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Four Houston Refugee Resettlement Agencies Form Collaborative to Raise \$8.5 Million for Houston Afghan Resettlement Efforts

The Kinder Foundation and Houston Endowment gift \$3 million in total to help Afghan families build new lives in Houston

HOUSTON (Sept. 27, 2021) – The Alliance, Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston, Interfaith Ministries for Greater Houston, and YMCA of Greater Houston have joined forces to form the [Houston Afghan Resettlement Fund \(HARF\)](#) to raise support for vetted Afghan families who are resettling to the Houston area. This multi-agency collaboration established the Fund with a goal to raise \$8.5 million that will provide critical needs for Houston’s new neighbors during their resettlement. [The Kinder Foundation](#) and [Houston Endowment](#), two prominent Houston philanthropic organizations with missions to improve and enrich the lives of our city’s residents, have donated \$1.5 million each for a total of \$3 million to help propel the efforts that are needed for the Afghan families. Their contribution will immediately help Afghan allies cover housing rent, utilities, groceries, clothing, household supplies as well as provide support services to help with their resettlement process.

“As we learned of the number of Afghan humanitarian parolees that Houston will soon welcome, we recognized the need to respond quickly. We hope that others will be inspired to join this coalition and support Afghan refugees as they rebuild and make Houston home,” said Nancy Kinder, president and CEO of the Kinder Foundation.

“We’re proud to support the Houston Afghan Resettlement Fund,” said Ann B. Stern, president and CEO of Houston Endowment. “The cooperative approach accelerates the opportunity for Afghan evacuee families to access essential services, establish roots and become a part of our vibrant city.”

For over two decades, Afghans worked alongside our troops, diplomats, and other government employees as military personnel [or support], interpreters, cultural advisors, drivers, and more. With the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan, tens of thousands of our Afghan allies and their families became targets, in grave danger of retaliation from the Taliban.

The Afghan evacuees are arriving under “humanitarian parole,” which is an emergency designation granted when there is an urgent humanitarian reason or significant public benefit to allow evacuees to temporarily enter the United States. This designation qualifies for minimal federal funding and benefits unlike a traditional refugee who receives more government support. As agencies in Houston prepare to resettle approximately 3,000 vetted Afghan evacuees who will arrive in Houston by the end of March 2022, with the largest numbers arriving from military bases early October, the agencies predict it will cost over \$11,000 to support each Afghan family of up to four members for six months. Evacuees often arrive with only what they can carry. Therefore, our community must raise funds and resources to help set them up for success as they transition to their new homes and lives.

Donations to HARF will directly support families in establishing households, securing employment, enrolling in schools, finding transportation, learning English as a second language, arranging medical services, coordinating legal services, providing cultural orientation and obtaining welcoming resources on arrival.

The four agencies have spent decades individually welcoming newcomers to the community and have been working together as a collaborative for years to accelerate and expand their efforts. Each organization contributes to the transition with their unique efforts and work together seamlessly to help refugees find a path to self-sufficiency. The agencies have resettled collectively more than 300 evacuees from Afghanistan and more than 75,000 refugees from all over the world since 1978.

*"I applaud the organizations who have made this commitment. Throughout Houston's history, we have always stepped up to welcome refugees from across the globe. Since the 1970's families displaced due to war, including our Afghan Allies, call Houston home," said **Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner**. "Just like they helped us, it is now time to help them in return. I ask all Houstonians to donate to the Houston Afghan Resettlement Fund. Contributions will go to help our Afghan Allies in need. It is just one way that Houston can welcome and support these families as our own."*

*"The Alliance has a proud history of welcoming refugees seeking to build new lives in the United States. Over the years, we have seen just how much refugees can thrive in our city with support from our resettlement services and the generosity of local corporate, faith-based, and community partners," said **Daniel Stoecker, president and CEO of The Alliance**. "Refugees have strengthened our communities and our local economies, with many starting small businesses that create opportunities for all Houstonians. We look forward to working with our resettlement partners and community members to help our Afghan allies in their successful integration in the U.S."*

*"Catholic Social Teaching emphasizes the dignity and worth of each person and, like the Good Samaritan, we are called to lend a helping hand to our brothers and sisters in need," said **Cynthia N. Colbert, MSW, president and CEO of Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston**. "Catholic Charities, along with our partners, has years of experience in providing refugees with support in their journeys to begin new lives in the U.S. We are proud to be part of this collaboration reaching those who were forced out of their own country due to violence."*

*"For more than 30 years, Interfaith Ministries for Greater Houston has been welcoming refugees from around the globe. 'Welcoming the stranger' is a shared belief of all faith traditions and a shared human value," said **Martin B. Cominsky, president and CEO of Interfaith Ministries for Greater Houston**. "Interfaith Ministries, itself, is prepared to welcome up to 1,000 Afghan refugees and we can only do so with community support. Interfaith Ministries has always been a connector in the community and we are proud to collaborate with our partner resettlement agencies to welcome our newest neighbors."*

*"We believe everyone deserves a certain quality of life and level of respect. The YMCA is more than a place, we are a purpose and restoring hope and wellbeing for newcomers is a vital part of the YMCA movement," said **Stephen Ives, president and CEO of YMCA of Greater Houston**. "Houston is one of the most diverse cities in the nation and we are grateful for the Kinder Foundation and Houston Endowment for stepping up and helping the community's most vulnerable succeed in their new home."*

To donate to HARF, Individuals, corporations and organizations can donate directly here: <https://houstonafghanhelp.org>. Additionally, the agencies are asking for individual donations of personal items to set up their new home. Catholic Charities is requesting gift cards for Target or Walmart. Interfaith Ministries is requesting food gift cards. The YMCA of Greater Houston has set up

an [Amazon Wishlist](#) and is accepting new mattresses. The Alliance is accepting [donations of household goods and furniture](#).

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About Houston Afghan Resettlement Fund

Houston refugee resettlement organizations – The Alliance, Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston, Interfaith Ministries for Greater Houston, and YMCA of Greater Houston – are coordinating fundraising efforts to build a system of care for the good of all Afghans coming to Houston. This multi-agency collaboration gives funders and philanthropists the opportunity to welcome the stranger and provide for the critical needs of Houston’s new neighbors during their resettlement. Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston is taking the fiscal management duties, accepting and distributing funds on behalf of the agencies.