

HOW TO APPLY FOR CHIEF OF MISSION APPROVAL AND PETITION FOR SPECIAL IMMIGRANT STATUS

Special Immigrant Visa Program for Afghan Nationals

GENERAL GUIDELINES

To apply for Chief of Mission (COM) approval for the Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) program, you must have access to email, the ability to scan and save all the required documents from the list as PDF files and be able to submit these documents via email. You must also file the Form DS-157 which will be processed as your petition for special immigrant status.

After you have gathered all the required documents listed below, attach them to an email and send it to AfghanSIVApplication@state.gov. The email must contain the principal applicant 's name as it is written in the passport or tazkera, plus the applicant' s date of birth using the following format: DAY-MONTH-YEAR.

We will send all communication and instructions related to this application to you via email. We recommend that you use the same email address to correspond with us throughout the process and that you keep a copy of any documents you send us.

REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

Applicants must submit the below five (5) items in their application package. *Please do not submit anything other than what is listed below unless we ask you to do so.* Specifically, do **not** submit photographs, certificates of appreciation, training certificates, resumes, or academic transcripts. These documents have no bearing on your COM approval application or petition and will not be considered.

Failure to submit all the required documentation exactly as requested below may significantly delay review of your application for COM approval. While this list specifies the documents required of all applicants, we may request additional information and documentation should questions arise during processing.

1. Verification of Employment in Afghanistan

A) If you. were employed by or on behalf of the U.S. government:

You must submit a letter from your employer 's Human Resources (HR) department confirming that you were employed by, or on behalf of, the U.S. government in Afghanistan between October 7, 2001, and December 31, 2024, for at least one year.

The letter must contain all the information below:

- Your full name
- Your date of birth
- Information on the U.S. government contract or subcontract held by your employer, if applicable. This should include project name, contract number, the period of performance of the contract, and the name of the prime contractor. If available, a copy of the contract between your employer and the U.S.

government or a copy of the subcontract between your employer and the company that maintains a contract with the U.S. government should be provided.

- Your job title
- Your job location
- The date you started working for the employer(DD-MM-YYYY)
- The date you stopped working for the employer(DD-MM-YYYY)
- The reason for separation (if you are no longer employed)
- The name of the author completing the letter, his or her signature, and his or her contact information including corporate email (or alternate email if he no longer works with the organization) and current phone number.
- A thorough description of your work duties and the location where you performed those duties. If applicable, this should include an explanation of how your position required you to:
 - Serve as an interpreter or translator for personnel of the Department of State or the United States Agency for International Development in Afghanistan, particularly if it included duties that required traveling away from the embassy with such personnel;
 - Serve as an interpreter or translator for U.S. military personnel in Afghanistan, particularly if this work required traveling off-base.

Note: If the U.S. government directly employed you, you may submit a copy of your employment contract for consideration.

B) If you were employed by the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), or a successor mission:

You must submit a letter from your employer confirming that you were employed by ISAF, or a successor mission, between October 7, 2001 and December 31, 2024, for at least one year. If you were directly hired by ISAF, or a successor mission, this letter must be from ISAF Headquarters HR, or the successor mission HR, regardless of where you were stationed in Afghanistan. If you were hired by an ISAF member nation, or a successor mission member nation, this letter must come from the department or agency that hired you.

Note: *Private contractors and subcontractors with ISAF or a successor mission or member nations other than the United States do NOT qualify.*

The letter must contain all the information below:

- Your full name
- Your date of birth
- An English language copy (or English translation) of the contract between you and your employer. If you were hired on a personal services agreement (PSA) or a personal services contract (PSC), you must submit an English language copy of the agreement or contract
- Your job title
- Your job location
- The date you started working for ISAF, or a successor mission (DD-MM-YYYY)
- The date you stopped working for ISAF, or a successor mission (DD-MM-YYYY)

- The reason for separation if you are no longer employed
- The name of the HR representative completing the HR letter, his or her signature, and his or her contact information including corporate email (or alternate email if no longer with the organization) and current phone number
- A description of your work duties. If applicable, this should include how your position required you to:
 - Serve as an interpreter or translator for U.S. military personnel while traveling off- base with U.S. military personnel stationed at ISAF or a successor mission, or
 - Perform activities for U.S. military personnel stationed at ISAF, or a successor mission

2. Letter of Recommendation

A) If you were employed by or on behalf of the U.S. government:

You must submit a letter from a direct, senior supervisor who knew you personally. If your supervisor has left Afghanistan or is no longer employed by the employer, the author may also be the person currently occupying that position or a more senior person. In all cases, the author must be connected with the qualifying employment. The supervisory period should overlap with the period of employment noted in your employment letter. **The letter should be dated and signed by your supervisor.** It must contain all of the information below:

- Your full name
- Your date of birth
- Your badge number (if available)
- Your job title
- Your job location
- Confirmation that the recommender was/is your supervisor, or is a more senior person
- The date the author of the letter began supervising you (DD-MM-YYYY)
- The date the author of the letter stopped supervising you (DD-MM-YYYY)
- The supervisor's name, title, corporate or U.S. government/military email address and personal email address and current phone number
- Justification for recommending you for COM approval, i.e., that you provided faithful and valuable service to the U.S. government
- The supervisor's description of your work duties. This statement should be personalized to the specific duties you performed, including a description of where you performed those duties. If applicable, your supervisor should also address how your position required you to:
 - Serve as an interpreter or translator for personnel of the Department of State or the United States Agency for International Development in Afghanistan, particularly if those duties required traveling away from the embassy with such personnel;
 - Serve as an interpreter or translator for U.S. military personnel in Afghanistan, particularly if those duties required traveling off-base.

You should try to obtain the above recommendation from a U.S. citizen supervisor who knows you personally, but if that is not possible, you should try to provide a letter of recommendation signed by your non-U.S. citizen supervisor and co-signed by the U.S. citizen who is responsible for the contract. Any U.S. citizen who co-signs should indicate that, based on his or her relationship with your contract or sub-contract supervisor, he or she is confident that the information provided is correct. The recommendation must contain the work and personal email address and phone number of any cosigner so he or she may be contacted if additional information is needed.

B) If you were employed by the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), or a successor mission:

You must submit a letter from your immediate supervisor, the person currently occupying that position, or a more senior person. Preferably, the letter should come from a member of the U.S. military who personally supervised you. **The letter should be dated and signed.** It must contain all the information below:

- Your full name.
- Your date of birth.
- Your badge number (if available).
- Your job title.
- Your job location.
- The date the author of the letter began supervising you (DD-MM-YYYY).
- The date the author of the letter stopped supervising you (DD-MM-YYYY).
- The recommender's name, title, rank, U.S. government/military email address (if applicable), personal email address and phone number.
- Justification for recommending you for COM approval, i.e., that you provided faithful and valuable service to the U.S. government.
- The supervisor's description of your work duties, including, if applicable, how your position required you to:
 - Serve as an interpreter or translator for U.S. military personnel in Afghanistan while traveling off-base; or
 - Perform activities for U.S. military personnel stationed at ISAF, or a successor mission.

IMPORTANT NOTICE REGARDING EMPLOYMENT AND RECOMMENDATION LETTERS:

The letters of employment and recommendation are core documents. COM cannot adjudicate your case until you submit these documents. There is one possible exception, and that is if you submit a statement of unavailability for these documents and the U.S. government (USG) can secure letters of employment and recommendation for you through Project Rabbit or another mechanism created by the USG to assist Afghan SIV applicants with obtaining these documents. There is no way to confirm whether the USG may be able to assist obtaining these letters in any case. If the USG can obtain these letters for you, COM will adjudicate your case and inform you of its decision.

3. Updated Form DS-157, Petition for Special Immigrant Classification for Afghan SIV Applicants

Beginning July 20, 2022, you must submit the Form DS-157 Petition for Special Immigrant Classification for Afghan SIV Applicants together with your COM approval application. The form is available online at <https://eforms.state.gov/Forms/ds157.pdf>. You must complete the entire form, leave no fields blank, and **sign the form**. It is important that you follow the instructions to the DS-157 at the end of the form. If you have previously submitted a signed DS-157 with your application, there is no need to submit a new one. See travel.state.gov/afghan for more information on the updated Form DS-157 petition.

4. Evidence of Afghan Nationality

You must submit a scanned photocopy of your tazkera with an English translation. Alternatively, the biographic data page of your Afghan passport is acceptable evidence of Afghan nationality, or a photocopy of your National Identity Card front and back.

5. Employee Badge(s)

If available, submit a scanned copy of any identification badges you have held during any periods of employment by or on behalf of the U.S. government, or by ISA F or a successor mission.

NEXT STEPS AND QUESTIONS

Once you have submitted your complete COM approval application packet via email to AfghanSIVApplication@state.gov, please allow NVC to review your submission. We will let you know if anything is missing or incomplete.

If you have further questions about the Afghan SIV program, please first review the information online at <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/immigrate/special-immg-visa-afghans-employed-us-gov.html>. If you cannot find the answer to your question, please email AfghanSIVApplication@state.gov.

TIPS TO PREVENT DELAYS IN PROCESSING YOUR APPLICATION

Ensure that the scanned copies of documents you provide are clear. Print your documents in black ink on white paper before scanning them. **Make certain all uploaded documents are in PDF format.**

Use the same spelling of your name on all documents and email correspondence. The spelling should match how your name is written in your passport or tazkera. You should list aliases after your correct name.

Letters of recommendation are very important in the SIV application process. Please ask your supervisor to be as detailed and complete as possible in describing your work and to write a letter that is specific to your accomplishments and responsibilities. Make certain that the supervisor(s) contact information is active and current. Make sure that letters of recommendation, letters from HR, and your DS-157 are signed.

