



**Homeland
Security**

October 25, 2021

Ms. Miriam Feldblum
Executive Director
Presidents' Alliance on Higher Education and Immigration
740 15th St. NW
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Ms. Feldblum:

Thank you for your August 24, 2021 letter to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). Secretary Mayorkas asked that I respond his behalf. I apologize for the delay in my response.

On August 29, 2021, President Biden directed DHS to lead implementation of ongoing efforts across the federal government to support vulnerable Afghans, including those who worked for the United States, as they safely resettle in the United States. These coordinated efforts are known as Operation Allies Welcome (OAW). At the President's direction, DHS stood up a Unified Coordination Group (UCG) to coordinate the implementation of a broad range of services, including initial immigration processing at pre-designated military bases prior to individuals being connected with resettlement organizations. The UCG coordinates closely with partners across every level of government and the private sector, and with non-governmental organizations.

Secretary Mayorkas has exercised his authority to parole certain Afghan nationals – including women and girls at risk – into the United States, on a case-by-case basis, for a period of two years and subsequent to appropriate screening and vetting, provided their movement to the United States is being carried out pursuant to current operations. Once paroled by DHS, Afghan nationals may be eligible for employment authorization¹ and to apply for immigration status through U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).

In addition to OAW, the Department of State is managing referrals to the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program for Afghans who assisted or were associated with the United States in Afghanistan so that they can be processed for U.S. resettlement from a third country if they have already left or leave Afghanistan. DHS stands ready to assist with refugee cases once they have been referred to USCIS for interview and adjudication.

Thank you again for your letter. DHS deeply values its relationship with your association, and we will continue to rely on your unique perspective to support the successful resettlement of our Afghan allies into our communities.

¹ See [Humanitarian or Significant Public Benefit Parole for Individuals Outside the United States](#) | USCIS

Sincerely,

Eva A. Millona
Assistant Secretary