



MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

A HerStory pilot initiative



Empowering young Afghan women to unlock their academic potential through university-level peer support.

| 2025 Program Plan

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Program Overview



In response to the growing educational barriers faced by Afghan women and girls, HerStory is launching the **ROYA Mentorship Program** – a pilot initiative that aims to connect female Afghan students — who arrived in Canada after August 2021 as refugees and now hold protected person, permanent resident, or citizen status — with university-level mentors across Canada.

The program seeks to provide **personalized, one-on-one** guidance throughout the university application process – from academic planning to essay writing, scholarship research, and interview preparation. By fostering cross-cultural support and building lasting mentor-mentee relationships, the program hopes to empower Afghan women and girls to achieve their dreams in higher education.



What does ROYA mean?

In Farsi, ‘roya’ means dream.

When the Taliban returned to power in 2021, millions of women and girls in Afghanistan lost their rights to education and fled the country.

The ROYA Mentorship program was created to **Raise Opportunities for Young Afghans** to pursue their dreams of attending post-secondary education in Canada.



Program Goals



1.

Expand Access to Higher Education

Facilitate access to post-secondary opportunities at top Canadian institutions for Afghan women and girls by offering personalized mentorship and support, especially for those facing barriers and lacking resources.



2.

Support & Network-Building

Strengthen the personal and financial readiness of mentees to succeed in Canadian post-secondary education through supportive network-building.

3.

Capacity Building

Equip mentees with the tools, skills, and confidence they need to navigate university through sustained mentorship and support.



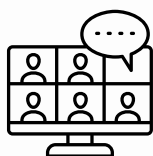
Program Structure



Mentor Recruitment: Eligible mentors in Canada will be recruited through university networks. Applicants will be asked to submit an application form (with their CV) before attending a short interview.



Mentee Selection: Eligible mentees will be identified through NGO networks and encouraged to apply to the program.



Training & Orientation: Mentors will receive resources and training. Both mentors and mentees will attend orientation to discuss the program, its policies, expectations, and requirements.



Pairing: Mentors and mentees will be matched according to their time zones, expertise, language proficiency, and academic interest.



Application Period: Mentors will work closely with mentees to assist with:

- School and program selection
- Developing application timelines and strategies
- Writing and reviewing essays/personal statements
- Scholarship research and application writing
- Interview preparation

Program Eligibility



Mentor Requirements:

- **Basic Requirements:** University student or recent graduate
- **Expertise:** Experienced in applying to university programs and scholarships in Canada
- **Availability:** Available ~2-5 hours per week starting September 2025, available in late August for training and orientation (dates TBD)
- **Language:** Fluent in English, displaying strong verbal and written communication skills
- **Attitude:** Ideal mentors should demonstrate leadership, initiative, and dedication to the success of their mentees and the program

Mentee Requirements:

- **Basic Requirements:** Female-identifying Afghan refugee who arrived in Canada after August 2021 and currently holds protected person, permanent resident, or Canadian citizen status
- **Education:** Must either:
 - Hold a high school diploma from Afghanistan, earned in 2017 or later
 - Hold a high school diploma from a Canadian high school
 - Be on track to complete Canadian high school by Spring 2026
- **University Application Fees:** There is currently no funding available at HerStory to help mentees with their application fees for Canadian schools. However, HerStory will be working with the schools that mentees are applying to in order to secure application fee waivers for eligible applicants. Mentees should assume and be prepared to cover the application fees themselves in case a waiver is not granted.
- **Language:** Verbal and written English language proficiency demonstrated through a minimum TOEFL score of 90 or a Duolingo English Test score of 130, suitable for admission to a first-year undergraduate liberal arts or science program. Applicants who have been studying in a Canadian high school for over 2 years may be exempted from this requirement on a case-by-case basis.
- **Access:** Has access to stable WIFI connection, email, and video-conferencing technology
- **Attitude:** Highly motivated and academically oriented, with a desire to pursue post-secondary education in Fall 2026

Program Timeline



Phase	Timeline	Activities
1 Planning & Development	May – June 2025	June 15: Mentorship applications open
2 Recruitment & Training	July – August 2025	Mentors will be contacted for interviews and recruitment. Mentees will be scouted and selected based on academic merit. Late August: Training and Orientation sessions (<i>dates TBD</i>)
3 Program Launch	September 2025	Mentors and mentees will meet their pairings and schedule weekly meetings. Together, they will set application goals and timelines and begin application writing.
4 Active Mentorship	September – December 2025	Mentors will provide mentees ongoing support throughout the application process through regular check-ins and review periods, by sending resources, researching scholarships, and offering encouragement.
5 Final Submissions	January 2026	Mentors and mentees will work closely to finalize program and scholarship applications by relevant deadlines.