



**Homeland
Security**

MEMORANDUM FOR: Dominic Mancini
Acting Administrator
Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs
Office of Management and Budget

From: Eric Hysen
Chief Information Officer
Department of Homeland Security

Subject: Emergency Approval Request For DHS HQ Hummingbird Program Collection

This memorandum requests an emergency approval for the collection of information under the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) for the Department of Homeland Security Head Quarters(DHS HQ), Hummingbird program. The Hummingbird program supports Operation Allies Welcome (OAW). DHS HQ, in coordination with the Department of State (DOS), is supporting screening, processing and resettlement efforts for individuals coming from Afghanistan who are neither U.S. citizens nor lawful permanent residents. This includes initial screening and vetting prior to entering the U.S., managing humanitarian parole, issuing special immigrant visas, processing at pre-designated U.S. military bases, COVID-19 testing, isolation of COVID-positive individuals, vaccinations, additional medical services, applications for immigration status, work authorization, and essential coverage, and resettlement assistance. The request for emergency approval is based on the reasons listed below.

1. Public Harm is Reasonably Likely to Result if Normal Clearance Procedures are Followed

Through this summer and fall Americans across the country witnessed horrifying images of Afghani allies desperate to flee Afghanistan as that country rapidly fell into the hands of the Taliban. These Afghanis had offered their support and loyalty to the American military while American troops were deployed in their country. As a result of their loyalty to the United States, they became prime targets for Taliban retribution including likely bodily harm, possible death, and severe psychological distress over the traumatizing situation. During the fall of Kabul, reports in the American news media included instances of the Taliban murdering civilians and telling women it was not safe for them to leave their homes as their troops had not been trained in how to interact with women. Over the ensuing days, the Taliban noose tightened over Afghanistan and around the necks of our Afghan allies. Operations Allies Welcome very likely saved our allies lives by extracting them from Afghanistan and offering them refuge in America. In order to provide desperately needed resettlement and medical benefits to this loyal and deserving group, the collection of the information outlined in Statement A is required. Without this critical information, the DOS and now DHS HQ would

not be able to provide evacuation travel, critical medical services, and resettlement benefits. The Hummingbird team is asking OMB to join with the DOS and DHS HQ in our efforts to deliver valuable benefits in an efficient manner reducing the time these loyal allies wait for critical services by approving this request for an emergency approval of this collection.

2. Paperwork Reduction Act Timeframes

If DHS HQ were to follow the normal information collection clearance procedures, it will significantly hinder DHS HQ's ability to provide swift assistance to these deserving individuals. The data captured in Statement A is required to process Afghans through the Hummingbird program. Waiting for approval to collect this information will basically halt the progress of this program leaving allies who have given so much to this country in a position where they cannot provide the basic information needed to bring them through the resettlement process. This could leave these individuals at lily pads (safe areas in other countries) and safe havens (military bases and other locations in the United States) for a very long period of time which could also compromise medically fragile individuals including late trimester pregnant women.

3. Unanticipated Events:

The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the Delta and Omicron variants continue to impact the American public and the scope continues to evolve. This pandemic has made it imperative that DHS HQ assist these Afghani refugees/ parolees in moving into their final homes as quickly as possible. Leaving individuals in temporary high density housing situations at safe havens creates a situation where COVID-19 and its variants could flourish. While the safe havens have offered support for those who have COVID-19 and appropriate accommodations for isolating exposed individuals as required, moving individuals into their own homes could reduce their overall COVID-19 risk. To this end, the DHS HQ request to approve this collection should be granted. This will keep the resettlement program moving forward and placing refugees/ parolees in their own homes as quickly as possible.

4. DOS Has Been Collecting This Vital Information Since July 2021

The collection of this information began in July 2021 when the DOS launched the urgent mission supporting Operation Allies Welcome to pull Afghani allies who had supported this Nation's military out of Afghanistan as the chaotic fall of that country began. As was well documented on many credible news stations, Afghani allies were desperate to flee Afghanistan for fear of extreme physical and psychological harm, including possible death at the hands of the Taliban. Most of us saw images of desperate people rushing airports and even resorting to tossing their babies into American troops arms in an effort to protect their children's lives. As a result, tDOS developed and rolled out an emergency response to this crisis in a matter of days. Thanks to this rapidly developed program, Afghani allies were able to reach lily pads (safe areas in other countries) and eventually safe havens in the United States (military bases and other locations) where they were able to leave the fear of Taliban retribution and receive essential relocation and medical services. Given the urgency of the crisis, DOS was not able to complete all required compliance processes. As DHS HQ takes over this program at the specific direction of the White House, the DHS HQ team is striving to build on DOS success and strengthen the program in part by completing required compliance items such as gaining OMB approval of the collection of this information. As the collection of this information is

already in process, delaying approval of this collection request will significantly disrupt the on-going mission critical delivery of desperately needed support to this very unique and vulnerable population.

Conclusion

Following the normal clearance procedures for OMB approval to collect information during the surge to resettle thousands of Afghani refugees who have supported this Nations military would severely hamper DHS HQ efforts to resettle these refugees and provide required care for the medically fragile. In addition, delaying approval of this collection will result in refugees being denied crucial benefits including support for COVID illnesses in the midst of the ever-changing and stressful environment associated with new emerging variants such as Delta and Omicron. Refugees/parolees will also be left to contend with the risk high density housing environments pose as COVID continues to move through the country. Delaying the approval will limit DHS HQ’s ability to provide this vulnerable population the critical resettlement support they have earned.

As discussed, DHS HQ certifies that this request meets the requirements of 5 C.F.R. § 1320.13(a) and it is vital that this collection be implemented immediately because:

- 1. Public harm is reasonably likely to result if normal clearance procedures are followed
- 2. An unanticipated event has occurred; or
- 3. The use of normal clearance procedures is reasonably likely to prevent or disrupt the collection of information or is reasonably likely to cause a statutory or court ordered deadline to be missed.

The DHS HQ respectfully requests your approval to allow the collection of critical information required to establish Afghan refugees’ eligibility for resettlement support and successfully complete resettlement of these allies.

Thank you for your consideration.

Approve

Date

Disapprove

Date

