



**JOEL ANDERSON**  
SUPERVISOR, SECOND DISTRICT  
SAN DIEGO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

2021 SEP 27 PM 12:06

OFFICE OF THE BOARD  
OF SUPERVISORS

**AGENDA ITEM**

**DATE:** October 5, 2021

**07**

**TO:** Board of Supervisors

**SUBJECT**

**FUNDING AFGHAN REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT COSTS FROM FROZEN  
AFGHANISTAN GOVERNMENT ASSETS AND DEVELOPING A COMPREHENSIVE  
COUNTY RESPONSE PLAN (DISTRICTS: ALL)**

**OVERVIEW**

Following the Taliban's resurgence and the withdrawal of the U.S. military from Afghanistan on August 31, 2021, a majority of the \$9.5 billion in Afghanistan government assets were frozen by the U.S. Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control and the Treasury Secretary. These frozen funds are primarily held by the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, and mirror previous actions taken by the U.S. against the governments of Venezuela, Libya and Iran after leaders hostile to our government assumed power in those nations.

The Taliban resurgence in Afghanistan resulted in a massive airlift involving the departure of tens of thousands of Afghans who fled their homes fearful of living under the return of Taliban rule. Although efforts to free more people from Afghan continue, an initial 58,000 Afghans are expected to arrive in the U.S. – many of whom were forced to depart their homes quickly, without any of their possessions. According to staff from the California Department of Social Services Refugee Programs Bureau, the number of Afghans resettling in California is still unknown. However, because Afghan refugees are likely to settle in locations where their relatives and friends live, San Diego County – and particularly East County – is expected to serve as a popular region for refugees to permanently relocate due to the large number of former Afghan residents now living here. It is, therefore, vital that the County be prepared for the anticipated influx of Afghanistan refugees coming to San Diego in the coming weeks and months.

There are currently four resettlement agencies in San Diego that assist refugees during their initial resettlement in the United States. These agencies find initial housing for the refugees, including furnishings, food and other basic necessities. Some of the housing may be provided by hotels, working in partnership with the California Refugee Programs Bureau. The four resettlement agencies also help refugees enroll in employment services and apply for social security cards, help them register children for school, and connect them with necessary social or language services. Other organizations have started to organize donations of furniture, clothing and other goods that will ultimately be provided to the refugees. Although the County may assist with the administration

**SUBJECT: FUNDING AFGHAN REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT COSTS FROM  
FROZEN AFGHANISTAN GOVERNMENT ASSETS AND DEVELOPING  
A COMPREHENSIVE COUNTY RESPONSE PLAN (DISTRICTS: ALL)**

of self-sufficiency programs, non-government organizations are seeking County assistance in additional areas such as the coordination of long-term housing options, enhanced mental health resources and assistance completing Emergency Rental Assistance Program applications.

Although the County does not have a role in determining the number of refugees who will resettle in San Diego, it is critical for the County, through the new Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs (OIRA), to coordinate with the federal Office of Refugee Resettlement and the state Refugee Programs Bureau to identify the number of Afghan refugees expected to resettle in our County. OIRA should work closely with these departments and the local non-government agencies that provide assistance to refugees to ensure the County has a comprehensive plan in place to address the anticipated influx of Afghan refugees into our region.

As the current Afghan refugee situation is a direct result of decisions and actions taken by the federal government and the Taliban's takeover, frozen Afghanistan government assets should be used to reimburse the State and County for the costs associated with resettlement activities. Accordingly, this item would call upon the Administration and Congressional leaders to take the necessary action to allow for the use of Afghanistan government assets currently frozen by the Administration to ensure the State of California and County of San Diego are fully compensated for any and all costs associated with Afghan refugee resettlement activities.

**RECOMMENDATION(S)  
SUPERVISOR JOEL ANDERSON**

- 1) Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to have the County Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs work with the Refugee Resettlement Agencies and other key stakeholders to coordinate a response plan to successfully address the anticipated influx of Afghanistan refugees into the County.
- 2) Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to coordinate with the County's federal legislative representatives to advocate for the use of the Afghanistan government assets frozen by the Administration to fund any and all costs to the State and County, resulting from the resettlement of Afghan refugees.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

There is no fiscal impact associated with today's actions. Additional appropriations or staff years will be requested in future Board meetings if needed based on any recommendations resulting from the stakeholder planning and coordination work. There will be no change in net General Fund cost and no additional staff years."

**EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT**

Resettled refugee families face many barriers upon entry into the United States. Clear communication and coordination among government and non-government organizations is vital to ensure equitable access to resources necessary to protect the health and well-being of these vulnerable individuals.

**SUBJECT:** FUNDING AFGHAN REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT COSTS FROM  
FROZEN AFGHANISTAN GOVERNMENT ASSETS AND DEVELOPING  
A COMPREHENSIVE COUNTY RESPONSE PLAN (DISTRICTS: ALL)

### **BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT**

By proactively developing a comprehensive plan to successfully address the anticipated resettlement of Afghan refugees into the County and advocating for the resources to implement the plan, we can ensure those arriving in San Diego are well-positioned to contribute to the regional economy. According to the Washington, DC-based Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, a higher percentage of foreign-born adults participate as members of the labor force than native-born adults. Additional research has found that immigrants also help native-born workers by filling gaps that could otherwise make their jobs impossible or reduce their productivity and lower their wages. Also, as a result of the low U.S. birth rate, combined with our aging population, immigrants are vital to improving our ratio of workers to retirees.

### **ADVISORY BOARD STATEMENT**

N/A

### **BACKGROUND**

Following the Taliban's resurgence and the withdrawal of the U.S. military from Afghanistan on August 31, 2021, a majority of the \$9.5 billion in Afghanistan government assets were frozen by the U.S. Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control and the Treasury Secretary. These frozen funds are primarily held by the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, and mirror previous actions taken by the U.S. against the governments of Venezuela, Libya and Iran after leaders hostile to our government assumed power in those nations.

The Taliban resurgence in Afghanistan resulted in a massive airlift involving the departure of tens of thousands of Afghans who fled their homes fearful of living under the return of Taliban rule. Although efforts to free more people from Afghan continue, an initial 58,000 Afghans are expected to arrive in the U.S. – many of whom were forced to depart their homes quickly, without any of their possessions. According to staff from the California Department of Social Services Refugee Programs Bureau, the number of Afghans resettling in California is still unknown. However, because Afghan refugees are likely to settle in locations where their relatives and friends live, San Diego County – and particularly East County – is expected to serve as a popular region for refugees to permanently relocate due to the large number of former Afghan residents now living here. It is, therefore, vital that the County be prepared for the anticipated influx of Afghanistan refugees coming to San Diego in the coming weeks and months.

There are currently four resettlement agencies in San Diego that assist refugees during their initial resettlement in the United States. These agencies find initial housing for the refugees, including furnishings, food and other basic necessities. Some of the housing may be provided by hotels, working in partnership with the California Refugee Programs Bureau. The four resettlement agencies also help refugees enroll in employment services and apply for social security cards, help them register children for school, and connect them with necessary social or language services. Other organizations have started to organize donations of furniture, clothing and other goods that will ultimately be provided to the refugees. Although the County may assist with the administration of self-sufficiency programs, non-government organizations are seeking County assistance in additional areas such as the coordination of long-term housing options, enhanced mental health resources and assistance completing Emergency Rental Assistance Program applications.

**SUBJECT: FUNDING AFGHAN REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT COSTS FROM  
FROZEN AFGHANISTAN GOVERNMENT ASSETS AND DEVELOPING  
A COMPREHENSIVE COUNTY RESPONSE PLAN (DISTRICTS: ALL)**

Although the County does not have a role in determining the number of refugees who will resettle in San Diego, it is critical for the County, through the new Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs (OIRA), to coordinate with the federal Office of Refugee Resettlement and the state Refugee Programs Bureau to identify the number of Afghan refugees expected to resettle in our County. OIRA should work closely with these departments and the local non-government agencies that provide assistance to refugees to ensure the County has a comprehensive plan in place to address the anticipated influx of Afghan refugees into our region.

As the current Afghan refugee situation is a direct result of decisions and actions taken by the federal government and the Taliban's takeover, frozen Afghanistan government assets should be used to reimburse the State and County for the costs associated with resettlement activities. Accordingly, this item would call upon the Administration and Congressional leaders to take the necessary action to allow for the use of Afghanistan government assets currently frozen by the Administration to ensure the State of California and County of San Diego are fully compensated for any and all costs associated with Afghan refugee resettlement activities.

**LINKAGE TO THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO STRATEGIC PLAN**

Today's proposed action supports the Operational Excellence Initiative by planning for the needs of immigrants choosing to resettle in the County and by advocating for the financial resources to maintain fiscal stability.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joel Anderson', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

JOEL ANDERSON  
Supervisor, Second District

**ATTACHMENT(S)**

N/A

**SUBJECT:** FUNDING AFGHAN REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT COSTS FROM  
FROZEN AFGHANISTAN GOVERNMENT ASSETS AND DEVELOPING  
A COMPREHENSIVE COUNTY RESPONSE PLAN (DISTRICTS: ALL)

**AGENDA ITEM INFORMATION SHEET**

**REQUIRES FOUR VOTES:**       Yes     No

**WRITTEN DISCLOSURE PER COUNTY CHARTER SECTION 1000.1 REQUIRED**  
 Yes     No

**PREVIOUS RELEVANT BOARD ACTIONS:**  
N/A

**BOARD POLICIES APPLICABLE:**  
N/A

**BOARD POLICY STATEMENTS:**  
N/A

**MANDATORY COMPLIANCE:**  
N/A

**ORACLE AWARD NUMBER(S) AND CONTRACT AND/OR REQUISITION  
NUMBER(S):**  
N/A

**ORIGINATING DEPARTMENT:** Board of Supervisors, District 2

**OTHER CONCURRENCE(S):**    N/A

**CONTACT PERSON(S):**

Michael Kulis  
Name  
(619) 531-5522  
Phone  
Michael.Kulis@sdcounty.ca.gov  
E-mail

Victoria Floyd  
Name  
(619) 531-5522  
Phone  
Victoria.Floyd@sdcounty.ca.gov  
E-mail