Appendix D: Early Benefits Available to Refugees

Eligible for TANF\textsuperscript{1}, Medicaid, FAMIS, Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program, Energy Assistance Program, General Relief Program, Foster Care Services, and any other program of Department of Social Service pending financial and non-financial requirements

- This document will discuss the programs particular to refugees who fail to meet specific criteria for TANF/Medicaid.

To apply for ANY public assistance...

1) Apply for benefits at local Department of Social Service (DSS) via completing Application for Benefits
2) Failure to qualify leaves refugees still eligible for Chapter 3 and 4 programs (RMA, RCA)
3) Obtaining LPR does not change eligibility status

A) Refugee Cash Assistance Program: time limited (<8 months from arrival date) cash assistance to eligible populations that meet financial TANF criteria but not non-financial criteria
- Coverage/payments begin first day of the month in which the refugee submits application
- No retroactive payments back to US entry day
- Available in EVERY VIRGINIA LOCALITY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Same as TANF</th>
<th>Different than TANF</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>~Amount in cash payments</td>
<td>~RCA only counts income on date of application (not mean income over application processing period)</td>
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<tr>
<td>~Right to appeals process</td>
<td>~RCA is time limited (&lt;8 months)</td>
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<tr>
<td>~Collection of overpayment/repayment of underpayment</td>
<td>~RCA first month's payment is NOT prorated based on application date</td>
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<tr>
<td>~Case transfers process (mail case file to receiving agency)</td>
<td>~RCA does NOT require SSN</td>
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<tr>
<td>~Work requirement</td>
<td>~RSSEP qualifies for RCA, but NOT TANF, and only applies in areas where RSSEP exists</td>
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<tr>
<td>~Once employed, MUST report income (termination/reduction in benefits same)</td>
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</table>

Eligibility/application includes

1) Complete VDSS Application of Benefits as above (applicant screened for TANF vs. RCA)
   a. Only one required per household
   b. If some eligible for TANF and others for RCA only, application will be automatically divided
2) Meets TANF financial but fails non-financial requirements
3) Proven documentation of Refugee status
4) Meets RSSEP work requirements
5) Application must be made within 8 months of arrival
6) Applicant CANNOT be full-time student in higher education

Financial Notes
- Home country assets are not considered against limits of TANF/RCA
- DSRP (Department of State Reception and Placement Program) payments are not counted as income/assets
- If fail to obtain SSN or achieve school attendance, refugee receives RCA until TANF approval

Payment Amount determined by income and geographic location, but equivalent to TANF

B) Refugee Social Services Employment Program: administered via VDSS Office of Newcomer Services
- Available up to 5 years after arrival and serves as requirement for RCA
- Tailored to linguistic and cultural needs of population
- Programs focus on employment/employability services; job training/preparation; assistance with job search, placement, and retention; English language/vocational training; skills recertification; job-related day care; job-related transportation; translation/interpretation services; case management
  -> Goal is to find work within one year of enrollment
  -> Priority to new arrivals in first year, those on cash assistance, unemployed, employed but dependent refugees still requiring services

...Non-Participation/Loss of Benefits...
- When an RCA recipient does not meet RSSEP requirements without good cause, written notification sent to local DSS
- Local DSS will then send this letter and Advance Notice of Proposed Action Form to RCA refugee
- 10 day period to file appeal; often use local legal aid office to help with legal advice
- If Appeal filed, RCA benefits will still be given until hearing occurs (and repayment occur if receiver found negligent)
- Termination of benefits occurs on the first of the following month of issuance
- First Sanction: lose benefits for one month
  Second Sanction: Lose benefits for 3 months

...Exemption...
  a) Geographic if applicant does not live in RSSEP region
  b) Age: >65yo; <16yo for entire 8-month benefit period: is 16–18yo but is a full time student
  c) Disability is NOT an exemption and will be addressed on case-by-case basis

\textsuperscript{1} Refugee must still participate in TANF work requirements via Virginia Initiative for Employment not Welfare (VIEW) program. Participation in Refugee Social Services Employment Program (RSSEP) is not an exemption. RSSEP provided by local non-profit agencies under contract with Office of Newcomer Services (ONS)
C) Refugee Medical Assistance: time limited (<8 months from arrival date) cash assistance to eligible populations that meet financial Medicaid criteria but not non-financial criteria
- Virginia receives full federal funding with no state matching funds for the medical assistance provided to these individuals during the first 8 months they are in the U.S., though these are distributed at the state’s discretion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Same as Medicaid</th>
<th>Different from Medicaid</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Types of services received</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Matching Grant Program payments NOT counted as income</td>
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<tr>
<td>Right to appeal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spend down rules</td>
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<tr>
<td>Virginia’s Health Insurance Premium Program (HIPP) rules</td>
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<tr>
<td>Case Transfer process</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Only income on date of application counted (not mean over application process time)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Time limit on assistance received (8 months from arrival)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wages from employment AFTER case approval are NOT counted</td>
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<tr>
<td>NO requirement for SSN</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Eligibility/application includes
1) Complete VDSS Application of Benefits as above (applicant screened for Medicaid vs. RMA
   a. Only one required per household
   b. If some eligible for Medicaid and others for RMA only, application will be automatically divided
2) Meets Medicaid but fails non-financial requirements
3) Proven documentation of Refugee status
4) Meets RSSEP work requirements
5) Application must be made within 8 months of arrival
6) Applicant CANNOT be full-time student in higher education

Financial Notes
- Home country assets are not considered against limits of RMA
- Department of State Reception and Placement Program (DSRP) payments are not counted as income/assets
- Wages earned from employment after receipt of RMA and before end of 8-month eligibility do NOT affect eligibility
- If originally on Medicaid but becomes ineligible due to employment earnings --> automatically transferred to RMA for remainder of 8-month period
- If applicant receives employer sponsored health insurance during 8 months, this becomes primary and RMA secondary (RMA will pick up costs that employer-sponsored insurance will not)

...NON-PARTICIPATION/LOSS OF BENEFITS...
- When an RMA recipient is later determined to be ineligible
  - Local DSS will then send this letter and Advance Notice of Proposed Action Form to RMA refugee
  - 10 day period to file appeal; often use local legal aid office to help with legal advice
  - If Appeal filed, RMA benefits will still be given until hearing occurs (and repayment occur if receiver found negligent)
  - Termination of benefits occurs on the first of the following month of issuance

D) Refugee School Impact Program: helps students aged 5–18 become integrated/educated through ESL, tutorials, clubs/activities, counseling, interpretation services

E) Refugees under the Affordable Care Act
- Insurance Protections: No lifetime benefits limits or rescissions; No denying coverage to children <19 year’s old based on pre-existing conditions
- Health Insurance Exchanges: incomes 133–400% federal poverty level will receive tax credits to assist purchasing insurance
- Medicaid coverage will be available to young adults up to age 26 who have aged out of the foster care or Unaccompanied Refugee Minors programs