



Colorado Afghan Legal Project

What is it?

The Colorado Afghan Project is a State-sponsored legal project that helps Afghan parolees in Colorado apply for asylum and get connected to other immigration legal services where appropriate.

Where is it?

The Project is based at Catholic Charities of Denver. Screenings and workshops are located at various locations in the Denver Metro and Colorado Springs areas. Currently, screenings are taking place **by appointment only** at Hidden Brook Apartments and Lutheran Family Services in Denver, and workshops have been held and scheduled at Project Worthmore in Aurora and Masjid Ikhlas mosque in Northglenn. We anticipate having at least one workshop in Colorado Springs this summer.

How do I refer someone for services? How do I sign up for services?

The Project works directly with Colorado's resettlement agencies (except for International Rescue Committee (IRC), which is supporting its own clients' legal needs) to schedule Afghans for legal screenings and, where appropriate, an asylum workshop. **We do not accept direct referrals from other service providers or schedule appointments directly with eligible Afghans.** If you are supporting an Afghan who you think may be eligible for services through this project, email tharper@ccdenver.org to get connected to the appropriate contact within their resettlement agency. If you are an Afghan who would like to sign up for a screening, contact your case manager.

What services do you provide?

Through this Project we screen and refer Afghan parolees to their best next steps to stabilize their immigration legal status from humanitarian parole to a path to lawful permanent residence (green card). For most, asylum will be the best next step. For the majority of those, we will refer individuals to an asylum workshop. Our workshop model is unable to assist unaccompanied children, adults with certain kinds of criminal history, and adults who have had certain kinds of contacts or interactions with the Taliban or other armed groups in Afghanistan. Also, we are limited to assisting only with the application for asylum. To the greatest extent possible we will refer anyone who does not qualify for assistance through an asylum workshop to other non-profit immigration legal programs, pro bono attorneys, and private immigration attorneys for direct assistance.

How much does it cost?

The services provided through the Colorado Afghan Legal Project are 100% free. The funding for this project covers screening and referrals, as well as participation in the asylum workshops. However, in the event that we make a referral for individuals whose immigration legal needs do not fall within the scope of this Project, there may be costs associated with obtaining legal services from a non-profit legal program or a private attorney, and we make no promises as to what these costs are or whether

attorneys associated with these organizations or firms will make exceptions to their typical fees for Afghans seeking to stabilize their legal status. Individuals seeking legal services and those acting on their behalf should obtain information about potential fees at the earliest opportunity in the process.

What happens at an asylum workshop?

At the workshop, each participant will be paired with a team of trained volunteers to help prepare the application for asylum. Workshop volunteers will help fill out the Form I-589, Application for Asylum; gather, print, and copy supporting documentation; and compile, copy, and package the completed application packet. It is our intention that every participant will leave the workshop with a completed application packet ready to submit via mail.

What about the one year deadline to apply for asylum?

Typically, an applicant for asylum must submit their application within one year of their arrival in the U.S. However, there is an exception for those in lawful immigration status, including humanitarian parole. For those individuals, they are given a reasonable amount of time beyond the one-year deadline (usually no more than six additional months) to submit their applications. To the greatest extent possible, we will try to schedule and complete applications according to participants' arrival dates (as indicated on their I-94), and within one year of that date. However, given the extension available to this population by U.S. immigration law, the sheer number of Afghans needing to apply for asylum in Colorado, and the capacity afforded by our workshop model, some applicants may not be scheduled for the workshop before the one-year anniversary of their arrival.

When will I be scheduled for an asylum workshop?

We will schedule participants for the workshop according to arrival date, prioritizing earliest arrivals. We may reach out directly to participants to schedule, or we may work with our resettlement agency contacts to schedule participants.

What about after the workshop? Do you provide any assistance with preparing for the interview?

We are unable to offer any follow-up legal services after the workshop, including interview preparation. This is currently out of the scope of our workshop model, but if we can include assistance in the future, we will reach out to participants and our networks to make those services available.

What do I do if I still have questions?

Email the Asylum Workshop Coordinator at tharper@ccdenver.org.