

DATE:**September 13, 2023****February 22, 2023****October 7, 2022****November 15, 2021****OPERATIONS MEMORANDUM #21-11-01****SUBJECT:** **Revised** Eligibility for Afghan Nationals and Acceptable Documentation of Immigration Status**TO:** Executive Directors**FROM:** ~~Tanea Fagan~~ **William Schabener**
Acting Director
Bureau of Operations**PURPOSE**

To advise County Assistance Offices (CAOs) that Afghan Parolees arriving between July 31, 2021 and ~~September 30, 2022~~ ~~December 16, 2022~~ **September 30, 2023** may be determined eligible for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Medical Assistance (MA), Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA), and Refugee Medical Assistance (RMA) until March 31, 2023 (or the end of an individual's parole term, whichever is later) and to identify the documentation that reflects the new immigration status.

To inform CAOs of the required weekly completion and submission of the attached Afghans Accessing Benefits Tracking Tool spreadsheet to assist the Department of Human Services (DHS) in monitoring the impact of arriving Afghans and track individuals' enrollment into public benefits.

BACKGROUND

Afghan individuals evacuated during the Afghanistan humanitarian crisis may receive TANF, SNAP, MA, and LIHEAP if all other eligibility requirements are met. The Afghanistan Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2022, effective September 30, 2021, authorizes citizens or nationals of Afghanistan paroled into the United States between July 31, 2021, and September 30, 2022, to receive these mainstream benefits, resettlement assistance, and other benefits available to refugees. ~~The Continuing~~

~~Appropriations and Afghanistan Supplemental~~ **The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2023 updated the eligible parole period to July 31, 2021, through September 30, 2023.** Additionally, a spouse or child of any Afghan humanitarian parolee described above, who is paroled into the United States after September 30, 2022, is entitled to the same benefits and assistance. The benefits and assistance will be available until March 31, 2023, or the end of an individual's parole term, whichever is later.

DISCUSSION

TANF: Afghan Parolees may be eligible for TANF if they meet all other eligibility requirements. After March 31, 2023, or the end of an individual's parole term, whichever is later, these individuals may be eligible for TANF if they meet the definition of a qualified noncitizen provided in CAH 122 – Citizen Noncitizen.

Applicants must be deemed ineligible for TANF before determining eligibility for RCA benefits provided by the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR).

MA: Afghan special immigrants and humanitarian parolees are eligible for federally funded MA without a five year wait period if they meet all other eligibility requirements.

Applicants must be deemed ineligible for MA and/or Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) before determining eligibility for RMA benefits provided by the ORR.

SNAP: Afghan nationals, citizens, or those who last habitually lived in Afghanistan who are granted parole between July 31, 2021, and ~~September 30, 2022~~ **September 30, 2023**, may be eligible for SNAP if they meet all other SNAP eligibility requirements. These individuals are not subject to a waiting period and are immediately eligible for benefits. These individuals may receive SNAP benefits for a limited period, either through March 31, 2023, or until the end of their parole term, whichever is later. After which time, these individuals are subject to the five-year bar.

Additionally, parents and legal guardians of individuals who were unaccompanied minors, are eligible for SNAP benefits even if they are granted parole after September 30, 2022, as long as they meet all other SNAP income and eligibility requirements. This eligibility lasts until March 31, 2023, or the end of the parole term, whichever is later.

NOTE: Should these individual's transition to asylee status, they would continue to be eligible for SNAP benefits while they remain in that status and would not be subject to a waiting period.

LIHEAP: Afghan Parolees may be eligible for LIHEAP if they meet all other eligibility requirements. After March 31, 2023, or the end of an individual's parole term, whichever is later, these individuals may be eligible for LIHEAP if they meet the definition of a qualified noncitizen, as defined in LIHEAP Handbook 622.2.

REMINDER: ORR-eligible applicants must first be deemed ineligible for cash assistance under the TANF program before determining eligibility for RCA. Similarly, ORR-eligible applicants must be deemed ineligible for MA and/or CHIP before determining eligibility for RMA.

On August 1, 2023, ORR published [Policy Letter \(PL\) 23-06 Continuation of ORR Services for Certain Afghans Who Have Filed for Re-Parole, Asylum, or Adjustment of Status](#). Per the PL guidance, CAO may continue to provide benefits to eligible Afghan Humanitarian Parolees/Non-Special Immigrant Parole whose initial period of parole expires while their applications for re-parole, asylum, or adjustment of status are pending.

Eligible Afghan parolees are those who:

1. Are an ORR beneficiary, as of the day before their initial parole expiration date; and
2. Have submitted, as of the day before their initial parole expiration date:
 - A re-parole application prior to the expiration of their initial period of parole.
 - An asylum application prior to the expiration of their initial period of parole; or
 - An adjustment of status application prior to the expiration of their initial period of parole.

NOTE: Eligible individuals must not exceed a total of 12 months of RCA/RMA benefit receipt in a lifetime.

Most Afghans are now arriving as refugees and are eligible for appropriate benefits, services, and supports as a qualifying refugee. On or after 10/1/2023, newly arriving Afghans with Humanitarian Parole/Non-Special Immigrant Parole are not eligible for benefits as a qualifying refugee status; this includes RCA/RMA and refugee program referrals.

PROCEDURE

The United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) designates these individuals as “Special Immigrant Status (SQ/SI) Parole”, “Special Immigrant (SI) Conditional Permanent Resident”, or “Humanitarian Parole”, sometimes called “Non-SI Parole”.

DHS is adding the following eligible applicants and verification documents to the Refugee Status and Documentation table in Appendix C of the Supplemental Handbook Chapter 730, [Appendix C](#).

Applicant	Documentation
Afghan Special Immigrant Parolee (includes Principal Applicant, Spouse of Principal Applicant, or Child of Principal Applicant)	I-94, Arrival Departure Record, noting SQ or SI Parole. Or Form I-766, Employment Authorization Document, with a C11 parolee category. The Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (SAVE) response will be returned as Parolee with an SQ4 or SQ5 COA code.
Afghan Special Immigrant Conditional Permanent Resident (includes Principal Applicant, Spouse of Principal Applicant, or Child of Principal Applicant)	Foreign passport with Department of Homeland Security (DHS)/Customs and Border Protection (CBP) admission stamp noting that the individual has been classified under IV (immigrant visa) Category CQ1, CQ2, CQ3, S16, S17, S18, SQ6, SQ7, or SQ8 Or DHS Form I-551 ("green card") with an IV (immigrant visa) code for category CQ1, CQ2 or CQ3 Or DHS/CBP temporary Form I-551 Alien Documentation Identification and Telecommunication (ADIT) stamp Or DHS/USCIS temporary Form I-551 ADIT stamp
Afghan Humanitarian Parole/Non-Special Immigrant Parole NOTE: The eligibility date of Afghan Humanitarian Parolees for ORR benefits and services is October 1, 2021, (if the individual has already entered the community) or their date of entry into the community (for example, the date on which the Afghan Humanitarian Parolee departs the military base), whichever is later.	Form I-94 noting Humanitarian Parole per INA section 212(d)(5)(A) Or Foreign passport with DHS/CBP admission stamp noting Operation Allies Refuge or "OAR" Or Foreign passport with DHS/CBP admission stamp noting Operation Allies Welcome or "OAW" Or Foreign passport with DHS/CBP admission stamp noting "DT" Or Form I-766, Employment Authorization Document, with a C11 parolee category. The SAVE response will be returned as Parolee, but it will not have an SQ4 or SQ5 COA code.

In addition, ORR will also accept the following documents as proof of eligibility for Afghan Special Immigrants:

Applicant	Documentation
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Afghan Special Immigrant (includes Principal Applicant, Spouse of Principal Applicant, or Child of Principal Applicant)	DHS/CBP temporary Form I-551 ADIT stamp Or DHS/USCIS temporary Form I-551 ADIT stamp
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NOTE: If an Afghan parolee is not a special immigrant or does not meet the humanitarian parolee criteria in the bolded and underlined statement above, the CAO will follow regular policy for each benefit program for individuals paroled into the United States under section 212(d)(5) of the Immigration and Nationality Act.

TRACKING

DHS is monitoring the impact of arriving Afghans. Attached is the Afghans Accessing Benefits Tracking Tool spreadsheet to track individuals' enrollment into public benefits (Attachment 1). On a weekly basis, record all applicable information on the spreadsheet as well as any notes or information you would like to provide and save the file once data entry is completed. The file name shall be County Name/Afghan Benefits/MMDDYYYY.

Example: Lehigh Afghan Benefits 10292021

CAO staff will submit completed spreadsheets to the Refugee Resettlement Program's resource account at RA-PWREFUGEEPROGRAM@pa.gov by the close of business every Friday.

Questions about the tracking spread sheet should be submitted to the same resource account address above.

NEXT STEPS

1. Review this Operational Memorandum and Attachment with appropriate staff.
2. Direct questions regarding this Operations Memorandum to your Area Manager.

ATTACHMENT

[Attachment: Afghans Accessing Benefits Tracking Tool](#)