ADMINISTRATION FOR
CHILDREN & FAMILIES
Office of Refugee Resettlement | 330 C Street, S.W., Washington, DC 20201
www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr

COVID-19 Extended Assistance for ORR Populations

Policy Letter 20-03

Date: April 22, 2020

Across the country, communities are starting to feel the impact of COVID-19 and the response by federal, state and local governments to limit its spread. As schools, nonprofit agencies, businesses, and other locations in which people congregate may temporarily shut down and transportation services may be reduced or eliminated, Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) eligible populations are especially vulnerable to job disruption, job loss or other related challenges.

In response to the spread of COVID-19 and its impact on Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) eligible populations, ORR is providing states[1] and replacement designees with the ability to request waivers pursuant to 45 C.F.R. § 400.300, to enhance assistance to ORR eligible populations.

I. Refugee Cash Assistance Eligibility Period

Pursuant to its authority under 45 C.F.R. § 400.300, ORR is willing to extend 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, upon request, ORR will waive 45 C.F.R. § 400.211, the normal process for shifting the eligibility period, and will extend the eligibility period to up to eighteen months for clients who became eligible for RCA after April 1, 2019, with the additional months not extending beyond September 30, 2020. For clients who became eligible for RCA on or after February 1, 2020, the eligibility period will remain at eight months. ORR will continue to assess the longer term impact and need for an additional extension of the eligibility period.

II. Refugee Medical Assistance Eligibility Period

To aid clients affected by COVID-19, pursuant to its authority under 45 C.F.R. § 400.300, upon request, ORR is willing to waive 45 C.F.R. § 400.211, and extend the Refugee Medical Assistance (RMA) eligibility period from eight months to up to eighteen months for clients who became eligible for RMA after April 1, 2019, with the additional months not extending beyond September 30, 2020. For clients who became eligible for RMA after February 1, 2020, the eligibility period will remain at eight months. ORR will continue to assess the longer term impact and need for an additional extension of the eligibility period.

[1] "States" throughout this policy letter refers to states and replacement designees.

III. Requesting a Waiver

A state can request the waivers listed herein by sending one email entitled "COVID-19 waiver requests" to the following contacts:

For the RCA eligibility period extension: Regional Representative/Analyst and Carl Rubenstein, Director of the Division of Refugee Assistance at Carl.Rubenstein@acf.hhs.gov.

For the RMA eligibility period extension: Curi Kim, Director of the Division of Refugee Health at Curi.Kim@acf.hhs.gov.

All waiver requests consistent with the allowances herein will be automatically granted and will remain in effect through September 30, 2020, unless otherwise specified.

If you have questions about the information contained in this Policy Letter, please contact ORR's Refugee Policy Unit at refugeepolicy@acf.hhs.gov.

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