

Who is a refugee?

A refugee is an individual granted refugee status overseas by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion and unable or unwilling to return to their home country. For more information about U.S. refugee admissions, go to <https://www.state.gov/refugee-admissions>.

Are you an individual who has been granted refugee status to enter the United States?

You may be eligible for federal “mainstream” (non-ORR-funded) benefits, such as cash assistance through Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI), health insurance through Medicaid, and food assistance through Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). You may also be eligible for cash assistance, medical assistance, employment preparation, job placement, English language training, and other services offered through ORR. This document focuses on the benefits and services that ORR funds.

Where do I sign up for ORR benefits and services?

ORR provides funding to state governments, resettlement agencies, and other nonprofit community-based organizations to provide benefits and services to eligible individuals. Regardless of whether you arrive through the Reception and Placement Program (the U.S. public resettlement program: <https://www.state.gov/refugee-admissions/reception-and-placement>) or through Welcome Corps (the U.S. private sponsorship program: <https://welcomecorps.org>), you can apply at the state government benefits office or closest resettlement agency in your state. For a state-by-state listing of local resettlement agencies, view the ORR state program directory, which also includes a link to ORR state contacts: <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/orr/map/find-resources-and-contacts-your-state>.

When should I sign up for ORR benefits and services?

Immediately. Your benefits and services are only available for a limited time. ORR-funded cash and medical assistance are limited to a maximum of 12 months from your date of ORR eligibility. Most ORR employment services and other services aimed at self-sufficiency, wellbeing, and integration will be available to you for up to five years from the date you entered the United States as a refugee.

What should I bring with me?

You should bring proof of your status as a refugee and the date of your arrival into the United States. Types of proof include: 1) an I-94 (DHS Arrival/Departure Record) noting admittance under § 207 of the Immigration and Nationality Act; 2) an I-94 with the code Visa 93; or an Employment Authorization Document (EAD) with the code A03.

This list does not include all types of documentation or specific information on your documentation that may prove your status as a refugee. For more information on required status, see:

https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/orr/orr_fact_sheet_refugee.pdf (PDF).

What are some of the benefits and services I can receive as a refugee?

Some refugees are eligible to apply for federal mainstream benefits in their state, such as cash assistance through Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), health insurance through Medicaid, and food assistance through Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). If you are not eligible to receive these mainstream benefits, you can be screened for eligibility at a state government benefits office or the closest resettlement agency in your state for the following ORR benefits and services:

Initial ORR Benefits *(up to 12 months from your ORR eligibility date)*

Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA)

Those not eligible for SSI or TANF may receive RCA. Counting from their date of eligibility, individuals may receive up to 12 months of RCA to help meet their most basic needs, such as food, shelter, and

transportation. RCA is linked to programming that provides family self-sufficiency planning and employment services to help clients assess their needs, plan how to meet these needs, and immediately find and maintain employment.

ORR Matching Grant (MG) Program

As an alternative to TANF or RCA, some may participate in the ORR MG Program, an early self-sufficiency program. Enrollment slots are limited in number and by location. The MG Program provides cash assistance, intensive case management, and employment services to help clients immediately find and maintain employment. The goal of the program is to assist clients to become economically self-sufficient within the 240-day MG service period. Individuals should enroll in the MG Program as soon as possible after their date of eligibility.

Refugee Medical Assistance (RMA)

Those not eligible for Medicaid may receive up to 12 months of RMA from their date of eligibility. RMA provides the same health insurance coverage as Medicaid.

Medical Screening

Upon arrival, refugees are eligible for a domestic medical screening examination funded by ORR. The screening supports clients by identifying health conditions that threaten their wellbeing, providing vaccinations required for school and work, and referring them to primary care providers or specialists for ongoing health care. ORR recommends that medical screenings are completed soon after arrival in the U.S.

Services *(up to 5 years from your ORR eligibility date)*

Refugee Support Services (RSS)

Refugees may be eligible to access RSS, which provides a wide range of services in support of employment and self-sufficiency: employability services; job training and preparation; assistance with job search, placement, and retention; English language training; childcare; transportation; translation and interpreter services; and case management.

Specialized Programs

Some clients may be eligible for specialized programs such as health services, technical assistance for

small business start-ups, financial savings, youth mentoring, or other targeted support programs.

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