



ADMINISTRATION FOR
CHILDREN & FAMILIES

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Repatriation Guide: Section 1 Overview

Section 1 includes:

- Eligibility
- Services
- Roles of Agencies
- Financial Obligations of Participants
- Privacy of Participants

Repatriation is the return of a U.S. citizen from a foreign country. The U.S. Repatriation Program (Program) exists to provide temporary assistance to citizens and their dependents that have repatriated and are in need of assistance. The Program assists citizens on an individual basis and during an emergency or group repatriation. All Program assistance is given in the form of loans that must be paid back to the federal government. Repayment may be waived under certain circumstances.

The Program is administered by the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) within the Administration for Children and Families at the Department of Health and Human Services. ORR partners with Department of State (DOS), state governments, and non-governmental organizations to provide assistance to participants of the Program.

A U.S. citizen applying for assistance under the Program must contact the U.S. consulate in the host country. The U.S. consulate will collect all the information needed to ensure eligibility for the program. If the applicant is eligible, he or she must sign a privacy waiver, which allows DOS to share information with service providers.

Eligibility

Broadly, the Program assists two groups of U.S. citizens: those that lack resources and return to the United States because of destitution, illness, war, threat of war, invasion, or similar situation; and those that are mentally ill.

Assistance to U.S. citizens without resources

The Program can provide services to U.S. citizens and their dependents that lack resources and return to the United States. The eligibility requirements, found at 42 U.S.C. § 1313, are:

- 1) The person must be a U.S. citizen or a dependent of a U.S. citizen;
- 2) The person must be identified by the Department of State as returning to the United States from a foreign country because of destitution, illness, war, threat of war, invasion, or similar situation;
- 3) The person must be without available resources for living expenses.

If a person meets all of these requirements, the Department of State will certify that the person is eligible for services. Under this program, U.S. citizens may receive assistance for up to 90 days. The services provided are discussed in detail below.

Dependents of U.S. citizens are also eligible for assistance under the Program. Dependents of U.S. citizens include: spouses, parents, spouse's parents, grandparents, unmarried minor children including adopted children and stepchildren, unmarried adult children who are dependent due to disabilities, and minor siblings of the U.S. citizen or his/her spouse.

Assistance to mentally ill U.S. citizens

The Program also provides services to U.S. citizens that are determined to be mentally ill while abroad. Under 24 U.S.C. §321(d), a person is eligible for assistance under the Program if:

- 1) The person is certified as a national of the United States by the Secretary of State and
- 2) The person has:
 - a. A certificate stating that the person has been legally adjudicated insane in a named foreign country; or
 - b. A certificate of an appropriate authority stating at the time of the certification, the person was in need of care and treatment in a mental hospital in a named foreign country.

Services

All Program assistance is temporary. Also, the services provided must be necessary for the health and welfare of the participant. For example, they may include: cash payments, medical care, counseling, shelter, and transportation. Service providers evaluate whether a participant is eligible for other types of benefits like Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Medicaid, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), and Supplemental Security Disability Insurance (SSDI). If a repatriate qualifies for other types of benefits, obtains an income, or has access to other resources, then he or she is no longer eligible for services under the Repatriation Program.

Services provided under the Program last up to 90 days. A participant may request a time extension for the temporary assistance. ORR may grant an extension if the participant's circumstances warrant it. Other types of benefits like SSI or TANF have their own time limitations.

Within the categories of repatriates, there are groups that require specialized assistance, such as unaccompanied children.

Roles of Agencies

A number of agencies work together to provide assistance to Program participants.

Office of Refugee Resettlement

ORR administers the Repatriation Program. It oversees the program, coordinates with other agencies, reviews eligibility determinations, approves extensions for assistance and waivers/deferments for repayment, and develops and implements program policies and procedures. ORR is also the lead agency in the event of an emergency or group repatriation.

Department of State

DOS is responsible for assisting U.S. citizens and their dependents in the program directly while they are abroad. Some of DOS's responsibilities include:

- Determine eligibility for the Repatriation Program.
- Contacting family members of repatriates in the United States.
- Notifying and coordinating with the NGO that administers services in the United States to arrange travel and pre-planning for services.
- If required, providing certificate of mental incompetence.
- Providing custody information for unaccompanied children.

International Social Service- United States Branch (ISS-USA)

ISS-USA is a non-governmental organization (NGO) that receives funding from ORR to perform administrative tasks and provide case management to Program participants. ISS-USA is the main point of contact between all of the agencies (federal, state, and local) involved in the Program. ISS-USA's duties include:

- Receiving information about participants from DOS.
- Writing the referral for the participant to the state and local service provider.
- Developing a case plan for services in consultation with DOS, the service provider, the participant, and the participant's family.
- Arranging for travel and medical escort, if needed.
- Reimbursing local service providers for services provided.
- Assisting the participant with repayment by sending reminders and processing financial waivers.

Local Service Providers

Each state and the District of Columbia have a State Repatriation Coordinator (SRC). Together with local NGOs, SRCs provide services to Program participants, including:

- Meeting the participant at the airport or place of arrival in the state.
- Assessing a participant's needs and eligibility for benefits and determining the appropriate services.
- Coordinating with medical institutions that will provide medical or psychological services.
- Administering cash assistance.
- Providing food, clothing, and other goods as needed.
- Obtaining a participant's signature on the repayment obligation form.

Financial Obligation of Participants

Participants of the Repatriation Program must reimburse the federal government for the cost of the services provided. The Payment Support Center for ORR notifies the participant of the amount to be repaid and how to make payments. The participant may request an extension of time to make payments or a waiver of payment.

Privacy of Participants

Protecting the privacy of participants is a priority for the Repatriation Program. Participants are protected under federal and state privacy laws. Participants' personal and private information are disclosed to the extent necessary to carry out the functions of the program. ORR takes steps to ensure that information collected pursuant to the program is not shared or disclosed except as authorized under statute or regulation.

Legal Authority

Non-mentally ill repatriates

The statutory authority for the repatriation of U.S. citizens is located at [42 U.S.C. §1313](#). The regulations for repatriation of U.S. citizens are located at [45 C.F.R. §212](#).

Mentally ill repatriates

The statutory authority for repatriation of a mentally ill U.S. citizen is located at [24 U.S.C. §§ 321- 329](#). The regulations for repatriation of a mentally ill U.S. citizen are located at [45 C.F.R. §211](#).