
Afghan Evacuee Community Roundtable

November 15, 2022
10:00 A.M. – 11:00 A.M.

Guiding Principles:

1. Uplift the individuals and families coming to Minnesota as the expert of their own needs, and prioritize their concerns.
2. Celebrate the resilience, strength, and expertise of community voices.
3. Actively work against the influences of systemic inequity and elevate the voices of those who have been historically marginalized.
4. Maintain a spirit of joy and fellowship in our work as a tool of healing and transformation.

Urgent Needs:

- Vehicle access – We have a number of families who obtained a driver’s license and now need a vehicle. Has anyone been successful with purchasing a vehicle for families?
- Mirwais Momand helped more than 5-6 families purchased a car. We connect families with them and share the car information and talk to the families about makes and models and preferences. Connect with Muhammad Tayyeb.
- Building Blocks – We helped 1 family with this through Ridwan. We refer people to ZACAH and try to meet them at \$2,000 and see what the family have saved and what can be borrowed and contribute to the family purchasing a vehicle. He works with them for payment plans as well. Reach out to us with questions but folks will have to do an intake for eligibility so that we know what amount we can help them with.

Community Organization Updates:

Alight

- Clothing drive for winter, 60 families reached out to them. Will check and see if more families can be added to this. There is a need for children and adults.

Minneapolis Public Schools

- Early Childhood screening, 2-3 families are scheduled per week.
- Last month conferences, some students need support on literacy and math, and we are connecting students and families to use applications electronically to help them practice afterschool hours.
- Edison High School student is aiding and helping students where they are struggling with school subjects.
- Helping families get connected with clothing drive with Alight if they need it.
- Helped some families install school bus roadmap so they can better understand their student’s bus stops.
- Making sure that families have working heat units.

- Making sure that families are also aware and connected to utility friendly benefits.

City of Minneapolis

- Working on employment and training in WhatsApp group and referred 20-30 folks to these resources, and they are now involved in ESL classes. Shared training based information that leads to placements in childcare, machine operator, and soldering, and helps prepare them for higher pay (around \$18-\$20/hour). Can register with Nawid.
- Here is the WhatsApp: <https://chat.whatsapp.com/DqaHgJrOCUQ4QznzN7s22q>

Advocates for Human Rights

- We are starting to hear in the last two weeks for people doing SIV process, and we are able to apply for green card which is the last step. Folks are being called for interviews.
- Our clinic is continuing this process but there will be a pause in December, however, continuing this process through January. SIV process is a 2-3 step application. It needs Chief of Mission approval and we are still monitoring this because it is very slow.
- The average case processing time for a green card is 2.5 years. If you file for your green card and file before the parole expires, you can stay in the state during the pending process but you can still apply to work in the state.

MDE

- Early Childhood screening occur between the ages of 3-5 years old. Required screening after turning 3 and prior to entering kindergarten or within 30 days before starting. This screening is a preliminary checkup on speech, social and developmental process. This can be done at the district or comparable screening done by the child's head start provider and then this info is handed over to the district at enrollment. Those who provide the screening needs to be eligible to do so deemed by MDE.
- We received questions from workers in the field that Afghan folks are getting their children screened and this area needs more support form MDE about what the process looks like.
- Parents can call the welcome center or district to set-up an appointment.
- If parents don't speak English, consult with the district about your language and they will work with you. If parents think an interpreter should be present for the child that can be arranged. It's better to screen the child with interpretation done with the language most spoken in the home but can also just request for English only.
- This screening process is not to diagnose the child with something medically, it's just to check if the child is developing normally.
- MDE will provide more information for some possible questions FAQ.
- The screening is a way for parents to also ask questions and learn about resources if they want to know how they can help their child's development at home. The potential of the screening is to help identify and support early childhood benefits that can help prepare them for school. If you feel like you need a second screening because language was a barrier at your first visit, you can request for it to be done again with an interpreter. The child does get separated from the parents so they can be a little nervous and need some time to adjust to the new environment because they are talking to a complete stranger. But parents can ask for extra time for the child to adjust and activities to break the ice for the child.
- If your child goes through fine, this is also good reassurance for you because there is nothing further that you need to do except what you have already been doing at home to help prepare them for school.

- When the child is turning 3 years old in a few months, it's time to enter some early childhood education, parents should be reaching out to the district and asking for a screening appointment for your child.
- If you as a parent are starting to notice that the child is developing with some hearing or vision issues, contact your primary care provider and get medically diagnosed, however the screening is another resource for parents to also learn about how they can support the child from an educational standpoint.
- Districts are short of Afghan interpreters so if they are unable to get an appointment setup sooner then this can be why.
- Train district learners: Margaret Chresand, Early Childhood Screening Specialist, mde.els@state.mn.us or 651-582-1136
- Refugee and Immigrant Education Network: We are excited about yesterday's meeting – about 60 people attended. The goals of this group going forward are to build effective connections to support the education of K-12 students, and create a central list of resources and information so that our partners can access this. Bringing together school districts to work toward supporting refugees. Next meeting is on January 16.
- MN K-12 Refugee and Immigrant Education Network (RIEN) Next meeting is January 16 from 2:30 pm to 3:30 pm. [Click here to join the meeting](#) on January 16
Contacts: Michael.Bowlus@state.mn.us Saadia.Mohamed@state.mn.us Thank you!