



**Report to Congress on
Posting of the Afghan Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) Quarterly Report
on the Department of State's Website
Section 1219 of the National Defense Authorization Act
for Fiscal Year 2014 (Pub. L. No. 113-66)**

NOTE:
This report covers only
Q1 FY2026, October 1, 2025 – December 31, 2025

The Department of State (State), the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and other U.S. government (USG) departments and agencies involved in the Afghan Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) process continued to review applications submitted under Section 602(b) of the Afghan Allies Protection Act of 2009, as amended, during the reporting period of October 1, 2025, to December 31, 2025 (Q1 FY 2026).

How many Afghan SIVs have been issued in the first quarter (Q1) of FY 2026 (October 1, 2025, to December 31, 2025)?

Afghan Principal Applicants Issued in Q1	Afghan Derivative Applicants Issued in Q1	Total Afghan SIVs Issued in Q1	Total Afghan SIV Numbers Used ^{1,2}	Remaining SIVs for Afghan Principal Applicants as of December 31, 2025 ^{3,4}
468	1,568	2,036	44,530	5,970

What efficiency improvements have been made to Afghan SIV processing?

During the October 1 – November 12, 2025, lapse in appropriations, two-thirds of the Afghan SIV Unit’s (ASIV) U.S. direct hire staff were furloughed, affecting its ability to implement process changes. Outside of the lapse period, ASIV continued to employ advanced analytics to improve Chief of Mission (COM) processing, and to focus on reviewing some of the longest-pending COM cases. As a result of these efforts, the average COM processing time decreased by 43 days from the previous quarter. The Department paused COM processing in late November 2025 following the attack on two National Guard members by an Afghan national. As a result, COM throughput decreased by more than 4,000 cases from Q4 2025 to Q1 2026. During the processing pause, ASIV trained additional staff to conduct the most complex stages of COM review; continued efforts to verify submitted employment contracts against U.S. government databases; conducted credibility reviews for supporting case documentation; improved the quality and consistency of fraud prevention and detection materials; and reviewed internal procedures for consistency and efficiency.

What is the average USG processing time for Afghan SIVs, and how many cases are processed in that time?

The stages and steps in the Afghan SIV application process are outlined below and include the average processing time for each step for cases processed during Q1 FY 2026, including the time required by relevant USG

¹ Total number of visas issued to SIV principal applicants overseas combined with SIV numbers used through domestic adjustments of status since permanent numbers became available on December 19, 2014.

² In February 2026, State conducted an audit of SIV issuances from December 2014 through the end of Q3 FY 2025, which resulted in slight variations in the number of remaining visa numbers now reflected in this table.

³ Numbers remaining are preliminary and subject to change. They are accurate as of the date of publication and account for recaptured numbers.

⁴ In March 2024, Congress allocated an additional 12,000 Afghan SIV numbers. These are reflected in the number of SIVs remaining through the end of Q4.

entities. This chart captures total USG processing time in calendar days, beginning when the applicant first expresses interest in applying for a SIV to the National Visa Center (NVC) and ending with the date of visa issuance or final refusal at a U.S. embassy or consulate. It does not capture time taken for steps in the SIV process outside USG control that depend solely on the applicant's initiative. However, even within each step below identified as under USG control, there may be significant time spent waiting for applicant or third-party action not attributable to the USG entities involved. Therefore, the average processing time listed below generally overestimates the total processing time solely attributable to USG entities.

SIV Processing Steps^{5,6}				
Stage	Step	Description	Average processing time in calendar days	Number of Cases Processed
COM application process	1	Applicant submits COM approval application package to the NVC. ⁷	Applicant-controlled	N/A
	2	NVC reviews documents for completeness.	10	52,463 ⁸
	3	NVC sends completed COM	1	8,957

⁵ Processing steps are for SIVs authorized under section 602(b) of the Afghan Allies Protection Act of 2009, as amended. Afghan national cases processed under 602(b) are given the SQ SIV classification.

⁶ Previous versions of this report listed 14 steps. During Q1 FY 2022, step 5 "The ACOM advises NVC if the application is approved. If approved, NVC immediately sends approval letter to applicant." was fully automated and no longer requires manual processing. For this reason, as noted in the report covering Q1 FY 2022, State will no longer include this step in reporting.

⁷ At this stage, the applicant has contacted NVC to express interest in a SIV and provided the documents necessary to begin processing.

⁸ This number reflects the number of case reviews conducted by the NVC within the quarter. The NVC counts a review each time an SIV applicant submits additional documents to complete his/her case. This number may be larger than the total number of cases pending at the NVC because an individual case might be reviewed multiple times in a single quarter.

SIV Processing Steps^{5,6}				
Stage	Step	Description	Average processing time in calendar days	Number of Cases Processed
COM application process		application package to ASIV Unit. ⁹		
	4	ASIV Unit reviews application and Form DS-157 petition for special immigrant status, and COM or Designee decides. Applicant is automatically informed of decision. ¹⁰	597 ¹¹	4,418
Form I-360 adjudication process	5	Applicant self-petitions to USCIS using Form I-360. ¹²	Applicant-controlled ¹³	N/A

⁹ COM approval may be provided by the “appropriate Chief of Mission, or the designee of the appropriate Chief of Mission” (see Afghan Allies Protection Act of 2009 (Public Law 111-8), section 602(b)(2)(D)). The ASIV director was the COM’s designee throughout this reporting period. Since the COM dissolved the COM Committee on August 19, 2021, the ASIV Unit sends COM approval agendas directly to the COM designee for a decision.

¹⁰ The COM approval process involves verifying the SIV applicant’s ability to qualify for special immigrant status based on the information submitted in step 1. This process may require input from third parties. Accordingly, the length of time spent at this stage may vary depending on the responsiveness of such third parties and other factors.

¹¹ In response to a congressional mandate, in FY 2020 the Department began processing COM cases within priority tiers. For Q1 FY 2026, 63 percent of cases that received COM decisions were in the lowest two priority tiers. The average COM processing time decreased by 43 days from the previous quarter, highlighting the Department’s effort to review and complete the longest-pending cases.

¹² As of July 20, 2022, all new SIV applications are filed with the Department of State via Form DS-157, consolidating the COM approval and petition adjudication responsibilities at the Department of State. Only certain applicants who had a COM approval before July 20, 2022, and are in the United States, or applicants who did not file a DS-157 with their initial SIV application, will need to file a Form I-360 to petition for special immigrant status. Additionally, applicants who filed a Form I-360 before July 20, 2022, are required to await a USCIS decision; they may not switch to the Form DS-157 petition process.

¹³ Effective July 20, 2022, State and DHS simplified and streamlined the SIV application process for Afghan applicants. New Afghan SIV applicants filing on or after July 20, 2022, only need to file one form with the Department of State, a revised Form DS-157, as their SIV classification petition, instead of having to file Form I-360, Petition for Special Immigrant Status, with USCIS.

SIV Processing Steps^{5,6}				
Stage	Step	Description	Average processing time in calendar days	Number of Cases Processed
	6	USCIS adjudicates petition and sends to NVC if approved. ¹⁴	18 ¹⁵	8
Visa interview process, including pre- and post-interview ¹⁶	7	NVC sends instruction packet to applicant requesting standard immigrant visa documentation, including Form DS-260.	2	2,227
	8	Applicant submits required documentation to NVC.	Applicant-controlled	N/A
	9	NVC reviews documents for completeness and corresponds with applicant when additional documentation is needed.	9	35,837 ¹⁷

¹⁴ Form I-360 petitions adjudicated by USCIS between October 1, 2025, and December 31, 2025.

¹⁵ As of Q4 FY 2022, the methodology for calculating the average processing time reflects the average time it took USCIS to adjudicate a Form I-360 petition completed in the quarter; the processing time is calculated from the date USCIS receives the petition to the date a final adjudicative decision is rendered on the petition (i.e., approved, denied, or administratively closed). Petitions where a request for evidence (RFE) or notice of intent to deny (NOID) was sent to the petitioner prior to final decision are filtered out of the processing time calculation. The petitioner's response time to the RFE or NOID is not calculated as part of the USCIS processing time.

¹⁶ Most applicants receive special immigrant status by going through the process explained in this chart. Applicants who obtain special immigrant status in the United States apply for adjustment of status with USCIS.

¹⁷ As in step 2, this number reflects the number of case reviews conducted by the NVC, which counts a review each time a SIV applicant submits additional documents to complete his/her case. This number may be larger than the total number of cases pending at the NVC because an individual case might be reviewed multiple times per quarter.

SIV Processing Steps^{5,6}				
Stage	Step	Description	Average processing time in calendar days	Number of Cases Processed
	10	When immigrant visa application is complete and applicant's desired post of interview has availability, NVC schedules interview at a U.S. embassy or consulate. ¹⁸	222 ¹⁹	244
	11	Applicant is interviewed and biometrics collected by consular officer on scheduled appointment date. Administrative processing, if needed, is initiated following interview.	N/A	1,100
	12	Applicant's case undergoes administrative	332	77

¹⁸ This number only includes interviews scheduled by NVC immediately following the case being documentarily completed. It does not include interviews scheduled locally by an embassy or consulate following a case transfer from Embassy Kabul. Since Embassy Kabul suspended visa operations on August 31, 2021, NVC has been scheduling SIV applicants for visa interviews at any IV post in the world where the applicant is able to appear.

¹⁹ This number reflects the average processing time between when an applicant is considered documentarily complete and when he/she is scheduled for an interview. NVC schedules interviews for documentarily complete applicants who can appear at an IV post for an interview. In some cases, a lengthy period of time may elapse before an applicant notifies NVC they are able to travel to such a post. Although the applicant's ability to travel to a third-country post is outside the Department of State's control, this figure nonetheless includes the time periods during which applicants are documentarily complete but unable to travel to an IV post for an interview. Therefore, the average processing time for step 10 is overinclusive and reflects time during which the applicant is not waiting for government-controlled action.

SIV Processing Steps^{5,6}				
Stage	Step	Description	Average processing time in calendar days	Number of Cases Processed
		processing, if required. ²⁰		
Visa issuance to eligible applicants	13	Upon completion of administrative processing, visa is issued if applicant is eligible.	Applicant-controlled	N/A
		Total USG processing time in calendar days²¹	1,191	N/A

Why are applications pending more than nine months in USG-controlled stages of the SIV application?

Step 10 includes both USG- and applicant-controlled timeframes. While the USG is responsible for scheduling, applicants must designate a U.S. embassy or consulate (IV post) that processes immigrant visas outside of Afghanistan where they can appear to have their visa interviews scheduled and conducted.²² The average processing time at step 10 includes the period in which the applicant has not designated an IV post for interview. The timeframes indicated for steps 2 and 9 reflect NVC processing time only. The USG also continues to work through the surge in COM applications (step 4) received following the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Afghanistan in accordance with the priority tiers established in response to a congressional

²⁰ This step measures the time from when a consular officer requests national security, legal, or procedural guidance from the Department of State through the software used to process immigrant visa applications until the guidance is provided, for those cases in which a consular officer makes such a request. Step 12 totals include data for SIV applicants who completed this step in Q4 FY 2025. Average processing time for remaining cases pending cannot be calculated until they are completed. A high number in this field reflects older cases being completed, not older cases languishing.

²¹ The statistics in this chart were formerly reported in business days in reports published from April 2014 to April 2016. USG processing times do not factor in applicant-controlled steps, although significant time spent may be spent awaiting applicant or third-party action not attributable to the USG entities involved. Moreover, the total USG processing time may overestimate the processing time for any individual applicant because not all applicants are required to undergo processing at step 6 or step 12. Overall processing times are greater than USG processing times.

²² As of January 26, 2025, State has paused all USG relocation flights from Kabul to third-country processing platforms for Afghan refugee and Afghan SIV applicants until further notice.

mandate in FY 2020. In Q1 FY 2026, 63 percent of cases that received COM decisions were in the lowest two priority tiers. ASIV is focused on processing the longest-pending cases, and the average COM processing time decreased by more than 120 days in the last two quarters as a result. During Q1 FY 2026, ASIV received 8,857 COM applications, a significant increase from the 5,930 received in Q4 FY 2025, which we attribute to the approach of the December 31, 2025, COM application deadline. Because of the processing pause implemented following the National Guard attack, the average COM processing time is likely to increase in the near future.

How many SIV applications are pending as of December 31, 2025?

Step 1: 66,408 principal applicants submitted some, but not all, documents required to apply for COM approval.

Step 4: 51,122²³ principal applicants were pending review for COM approval. These applicants had submitted all documents.

Step 6: 25 principal applicants had Form I-360 petitions pending with USCIS.

Step 10: 15,300 principal applicants and 67,441 derivative family members were pending scheduling of visa interviews. Applicants outside of Afghanistan may be interviewed at any U.S. embassy or consulate that adjudicates immigrant visa applications.

Step 12²⁴: Applications for approximately 311 principal applicants and 208 derivative family members were undergoing administrative processing.

How many SIV applicants were interviewed in Q1 FY 2026?

²³ The number of cases pending COM review increased in Q1 FY 2026 after decreasing for several quarters. The increase resulted from an influx of applications submitted prior to the December 31, 2025, COM application deadline as well as an increase in the backlog following a processing pause that was implemented following the November 2025 attack on two National Guard members in Washington, D.C., by an Afghan national.

²⁴ Average processing time in Q1 FY 2026 was 332 days, including 10 cases created prior to 2024, 17 cases created in 2024, and 50 cases created in 2025. 24 percent of all applicants completing administrative processing during the quarter were processed in under 90 days, 44 percent were processed within 180 days, and 70 percent were processed in under 365 days.

The following chart shows the number of Afghan nationals who completed a consular interview in Q1 of FY 2026 as part of the application for an SIV under the Afghan Allies Protection Act of 2009, as amended.

Month	Principal Applicants	Derivative Family Members	Total
October	372	1,076	1,448
November	413	1,097	1,510
December	315	571	886
Total	1,100	2,744	3,844

How many denials were there in Q1 FY 2026?

At the end of this quarter, the following numbers of applications were denied at one of the application stages:

- 2,855 Afghan principal applicants were deemed unqualified to receive COM approval or had their prior approval revoked.
- USCIS denied eight principal applicants who submitted Form I-360 petitions.

What are the reasons for a COM denial?

Denial of an application for COM approval generally occurs for one or more of the following reasons:

- **Failure to establish qualifying employment by or on behalf of the USG or by the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) or a successor mission.** Applications are denied for this reason if the applicant fails to establish qualifying employment. For information on qualifying employment, see the Department of State's website at: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/immigrate/special-immg-visa-afghans-employed-us-gov.html/>

- **Insufficient documentation.** Applications are denied for this reason if the applicant fails to provide a required document or if there is a deficiency in a document provided by the applicant.
- **Failure to establish at least one year of employment by or on behalf of the USG, or by ISAF or a successor mission, during the period specified in section 602(b) of the Afghan Allies Protection Act of 2009, as amended.**
- **Failure to provide evidence of faithful and valuable service to the USG.** Applications denied for this reason have generally involved cases lacking the requisite positive recommendation or evaluation to establish faithful and valuable service as required by law. In some instances where faithful and valuable service was not confirmed, employment by or on behalf of the USG had been terminated for cause.
- **Derogatory information associated with the applicant that is incompatible with the requirements for special immigrant status.** This reason for denial generally indicates the applicant engaged in an unlawful, unethical, criminal, or terrorism-related activity.

Section 7806 Cost and Hours

The total estimated number of personnel hours taken to produce this report is 80 hours.