**Polk County Purchases 300 Beds for Afghan Refugees**

*Polk County Supervisors recognize need of providing assistance to families displaced to Central Iowa following war in Afghanistan*

**Des Moines, IA-** On Tuesday, Polk County Supervisors voted unanimously to purchase 300 beds to be distributed to local non-profit organizations. The organizations will help assist in the resettlement of several hundred Afghan families over the course of the next year, many of whom will start to arrive in the next week. The resettlement is a direct result of the end of the decades long war in Afghanistan. Those who have fled Taliban rule are in the process of relocating to the United States. This commitment of more than $43,000 in furnishings for non-profit agencies is the latest example of a history of commitment by the Polk County Board of Supervisors to welcoming immigrants and refugees to Central Iowa.

Polk County Board of Supervisor Robert Brownell (Dist. 1) says of the contribution, “*Polk County and our residents have always proven to be a welcoming community. So many are looking to help those in need beyond the holiday season. If we are going to be that welcoming community we are all proud of, we again have to step up and help and not just talk the talk. We also need to walk the walk*.”

Three non-profits are currently authorized to assist refugees in Polk County. That includes Lutheran Services of Iowa, Catholic Charities and U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants. In all, the three non-profit organizations expect 575 Afghan refugees will call Polk County home in the next year.

Refugee Alliance of Central Iowa is helping to coordinate the effort of the three refugee resettlement agencies. Stephanie Moris, Director of R.A.C.I. says, “*Iowa is internationally recognized for its legacy of welcoming refugees. Central Iowa is unique as we have 3 agencies that work together to collect items in one centralized location. We are grateful for the help of Polk County and all of our public and private sector partners who recognize the need these families have as they settle into their new home community.*”

The initial purchase of 300 beds is just a start. Supervisor Brownell says, “*We expect other partners in the public and private sector will also step up in the coming weeks and months to help us assist these Afghan families to make Central Iowa feel at home in their journey*.”

Those interested in assisting Afghan refugee families are encouraged to visit: <www.refugeeallianceofcentraliowa.org>

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