



U.S. Repatriation Program

Mission Statement: The United States (U.S.) Repatriation Program is committed to helping eligible U.S. citizens and their dependents repatriated from overseas by providing them with temporary assistance upon their arrival to the United States. This assistance is not an entitlement but a service loan repayable to the U.S. Government.

General Background: The U.S. Repatriation Program (Program) was established in 1935 under Section 1113 of the Social Security Act (Assistance for U.S. Citizens Returned from Foreign Countries), to provide temporary assistance to U.S. citizens and their dependents who have been identified by the Department of State (DOS) as having returned, or been brought from a foreign country, to the U.S. because of destitution, illness, war, threat of war, or a similar crisis, and are without available resources. Upon arrival in the U.S., services for repatriates are the responsibility of the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS). The Secretary has delegated these responsibilities to the Administration for Children and Families and to the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR). Temporary Assistance is provided in the form of a loan that must be repaid to the Federal Government.

Programmatic Structure: The Program contains four different activities. Two of these are characterized by ongoing caseloads with individual repatriations under Section 1113 of the Social Security Act and the assistance provided to mentally ill repatriates found under 24 U.S.C. 321. The other two activities are contingency components regarding emergency repatriation responsibility assigned under Section 1113 of the Social Security Act and Executive Order (E.O.) 12656 and group repatriations which, by the extension of the E.O. precedent, ORR often has the responsibility to provide services under Section 1113 authority. Operationally, these activities involve different kinds of preparation, resources and execution. However, the core program policies and administrative procedures are essentially the same for each. Overseas, DOS conducts the initial assessment and makes the referral to ORR and/or grantee for ORR authorized staff to make final eligibility. DOS ensures transportation of eligible individuals to the U.S. Upon their arrival to the U.S., ORR becomes responsible for providing temporary services to eligible repatriates. Presently, ORR oversees a cooperative agreement with International Social Service (ISS-USA), which in consultation with ORR coordinates with State Coordinators (e.g., State agency, private providers) the provision of temporary assistance under non-emergency activities.

Services Provided: Temporary assistance, which is defined as cash payment, medical care (including counseling), temporary shelter, transportation, and other goods and services necessary for the health or welfare of individuals is given to eligible individuals in the form of a loan and must be repaid to the U.S. Government. Temporary assistance is available to eligible individuals for up-to 90-days. Cash payments are determined by the assessment performed to the eligible repatriate and might be provided up to the state TANF rate per month. For temporary shelter repatriates might be placed in public shelters, unless the circumstances involved necessitate or justify the provision of other reasonable temporary shelter accommodation. To determine whether a repatriate is eligible for repatriation assistance, it must be established that necessary services or assistance are unavailable to the requesting individuals via other alternative resources. Assessment of an individual's available resources, including identification of services or assistance the individual is receiving and/or is able to receive is necessary to determine eligibility for this Program pursuant to its implementing regulations at 45 CFR 211 and 212. It is the responsibility of the individual requesting repatriation assistance to collaborate during the assessment and fact finding process. Failure to provide requested information may result in a finding of ineligibility. Periodic case revisions are performed to determine whether the repatriate remains eligible for services. Repatriates are to collaborate with this periodic revisions, failure to cooperate may result in closing of the case. Temporary assistance is not retroactive. Certain temporary assistance may be furnished beyond the 90-day period if ACF/ORR finds that the circumstances involved necessitate or justify the furnishing of such assistance to repatriates and their dependents beyond the 90 day limit (42 United States Code (U.S.C.) 1313). *In order to qualify for an extension of services, repatriates and/or representatives must submit their requests prior to the end of their 90-days of eligibility period.* Necessary and timely supportive information must accompany the request for an extension. In addition, under the Program legislation, eligible individuals can apply for debt waivers and deferrals. Repatriates should submit timely request for waivers and deferrals to ORR or its grantee, failure to submit timely requests may result in irreversible garnishment of resources available to the repatriate.

During Emergency or Group Repatriations: In the event of a massive evacuation from overseas, HHS/ACF/ORR is the lead Federal agency responsible for the coordination and provision of temporary services within the CONUSA to all non-combatant evacuees returned from a foreign country. While ACF/ORR is responsible for the National Emergency Repatriation planning, coordination and implementation, through ORR agreements, the States and local government, in consultation with ACF/ORR, carry out the operational responsibility for the reception, temporary care, and onward transportation of the non-combatant evacuees. Whenever necessary, ACF/ORR works with various support Federal agencies (e.g. DOD, ASPR, DHS, FEMA) to assist, through mission assignments, with the provision of temporary services. Services are provided in accordance to the regulations found at 45 CFR 211 and 212.

Contact Information

LT Elizabeth Russell, HHS Repatriation Program Coordinator

330 C Street, S.W. Washington, D.C. 20201

Phone: 202.401.9246, Fax: 202.401.6533, e-mail Elizabeth.russell@acf.hhs.gov