

DHS Announces Extension and Redesignation of Afghanistan for Temporary Protected Status

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BACKGROUND

On September 21, 2023, Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Secretary Mayorkas [announced](#) the extension and redesignation of Afghanistan for Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for 18 months, from November 21, 2023, to May 20, 2025, due to [ongoing armed conflict and extraordinary and temporary conditions](#) in Afghanistan that prevent individuals from safely returning. The need for TPS redesignation stemmed from surmounting barriers to long-term paths to protection for Afghan nationals and worsening conditions in Afghanistan, including violence by the Taliban and other armed-groups, economic and humanitarian crises, and erosion of the rights of women and members of religious and ethnic minority groups. As a key lead in Afghan policy advocacy including the push for TPS redesignation, Global Refuge [applauded](#) the Secretary's decision.

Afghanistan was initially designated for TPS on May 20, 2022. As of the announcement, 3,100 Afghan nationals in the United States had received TPS. This redesignation is estimated to offer protection to 14,600 additional individuals.

TPS is a temporary immigration status that provides protection from deportation and eligibility for work authorization for certain, eligible nationals of the designated country. Individuals must register for TPS and apply for work authorization to receive benefits. If TPS is granted, the beneficiary may also seek a TPS travel authorization document which may be used for travel abroad.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR TPS UNDER THIS EXTENSION AND REDESIGNATION:

This TPS extension and redesignation allows Afghan nationals (and individuals having no nationality who last habitually resided in Afghanistan) who have been continuously residing in the U.S. since September 20, 2023, and who have been continuously physically present in the U.S. since November 20, 2023, to apply or re-register for TPS.

With some [notable exceptions](#), TPS applicants must also demonstrate that they are admissible to the U.S. Individuals who have been convicted of a felony or two or more misdemeanors in the U.S., those who are subject to any of the [mandatory bars to asylum](#), and those who have been found inadmissible as an immigrant under applicable grounds in INA section 212(a), including non-waivable criminal and security-related grounds may not be eligible for TPS.

TPS Redesignation & Initial Applications

The redesignation of TPS for Afghanistan allows more recently arrived Afghan nationals to register for TPS protections and apply for an EAD.

- New applicants must apply during the initial registration period open September 25, 2023 – May 20, 2025.
- Applicants must demonstrate continuous residence in the U.S. since September 20, 2023 and also demonstrate that they have been continuously physically present in the U.S. since November 20, 2023.
- Applicants must also meet [eligibility standards](#) (INA section 244(c)(1)–(2)).
- Applicants must pay the USCIS filing fees or seek a fee waiver. The current filing fee for initial TPS applications is \$50 and \$30 for biometrics. Payment can be made online or, if filing by mail, in one single check or money order or two separate checks or money orders.

WHAT IS REQUIRED FOR TPS REGISTRATION

Individuals seeking Temporary Protected Status apply by submitting [Form I-821](#) with the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) along with filing fees and supporting documentation. TPS applicants seeking work authorization should file [Form I-765](#) and filing fees with the TPS registration application. The filing fee for Form I-765 is the same for initial applicants and individuals re-registering for TPS. Individuals who apply online will pay \$470 for work authorization and those applying on paper will pay \$520. Complete fee schedule can be found [here](#). TPS and associated work authorization applications may be submitted online unless the applicant is seeking a fee waiver ([Form I-912](#)).

Fee waivers are available for certain individuals who cannot afford the USCIS filing fees. However, the fee waiver request and associated TPS and EAD applications must be submitted by mail. Detailed and updated information about the application process is found on [USCIS' TPS for Afghanistan webpage](#).

TPS Initial Applications

When filing an initial TPS application, the applicant must submit:

- Evidence demonstrating the applicant's identity and establishing that they are a national of Afghanistan or that they have no nationality and last habitually resided in Afghanistan. Such evidence may include copies of:
 - Passport
 - Birth certificate or
 - Afghan Tazkira
- Date of entry evidence to show when the applicant entered the U.S. Evidence may include copies of:
 - [I-94, Arrival Record](#)
 - Entry stamp on the passport page

- Notice to Appear
- Continuous Residence (CR) evidence to demonstrate that the applicant has been in the U.S. since the CR date specified (Sept. 20, 2023). Evidence may include copies of:
 - Rent or lease agreements
 - Utility bills such as cell phone bills, insurance payments
 - School records
 - Attestation by shelter, church, union, or other organization that can confirm services related to residence
- Filing fees or fee waiver request as indicated above

Note: Any document that is not in English must be accompanied by a complete English translation.

WHAT IS THE CURRENT PROCESSING TIME FOR AFGHAN NATIONALS TPS AND EAD APPLICATIONS

TPS Re-registration

USCIS is [currently processing](#) Afghanistan TPS re-registration applications in 6–7 months.

TPS Initial Applications

USCIS is [currently processing](#) initial Afghanistan TPS applications in 14–15 months. When an EAD application is submitted to USCIS with the TPS application, USCIS will typically process both applications concurrently. If USCIS grants TPS, the EAD should follow the TPS grant.

ARE AFGHAN NATIONALS ELIGIBLE FOR BENEFITS IN THE U.S.

[Certain Afghan nationals](#) who were granted Humanitarian Parole under Operation Allies Refuge (OAR) or Operation Allies Welcome (OAW) in addition to TPS may be eligible to apply for federal mainstream benefits in their state, such as cash assistance through Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), health insurance through Medicaid, and food assistance through Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

OTHER IMPORTANT THINGS TO CONSIDER

1. Individuals with a pending asylum application (Form I-589) can and **should** consider applying for TPS, if they are eligible to do so.
2. Individuals who currently hold another temporary immigration status such as OAR/OAW humanitarian parole, F-1 student status, H-2A or H-2B temporary work visas can and **should** consider applying for TPS, if they are eligible to do so.

Note: We strongly recommend consulting with a qualified immigration legal services provider when considering TPS and how seeking TPS may interact with other immigration benefits applications. A listing of non-profit immigration legal services providers can be found at www.immigrationadvocates.org/legaldirectory/.