

Operations Memorandum - Cash Assistance OPS110101

January 21, 2011

SUBJECT: CAO Reimbursement for Repatriated Citizens
TO: Executive Directors
FROM: Lourdes Padilla, Acting Director, Bureau of Operations

Purpose

To provide guidance in the repayment of County Assistance Office (CAO) expenses incurred while providing services for a Repatriated National.

Background

The U.S. Department of State (DOS) Office of American Citizens Services and Crisis Management and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) are responsible for providing temporary assistance to U.S. citizens and their dependents who become destitute or ill in a foreign country and require assistance to return to the U.S. Once repatriates return to the United States, ORR determines their eligibility for repatriation social services and benefits, and works with States to ensure the delivery of needed services. Although administered by ORR, the Repatriation Program does not serve refugees; it only assists U.S. citizens returning from abroad. The Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare (DPW) Operations Support Unit is responsible for coordinating this program at the State level.

ORR provides temporary assistance in the U.S. to certified repatriates through a contract with International Social Services – USA, Inc. (ISS), a nonprofit agency. ISS is responsible for notifying the Operations Support Unit when DOS-certified repatriates are arriving from overseas. They provide information on the types of assistance the repatriate will need and arrange payment for the services to be provided. The Operations Support Unit, in conjunction with ISS, is responsible for the coordination of payments for services and resolution of issues between ISS and Pennsylvania counties. If a repatriated national is relocating to your county, you will be notified by the Operations Support Unit. The CAO will be notified that the repatriated national is eligible for services as outlined in Supplemental Handbook, Chapter 750.

Discussion

CAO Reimbursement and Program Costs

The Repatriation Program is federally-funded and county agencies are reimbursed by the federal government for 100 percent of all reasonable and allowable program costs.

These costs fall into **two** categories:

1) Costs of Direct Assistance to Repatriates

Direct assistance to repatriates includes services and benefits, such as lodging or medical assistance, that are provided to the client. The costs for direct assistance are considered to be a loan that must be repaid to the U.S. government by the repatriate. To receive direct assistance, repatriates must sign [a *Privacy Act Statement and Repayment Agreement form*](#) and should be advised by the county or service provider of the total loan amount whenever services are provided. This assistance is provided to the eligible repatriate for up to 90 days and includes, but is not limited to, the following:

Cash assistance

- Food, lodging, and incidentals
- Domestic travel assistance to final repatriation destination
- Medical/psychiatric care - the Repatriation Program has the authority to reimburse counties for medical care at the third-party payer rate that is paid by OMAP. Medical costs exceeding the rate will not be reimbursed by the Repatriation Program.
- Assistance to unaccompanied minors
- Other services and benefits necessary for the health and well-being of the person (i.e., counseling, translation services, employment & training, etc.)

2) Costs for CAO and Case Management

CAO and case management costs are expenses for allowable program activities performed by caseworkers and administrators who work directly on repatriation cases. These costs are not subject to repayment by the repatriates, but are reimbursable to the State by ORR. CAO personnel costs claimed to the Repatriation Program must be directly attributable to a specific repatriation case. Time spent on the program must be recorded, along with a description of the activities performed. The CAO is to apply its personnel rate to the number of recorded hours for computing the amount of personnel costs to be claimed.

Administration and case management costs incurred by CAOs in preparation for the arrival of an ISS-referred repatriate are eligible for reimbursement, even if the repatriate refuses to sign the repayment agreement, refuses further services after initial contact, or despite the referral by ISS, never arrives or meets with the CAO. If a repatriate refuses assistance after arriving in the county, the CAO notes the refusal on the *Privacy Act Statement and Repayment Agreement* and signs the form. Once repatriates are determined to be eligible for other federal, state, or local assistance programs (i.e., Social Security, Medical, or General Assistance), the Repatriation Program case is closed, since the repatriate will receive services and benefits provided by other programs.

Limits on Repatriation Assistance

When the cost of direct assistance will exceed \$1,500 for a single repatriation case, ORR requires that States obtain ORR approval before services are provided. Some examples of assistance that may require ORR preapproval include, but are not limited to, placement in long term care for medically/mentally-impaired repatriates and domestic transportation arrangements. In the request, include: the name of the repatriate; a description of the

service requested, why the service is required, service amount and length, and county contact information, including contact name, phone number, e-mail address, and the name of the county. CAOs must submit such requests by e-mail to the Pennsylvania State Repatriation Coordinator, Linda Fry, at lifry@state.pa.us.

In circumstances where the repatriate requires repatriation services beyond 90 days after returning to the U.S., assistance may only be extended with the approval of ORR. To prevent a break in services, a county may request approval to extend services beyond the 90 days at any time that the county determines there is a need for extended services. The request must include the name of the repatriate, a description of the service(s) requested, why the service is required beyond the 90 days, service amount and length, and county contact information, including contact name, phone number, e-mail address, and the name of the county.

The Pennsylvania State Repatriation Coordinator will forward the request to ORR, which considers each request individually, depending upon the circumstances. If any additional information is needed, the county will be contacted. Requests to provide assistance beyond the 90-day period should also be e-mailed to Mrs. Fry at lifry@state.pa.us

Deadline for Requests for Reimbursement

CAOs must submit their reimbursement documentation no later than 30 days after the repatriation event unless the event takes place during the last month of the Federal fiscal year. In that case, repayment will be coordinated through ISS on a case by case basis. Requests for reimbursement should be submitted timely because, at the end of the FFY, all unused Repatriation Program funds for the year are returned by ISS to the U.S. Treasury. These funds are no longer available to pay county claims.

Procedures and Required Documents for Reimbursement

To ensure that CAO reimbursement claims are processed as expeditiously as possible, reimbursement packets must contain the following:

- A properly completed and signed *Privacy Act Statement and Repayment Agreement*.
- A cover letter containing the name, address, telephone number, and e-mail address of the CAO contact person for the claim; the time period covered by the claim
- A correctly completed SSA-2061, *Report on Referral form* ([Enclosure 2](#)), and SSA-3955, *Expenditure Statement and Claim for Reimbursement form* ([Enclosure 3](#)), with the current address of the repatriate, case notes, detailed explanations of all costs, and supporting documents, such as copies of checks, original receipts, and signed cash disbursement acknowledgment forms.

Submit Repatriation Program reimbursement packets to:

Linda Fry, State Repatriation Coordinator

Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare

Operations Support Unit

1401 North 7th Street

5th Floor, Bertolino Bldg

Harrisburg, PA 17102

All blank forms and documents relating to the Repatriation Program may be downloaded or printed from the ISS website at <http://www.iss-usa.org>.

NEXT STEPS

1. Although the number of repatriates to Pennsylvania each year is small, repatriates may be placed in any county. The Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare is updating the list of CAO contacts that have been designated as the local repatriation coordinator. Please complete the enclose [Repatriation Contact Information form](#) and submit it to Mrs. Fry, by e-mail (lfry@state.pa.us) or via FAX at (717) 772-4702 **no later than February 11, 2011**.
2. If you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact Mrs. Fry, State Repatriation Coordinator.
3. This Operations Memorandum will become obsolete once incorporated into the Supplemental Handbook, Chapter 750.