

Maryam's Resettlement Experience



BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- **Name (pseudonym*):** Maryam
- **Age:** 51
- **Arrival date:** August 2021
- **Household composition:** Lives with her adult son and three grandchildren
- **Education:** 10th grade
- **Languages spoken:** Dari, some English

“Sometimes the kids are a bit uneasy because they are away from their parents. I tell them they’re going to be OK and they will be with their parents again. I try to keep them going. It is up and down, good and bad.”

	PRE-ARRIVAL	ARRIVAL	1 YEAR	18 MONTHS	2 YEARS
Health and Health Care 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maryam has chronic heart disease. • Her son has chronic pain due to a back injury. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maryam and her family are enrolled in Medicaid to cover anticipated medical expenses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sometimes, Maryam goes to an adult medical daycare center to get COVID-19 tests or routine checks of her vital signs, as needed. • She would like to get dental care, but she is unable to find a provider that accepts Medicaid. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maryam has chronic pain in her left arm, hypertension, and thyroid problems. • Stress related to financial concerns contributes to her health problems. • Maryam also has memory problems, making it difficult for her to remember her doctor's advice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maryam is feeling stressed and unwell as financial instability and uncertainty about housing are ongoing worries.
Social Services 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maryam and her family use Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits to buy food. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The resettlement agency provided rental assistance for 1 year, but this support has ended. • Maryam worries that they will have to move to Virginia to live with relatives if they do not receive additional financial support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maryam has received multiple notices from her landlord that she is behind on rent. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maryam's case manager helped pay rent on a month-to-month basis, but this support has ended.
Legal Status 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maryam needs a lawyer to help her family apply for asylum. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The resettlement agency connected Maryam with a lawyer to help with her asylum application, but she is still waiting to hear back from them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maryam's parolee status will expire soon and she is unsure about the status of her asylum application. • She is still waiting to get connected with a lawyer. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Despite long wait times and frequent staff turnover at the resettlement agency, Maryam is connected with a lawyer. • Maryam and her son are waiting for their asylum interview to be scheduled.
Community Integration 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maryam's grandchildren are separated from their parents. Their parents remain in Afghanistan. • Maryam becomes the primary caregiver for her grandchildren in the United States. • There is a mosque nearby, but Maryam is not sure how to get there. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maryam and her son have been learning English through an online course, which has been a challenge for Maryam as she is still not accustomed to using technology. • Maryam's grandchildren struggle with being separated from their parents, so she tries her best to be emotionally supportive. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maryam continues to attend the medical daycare to exercise, socialize, and learn English. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although Maryam's ability to read and write in English is limited, her spoken English has improved. • She is learning to navigate U.S. systems and ask questions when she needs additional support.
Employment 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maryam and her son are both unemployed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maryam and her son remain unemployed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maryam's son begins working the night shift a few days a week at a nearby store. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maryam's son loses his job.
Policy and Program Implications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A longer time frame for early resettlement support (rent, utilities, and basic living expenses) from organizations • Partnerships with landlords to prevent eviction when refugees face financial insecurity • Cultural integration activities (for example, English classes, the Life Skills curriculum for English learners, or American cultural guides to orient refugees to U.S. systems and social norms) • Written guides outlining processes for refugees' eligibility, application, and renewal for social services programs, such as Medicaid and SNAP • Connection to professional development opportunities that transition new arrivals with disabilities to U.S. employment (for example, skills training, the Job Accommodation Network, workforce development transition programs, or course certificates) • Job training, which includes identifying transferable skills and a description of the kinds of jobs that refugees can apply for • Culturally competent health services and/or community health workers to provide outreach in refugee communities • Timely access to legal services to support required updates in documentation status 				

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Nasima's Resettlement Experience



BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- **Name (pseudonym*):** Nasima
- **Age:** 33
- **Arrival date:** August 2021
- **Household composition:** Husband and three children (ages 3, 5, and 8)
- **Education:** Trained as a midwife in Afghanistan; working as a medical assistant in the United States
- **Languages spoken:** Dari, increased English proficiency in the United States

"In the future I want to be a doctor. Right now, I start with CNA [certified nursing assistant]. Once I finish that, I will find someone to help me find a nursing class. I don't want to work in a restaurant, I want to be a doctor. I'm working hard to save money and go to college."

	PRE-ARRIVAL	ARRIVAL	1 YEAR	18 MONTHS	2 YEARS
Health and Health Care 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nasima and her family are enrolled in Medicaid to cover anticipated medical expenses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nasima receives a dental insurance card. • Nasima would like to get birth control but has not found a doctor to provide reproductive care. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nasima calls a healthcare organization to find a dentist and family doctor. • Nasima can speak enough English to make appointments on her own. • Nasima hopes to find a clinician that can give her an IUD. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nasima is healthy and discovers she is pregnant. She adjusts her lifestyle to welcome another child.
Social Services 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nasima and her family use Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits to buy food. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The resettlement agency provides rental assistance for 3 months after her family moves. • SNAP benefits are cut off. Her caseworker recommends that she reapply. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nasima is looking to move out of their current apartment due to cost and sanitation concerns. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nasima's family has moved to a new home. • Her case manager helps her apply to receive a voucher to cover childcare expenses. • Nasima is reenrolled in the SNAP program for her three children.
Legal Status 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nasima has trouble finding a lawyer to help her family apply for asylum. She is worried that she will face legal problems if she does not apply on time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nasima's caseworker helps her find a lawyer to apply for asylum. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nasima has had an interview for her asylum application and is waiting for a status update. • Nasima and her husband's work permits will expire soon, and they need to reapply. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seven months after their asylum interview, their case is accepted. • Nasima and her husband's work permits expired after 2 years in the United States. They reapply, and their new permits are valid for 2 more years.
Community Integration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nasima was close with her neighbors and friends from college. She often shared meals with her neighbors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the United States, Nasima quickly makes friends who support her resettlement. • Her friends help her find an apartment close to her new job. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nasima's children love school and are making friends. • Nasima has made many friends in her building and by volunteering to serve meals to seniors at her mosque. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nasima's husband receives his driver's license. • Nasima's daughter starts taking Taekwondo classes. • Nasima's friend at the mosque offers to pay for her CNA class. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nasima receives her driver's license. • Nasima and her husband buy a second car.
Employment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Afghanistan, Nasima worked as a midwife at a large hospital. • Her husband ran a chicken farming business. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nasima takes a cooking class at a local university where she also learns English. • The class helps her find a job as a cook. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nasima continues to work as a cook. • Nasima's husband works at a warehouse. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nasima starts taking an online CNA course to get back into the healthcare field. • Nasima's husband works as a rideshare driver. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nasima completes her CNA class. • She finds a job working as a medical assistant.
Policy and Program Implications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved connections between government services and organizations supporting resettlement • A longer time frame for early resettlement support from organizations • Accommodations to offset the "benefits cliff" (ineligibility for benefits due to a slight increase in household income) 				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional development opportunities to transition new arrivals to U.S. employment (for example, skills training, workforce development transition programs, or course certificates) • Improved access to reproductive health care for women as needed • Timely access to legal services to support required updates in documentation status 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural integration activities (such as English classes or the Life Skills curriculum for English learners) • Social support and community building with people from similar backgrounds 		

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Ahmed's Resettlement Experience



BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- **Name (pseudonym)*:** Ahmed
- **Age:** 42
- **Arrival date:** September 2021
- **Household composition:** Lives in the United States with his adult son; his wife and four younger children are in Afghanistan
- **Education:** 8th grade
- **Languages spoken:** Pashto, Farsi, Italian

"I don't have any family here. I call them [in Afghanistan] and share everything with them. I have one friend here that I talk to. My son goes to school and then he works. He's with me at home but he lives his own life and I live mine. There are more people at the medical daycare. I socialize with them. We play billiards and we eat and do exercises. Being away from the family is not fun. Half of the family is there, and half is here. We are not together. It is not good. Once we are together it will be OK, but not now."

	PRE-ARRIVAL	ARRIVAL	1 YEAR	18 MONTHS	2 YEARS
Health and Health Care 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ahmed lost his leg when he was injured in a landmine blast in Afghanistan. • Because of the accident, he now uses a prosthetic leg to help him walk short distances. But standing or walking for long periods of time can sometimes be challenging. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The resettlement agency helps enroll Ahmed in Medicaid to cover anticipated medical expenses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ahmed's case worker at the resettlement agency helps him find a medical provider. • Since he does not speak English, Ahmed's son and/or the case worker help him make doctors' appointments. • He has asked his case worker about finding an electric wheelchair, but he is not sure if they can help. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ahmed has a hand injury from the landmine blast and is looking for a doctor to address chronic pain. • At the doctor's office, Ahmed uses a Pashto interpreter. Ahmed is satisfied with the care he is receiving. • Ahmed experiences depression and anxiety related to his family in Afghanistan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ahmed uses a walker, but he is trying to find out if Medicaid will pay for a wheelchair. • Although he is still missing his wife and children in Afghanistan, Ahmed is feeling better and less depressed.
Social Services 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The resettlement agency helps enroll Ahmed in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to buy food and provides cash assistance for utilities and rent. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ahmed's case worker helps him apply for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits, and he is waiting for a status update. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ahmed is still waiting for an update on his SSI application. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ahmed is still waiting for an update on his SSI application.
Legal Status 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ahmed has not filed his asylum application due to the cost, and he is hoping the resettlement agency can help. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The resettlement agency provides Ahmed with a lawyer who helps him gather relevant documents and submit his asylum application. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ahmed completes his interview for the asylum application. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ahmed is still waiting for an update on his asylum application. • Ahmed receives his work permit, which is valid for the next 2 years.
Community Integration 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ahmed starts visiting an adult medical daycare regularly. The facility provides free meals and social activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ahmed spends most days at the medical daycare or at home. Other Afghans come to the center, and he plays billiards with them, shares meals, and exercises. • Some of his neighbors also are from Afghanistan, but Ahmed does not interact with them very much due to conflicting work schedules. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ahmed continues to attend the medical daycare. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ahmed continues to attend the medical daycare, which has become an important part of his daily routine.
Employment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before coming to the United States, Ahmed ran a thriving construction business in Afghanistan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ahmed would like to work but he is having a hard time finding a job that matches his physical abilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cash and rent assistance from the resettlement agency have ended, and Ahmed and his son are facing financial challenges with a limited household income. • They also send money to family in Afghanistan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ahmed is still looking for employment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ahmed is still looking for employment.
Policy and Program Implications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colocating essential services (such as transportation, meals, language training, and social supports) provided by community-based organizations to help with community integration • Culturally competent mental health services to address depression and anxiety • Connection to professional development opportunities that transition new arrivals with disabilities to U.S. employment (for example, skills training, the Job Accommodation Network, workforce development transition programs, or course certificates) • Job training, which includes identifying transferable skills and a description of the kinds of jobs that refugees can apply for • Timely access to legal services to support required updates in documentation status and support helping families reunite • Cultural integration activities (such as English classes or the Life Skills curriculum for English learners) • Social support and community building with people from similar backgrounds 				

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Mohammed's Resettlement Experience



BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- **Name (pseudonym*):** Mohammed
- **Age:** 30
- **Arrival date:** December 2021
- **Household composition:** Lives with his wife
- **Education:** Master's degree
- **Languages spoken:** Dari, English

"Sometimes we have a lot of happiness, looking back over the year. Sometimes we have very hard times. Particularly when we did not have any medical insurance, or job, or money. We only had food stamps. It was hard for us. We were patient to get through the hard times."

	PRE-ARRIVAL	ARRIVAL	1 YEAR	18 MONTHS	2 YEARS
Health and Health Care 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mohammed's wife has stomach problems and may need ongoing medical care. • A friend helped him enroll in Medicaid to cover anticipated medical expenses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mohammed received a Medicaid card and his wife was able to access health care. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mohammed's wife needs to get a tooth pulled. He used their Medicaid coverage to find dental care. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medicaid coverage was terminated due to lack of eligibility. Mohammed and his wife now pay for a health insurance plan monthly.
Social Services 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mohammed uses Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits to buy food. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SNAP benefits were cut off. He submitted the appropriate documentation and was re-enrolled in the SNAP program. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SNAP benefits were terminated. Because he and his wife are both working, they are no longer eligible. 	
Legal Status 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • His legal status is "humanitarian parolee" but he is unsure of next steps to apply for permanent residence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mohammed found a lawyer who helped him gather relevant documents and make an appointment for the asylum interview. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He is still waiting for an update regarding the asylum application. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With the help of their lawyer, Mohammed and his wife had their work permits extended through 2025. • He is still waiting to see if their asylum application has been approved.
Community Integration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mohammed learned English while earning a master's degree in sociology in India. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After a month at a military base, Mohammed completed a "self-departure process"; therefore, he was not formally connected with a resettlement agency. • A friend helped him find affordable housing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • About 10 Afghan families live in his area, but they do not socialize much due to conflicting work schedules. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mohammed completed a driver's education course and earned his driver's permit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mohammed bought a car. • He also completed a 6-month online data analysis course to earn a certificate.
Employment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before coming to the United States, Mohammed worked as a social scientist. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mohammad found a job in hotel reception but struggles to pay for household needs, including rent and utilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mohammed remains employed at the hotel. • He hopes to earn an additional certificate to improve his employment marketability. • His wife found a job at a large retail store. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mohammed remains employed at the hotel. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mohammad found a new job through an Afghan friend he met while working at the hotel. He provides administrative support to a private social club in the region.
Policy and Program Implications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved connections between government services and organizations supporting resettlement • A longer time frame for early resettlement support from organizations • Accommodations to offset the "benefits cliff" (ineligibility for benefits due to a slight increase in household income) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional development opportunities to transition new arrivals to U.S. employment (for example, skills or training, workforce development transition programs, or course certificates) • Timely access to legal services to support required updates in documentation status 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural integration activities (such as English classes or the Life Skills curriculum for English learners) • Social support and community building with people from similar backgrounds

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