

Indiana Region Opportunities to Welcome Afghan Refugees

By Rev. Dr. Sharon Stanley-Rea, Director, Disciples Refugee & Immigration Ministries

(Check back for updates to this information at: <https://bit.ly/INRegionAfghan>)



(Above center: AP Photo/Jose Luis Magana)--Families evacuated from Kabul, Afghanistan, walk through the terminal before boarding a bus after they arrived at Washington Dulles International Airport, in Chantilly, Va., on Friday, 8/27/2021 and (Above rt: Images from Dar Al-Hijrah at last Saturday's giveaway in Falls Church.)

- **Sign Up for info about how you & your congregation can help:** <https://bit.ly/DisciplesRefugeeInterest>
- **Sign Up to Receive updates from Disciples Refugee & Immigration Ministries:** <http://bit.ly/RIMWRAP>
- **Stay Tuned for info about an upcoming Webinar Next Thursday with Week of Compassion, Disciples Refugee & Immigration Ministries, and GMP Rev. Terri Hord Owens**

Last week, Retired Disciples Pastor Jeff Wright in CO. passed through Dulles Airport after visiting relatives in Scotland. "As we were directed by U.S. Customs for screening" he said, "the room was filled with Afghan families who had completed their flight to the States. They looked dazed and exhausted. Our church wants to help."

Again and again in recent days following the unexpectedly rapid fall of Afghanistan to Taliban control, Disciples have called to ask how they could offer help and welcome. Late last week when a traumatized relative of family members showed up at the door of First Christian in Falls Church, VA., Rev. Steve Moore wrote a letter of support, and later shared contacts for legislative assistance for the man's relatives. The church also supported their interfaith neighbors at Dar Al-Hijrah Islamic Center last Saturday in a donations drive (see above photo) to help welcome new arrivals. Today, the center sent the church a thank you, saying they are "amazed at the goodness of people" and now "busting at the seams with brand new items to distribute."

Disciples Refugee & Immigration Ministries, a ministry of Disciples Home Missions, is receiving calls from Chevy Chase to Nebraska to Oregon who are ready to live out God's call to welcome vulnerable refugees. And welcoming refugees—tens of thousands of them—is something Disciples have generously done since the end of World War II.

The Afghan Crisis is the call of our times for a revival of U.S. resettlement, which has been one of the most effective and non-partisan ways for churches to offer hope for decades. The heartbreak of needs is likely to be lengthy, and areas such as Northern Virginia/Maryland, Sacramento, Dallas, Seattle, and Atlanta are likely to receive high numbers of refugees. Many other areas will receive refugees, as well. Additionally, as we have seen through consistently unfolding news, Camp Atterbury in Johnson County is now joining Dulles Airport, along with Quantico, Fort Lee, and Fort Pickett in Virginia, Fort Bliss in Texas, and a growing list of other bases who are serving as temporary transit and processing centers--offering pathways of promise for Afghan refugees.

What can we DO as Congregations & a Region to Help?



- **WATCH** & Share this Week of Compassion short video, and SHARE recent "RIM WRAP" Refugee & Immigration Alerts about Afghanistan [HERE](#) and [HERE](#).
- **SEE CWS LEARNING RESOURCES** at this [YouTube Link](#), [Afghan Welcome page](#), and [Learn More](#) page. Here is the link to [CWS Welcome Home Campaign](#) — which allows community members to rally friends and family through social media to raise rental assistance and provide a safe landing place for our Afghan friends.

- **TAKE ACTION** to urge safe and [ongoing evacuations](#) of remaining US citizens, Afghan military allies and vulnerable communities still seeking routes to fleeing dangers under the Taliban. See a resource compilation [here](#) about how to support, protect, and advocate for our allies.

- [SEARCH HERE](#) for a map of local affiliate offices of the nation's nine approved refugee resettlement organizations nearest to your area, and [FIND HERE](#) a state by state directory of resettlement offices.
- **PRAY** for U.S. veterans who worked with Afghans for years and are experiencing trauma since Afghanistan's takeover and recent deaths at the airport last week. **PRAY** for U.S. military who are a part of Operation Allies Refuge who have offered their services in this time of lifesaving evacuations and assistance. Remember the Veterans Crisis Line at 1-800-273-8255. And **PRAY** especially for Afghan families who have endured multiple traumas and are seeking hope now to rebuild their lives. Download an Interfaith Prayer Toolkit [here](#), and stay tuned for more opportunities to join together in prayer!
- **PLAN NOW TO VIRTUALLY ATTEND** the "Together We Welcome" National Conference, sponsored by Church World Service and co-sponsored by Disciples of Christ, with refugee, asylum seeker, immigration, and climate migration learning tracks. Nov. 7-11, from 7-9 p.m. ET each evening.
- **RAISE YOUR VOICE PUBLICLY FOR WELCOME** to build awareness and support for your faith welcome for Afghan refugees and allies. Feel free to use/adapt [RCUSA's press statement from August 16th](#), [this digital toolkit](#), [this messaging guidance](#), [this social media guide](#), or [this rapid response toolkit](#) for sample social media posts, graphics, talking points, and more.
- **VOLUNTEER** to help Disciples Refugee & Immigration Ministries mobilize Disciples around the country to respond. Remote options available! Email: sstanley@dhm.disciples.org.

And, in Your Own Area:

LOCALLY HELP REFUGEES THROUGH PARTNERS LIKE THESE:

There are 9 state department approved refugee resettlement agencies in the U.S.; six of which are faith based. Disciples of Christ has a long-term partner relationship with Church World Service, which has a vibrant office in Indiana! RIM also works closely with all other resettlement agencies--and encourages Disciples to work offices nearest to them. Some local Indiana opportunities include:

- **Exodus Refugee/Immigration Inc. (A CWS Refugee Affiliate Office.)** <https://www.exodusrefugee.org/> 2457 E. Washington St., Suite A Indianapolis 46201 317-921-0836 317-204-2715. Note this messaging (updated 9/1): "Right now, Exodus is receiving a high volume of calls and emails about the evacuation in Afghanistan and how we can help Afghan refugees who may be resettled here in Central Indiana. While Exodus is preparing to welcome refugees to our community, our work will happen as the "next step" after refugees are processed at military bases throughout the country, including Camp Atterbury. To donate directly to Camp Atterbury, contact Laura from the National Guard at 317-247-3559. If you are interested in volunteering with Exodus, please visit <https://www.exodusrefugee.org/take-action/volunteer/> and complete a volunteer application! You can also help us by donating household items to Exodus. For a full list of items that we can accept, please visit <https://www.exodusrefugee.org/take-action/household-donations/>. Also, Exodus' physical office remains closed to reduce the risk of virus transmissions in the midst of concerns around COVID-19. We are continuing our critical services remotely. Please call our main number between 9:00 am – 4:00 pm, Monday through Friday for assistance at 317-921-0836."
- **Catholic Charities Indianapolis, Inc 1400 North Meridian Street Indianapolis (A USCCB Affiliate Office.)** 46202 317-236-1518 317-261-3375 webmaster@archindy.org www.archindy.org
- **Catholic Charities of Fort Wayne-South Bend, Inc. (A USCCB Affiliate Office.)** 915 S Clinton Street Fort Wayne 46802 260-422-5625 260-422-5657 ccoffice@ccfwsb.org www.ccfwsb.org. Also see: <https://www.ccfwsb.org/ways-you-can-get-involved>

It is a joy to serve all in the Indiana Region and around the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)—and I look forward to ministering together with refugees in this critical time and ahead!

Rev. Dr. Sharon Stanley-Rea, Director, Disciples Refugee & Immigration Ministries (RIM)

RIM is a ministry of Disciples Home Missions. [Donate](#).

Contact RIM at: sstanley@dhm.disciples.org, or 202-957-7826 (text or call), FB: <http://bit.ly/RIMFacebook>,

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