



**\*Media Advisory\***

**Women for Afghan Women to Open Virginia Community Center to Help Serve Influx of Afghan Refugees**

ALEXANDRIA, VA — On Thursday, May 19, Women for Afghan Women's (WAW) will host the grand opening for its new Virginia Community Center (VACC). The VACC will be the second field office and community center in the United States and fourth office around the globe for the organization. WAW's VACC is located in Alexandria, VA, and will provide free, culturally sensitive, and linguistically competent services ranging from case management support to mental health counseling, to ESL and citizenship classes for Afghan women and girls.

Over 80,000 Afghan refugees and evacuees have arrived in the US since the Taliban take-over. This influx of Afghans seeking safety has led to a 300% increase in requests for WAW's services and programs here in the United States (US).

Virginia has the second largest Afghan community in the US—over 23,000 or 18% of the US total Afghan population. The VACC was established to provide vital services to newly arriving Afghans in the area, in addition to supporting more established Afghan and other immigrant communities.

**WHAT:** Grand opening for WAW Virginia Community Center

**WHO:**

- Women for Afghan Women board members, directors, and program managers
- Women for Afghan Women Clients
- Community leaders and elected officials
- Spokespeople from the Department of Homeland Security

**WHEN:** Thursday, May 19 2022 6:00 PM EDT

**WHERE:** 5510 Cherokee Ave., Suite 110, Alexandria, VA 22312

**TO RSVP:** Please register contact [oliver.jones@berlinrosen.com](mailto:oliver.jones@berlinrosen.com)

More than 6,000 new Afghans have arrived in Virginia since 2021, with thousands more expected to arrive in 2022 and beyond, according to government officials in Virginia. WAW and its resettlement partners also expect more newly arrived Afghans to move to the greater DC area after their 90-day resettlement support period ends in order to be closer to families and an established Afghan community.

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**About Women for Afghan Women**

Women for Afghan Women (WAW) is a grassroots, civil society organization dedicated to advocating for women's rights, challenging the norms that underpin gender-based violence, and influencing harmful attitudes to bring about positive change.



WAW grew from a small network of volunteers established in early 2001 in New York to become the largest women's organization in Afghanistan before the Taliban took over the governance of Afghanistan in 2021. Today, WAW continues to expand its services to provide life-changing programs, women's empowerment education, and vocational training for its clients in the United States (US) and continues to execute its humanitarian programs and work with non-governmental partners across Afghanistan. .

The key to our enduring impact is that WAW always hires locally and uses:

- a bottom-up approach,
- local knowledge, and
- a deep understanding of and sensitivity to local culture, traditions, customs, and challenges.

Pragmatically, this approach and operational model has manifested into core programs and services that serve to meet the needs of **8,000+ beneficiaries every year**.

#### **Services set to be provided by VACC**

- CASE MANAGEMENT SUPPORT to ensure Afghan and other immigrant families can meet their basic needs, including housing, job matching, healthcare, education, certifications/vocational training, transportation, accompaniment to appointments, interpretation/translation, and any other needs.
- IMMIGRATION LEGAL SERVICES that the majority of newly arrived Afghan evacuees, refugees and parolees need for adjustment of status, asylum, naturalization, among others.
- MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELING to help Afghan refugees and evacuees better deal with their trauma; and, to develop positive coping skills, especially in light of the panic attacks, post-traumatic stress, survivors' guilt, and depression that they often suffer.
- ADULT EMPOWERMENT CLASSES such as ESL and citizenship classes, and other life-skills and vocational training for Afghan and other immigrant women.
- AFTER-SCHOOL AND YOUTH LEADERSHIP PROGRAMS to help students in the community with high school and college preparedness, career development, and civic engagement.