



General Information System (GIS) Message

Section 1

Transmittal:	24DC061 Upstate and New York City
Date:	September 23, 2024
To:	Subscribers
Suggested Distribution:	Commissioners, TA Directors, HEAP Coordinators, SNAP Directors, Employment Coordinators, Fair Hearing Officers, Staff Development Coordinators, WMS Coordinators
From:	Valerie Figueroa, Deputy Commissioner Employment and Income Support Programs
Subject:	Streamlined USCIS Process for Initial Employment Authorization Documents for Refugees
Effective Date:	Immediately
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Section 2

The purpose of this GIS message is to inform social services districts (districts) that the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) recently implemented a streamlined process for [Form I-765, Application for Employment Authorization \(Form I-765\)](#), to more efficiently provide [Form, I-766 Employment Authorization Documents](#) (EADs) to eligible refugees after they are admitted to the United States (U.S.), when receiving an EAD for the first time. The information provided in this GIS is for informational purposes only.

A refugee is any person outside of their country who is unable or unwilling to return to that country because of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion, as defined under section 101(a)(42)(A) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA). Under special circumstances, section 101(a)(42)(B) of the INA allows for “in-country” overseas refugee processing.

Under federal law, refugees are legally authorized to work as soon as they arrive in the U.S. However, obtaining verification of this authorization in the form of an EAD has previously been an extensive process leading to delays in the ability of refugees to obtain employment.

On December 10, 2023, the USCIS implemented a new process that is fully automated and no longer requires refugees to apply for an EAD once they are admitted to the U.S. USCIS now digitally creates a Form I-765 for each arriving refugee. Following USCIS approval of Form I-765, refugees will generally receive their EAD at their address of residence within one to two weeks via U.S. Postal Service Priority Mail; however, delivery times of an EAD may vary. The USCIS requires a total of 30 days from approval before allowing inquiries about receiving an EAD.

Additionally, USCIS will electronically provide the Social Security Administration (SSA) with the information necessary to generate a Social Security Number (SSN). The Social Security card will then be mailed to the refugee.

It is important to note that this new process does not apply to refugees admitted to the U.S. based on approval of [Form I-730, Refugee/Asylee Relative Petition](#).

Refugees seeking a replacement EAD or renewing an EAD must still complete and submit Form I-765 to USCIS.

As a reminder, refugees are eligible for Temporary Assistance (TA), which includes Family Assistance (FA) and/or Safety Net Assistance (SNA), as well as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP), if they otherwise meet program eligibility requirements. For guidance on determining whether a non-citizen is a refugee, please refer to the [LDSS-4579](#): “Non-Citizen Eligibility Desk Aid”.

Districts are reminded that certain laws require that all members of the TA, SNAP, and/or HEAP household must furnish an SSN as a condition of eligibility. When an SSN cannot be furnished, the applicant must apply for such number, submit verification of such application to the district, and provide the number upon its receipt. Assistance must not be denied, delayed, or discontinued pending issuance or verification of an SSN if the applicant has complied with the above. Please see [93-ADM-4](#) and [07-INF-01](#) for further guidance. If the applicant indicates they require assistance with obtaining a SSN, the district must assist in accordance with [93-ADM-20](#).