

# Welcome Start Eligibility

The Welcome Start program was created to reach vulnerable populations in the state of California. The program will provide culturally-sensitive educational resources to support clients in achieving self-sufficiency and successful integration. This program is designed to specifically reach Afghan and Ukrainian refugees. This document will outline which individuals in the state of California are eligible to participate in the Welcome Start program.

## Eligible Counties

Alameda	Orange	San Diego	Santa Clara
Los Angeles	Sacramento	San Francisco	Stanislaus

## Afghans

1. Citizens or nationals of Afghanistan paroled into the United States under section 212(d)(5) of the Immigration and Nationality Act between July 31, 2021 and September 30, 2023. This group includes unaccompanied minors as defined by 6 U.S.C. 279(g)(2)). Unaccompanied Afghan Minors under the age of 18 are eligible to apply for ORR's Unaccompanied Refugee Minor (URM) program (8 U.S.C. 1522(d)(2)), under which they are eligible to receive URM services to the same extent as refugees in the URM program.
  - o AHPs who arrived between July 31, 2021 and September 30, 2023 are eligible for ORR benefits and services until the end of their parole terms
  - o Some Afghans whose parole terms have expired may continue receiving these ORR funded benefits and services they were already receiving if they applied for re-parole, asylum, or adjustment of status before their parole term expired (see [ORR PL 23-06](#) for more information)



2. A spouse or child of any individual described above in number 1, who is paroled into the United States after September 30, 2023.
3. A parent or legal guardian of any individual described above in number 1, who is determined to be an unaccompanied child as defined by 6 U.S.C. § 279(g)(2), who is paroled into the United States after September 30, 2023.
3. In addition to Afghan Humanitarian Parolees, the following Afghan populations are also eligible not only for traditional ORR benefits and services but also ASA-funded benefits and services:
  - o Citizens and nationals of Afghanistan for whom refugee and entrant assistance activities are authorized (e.g., Special Immigrant Visa holders, Special Immigrants with Conditional Permanent Resident status, SI/SQ parolees, refugees, asylees), whose eligibility date is on or after July 31, 2021.

## Ukrainians

1. New categories of ORR-eligible Ukrainian populations and other non-Ukrainian individuals displaced from Ukraine
2. Citizens or nationals of Ukraine who the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has paroled into the United States between February 24, 2022, and September 30, 2023, due to urgent humanitarian reasons or for significant public benefit, known as Ukrainian Humanitarian Parolees (UHPs).
3. Non-Ukrainian individuals who last habitually resided in Ukraine, who DHS has paroled into the United States between February 24, 2022, and September 30, 2023, due to urgent humanitarian reasons or for significant public benefit.
4. A spouse or child of an individual described in section I.A. or I.B. who is paroled into the United States after September 30, 2023.
5. A parent, legal guardian, or primary caregiver of an unaccompanied refugee minor or an unaccompanied child described in section I.A. or I.B. who is paroled into the United States after September 30, 2023.

**For additional questions reach out to Refugee Program Bureau**  
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