

Department of Health and Human Services
Administration for Children and Families
OFFICE OF REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT

Asylee Eligibility for Assistance and Services
Through the Office of Refugee Resettlement

Am I eligible to receive benefits through the Office of Refugee Resettlement?

If you have been granted asylum in the United States, you may be eligible to receive assistance and services through the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR). ORR funds and administers programs to help refugees, asylees and other special populations restart their lives in the United States. Programs include cash and medical assistance, employment preparation and job placement, and English language training.

Who runs these programs?

These programs are run by state and private agencies in various locations throughout the United States. Each state may have different programs available. To find out what is available and where to go for assistance and services in your state, please call:

1-800-354-0365

You may also sign on to the ORR website at www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr.

What is the eligibility period for these benefits?

You may only receive certain assistance and services for a limited period of time. Asylees may apply to receive refugee cash and medical assistance for 8 months beginning on the date that they are granted asylum. When you go to the benefits office to apply, you will need to bring proof that you have been granted asylum and proof of the date on which you were granted asylum. In addition to proving that you are an asylee, there are other requirements that you must fulfill in order to receive this assistance. These will be explained to you when you go to apply. The eligibility period for other ORR programs is normally 5 years.

Am I eligible for any other benefits?

Along with ORR assistance and services, you may be eligible for other benefits programs administered by the Department of Health and Human Services. When you go to the benefits office, ask to learn about all of the assistance and services that may be available to you.

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You have been granted asylum. Asylum status carries certain benefits and responsibilities, some of which are described below.

BENEFITS

1. Employment Authorization: You are authorized to work in the United States for as long as you remain in asylum status. Your dependents are also authorized to work in the United States, so long as they retain derivative asylum status. In order to work in the United States, every employee must show a prospective employer certain documentation as proof of employment authorization. That proof may consist of, among other things, an unrestricted social security card and a state-issued driver's license. It may also consist of an unexpired employment authorization document (EAD) issued by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). For a list of all documents that can be accepted by an employer as proof of employment authorization, consult the USCIS Form I-9, *Employment Eligibility Verification*, available on the USCIS website at <http://uscis.gov/graphics/formsfee/forms/index.htm>. You and any qualifying dependents are each entitled to immediately receive an EAD issued by USCIS. To obtain an EAD, visit or make an appointment at your nearest USCIS district office. Bring your copy of the immigration judge's order or the Board of Immigration Appeals decision granting asylum and some form of identification. Request an I-94 card at the same time as the EAD.

2. Immigration Related Unfair Employment Practices: You may be the victim of unlawful discrimination if you are refused hire, or are fired, because you are not a U.S. citizen or lawful permanent resident. You may also be subject to unlawful discrimination if an employer refuses to accept your unrestricted Social Security card or unexpired employment authorization document during the employment eligibility (I-9 Form) verification process, or refuses to hire you because you do not have a green card. For further assistance, please call the Office of Special Counsel for Immigration Related Unfair Employment Practices (OSC) at 1-800-255-7688 or 1-800-237-2515 (TDD for hearing impaired). You may also visit the OSC website at <http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/osc/>.

3. Derivative Asylum Status: You may request derivative asylum status for any spouse or child (unmarried and under 21 years of age) who is not included in this decision and with whom you have a qualifying relationship, whether or not that spouse or child is in the United States. To request derivative asylum status, you must submit a Form I-730, *Refugee and Asylee Relative Petition*, to the Nebraska Service Center, P.O. Box 87730, Lincoln, NE 68501-7730. **The Form I-730 must be filed for each qualifying family member within 2 years of the date you were granted asylum status**, unless the USCIS determines that this time period should be extended for humanitarian reasons. You may obtain a Form I-730, *Refugee and Asylee Relative Petition*, online at <http://uscis.gov/graphics/formsfee/forms/index.htm>.

4. Social Security Cards: You may immediately apply for an unrestricted Social Security card at any Social Security office. To get an *Application for a Social Security Card* (Form SS-5) or to get more information about applying for a Social Security card use <http://www.ssa.gov/ssnumber/> on the Internet, call the toll-free number 1-800-772-1213, or visit a local Social Security office. When you go to a Social Security office to apply for a Social Security card, you must show either: your original order from the immigration judge or Board of Immigration Appeals granting asylum; your I-94 card; or your EAD. If available, you should take some kind of photo-identity document, such as your passport. For directions to the Social Security office nearest to you, call the SSA toll-free number or visit the website listed above.

5. Adjustment of Status: You may apply for lawful permanent resident status under section 209(b) of the Immigration and Nationality Act after you have been physically present in the United States for a period of one year after the date you were granted asylum status. To apply for lawful permanent residence status, you must submit a separate Form I-485, *Application to Register Permanent Residence or Adjust Status*, for yourself and each qualifying family member to the Nebraska Service Center, P.O. Box 87485, Lincoln, NE 68501-7485. You may obtain a Form I-485, *Application to Register Permanent Residence or Adjust Status*, online at <http://uscis.gov/graphics/formsfee/forms/index.htm>.

RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Departing from the United States: If you, and/or your qualifying family members with derivative asylum status, plan to depart the United States, you must each obtain permission to return to the United States before you leave this country by obtaining a refugee travel document(s). A refugee travel document may be used for temporary travel abroad and is required for re-admission to the United States as an asylee. If you and/or your qualifying family members do not obtain a refugee travel document in advance of your departure, you may be unable to re-enter the United States, or you may be placed in removal proceedings before an immigration judge. You and each qualifying family member may apply for a Refugee Travel Document by each submitting a Form I-131, *Application for Travel Document*, with the required fee or request for fee waiver under 8 C.F.R. 103.7(c) to the Nebraska Service Center, P.O. Box 87131, Lincoln, NE 68501-7131. You may obtain a Form I-131, *Application for Travel Document*, online at <http://uscis.gov/graphics/formsfee/forms/index.htm>.

2. Changes of Address: You must notify the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) of any change of address within ten days of such change. You may obtain a Form AR-11, *Alien's Change of Address Card* at your nearest post office or USCIS office, or online at <http://uscis.gov/graphics/formsfee/forms/index.htm> to comply with this requirement.

3. Selective Service Registration: All male asylees between the ages of 18 and 26 must register for the Selective Service. To obtain information about the Selective Service and how to register, you may sign on to the Selective Service website at <http://www.sss.gov> or obtain a Selective Service “mail-back” registration form at your nearest post office.

4. How to Get Your Personal Property After You are Released From Detention [excerpted from *Pocket Knowledge*, a publication available at <http://www.lirs.org/What/programs/pocketknowledge.htm>]: When you came to the detention center an officer took your property. Your property was put in a safe place. The processing officers gave you receipts for your property: Form G-589, a white paper describing personal property, including documents and cash; and Form I-77, a ticket for luggage and a description of contents. They should return your property when they release you. When you left detention, you and the officer should have checked that you received everything written on the G-589 and I-77 forms. U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) may reserve the right to appeal the judge's decision in your immigration case. If ICE reserves the right to appeal, it may keep some of your original documents. ICE must appeal within 30 days. If you have not been notified of an appeal within 30 days, you can get back your documents. To do this, call the detention center and ask for help.