



KATHY HOCHUL
Governor

BARBARA C. GUINN
Executive Deputy Commissioner

General Information System (GIS) Message

Section 1

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Transmittal: | 21 TA/DC071 Upstate and New York City |
| Date: | October 25, 2021 |
| To: | Subscribers |
| Suggested Distribution: | Commissioners, HRA Center Directors, TA Directors, HEAP Coordinators, SNAP Directors, Fair Hearing Officers, Staff Development Coordinators, WMS Coordinators |
| From: | Alison Maura, Director of Temporary Assistance and HEAP Employment and Income Support Programs Linda Glassman, Deputy Commissioner Housing, Refugee Services and Disability Determinations |
| Subject: | Guidance on Providing Assistance to Evacuees from Afghanistan |
| Effective Date: | Immediately |
| Contact Information: | NYS OTDA Temporary Assistance Bureau: 518-474-9344 or otda.sm.cees.tabureau@otda.ny.gov NYS OTDA Home Energy Assistance Program Bureau: 518-473-0332 or NYSHEAP@otda.ny.gov NYS OTDA Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Bureau: 518-473-1469 or otda.sm.cees.snap@otda.ny.gov NYS OTDA Bureau of Refugee Services: 518-402-3096 or bria.contact@otda.ny.gov |
| Attachments: | Attachment: Examples of Afghan Humanitarian Parole Stamps |

Section 2

Purpose

The purpose of this GIS message is to provide guidance to social services districts (districts) on meeting the needs of individuals and families entering the United States (U.S.) from Afghanistan who are applying for benefits and/or assistance through Temporary Assistance (TA), the Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP), the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA).

This GIS message also notifies districts that there may be an influx of referrals of U.S. citizens and their dependents under the United States Repatriation Program (USRP) and reminds districts of their USRP responsibilities under [19-ADM-09](#).

Background

Due to the U.S. completing its withdrawal from Afghanistan and the other events that are unfolding in Afghanistan, vulnerable evacuees from Afghanistan have resettled, or are in the process of resettling, in the U.S. Many of these individuals are expected to fall into three groups, special immigrant visa (SIV) holders, special immigrant SQ/SI parolees, and humanitarian parolees.

Afghan nationals that are SIV holders or special immigrant SQ/SI parolees are generally interpreters and/or translators (or members of their families) who performed work in Afghanistan with the U.S. Armed Forces or under the authority of the Chief of Mission for Afghanistan. In addition, the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) may exercise discretion to authorize humanitarian parole on a case-by-case basis for evacuees from Afghanistan with urgent humanitarian or significant public benefit reasons to come to the U.S. for a temporary period.

Furthermore, as a result of the Afghanistan Emergency Repatriation Mission, thousands of people, including U.S. citizens and their dependents, have returned and are continuing to return to the U.S. from Afghanistan via U.S. government-provided flights to two ports of entry in Virginia and Pennsylvania. The ports of entry have established Emergency Repatriation Centers to receive these evacuees and assist those who are unable to proceed to their final destination on their own recognizance. Eligible repatriates (U.S. citizens and their dependents) who need assistance in their final destination are referred to the USRP. A repatriate has the constitutional right as a U.S. citizen to travel and to live in any state that they may choose. In New York State, the USRP is administered through districts in coordination with the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) Bureau of Refugee Services (BRS).

Program Implications

Temporary Assistance, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, Home Energy Assistance Program, Refugee Cash Assistance

SIV Holders and Special Immigrant SQ/SI Parolees:

Under the Afghan Allies Protection Act of 2009, Afghan SIV holders evacuating Afghanistan are being admitted to the U.S. by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) as special immigrant (SI) lawful permanent residents (LPRs). In addition, due to the recent evacuation of Afghan nationals from Afghanistan, DHS began admitting Afghan SIV holders to the U.S. as SI conditional permanent residents (CPRs). A CPR becomes an LPR after DHS removes the conditions on their LPR admission. The following Class of Admission (COA) codes, often referred to as category codes on USCIS documents indicate SI CPR: CQ1, CQ2, or CQ3.

In response to Afghan nationals evacuating Afghanistan, DHS also created new COA codes for those who may qualify for SIVs but due to the extenuating circumstances surrounding the evacuation were not able to complete the SIV process prior to their evacuation from Afghanistan: special immigrant SQ/SI parole, SQ4 or SQ5.

Afghan SIV holders, including SI LPRs and SI CPRs, or special immigrant SQ/SI parolees are eligible for Family Assistance (FA), Safety Net Assistance (SNA), HEAP, and SNAP, if otherwise eligible. When determining TA, HEAP, and SNAP eligibility, these non-citizens will be coded Welfare Management System (WMS) ACI code "R," and are eligible for federal benefits, if otherwise eligible. [GIS 17 TA/DC034](#) and [GIS 10 TA/DC005](#) include further information on Afghan SIV holders. Additionally, singles and childless couples who are Afghan SIV holders or special immigrant SQ/SI parolees can be claimed to RCA. For further RCA guidance, districts may refer to [16-ADM-02](#).

The following is a list of common USCIS documents Afghan SIV holders or special immigrant SQ/SI parolees may present to districts:

- Form I-94, Arrival/Departure Record, stamped/coded with one of the following category codes: CQ1, CQ2, CQ3, SI1, SI2, SI3, SI6, SI7, SI8, SI9, SQ1, SQ2, SQ3, SQ4, SQ5, SQ6, SQ7, SQ8, SQ9, or

stamp noting SQ/SI parole, or stamp noting admission under Section 101(a)(27) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA), or

- A separate, printed page on Customs and Border Protection (CBP) letterhead with the Form I-94, Arrival/Departure Record, and the following notation, signed and dated by a USCIS officer: Special Immigrant Status SQ/SI Parolee; Section 602(B)(1) AAPA/Section 1059(a) NDAA 2006; Date _____ USCIS officer: _____, or
- DHS/CBP or DHS/USCIS Temporary I-551 Alien Documentation Identification and Telecommunication (ADIT) stamp, or
- Afghan passport with an immigrant visa stamped with one of the following category codes: CQ1, CQ2, CQ3, SI1, SI2, SI3, SI6, SI7, SI8, SI9, SQ1, SQ2, SQ3, SQ4, SQ5, SQ6, SQ7, SQ8, SQ9, or stamp noting admission under Section 101(a)(27) of the INA, or
- Form I-551, Permanent Resident Card, with one of the following category codes: CQ1, CQ2, CQ3, SI1, SI2, SI3, SI6, SI7, SI8, SI9, SQ1, SQ2, SQ3, SQ4, SQ5, SQ6, SQ7, SQ8, SQ9, or
- Form I-766, Employment Authorization Document (EAD), with a C11 parolee category code, and a response from the Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (SAVE) system with a COA code of SQ4 or SQ5, or
- Any other authoritative USCIS document indicating the Afghan national was granted a SIV or special immigrant SQ/SI parole.

Afghan Humanitarian Parolees:

In addition to the Afghan SIV holders and special immigrant SQ/SI parolees that are detailed above, other individuals arriving from Afghanistan may be granted humanitarian parole under INA Section 212(d)(5)(A).

Effective September 30, 2021, the federal government is providing evacuees from Afghanistan who enter the U.S. on humanitarian parole access to federal benefits and services through the Afghanistan Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2022. Citizens or nationals of Afghanistan, or individuals with no nationality who last resided in Afghanistan, may be eligible for benefits if they have completed DHS's background checks, their parole has not been terminated by DHS, and if they were: (1) paroled into the U.S. between July 31, 2021 and September 30, 2022, or (2) paroled into the U.S. after September 30, 2022, and are: (a) the spouse or child of an evacuee from Afghanistan paroled between July 31, 2021 and September 30, 2022, or (b) the parent or legal guardian of an unaccompanied child paroled between July 31, 2021 and September 30, 2022. The Afghanistan Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2022 allows these individuals to receive benefits for a limited period of time, either through March 31, 2023, or until the end of their parole term, whichever is later.

If otherwise eligible, these non-citizens are eligible for FA, SNA, HEAP, and SNAP, and will be coded WMS ACI code "R." Additionally, singles and childless couples who are Afghan humanitarian parolees can be claimed to RCA.

The following is a list of common USCIS documents Afghan humanitarian parolees may present to districts:

- Form I-94, Arrival/Departure Record, noting Humanitarian Parole per INA Section 212(d)(5)(A) and reasonable evidence of being an evacuee from Afghanistan, or
- Foreign passport with DHS/CBP admission stamp noting one of the following: Operation Allies Refuge or "OAR;" or Operation Allies Welcome or "OAW;" or "DT", or

- Any other authoritative USCIS document indicating Afghan humanitarian parole was granted.

Examples of humanitarian parole stamps for evacuees from Afghanistan are included in the Attachment: Examples of Afghan Humanitarian Parole Stamps. These and the documents listed above are not the only forms of acceptable immigration documentation to support an Afghan humanitarian parole status.

It is important to note that the above guidance pertains specifically to Afghan humanitarian parolees covered under the Afghanistan Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2022. For guidance on the immigration documentation and on determining eligibility for other humanitarian parolees who are not evacuees from Afghanistan, districts should continue to refer to page four of the [LDSS-4579](#): “Non-Citizen Eligibility Desk Aid.”

Verifying Immigration Documentation

As a reminder, in accordance with [13-ADM-07](#), when determining TA and SNAP eligibility, districts must use the SAVE system to verify non-citizens’ immigration documentation. Benefits must not be delayed, denied, reduced, or terminated, pending verification of non-citizens’ documentation through the SAVE system. If all other factors of eligibility have been established and the non-citizens are otherwise eligible, benefits must be granted while awaiting responses from the SAVE system.

Regardless of the immigration documentation presented by SI LPRs, the SAVE system can provide an initial verification response of LPR, except for those SI LPRs whose case involves something unusual that may require additional verification.

When districts initiate verification of the immigration documentation for SI CPRs, the SAVE system can provide an initial verification response of CPR and the COA code. Some cases may require additional verification. Additional verification responses will state “CPR” and provide the COA in the Comments to Agency field.

For immigration documentation from Afghan special immigrant SQ/SI parolees, the SAVE system can provide an initial verification response of parolee with an SQ4 or SQ5 COA, unless there is something unusual about the case that may require additional verification.

When verifying the immigration documentation presented by Afghan humanitarian parolees, the SAVE system will confirm the documentation by providing a “parolee” response.

United States Repatriation Program

Due to the emergent nature of the humanitarian crisis response effort, repatriations of American citizens from Afghanistan may also occur quickly with little information or time to plan and coordinate. It may also be unavoidable for repatriates to arrive at their final destination outside regular business hours. When a repatriate is referred to a district, BRS initially contacts the district’s Commissioner with the information. At this time, BRS recommends that all districts proactively designate a contact person internally who has reviewed [19-ADM-09](#) and who will be able to readily and effectively communicate with BRS and other stakeholders, and quickly plan and coordinate in the event a referral is received.

Guidance and Questions

For questions or further information on determining TA eligibility for evacuees from Afghanistan or other non-citizen questions, please contact the OTDA TA Bureau for assistance by calling: 518-474-9344 or emailing: otda.sm.cees.tabureau@otda.ny.gov.

HEAP eligibility questions regarding evacuees from Afghanistan should be directed to the OTDA HEAP Bureau by calling: 518-473-0332 or emailing: NYSHEAP@otda.ny.gov.

SNAP eligibility questions regarding evacuees from Afghanistan should be directed to the OTDA SNAP Bureau by calling: 518-473-1469 or emailing: otda.sm.cees.snap@otda.ny.gov.

For questions pertaining to RCA or USRP, districts should contact the OTDA BRS by calling: 518-402-3096 or emailing: bria.contact@otda.ny.gov.