



ADMINISTRATION FOR  
**CHILDREN & FAMILIES**

Office of Refugee Resettlement | 330 C Street, S.W., Washington, DC 20201  
[www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr)

## Expansion of the Refugee Cash Assistance and Refugee Medical Assistance Eligibility Period

Dear Colleague Letter 22-12

March 28, 2022

Dear Colleague:

This Dear Colleague Letter (DCL) announces the expansion of the eligibility period for Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA) and Refugee Medical Assistance (RMA) from eight months to 12 months for ORR-eligible populations whose date of eligibility for ORR benefits is on or after October 1, 2021. For historical context, since FY 1992, mainly due to insufficient appropriations, ORR had reduced the RCA and RMA eligibility period to eight months.

### Authorization

Pursuant to 45 C.F.R. § 400.211, the ORR Director is authorized to determine the eligibility period for RCA and RMA by publishing a final notice in the Federal Register. A Federal Register Notice announcing the increase in the RCA and RMA eligibility period from eight months to 12 was published on March 28, 2022.

### Rationale for Increase

For thirty years, ORR has not increased the RCA or RMA eligibility period. The expansion of the eligibility period will positively impact refugees who are not eligible for TANF or Medicaid. While most RCA clients will gain employment as soon as possible, given the low rate of cash assistance and the high costs of housing and living, increasing the RCA and RMA eligibility period will enable certain ORR-eligible populations to have additional time in which to address any medical and mental health issues that impede their ability to become self-sufficient. Additionally, an expanded eligibility period will allow ORR grantees to provide ORR-eligible populations who are unable to find immediate employment, with additional time to acquire English language proficiency, receive employment training, and secure employment. Extending the RCA and RMA eligibility period will lead to more effective resettlement, by providing refugee and other ORR-eligible populations with additional time to become self-sufficient.

### Eligibility

ORR-eligible populations<sup>1</sup> whose date of eligibility for ORR benefits is on or after October 1, 2021 are eligible to receive up to 12 months of RCA and RMA.

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<sup>1</sup> For a description of ORR-eligible populations see ORR Policy Letter 16-01: *Documentation Requirements for the Refugee Resettlement Program* its attached [Documentation Guide](#), the [ORR PL 16-01 FAQ](#), and [ORR PL 22-02, Additional ORR-Eligible Statuses and Categories and Acceptable Documentation Requirements for Afghan Nationals](#), as well as 45 CFR § 400.43, and 400.208.

If you have questions about the expanded eligibility period for RCA and RMA, please contact your ORR Regional Representative/Regional Analyst or the Division of Refugee Assistance at [draprograms@acf.hhs.gov](mailto:draprograms@acf.hhs.gov).

Sincerely,

Cindy Huang  
Director  
Office of Refugee Resettlement