



ADMINISTRATION FOR
CHILDREN & FAMILIES

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Repatriation Guide: Section 5 Group and Emergency Repatriations

Section 5 includes:

- Emergency Repatriation Centers
- Temporary Services
- Financial Obligation 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 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.

The Program provides assistance to individuals as services are needed and to groups in the event of an emergency. Large-scale repatriation activity is broken down into a group repatriation, which is the evacuation of 50 to 500 U.S. citizens and their dependents, and an emergency, or mass, repatriation, which is the evacuation of 500 or more U.S. citizens and their dependents. This document will use the term “emergency repatriation” to refer to both group and emergency repatriation efforts.

ORR is the lead federal agency during an emergency repatriation and coordinates the national response and state response to provide the services that are needed. During an emergency repatriation ORR may ask states to serve as ports of entry for returning repatriates and to activate their state emergency repatriation plan.

Emergency Repatriation Centers

ORR, in consultation with other federal agencies and states, will designate a port of entry (POE) in the United States for returning repatriates. Repatriates have the right to live in any state they choose, but in the case of an emergency repatriation, a specific POE will be selected. A POE may be a commercial international airport, a private facility, a military facility, or other federal facility. An Emergency Repatriation Center (ERC) will be established at the POE to provide emergency services.

Emergency Services

Once a repatriate arrives at an ERC, he or she will have access to emergency services for 24 hours. Some of these services include: emergency medical care, clothing, temporary shelter, and assistance in accessing banking or financial services. Additional services are available as needed.

If a repatriate lacks the financial resources to arrange for travel to the state of his or her choice or to otherwise care for themselves in the United States, the repatriate may be eligible for additional temporary services for up to 90 days under the Program.

Eligibility for Repatriation Program Services

An entity designated by ORR (a state or non-governmental organization) assesses repatriates for eligibility for the Program. Eligibility is assessed using a form and through an interview. The eligibility criteria are:

1. Citizen or dependent of U.S. Citizen: The Department of Homeland Security will verify U.S. citizenship. 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. ORR determines whether someone qualifies as a dependent.
2. Identification by DOS: DOS may provide written notification that an evacuation has been ordered or has occurred. A person that arrives on DOS chartered transportation will also meet this criterion.
3. Without available resources: Available resources are resources that are immediately available for use at the time temporary services are needed. A declaration by a repatriate that he or she is without available resources is sufficient to meet this requirement unless the interview reveals otherwise.

ORR makes the final eligibility determination. If a repatriate is eligible, then he or she will receive temporary services.

Temporary 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 benefits. ORR will grant an extension if the participant's circumstances warrant it. Other types of benefits like SSI or TANF have their own time limitations.

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. For all information that is collected pursuant to the program, ORR takes steps to ensure that information is not shared or disclosed except as authorized under statute or regulation.