

ADDENDUM
TO THE
CALIFORNIA STATE PLAN FOR REFUGEE/ENTRANT
ASSISTANCE AND SERVICES
FOR
FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR (FFY) 2001/02

Section A.1.c RCA/ECA

The RCA/ECA programs and related administrative costs are 100 percent federally-funded under the federal RRP. Program benefits are provided for refugees/ entrants who have been in the United States eight months or less and are ineligible for CalWORKs or SSI/SSP.

On April 21, 2000, the federal Office of Refugee Resettlement issued revised regulations for operating the Refugee Cash Assistance Program. The regulations gave states the flexibility to establish a public/private refugee cash assistance program with local resettlement agencies, operate a publicly-administered RCA program modeled after a state's TANF program, establish an alternative approach under the existing Wilson/Fish program, or obtain a waiver to continue to operate an AFDC-type RCA program. The California Welfare and Institutions Code, Section 10800, Administration as County Function; Establishment of County Department, states, ". . . the administration of public social services in each of the several counties of the state is hereby declared to be a county function and responsibility therefore rests upon the boards of supervisors in the respective counties which federal or state funds are provided . . ." In accordance with this requirement California is mandated to adopt the option of operating the RCA program as publicly administered and modeled after California's CalWORKs Program. On February 1, 2002, the Department adopted the regulations necessary to align the RCA program with CalWORKs.

In accordance with 45 CFR 400, as a condition of RCA/ECA eligibility, the client, unless exempt, must: 1) participate in employability and training services which are designed to assist refugees in becoming employed; 2) go to job interviews as directed; and, 3) accept any appropriate employment offer. These mandatory participation requirements which are contained in Sections 69-208.12 of the CDSS' Special Programs Manual and 42-800.1 of the CDSS Eligibility and Assistance Standards Manual of Policies and Procedures, are explained to the client by the CWD during program orientation.

At intake, the CWD informs the client of available employment/training services and supportive services (i.e., childcare, transportation, work-related expenses). The client is then assessed for employment/training service

needs. The assessment is conducted either by the CWD or by a contracted service provider. The available employment/training services are provided by local service providers. The client's failure to participate and/or accept appropriate employment is reported to the CWD. If good cause is not found, the CWD may impose financial sanctions.

In accordance with the Executive Summary of the Office of Refugee Resettlement's Final Rule Amending Current Requirements Governing Refugee Cash Assistance and Refugee Medical Assistance, the following provisions are applicable to the current RCA program effective May 1, 2000:

- In determining income eligibility, counties must use the \$225 and 50 percent disregards used in the CalWORKs program; and
- Any reception and placement cash received by a refugee may not be considered in determining income eligibility (45 CFR Section 400.66 (d)). (Voluntary resettlement agencies are still contacted to ascertain whether the refugee has refused an offer of employment or has voluntarily quit a job.)

It has always been California's policy that service providers providing case management and employment training services are culturally and linguistically proficient in the refugee cultures and languages so that they are able to meet the needs of refugees with limited English proficiency.

Through arrivals and assurances data provided by ORR and disseminated by RPB, counties are able to evaluate the potential number of refugees that may resettle in their particular county. From this data, the languages can also be identified. It has always been the policy that the language of the individual is recorded in the case file. In those rare instances where service provider staff is not proficient in the language a refugee speaks, arrangements are made for interpreter services. As a matter of course, service providers identify resources to implement language access programs and make the necessary arrangement for the refugee to access and to participate in English language training while concurrently participating in employment training services. In addition, all written materials are routinely translated into a language the refugee understands.

Asylees now may receive refugee benefits under the RCA/ECA program from the date asylum is granted and not from the date of entry into the United States. In addition a new category "Victims of a Severe Form of Trafficking" has been recognized by ORR as eligible to receive benefits RCA/ECA benefits.