



MEPD and TW Bulletin 21-22

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To: Eligibility Services Supervisors and Staff
Program Managers
Regional Directors
Regional Attorneys
Hearings Officers

From: Access and Eligibility Services Program Policy
State Office 2115

Subject: **1. Eligibility for Federal Benefits for Afghan Evacuees**
2. COVID-19 Update: Additional Emergency Allotment Supplement

The information in this bulletin will be included in a future handbook revision. Until the handbook is updated, staff must use the information in this bulletin. If you have any questions regarding the policy information in this bulletin, follow regional procedures.

Active bulletins are posted on the following websites:

- [Medicaid for the Elderly and People with Disabilities Handbook \(MEPDH\)](https://hhs.texas.gov/laws-regulations/handbooks/mepd/policy-bulletins) at <https://hhs.texas.gov/laws-regulations/handbooks/mepd/policy-bulletins>;
- [Texas Works Handbook \(TWH\)](http://hhs.texas.gov/laws-regulations/handbooks/texas-works-handbook/texas-works-bulletins) at <http://hhs.texas.gov/laws-regulations/handbooks/texas-works-handbook/texas-works-bulletins>.

Eligibility for Federal Benefits for Afghan Evacuees

Background

This bulletin replaces guidance provided in [MEPD and TW Bulletin 21-16, 2. Revised - Afghan Special Immigrant Parolee \(SI/SQ\) and Lawful Permanent Resident \(LPR\) Status, released on Oct. 1, 2021.](#)

Afghan nationals who worked with, or on behalf of, the United States and their family members can be granted special immigrant LPR or SI/SQ Parolee status when they relocate to the United States. Under the requirements of the Afghan Allies Protection Act of 2009, Afghans admitted to the United States with special immigrant status are eligible for the same benefits as persons who qualify as refugees under section 207 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA), including the ability to receive federal benefits [Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP), and Medicaid] without a waiting period if the person meets all other eligibility criteria.

The United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) created two new codes of admission for Afghans who qualify for special immigrant visas (SIVs). These include:

- SQ-4, Special Immigrant (SI/SQ) Parolee; and
- SQ-5, Special Immigrant (SI/SQ) Parolee.

Either of these codes are acceptable Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (SAVE) Class of Admission (COA) results for Afghan special immigrants.

The Administration for Children and Families (ACF), Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) provided guidance that an I-94, Arrival/Departure Record, noting SQ or SI Parole, is now a valid form of documentation of a qualifying immigration status for Afghan and Iraqi special immigrants.

The ACF - ORR also clarified that some Afghans are entering the United States as humanitarian parolees. These Afghans do not have special immigrant (SI/SQ) parole status or special immigrant visas (SIV). Previous guidance indicated that humanitarian parolees are not eligible to receive federal benefits in the same manner as special immigrant (SI/SQ) parolees.

However, the recent passage of the Afghanistan Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2022, Public Law No: 117-43, establishes that Afghan humanitarian parolees (without SI/SQ parole) paroled into the United States between July 31, 2021 through Sept. 30, 2022 are eligible to receive the same federal benefits available to

those who qualify as refugees until March 31, 2023, or the term of parole granted, whichever is later. This also includes the spouses or children of these parolees' and the parents or legal guardians of unaccompanied minors paroled into the U.S. after Sept. 30, 2022.

Additionally, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is now admitting certain Afghans as Special Immigrant Conditional Permanent Residents (CPRs). These Afghans are granted special immigrant status and will become LPRs upon the removal of their conditions by DHS. Afghan SI CPRs meet the qualifying immigration status requirement and are also eligible to receive federal benefits.

The USCIS SAVE COA results for people who qualify as special immigrant CPRs include:

- CQ1, Special Immigrant Conditional Permanent Resident, Principal Applicant;
- CQ2, Special Immigrant Conditional Permanent Resident, Spouse of Principal Applicant; or
- CQ3, Special Immigrant Conditional Permanent Resident, Unmarried Child of Principal Applicant (Under Age 21).

Current Policy

[MEPD, Texas Works Medicaid, and TANF](#)

Acceptable verification of immigration status for an Afghan or Iraqi immigrant includes:

- A passport with a stamp noting the person is admitted under a SIV category with one of the following codes of admission:
 - SI-1, SQ-1, SI-2, SQ-2, SI-3, SQ-3, SI-6, SQ-6, SI-7, SQ-7, SI-9, or SQ-9; and a
 - Department of Homeland Security (DHS) stamp or notation, on passport or I-94, showing date of entry.

For special immigrants who qualify as an LPR, acceptable verification of immigration status includes:

- An I-551, Permanent Resident Card, with one of the following codes of admission:
 - SI-1, SQ-1, SI-2, SQ-2, SI-3, SQ-3, SI-6, SQ-6, SI-7, SQ-7, SI-9, or SQ-9.

([TWH A-342](#), TANF and Medical Programs Alien Status Eligibility Charts, Chart B Medical Programs and [MEPD D-8920](#), Entry On or After Aug. 22, 1996 – Qualified Alien No Waiting Period – Chart B)

SNAP

Acceptable verification of immigration status for an Afghan or Iraqi immigrant includes:

- A passport with a stamp noting the person admitted under a SIV category with one of the following codes of admission:
 - SI-1, SQ-1, SI-2, SQ-2, SI-3, or SQ-3; and a
 - Department of Homeland Security (DHS) stamp or notation, on the passport or I-94, showing date of entry.

For special immigrants who qualify as an LPR, acceptable verification of immigration status includes:

- An I-551, Permanent Resident Card, with one of the following codes of admission:
 - SI-6, SQ-6, SI-7, SQ-7, SI-9, or SQ-9.

([TWH A-341](#), SNAP Alien Status Eligibility Charts – Chart A)

For Afghan parolees, acceptable verification of immigration status includes:

- An I-94, Arrival/Departure Record, showing admission for at least one-year under INA Section 212(d)(5) or Parolee; or
- An I-766, Employment Authorization Document (EAD), annotated with A-4 or C-11.

Note: Parolees do not automatically qualify for SNAP benefits. They must meet certain additional eligibility requirements.

New Policy

All Programs

Acceptable verification of immigration status for Afghan or Iraqi **special immigrants** (Principal Applicant, Spouse of Principal Applicant, or Unmarried Child of Principal Applicant Under Age 21) includes any of the following:

- An I-94 noting Special Immigrant Status (SQ or SI) Parole Section 602(B)(1) AAPA/Sec 1059(a) NDAA 2006.
- A passport with a stamp noting the person admitted under a SIV category with one of the following codes of admission:

- Principal Applicant: SI-1, SQ-1, SI-6, or SQ-6;
- Spouse of Principal Applicant: SI-2, SQ-2, SI-7, or SQ-7;
- Unmarried Child of Principal Applicant (Under Age 21): SI-3, SQ-3, SI-8, or SQ-8; and a
- Department of Homeland Security (DHS) stamp or notation, on the passport or I-94, showing date of entry.
- An I-551, Permanent Resident Card, with one of the following codes of admission:
 - Principal Applicant: SI-1, SQ-1, SI-6, or SQ-6;
 - Spouse of Principal Applicant: SI-2, SQ-2, SI-7, or SQ-7; or
 - Unmarried Child of Principal Applicant (Under Age 21): SI-3, SQ-3, SI-8 or SQ-8.
- A DHS/CBP temporary Form I-551 Alien Documentation Identification and Telecommunication (ADIT) stamp; or
- A DHS/USCIS temporary Form I-551 Alien Documentation Identification and Telecommunication (ADIT) stamp.

Note: Accept any of the following special immigrant annotations in the SAVE COA results: SI-1, SQ-1, SI-2, SQ-2, SI-3, SQ-3, SQ-4, SQ-5, SI-6, SQ-6, SI-7, SQ-7, SI-8, or SQ-8.

Acceptable verification of immigration status for Afghan **special immigrant conditional permanent residents** (CPRs) (Principal Applicant, Spouse of Principal Applicant, or Unmarried Child of Principal Applicant) includes any of the following:

- An I-94.
- A passport with a DHS/CBP stamp noting that the person has been admitted under IV Category CQ1, CQ2 or CQ3.
- An I-551, Permanent Resident Card, with an IV code for category CQ1, CQ2 or CQ3.
- A DHS/CBP temporary Form I-551 Alien Documentation Identification and Telecommunication (ADIT) stamp.
- A DHS/USCIS temporary Form I-551 Alien Documentation Identification and Telecommunication (ADIT) stamp.

Afghan Special Immigrant Parolees (SI/SQ), Special Immigrant LPRs, and Special Immigrant CPRs are eligible for:

- Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) for the first seven years from their legal date of entry;
- TANF for the first five years from their legal date of entry; and

- SNAP from their legal date of entry.

Note: Afghan special immigrants retain their eligibility even if they adjust their status to LPR.

Afghan **humanitarian parolees** must have:

- SAVE results that indicate the person is an Afghan humanitarian parolee paroled into the United States between July 31, 2021 through Sept. 30, 2022 under section 212(d)(5) of the INA.

Additionally, Afghan **humanitarian parolees** must also provide one of the following:

- Form I-766, Employment Authorization Document (EAD) with a C11 category (regardless of age).
- I-94 noting Humanitarian Parole (per INA section 212(d)(5)(A)) and/or a "OAR" designation.
- A passport with any of the following annotations:
 - CBP "PAROLED" stamp;
 - DHS/CBP admission stamp noting Operation Allies Refuge or "OAR";
 - DHS/CBP admission stamp noting Operation Allies Welcome or "OAW"; or
 - DHS/CBP admission stamp noting "DT".

Note: Provided all other eligibility criteria is met, Afghan humanitarian parolees qualify for federal benefits (SNAP, TANF, Medicaid/CHIP) if they were:

- Paroled into the U.S. between July 31, 2021 and Sept. 30, 2022; or
- Paroled into the U.S. after Sept. 30, 2022 and
 - Are the spouse or child of persons paroled between July 31, 2021 and Sept. 30, 2022; or
 - Are the parent or legal guardian of persons determined to be an unaccompanied minor.

Afghan humanitarian parolees' eligibility for federal benefits is time-limited until March 31, 2023, or the term of parole granted, whichever is later.

Follow policy clearance request procedures for questions about documents or immigration statuses for Afghan evacuees not listed in this bulletin.

Automation

[Special Immigrants](#)

In the **Alien/Refugee - Details** LUW, select the appropriate document type (I-94, passport or I-551) in the **Document** field.

If the applicant provides an I-94 or a passport, select Special Immigrant Visa, Iraqi/Afghan – Code SI1, SI2, SI3, SI6, SI7, SI8, SQ1, SQ2, SQ3, SQ6, SQ7, SQ8 (I-94) in the **Annotation** field.

Note: Follow the instructions provided in Contingency Processing Method (CPM) #1001308 for Special Immigrants applying for MEPD Medicaid who provide a passport.

If the applicant provides an I-551, select *LPR Special Immigrant Visa, Iraqi/Afghan* – Code SI1, SI2, SI3, SI6, SI7, SI8, SQ1, SQ2, SQ3, SQ6, SQ7, SQ8 (I-551) in the **Annotation** field.

[Special Immigrant Conditional Permanent Residents and Afghan Humanitarian Parolees](#)

Until TIERS is updated to include these new documents and statuses, use CPM #1001308 to enter immigration information for Afghan evacuees.

Correspondence

Correspondence changes are not required.

Handbook

The TWH is currently scheduled to be updated in the April 2022 revision.

The MEPDH is currently scheduled to be updated in the June 2022 revision.

Training

Training is not required.

Effective Date

This policy is effective with the release of this bulletin.

COVID-19 Update: Additional Emergency Allotment Supplement

Background

On January 27, 2020, the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services declared that a public health emergency exists nationwide due to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. Additionally, on March 13, 2020, Governor Greg Abbott also declared a state of disaster for all counties in Texas due to the COVID-19 outbreak. HHSC is providing the following temporary guidance regarding policies and procedures for processing case actions during the COVID-19 public health emergency.

COVID-19 Policy

SNAP

HHSC has been granted approval from the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) to issue November 2021 EA supplements to participating SNAP households. Households who are approved for SNAP in November 2021 will automatically be issued supplements that will bring the household up to the maximum monthly allotment for the household's size. All SNAP households will receive a minimum of \$95 in EA supplements.

All EA supplements will be automatically issued on the SNAP household's existing EBT card. SNAP households do not need to take any action to receive EA supplements.

HHSC will issue EA supplements for November, on a randomized staggered schedule starting November 1, 2021. The expected completion of November EA supplement issuance for active SNAP households is November 5, 2021. Households who are determined eligible for SNAP after November 5, 2021 will be issued their supplement within approximately 60 days from disposition. Staff should call in a ticket when the SNAP household reports not receiving the supplement by that timeframe.

TIERS will add the following case comment "COVID-19 SNAP supplements issued" for a case where the EA supplement was issued. HHSC will not be sending a notice to households regarding the EA supplement.

Additionally, during the pandemic, Quality Control and other case reading reviews will continue to ensure accuracy. Although SNAP households will receive a minimum of \$95 in EA supplements, staff must still ensure regular monthly benefits are calculated correctly when processing any case actions.

Automation

November EA supplements for active SNAP households are expected to be issued between November 1, 2021, and November 5, 2021. Households who are determined eligible for SNAP after November 5, 2021 will be issued their November EA supplement within approximately 60 days from disposition.

Correspondence

Correspondence changes are not required.

Handbook

Handbook updates are not required.

Training

Training is not required.

Effective Date

This policy is effective with the release of this bulletin. Staff will be notified when the COVID-19 policy and clarifications no longer apply.