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New Blue Star Families, Welcome.US Poll Shows Troops, Veterans, and Military Families Overwhelmingly Support Afghan Refugee Resettlement

25 Veterans Service Organizations, veterans' organizations join Welcome.US coalition

Washington, D.C. — Today, [Welcome.US](#) and [Blue Star Families](#) released a new poll of military- and veteran-connected families that shows overwhelming support for Afghan refugees and helping them resettle in the United States.

Welcome.US is a bipartisan initiative that launched in September with a mission to engage and mobilize Americans in welcoming and supporting refugees, starting with the individuals and families fleeing Afghanistan. Today, 25 Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs) and veterans' organizations, including Blue Star Families, Team Rubicon, and The Independence Fund, are joining the broad coalition of partners working with Welcome.US.

Key findings from the [poll](#) include:

- **77%** of survey respondents agree that the United States has an obligation to help those fleeing Afghanistan.
- **46%** of respondents who had served in Afghanistan had already taken action to help Afghan refugees.
- **84%** of all respondents, and 81% of those who served in Afghanistan, agree with the statement that “Veterans of the war in Afghanistan are going to have a hard time processing the end of the war.”

“It is wonderful to see our veterans, service members, and their families mobilizing support for our new Afghan neighbors,” **said Welcome.US CEO Nazanin Ash.** “Their actions and the poll

results tell us what we know: that Americans are eager to live their values of welcome. We are proud to welcome Blue Star Families and 25 other VSOs to the Welcome.US coalition as we continue working to welcome these refugees to their new home, and we hope many other community organizations will join them.”

The results of the poll come as nonprofit organizations, volunteer associations, faith institutions, businesses, state and local governments, and everyday Americans are coming together to help welcome Afghan refugees as they rebuild their lives in the United States.

“Our service members know firsthand the enormous sacrifices our Afghan allies have made for the shared values of freedom and democracy that we all hold so dear,” **said General Stanley A. McChrystal**. “It should be no surprise that our veterans and their families have been among the first to step up to welcome and support the Afghan people as they build their lives here in America. With steadfast commitments from 25 VSO partners and all the organizations that Welcome.US has brought together, the American people are showing once again why we are a beacon of hope and light for the rest of the world.”

For example, Team Rubicon, a veteran-led nonprofit that serves communities impacted by natural disasters and humanitarian crises, is supporting the resettlement effort by providing logistics support and site management, collecting and organizing donated goods, assisting with the setup of housing units, and supplying interpreters. With a predominantly veteran volunteer base, Afghan family resettlement is a deeply personal mission for the organization.

“Team Rubicon is honored to assist with meeting the immediate needs of Afghan families on our bases and contributing to the national resettlement effort as they become members of communities across the United States,” **said Art delaCruz, CEO of Team Rubicon**. “Veterans, service members, and their families are all experiencing a range of complex emotions following the withdrawal from Afghanistan and the opportunity to assist across the country not only allows us to keep the promises we made to our Afghan allies, but gives our volunteers a sense of purpose, community, and mission.”

The Independence Fund, which is committed to empowering our nation’s catastrophically wounded, injured, or ill veterans to overcome physical, mental, and emotional wounds, is working with Save Our Allies to replace the American Red Cross at Fort McCoy in Wisconsin and Fort Bliss in Texas, and has veteran volunteers on site at the other six military installations. The Independence Fund and Save Our Allies are encouraging veterans to find a mission to serve Afghan allies stateside, as many veterans continue to deal with the emotional toll of the withdrawal in Afghanistan.

“For many of us, the aftermath of Afghanistan is forever in our homes,” **said Sarah Verado, CEO of The Independence Fund**. “Doing what we can, however we can, to help our wartime allies is a moral obligation that as military and veteran families we must uphold.”

This is also personal for many military spouses and families, who are playing an active role in welcoming our new Afghan neighbors.

“The war in Afghanistan shaped the lives of both service members and their families. As a military family, we love and care about our service members and our veterans, but military families had

our own unique experiences as we served alongside our service members and veterans,” **said Kathy Roth-Douquet, CEO of Blue Star Families.** “Each military family member is experiencing their own feelings, and like others in our community, deserve outlets to address their mental health and well-being. For many in our community, that often means serving and acting.”

“I have always felt called to be a helper, to be a voice or amplifier for those who need support,” **said Tonya Murphy, an active-duty Navy spouse currently stationed in the National Capital Region and a DEPLOY Fellow with Blue Star Families.** “Helping Afghan allies resettle is a small way that I can offer support and hopefully extend a feeling of welcome and lighten the burden for a family who is going through such a difficult challenge. I hope that the Afghan families resettling here feel seen, welcomed, and a sense of belonging through the work that all of the volunteers are doing to help them as they begin to rebuild their lives here. It is what we as military families want with each move, and while it is not at all the same thing, some part of us can identify with these families and their feelings as they transition to a new country.”

To help veterans and military families learn more about ways to welcome Afghan refugees, Welcome.US and Blue Star Families are hosting a webinar on October 26 at 2PM ET. Interested veterans and families can RSVP [here](#).

Blue Star Families conducted the [Supporting Afghanistan Allies Pulse Check](#) from September 3–7, 2021. The survey includes the responses of 1,723 individuals who identify as an active-duty spouse (38%), veteran or retired service member (23%), spouse of a veteran (18%), military parent (13%), and active-duty service member (6%). Respondents include 200 service members, veterans, or retired service members who served in Afghanistan, and 494 family members of a current service member, veteran, or retired service member who served in Afghanistan.

The 25 Veterans Service Organizations and veterans’ organizations joining Welcome.US today include:

- American Red Cross
- Association of Wartime Allies
- Blue Star Families
- Combined Arms
- Common Defense
- Elizabeth Dole Foundation
- High Ground Veterans Advocacy
- Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America
- Institute for Veterans and Military Families at Syracuse University
- Military Child Education Coalition
- Nation’s Finest
- No One Left Behind
- PsychArmor
- Secure Families Initiative
- Student Veterans of America
- Team Rubicon
- The Independence Fund
- The Mission Continues
- Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors
- Travis Manion Foundation

- The U.S. Chamber of Commerce — Hiring Our Heroes
- Veterans for American Ideals
- Vets Community Connections
- With Honor Action
- Wounded Warrior Project

About Welcome.US

Welcome.US is a new national effort that launched on September 14 to welcome refugees, beginning with Afghan families and individuals as they get settled and build new lives in the United States. Welcome.US provides a single point of entry to channel the outpouring of support from Americans who want to get involved by donating supplies, money, or time to frontline organizations; offering temporary housing; or sponsoring refugees. President Barack Obama and Michelle Obama, President George. W. Bush and Laura Bush, and President William J. Clinton and Secretary Hillary Clinton serve as honorary co-chairs.

In addition to encouraging Americans to donate to frontline organizations, Welcome.US created the [Welcome Fund](#), which will provide emergency grants to nonprofit organizations working to address the most urgent needs facing Afghan refugees.

Welcome.US is co-chaired by Cecilia Muñoz, senior adviser to New America and former director of the White House Domestic Policy Council under President Obama, and John Bridgeland, CEO of the COVID Collaborative and former director of the White House Domestic Policy Council under President Bush.

Welcome.US is a sponsored project of Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors, a 501(c)3 organization.

To learn more about Welcome.US, please visit welcome.us.

For press inquiries, please contact press@welcome.us.

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