State of Florida
Department of Children and Families

Ron DeSantis
Governor

Kathryn Williams
Interim Secretary

DATE: August 6, 2026 **TRANSMITTAL NO.: P-26-08-0006**

TO: Economic Self Sufficiency Operations Managers
Economic Self Sufficiency Program Offices

FROM: Julie Reed, Chief, Program Policy
(Signature on File)

SUBJECT: Benefit Eligibility Period for Refugee Cash Assistance and Refugee Medical Assistance Changes - Updated October 20, 2026

EFFECTIVE: **November 1, 2026**

This transmittal is to notify staff of a change in the benefit eligibility period for individuals eligible for Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA) and/or Refugee Medical Assistance (RMA). The Refugee Assistance Program (RAP) includes RCA and RMA; new policy changes are noted in green within the transmittal.

This new policy will obsolete Transmittals P-22-08-0012, I-23-02-0002 and P-25-09-0007.

Background

On July 14, 2026, the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) published a notice announcing the extension of the benefit eligibility period for RCA and RMA **from 4-months to 8-months** of assistance for individuals whose eligibility date for ORR benefits is **on or after January 1, 2026**.

On October 1, 2026, ORR published a revised notice announcing that the eligibility period should be 12 months after further review and consideration. The ORR notice serves to correct the eligibility time period from 8 to 12 months for both programs (RCA and RMA). No other adjustments were made to the policy. The effective date of this change (including systems) is November 1, 2026.

Old Policy

Individuals with an ORR benefit eligibility date on or after May 5, 2025, were eligible for RCA and RMA for up to 4-months. The ORR benefit eligibility date is based on the date of entry, date of status, or date of asylum.

New Policy

Individuals with an ORR benefit eligibility date **on or after January 1, 2026**, will be eligible to receive up to **12-months** of RCA (AWAA category RAP) and/or RMA (AWAA categories: MRR, NRR, MREI), if they meet all eligibility requirements for the program.

Individuals who received less than 12-months of RCA/RMA benefits based on the previously applicable 8-month eligibility period, may reapply and be provided the additional months (up to 12 consecutive benefit months maximum), if they are determined eligible for the benefits. If there are gaps in assistance retroactive benefits/payments may be issued provided the individual was eligible for RCA/RMA during the gap months within the 12-month eligibility period and where no payment/coverage was issued.

Individuals with an ORR benefit eligibility date **prior to January 1, 2026**, are only eligible for up to **4-months** of assistance and are not eligible for additional months of assistance. The existing RCA/RMA auto-closure process for individuals with an ORR benefit eligibility date prior to January 1, 2026, has been applied to these cases.

Please reference eligibility Policy Transmittal P-19-04-0005.

Application Assignment Procedures

New RCA and/or RMA applications for individuals who have not previously received the benefit(s) will be routed and processed through the regular assignment process.

Applications/Reapplications submitted to request additional months **(retroactive/gap months)** based on this recent RCA/RMA federal policy change, should be reassigned to the **Headquarters Program and Policy Unit**. These Work Items must be assigned to Worker Number **Z32850** (caseload **02AD01**), and update Case Notes with the reason for the transfer. Prior to reassigning the Work Item and Case Note, review the request to ensure the individual previously received RCA and/or RMA benefits. **Do not** reassign Work Items for RCA and/or RMA in the Management Portal, if the individual did not previously receive benefits.

System Instructions and Procedures

The FLORIDA system was modified to calculate the 12-month eligibility period for RCA/RMA if the date of entry, date of status, or date of asylum is **on or after** January 1, 2026.

The 12-month eligibility period for RCA/RMA will be based on the AICZ dates. The auto-closure process for individuals reaching their maximum eligibility period/months of assistance was activated.

The reason and notice description language for code **250** "**You are no longer eligible for Refugee Cash and/or Refugee Medical Assistance because the time-limited period to receive this assistance has ended**" will display for auto-closures. Staff must also use this code when manually taking action on assistance groups (AGs) whose eligibility period has ended.

On **AGPY** during ASRE, the REV AG field will be protected with an "N" if the same RMA assistance group is built. The REV AG field will continue to work the same for all other assistance groups.

On **AWER**, the ELIG REVIEW DATE is protected for RMA. This date is already protected for RCA.

Note: **AWER** may retain a past date as the eligibility review date for RCA and/or RMA. The auto-process will close based on one of the three (**Entry**, **Asylum**, or **Status)** dates on AICZ.

If it is determined that the individual is eligible for retroactive RCA payments, staff must issue these additional benefits by creating an auxiliary(ies), **BICS,** with the **CASE/CAT/SEQ** for any past month(s) covering the time period.

If it is determined that the individual is eligible for additional (retroactive) months of RMA coverage, enter the additional month(s) of coverage on the **AFME** screen or enter the date of application on **AGPY** as the first day of the month following the month of the RMA closure.

Note: If the recurring eligibility month is greater than 12 months, staff may be required to complete passing dates to build the required coverage.

Staff must enter comments in the **Case Notes** regarding the action taken to evaluate eligibility and coverage for the additional month(s) of RCA and/or RMA.

Reminder

As of May 2, 2025, FLORIDA's AICZ screen only allows a staff member with a ELIGPASS profile or higher to edit the **Entry Date**, **Asylum Date**, **Status Date**, **Alien Status Code**, and **Delete Code** fields. Staff should ensure the correct date of entry, date of status, or date of asylum is entered on AICZ before pressing enter. Staff who complete or review a case that requires an AICZ screen update will need to follow their regional procedures to request changes to the protected fields. Staff with an ELIGPASS profile or higher should ensure the accuracy of the requested change prior to making any updates on AICZ.

Regional Program Offices with policy questions related to this transmittal should submit them through the Policy Technical Assistance Request page. Systems related questions should be directed to LaQuetta Anderson at LaQuetta.Anderson@myflfamilies.com.

cc: Assistant Secretary for Economic Self Sufficiency (Bridget Royster)
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Assistant Secretary for Office of Substance Abuse and Mental Health (Amanda VanLaningham)
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