

ACCESSING BENEFITS WITH AN HHS/OTIP LETTER

A Certification Letter from the Dept. of Health and Human Services, Office on Trafficking in Persons (HHS/OTIP) grants benefits to the same extent as a refugee.

Your Benefits Start Date is **bolded** and underlined in the middle of your HHS letter. You can apply for benefits beginning on this date. The letter does not expire, but some benefits are time-limited.

If you have been granted a T visa, Continued Presence, or a T visa Bona Fide Determination, but have not received your HHS/OTIP Certification Letter, see page 2.

Remember: keep your letter in a safe place! You will need your original HHS letter to apply for benefits.

BENEFITS AND SERVICES YOU MAY BE ELIGIBLE FOR:

You must meet other eligibility requirements (such as income limits) for certain benefits. If you do not meet these other requirements, you will not be able to receive the benefit or service.



HEALTH & MEDICAL INSURANCE

- **Medicaid*:** Health coverage for people with low income and limited resources.
- **Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)*:** Health insurance for children under 18 years old with low income and who are uninsured.
** Medicaid and CHIP eligibility are scheduled to end 10/1/26, per H.R. 1. However, this may differ by state and some exceptions may apply.*
- **Refugee Medical Assistance (RMA):** Time-limited medical help for refugees and other special populations who are not eligible for Medicaid. *RMA is only available for up to 8 months following your Benefits Start Date.*



EDUCATION & JOB TRAINING

- **Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA):** Grants, loans, and work-study to help pay for education.
- **Refugee Support Services:** Services include English language training, vocational training, and job placement and retention.
- **Job Corps:** Career training program for youth 16 to 24 years old with employment authorization.
- **Matching Grant Program:** Helps ORR-eligible populations overcome barriers and find jobs quickly.



MONEY

- **Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF):** Cash and work opportunities for families and children under 18 years old.
- **Supplemental Security Income (SSI):** Cash assistance to meet basic needs (food, shelter, and clothing) for people who are blind, aged, or have a disability and have little or no income and resources.
- **Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA):** Time-limited assistance for refugees and other special populations over 18 who are not eligible for SSI or TANF. *RCA is available for up to 8 months following your Benefits Start Date.*



REFUGEE HEALTH SERVICES

- **Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) Medical and Mental Health Services:** Screenings, diagnosis, treatment, and preventative care.
- **Refugee Health Promotion (RHP):** Health education classes, medical and mental health navigation, groups, and peer support meetings.
- **Support for Trauma Affected Refugees (STAR):** Case management services for individuals who have symptoms of trauma.



HOUSING

- **Public Housing Program:** Affordable housing for families and individuals with low income.
- **Housing Choice Voucher Program:** Housing voucher program to help families and individuals with low income pay rent. *Dependent on availability.*

Note: Eligibility for SNAP (food assistance) ended on November 1, 2025 as directed by H.R. 1.

FOLLOW THESE STEPS TO REQUEST A CERTIFICATION LETTER:

You are eligible for an HHS Certification Letter if you:

- Were granted a T visa or bona fide determination for a T visa (I-797 Notice of Action)
- Were granted Continued Presence by a law enforcement agency

If you have not received your HHS Certification Letter, follow these steps:

Do you have your Social Security Card and Employment Authorization Document (EAD)?

Some benefits are time-limited. It may be better to wait until you've received these documents before requesting your Certification Letter.

*Experiencing delays?
Consult with your attorney.*

Ask the attorney who filed your T visa application, the **law enforcement officer/victim assistance specialist** who submitted your request for Continued Presence, or your **case manager** if they submitted a request to OTIP for your HHS Certification Letter. **If they have not, ask them to do so.**

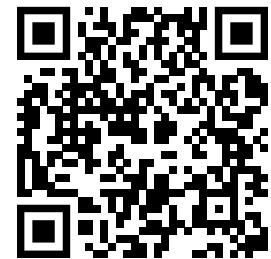
They submitted the request!

If you have a safe place to keep your letter, ask them to send you the original copy.

They need help to submit the request. Share this resource with them.

They cannot submit the request. You can submit the request yourself!

Use the QR code to access step-by-step instructions on how to submit the Request for Certification (RFC) through OTIP's Shepherd system. If you need additional support, contact OTIP at Trafficking@acf.hhs.gov or 866-401-5510. Once the RFC is submitted, you should receive your letter in the mail.



Apply for benefits with your letter

Apply online or go to a benefit-issuing agency. The best way to apply may depend on your state.

More information is on page 3.

HOW TO APPLY FOR BENEFITS

Apply online or find a benefit-issuing agency near you.

When you apply, you will need:

- ✓ Your HHS Certification Letter
- ✓ Social Security Card
- ✓ Proof of household income *for all working household members*. A household member is any person you live with or share expenses with, related or unrelated.

If you have not received your **Social Security number**, go to <https://www.ssa.gov/locator>



or or scan the QR code to find the closest Social Security office.

Proof of income may include:



Recent pay stubs



Employment offer letter



Bank statements showing regular income



W-2 form

* If you don't have proof of income, benefit-issuing agencies may accept a written, signed letter from you or your employer stating your income and employment.

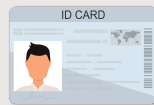
Your original HHS Certification Letter and Social Security Card are required.

When applying for public benefits additional documents are not required, but to avoid delays, it can help to bring any identifying documents you have, such as:

- State-issued ID, unexpired passport, or original birth certificate
- If applicable, proof of car ownership, property ownership, child care, recent bank statements, or rental agreement



REQUIRED



OPTIONAL

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What if I don't speak English?

Benefits offices are required by federal law to provide free language interpretation services to individuals with limited English proficiency.

What if they want to verify the HHS letter?

If they question the validity of the letter, they can verify it's authenticity at <https://shepherd.otip.acf.gov/shepherdpublic/letterverification>

Can my family members access benefits?

If you have a T visa, certain family members may be eligible for T derivative status. Speak to an attorney to apply. If your family members already have a T derivative status, they can apply for benefits with your HHS Certification Letter. They do not receive their own HHS Certification Letter.



NEED HELP ACCESSING BENEFITS OR SERVICES?

Call USCRI's TVAP Program at 1-800-307-4712 or email TVAP@refugees.org.