



## United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Applicant:

Our records indicate that you have applied for a Special Immigrant Visa (SIV). If you are issued such a visa, you have the option to receive certain benefits under the U.S. Department of State's resettlement program that are available to refugees who are resettling in the United States. Please read the contents of this letter carefully, including the accompanying *Frequently Asked Questions* and *19 Things You Need to Know about Resettling in the United States*. These documents will help you make an informed decision about electing to receive (or decline) resettlement benefits through our program, **which covers up to your first 30-90 days in the United States**. In addition, please see below for information regarding separate benefits funded by the Health and Human Services Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) for which you may qualify.

You must indicate your decision to receive or decline Department of State resettlement benefits by returning the attached Refugee Benefits Election Form and the DS-0234 Special Immigrant Visa Biodata Form to the National Visa Center (NVC), the Refugee Processing Center (RPC), or the appropriate Resettlement Support Center (RSC) (see below chart) **as soon as possible** while still overseas or upon arrival in the United States. These forms will allow us to initiate processing of your case. In addition, you must submit a scanned copy of your visa foil. We cannot book your travel until we receive a copy of your visa. **You should not wait to submit the Refugee Benefits Election Form and the DS-0234 Biodata Form until your visa is issued.**

The entity responsible for processing your Department of State benefits will depend on the location of your visa issuance post:

- If you are an Iraqi applicant and your visa is being processed by the U.S. Embassy in Turkey or Lebanon, your application for benefits will be processed by the Department-funded Resettlement Support Center (RSC) based in Istanbul, Turkey.
- If you are an Iraqi applicant and your visa is being processed by any other U.S. Embassy, your application for resettlement benefits will be processed by the RSC based in Amman, Jordan.
- All Afghan applicants will be processed for benefits by the RPC, regardless of embassy location.

Nationality	Visa Issuance Location	Responsible Agency	Contact Info
Iraqi	Turkey or Lebanon	RSC Turkey and Middle East	<a href="mailto:info.rsc@icmc.net">info.rsc@icmc.net</a>
Iraqi	All other locations	RSC Middle East and North Africa	<a href="mailto:siv_ope@iom.int">siv_ope@iom.int</a>
Afghan	All locations	Refugee Processing Center	<a href="mailto:siv@wrapsnet.org">siv@wrapsnet.org</a>

Resettlement is a multi-step process. If you choose to participate in the program while you are still overseas, the U.S. Department of State will need to make important arrangements in advance of your departure. Because your visa is valid for only a limited time, it is important that you submit all required paperwork (including a scanned copy of your visa) as soon as possible, and that you respond to requests for additional information as promptly as possible.

The information you provide to the NVC/RPC/RSC will be shared with a U.S. resettlement agency, which will provide you with basic services intended to help you adjust to life in the United States. The agency's ability to successfully assist you with your resettlement in the United States depends on the accuracy and timeliness of the information you provide, including information about your education, occupation, ethnicity, religion, U.S.-based family and friends, and medical issues.

You have three options to influence where you will be placed in the United States:

1. **You may choose a city from the list of SIV R&P Placement Options in the table below.** If you would like to be resettled to one of the listed cities, please write the selected city on page 2 of the DS-0234 SIV Biodata Form under Section E, entitled "Comments."
2. **You may list a person near whom you would like to be resettled.** If you have family members or friends in the United States near whom you would like to be resettled, you should indicate this on page 2 of the DS-0234 Biodata Form under Section D, "U.S. Ties". Please ensure you provide their full name, address, telephone number, email address, and relationship. *While you may provide a preference about where you might wish to be resettled, if you elect to participate in this program, it may not always be possible to honor your request to resettle near family members or friends.* Please be aware that the cost of living and the availability of housing can vary significantly in different locations across the United States. Due to extremely high housing costs and limited housing availability, among other challenges, **only those SIVs joining a spouse, parent, sibling, child, or grandparent will be allowed to receive R&P benefits in the Northern Virginia area.** Unless you have an immediate relative in this area, you must choose a location from the list provided below, or allow a resettlement agency to choose a more suitable location for you.
3. **You may allow a resettlement agency choose a location for you.** The resettlement agency will use the biographical information you provide to determine the resettlement site that is best suited for you and your family.

SIV R&P Placement Options			
	State	City	City Website
1	AZ	Phoenix	<a href="https://www.phoenix.gov/">https://www.phoenix.gov/</a>
2	CO	Denver	<a href="https://www.denvergov.org">https://www.denvergov.org</a>
3	FL	Jacksonville	<a href="http://www.coj.net/">http://www.coj.net/</a>
4	GA	Atlanta	<a href="http://www.atlantaga.gov/">http://www.atlantaga.gov/</a>
5	IL	Chicago	<a href="https://www.cityofchicago.org">https://www.cityofchicago.org</a>
6	MD	Baltimore	<a href="https://www.baltimorecity.gov/">https://www.baltimorecity.gov/</a>
7	MO	St. Louis	<a href="https://www.stlouis-mo.gov/">https://www.stlouis-mo.gov/</a>
8	NC	Raleigh-Durham	<a href="http://durhamnc.gov/">http://durhamnc.gov/</a> & <a href="https://www.raleighnc.gov/">https://www.raleighnc.gov/</a>
9	NJ	Northern New Jersey	<a href="http://www.elizabethnj.org/">http://www.elizabethnj.org/</a> & <a href="http://www.hpboro.com/">http://www.hpboro.com/</a>
10	NV	Las Vegas	<a href="https://www.lasvegasnevada.gov">https://www.lasvegasnevada.gov</a>
11	NY	Buffalo	<a href="https://www.ci.buffalo.ny.us/">https://www.ci.buffalo.ny.us/</a>
12	OH	Cleveland	<a href="http://www.city.cleveland.oh.us/">http://www.city.cleveland.oh.us/</a>
13	OR	Portland	<a href="https://www.portlandoregon.gov/">https://www.portlandoregon.gov/</a>
14	PA	Philadelphia	<a href="http://www.phila.gov">http://www.phila.gov</a>
15	PA	Pittsburgh	<a href="http://pittsburghpa.gov/">http://pittsburghpa.gov/</a>
16	TX	Austin	<a href="http://www.austintexas.gov/">http://www.austintexas.gov/</a>
17	TX	Dallas – Fort Worth	<a href="http://dallascityhall.com">http://dallascityhall.com</a> & <a href="http://fortworthtexas.gov/">http://fortworthtexas.gov/</a>
18	TX	Houston	<a href="http://www.houstontx.gov/">http://www.houstontx.gov/</a>
19	UT	Salt Lake City	<a href="http://www.ci.sl.c.ut.us/">http://www.ci.sl.c.ut.us/</a>

Once your visa has been issued and your case has been assigned to a resettlement agency, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) will contact you to arrange your travel. Only SIV recipients who elect to participate in the Reception and Placement (R&P) Program *while still overseas* are eligible to receive a travel loan to cover the costs of his/her transportation to the United States. In order to receive the travel loan, SIV recipients must travel on a flight arranged by IOM. IOM will prepare each individual's travel loan and arrange his/her travel to the United States. To the extent possible, IOM will work with you to determine a travel date that is convenient for you. You may pay for your travel either with an interest-free loan, or pre-pay the cost of your ticket. If you choose the loan, you will be required to sign a promissory note committing to repay the loan over a three-year period. Upon arrival to the United States, IOM representatives will assist you at the port of entry and help you with immigration and customs procedures. When you reach your final destination, a representative from the resettlement agency to which you are assigned will meet you at the airport, take you to your initial housing, and assist you in settling you into your new community.

Under certain circumstances, you may not have time to declare your intention to participate in the R&P Program while still overseas. If you elect to arrange your own flight, you may still be eligible for Department of State resettlement benefits or benefits funded by the Department of Health and Human Services Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR). **To determine if you qualify, please contact a resettlement affiliate as soon as possible after your arrival in the United States, as your eligibility is time-limited.** We recommend you contact a resettlement affiliate within 30 days after your arrival. Please contact [siv@wrapsnet.org](mailto:siv@wrapsnet.org) for a list of resettlement affiliates nearest you.

**Please note: Due to extremely high housing costs and limited housing availability, among other challenges, only those SIVs joining a spouse, parent, child, sibling, or grandparent will be allowed to receive R&P benefits in the Northern Virginia area.**

The U.S. Government has established guidelines and provides funding for the resettlement services that you will receive upon arrival in the United States. Your resettlement agency will have a local office in or near the town where you will be resettled and will provide basic living assistance and support for *the up to the first 30 - 90 days after you arrive*. The following are some of the things you should expect to do and/or receive during your first weeks in the United States:

- The resettlement agency to which you are assigned receives U.S. Government funds, of which a minimum of \$975 per person must be spent on your behalf. These funds will be used to pay for your rent and/or basic necessities. Some portion of it may be given to you in cash. The resettlement agency will make sure you have a small amount of pocket money for daily needs.
- Housing for your first 30 days.
- Apply for a social security card, required for work.
- Learn about and be assisted with access to employment services (while the agency will assist in whatever way it can, it is ultimately your responsibility to find and maintain employment).
- Assist with enrolling your children in school.
- Learn to use public transportation (a car will not be provided).
- Assist you with access to English language classes, if necessary.
- Begin to learn about U.S. customs and law.
- Learn about and be assisted with access to community services that can help you, including social services, cash and medical assistance, and food stamps, if necessary.
- Find out about other government services and programs and how to access services.

If you choose to participate in this resettlement benefits program, it is essential that you submit the attached Refugee Benefits Election Form and the DS-0234 Biodata Form to the NVC, RPC, and/or RSC as *soon as possible*. In addition, we must receive a scanned copy of your visa foil *as soon as possible*.

Additional information regarding the U.S. Department of State resettlement program can be found on the RPC website. Arabic, Dari, and Pashtu translations of this letter, as well as the *Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)* and *19 Things You Need to Know about Resettling in the United States* are also available on the website here: <http://www.wrapsnet.org/siv-iraqi-syrian->

These State Department-funded benefits are separate from benefits funded by the Health and Human Services Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR). Therefore, if you choose to decline State Department-funded benefits, you may still be eligible for ORR-funded benefits upon your arrival to the United States. ORR-funded benefits provide a variety of services and have strict time limits and guidelines for participation. You can find additional information about these benefits by visiting the ORR website here: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr>.

# Refugee Benefits Election Form

PLEASE INDICATE YOUR ELECTION BELOW:

If approved to receive a Special Immigrant Visa,

\_\_\_\_\_ I wish to participate in the U.S. Department of State's resettlement program and receive the associated benefits including IOM-arranged travel. If there are any changes in my intention to participate, or if my family composition changes (e.g. a birth or death), I will notify the Refugee Processing Center and/or Resettlement Support Center as soon as possible.

\_\_\_\_\_ I DO NOT wish to participate in the U.S. Department of State's resettlement program. Even though I choose to decline State Department-funded benefits, I understand that I may still qualify for certain ORR-funded benefits.

By signing this form, I acknowledge that I have read the U.S. State Department letter and the accompanying *Frequently Asked Questions* and *19 Things You Need to Know about Resettling in the United States*. I understand that resettlement benefits vary from one location to another, and that luxury items (including TVs, radios, telephones, DVD players, computers, vacuums, bicycles, cars, or air conditioners), professional-level employment, and medical insurance are not guaranteed. I also understand that housing assistance funding is not guaranteed by the U.S. State Department beyond my first 30 days in the United States.

Petitioner's Case Number: \_\_\_\_\_

_____ Name (block letters, in English only)	_____ Date of Birth (MM/DD/YYYY)
_____ Email Address	_____ Telephone Number
_____ Signature	_____ Date (MM/DD/YYYY)

Please return a scanned copy of ***this page only*** and the DS-0234 Special Immigrant Visa Biodata Form to the National Visa Center ([NVCSIV@state.gov](mailto:NVCSIV@state.gov)), Refugee Processing Center ([siv@wrapsnet.org](mailto:siv@wrapsnet.org)), or appropriate Resettlement Support Center as ***soon as possible***. In addition, you must submit a scanned copy of your visa ***as soon as possible***. **You should not wait to submit this form and the Special Immigrant Biodata Form until your visa is issued.**