

DSS ADMINISTRATIVE LETTER ECONOMIC AND FAMILY SERVICES 1-2020
EFS_RA_AL-1-2020

Refugee Cash Assistance Certification Period Extension

TO: County Directors of Social Services

ATTENTION: Work First Managers and Supervisors

DATE: May 5, 2020

SUBJECT: Refugee Cash Assistance Certification Period Extension

EFFECTIVE: Upon Receipt

PRIORITY: For Information and Action

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

On March 10, 2020 Governor Roy Cooper issued Executive Order No. 116, Declaration of a State of Emergency to Coordinate Response and Protective Actions to Prevent the Spread of COVID-19. As a result of this Declaration, the Department of Health and Human Services will extend the certification periods for all Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA) cases with a participant Date of Entry between April 1, 2019 and January 31, 2020 and their eight-month period will be exhausted between April 1, 2019 and September 30, 2020.

II. ELIGIBILITY PERIOD

Pursuant to its authority under 45 C.F.R. § 400.300, the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) is extending the RCA eligibility period from eight months to up to eighteen months for clients who are about to terminate from the program or who have successfully exited the program and then, subsequently, either lost employment or sustained a reduction in hours that would requalify them for RCA. Specifically, the eligibility period will be extended for up to eighteen months for clients with a Date of Entry between April 1, 2019 and January 31, 2020, with the additional months not extending beyond September 30, 2020. For clients with Date of Entry on or after February 1, 2020, the eligibility period will remain at eight months.

III. POLICY PROCEDURES

The caseworker will key a Forced Eligibility – Cash application on the Income Support Case that contains the Refugee Cash Assistance PDC. The Refugee Cash Assistance program should be selected. Refer to “Forced Eligibility for Income Support Medical Assistance, Special Assistance & Cash Assistance” in NC FAST Help, for additional assistance.

To prepare for the extension, the following will occur:

1. The county will be notified by the Refugee Resettlement Agency of clients who may potentially be eligible for an extension of their RCA benefits. After receiving the notification, caseworker will react to reopen or extend RCA cases for all Refugee arrivals between April 1, 2019 and January 30, 2020. Counties will be able to conduct telephone interviews in-place of face to face interviews.

2. NC FAST will create a report titled "COVID-19: Extend Eligibility Period for Refugee Cash Assistance" that can be used to confirm the identity of the potential client. The report will be located under Economic Services Reports; RA Section in NC FAST Help. NC FAST will send a communication once the report is available.

Mapping for the report: Economic Services> COVID-19> Reports> Refugee Cash Assistance> COVID-19: Extend Eligibility Period for Refugee Cash Assistance.

Previous clients whose cases have closed, clients whose benefits are about to terminate or who successfully exited the program and then subsequently either lost employment or sustained a reduction in hours due to COVID-19, would requalify for RCA.

1. Client's statement of employment termination or reduction in hours are acceptable.
2. The extension periods will start the following month the client lost employment or experienced a reduction in hours due to COVID-19.
3. Certification periods will not be extended for cases that have Refugee arrivals who became eligible for RCA on or after February 1, 2020, the eligibility period will remain at eight months. These RCA cases will be processed as normal with an 8-month certification process. See examples below:

Scenario one, client A has refugee status; arrived on May 1, 2019. Client was screened and awarded RCA benefits. RCA eligibility period begin date May 1, 2019 through end date December 31, 2019. Client received RCA for 3 months, employed & successfully exited in August 2019. Client was laid off in March 2020 due to COVID-19 and has no income. Client goes into the DSS to re-apply for RCA benefits in April 2020. Client would be eligible for 6 additional months of RCA through September 30, 2020.

Scenario two, client B received granted asylum letter (refugee status) on September 1, 2019. Client visited the DSS on November 1st was screened and awarded RCA benefits. RCA eligibility period begin date November 1, 2019 through eligibility end date April 30, 2020 (total of 8 months from date of eligibility). Client is now eligible to receive RCA eligibility effective date May 1, 2020 through September 30, 2020.

Scenario three, client C with refugee status of Special Immigrant Visa Holder (SIV) date of entry February 1, 2020. Client was screened and awarded RCA benefits. RCA eligibility period begin date February 1, 2020 through end date September 30, 2020.

IV. IMPLEMENTATION INSTRUCTIONS

The Certification Extension applies only to cases with Refugee eligible clients who arrived into the United States between April 1, 2019 and January 31, 2020. The RCA certification periods can only be extended through September 30, 2020. Submit any questions regarding this information to RefugeeAssistance.Policy.Questions@dhhs.nc.gov.

Sincerely,



David Locklear, Deputy Director
Economic and Family Services

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