

ACF's Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) Benefits for Afghan Youth in the U.S. Living with Non-Parental Caregivers

Are you an Afghan youth under the age of 18 living with an adult who is not your parent or legal guardian?

Through Congressional authorization and funding to assist Afghan humanitarian parolees, you may be eligible for ORR-funded benefits and services to help you adjust to life in the U.S. This may include limited cash and medical assistance, immigration legal services, behavioral health support, English language classes, education support, and training for a future job. You may also be eligible for other federal (non-ORR funded) benefits.

Who are eligible Afghan youth?

Eligible Afghan youth have been granted humanitarian parole by U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), in response to the need for rapid evacuation and relocation under Operation Allies Refuge/Operation Allies Welcome. Some Afghan minors, known as "Unaccompanied Afghan Minors (UAMs)," were referred to ORR's Unaccompanied Children Program and released to sponsors. Other youth, known as "Attached Afghan Minors (AAMs)," were resettled directly into U.S. communities from Safe Havens with non-parental caregivers. As Afghan humanitarian parolees paroled into the U.S. between July 31, 2021, through September 30, 2023, both UAMs and AAMs, may be eligible to receive resettlement assistance and other federal benefits until the end of their parole term. Parents of these individuals paroled into the U.S. after September 30, 2022, may also be eligible to apply for these benefits. Humanitarian parole authorizes only temporary residence in the United States, but Afghans with humanitarian parole may be eligible to apply for asylum (a permanent status) as well as Temporary Protected Status, which may authorize their residence in the United States beyond the expiration date of parole.

Where do I apply for ORR benefits/services?

You should accompany your non-parental caregiver to 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. The directory also includes a link to ORR state contacts:

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/orr/map/find-resources-and-contacts-your-state>.

Also, with ORR support, DHS is holding various Afghan Support Centers throughout the United States, where you and your caregivers can visit one place to sign up for benefits and services. View upcoming locations and dates: <https://www.uscis.gov/outreach/upcoming-local-engagements>. (Select "Afghan Support Center" from the events' subject dropdown.)

When should I apply for ORR benefits/services?

Immediately. Your benefits and services are only available for a limited time.

What should I bring with me?

You should bring proof of your humanitarian parole and the date you received it. Types of proof include a Form I-94 noting Humanitarian Parole (per INA section 212(d)(5)(A)), a foreign passport with DHS/CBP admission stamp noting "OAR," or a foreign passport with DHS/ CBP admission stamp noting "OAW."

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

You might be able to receive federal benefits in your 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). You and your family may already be enrolled. If you are not eligible to receive these non-ORR benefits, please be sure you have been screened for ORR eligibility at a state government benefits office or the closest resettlement agency in your state. You may be able to receive the following ORR benefits and services:

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

Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA)

Those not eligible for SSI or TANF may be eligible to receive Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA). Counting from your date of eligibility, you may receive up to 12 months of RCA to help meet your most basic needs, such as food, shelter, and transportation.

Refugee Medical Assistance (RMA)

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

Medical Screening

You may be eligible for a domestic medical screening examination funded by ORR. The screening identifies health conditions, provides vaccinations required for school and work, and refers you 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 (*Until the end of your parole term*)

Case Management: Preferred Communities

Through a case manager, who can guide, support, and develop a plan including academic support and mentoring, the Preferred Communities program may offer you targeted assistance. The program can help you and your family navigate your new community and life in the United States, focusing on your unique needs and circumstances.

Employment Assistance: Refugee Support Services

If you are 16 or older, you may be eligible to access the Refugee Support Services (RSS) program to receive employability services. RSS helps provide job training and preparation, English language training, assistance with job search and placement, transportation, translation and interpreter services, and case management.

Immigration-Related Legal Assistance

You may be eligible for immigration-related legal assistance and other related activities to help you on your pathway to obtaining a permanent status, such as acquiring asylum, in the United States. Legal services may help families with guardianship, custody, and family reunification. For more information, visit Immigration Legal Services for Afghan Arrivals (ILSAA): <https://ilsaa.acf.hhs.gov/>.

Refugee School Impact

The Refugee School Impact program assists children from birth to age 18 to succeed in school, strengthen academic performance, and adjust socially.

Youth Mentoring

This program matches youth with mentors, who will support your social, educational, and vocational needs to guide you through the challenges of resettlement and beyond.

Specialized Programs

You may be eligible for specialized programs such as behavioral health services or other targeted support programs.