

ACF's Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) Benefits for Afghan and Iraqi Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) Holders or SQ/SI Parolees

Are you an Afghan or Iraqi individual who has been granted an SIV or SQ/SI parole?

You may be eligible for cash assistance, medical assistance, employment preparation, job placement, English language training, and other services offered through ORR. You may also be eligible for federal "mainstream" (non-ORR funded) benefits, such as cash assistance through Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), health insurance through Medicaid, and food assistance through Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). SIV holders can also receive Reception and Placement (R&P) services from local refugee resettlement agencies. To find a local refugee resettlement agency (R&P affiliate) visit: <https://www.wrapsnet.org/rp-agency-contacts/>. This document focuses on the benefits and services that ORR funds.

Who has an SIV or SQ/SI Parole?

Certain individuals are granted a Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) or SQ/SI parole by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Afghan or Iraqi nationals granted an SIV or SQ/SI parole for their service to the U.S. government are eligible for ORR benefits. For more information on the Afghan program, visit: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/immigrate/special-immig-visa-afghans-employed-us-gov.html>. For the Iraqi program, see: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/immigrate/special-immig-visas-iraqis-employed-us-gov.html>.

Where do I sign up for ORR benefits/services after I arrive in the U.S.?

ORR provides funding to state governments, resettlement agencies, and other nonprofit community-based organizations to provide benefits and services for eligible individuals. You can sign up at the state government benefits office or closest resettlement agency in your state beginning on or after the date that you received an SIV or SQ/ SI parole. For a state-by-state listing of local resettlement agencies, view the ORR state program directory, which also includes a link to ORR state contacts: <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/orr/map/find-resources-and-contacts-your-state>.

When should I sign up for ORR benefits/services?

Immediately. Your benefits and services are only available for a limited time. ORR-funded cash and medical assistance are limited to a maximum of 12 months from your date of ORR eligibility. For most employment services and other services that support integration and self-sufficiency, the eligibility period ends five years from the date you received an SIV or SQ/SI parole.

What should I bring with me?

You should bring proof of your SIV or SQ/SI parole and the date you received it. Types of proof include your passport with an immigrant visa stamp noting that you have been granted an SIV or an I-94 (DHS Arrival/Departure Record) noting Special Immigrant (SQ/SI) Parole. If you traveled with your spouse and children, every individual should bring their own proof and the date their SIV/parole was granted.

What are some of the benefits and services I can receive as an Afghan or Iraqi SIV Holder or SQ/SI Parolee?

Some SIV holders and SQ/SI parolees are eligible to apply for federal mainstream benefits in their state, such as cash assistance through Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), health insurance through Medicaid, and food assistance through Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). If you are not eligible to receive these mainstream benefits, you can be screened for eligibility at a state government benefits office or the closest resettlement agency in your state for the following ORR benefits and services:

Initial ORR Benefits (up to 12 months from ORR eligibility date)

Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA)

Those not eligible for SSI or TANF may receive Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA). Counting from their date of eligibility, individuals may receive up to 12 months of RCA to help meet their most basic needs, such as food, shelter, and transportation.

ORR Matching Grant Program

Some may participate in the ORR Matching Grant (MG) Program, an early self-sufficiency program. Enrollment slots are limited in number and by location. The MG Program provides cash assistance, intensive case management, and employment services to help clients immediately find and maintain employment. The goal of the program is to assist clients to become economically self-sufficient within the 240-day MG service period. Individuals should enroll in the MG Program as soon as possible after their date of eligibility.

Refugee Medical Assistance (RMA)

Those not eligible for Medicaid may receive up to 12 months of RMA from their date of eligibility. RMA provides the same health insurance coverage as Medicaid.

Medical Screening

From their date of eligibility, some SIV holders and SQ/SI parolees may be eligible for a domestic medical screening examination funded by ORR. The screening supports client resettlement by identifying health conditions that threaten their well-being, providing vaccinations required for school and work, and referring them to primary care providers or specialists for ongoing health care. ORR recommends that medical screenings are completed soon after arrival in the U.S.

Services (up to 5 years from ORR eligibility date)

Employment Assistance: Refugee Support Services

SIV holders and SQ/SI parolees may access the Refugee Support Services (RSS) program to receive employability services, available for up to five years from their date of eligibility. RSS helps provide employability services; job training and preparation; assistance with job search, placement, and retention; English language training; childcare; transportation; translation and interpreter services; and case management.

Specialized Programs

Some clients may be eligible for specialized programs such as health services, technical assistance for small business start-ups, financial savings, youth mentoring, or other targeted support programs.