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### **Family Reunification Program for Afghan Relatives - (Form DS-4317)**

<https://www.state.gov/afghanistan-family-reunification/>

It is crucial to be aware that there is a significant amount of inaccurate and deceptive information circulating on social media and in the news regarding the Department of State Family Reunification Program for Afghan Relatives (Form DS-4317). Before initiating the process of filing a petition for a family member, it is highly advisable to seek legal advice from a qualified immigration attorney in the United States. Be cautious and vigilant to avoid falling victim to scams perpetrated by individuals who are not licensed attorneys in the United States and who may fraudulently solicit money from you and promise to expedite your family petition.

Last year, the U.S. Department of State introduced the Family Reunification Program, officially known as Form DS-4317. This program aims to facilitate the reunion of Afghan families who were separated due to the chaotic evacuation at the airport in Kabul, Afghanistan in August 2021. Form DS-4317 is specifically tailored for Afghans who entered the United States under Operation Allies Welcome (OAW) or Operation Allies Refuge (OAR) parole.

The purpose of Form DS-4317 is to allow individuals to apply for reunification for certain family members left behind in Afghanistan. You may apply for your spouse and your unmarried children under the age of 21 who are outside the United States if you are an Afghan national who entered the United States under parole and you currently remain a parolee, OR you were paroled into the United States and subsequently granted Temporary Protected Status (TPS). With this assistance, your lawful spouse and your unmarried children under the age of 21 may be eligible for admission to the United States as refugees. You may apply for your children who are unmarried and were under the age of 21 on August 14, 2021. Additionally, unaccompanied Afghan minors who entered the country on parole can also use this form.

**It is important to note that the Family Reunification Form (DS-4317) is not intended to expedite family-based petitions for U.S. citizens or Lawful Permanent Residents. Furthermore, Lawful Permanent Residents cannot file petitions for their parents; they must first obtain U.S. citizenship before becoming eligible to do so.**

In accordance with the current immigration laws of the United States, individuals who are either U.S. citizens or Lawful Permanent Residents can sponsor specific family members for immigration to the U.S. The eligibility criteria to sponsor family members depends on your citizenship, immigration status, and the manner in which you entered the United States.

#### **If You Are a Citizen of the United States:**

For U.S. citizens, their spouses, children, and parents may potentially qualify for immediate immigration to the United States. U.S. citizens can also petition for their siblings and unmarried adult children, who can immigrate once a visa becomes available. **However, it's important to acknowledge that filing petitions for siblings can be a lengthy process, often taking ten years or more to complete. Unfortunately, the U.S. government does not have an expedited process despite the risks faced by family members in Afghanistan.**

#### **If You Are a Lawful Permanent Resident of the United States:**

If you hold lawful permanent resident status in the United States, your spouse, unmarried children under the age of 21, and unmarried adult sons and daughters may be eligible for immigration to the United States. If your child is over 21 and married, you will not be able to file a lawful permanent resident status for your child because there is no immigrant visa category for children over the age of 21 who are married. This immigration process typically spans many years, and there is no established procedure in place to expedite petitions for family members.