

<b>DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES FAMILY INVESTMENT ADMINISTRATION</b>	<b>TEMPORARY CASH ASSISTANCE MANUAL</b>	
<b>REFUGEE ASSISTANCE 1308</b>	<b>COMAR 07.03.16</b>	<b>SUPPORTIVE SERVICES 1300</b>

## 1308.1 OVERVIEW

- A. Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA) is a federally funded program through the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR). RCA is administered by the DHS/FIA Maryland Office for Refugees & Asylees (MORA), in accordance with the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), [Title 45, Part 400, Subpart E](#). Maryland implements a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model for administering refugee<sup>1</sup> benefits. The PPP model enables the state to provide critical support services through a network of providers for eligible populations. Programming includes temporary financial and medical assistance, health screenings and education, employability services, and other support services that address or reduce each eligible customer's barriers to achieving economic and social self-sufficiency.
- B. Customers may receive RCA through MORA's PPP providers, or may apply at a local department of social services (LDSS) and the Maryland DHS myMDTHINK Eligibility & Enrollment (E&E) system.
- C. A customer is eligible for RCA only when they are not otherwise eligible for Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA). In most cases, such individuals are singles or couples without dependent children under the age of 18, and childless couples.
- D. Any cash grant received by a TANF/TCA or RCA applicant under the Department of State Reception and Placement (R&P) or Welcome Corps programs is deemed excluded income and therefore is not counted to determine eligibility or payment levels.

## 1308.2 REQUIREMENTS

- A. Customers with an eligible immigration status who live in the Baltimore Metropolitan Area (Baltimore City; and Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Harford, and Howard Counties), Suburban Washington Area (Prince George's and Montgomery Counties), and Frederick County may apply for RCA at local resettlement agencies (RAs). RAs are private

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<sup>1</sup> The terms "refugees", "humanitarian immigrants" or "ORR-eligible populations" may be used interchangeably in this manual to refer to the group of immigrant populations eligible for resettlement services, including Refugees, Asylees, Certified Victims of Trafficking, Cuban or Haitian Entrants/Parolees, Certain Amerasians, Afghan or Iraqi Special Immigrants, as well as Afghan or Ukrainian Humanitarian Parolees.

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organizations that contract with the U.S. Government to welcome and orient refugees to their new communities.

Customers in the Baltimore Metropolitan Area may access RCA through:

1. [International Rescue Committee-Baltimore](#)  
Baltimore Resettlement Center (BRC)  
2601 North Howard Street, Suite #225, Baltimore, MD 21218  
Phone: 410-327-1885  
<https://www.rescue.org/united-states/baltimore-md>
2. Lutheran Social Services of the National Capital Area (LSSNCA)  
1730 Twin Springs Road, Suite 213-214, Baltimore, MD 21227  
<https://lssnca.org>

Customers in the Suburban Washington Area may access RCA through:

3. Ethiopian Community Development Council (ECDCC)  
8121 Georgia Avenue Suite 720, Silver Spring, MD 20910  
Phone: 301-562-7301  
<https://acc-dc.org>
4. International Rescue Committee-Silver Spring  
8737 Colesville Road, Suite 1200, Silver Spring, MD 20910  
Phone: 301-562-8633  
<https://www.rescue.org/united-states/silver-spring-md>
5. Lutheran Social Services of the National Capital Area (LSSNCA)  
7474 Greenway Center Dr, Suite 1200, Greenbelt, MD 20770  
Phone: 240-714-4034  
<https://lssnca.org>

Customers in the Frederick Area may access RCA through:

6. Lutheran Social Services of the National Capital Area (LSSNCA)  
Grace United Church of Christ  
5 E. 2nd Street, Frederick, MD 21701  
Phone: 240-496-6841  
<https://lssnca.org>

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- B. Customers living outside of the Baltimore Metropolitan, Suburban Washington, and Frederick Areas must apply for cash assistance and other public services at the LDSS in the jurisdiction in which they live.
- C. In accordance with [45 CFR § 400.43](#), [ORR Policy Letters 16-01](#), [22-02](#), and [22-13](#), and any other categories designated by ORR, an RCA applicant must meet one of the following immigration criteria, or be the dependent children of, and part of the same family unit as, individuals who meet these requirements, including:
1. Refugees, including individual(s) admitted as a refugee under section 207 of the Immigration and Naturalization Act (INA), and those paroled as a refugee under section 212 (d)(5) of the INA.
  2. Asylees, including individuals (s) granted asylum under section 208 of the INA, and those admitted as asylees under section 212 (d)(5) of the INA.
  3. Cuban and Haitian Entrants (CHEs), in accordance with 45 CFR § 401, including individuals paroled into the U.S. who have not acquired any other status under the INA; individuals subject to exclusion or deportation proceedings; and/or individuals with no other status and an application for asylum pending with the U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services (USCIS).
  4. Certain Amerasians from Vietnam were admitted to the US as immigrants pursuant to section 584 of the Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Appropriations Act, 1988.
  5. Victims of a Severe Form of Trafficking (VOTs), including family members with T visas.
  6. Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) holders from Iraq or Afghanistan.
  7. Afghan nationals granted humanitarian parole into the U.S. before September 30, 2023 (known as Afghan Humanitarian Parolees, AHPs), or their immediate family members (spouses, parents/caregivers, or children) paroled after that date; or
  8. Ukrainian nationals or individuals who resided in Ukraine who were granted humanitarian parole into the U.S. before September 30, 2024 (known as Ukrainian Humanitarian Parolees, UHPs), or their

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immediate family members (spouses, parents/caregivers, or children) paroled after that date.

D. RCA applicants must be determined ineligible for any other financial assistance programs prior to enrollment in RCA, including for Temporary Cash Assistance. LDSS must ensure the following:

1. At the time of application, determine eligibility for TCA prior to determining eligibility for RCA. Households with one of the qualifying immigration statuses in section 13082.C with dependent children living with them and/or pregnant individuals may be eligible for TCA if they meet the TCA eligibility requirements. The household composition must be calculated accurately in case households have individuals with different immigration statuses.
2. If the household composition may be eligible for TCA, proceed with application in E&E. Refugee households must meet all technical and financial eligibility requirements for TCA benefits.

Note: Any cash grants received from RCA, as well as TCA/TANF applicants from the Department of State Reception and Placement or Welcome Corps programs, are excluded from eligibility and income determinations.

3. Refugee households are subject to the same TCA time limits as all other TCA customers. The RCA eligibility time limits in this manual do not apply to TCA.
4. The 5-year bar imposed on immigrants to access federally funded public assistance does not apply to refugees or other populations listed in this manual, who have the same right to these programs as U.S. citizens. Similarly, Lawful Permanent Residents (LPRs) with a previous refugee status remain eligible for public assistance programs, though they may be beyond the RCA eligibility period.
5. If household composition is ineligible for TCA or has been denied benefits due to being over the program's income limits, but may be eligible for RCA, determine whether RCA application can proceed in E&E (depending on jurisdiction of residency) or through local RA (see 1308.2.A). The TCA denial letter must be

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provided to the RA to verify they are ineligible for TCA.

6. Proceed with application for RCA through the E&E system only if a household resides outside a PPP jurisdiction or is unable or unwilling to enroll in RCA through a local RA affiliate.

### **1308.3 ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION**

- A. Complete TCA eligibility determination prior to RCA enrollment.
- B. Verify technical eligibility prior to enrollment in RCA to ensure the customer and/or household:
  1. Hold one of the qualifying immigration statuses listed in 1308.2(C).
  2. Reside in the U.S. for less time than the eligibility period for RCA which is determined by the USCIS status date and varies by immigration status. The status date (date of eligibility) is defined as: the date of entry into the U.S. for refugees and SIV holders; date of entry into the U.S. or parole for eligible parolees (primarily for Cuban/ Haitian Entrants); date of certification for VOTs; or date asylum was granted for asylees. The length of program eligibility is based on the date an ORR-eligible status was obtained:

**USCIS Status date (date of eligibility) before May 5, 2025:**

RCA eligibility period of 12 calendar months

**USCIS Status date (date of eligibility) on or after May 5, 2025:**

RCA eligibility period of 4 calendar months

3. Are not full-time students in institutions of higher education.
4. Are ineligible for any other federal cash assistance programs, including TANF/TCA, Transitional Support Services (TSS), Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), Old Age Assistance (OAA), Aid to the Blind (AB), Aid to the Permanently and Totally Disabled (APTD), or Aid to the Aged, Blind and Disabled (AABD).
  - a. Customers may be enrolled in RCA while awaiting determination of eligibility for SSI or another program.

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- b. Customers must be disenrolled from RCA upon verification of activation of any other federal cash benefits.
- C. Determine financial eligibility, by establishing the household is at or below 200% of the current Federal Poverty Level (FPL).
- D. Determine if the customer is enrolled with a local resettlement agency affiliate and whether referral for RCA enrollment through the PPP is applicable, based on the guidelines in section 1308.2(A).
- E. Determine the length of eligibility based on the date that the client received their eligible immigration status. (See 1308.3(B)(2)).

#### **1308.4 EMPLOYMENT AND EMPLOYABILITY SERVICES**

- A. All RCA customers must register for employment or employability services unless they are exempt.
  - 1. RCA customers enrolled through local RAs will be enrolled in Refugee Support Services (RSS) employment programming, for which they are eligible for their first 5 years in the U.S. Note that participation in this program meet requirements for Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDs) workforce participation guidelines in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) - see [ORR Policy Letter 16-08](#) for additional federal guidance.
  - 2. Local departments may require an individual employed at least 30 hours per week to participate in part-time employability services if it does not interfere with the individual's job.
  - 3. Individuals must register for and participate in employment or employability services even if they do not speak English.
  - 4. Exempt individuals may voluntarily register for employment.
- B. All household individuals who are not exempt must develop an individual employability plan as part of their family self-sufficiency plan, with appropriate employment services.
- C. Failure or refusal to accept employability services or employment results in one of the following:
  - 1. Deregistration (with no effect on an individual's cash assistance) of a voluntary registrant from the program, at local department

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discretion, for up to 90 days from the date of determination of failure or refusal.

2. Termination of assistance when a mandatory registrant voluntarily quits a job or fails or refuses, without good cause, to participate in a program or accept a job offer.

### **1308.5 MEDICAL SERVICES**

1. Refugee Medical Assistance (RMA) is considered medical assistance of the last resort. Per 45 CFR § 400.100, eligibility for RMA is limited to those individuals who are ineligible for other MA programs, including the Maryland Children's Health Program (MCHP), but meet financial and technical eligibility standards.
2. Recipients of RCA who are not eligible for Medicaid, MCHP, or other MA programs may be eligible for RMA. RMA customers are not required to apply for and receive RCA as a condition of eligibility for RMA, nor required to apply for Medicare prior to enrollment.
3. Individuals subject to Modified Adjusted Gross Income (MAGI) determinations must be assessed for eligibility for federal Medical Assistance (MA) using the Maryland Health Connection (MHC). Individuals who are age 65 or older, disabled, or require long-term care, not subject to MAGI requirements, may apply for MA through MDThink, which will determine their eligibility for MA or RMA based on their income, household composition, and immigration status.
4. An individual with a verified ORR-eligible immigration status who is not eligible for any other MA programs may be eligible for RMA if their household income is above the limit for other MA programs but is below 200% of the FPL, and they are not full-time students in institutions of higher education.
5. As with RCA, an individual may only receive RMA for the eligibility period determined by the date they obtain an ORR-eligible status (date of entry into the U.S. or USCIS status) - those with a date before May 5, 2025, remain eligible for 12 calendar months, those on or after this date are eligible for 4 calendar months (see 1308.3(B)(2)).