

**California Department of Social Services
2021 Proposed Budget Bill**

Title: Temporary expansion of the state Trafficking and Crime Victim Assistance Program to include Afghan arrivals ineligible for federally-funded public assistance benefits.

FACT SHEET

1. Summary

The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) proposes to expand Trafficking and Crime Victim Assistance Program (TCVAP) eligibility to include certain Afghan citizens and nationals admitted to the United States as humanitarian parolees under Section 1182(d)(5) of Title 8 of the United States Code on or after July 31, 2021.

2. Background

The Federal Government is responsible for the evacuation, transportation, processing, and initial placement of certain Afghan arrivals into communities across the United States. Depending on their immigration status, these individuals and families are eligible for certain public assistance programs. Afghan arrivals per Section 1182(d)(5) of Title 8 of the United States Code (also known as humanitarian parolees) for more than one year are considered “qualified noncitizens” and are potentially eligible for state-funded CalWORKs, Medi-Cal, and California’s Food Assistance Program (CFAP) if they meet program eligibility requirements. Notably, as humanitarian parolees, only Afghan arrivals with children could be eligible for CalWORKs, and there is an expected gap in assistance available for Afghans under this status who are without children.

CDSS is proposing to provide assistance to *childless Afghan humanitarian parolees* through the temporary expansion of the TCVAP program, which provides cash assistance benefits similar to those available to refugees with another immigration status. Currently, under Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC) Section 18945, TCVAP serves T-Visa applicants or would be applicants and U-Visa applicants and holders, populations who are not eligible for federal benefits and services. Benefits and services under TCVAP are paid from state general funds to the extent federal funding is unavailable. Recipients are transferred out of the TCVAP if they become eligible for federal benefits and services. This is the state program that is the closest in structure and eligibility to fill the service gap for this subset of the population.

For eligible childless adults, TCVAP provides:

- 8 months TCVAP cash assistance
- Up to 60 months of employment and social services including English classes, skills training and employability and social adjust services.

3. Justification for the Change

A portion of the estimated 120,000 Afghan citizens and nationals evacuated from Afghanistan will resettle to California where there are established Afghan communities. Some of these Afghan arrivals will not be Special Immigration Visa holders, but rather will be paroled into the U.S. for humanitarian reasons due to the current emergency. The Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) authorizes the Secretary of Homeland Security to exercise discretion under section 1182(d)(5) of Title 8 of the U.S.

Code to temporarily allow certain noncitizens applying for admission to the U.S. to physically enter the U.S.

Unlike immigrants with a Special Immigration Visa status, arrivals under Section 1182(d)(5) are not eligible for federal public benefits such as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Medicaid, and Supplemental Security Income/State Supplementary Payment (SSI/SSP). Additionally, the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA) created a five-year waiting period before qualified noncitizens can access certain federal benefits, which left the states to create and fund programs to bridge the gaps and ensure the health and safety of their residents.

The expansion of TCVAP eligibility will provide immediate access to state-funded cash assistance and related services to support the integration of childless Afghan adults into Californian communities. Given the difficulty in estimating the number of expected arrivals to California, providing the authority to include this population in the TCVAP program would allow the State to respond quickly to support arrivals. Providing the same benefits and wrap around services to this population of evacuees from Afghanistan as refugees will help support their successful integration and resettlement into our state.

4. Fiscal Impacts

The Department of Social Services is requesting \$16.7 million General Fund in 2021-22 to implement this expansion. The amount requested will serve 3,000 individuals. We are assuming 15,000 total arrivals and that 20 percent of all arrivals will be individuals without children (20% of 15,000 = 3,000). The costs are as follows:

- 3,000 individuals x \$558 assistance payment x 8 months = \$13,392,000
- 3,000 individuals x \$136.29 admin cost x 8 months = \$3,270,960
- **TOTAL: \$16,662,930 (rounded to \$16.7M)**

5. Additional Information

The use of state funds to support the successful integration of the Afghan arrivals into California communities may benefit California in meeting the workforce gaps within the state for highly skilled workers. Current data indicate that many Afghan arrivals have a high level of post-secondary education and advanced degrees due to their support of American forces abroad as interpreters, administrators, engineers and computer programmers, IT specialist, trainers, and even medical personnel. However, many may need assistance to obtain English language fluency and acculturation to American work practices.