

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 December 31, 2014. This means that principal applicants must apply for Chief of Mission approval, the first step of the overall application process, no later than December 31, 2014. Those who have submitted complete applications and are awaiting Chief of Mission approval will continue being considered for the program after December 31, 2014.

Applicants for Chief of Mission approval must submit an application including, at a minimum, name, nationality, and an email address by December 31, 2014. However, only complete Chief of Mission applications containing all required documents and information will be forwarded to U.S. Embassy Kabul for a decision by the Chief of Mission designee. Applicants who meet the December 31 deadline may provide additional required information or documentation following that date.

Although the deadline to apply for Chief of Mission approval is December 31, 2014, the current law provides that no SIVs may be issued under this program after that date. We welcome action by Congress to extend this program.

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. All of these visas were issued by August 2014. On August 8, 2014, the President signed the Emergency Afghan Allies Extension Act of 2014 which authorized the issuance of 1,000 additional visas for Afghan principal applicants by December 31, 2014. At the current issuance rate, the 1,000 additional Afghan visas will be exhausted before December 31, 2014. We continue to work with Congress on extending this program further.

After the additional 1,000 visas have been issued or after December 31, 2014, whichever occurs first, 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 \$365 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 the additional 1,000 visas have been issued to Afghan principal applicants or after December 31, 2014, whichever occurs first, 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: Are SIV interviews being conducted for Afghan SIV applicants?

At this time, visa interviews are not being scheduled for Afghan SIV applicants with approved petitions under section 602(b) of the Afghan Allies Protection Act

of 2009, as amended. The number of applicants who have already completed their initial interviews and whose applications are in process exceeds the number of available visa numbers. We plan to immediately resume interviews if Congress provides additional visa numbers.

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 the additional 1,000 visas have been issued to Afghan principal applicants or after December 31, 2014, whichever occurs first, 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 13,000 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 the additional 1,000 visas have been issued or after

December 31, 2014, whichever occurs first, we will immediately restart processing if Congress extends this program.

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](#).