refugees or children of refugees, promotes the sustainable integration of immigrants and refugees in the DC, Maryland, and Virginia metropolitan area. Fresh Start mobilizes community members to provide emergency resettlement services by providing translation services, transportation, home set up assistance, grocery runs, tutoring and mentorship, and accompanying newcomers to appointments.
- [Milwaukee Muslim Women's Coalition](#) is a community organization based in Greenfield, Wisconsin that empowers women and girls to reach their fullest potential. The Coalition organizes regular “tea salons” where Afghan newcomers can express their concerns and needs in a culturally competent setting. With the support of trauma specialists and community volunteers, newcomers can rebuild a sense of agency and find solutions to the problems they may be facing.
- [Veterans Bridge Home](#) connects newcomers with a broad community of support in Charlotte, North Carolina. Volunteers help transition Afghan newcomers to their new lives by assisting with everything from grocery delivery and transportation to housing setups and cultural advice.
- [Vitendo 4 Africa](#), in Hazelwood, Missouri, launched in 2009 to support East African immigrants and has grown to serve 20,000+ immigrants and refugees from more than 27 countries. Their Welcome New Neighbors initiative mobilizes volunteer families to help new Afghan neighbors find large family housing, groceries, and medical assistance, enroll in school, sign up for adult education and literacy classes, and begin acclimating to their new life.

A full list of grantees is available [here](#).

“The Welcome Fund Advisory Committee deeply appreciates contributions from donors that allow us to support the important work of many organizations across the United States,” **said Ngoan Le, Chair of the Welcome Fund Advisory Committee**. “These grantees facilitate community involvement in the support of Afghan newcomers. The result of this work is to ensure that Afghan evacuees are able to realize their full potential and are well integrated in their new community.”

“These grantees have demonstrated an incredible commitment to supporting Afghan newcomers here in the U.S. GoFundMe.org is a proud partner of the Welcome Fund, and we are thrilled to support the welcoming movement that’s rapidly spreading across the country,” **said Yoshiko Inoue, Executive Director of GoFundMe.org**.

#### **Statements from some of the Welcome Fund grantees:**

“Islamic Relief USA has long supported and partnered with local organizations with a track record of excellence, helping to implement crucial programs and services to help populations in need,” **said Sharif Aly, chief executive officer of Islamic Relief USA**. “These partnerships will help people adapt to new surroundings, providing them essential skills to sustain themselves that will ultimately benefit local economies and enrich communities culturally. We look forward to partnering with those who can continue to support the achievement of these positive outcomes.”

“Veterans Bridge Home is working to meaningfully partner members of the Charlotte community, including a special focus on Veterans, with resettled Afghan families as they continue to navigate their resettlement journey,” **said Nate Schwartzbauer, Veterans Bridge Home Charlotte Afghan Task Force Co-Lead**. “The grant Welcome.US provided will allow the Charlotte Afghan Task Force to expand its reach in North Carolina and innovate processes of Afghan community engagement, allowing for even broader impact. Most importantly, the grant will help our new Afghan neighbors feel meaningfully a part of their new community.”

“Fresh Start Refugee Assistance Center and volunteers are grateful for the generous donation from Welcome.US,” **said Maryam Rashid, Vice President of Fresh Start Refugee Assistance Center**. “Your commitment to helping refugees in our communities is appreciated by those who help them and, most importantly, by the refugees who have been given another chance to have a fresh start.”

To learn more about the Welcome Fund, visit <https://welcome.us/welcomefund>.

#### **About Welcome.US and the Welcome Fund**

Welcome.US was founded to unite, inspire, and empower Americans to support those seeking refuge here, beginning with Afghan refugees evacuated to the United States after the fall of Kabul in August 2021. Welcome.US has one overarching goal: to grow that outpouring of public support into building durable capacity and codifying commitments to welcome all newcomers. In partnership with local and national resettlement agencies, community organizations and leaders, refugees, community sponsorship groups, nonprofits, businesses, faith-based institutions, veterans, universities, four former Presidents and four 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.

A project of Welcome.US, the Welcome Fund provides philanthropy, major donors, and the private sector an effective and coordinated national mechanism that will enable communities to not only support those seeking refuge, but also to build a movement of welcome that extends beyond this immediate crisis. The Fund is informed by the strategic vision of Welcome.US and led by an advisory committee composed of leaders who bring lived experience, refugee resettlement expertise, grantmaking knowledge, and other resources that are essential to executing the Fund's mission. Welcome.US does not make recommendations on individual grants.

To learn more about Welcome.US, please visit [welcome.us](https://welcome.us).

**About GoFundMe.org**

[GoFundMe.org](https://gofundme.org), a 501(c)(3) public charity, manages and receives donations for the Welcome Fund from individual and philanthropic donors. Recommendations for potential grantees are made by the Welcome Fund Advisory Committee to GoFundMe.org, which provides rigorous fiduciary and compliance oversight; supports rapid deployment of grants; and ensures timely and transparent reporting.

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