

TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR REPATRIATES

U.S. Repatriate Program

No one likes to think about becoming ill or destitute when far away from home in a foreign country.

If it happens to U.S. citizens, the U.S. Government may help.

The U.S. Repatriate Program provides temporary assistance, care and treatment for persons after they have returned to this country. Any assistance given under this program is like a loan which must be repaid to the U.S. Government.

Temporary assistance under this program may include money needed for food, shelter, clothing and transportation. It may also include payment for special services needed such as medical and psychiatric care. The amount and type of assistance provided is determined by a local social service agency according to the state's standards for the Aid to Families with Dependent Children program.

As part of the program of assistance – guidance, counseling and, if necessary, vocational rehabilitation service may also be provided to help you get back on your feet and become financially independent.

Federal assistance to destitute and ill citizens returned to the U.S. from foreign countries is authorized by Section 1113 of the Social Security Act. Assistance to U.S. citizens who are returned to the U.S. from foreign countries because of mental illness is authorized by Public Law 86-571.

Who is Eligible for Assistance?

You must meet four qualifications to be eligible for assistance under the Repatriate Program. They are:

Certification: Your eligibility must be certified by the U.S. Department of State to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Citizenship: You must be a U.S. citizen or the dependent of a U.S. citizen. Those who qualify as a dependent of a U.S. citizen include: spouse, parents, spouse's parents, grandparents, unmarried minor children including adopted children and stepchildren, unmarried adult children who are dependent because they have disabilities, including adopted children and stepchildren, and minor siblings of the U.S. citizen and his/her spouse.

Within the U.S.: You must be in the U.S., having returned from a foreign country because you are destitute or ill (including mentally disabled), or because of war, threat of war or similar crisis.

Need: You must be without available resources for your living expenses.

Eligibility for the Repatriation Program is based on certification by the U.S. State Department, U.S. citizenship and individual need. Assistance is available without regard to race, color or national origin in accordance with the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Repayment of the cost of assistance is required.

How the Program Works

The U.S. Department of State certifies the persons who qualify for assistance under this program. If you are to return to the U.S. because of destitution or illness and need assistance after your arrival in the U.S., the U.S. Department of State will notify the Administration for Children and Families in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services about your situation, your arrival time and your final destination. This information is provided by a U.S. Consular office abroad.

When necessary, the Administration for Children and Families will arrange with a social service agency in the State where you arrive to have a social worker meet you and your family. The worker will provide services that you and your dependents need, such as transportation to your home, medical care and financial assistance.

The information that you give to the local social service agency while you are establishing your need for temporary assistance will be held in strict confidence.

If you need assistance with getting reestablished in your home area, you will be referred to the local social service agency in your area. In addition to temporary financial aid, the social service agency in your home area will be able to help you with vocational or occupational training to become self-supporting, as well as by providing child welfare and medical services. The agency will also assist you in making application for benefits under other government programs for which you may qualify.

How Long Can You Get Repatriation Aid?

You may receive temporary assistance under the U.S. Repatriate Program for up to 90 days from the day you arrive in the U.S. If you attain other resources or secure income from employment, you will no longer be eligible for temporary assistance under the Repatriation Program.

If, in the judgment of the social service agency which is assisting you, you are unable to attain self-support or self-care for such reasons as age, disability or lack of vocational preparation, and are not eligible for other assistance programs, temporary repatriation assistance may be extended but the social service agency must get prior authorization for this extension from the Administration for Children and Families Office of Refugee Resettlement.

While you are receiving temporary assistance under the U.S. Repatriate Program, you must report promptly to your local social service agency any circumstance or change that may affect your eligibility for continued assistance.

Repayment

If you receive assistance under the U.S. Repatriate Program, you are required to repay the cost of such assistance to the U.S. Government. When you are first assisted at the time of your arrival in the U.S., you will be required to sign an agreement that you will repay the U.S. Government for the cost of assistance provided to you. The Administration for Children and Families will send a letter to you informing you that the amount of your debt can be paid in full immediately or in monthly payments. In addition, you will be asked to return your repayment plan to the Administration for Children and Families by a specific date. If you fail to return this plan, or are delinquent with your payments, interest and penalties will be assessed.

Additional Information

Specific questions about the U.S. Repatriate Program or about applying for assistance under the program should be directed to the Administration for Children and Families, Office of Refugee Resettlement at the address below, or to your nearest social service agency.

US DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
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OFFICE OF REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT
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