

*Creating a world where immigrants, refugees, migrants, and people on the move are treated with dignity, respect, welcome and belonging.*

### **USCCB Organizational Structure and Management**

Migration and Refugee Services of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) fulfills the commitment of the U.S. Catholic bishops to protect the life and dignity of the human person by welcoming, protecting, promoting, and integrating refugees, asylees, migrants, unaccompanied children, and victims of human trafficking. USCCB brings the strength of conviction, deep compassion, humanitarian values, infrastructure, broad nationwide and international presence to a long history and commitment to refugee resettlement to Operation Allies Welcome (OAW).

USCCB headquarters is in Washington, D.C. USCCB operates the OAW program through its Migration and Refugee Services department, which also oversees other programs supporting vulnerable newcomers. In addition, USCCB Finance & Accounting processes all OAW program reimbursement requests and provides other financial services, including preparation of the financial reports to various funders, facilitation of the annual audit, and financial monitoring activities. Technology support is provided by USCCB Information Technology, primarily in the development and maintenance of the USCCB affiliate-facing programmatic and financial database, MRIS. USCCB ensures that services provided to those served under this proposal are not contrary to the authentic teaching of the Catholic Church, its moral convictions, or religious beliefs.

USCCB has cultivated a program management team with international emergency response, domestic resettlement, volunteer coordination and grants management experience and has developed structures to support effective communication, innovative idea generation, and cross-team collaboration. There will be an identified USCCB site lead, a legal lead and an Morale Wellness and Recreation (MWR) lead for each Safe Haven. Weekly meetings of all Safe Haven site leads will be hosted by the USCCB headquarters team and managed by the USCCB OAW Project Director. There will be weekly meetings for legal leads and MWR leads to support program operations and problem solving.

### **Activities at the Safe Havens**

The USCCB planning operations began in earnest in the last week of July for Fort Lee in collaboration with IRC and the other military and government organizations involved in Operations Allies Welcome. The initial program was targeted at primarily Afghan Special Immigrant Visas (SIVs) with a view to swift movement through an efficient processing flow to include the required and necessary completions of medical examinations and vaccinations (Form I 693), biometrics, and applications for employment authorizations (I-765). Once all necessary processing was completed a brief orientation was provided. Note that more intensive cultural orientations, while initially planned, were shelved due to the perceived need to move SIVs through a rapid program as others were to follow in successive airplane loads.

USCCB, worked jointly with IRC in supporting the overall operation with USCCB focused on

two specific areas – legal needs to complete the forms and an MWR program. The overall goals of the program were to provide children between 0 -17 years old access to safe recreation activities and child friendly spaces and for women to have access to a safe environment and receive support for infant and young child nutrition. The MWR program took the form of activities within a large tent next to the lodging of the Afghan guests and provided stress relief in the care for their children while going through a rigorous medical and legal process at the safe haven. While a full-fledged cultural orientation was not envisioned an information desk was also set up within the MWR tent to provide access to information about life in the U.S. and answer a myriad of questions particularly about “what next”? Overall, the USCCB drew on support from our Washington headquarters, the Catholic Charities organizations in Virginia involved with refugee resettlement who had extensive experience with Afghan SIVs, CLINIC (national legal immigrant organization) and the broader network of affiliate agencies involved with refugee resettlement. These were primarily in the form of relatively short one- or two-week assignments to work on the base.

USCCB also began to develop a bank of lawyers who were made available to provide the necessary forms filling expected to be required such as the work authorizations as well as individual consultations. Again, as the initial idea of a full-fledged cultural orientation program was put aside due to the expected rapid processing and movement of the SIVs, the objective of group legal orientation sessions was put aside in favor of support to processing. A further legal related initiative was started in support of the operation at Dulles airport and a system was set up to answer questions from SIVs being processed at the airport as a means to reduce the anxiety and trauma of coming to the United States. These were informal verbal counseling sessions with relocated clients about their legal options but not the completion of paperwork. NGO staff and interpreters were on-site to assist with these conversations.

The Fort Lee MWR tent and play/sports activities became the model for eventual expansion to other safe havens and provided an initial glimpse at the interactions of parents and children as well as men and women on the base.

### **Safe Haven Expansion**

After only a few weeks of SIV focused processing at Fort Lee the situation unraveled in Kabul leading to the unexpected evacuation and eventual arrival of tens of thousands of Afghans from the Kabul airport. USCCB and IRC were asked to expand the programs from Fort Lee to a developing list of military installations in the U.S. with an expectation to receive 60,000 Afghans from staging areas eventually referred to as “lily pads” in a number of overseas countries. During the last week in August USCCB began recruiting and placing staff in Fort Bliss and Joint Base MDL (Fort Dix) and rapidly expanded to eight bases. USCCB placed staff in all eight safe havens and by September 8, 2021, the welcome operation at the last base to come online, Atterbury in Indiana, was being supported by USCCB staff.

The unexpected expansion required an operation to recruit both volunteers and staff across the United States. Initial targets remained with the Catholic Charities network but USCCB began to draw on staff from Catholic Relief Services, Jesuit Refugee Services, CLINIC, and a national

immigration network called “Justice for Immigrants”. Eventually ads were placed in national recruiting sites such as Idealist and Indeed.

Each base has a site lead – the person with overall responsibility of USCCB activities and the liaison with other organizations. The person sits on the leadership team of the base which meets daily. USCCB continued to focus on the set up of legal support to the guests at the bases as well as MWR activities. In various bases volunteer groups such as the American Red Cross and Rubicon were initially present and collaborations with those organizations and other volunteer efforts developed.

### **Safe Haven Activities – MWR**

Each safe haven facility was first and foremost focused on both preparing, and in many cases building out, structures (housing and office tents), to receive the guests in a rapidly evolving and chaotic situation again precipitated by the end of military presence in Afghanistan. Issues such as measles outbreaks and the necessary containment measures as well as vaccinations have also hampered processing and life development in the safe havens.

A USCCB staffing pattern is being applied based on the initial work at Fort Lee and first experiences with the large, expanded and stable (not moving out quickly) populations in the safe havens. Further, the pattern is influenced by a number of domestic government organizations coming on line at the safe havens and the overall charge of the safe haven operations being moved to the Department of Homeland Security. Finally, it is important to note that each base has evolved differently and to some degree the expectations of USCCB and the needs of the base population and subsequent leadership desires also differs at each base.

The MWR program, once space is established, will be staffed by a core group of persons focused on activities in the tents and outside when possible. The plan is to have under the overall USCCB lead an MWR lead. The MWR lead (job description attached) coordinates the activities and has under his/her supervision a site tent lead. Under each tent lead are a number of staff per day, representing mixtures of paid activity coordinators and volunteers, to organize and supervise the activities of the participants in the tents. The ratio of play coordinators and supervisors to participants needs to be appropriate to assure safety. Activities may include basic play activities geared to the age of the child, art therapy, board games, movie nights, tea times, henna parties and fingernail painting for girls/women, sewing, arts and crafts, guest Afghan musicians, etc. Tents will be divided to accommodate different age groups. Other activities in MWR tents may include some basic English conversation and ESL classes, cultural orientation sessions, women’s group meetings, yoga for adults, and information sessions. Outdoor activities include soccer, volleyball, basketball and perhaps cricket. At times, related to the culture of guests, tents may need to be used uniquely by females or males – thus some gender division of whole tents and parts of tents.

### **Legal Activities**

USCCB anticipates setting up a “legal lead” (job description attached) in each base to coordinate activities. The USCCB will provide Legal Orientation Presentations (LOPs) at all safe havens.

The presentations may vary slightly at each safe haven, but all will consist of general information regarding the guests' immigration status and the relevant processes and legislation that apply to their situation. Guests are strongly encouraged to seek independent immigration representation and have the opportunity to ask questions after the presentation concludes. LOPs include:

- Options available for family and friends still in Afghanistan;
- Information about resettlement agencies;
- Encourage guests to seek counsel as well as a warning of nefarious actors or 'Fake Attorneys';
- Description of rights and responsibilities in order to become a permanent resident;
- Description of U.S. Citizenship;
- Information about parole status and humanitarian parole;
- Description of permanent residency, including information about Special Immigrant Visas, family-based petitions, and asylum;
- Steps in an application for a green card (description of forms I-360, I-485);
- Brief description of asylum process and form I-589.

In addition, some safe havens offer resources and material that guests are able to take with them in order to reiterate key messages or to obtain additional information.

The prominent activity will be "legal orientations" of groups of 25 – 50 persons. The groups may be divided according to linguistic capacity. The legal orientations will need to be in structures or rooms separate from the MWR activities. Depending on the base and its development in processing guest activities changes will be needed to this model and the sequencing of orientations and other legal assistance over time. It is anticipated that these orientations will be provided by attorneys either on staff or recruited in proximity to the safe haven. Immigration attorneys are keen to help this population and meetings have been held with and commitments made to assist by such organizations as the American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA), Human Rights First, Jesuit Refugee Services, Catholic Charities Las Cruces, and Migration and Refugees Services/El Paso (DMRS). Legal orientations will be held on bases, again in concert with processing activities.

Further, USCCB will endeavor to coordinate legal services as appropriate depending on population at the base. This could include hosting legal clinics with volunteer attorneys to assist with the completion of the I-485 (Permanent Residence application) for eligible cases, legal orientation programs to ensure evacuated Afghans have critical information about their options for adjustment of status and next steps. Services might also include special consultation with attorneys for mixed status families, possible cases of gender-based violence or domestic abuse, family separation, etc. In agreement with State Dept. the USCCB program lead and designated staff are available on an as needed basis to help with specific and challenging legal cases.

### **Other Activities**

- 1) Emergency purchase of supplies for the guest population or vulnerable groups in the population on an as needed basis and in concurrence with facility team members

including State Dept. Assistance with management and distribution of supplies on an as needed basis and in concurrence with State Dept. at the safe haven.

- 2) Desks or points of contact for counseling/information concerning base logistics and activities, early departure concerns, concerns with “life after the fort”, etc. depending on needs and other actor involvement in each safe haven. Facilitation of programs such as cultural orientation, behavioral health information sessions, etc.. at the safe haven including providing assistance to use MWR or legal orientation tents/rooms as feasible.
- 3) Dealing with cases of family separation on base and facilitating reunion of families across bases.
- 4) Ensure adequate personnel are identified (including some volunteers), hired and oriented to carry out all proposed activities.

### **Partnership and Coordination:**

USCCB prioritizes coordination with key actors to maximize complementarity and avoid duplication. All activities are planned based on perceived and when possible solicited needs of Afghan guest community, federal government representatives at the safe havens, US military personnel at safe havens, and other NGOs implementing similar legal and MWR activities.

In addition to weekly internal meetings of USCCB Base Leads, Legal Leads, and MWR Leads, USCCB will participate in coordination meetings at base level, as well as inter-base coordination meetings, such as the DHS Children’s Liaison Group and the CORE-PRM-DHS Meeting on Cultural Orientation.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation:**

To understand the reach of USCCB Legal and MWR activities across the eight safe havens, USCCB will track both quantitative and qualitative data, reporting the overall number of activities led by USCCB at each safe haven. Each safe haven’s activities will differ slightly, according to the Afghan population guests living on the site and availability of certain professionals (musician’s, soccer coaches, art therapy specialists, etc..) at each safe haven.

For legal activities, USCCB will track the number of Afghan guests who access legal information through the number of legal orientations held and the number of individuals participating, broken down by gender. Where USCCB holds legal clinics, the project will track the number of individuals assisted with support. Where information desks exist and are staffed by USCCB, the project will track the number of individuals who come with questions. Project staff will monitor the types of questions asked and use this information to help improve the messaging in legal orientation sessions. The project will also track the number of attorneys, both paid and volunteer who support this effort.

For MRW, USCCB will count the total number of activities occurring in MRW tents as well as the total number of Afghan guests enjoying activities in the MWR tents each day, broken down by gender and by age (under 14 and over 14). Outdoor recreation activities, such as number of sports games held can be counted, while the number of participants will be estimates. USCCB will also track purchases and donations of supplies for MWR activities.

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) will be scheduled periodically throughout the project period to understand how Afghan guests currently perceive on-going MWR activities and what other types of activities they would like to engage in while living at the safe haven. These methodologies will ask the guests about activities they already participate in, what they like or dislike about those activities, and what types of activities they would like added to the schedule and at what frequency. Questions will also be asked about the MWR tents and how those spaces could be made more comfortable and how the calendar of activities can be better communicated. The FGDs and KIIs will be conducted in Dari, Pashto, or English, depending on the language of the guest participating in these monitoring activities. All FGDs and KIIs will begin with a standard introduction and all guests will be asked to give their verbal consent to agree to answer the survey questions. USCCB will not ask for input from children unless their parent or legal guardian is present.

USCCB will share a monthly activity report, no later than 5 working days after the end of the calendar month. A human interest story will accompany the report.

#### Illustrative List of Indicators:

##### *Project level:*

Total # of USCCB-led activities on each base and across bases

##### *Activity level:*

Total # of USCCB-led legal activities held on each base and across bases

- # of legal orientations held on each base and across bases
  - # of participants, disaggregated by gender

Total # of USCCB-led MWR activities held on each base and across bases

- # of MWR activities held on each base and across bases
  - # of adult participants, disaggregated by gender
  - # of child participants, disaggregated by gender

## **Safe Haven Job Descriptions**

### **Job Description: MWR Activities Program Manager, USCCB Afghan Support Project**

Location: Indiana, New Jersey, New Mexico, Texas, Virginia, Wisconsin

Duration: 1 – 5 months from September 2021 through March 2022 (preference for candidates who are available for a minimum of one month)

#### **Background**

The Office of Migration and Refugee Services (MRS) of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) is taking responsibility to ensure Morale, Wellness and Recreation (MWR) activities for Afghan guests, who have been evacuated from Afghanistan, and are currently living on US military bases in Indiana, New Jersey, New Mexico, Texas, Virginia, and Wisconsin. The guests represent a diverse group of Afghans, from sophisticated city-based fluent English speakers to rural people with limited exposure to other cultures.

#### **Role**

The MWR Manager is responsible for overseeing activities designed to support the Afghan guests' morale, wellness and recreation needs. The MWR program responds primarily to the needs of women and children and aims to both enhance their experience in their current living circumstances, as well as preparing them for resettlement in the US.

#### **Specific Responsibilities**

- Coordinate with volunteer / staffing coordinators (International Rescue Committee and Catholic Charities) to ensure adequate personnel (volunteers, staff and interpreters) to carry out activities
- Establish norms and standards for activities
- Orient personnel to their roles and responsibilities
- Plan daily / weekly activities, including material needs and procurement through purchasing or donations
- Monitor quality of implementation to ensure a safe, educational and fun environment; establishing metrics for quality
- Monitor use / uptake of services; adjust planning to respond to highest levels of interests of the guests
- Coordinate activities with other MWR coordinators in other USCCB bases
- Feed into overall program development (e.g., changing or expanding services, etc.)

#### **Illustrative Activities of the MWR team:**

- Indoor and Outdoor activities for women and children (mostly under ten years of age)
- ESL classes for children and adults
- Barber Shop and Beauty Salon
- Cultural orientation and discussion rooms
- Group trauma healing sessions

#### Key Qualifications:

- Flexibility and comfortable working in a fast-paced, changing environment
- Experience working with refugee populations or in emergency settings, domestic or international is a plus
- Strong communicator
- Experienced working with those from other cultural contexts
- Team player
- Willingness to work long hours or evenings and on weekends as required
- Ability to read/write/speak Dari or Pashto is not required, but is a plus

Supervisory Responsibilities: Supervise team leads at each center, facilitate and ensure continuity of other (future) services, including supervision of personnel as appropriate.

#### Key contacts:

Program Director, Volunteer Coordinator, Staff Coordinator (IRC), Operations Manager, Rec Center personnel (DoD)

#### Job Description: Legal Lead, USCCB Afghan Support Project

Location: Indiana, New Jersey, New Mexico, Texas, Virginia, Wisconsin

Duration: 1 – 5 months from September 2021 through March 2022 (preference for candidates who are available for a minimum of one month)

#### Background

The Office of Migration and Refugee Services (MRS) of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) is taking responsibility to provide in-person and virtual legal consultations with Afghan guests, who have been evacuated from Afghanistan, and are currently living on US military bases in Indiana, New Jersey, New Mexico, Texas, Virginia, and Wisconsin. The guests represent a diverse group of Afghans, from sophisticated city-based fluent English speakers to rural people with limited exposure to other cultures.

Role: The Legal Lead is responsible for overseeing legal work for Afghan guests at each base, including legal orientation presentations and other legal support. S/he should ensure that attorneys are provided for each base for these purposes and work with USCCB Leads at each base to ensure that legal support is provided to as many Afghan guests as possible, within the resources available.

#### Specific Responsibilities:

- Coordinate immigration legal services as appropriate depending on population at the assigned base
- Host legal clinics with volunteer attorneys to assist with the completion of the I-485 (Permanent Residence application) for eligible cases
- Orient and consult with other volunteer lawyers assisting the legal clinic.
- Provide in-person and virtual legal orientation programs and consultations to ensure

evacuated Afghans have critical information about the immigration process, their options for adjustment of status and next steps

- Represent the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in coordinating meetings with United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), the United States Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) on technical legal issues.
- Raise especially complex cases to the appropriate agencies, i.e. USCIS, ORR, IOM etc.
- Coordinate and deploy legal volunteers as needed and manage legal counseling spaces.
- Work with USCCB Leads and appropriate NGO and agency staff to identify legal issues among the refugee population and seek solutions;
- Periodically attend meetings on base to discuss these matters.

#### Key Qualifications:

A successful candidate:

- has a good programming mind that can coordinate across multiple stakeholders to ensure the coordination of legal support activities, which would include general orientations for guests, in person and virtual counseling, as well as trouble shooting for specific cases.
- does not need to have a legal background but should have a basic understanding of US-based immigration laws and be able to consult and manage local legal expertise.
- Possesses strong communication skills and experience working with those from other cultural contexts
- Is comfortable working in a fast-paced environment
- Is willing to work long hours, which might include evenings or weekends
- Is a team player
- Ability to read/write/speak Dari or Pashto is not required, but is a plus