

# Steps to Apply for Benefits and Services with an HHS Eligibility Letter or Interim Assistance Letter

A foreign national minor who is a victim of a severe form of trafficking in persons is eligible to apply for benefits and services to the same extent as a refugee after the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) issues the child an Interim Assistance or Eligibility Letter.

## STEP 1



Determine which Letter the Child Received

## STEP 2



Connect the Child to Comprehensive Case Management Services

## STEP 3



Apply for a Non-work Social Security Number (SSN)

## STEP 4



Apply for Benefits and Services

## STEP 1

### Determine which Letter the Child Received



Determine whether the child received an Interim Assistance Letter or Eligibility Letter from HHS. The child's **Benefits Start Date** is the bolded and underlined date on the letter. The Interim Assistance period lasts up to 90 days (120 days, if extended). Eligibility Letters do not expire. When applying for benefits, **the child must bring the original letter to the benefit-issuing agency** and should keep it throughout their life, even when moving between placements and care providers. While copies can be made for recordkeeping purposes, the child should keep the original letter to apply for benefits and services.

## STEP 2

### Connect the Child to Comprehensive Case Management Services

HHS provides free case management services to foreign national minor victims of trafficking located across the United States. Case managers, such as one within the Trafficking Victims Assistance Program (TVAP), provide trafficking-specific case management services. If the child is not already connected to TVAP, use the [map](#) on the HHS website to determine which program to connect the child to based on location. These case managers can also help the child access benefits, including, but not limited to the ones below:

#### Benefits

- Food Assistance
- Educational Services
- Housing Assistance
- Cash Assistance
- Mental Health Services
- Medical Services



# STEP 3

## Apply for a Non-work Social Security Number

A case manager can help the child apply for a non-work Social Security number (SSN). This should be done as soon as possible so that the child is able to use the SSN to apply for benefits and services to the same extent as a refugee. Visit the [Social Security Administration \(SSA\) website](#) to locate the nearest SSA . Depending on the location, the child may need to make an appointment in advance.

When visiting the SSA office, remember to bring the following:

- **Eligibility Letter or Interim Assistance Letter** (required)
- **Birth Certificate** (recommended/not required)
- **Photo ID state ID, non-expired passport, school ID** (recommended/not required)

# STEP 4

## Apply for Benefits and Services

A case manager can help the child gather all needed documents to begin applying for **benefits and services**, such as SNAP, Medicaid, and TANF, at local social services offices or benefit-issuing agencies. **Applications for Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA) should be high priority as the application window expires 8 months after the child's Benefits Start Date.** If the child is in the care of the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR), there are some benefits that the child is not eligible for until they are no longer in ORR care, such as RCA. If the child was issued an Eligibility Letter, the child is eligible to apply for the **URM Program**, a federally-funded foster care program available to foreign national minor victims of trafficking.



When visiting the benefit-issuing agency, remember to bring the following:

- **Eligibility Letter or Interim Assistance Letter** (required)
- **Non-work Social Security ID** (required)
- **Proof of Household Income** *paystubs/proof of income for all working household members* (required)
- **Photo ID state ID, non-expired passport, school ID** (recommended/not required)

If more information is needed about the process to apply for benefits in the minor's state, contact the appropriate [state refugee and health coordinators](#).

The [National Human Trafficking Hotline \(NHTH\)](#) at 888-373-7888 is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to help provide support and guidance on getting connected to service providers in the minor's local area.

Benefit-issuing agencies can call the toll-free **Trafficking Verification Line** at 866-401-5510 to verify the validity of the minor's Interim Assistance or Eligibility Letter.

