
Project ANAR

Annual Report

2021



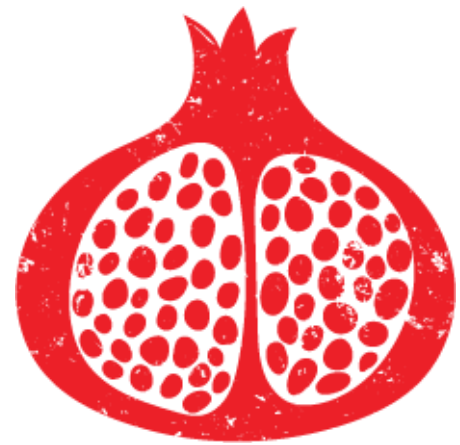
PROJECT
ANAR

AFGHAN NETWORK FOR ADVOCACY & RESOURCES

Project ANAR

Project ANAR (Afghan Network for Advocacy and Resources), is an Afghan-led legal assistance effort that has connected thousands of Afghans with legal volunteers in order to apply for Humanitarian Parole to come to the United States. We are a fiscally sponsored project of Pangea Legal Services.

In August 2021, as the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan was underway, most U.S. efforts related to Afghans were focused only on U.S. allied or U.S. affiliated individuals. For many everyday Afghans, there was no option for refuge. The Afghans leading this project saw a direct and urgent need to file U.S. humanitarian parole applications as the only option to ensure the safety of their loved ones. In a matter of days, Afghan lawyers and organizers, together with immigration lawyers from Pangea Legal Services and Centro Legal de la Raza, coordinated emergency pro bono legal assistance efforts to train volunteer lawyers, and pair them with Afghans seeking entry to the U.S.



PROGRESS SINCE AUGUST 2021

- Received requests from over 8,642 Afghans from all around the world for legal assistance
 - Connected over 5,350 individuals with legal volunteers
 - Recruited and provided technical assistance to over 1,100 legal volunteers
 - Recruited over 700 volunteer sponsors
 - Raised over \$450,000 for filing fee assistance
 - Filed over 600 individual Humanitarian Parole applications with filing fees
 - Wrote two letters to President Biden & the Administration advocating for more favorable use of the government's discretion to welcome Afghans
 - Recruited hundreds of legal service and community groups to join advocacy campaigns by signing on to letters
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Project ANAR

For the last several months, Project ANAR has rallied to meet the needs of Afghans facing a humanitarian crisis and seeking refuge and family reunification in the United States. Our work is founded and spearheaded by Afghans in the U.S. who come from refugee families ourselves.

Our immediate families came here a generation ago, after earlier crises in our homeland. During August 2021, we quickly became overwhelmed with requests for assistance from our extended families and communities, who were facing direct threats to their lives as the Taliban took over Kabul. As lawyers and legal professionals, we turned to our legal community for support in carrying the responsibility of our Afghan community's safety and hopes. Together, we took on the task of pairing legal volunteers directly with Afghans seeking assistance to file humanitarian parole applications, one of the only potential pathways available to most Afghans.

From the beginning, we sought to employ an empowerment model, where we explained the risks and challenges with applying for humanitarian parole to community members, so that Afghans could choose whether or not humanitarian parole was right for their needs. This started and remains a demand-based project, where we are responding to what the Afghan community is asking for.

Our efforts have grown over time – we went

from assisting our own families and friends with humanitarian parole applications to pairing a list of nearly 9,000 Afghans with over 1,100 legal volunteers to provide legal assistance. We've paired over half of the Afghans on that list with volunteers thus far and filed more than 600 applications with filing fees. We've also created public resources for countless others.

After months of filing applications non-stop, it quickly became clear that the U.S. government was not moving with the same urgency we were. In October, it was still unclear whether the U.S. government had granted a single application since the withdrawal.

Then, we took on the added responsibility of coordinating advocacy efforts to put pressure on the U.S. government to adjudicate Afghan parole applications and use its discretion to grant parole. We led two letters co-signed by hundreds of organizations raising concerns about the fate of thousands of Afghans who remain trapped in Afghanistan, and have applied for humanitarian protections with the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services. Our work has been covered in the [LA Times](#), [NPR's The World](#), [The Nation](#), [KQED](#), and the [Philadelphia Inquirer](#), among others.

While in the past five months we have witnessed our communities mobilize to an unprecedented level to meet the needs of Afghans, the U.S. government has yet to respond with humanity. In the new year, we plan to continue to pursue policy advocacy. We will also build on our existing resources to provide the community with more detailed resources to submit applications - without the need for a lawyer.

Project ANAR's U.S. Policy Priorities for Afghans

- Establishing a special parole program for Afghans urgently fleeing to the U.S. for safety and exercising broad and favorable use of discretion in granting parole to Afghans
 - Applying reduced evidentiary and threat standards that account for the reality that it is impossible to collect complete documentation in a crisis situation
 - Creating pathways for the safe passage of Afghans out of Afghanistan and to the U.S.
 - Exercising broad approval of fee waivers and a policy of waiving fees
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Thank You!



To Our Hundreds of Volunteers And Supporters

None of this work would be possible without the legal volunteers, sponsors, translators, and administrative volunteers who have each dedicated countless hours -- above and beyond their day jobs and other responsibilities -- to call Afghans seeking to come to the U.S. on WhatsApp, to get critical legal information, to quickly translate key documents, to act as a sponsor for Afghans who do not have family in the United States, to respond to questions from other legal volunteers, to review applications before they are submitted, and so much more. The responsibility of responding humanely to the outpouring of legal need from Afghans has taken a village. Each of you has shown dedication, service, and an ability to teach or learn about humanitarian parole. It has been an honor to work alongside you all during such a critical time for Afghans in need of assistance, and to create something positive with you in such a dark time.

This work has also depended on generous support of legal, community, and philanthropic partners.

Partners

- Afghan-American Community Organization
- Afghan Diaspora for Equality & Progress
- Berkeley Law Afghanistan Project
- Centro Legal de la Raza
- Human Rights First
- Innovation Law Lab
- Oasis Legal Services
- Pangea Legal Services
- PARS Equality Center
- Southeast Asian Resource Action Center

Funders

- Bigglesworth Family Foundation
- California Dignity for Families Fund
- Common Counsel
- Give Forward
- Grove Foundation
- Maxwell/Hanrahan Fund
- San Francisco Foundation
- Sobrato Foundation
- Sunlight Giving
- Tides Foundation
- Walter & Elise Haas Fund

Sending gratitude from our co-coordinators

Laila Ayub, Susan Beaty, Juliette Chisam-Majid, Saamia Haqiq, Michele Lampach, Wogai Mohmand, and Roxana Moussavian