



ADMINISTRATION FOR  
**CHILDREN & FAMILIES**

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## Refugee Support Services

Policy Letter 18-04

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### Policy Letter

This Policy Letter announces the new Refugee Support Services program at the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR).

#### Refugee Support Services

Refugee Support Services (RSS) is a new program pursuant to 412(c)(1) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, that replaces three separate programs, Refugee Social Services, formula and discretionary Targeted Assistance Grants (TAG), and the Refugee Health Promotion Program (RHP) with one program.<sup>1</sup> The goal of RSS is to provide grantees with more flexibility in allocating funding for services to ORR-served populations.

The RSS program will continue to fund the services that Refugee Social Services and TAG supported. Refugee Social Services and TAG funding supported employment services and programs to address employment barriers, such as social adjustment, interpretation and translation, childcare, and citizenship and naturalization. ORR provided TAG funding to states on behalf of counties with a significant number of persons served by ORR to ensure local planning and implementation.

Grantees that previously received Refugee Social Services and TAG grants should expect two primary changes to the allocation of funding. First, ORR will no longer allocate funds for certain counties as was done under the formula TAG program. States will be able to decide how to distribute funds based on arrival patterns, allowing for more flexibility.

Second, ORR will determine funding levels based on the number of arrivals during the previous 12 months instead of the previous 24 months. By allocating money based on the previous fiscal year,

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<sup>1</sup> ORR will no longer provide grants specifically under 412(c)(2), but as explained in the body of this policy letter, grantees may still perform the functions they performed under 412(c)(2) under the new RSS program.

rather than the previous two fiscal years, allocations will more accurately reflect the current number of recent arrivals in a state.

The RHP program uses a framework of health services, which has three key components: health literacy, access to health and emotional wellness services, and affordable health care beyond the initial services provided upon arrival into the United States.

The RHP program will continue within RSS funding as a set-aside. However, the changes for RHP will not go into effect until after the current project period ends in fiscal year 2020. Funding for Refugee School Impact and Services to Older Refugees will also continue as set-asides within RSS. This change does not affect other discretionary funding programs such as Ethnic Community Self Help and Refugee Agricultural Partnership Program.

The regulations at 45 C.F.R. 400 Subpart I Refugee Social Services remain in effect. The change to RSS will also not affect funding for Cash and Medical Assistance Programs, including Refugee Cash Assistance, Refugee Medical Assistance, and the Unaccompanied Refugee Minor Program.

If you have questions about the information in this Policy Letter, please contact Carl Rubenstein at [carl.rubenstein@acf.hhs.gov](mailto:carl.rubenstein@acf.hhs.gov).

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