

# HOW TO APPLY FOR CHIEF OF MISSION APPROVAL

## Special Immigrant Visa Program for Afghan Nationals Embassy of the United States of America – Kabul, Afghanistan

### GENERAL GUIDELINES

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To apply for Chief of Mission (COM) approval for the Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) program, you must have access to email; have the ability to scan and save all of the required documents from the list as PDF files; and be able to submit these documents via email.

After you have gathered all of the required documents listed below, attach them to an email and send it to [AfghanSIVApplication@state.gov](mailto:AfghanSIVApplication@state.gov). The email's subject line 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.

Do not include family member information in the subject line of your email. If a COM approval letter is issued, we will give you instructions on adding your spouse and unmarried children under age 21 to your case.

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.

Only complete COM applications containing all required documents and information will be forwarded to the U.S. Embassy in Kabul for a decision by the COM.

### REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

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Applicants must submit the below seven (7) items in their document 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 and will not be considered.

Failure to submit all of 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, 2020, for at least two years.

The letter must contain all of the information below:

- Your full name.
- Your date of birth.
- Contract information, including: project name; contract number; duration of contract; name of contractor; and contracting U.S. government entity. 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 work (DD-MM-YYYY).
- The date you ended your employment (DD-MM-YYYY).
- The reason for separation if you are no longer employed.
- The name of the author completing the letter, their signature, and their contact information including email and phone (or alternate email if no longer with the organization).
- A description of your work duties, including 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; or
  - Perform sensitive and trusted activities for the U.S. government in Afghanistan, including a description of those activities.

**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, 2020, for at least two years. 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 of 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 and a brief description of your duties.
- Your job location.
- The date you started work (DD-MM-YYYY).

- The date you ended your employment (DD-MM-YYYY).
- The reason for separation if you are no longer employed.
- The name of the HR representative completing the HR letter, their signature, and their contact information including email and phone (or alternate email if no longer with the organization).
- A description of your work duties, including 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 sensitive and trusted 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 U.S. citizen 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 and must have met the applicant before offering a recommendation for the purposes of obtaining a special immigrant visa. 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.
- The date the author of the letter began supervising you.
- The date the author of the letter stopped supervising you.
- The supervisor's name, title, corporate or U.S. government/military email address, personal email address, and phone number.
- The supervisor's U.S. passport number or other evidence of U.S. citizenship.
- Justification for recommending you for COM approval, i.e., that you provided faithful and valuable service to the U.S. government.
- The supervisor's explanation of any ongoing serious threat you have experienced or are experiencing as a consequence of your employment by or on behalf of the U.S. government.
- The supervisor's opinion on whether you pose a threat to the national security or safety of the United States.
- The supervisor's description of your work duties, including 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; or
- Perform sensitive and trusted activities for the U.S. government in Afghanistan, including a description of those activities.

If the above recommendation is not possible to obtain from a U.S. citizen supervisor, you should 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. The U.S. citizen who co-signs must 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 U.S. citizen co-signer must also certify that, to the best of his or her knowledge, you present no threat to the national security or safety of the United States. The recommendation must contain the U.S. citizen co-signer's work and personal email address 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 a member of the U.S. military who personally worked with you. The letter should be dated and signed. 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.
- The length of time the recommender worked with you, including specific dates.
- The capacity in which the recommender worked with you.
- The recommender's name, title, rank, U.S. government/military email address, 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 recommender's explanation of any ongoing serious threat you have experienced or are experiencing as a consequence of your employment by ISAF, or a successor mission.
- The recommender's opinion on whether you pose a threat to the national security or safety of the United States.
- The recommender's description of your work duties, including 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; or
  - Perform sensitive and trusted activities for the U.S. government in Afghanistan, including a description of those activities

### **3. Form DS-157, Supplemental Nonimmigrant Visa Application**

The form is available online at [travel.state.gov/content/visas/english/forms.html](http://travel.state.gov/content/visas/english/forms.html). You must complete the entire form and include start and end dates for all employment, and your academic and military history. It is important that you follow the [instructions](#) at the bottom of this page when completing the DS-157.

### **4. Evidence of Afghan Nationality**

You must submit a scanned photocopy of the biographic data page of your Afghan passport. If no passport is available, submit a copy of your tazkera with an English translation.

### **5. Biographic Data**

Provide the following biographic data for the principal applicant:

- First name
- Last name
- All other names/aliases
- Mother's name
- Nationality
- Passport number
- Date of birth
- Place of birth
- Gender
- Marital status
- Email address and phone number
- Work location (base or city and province)
- Residence location (base or city and province)

### **6. Statement of Threats Received as a Consequence of Your Employment**

You must write, sign, and date a brief statement describing the threat you face or have faced as a result of your employment by or on behalf of the U.S. government in Afghanistan or by ISAF, or a successor mission. Although statements provided by other parties may be included, you must provide your own statement. Please provide as many details as possible.

Section 1219 of Public Law 113-66 provides that a credible sworn statement depicting dangerous country conditions, together with official evidence of such country conditions from the U.S. government, should be considered as a factor in a determination of whether an applicant has experienced or is experiencing an ongoing serious threat as a consequence of employment by the U.S. government.

## 7. Employee Badge

If available, submit a scanned copy of your most recent identification badge(s).

### NEXT STEPS AND QUESTIONS

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Once you have submitted your complete COM approval application packet via email to [AfghanSIVApplication@state.gov](mailto:AfghanSIVApplication@state.gov), please allow up to eight (8) weeks for a response confirming that the National Visa Center (NVC) has received your documents. Once NVC reviews your COM approval application packet, we will let you know if anything is missing or incomplete.

*Only complete COM applications containing all required documents and information will be forwarded to the U.S. Embassy in Kabul for a decision by the COM.*

If you have further questions about the Afghan SIV program, please first review the information online at <https://travel.state.gov/content/visas/en/immigrate/afghans-work-for-us.html>. If you cannot find the answer to your question, please email [AfghanSIVApplication@state.gov](mailto:AfghanSIVApplication@state.gov).

### TIPS TO PREVENT DELAYS IN PROCESSING YOUR APPLICATION

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Ensure that the scanned copies of documents you provide are clear. Print your documents in black ink on white paper before scanning them.

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. You should list aliases after your correct name.

All letters of recommendation should be proofread closely. Letters of recommendation with significant spelling and grammar errors may delay processing.

### INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING FORM DS-157

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Form DS-157 is the Supplemental Nonimmigrant Visa Application. The form is available online at [travel.state.gov/content/visas/english/forms.html](https://travel.state.gov/content/visas/english/forms.html). Please read and follow the below instructions carefully when completing Form DS-157.

If the form does not provide sufficient space for your response, you may use additional sheets of paper. Do not leave any boxes blank. All questions must contain an appropriate response or your application will be delayed.

***Below are instructions for each numbered question:***

1. Enter your family name or surname as it appears in your passport, if any. Do not enter names that appear after d/o or s/o. If there is only one name, please enter that name here.
2. Enter your first name as it appears in your passport (if any). If there is only one name in your passport, enter FNU (First Name Unknown) here.

3. Write your full name in Dari exactly as it appears in your passport.
4. Enter your clan or tribal name. If you do not have a clan or tribal name, write 'none.'
5. Enter your spouse's full name. If you are unmarried, write 'N/A.'
6. Enter your father's full name as it appears in his passport.
7. Enter your mother's full name as it appears in her passport.
8. Enter the name, address and phone number of your U.S. contact person or organization in the following format: Sam Smith, 2100 Peach Street, Houston, TX 77003, phone (713) 555 1212. If you do not have a U.S. contact person or organization, write 'none.'
9. List all the countries you have visited during the past 10 years and the year of the visit (for example, China 2004, Italy 2007). If you have never traveled outside of Afghanistan, write 'none.'
10. List all the countries which have issued you a passport, including your current one. If you have never been issued a passport and do not hold a current passport, write 'none.'
11. Check the appropriate box.
12. List your two previous employers but not your current one. If you have had only one employer or no employer before your current job, you should explain that in the box. List your previous employers regardless of whether they have a connection to the United States. Please explain your job if you were self-employed. Please state very specifically your employer's name, the job location, and your job title.
13. List all professional, charitable, and social organizations in which you are or were a member. Do not write the names of employers. However, if one of your employers was also the Taliban government, at any level, write that here. If you have never been a member of an organization, write 'none.'
14. If your answer is 'yes,' provide details of your specialized skill.
15. This refers to any military service, including Northern Alliance, Taliban, or any other.
16. This refers to all armed conflicts in which you have been involved, regardless of when it occurred. If your answer is 'yes,' provide details.
17. List the names and addresses of all the educational institutions you attended after elementary school. Include the month and year you started and finished. If you did not attend any educational institution after elementary school, you should state that in this box.
18. Check the appropriate box.