



Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance

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Informational Letter

Section 1

Transmittal:	25-INF-04
To:	Social Services District Commissioners
Issuing Division/Office:	Housing and Refugee Services (HRS), Bureau of Refugee Services (BRS)
Date:	April 23, 2025
Subject:	Reduction of the Refugee Cash Assistance and Refugee Medical Assistance Eligibility Period
Suggested Distribution:	TA Directors, HEAP Coordinators, SNAP Directors, Employment Coordinators, Fair Hearing Officers, Staff Development Coordinators, WMS Coordinators
Contact Person(s):	Bureau of Refugee Services, BRStbenefits@otda.ny.gov
Attachments:	Attachment 1 - Dear Colleague Letter 25-13: Reduction of the Refugee Cash Assistance and Refugee Medical Assistance Eligibility Period

Filing References

Previous ADMs/INFs	Releases Cancelled	Dept. Regs.	Soc. Serv. Law & Other Legal Ref.	Manual Ref.	Misc. Ref.
96-ADM-07 97-ADM-20 97-ADM-21 97-ADM-23 03-ADM-01 04-ADM-04 05-ADM-01 16-ADM-02 07-INF-15 22-ADM-03 22-ADM-07		Part 349, 350, 351, 352, 355, 356, 357, 358, 359, 369, 370, 372, 373, 381, Subpart 360-4, 373- 2.1-2.6, 386, 415, Subpart 373- 1.1 -1.8, 373-2	45 CFR Part 400; 8 USC 1522; Welfare Reform Act of 1997, SSL 20; 34; 65; 117; 131; 131- a; 157; 158; 349; 350	83 MB-20	Fiscal Reference Manual, Volume 2, Chapter 3

Section 2

I. Purpose

The purpose of this INF is to inform social service districts (districts) that on March 21, 2025, the federal Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) published a [Federal Register Notice](#) that announced the reduction of the eligibility period for Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA) and Refugee Medical Assistance (RMA) from 12 months to four months of assistance for ORR-eligible participants¹ whose date of eligibility for ORR benefits is on or after May 5, 2025. In addition, ORR published [Dear Colleague Letter 25-13, Reduction of the Refugee Cash Assistance and Refugee Medical Assistance Eligibility Period](#) on March 28, 2025 with additional guidelines related to the change.

II. Background

ORR established the RCA and RMA programs to assure the availability of short-term cash and medical assistance to new refugee arrivals. RCA and RMA are federally funded, State supervised programs locally administered by the districts.

RCA provides cash assistance under Section 412(e) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) to eligible participants who are ineligible for Family Assistance (FA) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI).

RMA provides medical assistance under Section 412(e) of the INA to eligible participants who are ineligible for the Medicaid program.

In 2022, ORR expanded the RCA and RMA eligibility period from eight to 12 months. However, ORR stated in the March 21, 2025, Federal Register Notice that it is unable to sustain this expansion based on current and projected congressional appropriations and the number of refugees eligible for RCA and RMA. Accordingly, the time-eligibility period for RCA and RMA was changed to four months.

III. Program Implications

Per [22-ADM-07](#), districts shall determine RCA and RMA eligibility for ORR-eligible populations. ORR-eligible populations are eligible to receive up to four months of RCA and RMA if their eligibility date is on, or after, May 5, 2025.

ORR-eligible populations with eligibility dates prior to May 5, 2025, will remain eligible for the 12-month eligibility period.

IV. System Implications

WMS currently permits 12 months of RCA/RMA and will not accept an entry of 4 months prior to a systems change. If needed, districts should process a case using the 12 month entry and corrections will be made following systems edits. Districts should be aware that a federal pause on refugee entries is currently in place.

Details regarding systems implications will be issued at a later time.

Issued By:

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Title: Deputy Commissioner

Division/Office: Housing and Refugee Services

¹ For a description of ORR-eligible populations and their respective eligibility dates, see [22-ADM-07 Refugee Cash and Medical Assistance Programs \(RCA and RMA\)](#) and [LDSS-4579, NON-CITIZEN ELIGIBILITY DESK AID](#)