



U.S. REPATRIATION PROGRAM

GENERAL BACKGROUND

The U.S. Repatriation 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. 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).

MISSION STATEMENT

The U.S. Repatriation Program, within HHS/ACF/ORR, is committed to helping eligible repatriates referred from DOS by providing them with effective and efficient temporary assistance necessary for their transition and reestablishment in the United States of America.

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 Executive Order (E.O.) 12656 and group repatriations which, by the extension of the E.O. precedent, HHS/ACF/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 determination of Program eligibility, and ensures transportation of eligible individuals into the U.S. Upon their arrival to the U.S., HHS/ACF/ORR becomes responsible for providing temporary services to eligible repatriates. Presently, ORR oversees a cooperative agreement with International Social Service (ISS-USA), which coordinates in conjunction with State Coordinators (e.g., State agency, private providers) the provision of temporary assistance.

SERVICES PROVIDED

Temporary assistance, which is defined as cash payment, medical care (including counseling), temporary billeting, 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.

Certain temporary assistance may be furnished beyond the 90-day period if HHS/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 addition, under the Program legislation, eligible individuals are entitled to apply for debt waivers and deferrals. Appropriate procedures are followed to make this determination.

DURING EMERGENCY OR GROUP REPATRIATIONS

In the event of a massive evacuation from overseas, 50 or more eligible repatriates, HHS is the lead agency responsible for arranging through State agencies for the reception, temporary care, and onward transportation to the final destination of non-combatant evacuees returned to the U.S. from a foreign country. While HHS is responsible for the National Emergency Repatriation planning, coordination and implementation, States and local government carry out operational responsibility for the reception, temporary care, and onward transportation of the non-combatant evacuee.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Elizabeth Russell
Coordinator, Repatriation Program
Office of Refugee Resettlement
Administration for Children and Families
370 L'Enfant Promenade, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20447
Phone: 202.401.9246
Fax: 202.401.5487