

<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 separate federal program under the purview of 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 observes a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model for administering refugee<sup>1</sup> benefits funded by the federal Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR). Through its PPP model, MORA administers programming through a network of providers for eligible populations, including temporary financial and medical assistance, health screenings and education, employability assistance, and other critical support services that address or reduce each eligible family’s barriers to achieving economic and social self-sufficiency.
- B. Customers may enroll in RCA statewide through resettlement agencies (RAs) contracted by DHS to administer RCA benefits. These MORA-funded PPP providers deliver integrated employability assistance and training, case management, and other support services.
- C. A customer is eligible for RCA only when they are determined ineligible for Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA), Maryland’s Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, as well as any other federal financial assistance programs listed in [45 CFR § 400.53](#). In most cases, RCA-eligible individuals are single adults or couples without dependent children who meet income and immigration requirements.
- D. Customers in all Maryland jurisdictions determined eligible for the RCA program are required to enroll in RCA through referral to local 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 Maryland Benefits portal. Customers may apply with either the support of RA case managers as well as independently for those not yet enrolled in resettlement programming. LDSS may continue to determine eligibility for available programs. However, the system will deny RCA enrollment for those found eligible for RCA. The RCA denial notice will include a

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

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referral to local RA affiliates for enrollment in the PPP RCA program.

## 1308.2 REQUIREMENTS

A. Customers in all state jurisdictions with an eligible immigration status may apply for RCA by enrolling with one of the following local RAs contracted by DHS to welcome refugees to their new communities:

1. [Ethiopian Community Development Council \(ECDC\)](#)

8121 Georgia Avenue, Suite 720, Silver Spring, MD 20910  
301-562-7301  
[Info-acc@ecdcus.org](mailto:Info-acc@ecdcus.org)

2. [International Rescue Committee \(IRC\)](#)

2601 North Howard Street, Suite #225, Baltimore, MD 21218  
410-327-1885  
[baltimore@rescue.org](mailto:baltimore@rescue.org)  
<https://www.rescue.org/united-states/baltimore-md>

8737 Colesville Road, Suite 1200, Silver Spring, MD 20910  
301-562-8633  
[silverspringintake@rescue.org](mailto:silverspringintake@rescue.org)  
<https://www.rescue.org/united-states/silver-spring-md>

3. [Lutheran Social Services of the National Capital Area \(LSSNCA\)](#)

202-868-3218 (for statewide services)  
[Intake Form for all LSSNCA offices](#)

1730 Twin Springs Road, Suite 213-214, Baltimore, MD 21227

7474 Greenway Center Dr, Suite 1200, Greenbelt, MD 20770

5 E. 2nd Street, Frederick, MD 21701

B. Customers may be enrolled in RA services in-person or remotely when they reside in a jurisdiction inaccessible to in-person services. Eligible

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customers may access linguistically and culturally appropriate services through RA affiliates regardless of where they live.

- C. All customers referred to RA providers will have their needs assessed and eligibility determined for Refugee Transitional Cash Assistance (RTCA), the state’s PPP RCA program. Customers identified as employable and not exempt from work requirements will be simultaneously enrolled into the Refugee Support Services (RSS) Employment Assistance program.
- D. RCA applicants must be determined ineligible for any other financial assistance programs, including Temporary Cash Assistance, prior to enrollment in RCA. See section 1308.3.E. for more information.

### **1308.3 ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION**

RCA applicants must meet the following eligibility criteria, per [45 CFR Part 400 Subpart E](#), ensuring the customer:

- A. Meets one of the following immigration status criteria, in accordance with [45 CFR § 400.43](#), [ORR Policy Letters 16-01](#), [22-02](#), [22-13](#), and any other categories designated by ORR in the future, or is the dependent child and part of the same family unit as individuals who meet one of these requirements:
  - 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 granted asylum under INA section 208, and those admitted as asylees under INA section 212(d)(5).
  - 3. Cuban and Haitian Entrants (CHEs), as defined in [45 CFR § 401](#):
    - a. Any individual granted parole status as a Cuban-Haitian Entrant or granted any other special status subsequently established under immigration laws for Cuban or Haitian nationals, regardless of the status at the time assistance or services are provided; and
    - b. Any other individual with Cuban or Haitian nationality who
      - i. Was paroled into the U.S. and has not acquired any

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other status; or

- ii. Is in exclusion or deportation proceedings under the INA; or
  - iii. Has an application for asylum pending, and
  - iv. For whom a final, non-appealable, and legally enforceable deportation order has not been entered.
4. Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) holders from Iraq or Afghanistan.
  5. Victims of a Severe Form of Trafficking (VOTs), including derivative family members with T-category visas.
  6. 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.
  7. Afghan nationals granted humanitarian parole into the U.S. before September 30, 2023, or their immediate family members (spouses, parents/caregivers, or children) paroled after that date.
  8. Ukrainian nationals or individuals who resided in Ukraine who were granted humanitarian parole into the U.S. before September 30, 2024, or their immediate family members (spouses, parents/caregivers, or children) paroled after that date.
- B. Has resided in the U.S. for less time than the eligibility period for RCA. The beginning of the RCA eligibility period is determined by the USCIS status date and varies by immigration status, as described below:
1. Refugees and SIV holders: the date of entry into the U.S.;
  2. Cuban/Haitian Entrants: date of entry or parole into the U.S.;
  3. Victims of Trafficking: date of ACF trafficking certification, or for family members with T-category visa date of entry into U.S.; or
  4. Asylees: date asylum was granted, or follow-to-join asylee family members date of entry into the U.S.
- C. The length of program eligibility is based on the date that an initial RCA-eligible status was obtained:

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**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

- D. Is not a full-time student in institutions of higher education.
- E. Meets financial eligibility requirements by establishing the household is at or below 200% of the current Federal Poverty Level (FPL).

Note: Any cash grants received by an applicant under federal resettlement programs, such as the ORR Program of Initial Resettlement (PIR), formerly the Reception and Placement (R&P) program, or any other equivalent programs per [45 CFR § 400.59\(d\)](#) and ORR [Policy Letter 23-04 Income Disregards for RCA](#), are deemed excluded income and therefore are not counted to determine financial eligibility or payment levels.

- F. Is 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).
  - 1. RCA applicants must be determined ineligible for TCA and any other cash programs prior to enrollment in RCA. LDSS must ensure the following for customers who apply for cash benefits:
    - a. At the time of application, determine eligibility for TCA prior to eligibility for RCA. Households with one of the qualifying immigration statuses in section 1308.3(A) with dependent children residing 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 as households may have individuals with different citizenship and immigration statuses.
    - b. If the household composition may be eligible for TCA, proceed with the cash application in E&E. Refugee households must meet all technical and financial eligibility requirements for TCA benefits.
    - c. Refugee households are subject to the same TCA time

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limits as all other TCA customers. The RCA eligibility time limits in this manual do not apply to TCA.

- d. Refugees and other populations listed in this section are exempt from the 5-year waiting period for TCA and other benefits. Lawful Permanent Residents (LPRs) adjusted from a former refugee or asylee statuses remain eligible for TCA. For information on TCA and SNAP citizenship/immigration eligibility, refer to TCA Manual Section 0310 and SNAP Manual Section 120, respectively. Contact the FIA Policy Unit for any inquiries regarding TCA or SNAP eligibility.
- e. If the household composition is ineligible for TCA or has been denied benefits because they are over the program's income limits, but may be eligible for RCA, the application cannot proceed in E&E. The application must be referred to a local RA (see 1308.2.A) for further eligibility determination and enrollment. A TCA denial letter, if applicable, must be provided to the RA to verify they are ineligible for TCA. If the household is eligible for RCA, the system will automatically issue an RCA denial letter with a referral to local RAs.
- f. LDSS staff must determine if the customer may be already enrolled with a local RA to ensure accurate referral and follow-up and customers' timely access to RCA services.

#### **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, which they are eligible for during their first 5 years in the U.S. Note that participation in this program meets 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.

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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 participate in employability services or employment may result in reduced benefits per sanction procedures. Assistance may be terminated if a mandatory registrant voluntarily fails to participate in services, accept a job offer, or quit a job without good cause.

### **1308.5 MEDICAL ASSISTANCE**

- A. 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.
- B. 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.
- C. Individuals subject to Modified Adjusted Gross Income (MAGI) determinations must be assessed for eligibility for Medical Assistance (MA) using the Maryland Health Connection (MHC).
1. Individuals who are age 65 or older, disabled, or require long-term care are not subject to MAGI requirements and may apply for MA through the MD Benefits portal. MD Benefits will determine their eligibility for MA or RMA based on income, household composition, assets, and immigration status.
- D. 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.

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E. 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).

**1308.6 ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE**

A. This policy manual section includes all updated federal guidance and serves as a resource for local DSS while DHS updates the Refugee Cash Assistance regulations located in COMAR 07.03.16.