

NUMBER

#26-06-02C

DATE

October 21, 2026

OF INTEREST TO

County Directors

Social Services Supervisors and
Staff

Financial Assistance Supervisors
and Staff

Tribal Nation Directors

Employment Services Providers

Community Partners Agencies
and Advocates

Resettlement Network Service
Providers

ACTION/DUE DATE

Please read information and
prepare for implementation

EXPIRATION DATE

October 20, 2028

Corrected #26-06-02: Eligibility Period for Refugee Medical Assistance Increased to Twelve Months

TOPIC

This bulletin provides information on the Refugee Medical Assistance (RMA) program. The eligibility period for RMA which was recently increased from four months to eight months has been corrected, and has now increased to 12 months.

PURPOSE

Provide eligibility workers with guidance about how and when to apply the new policy.

CONTACT

For RMA, submit policy questions via HealthQuest.

Contact the TSS Help Desk with all MAXIS-related questions.

SIGNED



Rachele King
State Refugee Coordinator

TERMINOLOGY NOTICE

The terminology used to describe people we serve has changed over time. The Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) supports the use of "People First" language.

I. Background

Refugee Medical Assistance (RMA) provides short-term health care coverage for newly arrived people with Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR)-eligible immigration statuses who are not otherwise eligible for Medical Assistance (MA).

People granted the following immigration statuses or classifications are eligible for RMA if they meet all other eligibility factors:

- Refugee
- Asylee
- Certified Victim of Trafficking
- Iraq or Afghanistan Special Immigrant Visa
- Certain Amerasians from Vietnam
- Cuban or Haitian Entrant
- Certain Afghan Humanitarian Parolees
- Certain Ukrainian Humanitarian Parolees

The Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) adjusts the Refugee Medical Assistance (RMA) eligibility period based on funding availability, arrival trends, and program data, and in alignment with federal authority granted ORR under [45 CFR 400.211](#).

On July 14, 2026, ORR announced an increase in the RMA eligibility period from four months to eight months, effective immediately, and directed the DHS Resettlement Programs Office (RPO) to implement this change.

On October 1, 2026, ORR announced a correction to the July 2026 RMA program policy, correcting the eligibility period from eight months to a maximum of 12 months.

This corrected version replaces [Bulletin #26-06-02: Eligibility Period for Refugee Medical Assistance Increased to Eight Months](#), which was published on August 17, 2026.

II. New Policy Changes

Effective immediately, the RMA eligibility period (the maximum number of months of eligibility) is increased from eight to 12 months.

- The RMA eligibility period begins on the person's ORR eligibility date, which is either:
 - Date of first entry into the United States with an ORR-eligible status, or
 - Date an ORR-eligible status is granted, whichever is earlier
- People whose ORR eligibility date is on or after January 1, 2026, are eligible for RMA for up to 12 months from their eligibility date. People in this situation are eligible for retroactive eligibility if they meet all other eligibility factors. See more information in the next section.
- People whose ORR eligibility date was prior to January 1, 2026, are not eligible under this new policy; they are subject to the four-month policy.
- The 12-month period starts from the date of entry or status granted and runs consecutively through the 12 months without pause, even if the person is not active on RMA.

For people who have an ORR eligibility date of January 1, 2026, or after, who were initially granted four months of RMA, eligibility for the additional months will require that the participants meet all the following conditions:

- Had an initial healthcare application processed and approved for RMA
- Ineligible for Medical Assistance (MA)
- RMA active for less than 12 months
- Maintain an ORR-eligible status or classification
- Below the income and asset limit for RMA

The Department of Human Services Resettlement Programs Office (RPO) will review open RMA cases, RMA cases closed since January 1, 2026, and RMA cases closed under "Bulletin #26-06-02: Eligibility Period for Refugee Medical Assistance Increased to Eight Months" for eligibility during this transition to the 12-month period. RPO will reach out directly to county workers for any cases requiring more action.

1. Handling extended eligibility for active RMA cases

Current enrollees who were originally approved for a four-month RMA eligibility period and whose date of entry or status grant is on or after January 1, 2026, must now be redetermined for 12 months. A new application is not required. The additional months must be reviewed to see if they meet the above conditions and case noted.

For example: A refugee entered the U.S. on May 15, 2026, and applied for health care. They were approved for RMA to start on May 15, 2026. Since the refugee entered after January 1, 2026, the person is eligible for up to 12 months of RMA if all other eligibility criteria are met. May 2026 would be considered the first month of the 12-month period, and April 2027 would be the 12th month. RMA must then be closed for May 2027.

The RMA participant is exempt from the six-month review. The annual review due date for healthcare would be the month after the twelfth month. The RMA case must be closed for the thirteenth month, allowing at least a 10-day advance notice of adverse action.

2. Handling new applications for RMA

Effective immediately, new health care applications reviewed for RMA must be reviewed for the 12-month eligibility period. Eligibility and benefits begin on the application date, if no retro months are requested. The RMA participant is exempt from the six-month income review. The RMA case must be closed for the thirteenth month, allowing at least 10-day advance notice of adverse action.

A person can request any retroactive months, but the eligibility can only begin if certain criteria are met for RMA. The retroactive determination of eligibility can only go back up to three months from the entry date or the date the ORR-eligible status was granted. Retroactive months can only be approved if there were medical needs during that timeframe.

For new applicants who arrive in Minnesota from another state, eligibility for Minnesota health care programs begins on the date of their application. However, their RMA 12-month period starts from their

date of entry to the U.S. in ORR-eligible status or the date their ORR-eligible status is granted. If any retro months are requested, follow the Medical Assistance (MA) retro coverage requirements from the date they enter Minnesota.

III. Eligibility System Workaround

The eligibility system is not yet updated to determine eligibility for the 12-month policy. Workers must complete the following workaround in the eligibility system to determine the correct results for the initial application and closure for the thirteenth month.

At Initial Application approval:

1. The application date is the date the agency received the application.
2. Determine the 12-month eligibility period.
3. Set the six-month review date from the date of first entry with an ORR-eligible status or date an ORR-eligible status is granted. The recertification (ER) date is the thirteenth month from the date of first entry with an ORR-eligible status or the date an ORR-eligible status is granted. (RMA participants cannot be recertified; the RMA case must be closed at the end of the twelfth month.)
4. Update all necessary panels and FIAT in all incomes and assets for RMA results. See POLI TEMP for RMA procedures.
5. Approve the RMA.
6. Update MMIS with the approved RMA coverage span.
7. Case note all actions taken.

For the RMA closure month approval due to exhausting the 12 months:

1. Generate RMA results for the thirteenth month.
2. In **FIAT, FAILED** for Applicant Eligible on the Case Results Test (FRCR) screen. Saved the RMA FIAT result. (This is a workaround for the closure, until the system is updated.)
3. Approve the RMA to close.
4. Update MMIS with an end date if it does not have one. The RMA period must have an end date on the last day of the twelfth month.
5. Case note all actions taken.
6. Add the worker comment to the RMA closure notice.

Use the following worker comment for RMA Closure notice:

Your Refugee Medical Assistance has ended because you have reached the maximum number of eligible months, which is 12 months. You may apply for other healthcare programs if you still need assistance. Please contact your eligibility worker if you have questions.

For RMA cases closed due to the four-month or eight-month policy, to review for the 12-month policy:

1. Reinstate the closed RMA.
2. If the RMA **FAILED** for the eight-month test, update that to **PASSED**.
3. Update the review dates for the six-month and annual reviews. If the sixth-month review has already passed, update the six-month date field to be six months after the annual review date.
4. For any retroactive RMA months, review the eligibility for additional months outlined in section II.
5. Update MMIS to reflect the new approved RMA eligibility period. The RMA period must have an end date on the last day of the twelfth month.
6. The RMA must be closed in the eligibility system for the thirteenth month. RMA must not be allowed to remain open beyond the thirteenth month, even if determining eligibility for other healthcare programs.

IV. Policy Manuals and Eligibility System

The Minnesota Health Care Programs Eligibility Policy Manual (MHCP EPM), ONESource, and POLI TEMP will be updated to reflect the RMA policy changes.

The eligibility system will be updated to reflect the RMA policy change. In the meantime, follow the eligibility system workaround guidance listed in this bulletin.

V. Q&A

Q1: If someone became ORR-eligible before January 1, 2026, and has RMA active after January 2026, does this 12-month eligibility period apply to them?

A1: No. The eligibility falls under the four-month RCA policy. The 12-month eligibility period only applies to people who became ORR-eligible on or after January 1, 2026.

Q2: With this new policy, how should we handle active RMA cases before January 1, 2026?

A2: RMA cases that were active before January 1, 2026, will not be impacted by this new 12-month policy.

Q3: Can an eligibility worker pause the RMA eligibility months and start them at another time?

A3: No. The RMA eligibility timeline runs consecutively from the date the person became ORR eligible and does not stop until the available months (maximum of 12 months) are exhausted, even if the person did not apply for benefits or RMA is closed.

Q4: Does this new 12-month eligibility policy give people who have already exhausted their original four months of RMA another 12 months of RMA eligibility?

A4: No. The RMA benefit is a one-time benefit. If the four-month period has already been exhausted, they must be reviewed for up to eight additional months, following the new 12-month policy changes outlined in this bulletin. The total number of RMA months cannot exceed 12 months.

VI. Authority

Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR):

- [Federal Register Notice: Change in Eligibility Period](#), issued on July 14, 2026.
- [Dear Colleague Letter 26-05: Extension of Refugee Cash Assistance and Refugee Medical Assistance Eligibility Period](#), issued on July 14, 2026, and revised October 1, 2026.
- [Federal Register Notice: Period for Refugee Cash Assistance and Refugee Medical Assistance; Correction](#), issued on October 1, 2026.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Advisory

This information is available in accessible formats for people with disabilities by calling 651-431-4049 or toll-free at 800-657-3739 by using your preferred relay service. For other information on disability rights and protections, contact the agency's ADA coordinator.