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Launch of the Sponsor Circle Program for Afghans

PRESS STATEMENT

ANTONY J. BLINKEN, SECRETARY OF STATE

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The State Department is partnering with the Community Sponsorship Hub (CSH), a project of Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisers, Inc., to support the launch of the Sponsor Circle Program for Afghans. This program will create new opportunities for individuals and community groups across the country to directly support Afghans who have been relocated to the United States under Operation Allies Welcome. The program will enable groups of individuals to form sponsor circles to provide initial resettlement assistance to Afghans as they arrive and build new lives in local communities across the country.

Following the historic airlift and evacuation effort, Operation Allies Welcome has introduced tens of thousands of our Afghan partners to the United States. Americans of all walks of life have expressed strong interest in helping to welcome these individuals. The Sponsor Circle Program for Afghans harnesses this outpouring of support and enables individuals to become directly involved in the welcome and integration of our new neighbors. In addition to centering communities in welcoming new arrivals, the Sponsor Circle Program expands the capacity to resettle arriving Afghans, complementing the work of the State Department's non-profit resettlement agency partners. This program showcases the powerful role that individuals can play in coming together to welcome and integrate Afghans into American society, reflecting our

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spirit of goodwill and generosity.

To implement the Sponsor Circle Program, CSH will manage the application process for sponsor circles to participate. CSH will vet and certify sponsor circles by conducting background checks, ensuring the sponsor circles complete mandatory training developed by CSH, and reviewing pledges by sponsor circles to provide financial support and initial resettlement services to Afghan newcomers for the first 90 days after they arrive in a local community. These services include securing housing, providing for basic necessities (such as clothing, groceries, household furnishings), assisting with access to federal, state, and local benefits, and providing initial orientation to the local community. Once sponsor circles are certified, CSH will work to match them with arriving Afghans who choose to participate in the program.

This collaboration builds on the State Department's work with **Welcome.US**, a non-profit initiative representing a coalition of over 200 organizations focused on mobilizing the American public to engage in a variety of actions to support arriving Afghans including through signing up for community sponsorship opportunities. The Sponsor Circle Program for Afghans also expands the State Department's efforts to grow the use of community sponsorship programs in resettlement, including the new private sponsorship pilot program for refugees that the State Department plans to launch next year.

For more information on the Sponsor Circle Program and to learn how to apply to form a sponsor circle to support arriving Afghans, visit www.sponsorcircles.org.

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