



# WELCOMING AFGHAN NEWCOMERS

Metropolis Webinar  
June 20, 2022





# WHO WE ARE

Upwardly Global's mission is to lift refugee and immigrant professionals out of un- and underemployment into thriving wage jobs that align with their skills and education.

We build an inclusive, **future-ready workforce** that embraces the skills of immigrant and refugee professionals. We advance equity, power the economy, and **champion human potential**.



# SETTING THE CONTEXT

Newcomers to the U.S. are more educated than at any other time in our history: 45% of recently-arrived immigrants have at least a Bachelor's degree. Yet more than **2 million immigrants and refugees** who have degrees and professional work experience from their home countries face systemic barriers that leave them unemployed or working in low-wage rapid employment positions...

*Upwardly Global is the first and longest-serving national organization that helps these individuals restart their careers and bring their skills and perspectives into the American workforce*

## Our clients are at the intersection of vulnerability:

- 75% live in poverty or are economically vulnerable
- 75% are people of color
- 50% are women

## Barriers & Challenges

Foreign-born job seekers face barriers throughout the entire job search process



Job Search Strategy  
Support Needed



Lack Of Licenses &  
Certifications



English  
Language  
Proficiency



Gaps In Resume



Lack Of  
Professional  
Networks



Stuck In  
Survival Jobs



Employer Bias  
Unconscious bias; affinity bias; American exceptionalism; unspoken cultural norms; work-authorization confusion

# AFGHAN RESPONSE

A Resource for Skilled Immigrants.  
An Opportunity for America.



**~20%  
–30%**

Estimate of working population (e.g. ~8-9k of ~35k) with professional training who are proficient in English

**1,400+**

Number of Afghans we will support with our direct service program from Aug 2021 – Dec 2022

**5,000+**

Number of unique user sessions we aim for our free, self-paced, and virtual Afghan Rapid Response Portal

**\$62k+**

Average income gain for UpGlo's Afghan job seekers placed in professional roles since Aug 2021

## DEEPER LOOK: OUR ADDRESSABLE MARKET



- **~35,000** – the estimated number of 76k+ newcomers that constitute the working population (excluding children, elderly, full-time caregivers, those unable to work)
- **~20-30% (or ~8,000 - 9,000)** – estimated number with college degrees and English proficiency
- **2,600+** – applications received for our direct service program

***We reached about  $\frac{1}{3}$  of our addressable market in under six months...***



# AFGHAN SUCCESS STORIES



A project management professional with two Master's degrees and 9+ years of experience working on large projects with USAID and the World Bank. He volunteered with us at Camp Atterbury and started a job as a Senior Project Officer in March 2022 for a major international NGO making \$80,000/year

An international medical graduate with 14+ years of experience in reproductive and maternal health. She began a role in April 2022 as the Program Manager for a local nonprofit making \$73,920/year. Her husband is one of our job coaches!

An engineer who was accepted into our program in November 2021 and placed in December 2021. He is working as a Grid Planning Engineer with a major energy company earning \$106,000/year

*... also eight wonderful new Afghan colleagues that bring tremendous expertise across several industries!*

مسلكي دنده پيدا كړئ | وظيفه حرفه يي بيايد

# UpGlo's Afghan Response Initiatives

- *All of our programming is FREE and VIRTUAL for job seekers*
- *Open to Afghan newcomers in all 50 states*

Upwardly Global's **FREE** programs have helped **thousands** of immigrants & refugees to find professional work.

**Which program is right for you?**

**You are ...**

- **Authorized to work in the U.S.**
- **College or University Educated**
- **Able to speak English**



**Our Job Search Program  
is right for you!**

This FREE program includes coaching from an experienced career advisor, certifications from Microsoft, Google, Udemy, Coursera & more, and introductions to elite U.S. employers.



<https://www.upwardlyglobal.org/join-us>

**You are ...**

- **Looking for a Job**
- **Able to Understand Basic English**
- **Computer/Smartphone Proficient**



**Our Digital Resources  
are right for you!**

Our resources include virtual training videos and guides on critical skills and cultural norms for the job search in the U.S. It is a great way to get started for individuals at all skill levels



<https://www.upwardlyglobal.org/afghan-portal>

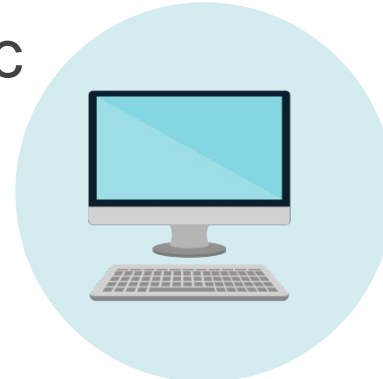


[outreach@upwardlyglobal.org](mailto:outreach@upwardlyglobal.org)

# Direct Service Program



Industry-specific  
job coach



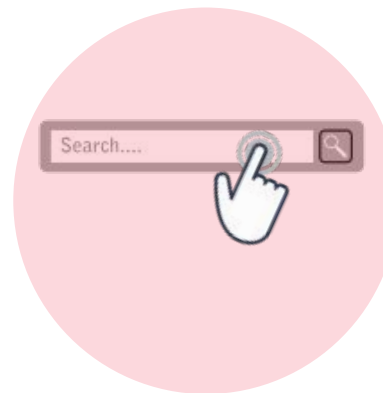
Industry-specific  
career plan &  
pathway aligned  
with labor market  
demand



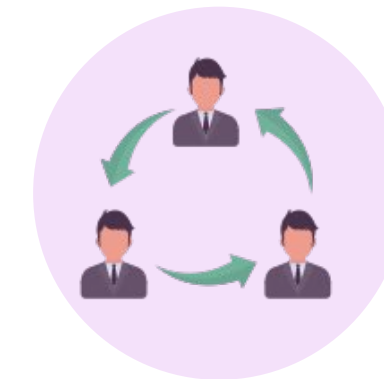
Resume  
development



Re/up-skilling,  
licensing, &  
certification



Job search  
strategies



Interview prep,  
networking, &  
employer  
introductions

*Note: UpGlo does not provide credential verification; our partner World Education Services' Gateway Program offers support for displaced persons*



# RAPID RESPONSE PORTAL

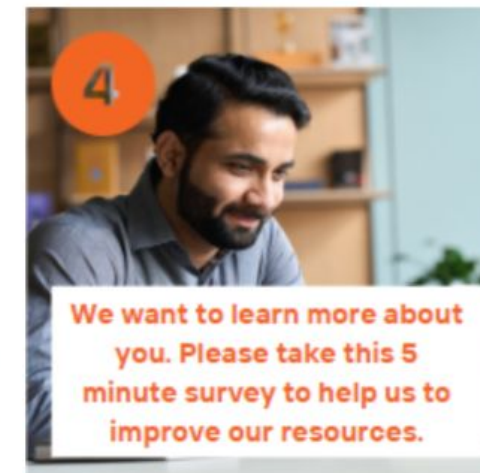
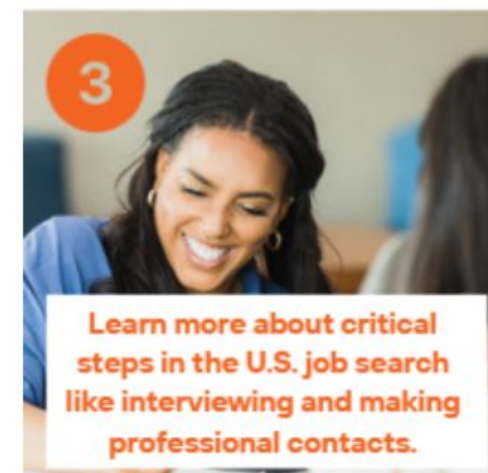
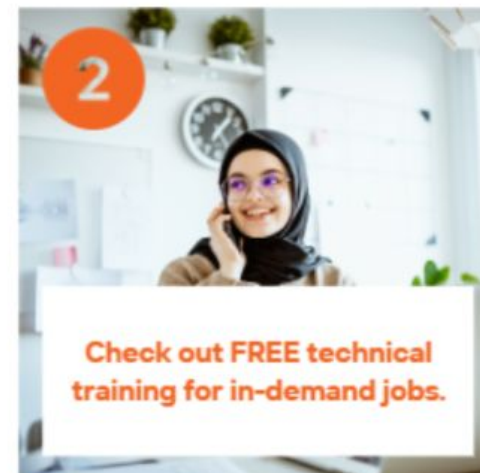
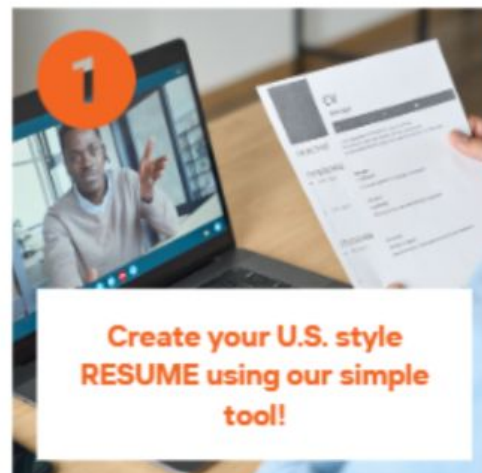
## Upwardly Global

Learn. Connect. Shine.

Welcome to Upwardly Global's free virtual learning platform for Afghan job seekers.

Feeling overwhelmed about finding a job? You're not alone. Upwardly Global has helped thousands of immigrants and refugees like you to start their careers in the U.S. Review our free resources below to get started with your job search.

- *New resume-building tool!*
- *Free access to Coursera and other trainings!*



# DEEPER LOOK: DIRECT SERVICES

- How we did it
  - Expanded to all US Safe Havens; leveraged relationships with partners/volunteers; created unique spaces for women
  - Outreach, info sessions, application assistance, job readiness programming, and EP events
  - National road show to elevate the need for the resettlement community to focus on employment
  - Expanded staff capacity
  - National Conference Center and Operation Allies Welcome / Welcome Centers
- Enrolled over 1,500 job seekers (our goal was 1,400!)
  - Some anticipated drop-off during resettlement
- Nearly 200 placements with average income gain of ~\$62k
  - Top 5 industries: IT, engineering, BLO, nonprofit, FAB

# DEEPER LOOK: RAPID RESPONSE PORTAL

- Jobversity has been and will continue to help us achieve impact at scale
  - With most of the newcomers largely off the Safe Havens, we are leveraging our relationships with partners and are overemphasizing the portal more so than direct service
- Since launching on October 1, 2021
  - We exceeded our target of 5,000 user sessions (in May)
  - Added resume builder, refreshed UX/UI, and modified survey to capture feedback



# ADDITIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- UpGlo infrastructure – we built the plane while flying it!
  - Holidays, COVID/omicron, equipment and logistical challenges, USG deployment transitions, etc.
- Demonstrated that we are a solution in the ecosystem
  - Employment is a gap, and there is a significant need for education and awareness of our solutions
  - Strengthened our credibility with the White House, policymakers, government agencies, and others
- Employer partnerships
  - Continued to position UpGlo as a thought leader in the workforce development space
  - Continued to catalyze innovation through our DEI Working Group and other hiring initiatives
  - Published journey map with Welcome.us and a hiring guide
- Humanitarian support – provided over \$1m in in-kind and cash support for newcomers at Fort Dix

# WHERE ARE WE GOING?

- Programs
  - Continue to operationalize our direct service programming to newcomers we've enrolled
  - Explore unique pathway offering(s) for Afghan pilots
  - Continue to analyze/understand our portal users and how we can best serve them
  - Fielding increased volume of questions now that folks have been resettled and financial assistance is ending
  - Cultivating potential relationships to provide mental health and wellness support
  - Mobilize volunteers from private sector
  - Emerging projects in California and Texas
- New employer partnerships and diving deeper on existing ones
- Capacity-building and technical assistance (via Jobversity)
- Thought leadership
  - What have we learned, what's our impact, how can we apply to Ukraine response
  - Continue to position UpGlo as a solution for immigrant inclusion

# POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Increased collaboration** from local and federal government, including with local workforce development boards. For our Afghan allies, the clock is ticking to integrate into the workforce or face under or unemployment. The longer they are out of work in their field, the harder it is to return
- **Rethink workforce integration** and how we can access and utilize the skill sets of workers who trained overseas; states like Illinois are [re-thinking credentialing processes](#) for internationally-trained medical professionals
- Connect communities to employer hiring pipelines. At UpGlo, we are working closely with employers to **reimagine pathways** for workers that traditionally have been overlooked, and to discuss best practices and innovative models for hiring





THANK YOU!

Learn more at  
[www.upwardlyglobal.org/support-afghans/](http://www.upwardlyglobal.org/support-afghans/)

*Rebecca Fishman, Special Projects Coordinator*  
[rfishman@upwardlyglobal.org](mailto:rfishman@upwardlyglobal.org)