

We Are America



2021-2022



CLIENTS SERVED: 5,021 including

Survivors of torture:

132

Survivors of domestic abuse:

556

Victims of violent crime:

324

Youth:

699

262

Arrivals through the US Refugee Program:

Immigrants newly granted asylum:

521

Our Supporters

NEW DONORS:

848

VOLUNTEERS:

725

HOURS CONTRIBUTED:

26,920

COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN:

165

TOP 10 COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN:



On the Cover: Service to the US Armed Forces in Afghanistan put Esmatullah Mosakhil and his family at life-threatening risk. They are deeply grateful to HIAS PA and our supporters for helping them begin their new life in Phladelphia.

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT & THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Last year's back-to-back crises in Haiti, Afghanistan and Ukraine created fears that the number of refugees fleeing violence would overwhelm our country's safety net. The problem, however, was not the numbers, but our failed immigration system's inability to respond to emergencies. Before the current refugee system was created, our country quickly took in more than 125.000 Vietnamese in the wake of the Vietnam War. After the fall of Kabul in August, 2021, the U.S. admitted a mere 79,000 Afghans. Even with the thousands of Haitians and Ukrainians who have arrived since then. the numbers still pale beside the waves of immigrants we integrated into American society in the 1970s.

Despite the obstacles, HIAS PA continues to find a way to "welcome the stranger." This is what we have done for 140 years, since our founding by Jews to help other Jews forced from their homes by persecution. Today, we help immigrants of every background become self-sufficient and thrive as contributing members of our community. Long after the headlines fade, our support remains, unwavering.

Consider a few success stories we celebrated this year. We helped a client obtain a green card after he spent more than 30 years in a maze of immigration laws. We honored Nor Farida Ahmed Jamil, a Burmese refugee who now supports other immigrants with free Halal meals from her grocery store. We cheered on 20 college-bound students in our Young Adult Mentoring Program.

Our theme for 2022 was "We Are America" because in these immigrants, we see our own history—and our future. They will advance our economy and stand among civil society's strongest defenders because they know what its absence is like.

In the years ahead, climate change will continue to accelerate political and economic unrest worldwide. To cope humanely with the fallout, all of us must move our federal government to create better systems for immigrants. Whatever the circumstances, HIAS PA will be able to respond with your help.

Thank you!

Cathryn Miller-Wilson, Esq.

Executive Director



Rebecca Katz
President





Esmatullah Mosakhil

AFGHAN EVACUEE



"For ten years, I supplied auto parts to the U.S. Armed Forces. When the Afghan government collapsed, my life and my family's lives were in immediate danger. We fled our home in the north and traveled for days to get to the Kabul airport. I was able to show my badge to a U.S. official, so we got inside the airport. We were there for 72 hours before we were flown to Qatar. From there, we were moved to Germany for one week, and then to New Jersey, where we stayed at Fort Dix for two months.

It was a long journey. Our children couldn't get enough sleep, and they saw a lot of bad stuff in Kabul. People were shooting their guns. Once we landed in Philadelphia, we were so happy. We finally had peace of mind. The people from HIAS PA who met us at the airport were very, very nice and took us to an Airbnb. We stayed there for six weeks, until HIAS PA was able to find us a more permanent home.

I'm very grateful to HIAS PA. They provided us with food when we first came, furniture, mattresses, school supplies, just everything. With their help, I enrolled in college classes to learn about robotics. They helped me get a job as a parking attendant, too.

We like everything about Philadelphia. We like experiencing all the seasons. At the beginning, the children were having a language problem, but now they speak English better than I do! In Afghanistan, I had a job and a lot of friends. I miss all of that, but right now, I am here. I know that my children are safe and going to school. I want them to be good citizens in the community. I greatly appreciate the American people."

Eliese Herzl-Betz

DUANE MORRIS, PRO BONO LAWYER



"Until I volunteered to work on the Mosakhils' case, I hadn't realized how difficult it is to apply for asylum. Anyone doing it without English as their native language would have a really hard time. Sometimes what the application seems to say is exactly the opposite of what it is really saying. And you need to know exactly what the regulations are. Cultural differences can also make the process difficult. For instance, the US prioritizes exact dates, but according to my clients, in Afghanistan people don't typically recall specific dates within a month. Instead, they refer to a season or a relative amount of time when something in the past occurred.

Despite the barriers, the Mosakhils have a good chance of being accepted for asylum because Esmatullah, the father, worked for the US government. The family thus became enemies of the Taliban. They are also part of the Hazara nation. They have a different religion from the Taliban and look different from other people in Afghanistan. They should easily meet the law's requirement that they have a well-founded fear of persecution.

The number of asylum applications pending in the US courts is now 1.6 million, and the average wait for a hearing is 4.5 years. The federal government established an expedited process for Afghan refugees — despite this, the vast majority of HIAS PA's Afghan clients have not even received a court hearing.

Helping with this case has been very rewarding. It is my first immigration case, but I have been working in a team with more experienced lawyers. I would encourage others to take on an asylum case to see into a system that is not what you would expect. Working with immigrants seeking asylum gives you more understanding about the reasons people leave their country. The Mosakhils believe in the principles of the US.

From my experience, I can say that it is not easy to claim asylum. You must have proof of everything. You are asked to produce all kinds of evidence, and it is all verified. The process is not straightforward, but it is thorough."



Your first week in Philadelphia, a few of many activities



Land in Philadelphia & meet HIAS PA staff at the airport



Move into housing



Apply for social security card, health insurance, other benefits



Open a bank account



Enroll children in school



Learn to use public transport



Start ESL classes

Taj Sheikh

REFUGEE RECEPTION AND PLACEMENT PROGRAM MANAGER

"On November 1, we found out the Mosakhils would be arriving in Philadelphia the next day! When clients come through the US Refugee Program, we usually have a month or two's notice so we can search for affordable housing based on the size of the family. We didn't have that much time for our Afghan families. We immediately booked temporary housing for the Mosakhils in an Airbnb, arranged for a staff member to pick them up at the airport, and contacted volunteers to deliver a hot meal and groceries for their first night.

Once a family arrives, our government grant gives us just 90 days to cover a lot of ground. For instance, we take them to the local benefits office, connect them to medical providers, teach them to use public transit and orient them to life in the US generally. I remember the Mosakhils used up their first allotment of food stamps in two weeks! They hadn't understood that their food stamps needed to last a month. We assessed Esmatullah and his wife for our online ESL classes and helped enroll the children in school. Esmatullah also joined our employment counseling program.

The Mosakhils are settling in well now. They have a really nice place with a little back yard. Esmatullah is working as a parking attendant, and the family got a car. The children even adopted a kitten. It is so wonderful to see their transformation. On day one, a family arrives from the airport saying, 'I don't know what this is' or 'I don't know what is going on.' In a very short time, they are going to the halal market on a bus and making you a delicious meal, or they are saying to you, 'I went to the doctor's office and asked for interpretation.' To see the resilience and continual growth is really, really rewarding."

As we have for 140 years, HIAS PA



- welcomes immigrants fleeing persecution.
- advocates for immigrant rights and dignity.
- provides legal & social services from arrival to citizenship.

1882

At our founding, an all-volunteer organization met ships carrying Jewish immigrants who were fleeing violence.

1917

HIAS PA lobbied Congress against the Immigration Act of 1917, which required immigrants to pass a literacy test. Cartoon from Puck Magazine.

1950

HIAS PA educated
Philadelphians about the
McCarran Act, aimed at
excluding and deporting
immigrants suspected of
Communist sympathies.







Teacher Marty Miller plays with children in a HIAS PA after-school program outside Spruance Elementary School.

HIAS PA celebrates the staff, volunteers, and supporters who keep our commitment strong!

1962

ESL classes and informal discussion groups helped HIAS PA clients gain English-language skills.

1979

At the US government's request, HIAS PA expanded to resettle refugees from the war in Southeast Asia

In recent years



HIAS PA legal staff share a client's joy as she becomes a US citizen.

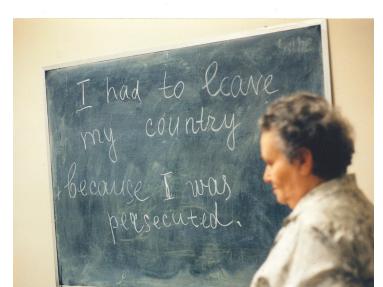
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HIAS PA has stood against waves of nativism and xenophobia that deny our past and threaten our future as a nation of immigrants.



In 2021-22

In 2021-22, we served over 4,700 immigrants from 165 countries.





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FISCAL YEAR 2022

(October 1, 2021 - September 30, 2022)

We gratefully acknowledge the support of the institutions and individuals who uphold HIAS PA's mission of helping immigrants who are fleeing persecution begin new lives in the Philadelphia region. Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this list. Due to space constraints, we have only included donors who donated \$500 and above.

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Tribute to

Adele Lipton

z"I (of Blessed Memory)

Former Board president, former Golden Door Awardee, forever beloved member of the HIAS PA family. Through her 40 years of Board service, including as HIAS Pennsylvania's president, Adele's determination and skills as a leader laid the foundation for HIAS PA's growth. Taking the reins at a particularly difficult time, Adele strengthened HIAS PA's financial resources and engaged a widening community of supporters to mark our resurgence. Her energy, kindness, compassion and sense of fairness were admired by all who knew her. In honor of her extraordinary legacy of service, we established the *Adele Lipton Tikkun Olam* award to be given annually to the person who best exemplifies her commitment to *tikkun olam* – repairing the world.

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How You Can Help

DONATE MONEY

You can help immigrants build new lives in the Philadelphia region by making a donation. You can also contact Ellen Freda, Director of Development, at **efreda@hiaspa.org** or 215-832-0940 about ways to give and fundraising opportunities.

hiaspa.org/donate

DONATE TIME Volunteers are critical members of the HIAS Pennsylvania team. Opportunities range from helping families resettle in the U.S. to teaching English and moving clients toward citizenship.

hiaspa.org/volunteer

ADVOCATE

Immigration policies are constantly changing. Learn more about the immigrants we serve by reading our updates, coming to our events, and exploring advocacy opportunities. Then, contact your elected officials!

hiaspa.org/get-involved/advocate

*Our audited financials for 2021-22, the period covered by this report, will be posted to hiaspa.org/financials as soon as the audit is completed. You may review the statement for 2020-2021 on the website now. HIAS Pennsylvania is the registered fictitious name of HIAS and Council Migration Service of Philadelphia; tax ID number 23-1405597. The official registration and financial information of HIAS and Council Migration Service of Philadelphia may |be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll-free, within Pennsylvania, 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

We are grateful to Maskar Design for donating graphic design services and Paul Wheeling for donating his services to photograph the Mosakhil family for this annual report.

^{**}Former Board President

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