

FAQs for Afghan SIV Applicants

Q. I have started the application process for an SIV but haven't received Chief of Mission approval. What should I do?

A. The Chief of Mission application period ends on September 30, 2014. This means that principal applicants must apply for Chief of Mission approval, the first step of the overall application process, no later than September 30, 2014. Those who have submitted complete applications and are awaiting Chief of Mission approval will continue being considered for the program after September 30, 2014. Applicants who have not submitted complete Chief of Mission applications must submit any missing documents by September 30, 2014.

Q. I will not have one year of employment by September 30, 2014, but I will have one year by December 31, 2014. What should I do?

A. Applicants must have one year of qualifying employment between October 7, 2001 and December 31, 2014. If you will have one year of employment by December 31, 2014, you must submit your application for COM approval, containing all required documents, to the National Visa Center (NVC) by September 30, 2014. The letter from your employer's Human Resources (HR) department should state the date by which you will reach one year of employment by, or on behalf of, the U.S. government in Afghanistan. If that date is after September 30, 2014, but before or on December 31, 2014, your application will be held until you have one year of employment. At that time, the Chief of Mission designee and staff at the U.S. Embassy in Kabul will review your application, and you may be requested to provide a new letter from your employer's HR department.

Q. My Chief of Mission application and Form I-360 petition were approved but I was never scheduled for a visa interview. Can my case still be approved?

A. On January 17, 2014, the President signed the Consolidated Appropriations Act for FY 2014. This legislation authorized 3,000 visas for Afghan principal applicants in fiscal year (FY) 2014 with carryover of any unused visas to FY 2015. At the current issuance rate, the 3,000 Afghan visas allocated for FY 2014 will be

exhausted well before the end of the fiscal year. We continue to work with Congress on extending this program further. After all 3,000 visas have been issued, we will hold all pending cases, and we will immediately restart processing if Congress extends this program.

Q. My visa application is at the U.S. Embassy but I haven't heard whether or not my case was approved. How can I find out?

A. The Embassy will contact you directly if your case has been issued or denied. If your passport is with the consular section and your case is approved, you will be contacted by the Embassy when your visa package is ready for pick-up.

Q. Should I update or get a new medical exam?

A. No. Do not schedule an appointment for a new medical exam until the U.S. Embassy in Kabul specifically requests medical exams for you and/or your family members. If your application has not completed administrative processing, the exams may expire and you would have to pay again for new exams for you and/or your family members. The panel physician charges \$360 for each exam.

Q. If I or my family members get a new passport, what should I do?

A. Immediately send a scanned copy of the passport picture page to KabulIV@state.gov. Changes to your passport may impact the speed at which your case is processed.

Q. What if I have not been contacted? Does that mean my case was denied or canceled?

A. The Embassy will contact you directly if your case has been issued or denied. After all 3,000 visas have been issued to Afghan principal applicants, no further action may be taken on a principal applicant's case without new legislative authority. We will hold all pending cases and we will immediately restart processing if Congress extends this program.

Q. I have heard that transferring my case to another U.S. embassy or consulate speeds up the process. Should I transfer my case?

A. All SIV applicants go through the same application process regardless of the U.S. embassy or consulate where they apply. If you transfer your case from U.S. Embassy Kabul to another post, this will significantly slow down the processing of your case. If you currently reside in a country other than Afghanistan, you may transfer your case but be aware that you and your family members will require new interviews at the new embassy or consulate.

Q. I received my visa but my spouse or child has not. We were told that the case is still in administrative processing. Can his/her visa still be issued?

A. Yes, if your visa is still unexpired or you have already used it to immigrate to the United States, your spouse or child may be able to qualify. No visas for principal applicants may be approved after all 3,000 visas have been issued to Afghan principal applicants, but spouses and qualified children of SIV holders still may obtain SIVs. Such spouses/qualified children with open cases may still be issued.

Q. The U.S. government made a commitment and promise to Afghans who worked with the U.S. government to protect them. How can the SIV program end while people are still in the process?

A. More than 9,000 Afghans who have worked for the United States in Afghanistan (and their family members) have benefited from Special Immigrant Visa programs. Of these, more than 70% served as translators with the vast majority serving our nation's military forces in their mission in Afghanistan. We have the highest respect for the men and women who take enormous risks in supporting our military and civilian personnel. We are committed to helping those who have helped us. After all 3,000 visas have been issued, we will immediately restart processing if Congress extends this program. The Department of State supports extension of the Afghan SIV program, as explained in this [L.A Times editorial by Secretary of State John Kerry](#).

Q. Am I able to receive any benefits after I receive my SIV?

A. Yes. Afghan SIV recipients are eligible to apply for the same resettlement assistance, entitlement programs, and other benefits as refugees admitted under the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP). Resettlement assistance is available

to Afghans who are admitted to the United States on SIVs for a period not to exceed eight months. For more information, please see travel.state.gov and the [Refugee Processing Center's website](#).