

Resolution welcoming Afghan Refugees to the La Crosse area.

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, refugees are persons forced to flee their homelands due to persecution or well-founded fear of persecution on the basis of their race, religion, nationality political opinion or membership in a particular social group; and

WHEREAS, resettlement to the United States is available only to those who demonstrate the greatest and most immediate need for protection-such as unaccompanied or other at-risk children, female-headed households, victims of torture, the physically disabled, and members of minority groups that are experiencing oppression in their home countries and takes place after eligible refugees undergo a rigorous selection, security vetting and medical screening process; and

WHEREAS, the greater La Crosse area is home to many members of the military and veterans who served and sacrificed in Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Freedom's Sentinel, forming a lasting bond with the people of Afghanistan; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. fight against Taliban forces following the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks expressed American solidarity with Afghan people in their fight for democracy, women's rights, free speech and economic prosperity; and

WHEREAS, Taliban forces took control of Afghanistan Aug. 15, 2021, sending Afghan people who fought and worked alongside American troops for the last two decades in search of safe haven; and

WHEREAS, the La Crosse area has a proud heritage of welcoming refugees to our communities and was the site of arrival for large groups of refugees from Vietnam and Cambodia in 1975; and

WHEREAS, many Americans whose families are now part of the fabric of La Crosse come from households that were at one time refugee households. These families, of different religions and traditions, enhance our community and help make it a place we all call home; and

WHEREAS, we affirm our solidarity with the people of Afghanistan and our friendship with all who labor for freedom among the nations of the world; and

WHEREAS, many of the first Afghan allies admitted into the U.S. this summer and housed at Fort McCoy arrive as Special Immigrant Visa applicants or as at-risk Afghans and are also compassionately referred to as special immigrants or as guests of the U.S.; and

WHEREAS, a strong local coalition in La Crosse County made up of non-profits and faith organizations is leading efforts to assist these refugees including special immigrants as they land at Fort McCoy in neighboring Monroe County, including Lutheran Immigration & Refugee Services, Catholic Charities, the American Red Cross, and church, mosque and synagogue houses of worship, and they are coordinating efforts such as collecting supplies needed for these refugees as they land at Fort McCoy and have indicated desire to assist in resettling

refugees around the country and in this county, as well as to help provide housing, job placement, food, mentorship and other assistance.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Common Council of the City of La Crosse that it hereby welcomes all who seek freedom and refuge from terror and invites the larger La Crosse community to volunteer relief efforts to help our new neighbors find affordable housing, employment, and food; and to offer mentorship to help them transition into our community in their new home country.

I, Nikki M. Elsen, certify that this resolution was duly and officially adopted by the Common Council of the City of La Crosse on October 14, 2021.



*Nikki M. Elsen, WCMC, City Clerk
City of La Crosse, Wisconsin*