FAMILY INVESTMENT ADMINISTRATION

Policy Number:	26 -06
Policy Title:	Expansion of Refugee Cash Assistance Public/Private Partnership Programming Statewide
Release Date:	October 16, 2025
Effective Date:	October 1, 2025
Approved By:	Augustin Ntabaganyimana, Executive Director Family Investment Administration
Revision Date(s):	Not applicable
Supersedes:	FIA Action Transmittal (AT) #25-17 Reduction of RCA and RMA Eligibility Period (released June 13, 2025)
Originating Office:	Office of Programs fia.policy@maryland.gov
Required Actions:	Expands availability of Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA) programming to eligible customers statewide through Maryland's Public/Private Partnership (PPP) network to ensure comprehensive resettlement assistance and support for refugee and humanitarian immigrant populations.
Key Words:	Refugee Cash Assistance, Refugee Support Services
Related Federal Law:	Not Applicable
Related State Laws:	Not Applicable
COMAR	07.03.03.10
State Plan Implications?	No

Maryland Department of Human Services **Department of Human Services** **25 S Charles Street** **Baltimore MD 21201**	**FAMILY INVESTMENT ADMINISTRATION (FIA) ACTION TRANSMITTAL**
Control Number: #26-06	**Effective Date: October 1, 2025** **Issuance Date: October 16, 2025**

TO: LOCAL DEPARTMENTS OF SOCIAL SERVICES (LDSS) DIRECTORS, LDSS DEPUTY/ASSISTANT DIRECTORS FOR FAMILY INVESTMENT, FAMILY INVESTMENT SUPERVISORS AND ELIGIBILITY STAFF

FROM: AUGUSTIN NTABAGANYIMANA, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

RE: EXPANSION OF REFUGEE CASH ASSISTANCE PUBLIC/ PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMMING STATEWIDE

PROGRAM AFFECTED: REFUGEE CASH ASSISTANCE (RCA)

Summary

The Maryland Office for Refugees and Asylees (MORA), under the DHS Family Investment Administration, administers the Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA) program statewide. The RCA program ensures that refugee, asylee, and certain immigrant customers ineligible for other forms of assistance receive short-term support to meet their basic needs and become self-sufficient through workforce participation. The United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) funds and designates MORA to administer RCA through a Public/Private Partnership (PPP) model of benefit provision. Under this model, MORA partners with local Resettlement Agency (RA) affiliates statewide to coordinate integrated financial and medical assistance, employability assistance and training, case management, outreach, and other critical support services. In federal fiscal year 2026, MORA has expanded PPP programming statewide to ensure eligible customers have equal access to available services as well as enhanced benefits and flexibilities to support customers' self-sufficiency, integration, and overall well-being.

Effective **October 1, 2025,** customers in all Maryland jurisdictions determined eligible for the RCA program are required to enroll in RCA through referral to

Supersedes: AT #25-17 Reduction of RCA and RMA Eligibility Period (released June 13, 2025)

RA PPP providers rather than through the Maryland Benefits system. Refugee customers may still apply for other programs and receive support at Local Departments of Social Services (LDSS) or through the online Maryland Benefits consumer portal with either the support of RA case managers and/or local sponsors, as well as independently for those not yet enrolled in resettlement programming. LDSS may continue to determine customer eligibility for available programs, however, they must manually deny RCA enrollment under an applicable code and refer customers to local RA affiliates.

All customers referred to RA providers will have their needs assessed and eligibility determined for the PPP RCA program, called Refugee Transitional Cash Assistance (RTCA). Customers identified as employable and non-work exempt will be simultaneously enrolled into integrated Refugee Support Services (RSS) and Employment Assistance. Services may be provided both remotely and in-person at existing RA affiliate offices located in the following jurisdictions:

1. Ethiopian Community Development Council (ECDC) African Community Center DC Metro - located in Montgomery County (Silver Spring)
2. International Rescue Committee (IRC) - located in Baltimore City and Montgomery County (Silver Spring)
3. Lutheran Social Services of the National Capital Area (LSSNCA) - located in Baltimore County (Arbutus), Frederick County (Frederick), and Prince George's County (Greenbelt)

Referral and contact information for RA affiliates is available on the MORA RTCA website as well as the Refugee Assistance section of the TCA manual. Eligible customers may access linguistically and culturally appropriate services through RA affiliates regardless of where they live. Customers may also be eligible for other available support service programs for up to 5 years from arrival in the U.S. or obtaining an eligible immigration status.

All other RCA program policies and eligibility requirements remain unchanged. This policy has no effect on eligibility or processing of Refugee Medical Assistance (RMA) or Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA) benefits. Currently enrolled RCA customers may continue to receive benefits until the end of their eligibility period, per AT 25-17 Reduction in RCA & RMA Eligibility Period.

Required Action

Effective on October 1, 2025, local staff in all jurisdictions must ensure that customers identified and/or determined eligible for RCA are referred to RA affiliates for RCA enrollment, rather than enrolling clients into RCA through the Maryland Benefits Eligibility and Enrollment (E&E) worker portal. Case managers must confirm that customers are ineligible for TCA prior to referral. To qualify for the RCA program, customers must satisfy the technical and eligibility requirements outlined in the following criteria:

- **Immigration Status:** Customers who have held a verified (through the USCIS SAVE Case Check system and immigration/identity documents) immigration status of Refugee, Asylee, Afghan Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) holder, Cuban/Haitian Entrant (CHE), Victim of Trafficking (VOT), Certain Humanitarian Parolee, or Amerasian may be eligible for financial assistance, depending on other criteria described below.

- **Household composition:** Most customers eligible for RCA are adults who do not have minor children and are not pregnant. Most newly arrived refugee families are eligible for TCA unless their income exceeds the established limit. Families with children must be determined ineligible for TCA prior to RCA enrollment.

- **Education status:** Full-time students enrolled in institutions of higher education are ineligible for RCA benefits.

- **Income:** RCA income standard is 200% of the Federal Poverty Limit (FPL), which is higher than TCA income standards.

Depending on their household composition, customers who meet the immigration status requirements above may either be determined ineligible for TCA prior to application and potentially eligible for RCA with or without a TCA eligibility determination and denial, as described below:

1. **The following require TCA application, eligibility determination, and denial prior to RCA referral and enrollment:**
    a. *Customers in households with dependent children under age 18 and/or individuals who are pregnant. These c*ustomers are not eligible for RCA unless they are denied TCA due to a determination of being overscale income. Any potentially TCA-eligible household must complete all TCA application requirements before RCA eligibility can be determined.

2. **The following do <u>not</u> require TCA application, eligibility determination, and denial prior to RCA referral and enrollment:**
    a. Customers in households with no dependent children under age 18 and/or individuals who are pregnant, including individual or couple applicants who are:
        i. 18-19 years old and not enrolled as a full-time student in secondary school or equivalent.
        ii. 19 years old and a full-time student in secondary school or equivalent but not expected to graduate or complete the

program in the same calendar year they turn 20 years old.
   iii. 20 years old or older who have no minor children under the age of 18 and who are not pregnant.
   iv. 18 or 19 years old with no minor children who are full-time high school students, but whose parent(s) are enrolled in TCA or the ORR-funded Matching Grant (MG) program, or who do not reside with their parent(s) or sibling(s).

b. Minor customers part of a TCA case who become ineligible for TCA and eligible due to their age (turning 18 and/or no longer in secondary school) may be closed from TCA and referred to RCA.

It is the responsibility of LDSS case managers to ensure that customers identified during application or recertification as eligible for RCA are referred to local RA affiliates rather than enrolled into RCA through E&E. System changes are in process whereby correspondence denying new RCA enrollment will be issued to customers determined eligible for RCA. The correspondence will provide RA referral information so that the customer can enroll through the PPP program. Until such system changes are completed, case managers must manually issue a denial notice consistent with the new policy. Additional guidance will be provided once system changes are complete.

References

45 CFR 400 Subpart E - Refugee Cash Assistance
TCA Manual Section 1308 Refugee Assistance (Updated May 2025)
AT 25-17 Reduction in RCA & RMA Eligibility Period (Issued June 13, 2025)

Inquiries

Please direct policy questions to FIA Policy by completing the FIA Policy Information Request Form. Montgomery County staff may submit their policy questions via email at fia.policy@maryland.gov. Contact or visit the website for MORA for questions related to refugee policies.

cc: DHS Executive Staff
Constituent Services
DHS Help Desk
FIA Management Staff
Office of Administrative Hearings