

1. Reception

- a. Most in Quantico are coming from Qatar & Germany
- b. Many vulnerable from Germany. Less vulnerable from Qatar
- c. 6 bases in USA sent for processing
- d. 9 Resettlement agencies in US approved by USG

Church World Service

<http://www.churchworldservice.org/Immigration/index.html>

Episcopal Migration Ministries

<http://www.episcopalchurch.org/emm>

Ethiopian Community Development Council, Inc.

<http://www.ecdcus.org>

HIAS

<http://www.hias.org>

International Rescue Committee (different branch from IRC, no real connection)

<http://www.rescue.org>

Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service

<http://www.lirs.org>

U.S. Committee for Refugee and Immigrants

<http://www.refugees.org>

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops/Migration and Refugee Services

<http://www.usccb.org/mrs/>

World Relief

<http://www.wr.org>

2. Admin

- a. All cases go in IRC portal and resettlement agencies pick them at like random
- b. IRC handles inprocessing - nationally
- c. Then to USCIS - biometrics.
- d. Medical - MMR, physical, medical treatment. Once MMR vaccine have a 22 day hold period. Most got COVID vaccines immediately before coming to USA.
- e. DOS has their own administrative thing going on too.
- f. DOD has a master list of everyone on the base but is not the most accurate document either.
- g. IRC (Not Resettlement Agency branch) has the best grasp overall.
- h. DOS wants IRC to flag if "local embassy staff." So this means basically everyone gets flags.
- i. DOS goes back and forth on giving status updates on cases to Afghans.
- j. Can get one your status once a week perhaps, but maybe changed.
- k. Avoid permitting checking on status regularly because otherwise everyone would show up every day.
- l. Cases are given "Assurance" which means assigned a Resettlement Agency (RA)
- m. Once MMR and vaccines you can leave on your own without Resettlement Agency. But 75% of those who left on their own, said they regretted it.
- n. If they try to get their benefits later, they often get "turned down" - basically you will be last priority. Because they just walk into a Resettlement Agency office in their area.
- o. In last 3 months Resettlement Agencies has had more cases than last 3 years combined. Resettlement Agencies were not able to scale up that much that fast.

0. Donations

- a. Donation center staff are very bad.

- b. DOD decided to not issue winter clothes until it hits like 38 degrees. But also, heard it may be a supply chain issue. Also heard DOD cannot distribute them until they have 100%. But that does not make sense because donation warehouses are full of stuff. Ample donations.

0. Quantico

- a. Quantico is in good hands - has fastest turnaround time of all bases - Heard nightmares about Fort Bliss.
- b. Camp Upshure is the main one at Quantico. WWII barracks. DFAC is Afghan cooks making Afghan food. Run by a COL. Barracks are barely heated.
- c. Had an issue of single men harassing younger women. So built a tent city for single men with max pax of 700. Called Pioneer City. Conditions are bad. Then ran out of space and began moving families there too. Likely being closed soon. Had many complaints about Pioneer City because snakes, spiders and mice in tents at night. But way more privacy in tents because they would only hold 1 maybe 2 families. As opposed to the larger general population billeting.
- d. Fort Bliss had MREs for a while.
- e. Quantico only has 5k pax only. Others have tens of thousands. So Quantico is in a much better position.
- f. Everyone has access to internet. Wi-Fi not great. Especially students who stay up late to use it because it is better at night. Quantico has good Wi-Fi; Bliss seems less well run so unknown how good it is there.
- g. Given smart phones (with US SIM card) at the airport. Given to whomever was viewed as Head of Family. But this did not work out well because if you had a family of 15 and your random Uncle gets the phone and then you get separated later by nuclear family. 60-70% of people who needed phones were given them. Many if not most had their own phone. Phones given so they had a US number. Afghans not checking their US phones, so we do not use their numbers to contact them.
- h. It was a common issue of people showing up with donations and for specific people. Really cracked down on it. Know people have gotten mail but not sure how they did. But definitely a way.
- i. All of this information is posted in the camps in 3 languages and on bulletin boards. If it is not, IRC is supposed to provide this info if asked.
- j. IRC alone, in Quantico has like 20 interpreters. Terps are allowed to walk around camp, and they are a wealth of knowledge also, but not 100% reliable. Also have a help desk, for 2 hrs, 3 times a week where people can come ask questions. All just ask about departure.
- k. Afghans do not understand the process and a lot of rumors that really make things worse.
- l. IRC has nothing to do with medical treatment.
- m. Quantico is USCG for medical. Air Force maybe at another base possibly.
- n. Medical is just like a walk-in clinic. Had one dude who was shot in Kabul and walked in asking for medical help. These are medical professionals and proper doctors not like field medics.
- o. Unsure what POCs at camps re for external contact

0. Process

- a. Everyone has a punch card with steps and family (Intake, Biometrics, Medical)
- b. Punch card is very deceptive though because most steps are done in first few days. Last step is IOM counseling which is not until Assurance is given and everything completed and planned for release. So, Afghans think they are all done, with only one punch hole / stop left, but then that could take weeks.
- c. IOM is dealing with travel stuff from camps to target destination. Car from Quantico to airport/train/etc.
- d. Independent Departing folks just get dropped at the gate with no other assistance.

- e. IOM and IRC has a good amount of overlap.
- f. Odd IOM is there, as they are UN and are a group of French people out of place with all USG staff.
- g. Time period people are there is insanely diverse. 23 days is minimum due to MMR. Others since end of August. No idea why their cases are not picked up by Resettlement Agencies. Much has to do with where you are going. CA, NOVA, TX takes a while. Less used destinations are fastest.
- h. People pick locations typically pick by if they know anyone there. Had 15 people all put the same house which was weird.
- i. Benefits end after a few months then you can move anywhere. But need to stay in one place for roughly 90 days. This is secret to making it through camp way faster. Pick “anywhere” or say you have no US contacts if you are fluid. Obviously if all your family is in one place that is different. But do not put CA, TX, NOVA if you only have a friend there and do not want to sit in camps for many weeks.
- j. Social Security Cards & Work Authorizations are distributed to RAs. Not clear who they go to if you leave independently. Thus, you are requesting it like a normal person, and it will take longer. So, effort of Afghans leaving camps independently to start working sooner leads to not working sooner. Have been some cases of those with jobs already lined up for great money – in those cases sure, depart on your own. Otherwise, it is wise to go through the process to ensure you get lined up with a Resettlement Agency.

0. Benefits

- a. All totally different by agency and state. Length of time for coverage and amounts are different. 30 to 180 days coverage hypothetically. Depends on your English language skills and job opportunities at target destination.
- b. RAs will try to send you where there are jobs and language schools.
- c. Selection of cases seems so random. Quickest ones are single or couples in good health with no US ties who can go anywhere. Huge backlogs for RAs at hot spots all Afghans want to go.
- d. Housing - Totally depends on RA & state and your case.
- e. Clothes - Unknown. Recommend Clothing Banks.
- f. Food - Everyone is eligible for SNAP and it goes through RAs. Process is not easy and is convoluted so RA is best to do this for you.
- g. IOM Counseling is the final step in camp, usually day before you get out and provides all the information for benefits and your Point Of Contact at the Resettlement Agency and travel logistics, etc.
- h. They are all given OAW Parolees unless you already have an active SIV case or another form of visa already arranged.
- i. Visa status/program alter duration of time in camp, but unknown if it impacts benefits
- j. No skills info is taken during intake. Only visa case, work at embassy or medical/protection issues. So, RAs cannot see if you speak English well or further details.
- k. Total mystery no one knows how or why or when a RA selects a case. Suspect it’s an algorithm but cannot be too complex or effective considering how solid cases are still pending. The RA case selection process is a black box.