# **1308.1** **OVERVIEW**

1. 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.](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-45/subtitle-B/chapter-IV/part-400/subpart-E) Maryland observes a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model for administering refugee[[1]](#footnote-0) 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 services, and other support services that address or reduce each eligible family’s barriers to achieving economic and social self-sufficiency. Customers may receive RCA through MORA’s PPP providers, or may apply for local DSS and the Maryland DHS myMDTHINK Eligibility & Enrollment (E&E) system.
2. 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.
3. 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.

# **REQUIREMENTS**

1. Customers with an eligible immigration status who live in the Baltimore Metropolitan Area (Baltimore City; and Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carol, Harford, and Howard Counties), Suburban Washington Area (Montgomery and Prince George’s Counties), and Frederick County may apply for RCA at local resettlement agencies (RAs), private organizations that have contracts with the U.S. Government to welcome and orient refugees to their new communities.

Customers who reside in the Baltimore Metropolitan Area may apply for and access RCA at either of the following organizations (highlighted below):

* 1. [International Rescue Committee-Baltimore](http://www.rescue.org/us-program/us-baltimore-md)  
     Baltimore Resettlement Center (BRC)  
     1900 N Howard St #200, Baltimore, MD 21218  
     Phone: 410-327-1885

<https://www.rescue.org/united-states/baltimore-md>

* 1. Lutheran Social Services of the National Capital Area (LSSNCA)

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

<https://lssnca.org>

Customers who live in the Suburban Washington Area may apply for and access RCA at any of the following organizations:

* 1. Ethiopian Community Development Council (ECDC)  
     The World Building  
     8121 Georgia Avenue Suite 720, Silver Spring, MD 20910  
     Phone: 301-562-7301

[https://acc-dc.org](https://acc-dc.org/)

* 1. 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>

* 1. 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 who live in Frederick County may access RCA at:

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>

1. Customers living outside of the Baltimore Metropolitan, Suburban Washington, and Frederick Areas must apply for cash assistance and other public services at the local department of social services in the jurisdiction in which they live.
2. In accordance with [45 CFR § 400.43](https://www.law.cornell.edu/cfr/text/45/400.43), [ORR Policy Letters 16-01](https://www.acf.hhs.gov/orr/policy-guidance/status-and-documentation-requirements-orr-refugee-resettlement-program), [22-02](https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/orr/ORR-PL-22-02-Additional-ORR-Eligibility-Categories-and-Documentation-Requirements-for-Afghan-Nationals-Revised.pdf), and [22-13](https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/orr/PL-22-13-Ukrainian-Humanitarian-Parolees-Eligible-for-ORR-Benefits-and-Services.pdf), and any other categories designated by ORR in the future, an RCA applicant must meet one of the following immigration status 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 individual(s) granted asylum under section 208 of the INA, and those admitted as an asylee 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 an application for asylum pending with U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services (USCIS).
   4. Certain Amerasians from Vietnam 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 habitually resided in Ukraine were granted parole into the U.S. before September 30, 2024, due to urgent humanitarian reasons, known as Ukrainian Humanitarian Parolees (UHPs), or their immediate family members ( (spouses, parents/caregivers, or children) paroled after that date.
3. Process for RCA applicants:
   1. Determine eligibility for Temporary Cash Assistance.
4. At the time of application, determine eligibility for TCA before determining eligibility for RCA.
5. Refugee families with dependent children living with them, and pregnant women and their spouses living with them, are eligible for TCA if they meet the TCA eligibility requirements.
6. Refugee families are certified for12 months for TCA, at which point they are required to complete recertification to continue benefits.
7. Refugee families must meet all technical and financial eligibility requirements for TCA benefits.

Note: Any cash grants received by 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.

1. Issue RCA benefits only if an individual or household is determined ineligible for TCA due to income or household composition.
2. Applicants must be immigrants who:
3. Meet eligibility criteria outlined in section C of this document;
4. Have held a qualifying immigration status or resided in the US less than the eligibility period for RCA which is 12 months from the USCIS status date, defined as the date of entry into the U.S. for refugees (with code RE), SIV holders (with code SI/SQ), date of entry into the U.S. or parole for eligible UHPs, AHPs, and CHEs, 12 months from the date of certification for VOTs, or 12 months from the date asylum or parolee status was granted.
5. Are ineligible for any other FIP or federal assistance programs (including TANF/TCA, SSI, OAA, AB, APTD, and AABD) but meet RCA need standards;
6. Are awaiting determination of eligibility for SSI or another disability/old age program;
7. Meet income and applicable employment or employability standards;
8. Provide the name of their resettlement agency if they are working with one;
9. Are not full-time students in institutions of higher education, as defined by the Director, Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR), unless higher education is part of an individual’s employability plan.

**1308.3 ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION**

1. Verify technical eligibility for RCA and/or RMA including eligible immigration status. The correct household composition should be confirmed in the instance that a household contains individuals with different immigration statuses.
2. Determine financial eligibility, which is based on 200% of the current Federal Poverty Level (FPL).
3. Determine the RCA payment amount. RCA payments are equal to TCA payment levels.
4. Determine the correct eligibility period based on the date that the client received his or her eligible immigration status.
5. If a refugee is determined ineligible for TCA, refer him or her to a resettlement agency closest to you to be assessed for RCA eligibility.





**1308.4 EMPLOYMENT AND EMPLOYABILITY SERVICES**

1. All RCA applicants/customers must register for employment or employability services unless they are exempt.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. Individuals must register for and participate in employment or employability services even if they do not speak English.
5. 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.

C. All employability services and employment must be appropriate according to RCA standards.

D. Failure or refusal to accept employability services or employment results in one of the following:

1. Deregistration (with no effect on the individual’s cash assistance) of a voluntary registrant from the program, at local department 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. All refugees must be assessed for eligibility for the Maryland Health Connection (MHC) and other federally funded MA programs.
2. Because income standards for MHC differ from RMA income standards, a refugee who is not eligible for MHC due to income must be assessed for RMA eligibility. A refugee who is not eligible for MHC may access RMA if their household income is below 200% of the FPL.
3. A refugee may only receive RMA for 12 months from the date of their eligibility (date of entry into the U.S. or date of USCIS status).
4. RMA services must at least equal services provided under MA.
5. Services in addition to MA, such as those that might be provided by county hospitals, are available to refugees to the extent that funds are available.
6. Refer to medical screening if:

* The applicant is within 90 days from the date of eligibility for federal refugee assistance. The health screening provides immunizations required for adjustment of immigration status and helps identify/resolve any potential public health concerns.



1. 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. [↑](#footnote-ref-0)