

News Release

September 13, 2021

City of Toronto partners with United Way Greater Toronto and Lifeline Afghanistan to launch the Toronto Region Afghan Resettlement Fund

Today, the City of Toronto, together with United Way Greater Toronto (UWGT) and Lifeline Afghanistan are partnering to launch the Toronto Region Afghan Resettlement Fund to help support the incoming refugees from Afghanistan.

The collaboration among these partners and the City will provide direct resettlement support for the many Afghan refugees who will choose to live in Toronto from the at least 20,000 who will make Canada their new home.

Individuals or corporations can support the Fund by:

- Donating to United Way Greater Toronto, which will distribute funds to frontline community agencies helping Afghan individuals and families settle in the GTA: <https://www.unitedwaygt.org/afghanresettlement>.
- Donating goods or services to the City, such as school supplies, clothing, household items and computers to support those resettling. A full list of items that are needed, as well as how to donate them, can be found at <https://www.toronto.ca/business-economy/partnerships-sponsorships-donations/donate/covid-19-donateto/>
- Engagement to support sponsoring families and individuals can be made through Lifeline Afghanistan <https://www.lifelineafghanistan.ca/>

Lifeline Afghanistan is mobilizing individuals, community groups, post secondary institutions and corporations to support urgent resettlement efforts. The organization is also encouraging and facilitating private sponsorship of Afghan refugees, as well supporting pathways to jobs, skills development and education opportunities.

United Way Greater Toronto builds and strengthens a network of agencies that is the GTA's social safety net. United Way's ongoing funding for a network of community agencies – including settlement focused agencies -- supports programs that offer a range of services to support immigrants and refugees with basic survival needs. Funds donated to the Toronto Region Afghan Resettlement Fund will support a variety of frontline community agencies that will help Afghan individuals and families settle into their new home, including providing housing and employment support, food, clothing and community connections.

The City's role includes accepting corporate or large-scale donations for distribution to community agencies; coordinating policies, strategies and structures to respond to arrivals of newcomers and refugees through the Toronto Newcomer Office (<https://www.toronto.ca/community-people/moving-to-toronto/refugee-resettlement->

[program/](#)) and partner with United Way Greater Toronto, Lifeline Afghanistan and other partners to coordinate support.

An advisory committee is being formed to strengthen partnerships and provide accountability for the management and distribution of the funds.

To donate or learn more visit <https://www.unitedwaygt.org/welcoming-afghan-newcomers>

Quotes:

"Toronto is a city that is known to be a place filled with people who want to support one another and today's announcement further demonstrates that spirit. Toronto will become a destination for thousands of people fleeing Afghanistan and we need to rally together to welcome them. This is an opportunity for Torontonians and all Canadians to once again show their compassion and commitment to helping others and to work together to support the resettlement efforts. We have done it before and we can do it again and our city and our country will be stronger for it. This new Toronto Afghan Resettlement Fund will ensure that newcomers have a strong foundation and good start in their new home."

- Mayor John Tory

"When it comes to helping people build a better life in the GTA, and helping our region harness all the talent that newcomers have to offer – United Way's strong network of community agencies is there, each and every day, every step of the way, in crisis and for the long haul. We thank the teams at local settlement agencies who are the first point of contact when people arrive from Afghanistan, arranging for housing, work and school in the early weeks of resettlement, and then supporting individuals and families as they continue their settlement journey. Thank you to the City of Toronto for leading this effort to show the world that Toronto is a welcoming place we all can love to call home"

- United Way Greater Toronto, Ruth Crammond Vice President, Community Investment & Development

"It takes a whole community to successfully resettle newcomers. This partnership will provide Canadians with the opportunity to support Afghan refugees to get established as new Canadians."

- Mario Calla, Executive Director of COSTI

"Immigrants and refugees have helped build Canada. In 1944, my father was a refugee to the UK. In 1979, I worked with Operation Lifeline to resettle Indochinese refugees and then in 2015 worked with Senator Omidvar to mobilize support for Syrian refugees. We did it before and we can do it again. Working together we can 'pay it forward' to help respond to this crisis. Our experience has also shown the many ways in which newcomers help build our economy and communities."

- Wendy Cukier, co-founder Lifeline Afghanistan and director of the Ted Rogers School of Management's Diversity Institute

“Experience with other newcomer groups shows that the greatest number of refugees settle in large urban areas, so the City of Toronto needs to take urgent action to prepare for their arrival. The Afghan refugees coming to Toronto will require targeted and coordinated support from the City, community and institutional partners and Toronto residents. By raising funds through this exciting campaign, we can invest in the supports these newcomers need to help them transition and settle into life in Toronto.”

- Vera Dodic, Manager, Toronto Newcomer Office

Toronto is home to more than 2.9 million people whose diversity and experiences make this great city Canada’s leading economic engine and one of the world’s most diverse and livable cities. As the fourth largest city in North America, Toronto is a global leader in technology, finance, film, music, culture and innovation, and consistently places at the top of international rankings due to investments championed by its government, residents and businesses. For more information visit www.toronto.ca or follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/CityofToronto, on Instagram at www.instagram.com/cityofto or on Facebook at www.facebook.com/cityofto.

- 30 -

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