

# Afghan Asylum Project

In August 2021, as a result of the crisis in Afghanistan, thousands of Afghan citizens began arriving in the United States, with urgent needs for legal and social services as they sought to rebuild their lives. We launched our Afghan Asylum Project shortly after with the goal of supporting as many refugees as possible with their asylum cases and providing access to health care, food, shelter, and the other basics they would need right away.

**After four years of successful advocacy helping many Afghan survivors and families access asylum, the project has come to an end. Here is a snapshot of the project's impact:**

## Afghan Asylum Helpline and Outreach

We launched the toll-free Afghan asylum helpline in September 2021 to meet the urgent need for specialized immigration services. We answered nearly 300 calls to our toll-free helpline for information and referrals, including more than 70 calls from monolingual speakers of Dari or Pashto. We also delivered training and outreach to over 750 professionals, advocates, and other community members to ensure that newcomers were met with welcome and support.

## Direct Legal Services to Afghans

From the calls we received on our helpline, we served a total of 205 clients, providing services to individuals in 41 cities across 18 states. Of those 205 clients, we filed asylum applications for 192 clients and provided social services support to 61 clients. To ensure we had enough legal expertise to meet clients' needs, Tahirih project attorneys mentored nearly 500 pro bono attorneys so they were prepared to provide assistance as well.

98%

**of asylum applications  
have been approved  
thus far**

*[Read a profile](#) of two Afghan Asylum Project pro bono attorneys from Morrison Foerster LLP*

**Thus far, 189 clients have received asylum, and five clients have been granted their green cards, enabling them to stay in the United States with their families on a permanent pathway to legal status.**

Tahirih partnered with the Department of State, Georgetown Institute for Peace and Security, Vital Voices, and Mina's List to provide legal representation to a cohort of at least 150 Afghan women leaders and their families, including lawyers, journalists, and politicians. We also partnered with the Asian University for Women, American University, Mayer Brown, and 15 other law firms to support 146 Afghan women students who evacuated to the United States when their studies were abruptly interrupted as the Taliban took control of their country.

***"There's a saying in Farsi that means, "my heart/soul, my inside has been emptied out." It's like I can exhale, I can breath now. You're able to connect with someone and share this information you've been holding onto for so long. It's been such an honor to be able to be that person for so many people and be able to validate what they're going through."***

**- Shabnam Sharifi, Social Services Consultant**

### **Know Your Rights Trainings, Education and Advocacy**

Tahirih provided extensive training, education, and advocacy to Afghan individuals, service providers, and government officials in the wake of the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan. As part of this effort, Tahirih staff traveled multiple times to Quantico and other military bases to deliver Know Your Rights presentations and conduct safety planning sessions with Afghan women and girls awaiting resettlement. These activities were critical in helping newly arrived Afghans understand their legal rights, navigate complex immigration processes, and protect themselves from potential harm. By empowering both survivors and the professionals who support them, Tahirih worked to ensure safer and more informed resettlement experiences.

In addition, in partnership with The National Immigrant Women's Advocacy Project, Catholic Charities, and Texas Rio Grande Legal Aid, Tahirih hosted live translated Know Your Rights webinars and Q&A sessions for Afghan women to disseminate information about legal rights and protections related to gender-based violence, rights under employment law, and eligibility for social benefit programs. Tahirih also provided extensive technical assistance to the State Department as they grappled with safety concerns among Afghan women and girls at risk of exploitation. We also provided education and advice to the White House, the Department of Defense, the Department of Homeland Security, and other federal agencies responding to Afghan survivors' safety and rights.

***"The Tahirih Justice Center provides unparalleled support to asylum seekers, offering vital legal assistance, guidance, and hope to those fleeing persecution. Their commitment to upholding rights and dignity, particularly for marginalized women and girls, embodies compassion and solidarity, making a profound difference in the lives of those in need."***

**-Afghan Asylum Project client reflecting on their experience working with the Tahirih Justice Center**