

# SACRAMENTO HIGHLIGHTS

June 21<sup>st</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup>, 2023

We are so thankful for the 75+ providers in the Sacramento region who helped more than 2,200 Afghans (34% of the local, newly arriving population) get the support they needed. The services delivered were valuable and appreciated as 96% of guests said they were very or extremely satisfied with their experience. While we cannot share every amazing story from our work, we can shine the spotlight on a handful of compassionate professionals who made a huge difference for so many families. We look forward to continuing our work at the Pittsburgh Marriott City Center, July 19 - 22. For more information, please visit [centersforafghansupport.org](https://centersforafghansupport.org).

[Elica Health](#) provides compassionate healthcare to tens of thousands of low-income patients in Sacramento. With 11 physical locations and four mobile units, Elica is responding to a growing demand for clinical and non-clinical services across the region. In 2022, the organization served nearly 50,000 patients.

Their team offers a patient-centered approach to healthcare delivery and understands the importance of hiring staff who represent the diverse population they serve.

Elica employs a number of people from Afghanistan, including Financial Counselor **Mansoor Naim** (pictured below). Mansoor helps newly arriving Afghans and their families navigate the state's health insurance system and understand the benefits available to them.

**Ajmal Safi** serves as a lead medical assistant on one of Elica's mobile clinics. His cultural competency and compassion for his patients help them adhere to treatment plans and understand their recovery path.

Other staff at Elica's Resource Center offer non-clinical support, including locating affordable housing, financial assistance, and food and clothing donations. Their team also offers a "Diapers for Kids in Need" program so Afghan families can access free diapers, children's clothes, toys and books.



Timothy Tibbs, Elizabeth Perez and Abdul Aziz Karimi were on hand to represent [Twin Rivers Unified School District](#). In the past two years, nearly 1,000 students have been enrolled in their district. Teachers and counselors focus on helping these students continue their educational journey, offering tutoring, STEM courses, ESL and addressing learning gaps.

Beyond enrollment in the district TRUSD also serves as a community connector, ensuring families can find additional services to assist them during their resettlement process. They often need help with medical information and introductions to food and housing resources. Elizabeth recently worked with a high school student suffering from high levels of anxiety and stress. Most of his family was still in Afghanistan, and he was worried about their safety. Elizabeth referred the student to a case manager, who connected him to counseling services.

Abdul serves as a family and community liaison, stressing the importance of making students and families feel welcomed into the community. Most immigrants do not know our systems or structure and can be overwhelmed by the many changes they have endured. Having someone who not only speaks their language but also understands their culture and experience can make all the difference in the world.

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CEO **Usama Khalil** founded [REDA](#) (Refugee Enrichment and Development Association) six years ago when he met a Syrian family who had recently arrived in the region. He quickly realized how challenging the immigration process can be and how much help is needed.

Soon after, REDA was helping dozens of families navigate the immigration system and collaborating with service providers across the community. After an initial seed investment of \$2,000, Usama today has secured grants totaling \$3.5 million to fund programs.

REDA provides refugees with the basic skills and knowledge needed to succeed in the United States, accelerating their ability to achieve self-sufficiency. The organization focuses on the key ingredients – learning English, continuing academic education and acquiring job skills. At their education center, teachers offer conversational English classes and tutoring for middle and high school students. They also partner with [UC Davis](#) students who serve as mentors.

The REDA team ensures immigrants are screened for mental health issues and referred to counselors and psychiatrists when necessary. Usama shared numerous stories of the stress and pressures immigrants face when they arrive in our country. The path can be incredibly daunting and overwhelming. Counselors work with clients to overcome the stigma of asking for help, validating the emotions refugees are experiencing and providing valuable resources.

During their work at the Afghan Support Center in Sacramento, REDA saw many familiar faces from the community bring friends and relatives into the Support Center for help. They expressed sincere gratitude for being viewed as a trusted organization capable of serving critical needs.

