

## UPDATE ON AFGHAN REFUGEES

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An estimated 700 out of 1200 refugees have arrived in NC, mostly in the last month and mostly in the Triangle, the Triad, and Charlotte. 9 different agencies are involved in resettling them, with loose coordination. The agencies are struggling to cope because of the number of refugees, the staff cuts they experienced during the Trump administration, and the shortage of local sponsors. Agencies “officially” are given 24 hours notice by the government, but sometimes the agencies are told “the refugees are on the plane and will be there in 2 hours.”

The agencies coordinate with local sponsors (congregations and organizations) who arrange for housing and help refugee families with basic needs. Because of the shortage of local sponsors and housing, many families are in temporary housing, with limited support.

If you want to get involved, there are several options: donating money to one of the agencies; donating money or needed goods to a local congregation that is sponsoring families; helping a local congregation in their active support of a family; contacting an agency to volunteer to help with an unsponsored family.

If you want to work directly with a family (for example, visiting with them, driving, helping with teaching them English, etc.), you will need to have a 2-hour orientation session via Zoom with one of the agencies and work with a local sponsoring organization.

Every agency and sponsor has different needs (monetary, donations, and active assistance) and criteria, so if you want to be involved, you need to contact an agency or sponsor directly. I'm compiled a partial list of contacts below;

Contact information:

### **Agencies:**

3 Agencies are working in Chapel Hill & Durham: Church World Services, Lutheran Immigration and Relief Services, and World Relief. The local contact for Church World Services has been very helpful to sponsors and individuals. I do not have local staff info for the other agencies.

Church World Services: Anne Louise Pass, [apass@cwsglobal.org](mailto:apass@cwsglobal.org), 919-432-9472

Lutheran Immigration and Relief Services: <https://www.lirs.org/>

World Relief: <https://worldrelief.org/>

**Sponsors:**

These congregations and organizations either already have families they are sponsoring or soon will. There are other congregations as well that I don't have information for.

Church of Reconciliation: Stu Cameron, [stucameroniii@gmail.com](mailto:stucameroniii@gmail.com) 928.202.7975. The church welcomes both donations and direct involvement. They are sponsoring 4 families and the first family will arrive around Jan. 19 (a family of 9!).

Eno River Unitarian-Universalist: Peggy Schaeffer, [heypeggy99@gmail.com](mailto:heypeggy99@gmail.com). Peggy is very involved and is happy to talk to people about ways to be involved. She says that ERUUF does not need any volunteers or donations for their refugee families. They've got it covered!

Binkley Baptist Church: Linda Textoris, [ltextoris@gmail.com](mailto:ltextoris@gmail.com)

Guilford College: Kathleen Herbst, Program Coordinator -- text at 864-363-1051; [herbstk@guilford.edu](mailto:herbstk@guilford.edu)