

Response to a Potential Government Shutdown

September 29, 2023

Dear Colleague Letter 23-39

Dear Colleague:

This Dear Colleague Letter (DCL) describes measures in place to address the immediate needs of ORR populations who will be affected if a government shutdown occurs on October 1, 2023.

ORR Cash and Medical Assistance

As noted in [ORR DCL 23-34](#), *Refugee Cash and Medical Assistance (CMA): FY 2023 and FY 2024 Deadlines Extended by One Year*, States and Replacement Designees may use their FY 2023 CMA funds within FY 2024. As such, ORR does not anticipate a State or Replacement Designee being unable to fund Refugee Cash Assistance, Refugee Medical Assistance, or Medical Screening in the near future.

Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)

TANF funding in some states may be temporarily unavailable due to lapses in funding. RCA cannot be used for families who are TANF-eligible; per 45 CFR 400.53, RCA can only be made available to those determined ineligible for TANF. To ensure on-going support and services for such families, ORR recommends enrollment in the Match Grant Program as an alternative option if a government shutdown occurs.

ORR Refugee Support Services Funding and Additional Services

States and Replacement Designees must follow existing policy to support client needs that arise as a result of lapses in federal mainstream programs such as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and childcare supports.

In practice, this means that States and Replacement Designees may use Afghanistan Supplemental Assistance Act, 2022 and Additional Afghanistan Supplemental Assistance Act, 2022 (ASA) funds to assist clients who are ASA-eligible, and they may use Additional Ukraine Supplemental Assistance Act, 2022 (AUSAA), funds to assist clients who are AUSAA-eligible.

To provide such assistance to clients who are not ASA- or AUSAA-eligible, States and Replacement Designees may request a waiver from ORR to use Refugee Support Services (RSS) funding for additional immediate emergency services, such as emergency cash assistance for food and other essentials, authorized under 45 CFR 400.155(h). States should consider a waiver request for this funding on a case-by-case basis after determining that the individual seeking assistance has no other resources available.

For more information on the use of RSS funding for additional services under 45 C.F.R. 400.155(h), including that additional services must be demonstrated to be effective and must not be available from any other funding source, please see [Policy Letter 16-07](#).

ORR Contacts

Matching Grant grantees may contact Thomas Giossi, the ORR Matching Grant Project Officer, at Thomas.Giossi@acf.hhs.gov.

Please direct any questions about Cash and Medical Assistance funding, Refugee Support Services funding, and the process of requesting a waiver to use RSS for additional emergency services, to your Regional Representative/Analyst within the Division of Refugee Assistance, with copy to Carl Rubenstein, Director of the Division of Refugee Assistance, at carl.rubenstein@acf.hhs.gov.

Other ORR Refugee Programs staff will also be working and remain available to you to address questions and concerns, as customary.

Sincerely,

Robin Dunn Marcos
Director
Office of Refugee Resettlement