
STATE REFUGEE OFFICE MANUAL
REFUGEE SERVICE PROGRAMS

CHAPTER I – REFUGEE SERVICE PROGRAMS

CHANGE #1-2022

January 1, 2022

I. REFUGEE ASSISTANCE OVERVIEW

The United States' humanitarian response to the unique needs of refugees was formally addressed with the enactment of The Refugee Act of 1980 (Public Law 96-212) that became effective on April 1 of that year.

Refugees are individuals fleeing from persecution in their homelands who have been designated for resettlement elsewhere in the world. In order to make determination of refugee status, representatives of the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) conduct interviews overseas of individuals who have fled persecution. Once refugee status is established, a joint effort, conducted by the United States Department of State (DOS), the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and USCIS, bring approved individuals to the United States for resettlement.

A. Background

The Refugee Act established the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to coordinate the program at the national level. In addition, the legislation created a State Coordinator of Refugee Resettlement position in those states administering a refugee program. Federal regulations provide 100% federal financial participation for administrative and assistance costs associated with aiding refugees.

The federal refugee program, administered by the states, consists of **a number of programs including but not limited to the following**. Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA) and Refugee Medical Assistance (RMA) are two short-term public benefits programs available to refugees for the first eight months after their Date of **Eligibility or Entry** in the United States. Refugee Support Services (RSS) are longer-term, programs for which refugees are eligible. Refugee Support Services primarily include employment services such as job development, job readiness and placement, job follow-up, vocational skills training, and English Language Training (ELT). Additional supportive services include case management, transportation, interpretation/translation, and various social adjustment services, such as home and health management, and community orientation are also funded.

B. Statutory Authority

The Refugee Resettlement Program (RRP) is authorized under Title IV of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1980.

The Refugee Act designates the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as the administering agency. RRP regulations are issued by HHS in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Title 45, Part 400, which is supplemented by administrative and program instructions issued by the federal department.

C. Eligible Recipients

1. Refugees

People who are outside of the country of their nationality; or in the case of people without nationality, is outside any country in which they last habitually resided, and who is unable or unwilling to return to, and is unable or unwilling to avail themselves of the protection of that country because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion.”

Using this definition, representatives of the USCIS conduct interviews overseas of individuals who have fled persecution and desire to be designated as refugees. USCIS then makes a determination of the individual's refugee status. After an individual is determined to be a refugee, a joint effort, conducted by the DOS, the IOM, the USCIS, and National Volunteer Agencies (VOLAGS), brings certain individuals to the United States for resettlement.

2. Asylees

Asylees meet the definition of 'refugee' for eligibility purposes. However, Asylees are individuals who, on their own, travel to the United States, apply for and receive a grant of asylum. These individuals do not enter the United States as refugees. They may enter as students, tourists, business people, or without papers. Once they are in the United States, or at a land border or port of entry, they apply to the USCIS for asylum, a status that will acknowledge that they meet the definition of a refugee and allow them to remain in the United States. Once USCIS has granted asylum, asylees are eligible for state assistance and services.

NOTE: Applicants for asylum are not eligible.

3. Cuban and Haitian Entrants

Any individual granted parole status as a Cuban or Haitian Entrant (Status Pending), or granted any other special status subsequently established under the immigration laws for nationals of Cuba or Haiti, regardless of the current status of the individual at the time of application for Refugee Medical Assistance; and

Any other national of Cuba or Haiti

- a. Who: (i) was paroled into the United States and has not acquired any other status under the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA); (ii) is the subject of exclusion or deportation proceedings under the INA; or (iii) has an application for asylum pending with the USCIS; and
- b. With respect to whom a final, no appealable, and legally enforceable order of deportation or exclusion has not been entered.

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4. Certain Amerasians (from Vietnam)

This status refers to individuals born in Vietnam after January 1, 1962, and before January 1, 1976, if the individual was fathered by a U.S. citizen. Immigrant visas are issued to Amerasians under Public Law 100-202 (Act of 12/22/87), as well as to their spouses, children, parents or guardians, provided they accompany the Amerasian to the United States.

[Specifically referred to herein are certain Amerasians from Vietnam who are admitted to the U.S. as immigrants pursuant to Section 584 of the Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 1988.]

5. Victims of Human Trafficking

Any individual who has been subjected to “severe forms of trafficking in persons,” which include:

- a. involvement in activity in which a commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such act is under 18 years of age; or
- b. the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery.

6. Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) Holders from Iraq and Afghanistan

Afghan and Iraqi individuals who are granted Special Immigrant (SI) Status under Section 101(a)(27) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA). Individuals and family members granted this SI Status are eligible for entitlement programs, including Refugee Cash Assistance and Refugee Medical Assistance, and refugee social services the same as refugees admitted under Section 207 of the INA.

For Iraqi/Afghan immigrants who acquire SI Status while already in the U.S., the date of eligibility for RCA/RMA (their “entry” date) is the date they are granted SI Status. Until Iraqis/Afghans in parole or some other non-immigrant status become SI with documentation of this status, they are not eligible for RCA/RMA.

7. Lawful Permanent Residents (LPR) (i.e. green card holders)

Individuals who held one of the above statuses prior to adjusting to Lawful Permanent Resident. This applies to RAP-Support Service recipients, who would be in country past 8 months from the date of arrival.

8. Afghan Special Immigrant Parole (SQ/SI)

Certain individuals are granted a Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) or SQ/SI parole by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Afghan nationals granted an SIV or SQ/SI parole for their service to the U.S. government are eligible for ORR benefits.

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9. Afghan Humanitarian Parolees

Certain Afghan individuals have been or will be granted humanitarian parole by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security in response to their need for rapid evacuation and relocation under Operation Allies Refuge/Operation Allies Welcome. Afghan humanitarian parolees paroled into the U.S. between July 31, 2021 and September 30, 2022 are eligible to apply for mainstream benefits, resettlement assistance, and other benefits available to refugees until March 31, 2023 or the end of their parole term whichever is later. Spouses or children of these individuals paroled into the U.S after September 30, 2022, are also eligible to apply for these benefits.

II. USCIS DOCUMENTATION MOST OFTEN PRESENTED BY ALIENS ELIGIBLE FOR RCA, RMA and RAP- SUPPORT SERVICES

For a comprehensive list of USCIS documentation, and instructions on how to determine eligibility status. A child/ren who arrives with a parent(s) carries the same immigration status as the parent(s).

If an applicant has a document which is a(n):	Then the status is:
I-94 (Arrival/Departure Record): Coded with a reference to the following section: Section 207	Refugee, Eligible
I-94 (Arrival/Departure Record): Coded with a reference to the following section: Section 208	Granted Asylum, Eligible
I-94 (Arrival/Departure Record): Coded AM-1, AM-2, or AM-3	Amerasian, LPR, Eligible
I-94 (Arrival/Departure Record indicating at least 12 months): Coded with Section 212 (d)(5)	Parolee; Cuban or Haitian National, Eligible
U. S. Passport or USCIS document bearing the Endorsement "Processed for I-551, Temporary Evidence of Lawful Permanent Residence"	Permanent Resident Lawfully Admitted for Permanent Residence (LPR), Eligible
I-551 (Resident Alien Card): Coded AM-1, AM-2, AM-3,	Amerasian, LPR, Eligible
I-551 (Resident Alien Card): Coded CH-6	Cuban/Haitian, Eligible
I-551 (Resident Alien Card): Coded RE6, RE7, and RE8	Other Refugees, Eligible

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The following documents will confirm both status and date of entry for Iraqi and Afghan Special Immigrant:

Applicant	Documentation
Principal Applicant Afghan or Iraqi Special Immigrant	Afghan or Iraqi passport with an immigrant visa stamp noting that the individual has been classified under IV (Immigrant Visa) Category SI1 or SQ1 and DHS stamp or notation on passport or I-94 showing date of admission
Spouse of Principal Applicant Afghan or Iraqi Special Immigrant	Afghan or Iraqi passport with an immigrant visa stamp noting that the individual has been classified under IV (Immigrant Visa) Category SI2 or SQ2 and DHS stamp or notation on passport or I-94 showing date of admission
Principal Applicant Afghan or Iraqi Special Immigrant Principal Adjusting Status in the U.S.	Afghan or Iraqi passport with an immigrant visa stamp noting that the individual has been classified under IV (Immigrant Visa) Category SI3 or SQ3 and DHS stamp or notation on passport or I-94 showing date of admission
Spouse of Principal Applicant Afghan or Iraqi Special Immigrant Principal Applicant Adjusting Status in the U.S.	DHS Form I-551 ("green card") with an IV (immigrant visa) code for category SI7 or SQ7
Unmarried Child Under 21 Years of Age of Afghan or Iraqi Special Immigrant Principal Applicant Adjusting Status in the U.S.	DHS Form I-551 ("green card") with an IV ("immigrant visa") code for category SI8 or SQ8
Afghan or Iraqi Special Immigrant (Principal Applicant, Spouse of Principal Applicant, or Child of Principal Applicant)	I-94 noting SQ or SI Parole (per section 602(B)(1) AAPA/Sec 1059(a) NDAA 2006)

While the Class of Admission (COA) code SQ designates Iraqi Special Immigrants, some Afghans were issued Special Immigrant Visas or I-551s (green card) with COA SQ1, SQ2, SQ3, SQ6, SQ7, or SQ9. Country of Citizenship is determined by the passport or information on the I-551, not by the COA code. When the COA is SQ, verify whether the applicant is Afghan or Iraqi to verify eligibility for ORR benefits and services.

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D. REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT PROCESS

Refugees are resettled through one of nine National Voluntary Agencies (VOLAG). In North Carolina, eight affiliates of a national VOLAG are responsible for Refugee Reception and Placement Services (R&P). NC Refugee Resettlement agencies are as follows:

- Carolina Refugee Resettlement Agency
- Catholic Charities Diocese of Charlotte
- Church World Service, Durham and Greensboro
- Interfaith Refugee Ministry
- Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services
- NC African Services Coalition
- US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants
- World Relief Corporation, Durham and Triad

Each of the NC Refugee Resettlement Agencies listed above are authorized to assist refugees who are approved for admission by the State Department Bureau of Population and Migration.

III. DEFINITION/ACRONYMS OF REFUGEE ASSISTANCE TERMS

AABD – Aid to the Aged, Blind, and Disabled

AAPD – Aid to the Permanently and Totally Disabled

AB – Aid to the Blind

ABAWDS – An Able-Bodied Adult between ages 18-49 without child/ren in the Food and Nutrition Services ;) household. ABAWD eligibility for FNS is limited to any 3 months in a 36-month period (considered the 3-month time limit) unless the individual meets the ABAWD work requirements or qualifies for a second 3-month period of eligibility, as determined in the Food and Nutrition Services Manual, Section FNS 245-246.

Adjustment to Lawful Permanent Resident (Immigrant) Status – Procedure requiring certain non-citizens, such as refugees already in the United States, to apply for a change in alien status. Non-citizens admitted to the United States in a refugee or parolee category are issued an I-94 Arrival/Departure Record. After residing in the United States for one year, refugees and asylees must apply to have the status changed to that of lawful permanent resident.

Adult – For determining Refugee Cash Assistance and Refugee Medical Assistance (RMA) eligibility, an adult is defined as any individual age 18 or older.

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Afghan Placement and Assistance (APA) Program – A new emergency program created in response to the evacuation efforts in Afghanistan. It allows for the provision of initial relocation support services for Afghan parolees admitted to the U.S. during the period of August 20, 2021 through March 31, 2022.

Alien – Any person not a citizen or national of the United States.

Alien Registration Number/Alien Number (A-Number) – An A-Number, also known as an Alien Registration Number, is a unique eight or nine-digit number (example, A012345678) assigned to a noncitizen by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) at the time their official record is created. The alien registration number is also referred to as USCIS # on some immigration documents.

Amerasian (Vietnam) – Individuals born in Vietnam after January 1, 1962, and before January 1, 1976, if the individual was fathered by a U.S. citizen. Immigrant visas are issued to Amerasians under Public Law 100-202 (Act of 12/22/87), as well as to their spouses, children, parents or guardians if they accompany the Amerasian to the United States.

Asylees – Non-citizens in the United States or at a port of entry who are found to be unable or unwilling to return to their country of nationality, or to seek the protection of that country because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution. Persecution or the fear thereof must be based on the non-citizen's race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion. For persons with no nationality, the country of nationality is considered to be the country in which the non-citizen last habitually resided. Asylees are eligible to apply to adjust to lawful permanent resident status after residing one year in the United States.

Case Management Services – The determination of which service(s) to refer a refugee to, referral to such service(s), and tracking of the refugee's participation in such service(s).

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) – The CDC, of the United States Public Health Service (USPHS), is responsible for ensuring that immigrants entering the U.S. do not pose a threat to the public health. CDC monitors the overseas medical screening of immigrants, inspects the medical records of immigrants at U.S. ports of entry, and notifies state health departments of each arriving refugee as well as some categories of other immigrants.

Central American Minor (CAM) Program – An in-country refugee and parole program for certain qualified minors in El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras. The CAM program began accepting applications from parents in the U.S. for their children on December 1, 2014.

Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) – A federal program funded under Title XXI of the Social Security Act. In North Carolina, this program is known as the NC Health Choice for Children, or NCHC.

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Cuban and Haitian Entrant – Any individual granted parole status as a Cuban or Haitian Entrant (Status Pending), or granted any other special status subsequently established under the immigration laws for nationals of Cuba or Haiti. This also applies to any other national of Cuba or Haiti who:

- was paroled into the United States and has not acquired any other status under the INA;
- is the subject of exclusion or deportation proceedings under the INA;
- has an application for asylum pending with the USCIS; or
- with respect to whom a final, non-appealable, and legally enforceable order of deportation or exclusion has not been entered.

Date of Entry– date a non-citizen arrived in the US, usually notated on the USCIS document. For Refugee Program eligibility for asylees, substitute the date asylum was granted for the actual date of entry. (Referred to as “Date of Arrival” in North Carolina Families Accessing Services through Technology (NC FAST)).

Economic Self-Sufficiency – A total family income which is at a level that enables a family unit to support itself without receipt of a cash assistance grant.

Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) is the process by which recipients receive their Food and Nutrition Services benefits.

Eligibility Information System (EIS) – (EIS was used prior to NC FAST and several acronyms established in EIS are still commonly referred to in the Refugee Program) An automated system which provides support for Work First Cash Assistance (WFCA), Special Assistance (SA), Medical Assistance (MA), Medicaid for Foster Care and Adoptive Children, and Refugee Assistance Programs (RAP). It allows entry and retrieval of case and individual data required to produce assistance checks, Medicaid ID cards, and federal, state and county level management reports.

Employability Plan – A written, individualized plan for a Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA) recipient who is not exempt from work registration. It sets forth a program of employment services intended to result in the earliest possible employment of the refugee.

Employability Services – Services designed to enable an individual who is receiving for Refugee Cash Assistance / Match Grant to obtain employment and/or improve the employability or work skills of the individual. These services include, but are not limited to, world-of-work and job orientation, job clubs, job workshops, job development, referral to job opportunities, job search, job placement and follow-up, on-the-job training, vocational training, skills re-certification, and work-related transportation.

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Exemptions – Criteria for exemption from registration for employment services, participation in employability service programs, and acceptance of appropriate offers of employment that apply to Refugee Cash Assistance applicants. Exemptions include a refugee who is:

- under age 18, or is age 65 or older;
- a parent or other relative who is caring for a child under age 2;
- ill or incapacitated or is required in the home to care for another member of the household who is ill or incapacitated.

NOTE: A refugee's inability to communicate in English is not a reason for exemption.

Family Unit – For determining eligibility for Refugee Cash Assistance and Refugee Medical Assistance a family unit is:

- an adult without children age 18 or older; or
- married individuals without dependent minor children.

Family Self-Sufficiency Plan – A required written plan for Refugee Cash Assistance recipients that addresses the employment service needs of non-exempt members for the purpose of enabling the family to become self-supporting through the employment of one or more family members.

Family Violence Option – To help raise the awareness of families who participate in Work First Cash Assistance about the impact that violence can have on individuals and families, and to assure that all individuals seeking assistance are given the opportunity and services necessary to address the violence.

Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) – works with State agencies, nutrition educators, and neighborhood and faith-based organizations to ensure that those eligible for nutrition assistance can make informed decisions about applying for the program and can access benefits. Food and Nutrition Services also works with State partners and the retail community to improve program administration and ensure program integrity. Expedited service is an application processing method designed to provide benefits to certain Food and Nutrition Services units within seven calendar days from the date of application. Once participants are found eligible, they will be awarded an EBT card.

Green Card (officially Permanent Resident card) – A term often used to refer to a document granting lawful permanent residence status in the United States. Lawful permanent residents have the right to live and work indefinitely in the United States, as well as to petition for certain family members to attain permanent resident status. Lawful permanent residence is also the first step towards becoming a citizen of the U.S. (“naturalizing”). There are several different ways to become a lawful permanent resident of the U.S., including through a family member, through an employer, through the diversity lottery, or applying for it after being granted asylum or refugee status.

I-693 Report of Medical Examination and Vaccination Record – A form used by USCIS to document the medical aspects of the Adjustment of Status application.

I-94 Arrival Departure Record Card – A form used by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service that records each non-citizen’s arrival and departure from the U.S. This form identifies the time period for which the non-citizen is admitted and the non-citizen’s immigrant status.

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Illegal Aliens (or "**Undocumented Immigrants**") is defined as people who enter or lives in the United States without official authorization, either by entering without inspection by the DHS, overstaying or violating the terms of their visa.

Immigrant is a general term for a person who lives in a new country with plans to settle there permanently. This term includes legal immigrants, refugees, asylees and lawful permanent residents.

Immigration Act of 1990 – Public Law 101-649 (Act of November 29, 1990), which increased the limits on legal immigration to the United States, revised all grounds for exclusion and deportation, authorized temporary protected status to non-citizens of designated countries, revised and established new nonimmigrant admission categories, revised and extended the Visa Waiver Pilot Program, and revised naturalization authority and requirements.

Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) – The Refugee Act, along with other immigration laws, treaties, and conventions of the United States, relates to the immigration, temporary admission, naturalization, and deportation of non-citizens.

Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) – See definition for U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services.

Immigration Status – refers to the condition under which a person is present in the United States. All refugees are legal immigrants.

International Organization for Migration (IOM) – IOM works to help ensure the orderly and humane management of migration, to promote international cooperation on migration issues.

IOM Bag – A large (white) bag issued to refugees at the time of travel to carry medical records (including the results of the overseas medical exam, immunizations records, and overseas chest X-rays) and other documents.

Labor Trafficking – The recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, forced labor, debt bondage, or slavery. The victim is an unwilling participant due to force, fraud, or coercion.

Lawful Permanent Resident (LPR) – An individual admitted to the United States as a lawful permanent resident. Lawful permanent residents are also commonly referred to as immigrants. Lawful permanent residents are legally accorded the privilege of residing permanently in the United States. They may be issued immigrant visas overseas by the Department of State or adjusted to permanent resident status by USCIS. See "Adjustment to Lawful Permanent Resident Status."

Local Resettlement Agency/Local Affiliates – An agency that contracts with the U.S. Department of State via National Voluntary Agency to provide R&P services to refugees who reside in the state in which they operate. Services include housing, essential furnishings, food, clothing and other basic necessities as well as case management and cultural orientation. See Appendix A for a list of North Carolina Local Resettlement Agencies.

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Matching Grant (MG) – A federal program designed to help refugees attain economic self-sufficiency within four months (120 days) after date of entry in the United States, without accessing public cash assistance. Participating NC refugee resettlement agencies agree to matching the Office of Refugee Resettlement grant with cash and in-kind contributions for refugees who qualify. Beginning upon enrollment and continuing at least until the first paycheck is received, agencies must provide a minimum of \$200 cash allowance per month or \$50 per week, or the maximum amount that will not affect Medicaid eligibility, to all adult refugees, and \$10 per week to each minor in the case.

Medicaid – A federally-funded entitlement program that provides medical assistance and benefits to individuals who meet eligibility criteria as outlined in the Family and Children’s Medicaid Manual, or in the Aged, Blind, and Disabled (Adult) Medicaid Manual.

Mutual Responsibility Agreement (MRA) – Core Requirements – An agreement that outlines and describes the Work First Cash Assistance family’s specific responsibilities and ways in which the worker will assist the family to achieve them. It includes Core Requirements and Plan of Action Requirements and is prepared jointly and signed by both the worker and applicant.

MRF – EIS code for entering Refugee Medical Assistance activity. In this document, RMA references will often be displayed as “RMA/MRF” for cross-referencing purposes.

North Carolina Families Accessing Services through Technology (NC FAST) – is a system designed to improve the way the NC Department of Health and Human Services and county departments of social services do business.

NC Works Career Center (formerly First Stop Employment Assistance) – A program established to assist applicants and participants of both Work First Cash Assistance and Refugee Cash Assistance become employed. Certain NC refugee resettlement agencies are also designated First Stop sites where refugees can register for work.

North Carolina Health Choice for Children (NCHC) – North Carolina’s response to SCHIP, the State Children’s Health Insurance Program, created by Title XXI of the Social Security Act. This program provides health coverage for uninsured low-income children from birth through age 18 who meet eligibility criteria, as determined in the Family and Children’s Medicaid Manual, Section MA-3255.

Numerical Limit Exempt – Those non-citizens with lawful permanent residence who are exempt from the provisions of the flexible numerical limit of 675,000 set by the Immigration Act of 1990. Exempt categories include immediate relatives of U.S. citizens, refugees, asylees (limited to 10,000 per year by Section 209(b) of the Immigration and Nationality Act), Amerasians, individuals adjusted under the legalization provisions of the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, and certain parolees from the former Soviet Union and Indochina.

OAA – Old Age Assistance

OASDI – Old Age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance

Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) is the federal agency responsible for the national refugee program. ORR provides funds to states and counties in the form of grants for services provided.

Overseas Medical Exam – The physical and mental examination that immigrants and refugees coming to the U.S. complete as part of the visa application process. The purpose of the overseas medical examination is to identify the presence or absence of certain disorders that could result in exclusion from the U.S. under provisions of the Immigration Act of 1990.

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Parolee – Applicants found by DHS to be ineligible for refugee status in the United States will be considered on a case-by-case basis for parole (**Parolee status**). A non-citizen, appearing to be inadmissible to the inspecting officer, may be allowed into the United States for urgent humanitarian reasons, such as a medical emergency, or when that non-citizen's entry is determined to be for significant public benefit, such as, non-citizens who enter to take part in legal proceedings, as well as for some Cuban and Haitian Entrants and **Afghans**. Parole does not constitute formal admission to the United States and confers temporary status only. It requires parolees to leave when the conditions supporting their parole cease to exist.

An individual considered for parole may be eligible for parole if DHS finds that the individual is at risk of harm, clears all background vetting, and there is no serious derogatory information.

Qualified Alien – This term was created under the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA) to define those non-citizens who are eligible to receive certain Federal public benefits such as Medicaid. Qualified aliens are potentially eligible for all Medicaid programs just like U.S. Citizens. Generally, there are two main categories of qualified aliens: (1) Lawful Permanent Resident admitted for permanent residence under the INA, and (2) Aliens Admitted Under a Specific Political Status. Eligibility is based on the date admitted and USCIS documentation of alien status. A child(ren) who arrives with a parent(s) carries the same alien status as the parent(s).

RAP – Refugee Assistance Program

Reception and Placement (R&P) – The initial resettlement process and period (generally 30 days) during which a VOLAG or other sponsor under an agreement with the United States Department of State is responsible for assisting the refugee.

Refugee – People who are outside of their country of nationality who are unable or unwilling to return to that country because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution. Persecution or the fear thereof must be based on the non-citizen's race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion. People with no nationality must generally be outside their country of last habitual residence to qualify as a refugee. Refugees are subject to ceilings by geographic area set annually by the President in consultation with Congress. Refugees must apply to adjust to lawful permanent resident status after residing one year in the United States. Refugees are able to apply for the same benefits and service programs that are available to U.S. Citizens.

Refugee Act of 1980 (Public Law 96-212) – The Act that created a domestic refugee resettlement program designed to provide assistance and services to refugees resettling in the United States.

Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA) – Cash assistance provided to refugees who are ineligible for TANF funds via the Work First Cash Assistance Program or other cash assistance programs. Refugee Cash Assistance is limited to eight months beginning with the first month of date of entry in the USA.

NOTE: Any refugee seeking this type of financial assistance must consist of households with, a single adult (age 18 and over), or a married couple with NO minor dependent children (age 17 or under) to be evaluated for Refugee Cash Assistance. A refugee individual or married couple is NOT eligible for Work First Cash Assistance.

Refugee Medical Assistance (RMA) – Medical assistance provided to refugees who are ineligible for any of the mainstream Medicaid programs {Family and Children's Medicaid (MAF) i.e. Medicaid Pregnant Women (MPW), Aged, Blind, and Disabled (Adult) Medicaid, NC Health Choice for Children (NCHC) and Children's Health Insurance Program (NC CHIP)}. Refugee Medical Assistance is limited to eight months beginning with the first month of date of entry in the USA.

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Refugee Resettlement – Permanent relocation of refugees to the United States, allowing them to establish residence and become productive members of society. Refugee resettlement is accomplished with the direct assistance of private voluntary agencies working with the Department of State under the Reception and Placement Program. Refugee Support Services are available through North Carolina refugee service providers under contract with the NC State Refugee Office via the US Department of Health and Human Services - Office of Refugee Resettlement.

Refugee Service Programs – North Carolina’s State Refugee Office administers a wide range of programs that are part of the implementation of the Refugee Resettlement Program funded under Title IV of the Immigration and Nationality Act, a federal program of assistance and services to refugees resettling in the United States. The North Carolina Refugee Service Programs provides Refugee Cash Assistance and/or Refugee Medical Assistance for up to eight (8) months after a refugee’s date of eligibility and/or entry in the United States. Federal funding also provides for social services, health promotion, integration support, vocational and self-sufficiency, youth and education services, and covers state and county administrative costs.

Refugee Support Services (RSS) (formerly known as Refugee Assistance Program – Social Services (RAP-SS)) – Program that supports employability services and other services that address barriers to employment, such as social adjustment, interpretation and translation, day care for children, and citizenship and naturalization.

Refugee School Impact (RSI) – The Refugee School Impact (RSI) program focuses on new arrivals and those who have been in the U.S. five years or less and continue to face integration and academic challenges. The central goal of the Refugee School Impact program is to strengthen academic performance and to aid the social adjustment of newly arriving refugee youth.

Refugee Youth Mentoring (YM) – The Youth Mentoring (YM) program funds grantees to match eligible youth with mentors who will support their successful integration and help them thrive. The YM program addresses the needs of refugee youth and young adults and promote their positive civic and social engagement. The YM program aims to provide the social, educational, and vocational supports needed to ensure all refugee youth and young adults are well-positioned on a path towards self-sufficiency and integration.

Refugee Health Promotion (RHP) – The Refugee Health Promotion (RHP) grant program supports refugee health literacy and access to health and emotional wellness services. The RHP program addresses low health literacy by educating newcomers on health issues via small groups, individual counseling, and classroom instruction. Specialized case management and emotional wellness services will address overcoming newcomer’s struggles with health barriers and mental health issues.

Refugee Mental Health Initiative (ReMHI) –The ReMHI program provides support to address the mental health needs of refugee populations. The ReMHI program builds capacity within communities to address the mental health needs of refugee populations, including help overcoming stigmas associated with mental health care and creating opportunities for social engagement to reduce isolation. The program utilizes an approach which is client-centered, trauma-informed, strengths - based, and culturally and linguistically appropriate. The main activities undertaken through the ReMHI are focused on increasing mental health literacy, coordinating mental health care, and organizing wellness groups

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Refugee Medical Screening (RMS) – Refugees are required to be medically screened overseas to be cleared for admission into the United States. Upon arrival, refugees should also complete a domestic medical screening. The Refugee Medical Screening (RMS) program provides guidance, technical assistance, and funding for state refugee programs to implement and manage domestic screening.

Two sets of guidance lay the foundation for refugee medical screening:

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued a series of guidelines to assist clinicians, health professionals, and public health departments in conducting medical screenings. These guidelines are referred to as **Guidelines for the U.S. Domestic Medical Examination for Newly Arriving Refugees** [Visit disclaimer page.](#)
- CDC’s guidelines and establishes a framework for reasonable medical screening reimbursement costs. Additional documents detail the clinical components of the RMS: **ORR’s Domestic Medical Screening Guidelines Checklist (DOCX)** and **List of Relevant Current Procedural Terminology (CPT) Codes by Screening Activity (XLSX)**.

Registrant – An individual who has registered for employment services as a condition for receiving Refugee Cash Assistance.

Resettlement Agency – See Local Resettlement Agency.

Resident – A person who lives in the state of North Carolina, voluntarily, with the intent to remain in the state.

Responsible Person – For these purposes, a responsible person includes, but is not limited to, a representative from a NC refugee resettlement agency or National Voluntary Agency, a sponsor, relative, friend, agency staff member, or other personnel acting on behalf of the refugee.

RRF – EIS code for entering Refugee Cash Assistance activity. In this document, Refugee Cash Assistance references will often be displayed as “RCA/RRF” for cross-referencing purposes.

Secondary Migrants – Refugee who initially settles in one state and subsequently move to another, outside the jurisdiction of the agency that was responsible for their initial resettlement.

Services to Older Refugees (SOR) – Refugee Assistance Program-Services to Older Refugees (SOR) was established via federal funding from the U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) to provide refugees age 60 and above access to mainstream aging services in their community by expanding the current working relationships with the local agencies on aging.

Sex trafficking – The recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for the purpose of a commercial sex act, in which a commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person is forced to perform such an act is under the age of 18 years.

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Special Immigrant Visa Holders from Iraq and Afghanistan (SIV) – Under Section 1059 of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), up to 50 Iraqi and Afghan translators working for the U.S. military have been eligible for special immigrant visas each fiscal year. Public Law 110-39, signed into law on June 15, 2007, amended Section 1059 by expanding the coverage to certain translators working under civilian authority and by increasing the total number of principal beneficiaries from 50 to 500 for fiscal years 2007 and 2008 only. Special Immigrants are admitted as lawful permanent residents (LPRs). Special Immigrants are eligible for Refugee Cash, Medical and Service benefits as well as other public benefits during their first 8 months after arrival. After the 8-month term has expired their access to all other services excluding Refugee Cash Assistance and Refugee Medical Assistance will continue until they meet the 5-year bar or otherwise meet the citizenship eligibility criteria.

Sponsor – An individual, church, or other group or organization that has agreed to help in the reception and placement of refugees in the USA. Refugees do not have legally binding sponsors, as no Affidavit of Support is required for the admission of refugees.

State Refugee Coordinator – An individual who is designated and authorized by the Governor or the appropriate legislative authority of the State to be responsible for coordination of public and private resources in refugee resettlement and administration of the refugee service provision in that state.

State Refugee Office (SRO) – The office that oversees statewide refugee service provision, including RSS, Refugee Cash Assistance and Refugee Medical Assistance among others. The NC SRO is operated within the Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Social Services, Economic and Family Services Section.

Substance Abuse/Mental Health Initiative – To assist families confronted with the barriers of substance abuse and mental health issues The Initiative offers screenings and follow-up for both. Screening for substance abuse is required of all participants in the WFCAs, and participation in the mental health screening is voluntary.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

Federal SNAP – is a federal program formerly known as the Food Stamps Program that offers nutrition assistance to eligible low-income individuals and families and provides economic benefits to communities.

NC SNAP – Simplified Nutrition Assistance Program – North Carolina's Simplified Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) is designed to deliver food assistance to elderly individuals receiving SSI. SNAP cases are certified for 36 months. SNAP is a simplified version of regular Food and Nutrition Services.

NOTE: The household requirement states, all individuals who eat together must be included in the same Food and Nutrition Services unit. Married individuals living in the same home cannot be considered a separate household. Reference Food and Nutrition Services Manual, Section FNS-210.

Supplemental Security Income (SSI) – A federal assistance program administered by the Social Security Administration for aged, blind, and disabled persons. SSI recipients automatically receive Medicaid.

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Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (SAVE Verification) – A Citizenship and Immigration Services (CIS) system designed to aid eligibility workers in public agencies in determining an applicant’s immigration status in order to establish the person’s entitlement to receive certain federal public benefits.

NOTE: Do not verify a refugee’s status via the SAVE system for Refugee Cash Assistance or Refugee Medical Assistance benefits. If a caseworker is unable to confirm status from documentation presented, then refer to fact sheets found in Appendices E-J.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families – (TANF) A revamping of the federal program formerly known as AFDC (Aid to Families with Dependent Children) under Title IV-A of the Social Security Act. It is known as Work First Cash Assistance or simply “Work First” in North Carolina.

Trafficking – Involvement in activity in which a commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such act is under 18 years of age; or the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery.

United States Citizen – Individuals are United States citizens if they were born in the United States or were naturalized as citizens. For purposes of qualifying as a United States citizen, the United States is defined as including the fifty states, District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, Virgin Islands, and nationals from American Samoa and Swains Island.

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) – Created in 2003, as a new bureau under the US Department of Homeland Security. It is responsible for the administration of immigration and citizenship services. The Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) formerly provided these services. It is responsible the implementation of federal immigration and naturalization laws, including immigration, exclusion, deportation, expulsion, or removal of immigrants.

Victim of Torture – Persons who have experienced torture abroad and who are residing in the United States to restore their dignity and health and rebuild their lives as they integrate into their communities.

Victim of Human Trafficking – Any individual who has been subjected to “severe forms of trafficking in persons” including:

- a. involvement in activity in which a commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such act is under 18 years of age; or
- b. the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery.

Voluntary Agency – This term refers to any of the eight U.S. private agencies that have cooperative agreements with the State Department to provide reception and placement services for refugees arriving in the United States. These agencies use funding from the State Department’s Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) along with self-generated resources to provide refugees with a range of services including sponsorship, initial housing, food, clothing, orientation and counseling. National Voluntary Agencies (VOLAGS) contract with local affiliates in various locations across the country for reception and placement services. The local agency, which operates under the auspices of the national, is called a “local affiliate” or “local resettlement agency.” See Appendix A for a list of local affiliates.

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Work First Cash Assistance (WFCA) – The component of NC's Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program that provides cash and medical assistance and is designed to promote self-sufficiency. It is built upon strategies that include promoting work, requiring personal responsibility, helping families get and keep jobs, locating absent parents, and reducing out-of-wedlock births. Implemented in 1995, the program requires active caretakers to participate thirty (30) hours/week in work or work-related activities.

NOTE: All refugee families (households with MINOR children age 17 and below) seeking financial assistance must be evaluated for Work First Cash Assistance eligibility. A refugee family is NOT eligible for Refugee Cash Assistance.

IV. NORTH CAROLINA REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT AGENCIES

A. North Carolina Refugee Resettlement Agencies (RRA)

A Local NC Refugee Resettlement Agency, or "local affiliate," operates under the auspices of a national Voluntary Agency (VOLAG) and under contract with the U.S. Department of State to provide Reception and Placement services at the local level. The State Refugee Office and local departments of social services work in partnership with these agencies to provide the necessary continuum of services for refugees. The local NC refugee resettlement agency may refer refugees to apply for public assistance benefits - most commonly, food stamps, medical, and cash assistance. When sending a refugee to apply for assistance, the local affiliate will send a DSS-6247, Notification of Refugee Arrival and Intent to Apply for Benefits. See Appendix A for a list of North Carolina Local Refugee Resettlement Agencies.

1. **Resettlement and Placement (R&P) Services** – For the first thirty to ninety days in the country, reception and placement services are usually provided by local resettlement agencies to refugees who arrive under Section 207. These services include assistance with housing, essential furnishings, food, clothing, and other basic necessities.
2. **Matching Grant (MG) Program** – Some local resettlement agencies participate in the federal Matching Grant Program. This program provides financial assistance to employable refugees who enroll for up to **4 – 8 months (up to 240 days)** from the date of entry. Agency participation is optional and contingent upon the availability of funds; therefore, not all of North Carolina's local refugee resettlement agencies participate and not all clients of a participating agency receive Matching Grant. If a Matching Grant Agency sends a refugee to apply for public benefits, they will also send a DSS-6247, Notification of Refugee Arrival and Intent to Apply for Benefits, noting whether or not the refugee receives Matching Grant. Refugees, currently receiving Matching Grant are ineligible for cash assistance through Work First Cash Assistance or Refugee Cash Assistance for the duration of the Matching Grant.

NOTE: Not all refugees are associated with a local RRA. Also, MG does not affect eligibility for refugee medical benefits.

B. North Carolina Refugee Service Providers (RSP)

NC refugee service providers contract directly with the SRO to provide a wide variety of ongoing refugee-specific services such as delivery of or coordination of English Language Training (ELT), translation and interpretation, case management, employment services, outreach, and Emergency Services. These services can last up to 5 years. A person is no longer eligible for services once they become a US citizen (are naturalized).

1. **Local Affiliates** – Some local affiliates also contract with the SRO to provide ongoing services to refugees after the initial R&P.
2. **Non-Affiliates** – Agencies who are not involved in the initial R&P, but who contract with the SRO to provide ongoing services to refugees.

A listing of all agencies, local affiliates as well as non-affiliates that provide refugee-specific services in North Carolina, can be found in Appendix B, NC Refugee Service Providers. This list contains the location, contact information, the primary services provided, and counties served by each agency. A refugee may receive services from more than one service provider.

All NC refugee service providers funded under contract with the SRO are available to assist, within their realm of expertise, other agencies that offer assistance to refugees in North Carolina.

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