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Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA)

3000 Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA) (01/01/1989, 88-21)

The Refugee Act of 1980 gives the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) jurisdiction over an individual who is admitted to the United States as a refugee. The Act will result in a standardized identity for all refugees without regard to nationality. However, for the next several years, there will continue to be certain individuals who qualify for refugee status and, therefore, refugee assistance. The following persons may be eligible for assistance under Refugee Cash Assistance:

- A. A person from Cambodia, Laos or Vietnam who is currently receiving assistance under the Indochinese Refugee Assistance Program (IRAP).
- B. A person from Cuba who is currently receiving Reach Up and/or Medicaid and who entered the United States on or after October 1, 1978.
- C. A person from Cambodia, Laos or Vietnam, provided that person's documentation (form I-94), if issued on or after June 1, 1980, clearly indicates that person has been paroled as a refugee or asylee [Section 212(d)(5) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA)].
- D. A person from Cuba who entered the United States on or after October 1, 1978. If the form I-94 was issued on or after April 21, 1980, it must clearly indicate the person has been paroled as a refugee or asylee.
- E. A person from any country other than those listed in subsections C and D above who has been paroled as a refugee or asylee. (form I-94 should indicate parole status.)

NOTE: While the exact wording on the form I-94 may differ in subsections C through E, it must clearly indicate that the person has been paroled as a refugee or asylee.

- F. A person admitted from any country as a conditional entrant under Section 203(a)(7) of the INA. However, a person with an INS status of applicant for asylum or a Cuban/Haitian entrant is not eligible.
- G. A person from any country admitted as a refugee under Section 207 of the INA.
- H. A person from any country who has been granted asylum under Section 208 of the INA.
- I. A person from any country who previously held one of the categories listed above whose status has been changed to permanent resident alien.

Documentation required: A form I-151 or I-551 (Resident Alien forms). Also, verification that previous status was one of those listed above (i.e., a photocopy of a previous form I-94).

Eligibility

3010 Eligibility (01/01/1992, 91-51)

- A. All refugees who apply for assistance and have minor children shall have their application screened for Reach Up eligibility on the basis of absence, UP or incapacity. If eligible they shall be granted Reach Up.
- B. Benefits to refugees with or without children who apply for assistance and do not meet the Reach Up requirements, but who meet the Reach Up income and resource requirements and the employment requirements in rule 3030 may be paid under the Refugee Cash Assistance program (RCA) in accordance with federal rules and policies. RCA, which is 100 percent federally funded, is not an entitlement program. Changes in eligibility for benefits are subject to only a ten day prior notice to the recipient. Qualification for RCA means:
1. Categorical relatedness is waived. In other words, assistance and services are provided on the basis of need without regard to family composition or the presence of children.
 2. Financial assistance will be based upon Reach Up need standards with income and resources taken into consideration and payments made according to the State's Reach Up payment levels. The State's standard for an assistance unit of one in Reach Up will be used for single individuals and the two-person standard for a couple.

A person receiving assistance under the Refugee Program is not entitled to the 30 and 1/3 earned income disregard.
 3. Financial resources which are in fact not available to the refugee, including resources remaining in his country of origin, shall not be considered in determining eligibility.
 4. The voluntary agency or the refugee's sponsor responsible for the refugee's initial resettlement must be contacted to determine if any kind of financial assistance is being provided to the refugee(s). Any financial assistance being provided by the voluntary agency or sponsor is countable as unearned income for Reach Up purposes. The income and resources of sponsors will not be considered in determining eligibility for refugees. (For non-refugee sponsored aliens see rule 2273)
 5. Each person receiving assistance under RCA must be reviewed in the final month of RCA eligibility.
- C. Once a refugee is no longer eligible for RCA according to federal rules and policies, he or she may receive Reach Up or General Assistance if determined eligible for either program. Refugees are not eligible for General Assistance during the period of potential RCA eligibility.

Relationship to SSI/AABD

3020 Relationship to SSI/AABD (12/01/2005, 05-02)

All refugee recipients who are 65 years of age or older or who are blind or disabled will be referred immediately to the Social Security District Office to apply for SSI/AABD benefits.

Such a refugee will be included in the Reach Up grant until SSI/AABD benefits become effective. SSA should be notified as to what amount of the Reach Up grant should be considered as income in the SSI/AABD grant, as outlined in Procedures (P-2220 I).

Employment Requirements

3030 Employment Requirements (01/01/1992, 91-51)

- A. Refugees who are categorically eligible for regular Reach Up financial assistance must meet Reach Up worker registration requirements.
- B. Refugees who are eligible for financial assistance under Refugee Cash Assistance must meet the following requirements:
 - 1. Every unemployed member of a refugee assistance group who applied for or receives refugee financial assistance must as a condition of eligibility register for employment with the Department of Labor/Vermont Job Service. This requirement, however, does not apply to the following:
 - a. A person who is already registered for employment through the 3SquaresVT program.
 - b. A person determined by a physician to be medically unable to work for up to 90 days, or incapacitated (to be determined by the Incapacity Examiner) or 65 years of age or older.
 - c. A person whose presence in the home is required because of illness or incapacity of another member of the household.
 - d. A mother or other relative of a child under the age of six who is personally caring for the child with only brief and infrequent absences.
 - e. A child who is under age 16, or a child of 16 or 17 years old who is a full-time student.
 - f. An individual who is enrolled full-time in a training program approved by the State Refugee Coordinator.
 - 2. A refugee must be certified by the State Refugee Coordinator as a participant in either an English language or job-training program as a condition of eligibility. A Refugee Checklist Form signed by the State Refugee Coordinator must be presented by the client at time of initial application. Inability to read, speak or understand the English language will not exempt a refugee from registering for employment.
 - 3. A refugee must not be a full-time student in an institution of higher education. Such are not considered appropriate training and are not eligible for assistance under the Refugee Cash Assistance.
 - 4. A refugee must not have refused an appropriate offer of employment nor have voluntarily terminated employment without good cause, within the last 30 days. (rule 2272.2 #7)

Sanctions

3031 Sanctions (01/01/1989, 88-21)

Refusal to cooperate with any of the above requirements in rule 3030 without good cause will cause the client to be de-registered and to be ineligible for assistance:

- For three payment months for the first occurrence.
- For six payment months for the second and subsequent occurrences.

Unaccompanied Minors

3040 Unaccompanied Minors (01/01/1989, 88-21)

The same range of child welfare benefits and services available in foster care cases to other children in a state applies also to unaccompanied refugee minors. Policy includes preparation and updating of a services plan for each child, implementation of the plan, payment of benefits, and periodic case review and reporting.

An unaccompanied refugee minor is defined as:

A person who has not yet attained his 18th birthday, or the age of majority in the state in which he is residing, and

Who has no immediate adult relatives in the United States, and

Who has been lawfully admitted to the United States as a refugee.

Before a voluntary resettlement agency places an unaccompanied child in a community, the voluntary agency shall consult with the appropriate state or local public child welfare authorities. Arrangements shall be made whereby the state establishes legal responsibility for the care and maintenance of the unaccompanied minor.

Assistance to an unaccompanied refugee minor is not determined by any time limits since his or her entry into the U. S. An unaccompanied refugee minor is eligible for assistance under Refugee Cash Assistance until the end of the month of that person's 18th birthday.

Fair Hearings

3050 Fair Hearings (01/01/1989, 88-21)

Refugees are entitled to the right of a fair hearing and appeal as accorded to applicants and recipients in all programs administered by the department. The provisions and procedures relevant to fair hearings and appeal shall apply.

Refugees may receive 3SquaresVT. The same eligibility criteria are applied as to any other applicant or recipient.