

Americans Support Taking in Afghans; Oppose Releasing Funds to Taliban Government

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A year after the withdrawal of US forces from Afghanistan, and 21 years after the US occupation of the country first began, the United States remains deeply involved in Afghanistan's future as the country struggles through famine and violence under the new Taliban government. Results from the 2022 Chicago Council Survey, conducted July 15-August 1, show that Americans broadly oppose recognition of the ruling Taliban government or releasing funds frozen by the United States to that government. But Americans support helping the Afghan people, both through direct aid and by taking in Afghans leaving the country.

Key Findings

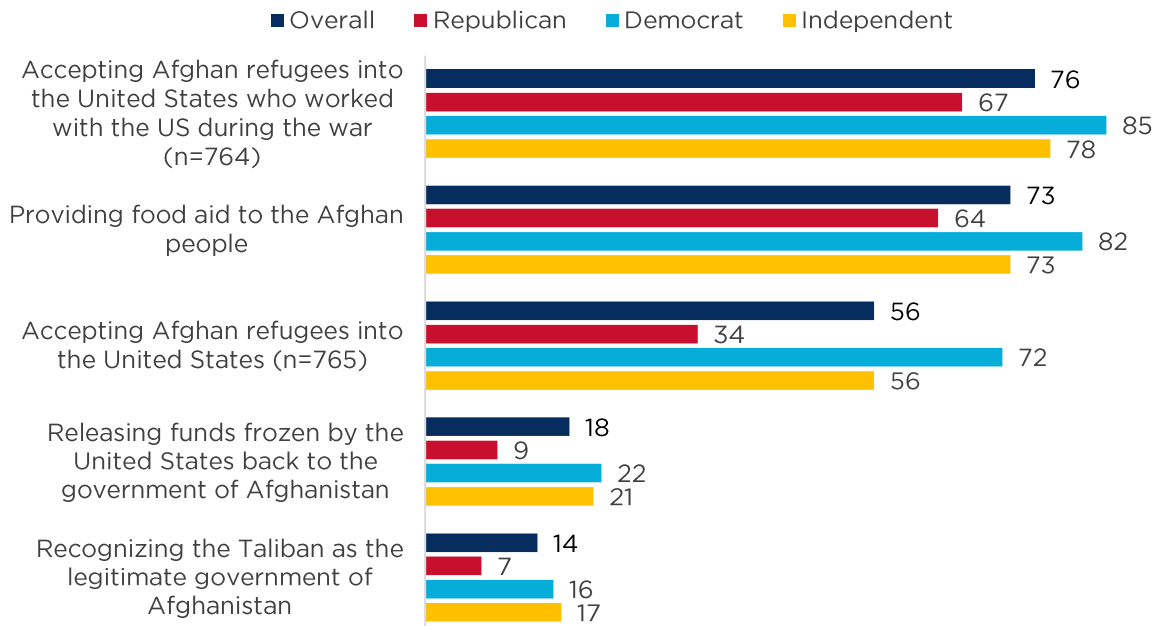
- There is broad bipartisan support for taking in Afghans who worked with the US during the war (76% overall), and more limited support for any Afghan fleeing the country (56% overall).
- Three-quarters (73%) support providing food aid to the Afghan people.
- Few Americans favor recognizing the Taliban (14%) or releasing frozen funds back to the government of Afghanistan (18%).

Majorities Support Accepting Afghan Refugees into the US

Since the collapse of the US-backed government of Afghanistan in 2021, over 76,000 Afghans [have been evacuated to the United States](#). A majority of Americans (76%), including majorities of Democrats (85%), Independents (78%), and Republicans (67%), support the US giving refuge to Afghans who worked with the United States during the war as refugees. A smaller majority also back a acceptance of any Afghan refugees into the United States (56%), but this support is partisan. While seven in ten Democrats (72%) and over half of Independents (56%) say the United States should accept Aghan refugees, only a third of Republicans agree (34%; 64% oppose).

US Policy toward Afghanistan

Would you support or oppose the following US policies toward Afghanistan? (% support)



July 15 - August 1, 2022 | n=1,539

CHICAGO COUNCIL SURVEYS

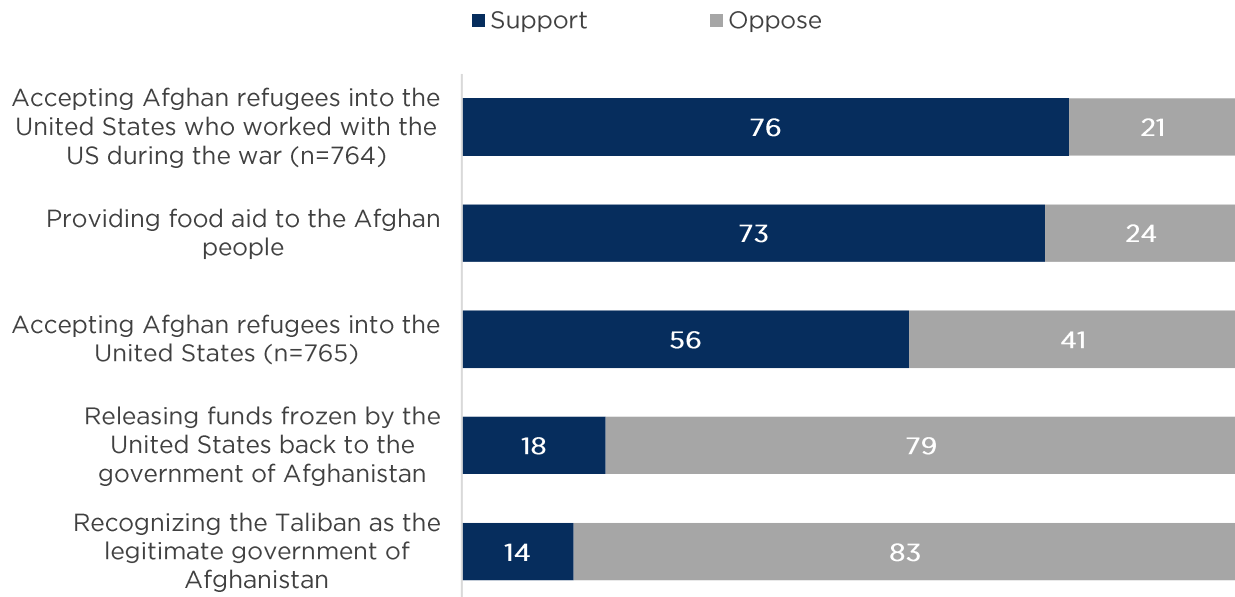
At a time when Afghans are experiencing dire levels of hunger, exacerbated by the slashing of Ukrainian grain exports due to war, bipartisan majorities of Americans support direct aid to the people of Afghanistan. Three-quarters overall (73%), including large majorities of Democrats (82%), Independents (73%), and Republicans (64%), support providing food aid to the Afghan people.

Broad Opposition to Recognizing the Taliban; Releasing Funds

Though Americans support assistance to the Afghan people, they broadly oppose US actions involving the Taliban government. Majorities across party lines oppose recognizing the Taliban as the legitimate government of Afghanistan (83% overall, 91% Republicans, 81% Democrats, 79% Independents). Following the Taliban takeover in 2021, the United States also [froze billions](#) in Afghan government funds, a policy tied to the government's ongoing involvement with al-Qaida and its now-dead leader al-Zawahiri. Eight in 10 Americans (79%) oppose releasing those [frozen funds](#) back to the government of Afghanistan. That opposition is bipartisan, including nine in 10 Republicans (89%) and three-quarters of Independents (75%) and Democrats (74%).

US Policy toward Afghanistan

Would you support or oppose the following US policies toward Afghanistan? (%)



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CHICAGO COUNCIL SURVEYS

Methodology

This analysis is based on data from the 2022 Chicago Council Survey of the American public on foreign policy, a project of the Lester Crown Center on US Foreign Policy. The 2022 Chicago Council Survey was conducted July 15–August 1, 2022 by Ipsos using its large-scale nationwide online research panel, KnowledgePanel, in both English and Spanish among a weighted national sample of 3,106 adults aged 18 or older living in all 50 US states and the District of Columbia. The margin of sampling error for the full sample is +/- 1.8 percentage points. The margin of error is higher for partisan subgroups or for partial-sample items.

Partisan identification is based on how respondents answered a standard partisan self-identification question: “Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or what?”

The 2022 Chicago Council Survey is made possible by the generous support of the Crown family and the Korea Foundation.

About the Chicago Council on Global Affairs

Founded in 1922, the Chicago Council on Global Affairs is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to increasing knowledge and engagement in global affairs. Our in-depth analysis and expert-led research influence policy conversations and inform the insights we share with our growing community. Through accessible content and open dialogue of diverse, fact-based perspectives, we empower more people to help shape our global future. Learn more at thechicagocouncil.org.

About the Lester Crown Center on US Foreign Policy

Established in 2018 with a transformative \$10 million gift from the Crown Family, the Lester Crown Center on US Foreign Policy is driven by the belief that the public plays a critical role in determining the direction of US foreign policy and that an informed and engaged public is critical for effective policymaking. The centerpiece of the Lester Crown Center is its annual survey of American public opinion and US foreign policy, the Chicago Council Survey, which has been conducted since 1974. For the latest research from the Crown Center, follow [@ChiCouncilFP](https://twitter.com/ChiCouncilFP).