ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN & FAMILIES
Office of Refugee Resettlement | 330 C Street, S.W., Washington, DC 20201
www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr

Income Disregards for Refugee Cash Assistance

Policy Letter 23-04

June 12, 2023
Revised February 10, 2025[1]
Revised February 2, 2026[2]

ORR is issuing this policy letter (PL) to provide guidance to States on disregarding income cash grants refugees[3] may receive from federal resettlement initiatives. The guidance aims to facilitate the calculation of Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA) now that the State Department Reception and Placement (R&P) program has ended, and ORR has assumed responsibility for the administration of initial resettlement services.

I. Challenge

ORR regulations 45 C.F.R. § 400.66(d) (for publicly administered programs) and 45 C.F.R. § 400.59(d) (for public/private RCA programs or PPPs) mandate that States and PPPs disregard cash grants that refugees receive through the Department of State's R&P program when conducting an income eligibility determination for RCA. However, because the Department of State's R&P program has ended and has been replaced by ORR's Program of Initial Resettlement (PIR), the regulation does not address the services refugees are currently receiving.

II. RCA Income Disregards for Cash Grants from ORR's Program of Initial Resettlement

ORR interprets 45 C.F.R. §§ 400.66(d) and 400.59(d) to require States to disregard cash grants that a refugee receives under a program equivalent to R&P, as well as R&P itself.

---

[1] This Policy Letter was edited February 10, 2025: Removal of equity language.
[2] This Policy Letter was edited February 2, 2026, to reflect the changes to the structure of domestic initial resettlement: On September 30, 2025, a memorandum was issued determining, in accordance with section 8 U.S.C. § 1522(b)(1) of the Refugee Act of 1980, that ORR will oversee initial refugee resettlement, which ORR is calling the Program of Initial Resettlement. As outlined in the Federal Register Notice, this centralizes responsibility for all domestic resettlement under a single federal agency.
[3] In the context of this PL, ORR uses the term "refugees" to include those ORR-eligible populations who are refugees and additional individuals (e.g., certain Afghans who arrived through Operation Allies Welcome) who are eligible for initial resettlement services as authorized by section 412(b)(1) of the Immigration and Nationality Act. The term "refugees" here does not include asylees, Cuban/Haitian Entrants, victims of human trafficking, humanitarian parolees from Ukraine, or other ORR-eligible populations who are not eligible for initial resettlement services under ORR's Program of Initial Resettlement.

Now that R&P has ended and the substantive services of initial resettlement have transferred to ORR, ORR considers its Program of Initial Resettlement (PIR) as equivalent.

In conducting a refugee's income eligibility determination for RCA, States must disregard cash grants a refugee receives from PIR.

If you have questions about the information contained in this PL, contact ORR's Division of Refugee Policy at **RefugeePolicy@acf.hhs.gov**.

Robin Dunn Marcos
Director
Office of Refugee Resettlement