



Department of Human Resources
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FIA INFORMATION MEMO

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**TO: DIRECTORS, LOCAL DEPARTMENTS OF SOCIAL SERVICES
 DEPUTY/ASSISTANT DIRECTORS FOR FAMILY INVESTMENT
 FAMILY INVESTMENT SUPERVISORS AND ELIGIBILITY STAFF**

FROM: CHARLES HENRY, ACTING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**RE: ASYLEE ELIGIBILITY FOR REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT PROGRAM
 BENEFITS**

PROGRAM AFFECTED: REFUGEE CASH ASSISTANCE

ORIGINATING OFFICE: OFFICE OF POLICY, RESEARCH AND SYSTEMS

SUMMARY

The Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) in the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) has announced that, effective June 15, 2000 asylees are eligible for refugee assistance and services **beginning on the date that they are granted asylum.**

This is a substantial policy change, since previously asylees were deemed eligible for refugee cash assistance benefits for 8 months from the date they arrived in the United States. Since the process of applying for asylum and having the case heard and decided often exceeded 8 months, many asylees were ineligible by the time they arrived at the local Department of Social Services Office to apply for benefits.

Effective immediately under ORR's new policy, an asylee's **entry date will be the date that the individual is granted asylum in the United States.** This policy change is particularly important for asylees who need to access refugee cash and medical assistance (RCA and RMA). For example, an individual enters United States on December 1, 2000 as a tourist. He or she applies for asylum on April 1, 2001. The asylum office interviews the individual on June 1, 2001 and grants asylum on August 1, 2001. This individual's date of entry would be August 1, 2001, the date asylum was granted. The asylee would be eligible to access refugee cash and medical assistance from August 1, 2001, through March 31, 2002. Under the old rule, the 8-month eligibility period would have begun December 1, 2000 and would have ended just before asylum was granted.

INQUIRIES: Please direct policy questions to Rick McClendon (410) 767-8513.

cc: FIA Management Staff
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