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TO: Subscribers

SUGGESTED DISTRIBUTION: Local District Commissioners, TA Directors, SNAP Directors,
HEAP Coordinators and Employment Coordinators

FROM: Phyllis D. Morris, Deputy Commissioner
Center for Employment and Economic Supports

SUBJECT: Refugee Form I-94 Arrival/Departure Record Automation

EFFECTIVE DATE: Immediately

CONTACT PERSON: Temporary Assistance Bureau 1-800-343-8859, ext. 4-9344
SNAP Bureau 1-800-343-8859, ext. 3-1469

Background

Form I-94 Arrival/Departure Record is the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) document issued to foreign nationals legally admitted to the United States. Form I-94 indicates the immigration category or the section of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) the individual is granted admission or parole. Prior to 2013 Form I-94 was in paper or hard card form.

In May of 2013, Customs and Border Protection (CBP) began automating Form I-94 at air and sea Ports of Entry (POE). The electronic I-94 was created by a scan of the foreign national's passport. CBP made the electronic I-94 available at its website: www.cbp.gov/I94. CBP also stamped the foreign national's passport with an admission stamp annotated with the date of admission, class of admission and the date a foreign national is admitted until date. Refugees, certain asylees and parolees were excluded from this initial automation of Form I-94 and continued to receive the paper form. This policy changed as of September 7, 2015.

Refugee Form I-94 Automation

On September 7, 2015 CBP began to automate the issuance of I-94 records for refugees at POEs. This is expected to streamline the inspection process for refugees at POEs and make I-94 process for refugees consistent with that of nearly all other foreign travelers entering the United States.

A transportation boarding letter is provided to the Principal Applicant (PA) of each refugee case by the Resettlement Support Center (RSC) overseas. The boarding letter introduces all members on the refugee case to the airlines and U.S. security agencies by providing identifying information, including photos, and affirms that they have been approved for refugee status, may travel aboard an airline to and within the U.S. to their resettlement destination, and apply for admission to the U.S. The PA of the refugee case presents this letter to CBP upon arrival at the POE.

Beginning September 1, 2015, the transportation boarding letter will be the only physical document provided to the refugee household with an official CBP refugee admission stamp. The PA of the refugee case must retain this transportation boarding letter and copy must be placed in the CBP refugee case file.

CBP will use the transportation boarding letter to create an electronic I-94 admission record for each individual admitted. A print-out of a refugee's electronic I-94 will be available at CBP website: www.cbp.gov/I94 and can be obtained after a refugee enters his or her name, date of birth and USCIS number (alien registration number) in the proper fields. The refugee's USCIS number must be entered in the passport field on the CBP website regardless of whether the refugee has a passport number.

A refugee electronic Form I-94 is supposed to be available within hours of a refugee's arrival at the POE. However, OTDA has received reports that refugees are experiencing delays in obtaining their I-94s. SSDs that have refugee applicants experiencing difficulty accessing a print-out of their electronic Form I-94 should report these cases to OTDA/CEES Temporary Assistance Bureau, 1-800-343-8859, ext. 4-9344.

Refugee Documentation for Benefit Eligibility

Paper Form I-94 Arrival/Departure Cards

Refugees that present an original paper Form I-94s annotated with a CBP refugee stamp need no additional documentation of their refugee status for a determination of their benefit eligibility.

Electronic Form I-94 Arrival/Departure Record

Refugees that CBP created an electronic record for will need a print-out of their I-94 from the CBP website. In addition they will need their original transportation boarding letter stamped with a CBP refugee stamp for SSDs to determine their eligibility for benefits. Both a copy of the I-94 print-out and a copy of the transportation boarding letter must be retained in the case record.

Some refugees may have a different immigration document than a transportation boarding letter. SSDs having questions on refugee immigration documents or needing assistance in interpreting refugee immigration documentation should contact the Bureau of Temporary Assistance.

The transition of refugees for inclusion in the automated I-94s will also affect how refugees receive Social Security Numbers (SSN) Beginning September 7, 2015, the Social Security Administration (SSA) will require the following two documents from newly-arrived refugees in order to issue a social security number:

1. An original transportation boarding letter stamp by the CBP with a refugee stamp
2. A print-out out of the electronic I-94 record from the CBP website

SSA will also continue to accept an unexpired I-766 Employment Authorization Document (EAD) coded with category "A3" (Refugee). If a refugee has an EAD, there would be no need to present the transportation boarding letter and I-94 print-out.

Refugee Temporary Assistance Eligibility

Refugees are specially qualified aliens and are not subject to 5 year bar on federal benefits. They can receive Family Assistance or Safety Net Assistance, if they otherwise meet necessary categorical, financial and nonfinancial eligibility requirements.

SSDs are reminded that single and childless couple refugee households receive cash assistance benefits through the Refugee Cash Assistance Program (RCA) for the first eight months from date of entry. RCA is 100% federally reimbursed.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) 200% Services

Refugees who meet the TANF 200% eligibility criteria as outlined in [00 LCM-20](#) are eligible for TANF funded services including, but not limited to services that may be provided under the Flexible Fund for Family Services (FFFS) Program, Summer Youth Program, Career Pathways and Educational Resources.

Refugee Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Eligibility (SNAP)

As specially qualified aliens refugees can receive SNAP, if they otherwise meet SNAP eligibility criteria. They may also be eligible for SNAP E&T funded services. See [15 LCM-08](#) for additional information regarding eligibility for SNAP E&T funded Services.

Refugee HEAP Eligibility

Refugees can receive HEAP, if they otherwise meet HEAP eligibility criteria.