

Afghan
Advocacy

Where we are:

- 1,806 Afghans relocated to Oklahoma since Sept. 2021
- Average family size: 7
- Over 35 babies born
- Over 70% are women, kids under 18
- About 60% of the total number of families have received items through the Resource Center
- Ongoing challenges include housing, food, medical conditions, language barriers, and legal status

The Current Situation:

While our Afghan friends meet the dictionary definition of a refugee, they are technically present in the U.S. under "humanitarian parole."

They must adjust their immigration status using the mechanism of asylum, special immigrant visa, or one of a very limited number of immigration visas available to them. If they fail, they risk losing their ability to work, go to school, or even stay in the country.

Asylum:

protection grantable to foreign nationals already present in the U.S. who meet the international law definition of a refugee

Refugee:

A person unable to return to their home country due to past persecution, or a well-founded fear of persecution, based on race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion.

Afghan Adjustment Act

S. 4787, filed in both the House and the Senate, would provide a clear path to permanent residency for the 1,800 Afghan parolees currently calling Oklahoma their home. It would also provide additional protections for the many Afghans still stuck in Afghanistan, hoping to escape. Similar to other Adjustment Acts passed to aid Cubans, Vietnamese, and Iraqi nationals, it would relieve the heavily burdened immigration backlog and fulfill our obligation to the Afghans who aided in U.S. efforts in Afghanistan over the past 20 years of conflict.



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Advocacy is an activity by an individual or group which aims to influence decisions within political, economic, and social systems and institutions.

PETITIONS

**EMAIL AND
PHONE CALLS**

**LETTER
WRITING**

OFFICE VISITS

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Why is storytelling so effective?

Readers recall stories
twice as well as facts.

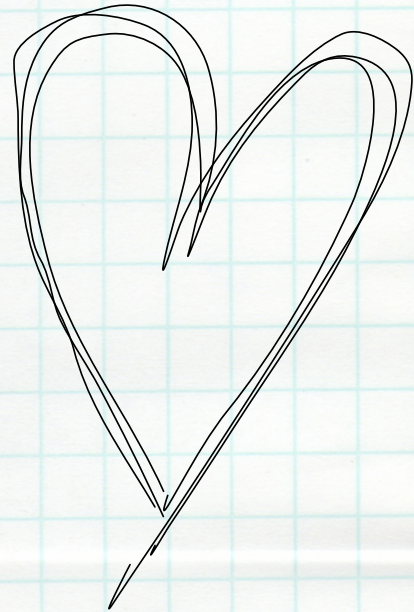
A story of a single individual
can evoke more compassion
and willingness to help than a
story about a large group of
people.

The How:

Advocacy stories should be focused, simple, credible, and point to a solution. They establish the characters, the obstacle, the solution, and the "ask."

The Why:

We are the experts of our own communities! Our lawmakers cannot truly make good decisions unless they're informed about what we are experiencing.



Crafting your story:

1. **Set the stage:** introduce yourself and your role. What is the setting and the context?
2. **Describe the challenge:** What is the main conflict or struggle you're facing? What are you afraid of?
3. **Convey the struggle:** Use vivid language, strong adjectives, and key details. Get your audience invested.
4. **Highlight the solution:** What is your ask? How does it address the struggle?
5. **Illustrate the resolution:** Emphasize the personal and community impact.
6. **Reach closure:** Remind your audience of their role in the story.

Examples

Set the stage:

We have been congregants at our church for many years. We began sponsoring an Afghan family who have taught us so much about love, compassion, and generosity.

Describe the challenge:

Our Afghan family faces many struggles, which we are working to meet: housing security, transportation, medical bills. But all our work is moot if they are not able to safely remain the U.S. as our neighbors and friends.

Convey the struggle:

Our friends are one of thousands of Afghan families filing for asylum in a heavily backlogged system. Delays, uncertainty, and the cost of the process leave them anxious and stressed with little recourse.

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More examples

Highlight the solution:

The Afghan Adjustment Act provides security and stability as our family are working to establish their new lives here. It would mean we truly are a place of refuge for those in need.

Show the resolution:

If they aren't afraid of losing their ability to work, go to school, and stay here safely, they can focus on becoming fully integrated members of the OKC community. We are all better and brighter for having them as neighbors.

Reach closure:

I am confident that you will reflect the desires of all your constituents by voting for the Afghan Adjustment Act and being a strong leader for our values of compassion and generosity.

Things to highlight:

Your experiences

Emotions and feelings

Things you've learned

Specific stories

Your moral values or
thoughts

Things that surprise you