



# Refugee Response Update

Letter to Agudas Achim Congregation

October 18, 2021

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AAC's Refugee Assistance Steering Committee has laid the groundwork for resettling an Afghan refugee family in our area. Committed to working with NoVa R.A.F.T. (Resettling Afghan Families Together), a local coalition supporting newly arrived Afghan allies, we are starting with **furnishing one apartment for an Afghan family**. Together with NoVa R.A.F.T., we will coordinate with Lutheran Social Services (LSS), the primary federally funded refugee resettlement agency in the D.C. area to identify a family to assist.

## Immediate Needs

We do not know when “our family” will arrive in the area, the number of family members or their ages. However, we know that time will be short to collect the needed items after the family is identified. NoVa RAFT said that once “our family” is identified the expectation is that they will move into the LSS-secured apartment **within a few days**.

**We must act now** and immediately begin collecting (1) new or gently used furniture and household items, including items for children, and school supplies; (2) financial donations to purchase items that do not get donated; and (3) gift cards for families to purchase groceries and other necessities for their new apartment.

**Donate items:** Please sign up to [donate furniture](#) and [household items](#). Please store your donated items until a family has been identified. At that time the Steering Committee will identify a time and

date to pick up your generously donated items. To donate smartphones, laptops, tablets, SIM cards you may also buy directly from [LSS's Amazon list](#) (new only).

**Financial Donations:** [Please donate](#) to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund as the primary source of funds for AAC's effort. Under "type" select Rabbi's Discretionary, and in the "payment notes" state AAC's Afghan Refugee Resettlement. Funds will be used to supplement donated items.

**Gift Cards:** The following types of gift cards have been identified as the most critical for Afghan families: Visa Gift Card, Target, Walmart, Giant, Aldi, Safeway, Uber, and Lyft. Please drop off cards at one of these locations: the Agudas Achim office, or the homes of Barbara Elkin at 6404 10th St., Alexandria, 22307; Mindi Maline at 4702 Pickett Road, Fairfax, 22032; or Samara Weinstein at 171 N. Columbus St., Arlington, 22203.

**Donate Time:** Congregants may [volunteer their time](#) to move furniture and household items, clean the apartment, and drive newly arrived Afghans to and from appointments and shopping, and work with them to complete forms and paperwork. In addition, our Partners at NoVa R.A.F.T. need immediate volunteer assistance. To work with NoVa R.A.F.T., please contact [Ben Kraut](#).

Please contact [Ben Kraut](#) about individual items, to answer questions, as well as track the progress of donations.

As the shock we all felt during the evacuation of Afghan allies fleeing their country has faded from the headlines, now is when the real work of *tzedaka* begins. Afghan Families are beginning to depart the military bases around the country and now, more than ever, need assistance.

**Let's get to work AAC!**