



Nearly 70 Organizations Serving Virginia's Communities Urge Virginia Lawmakers to Invest in Virginia's Refugee Resettlement Program

March 3, 2022

Dear Members of the Virginia General Assembly,

As 69 organizations serving Virginia's communities, including 52 Virginia-based organizations and resettlement agencies, we urge you to invest in Virginia's refugee resettlement program and support a budget request for a total of \$8 million for the Office of New Americans. These resources support our Virginia communities which help refugees, asylum seekers, and immigrants integrate and thrive.

Over the last five years, Virginia's resettlement program downsized significantly as the rate of refugee arrivals slowed. This devastated families awaiting reunification, abandoning their vulnerable relatives, and depriving employers who have relied upon refugees as employees with a reliable workforce. The U.S. has committed to rebuilding the resettlement program and Virginia has already welcomed thousands of Afghan evacuees. Virginia has a critical role to play in investing in community wholeness and ensuring new arrivals have their basic needs met.

The United States has a proud legacy of welcoming refugees and immigrants who helped found this nation, and we recognize the value these new Americans [contribute to Virginia's](#) communities and the economy. Refugees are vital to the prosperity of our communities – they pay taxes, help grow our economy, and bring unique skill sets, experiences, and insights. In [2015](#), nearly 87,000 refugees living in our state paid \$964 million in national, state, and local taxes, and held \$2.5 billion in spending power.

Virginia is an important destination for refugees and Afghan evacuees. From FY 2001 - FY 2020, more than 21,500 refugees were resettled in Virginia. In addition, following the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan, [over 130,000 Afghans](#) were evacuated of whom [44% are children](#). Overall, [roughly a third of all evacuees](#) are expected to live in just three states, including Virginia, Texas, and California. Approximately 8,000 Afghan arrivals are expected to resettle in Virginia alone.

Virginia's resettlement community and [refugee leaders](#) urge Virginia's elected leaders to strengthen our communities' resettlement program and invest in our capacity to welcome refugees and new Afghan arrivals who were evacuated following the U.S. withdrawal. This initial investment is a down payment on the long-term integration and economic success of new Americans, including individuals and families who are rebuilding lives after surviving violence, persecution, and trauma.

We urge you to support this critical investment and demonstrate moral leadership around the imperative to love our neighbor, welcome the immigrant, and care for the most vulnerable among us.

Sincerely,

Virginia Organizations

ACLU People Power Fairfax
 Afghan American Women's Association
 Afghan Association of Central Virginia
 All Dulles Area Muslim Society(ADAMS) - 11 Branches & Satellites in Virginia
 Arlington Democrats Interfaith Outreach & Advocacy Caucus
 Asian & Latino Solidarity Alliance
 Asian American Association of Central Virginia
 Bethel UCV
 Center for Common Ground
 Center for Faith, Justice, and Reconciliation
 Center for Refugee, Migrant, and Displacement Studies, Virginia Tech
 Church World Service Virginia
 Congregation Or Ami
 Dreamers Mothers In Action
 Edu Futuro
 Families of the Wounded Fund (VA)
 First Congregational Christian United Church of Christ- Chesterfield
 Hamkae Center (fka NAKASEC VA)
 Husayn For Humanity
 International Rescue Committee Virginia
 Islamic Center of Virginia, Refugee Committee
 JAMAAT - Jews and Muslims and Allies Acting Together
 Just Neighbors Ministry
 Kids in Need of Defense (KIND)
 Kindness Sharing Project KSP
 Lutheran Social Services of the National Capital Area (LSSNCA)
 Muslim Association of Virginia (MAV - Dar Al Noor)
 No One Left Behind (VA)
 NOVA Friends of Refugees
 NOVA Returned Peace Corps Volunteers
 Our Lady Queen of Peace Catholic church
 Peace Evangelical Lutheran Church
 REACT DC, Inc.
 ReEstablish Richmond
 River of Life Community Church
 Sayed Hashmat saddat
 The Commonwealth Institute for Fiscal Analysis
 Trinity Presbyterian Church - Arlington, VA
 Turning Point Counseling and Consulting
 Veterans for American Ideals (VA)
 Virginia Africa Partnership
 Virginia Civic Engagement Table (VCET)
 Virginia Coalition for Immigrant Rights
 Virginia Coalition of Latino Organizations
 Virginia Conference of the United Methodist Church
 Virginia Council of Muslim Organizations(VCMO) - 400,000 Muslims in Virginia
 Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy
 Virginia Organizing
 Welcoming Greater Charlottesville
 Wellspring United Church of Christ
 YMCA at Virginia Tech
 YMCA of Greater Richmond

National Organizations with Virginia Presence

32BJ SEIU

African Communities Together
Church of the Brethren
Church World Service
Disciples Refugee & Immigration Ministries
Emgage Action
Ethiopian Community Development Council, Inc.
International Refugee Assistance Project
Islamic Relief USA
Latina Institute for Reproductive Justice Virginia
Law Office of Matthew T. Famiglietti, PLLC
OCA – Asian Pacific American Advocates
Peace Corps Community for Refugees
Refugee Congress
Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice
Upwardly Global
World Education Services