



## Afghan Immigrants' Eligibility for Health Insurance

---

Afghans immigrants seeking refuge in the United States have experienced tremendous upheaval and now face the daunting task of navigating the immigration system and adjusting to their new home. The last thing they need to worry about is being able to access health care. Thankfully, all Afghan immigrants should qualify for some form of health insurance coverage.

Most Afghans who have arrived in the U.S. in the last months, or who are expected to arrive over the next year, are in one of four categories:

- **Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) holders** – These individuals worked for the U.S. government or its contractors in Afghanistan. Immediate family members of those workers are also eligible for SIV status.
- **SQ/SI Parolees** – These individuals have pending SIV applications.
- **Humanitarian Parolees** – These individuals do not fit into the other categories above. They are being granted permission to enter the United States – usually for a period of 24 months. Most will apply for asylum during that period. |
- **Refugees** – These are individuals who apply for and receive refugee status while still living outside of the U.S.

These immigrants are eligible for the following types of health insurance:

- Medicaid
- Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). CHIP covers children age 18 or younger whose household income is too high for Medicaid.
- Pennie. This is Pennsylvania's individual health insurance marketplace where people can buy health insurance. Substantial subsidies that help offset insurance costs are available through Pennie. Because of the American Rescue Plan Act, right now these subsidies are more generous than ever.

*Copyright September 2021*

*The Pennsylvania Health Law Project is a nonprofit legal services organization.*

*www.phlp.org ▪ 1-800-274-3258*

Originally, most Afghan Humanitarian Parolees were not eligible for federally-funded Medicaid. However, under the Extending Government Funding and Delivering Emergency Assistance Act signed by President Biden on September 29, 2021, Afghan humanitarian parolees are now eligible for Medicaid, as well as other federal benefits, without a waiting period.

This extension of Medicaid applies to Afghans paroled into the United States between July 31, 2021 and September 30, 2022 and certain of their immediate family members who are paroled into the United States after September 30, 2022. Provided they are otherwise eligible, their Medicaid will run until March 31, 2023 or the end of their parole period, whichever is later. The Medicaid is time-limited because Afghans humanitarian parolees are expected to apply for Asylum using expedited processes created by the new legislation. Asylees are also eligible for full Medicaid.

## **For More Information**

For additional information about access to health care for immigrants in Pennsylvania, please review our guide, "[Health Care for Immigrants: A Manual for Advocates in Pennsylvania](#)".

We urge organizations working with Afghan evacuees to help their clients take advantage of the above health insurance options available to them. PHLP staff are here to help. If you have questions about getting health insurance coverage for an Afghan evacuee, or if an application for health coverage is denied or delayed more than 30 days, call PHLP's Helpline at 1-800-274-3258.

*Copyright September 2021*

*The Pennsylvania Health Law Project is a nonprofit legal services organization.*

*www.phlp.org ▪ 1-800-274-3258*