

USCIS Extends and Expands Fee Exemptions and Expedited Processing for Afghan Nationals

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On September 27, 2024, USCIS announced that it is extending and expanding filing fee exemptions and expedited processing for certain nationals of Afghanistan, including those who have pending or have already received Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) status, certain applicants for affirmative asylum, and OAR/OAW parolees.

The new and continued exemptions and expedited processing will help to mitigate some delays and address financial burdens impacting Afghan nationals navigating a complex and overburdened immigration system. This includes Afghan nationals who entered the U.S. temporarily on parole on or after July 31, 2021, and who are now seeking asylum. As of June 27, 2024, the USCIS asylum office received over 21,000 asylum applications filed by Afghan parolees, with an average adjudication time of 324 days—longer than the 150 days mandated by Congress.

The SIV program has also experienced considerable processing backlogs—leaving tens of thousands of Afghan nationals in the U.S. and abroad in a state of limbo. Over 124,000 Afghans still remain in the earliest stage of the SIV process. According to the latest SIV quarterly report, SIV processing is currently taking an average of 569 days, far longer than the nine months mandated by Congress. For those who arrived during Operation Allies Welcome (OAW) on parole and are still awaiting adjustment of status to lawful permanent residency (LPR), it is advisable to retain temporary protection and work authorization until LPR status, or a green card, is approved by USCIS.

These fee exemptions and expedited processing will help Afghan nationals resettle in the United States, and in many cases reunite with their family members, by enabling USCIS to more quickly process requests for employment authorization, long-term status, and associated services.

OAR/OAW Parolees	Afghan SIV	Asylum Seekers	Refugees
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Fee Exempt:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Form I-131 for Re-Parole (until 1/31/25)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Form I-765 for Renewal EAD (until 1/31/25)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Fee Waiver Eligible:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Form I-131</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Form I-765</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> USCIS-Initiated Expedited Processing:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Form I-131 (until 1/31/25)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Form I-765 for Renewal EAD</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Fee Exempt:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Form I-130 filed for any Afghan beneficiary with a visa immediately available (until 9/30/25)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Form I-212</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Form I-485 (permanently exempt)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Form I-765 for initial, renewal & replacement EAD</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Form I-824 (permanently exempt)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Form I-290B (associated with an I-485 or I-360)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Fee Waiver Eligible:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Form I-90</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Form I-290B</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Form I-765</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Form N-300</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Form N-400</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Form N-470</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Form N-565</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Form N-600K</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> USCIS-Initiated Expedited Processing:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Form I-130 (until 9/30/25)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Form I-140 (until 9/30/25)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Form I-485 (until 9/30/25)</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Fee Exempt:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Form I-131 for <i>Refugee Travel Document</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Form I-589</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Form I-602</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Form I-730</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Form I-765 for initial EAD</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Fee Waiver Eligible:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Form I-90</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Form I-290B</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Form I-485</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Form I-765 for renewal EAD</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Form N-300</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Form N-336</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Form N-400</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Form N-470</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Form N-565</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Form N-600</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Form N-600K</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> USCIS-Initiated Expedited Processing:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Form I-485 (until 9/30/25)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Form I-589 (until 9/30/25)</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Fee Exempt:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Form I-131</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Form I-131A</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Form I-590</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Form I-485</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Form I-602</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Form I-730</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Form I-765 for initial, renewal & replacement EAD</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Fee Waiver Eligible:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Form I-90</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Form I-290B</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Form I-765</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Form N-300</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Form N-336</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Form N-400</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Form N-470</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Form N-565</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Form N-600</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Form N-600K</p>

¹ [USCIS Alert: USCIS Continues Fee Exemptions and Expedited Processing for Afghan Nationals](#); release date Sept. 29, 2023; [U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services Fee Schedule and Changes to Certain Other Immigration Benefit Request Requirements](#), 89 FR 6386, Jan. 31, 2024, as amended at 89 FR 20104, Mar. 21, 2024; [USCIS Stakeholder Message: USCIS Extends Certain Fee Exemptions and Expedited Processing for Afghan Nationals](#), last updated Sept. 30, 2024.