***Put at the top with the CADRE information***

Over fifty people attended CADRE’s first Afghan Resettlement meeting for Santa Clara County. The purpose of the meeting was to hear from those already conducting resettlement efforts and let the whole community offer input and resources.

Mindy Berkowitz, Executive Director, [Jewish Family Services Silicon Valley](https://www.jfssv.org/)

Lidia Gonzalez, Parish Engagement Program Manager, [Catholic Charities Santa Clara County](http://www.catholiccharitiesscc.org/) and

Sead Eminovic, Director, [International Rescue Committee](https://www.rescue.org/) shared information about the support being provided and additional resources needed.

Read more in the Spotlight section, below.

***Spotlight***

**Total number of refugees currently in Santa Clara County - 695**

JFS - 275 individuals since the surge happened. The number is expected to double by fall.

CC - Supporting 16 individuals and expecting 20 more.

IRC – 400 individuals and expect another 100

IRC in Alameda County has 606 clients

JFCS East Bay – at least 500

Working with Alameda County resettlement organizations

Too early to know if there will be Ukraine refugees – unknown whether people will come to America or go to other European Countries.

Afghan Refugees didn’t come with refugee status. They were classified as Humanitarian Parolees. They have to apply for asylum in order to get a green card.

**Differences Between Support Organizations**

**IRC** – total refugee focus. Core services are required: picking up people from airport, temporary and permanent housing, signing up for CalWORKs, Calfresh, medical benefits, take kids to school, transport to medical appointments, apply for social security numbers. Received some funding from Santa Clara County. Get them a job so they can afford housing. Need living wages. Also provide access to other training programs – hospitality, medical, finance, tech.

**JFS** – Social service organization, refugee support is part of it

Legal immigration services

ESL classes and vocational classes (Grant from Santa Clara County)

**Catholic Charities.** Accepted refugees who had previous U.S. ties. Upon arrival, ties said they couldn’t help any more. Offer benefits enrollment, drivers license, financial education, opening bank accounts, immigration services, legal services.

**Cost of Resettlement**

Cost per individual, first and last month rent (up to 3 months) $3000. We have some money to support immediate needs but it costs tens of thousands of dollars per person. The goal is to make them economically self-sufficient. Initial focus is to get them housed, fed, self-sufficient, with mental health support before doing other things.

Why are they coming to Silicon Valley? There is a thriving Afghan community here and in Alameda County. People want to be with their own people. It’s not the easiest place to get started, but there is a lot of diversity and a lot of opportunity and there have been many success stories.

**Refugee Needs**

1. **Most important need is Housing**. Need access to below market-rate housing.

It’s hard to find a job or enroll a child in school if you don’t have a permanent residence. Having a challenge with property managers and landlords because refugees can’t provide.

1. **Mental health** – IRC does mental health screenings during initial health screening. Services are needed for adults and the children who just witnessed a war.
2. **Jobs** – Need jobs to afford housing.
3. **Translating** - Pashto and Dari speakers are needed.
4. **Training** – Women must learn English and work skills to find jobs
5. **Childcare** for women taking ESL classes or working
6. **Cash** directly to service organizations.
7. **Gift Cards** (Target, Amazon, Lyft, Uber)
8. **Donations** – IRC and JFS have Amazon Wish Lists. IRS has made arrangements to pay a refugee’s cell phone bill
9. **Laptops and Ipads** (2 per household). Digital inclusion wifi provided by City of San Jose. Need devices to apply for services, participate in online classes, students working with tutors, etc.
10. **Transportation** – need rides to look at housing, medical appointments, school. Bicycles too.
11. **Volunteers**

**Catholic Charities has** [**Accompinment volunteer teams**](https://app.betterimpact.com/PublicOrganization/3e51b324-519f-4b9a-8e2e-0ea1fd4bfd26/1) that support a family by providing connection to the Muslim community, transportation, groceries from Afghan markets, culturally appropriate wardrobe

**IRC - Community Co-Sponsorship** – Get a group of five people to fundraise $5000 and work directly with a refugee family. IRC Recruits, oversees, and manages groups.

[**Jewish Family Services Silicon Valley**](https://www.jfssv.org/) **Contacts**

* **Jobs.** JFS helps them get their first jobs in America, and become responsible citizens. Contact Zoya Lazer: [zoyal@jfssv.org](http://zoyal@jfssv.org), 408-357-7452. Tell JFS about job opportunities, and hire refugees at your business. Contact Nellie Rochon-Ellis: [nelliere@jfssv.org](http://nelliere@jfssv.org), 408-357-7459.
* **Housing.** Call if you can temporarily house refugees or have access to below market rate housing. Contact Debbie Michels: [debbiem@jfssv.org](http://debbiem@jfssv.org), 408-357-7467.
* **Transportation.** Provide transportation for refugees when they arrive in the U.S.: from the airport, to help them receive benefits, and to health screenings. Contact Robin Feinman: [robinf@jfssv.org](http://robinf@jfssv.org), 408-556-0600.
* **Furniture.** Donate furniture in great condition. Contact [furnituredonation@jfssv.org](http://furnituredonation@jfssv.org)
* **Volunteer**. Help refugees acculturate to life in the United States. Contact Robin Feinman: [robinf@jfssv.org](http://robinf@jfssv.org), 408-556-0600.
* **Cash Donations.** [Ruth Perkins Emergency Fund for Refugee Services](https://nebula.wsimg.com/b75fb8bca2613a6d6375059fe070b4a3?AccessKeyId=30272F0E87888B2F2BED&disposition=0&alloworigin=1) to help refugees make a new, safe start in the United States.
* **Gift cards.** Newly arrived refugees appreciate Target, Safeway and Trader Joe’s gift cards for food and other essentials. Contact Mindy Berkowitz: [mindyb@jfssv.org](http://mindyb@jfssv.org); 408-357-7455.
* [**Amazon Wish List.**](https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/2ESVGJ4PJ2F0N/ref%3Dnav_wishlist_lists_3)  Find items that families are requesting.

[**Catholic Charities Santa Clara County**](http://www.catholiccharitiesscc.org/) **Contacts**

* [Accompaniment for individuals and families](https://app.betterimpact.com/PublicOrganization/3e51b324-519f-4b9a-8e2e-0ea1fd4bfd26/1)
* If you have additional questions or want to support our program for Afghan Placement & Assistance through Parish Engagement-Catholic Charities, please contact Bridget Balajadia [BBalajadia@catholiccharitiesscc.org](http://BBalajadia@catholiccharitiesscc.org)

[**International Rescue Committee**](https://www.rescue.org/) **Contacts**

* Sead Eminovic, Director, sead.eminovic@rescue.org

**Donations Challenges**

JFSSV has 9 storage units filled with donated “stuff” that was donated by well-meaning community members but is not needed. Better to provide gift cards or cash to allow refugees to make their own purchases and regain some control of their lives. Donating used items is discouraged. Better to hold a yard sale and sell items for cash.

**World Refugee Day, June 20, honors** the courage, strength, and determination of men, women, and children who are forced to flee their homeland under threat of persecution, conflict, and violence.  This annual celebration recognizes the hard-working network of refugee [resettlement agencies](https://www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/Refugees/Stakeholders/RAs) in our state and highlights the remarkable achievements of refugees throughout California.