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Frequently Asked Questions for Afghan SIV Holders and Recent SIV Entrants Affected by the January 25, 2025 R&P Stop-Work Order

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Background: On January 25, 2025, [CNN reported](#) that the Trump administration abruptly halted certain resettlement services for Afghan Special Immigrant Visa holders and refugees. Among the services that may be impacted are [Reception and Placement, or R&P](#), which includes flights to the United States, airport reception upon arrival, housing and employment assistance, integration, and other services that help new arrivals gain self-sufficiency.

This decision will impact tens of thousands of refugees and Afghan Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) green card recipients who have entered since October 28, 2024 and SIVs who have been issued a visa at a U.S. Consulate abroad and are awaiting entry to the United States. Due to the abrupt nature of the policy change and lack of detailed guidance issued by the administration, many questions cannot be answered in a concise manner or with authority at this time. While we don't have clear guidance for all questions, we will do our best to get official answers to help guide and inform individuals as they consider their next steps.

This FAQ is intended to address the top questions of Afghan SIV holders outside the United States who have not yet entered as lawful permanent residents or green card holders and SIV green card holders who recently entered the United States. If you have questions about the information contained in this document, please contact Kim Staffieri at the Association of Wartime Allies or Jill Marie Bussey at Global Refuge.

What is Reception and Placement or R&P?

R&P, commonly referred to as “welcome money,” is a U.S. government-administered program that assists refugees and some Afghan SIVs when they first arrive in the United States. The goal of R&P is to help the person settle into their new home and become self-sufficient. For refugees, the R&P process starts while the individual is still abroad, and services last for the first 90 days upon arrival. SIVs have the option to select assistance in traveling to the United States and assignment to a resettlement agency or they may decide to travel here on their own and enroll in services upon their arrival.

Because many SIVs have familiarity with U.S. culture, advanced English skills, and U.S. ties to assist them in getting settled in, the State Department offers two forms of R&P: (1) traditional R&P, which includes more intensive service through a local agency and case manager, and (2) [Virtual R&P](#), an innovative case management option that helps to facilitate family reunification.

Q. How does the Jan. 24, 2025 “R&P stop-work” order affect my ability to enter the U.S. and obtain services?

A. The State Department has not publicly released instructions to people impacted by the Jan. 24th R&P stop-work memo. Generally, the answer to this question will depend upon whether you are in or out of the U.S. and the stage of your visa processing. This document is divided into two sections to help individuals understand how the policy potentially impacts them.

I. Afghan National SIVs Outside of the United States

An important note of consideration for all Afghan nationals who are currently outside of the United States and who have a legal means of entry to the United States - The President issued an Executive Order on January 20, 2025 titled, “[Protecting the United States from Foreign Terrorists and Other National Security and Public Safety Threats](#),” which requires the administration identify “countries throughout the world for which vetting and screening information is so deficient” as to warrant a ***partial or full suspension on the admission of nationals from those countries***” within 60 days. On January 27, 2025, the administration issued a retaliatory travel ban on certain Colombian nationals. **During the President’s previous term, travel bans were issued that negatively impacted people from Muslim-majority countries. Potential impending travel bans are a factor to consider for individuals who have a legal means of entry and right to seek admission to the United States.**

For SIVs Outside the United States AND Supported by CARE, the following information applies to individuals outside the U.S. at a State Department processing center or still in Afghanistan.

For individuals who are currently residing at a U.S. State Department processing center (e.g., Doha), the stop-work order cuts off access to R&P, which includes International Organization for Migration, or IOM, flights to the U.S. This will impact flights to the United States and creates a “pause” for those who have visas issued at the sites. For these individuals, housing and visa processing may continue.

This is expected to have a downward impact on individuals still in Afghanistan who are currently in the State Department’s [Coordinator for Afghan Relocation Efforts \(CARE\)](#), pipeline at the relocation/travel-ready stage and are awaiting relocation to a U.S. processing center. This will “pause” flights to the processing centers due to the inability to resettle those with issued visas at the processing centers to the U.S. and make room for incoming arrivals from Afghanistan.

For those who have cases in stages before the relocation/travel-ready stage, we expect normal processing to continue for cases still at the [National Visa Center \(NVC\)](#) or waiting for Chief of Mission (COM) approval. At this time, we do not know the impact on CARE services inside of Afghanistan such as pre-travel arrangements, medical exams, etc.

Q. I am in CAS, Doha, and my SIV visa processing is complete, how does the stop-work order affect my ability to fly to the United States?

A. While the R&A stop-work order should not pause the services you are being provided in Doha, any travel from the processing center, including flights to the United States, must be

provided by the International Organization for Migration (IOM). Thus, people currently in Doha will be subject to a travel “pause.”

Q. I have received my SIV visa and IOM has already booked my flight. IOM has not contacted me to say the flight is canceled. How do I know if the flight is still valid and if I will be accepted into the U.S. upon arrival?

A. IOM will contact you directly if there are any changes to your flights. At this time, we are seeing some IOM flights being cancelled and visa recipients should be prepared for this possibility

Q. I am in Doha and my visa processing is not complete, can I transfer my case for visa processing at a consulate elsewhere?

A. Based on reports from Doha, there are currently logistical barriers for people seeking to depart the processing center to access travel to another country for visa processing. Please speak to a case counselor at CAS for more information. See the Q&A below for more info about requesting a case transfer.

Q. Can I transfer my case to another U.S. embassy for processing?

A. Yes. You can request a transfer to any U.S. embassy that has IV processing. You must be able to secure legal status to reside in the third country (e.g., visitor visa), AND you must be able to financially support yourself to travel there and to support your family’s living costs for the entire time you are in the third country. Wait times at U.S. embassies vary and can be as long as a year or very often longer than that. You must be able to maintain legal presence in the third country the entire time you are there, which means being able to renew the visa to stay there. Realistically, this proves to be extremely difficult for most people to achieve and you should very carefully research the country you are considering self-relocating to.

Also, note that self-initiated consular transfers remove the applicant from the CARE pipeline. If this occurs, all CARE support will be withdrawn and all related cases will be processed at the new U.S. Embassy without receiving any relocation support.

For SIVs Outside of the United States - the following information applies to individuals outside of the U.S. and have cases being processed at a U.S. Embassy (NOT at a State Department processing platform).

For individuals who have not yet arrived in the U.S., the stop-work order cuts off access to R&P, which includes IOM flights to the U.S. For many, including large families, the flight assistance R&P provides is critical to their access to protection and safe passage.

Q. If I have received a Special Immigrant Visa from a consulate abroad, can I arrange my own travel and still be admitted to the U.S. as a lawful permanent resident?

A. Yes, Afghan nationals may apply for their SIV visa at any U.S. consulate that can process immigrant visas as long as the applicant has obtained legal entry and may maintain a lawful presence in that country throughout their visa process. Upon issuance of the SIV visa in the passport, the person may independently arrange for their travel and arrival in the United States. Initial admission to the United States on the SIV visa will be carefully reviewed by officials at the first port of entry to the United States.

Selection of the first port of entry should be considered as some ports are less familiar with SIV visas and some ports have experienced historic capacity issues, resulting in extended initial admissions processing after long, international flights. Admission as an immigrant visa holder is not guaranteed and it may be denied by an officer at the port of entry for certain reasons. Because of this and the risks of travel to the U.S. at a time of rapidly shifting immigration policies, we recommend all SIV visa holders create a plan **before** traveling to the United States. For more information on what to expect during the initial entry to the U.S. and how to create a plan for initial entry as an immigrant visa holder, please see IRAP's resource at this link: <https://refugeerights.app.box.com/s/rxgl1xdrkdq2j4i7rahdbtg6nvee9tw1>

Q. My SIV processing is being processed at a U.S. consulate abroad, can they still issue my visa?

A. Yes, please see the question and answer above. At this time, for those who have cases in stages before the visa issuance stage, we expect normal processing to continue for cases still at the NVC waiting for COM approval, interviews, etc.

II. Afghan National SIVs (visa or green card holders) Inside the U.S.

Q. I entered the U.S. on my SIV this month and am working with a case manager at a local agency as of January 24, am I still able to access services

A. Access to benefits will depend upon each agency and individual circumstance. Please check with your local agency to review the programs you may be eligible for.

Q. I entered the U.S. through the Virtual R&P program, does this order apply to me?

A. Yes. Virtual R&P is a subset of the broader R&P program, and will also be affected by the stop-work order. If you have a case manager, attempt to speak to them about your situation.

Q. I entered the U.S. two weeks ago and my family is just getting settled in, can we enroll our children in school without resettlement assistance?

A. Yes, under the law, all children are entitled to enroll in public schools in the United States. This can be a daunting task in some school systems that have document and health requirements. Bridging Refugee Youth and Children's Services (BRYCS) offers helpful general information about enrolling children in school at: <https://brycs.org/schools/enrolling-refugee-children-in-u-s-schools/>. More specific information may be found by contacting your local school system or state refugee coordinator.

Q. I entered the U.S. recently and need health assistance. How can I access health services if my local agency cannot help me?

A. If you are experiencing a medical emergency, you should dial 911 or, if your situation allows, visit your local emergency room. For other health assistance, refugee health services vary in each state. Contact your state refugee coordinator to find more information about what services are available to you and how you may access them.