ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN & FAMILIES
Office of Refugee Resettlement | 330 C Street, S.W., Washington, DC 20201
www.acf.hhs.gov/orr

Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR)
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) on Unaccompanied Afghan Minors (UAM)
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This FAQ document is intended for use by ORR staff, Unaccompanied Children (UC) Program care providers, including Emergency Intake Sites, and Unaccompanied Refugee Minor (URM) Program providers serving UAM.

The FAQ covers the following topics:

- UAM Lawful Status
- Admission into the UC Program for UAM
- Change of Address
- Interpreters
- Legal Services
- Age Redeterminations and Age Outs
- Family Reunifications in the United States
- Family Reunifications in a Foreign Country
- Long Term Foster Care (LTFC)
- Unaccompanied Refugee Minor (URM) Program

UAM Lawful Status

Q: Do UAM have permanent lawful status in the U.S.?
A: UAM have humanitarian parole (e.g., lawful entry) which does not confer lawful status in the U.S. UAM will need to pursue immigration relief, such as asylum or Special Immigrant Juvenile Status. UAM are referred to Legal Service Providers (LSPs) and Child Advocates while they are in the UC program, who orient UAM to their potential options for immigration relief and may assist in that process.

Admission into the UC Program

Q: Where can I find guidance for UAM who should be referred to the UC network of care providers as a UAM?
A: See Field Guidance #19: UAM Processing, which reflects ORR's internal agency management of Afghan minors.
Q: Are UAM referred to UC care providers from safe havens?

A: In some cases, yes. If a child is referred from a safe haven (U.S. military bases where Afghans evacuees are temporarily located), there will be a referral in the UC Portal, denoting from which safe haven the referral was made. In those cases UC care providers will receive a notification through the UC Portal (https://ucportal.acf.hhs.gov) as they would any other referral.

Q: Who completes the process to retrieve the I-94?
A: A UC care provider case manager will conduct this. If you are having trouble finding the I-94, please elevate this to your assigned ORR Federal Field Specialist (ORR/FFS). The ORR/FFS will work with U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) to obtain the document. The I-94 is part of the necessary information that the ORR URM team will need to have in order to process the UAM's eligibility. This document is needed to submit the URM application and can be found online here: https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/#/recent-search

Change of Address

Q: How can I change a UAM's address with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS)?
A: USCIS can be notified of a change of address by filing the Form AR-11, Alien's Change of Address Card, online using the following webpage:
https://egov.uscis.gov/coa/displayCOAForm.do

For any issues or questions about an address change request for UAM and Afghan Humanitarian Parolees, email: nbcafghancoa@uscis.dhs.gov

Interpreters

Q: Can UC care providers use interpreters even though background check results haven't been received by the program?
A: Yes, as long as those interpreters are always directly supervised by staff who have completed and cleared those background checks and are not left alone with children. Please refer to Field Guidance #22 Interpreters Working with the Unaccompanied Children (UC) Program and to the ORR Policy Guide § 4.3.3 Employee Background Investigations.

Q: May a UC care provider use a language line to communicate with UAM?
A: Yes. The UAM must be able to communicate in their preferred language. ORR requires on-site interpreters, whenever possible. UC care providers relying solely on the use of a language line should work with their ORR Project Officer (ORR/PO) to address any budgetary or operational issue preventing the onboarding of staff, interpreters, or volunteers with appropriate language skills to serve UAM in person.

Q: What is ORR seeing from the field as best or promising practices in interpretation?
A: It is important to try to use the services of interpreters who specialize in a particular area relevant for our populations of children, such as medical interpretation, mental health services, or interpretation focused on educational assessments or clinical service provision. It is

important to try to tailor interpretation services to the unique needs, attributes, and gender of the children in care.

Q: Can an interpretation company sign the ORR-required Interpreter Agreement with the Office of Refugee Resettlement on behalf of its interpreters, as required under Field Guidance #22?
A: Yes, ORR will accept an interpreter agreement that is signed by an interpretation company on behalf of its employed interpreters. Under this scenario, the individual interpreters from that company will not need to sign the ORR-required interpreter agreement individually. See Field Guidance #22: Interpreters Working with the Unaccompanied Children (UC) Program for more information.

Q: If an interpreter company has already signed the Interpreter Agreement with the Office of Refugee Resettlement, does each UC care provider program have to obtain an additional signed Agreement with that company?
A: An interpretation service only needs to sign the *Interpreter Agreement with the Office of Refugee Resettlement* once. If the interpretation service has already signed the *Agreement*, then they can provide a signed copy to the UC care provider. ORR encourages the administrators of each UC care provider program to notify their staff which interpreters or interpretation services have already been approved (e.g., those who have signed the ORR *Interpreter Agreement with the Office of Refugee Resettlement*). The administrators of each UC care provider program must provide the signed *Interpreter Agreement with the Office of Refugee Resettlement* to their ORR Project Officer (ORR/PO) and ORR Federal Field Specialist (ORR/FFS).

Legal Services

Q: Do UAM in the ORR UC Program have Child Advocates?
A: ORR may appoint a Child Advocate for a UAM in the UC Program (see ORR Policy Guide § 2.3.4 Child Advocates). A Child Advocate is an independent third party who is appointed by ORR for select unaccompanied children to make recommendations to various stakeholders regarding the best interests of the child.

Q: What legal services are available to UAM while they are in the ORR UC Program?
A: UAM are referred to Legal Service Providers (LSPs) when they are in the UC program. An ORR-funded LSP coordinates legal services and pro-bono representation for unaccompanied children in ORR custody. UAM should get a Know Your Rights orientation, a legal screening (either while the UAM is in care or post-release), assistance in court as well as direct representation (at the discretion of the child and LSP/pro bono attorney).

The legal resource guide for UC is located here: https://www.acf.hhs.gov/orr/policy-guidance/unaccompanied-children-program#legal

Age Redeterminations and Age Outs

Q: Who can I contact for UAM age redetermination resources?
A: Please email the UAM resource mailbox for questions on UAM age redeterminations: UAM@acf.hhs.gov.

Q: What if I do not know a UAM's date of birth?
A: ORR uses the date of birth provided to ORR by the referring agency (e.g. DHS), as found on government records, or as identified either by the UAM or people who know the UAM. It is common for Afghans not to know or have documentation of their exact date of birth. ORR will determine the age of UAM based on the information provided.

If there is a question about whether the UAM is an adult (18 years of age or older), follow ORR Policy Guide § 1.6.1 Unaccompanied Children in HHS Custody and ORR Policy Guide § 1.6.2 Instructions. Both describe some situations where ORR may make an age determination/age redetermination for children when they are in ORR custody.

Q: What happens if a UAM is aging out of the UC program? Who are the ORR points of contacts for UAM age outs?
A: All UAM who are about to age out may be referred to the URM Program (see below section). However, the URM application process is lengthy, and the URM program may not be a good fit for all UAM. Since there are several variables into being placed into the URM program, there should always be alternative post-18 options as URM placement cannot be guaranteed. If a UAM chooses, they may go to a safe haven or age out into the community. Generally, a UAM must be transferred out of a UC care provider facility once they turn 18 unless (1) the UC care provider facility is licensed to care for adult youth; (2) the UC care provider is able to separate the UAM from UC at the program; (3) the UAM wishes to remain at the facility; and (4) the UC care provider has agreed to continue to care for UAM post-18. UC care providers that are interested in continuing to care for UAM post-18 should notify their ORR Project Officers as soon as possible.

ORR works with safe haven case managers and care providers to connect UAM turning 18 with a resettlement agency that can assist the youth once they have reached adulthood. Please see Field Guidance #9: Interim Guidance – Age Outs and Post-18 Planning. The Post-18 Plan will include coordination with refugee and culturally appropriate community-based programs to provide support to the UAM upon their release. If you have any children on your caseload who are aging out in the next 60 days, ORR will work with you to identify a resettlement agency that can assist the UC with their transition. For questions on age outs, please contact the UAM resource inbox and include the UAM's name, A number, and date of birth, flagging the age out: UAM@acf.hhs.gov.

For assistance with UAM who have aged out and are returning to a safe haven, including transportation questions, contact the UAM resource inbox: UAM@acf.hhs.gov.

Q: Is a Post-18 Plan required for UAM?
A: Yes. ORR requires that UC care providers provide a written Post-18 Plan, at least 2 weeks in advance of a UAM's 18th birthday (See Field Guidance #9: Interim Guidance – Age Outs and Post-18 Planning). Each Post-18 Plan identifies an appropriate non-secure placement for the youth and identifies any necessary social support services for them. The youth should be part of the development of the Post-18 Plan. When a UAM transfers out of the UC Program's care, if the youth wishes, the case manager can do a referral to refugee resettlement agency where they may be connected with community-based services. It is strongly encouraged to connect with a resettlement agency near the youth's family or friends, or the broader Afghan community. The UAM may also go to a safe haven if the youth has family or community connections there.

If you are aware that a UAM is aging out, please alert your FFS and the UAM resource inbox: UAM@acf.hhs.gov.

All Afghan parolees (including UAM who age out of the UC program) are able to apply for asylum. All UAM who age out will be referred for post-release services (PRS) (See ORR Policy Guide § 6.2 Post Release Services) and will receive safety and wellbeing calls (See ORR Policy Guide § 2.8.4 Safety and Well Being Follow Up Call).

Please see resources regarding benefits for Afghan Humanitarian Parolees: https://www.acf.hhs.gov/orr/programs/refugees/afghan-assistance-resources

Please see the Reception & Placement (R&P) Agency Contact List and state-by-state affiliate directory: https://www.wrapsnet.org/rp-agency-contacts/

Q: Do I report a UAM who is aging out to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Field Office Juvenile Coordinator (FOJC)? Additionally, are Post-18 Plans required to be sent to them to the for UAM age outs?
A: No, the FOJC does not need to be contacted since each UAM is a humanitarian parolee and not in removal proceedings.

Q: Are UAM eligible to receive a social security number and/or an Employment Authorization Document (EAD)?
A: Yes, UAM are eligible to receive a social security number and an EAD. Case managers are encouraged to assist eligible UAM who wish to obtain a social security number and/or an EAD in obtaining them. UAM will need a copy of the EAD to apply for a social security card, so it would be more efficient to opt-in with the EAD application, as both applications are completed with one step on the I-765 application.

A UAM can apply for a Social Security Number by following the instructions at www.ssa.gov/ssnumber/.

Information is located on the USCIS webpage on filing for the Employment Authorization Document (EAD): https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/information-for-afghans, under the "Afghan Parolees - Working in the United States" banner.

Another resource is: https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/document/fact-sheets/Information_Sheet_for_Afghans_Departing_Safe_Havens-English.pdf

Family Reunifications in the United States

Q: Can UAM, who are reunified with sponsors here in the United States, access benefits?
A: All UAM, including those who are reunified with sponsors, are eligible to receive PRS (see ORR Policy Guide § 6.2 Post Release Services), ORR refugee resettlement benefits, and federal "mainstream" benefits.

Please see the following links for more information:
https://www.acf.hhs.gov/orr/programs/refugees/afghan-assistance-resources,
https://www.wrapsnet.org/afghans-granted-humanitarian-parole/

Q: Who do I communicate with if I am reunifying a UAM with their family at a safe haven?
A: Before reunifying a UAM with family at a safe haven, you **must** contact the ORR UC Site Lead at the relevant safe haven to ensure that the safe haven is aware of the reunification. UC Site Leads must notify the safe haven's command leadership, security providers, and other relevant stakeholders from the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD), U.S. Department of State (DOS) and/or the International Rescue Committee (IRC) of the UAM's arrival. For the current list of ORR UC Site Leads at safe havens, contact the UAM resource inbox: UAM@acf.hhs.gov.

Q: How do I coordinate transportation for a UAM going to a safe haven?
A: As soon as transportation is booked, ORR's transportation contractor, MVM, is responsible for communicating to the safe haven UC Site Lead the names and phone numbers for the transportation specialist escorts, as well as the travel itinerary with expected date/time of arrival. As soon as available, MVM also provides the transporting vehicle information to safe haven ORR UC Site Leads. The UC care provider can also provide the transportation to the safe haven. They must work with their ORR/FFS in order to do this to coordinate with the proper stakeholders.

The safe haven ORR UC Site Lead is responsible for communicating with relevant parties at the safe haven with the below information for the UAM:

- UAM's name and Hummingbird[1] #

[1] Hummingbird is a case management system that stores Afghan Humanitarian Parolee data.

- UAM's sponsor name and Hummingbird #
- Transportation details provided by MVM

For any transportation questions for UAM who have aged out and are returning to a safe haven, contact the UAM resource inbox: UAM@acf.hhs.gov.

For family tracing at safe havens, email ORR_Family_Tracing@acf.hhs.gov.

Family Reunifications in a Foreign Country

*Q: Can a parent or legal guardian of a UAM, who is living abroad (**not in Afghanistan**) file a Family Reunification Application and reunify with their child?*
A: Yes, a parent/legal guardian may request reunification with their child to a location outside of the United States. The parent/legal guardian submits that request to the U.S. Consulate or Embassy in their host country. Generally, the parent/legal guardian works with that host country's immigration ministry to obtain clearance for their child to enter the host country.

The potential sponsor must complete a Family Reunification Application (see ORR Policy Guide § 2.2.3 The Family Reunification Application) including the potential sponsor's proof of identity, proof of relationship to the UAM, proof of address, etc. The care provider must follow ORR's standard sponsor assessment process, including completing the Sponsor Assessment and, if needed, an international home study (see ORR Policy Guide § 2.4 Sponsor Assessment Criteria and Home Studies.)

Please contact the UAM resource inbox for any questions regarding this type of reunification, UAM@acf.hhs.gov.

Q: How are relationships between a UAM and a parent living abroad verified?
A: A valid birth certificate can be used to verify proof of relationship (See other forms of proof of relationship in ORR Policy Guide § 2.2.4 Required Documentation for Submission with the Application for Release). If the UAM does not have a valid birth certificate, DNA testing can be used to show biological parentage. For some embassies, proof of DNA is always needed for parents to request a child to enter their country. Submission of DNA by the parent is voluntary. Competent UAM age 14 or over must consent to DNA submissions. ORR will consent for children under the age of 14 for purposes of DNA submissions to establish relationship. In any event, ORR will provide advanced notice to a child's attorney of record that a DNA test will be conducted. ORR works with the host country regarding their policies for verification of proof of relationship.

Q: What should I do if I believe a home study may be needed for a potential reunification of a UAM with a parent/legal guardian living abroad?
A: See Field Guidance #19: UAM Processing for guidance on home studies for the UAM population. Please be sure to elevate any cases with these concerns to your ORR/FFS.

Q: Can a UAM be reunified with family still in Afghanistan?
A: If you are aware of a UAM in your care who wishes to be reunified with a primary caregiver currently residing in Afghanistan, please immediately contact the UAM resource inbox with that information, UAM@acf.hhs.gov.

Long Term Foster Care (LTFC)

Q: Are UAM eligible for long term foster care?
A: Yes, per Field Guidance #19: UAM Processing, UAM may be transferred to LTFC (following ORR Policy Guide § 1.2.6 ORR Long Term Foster Care). The need for identification for legal relief by a legal service provider (LSP) is not required, per Field Guidance #18: Expansion of LTFC Eligibility. Additionally, legal relief may be presumed given the circumstances of the UAM. UC care providers should use the transfer procedures in the UC Manual of Procedures, 1.4.4 Transfer to Long Term Foster Care.

Q: Where are UAM being placed into long term foster care?
A: For purposes of transfer, ORR prioritizes placement with families who are linguistically and culturally appropriate. The Long-Term Foster Care network is making ongoing efforts to recruit Afghan-American families to be licensed in order to care for UAM in ORR custody. Additionally, further placement considerations for long term foster care placements may include UC care providers with proximity to Afghan communities, supportive partnerships with community agencies, child and family preferences, placement with other UAM, and their ability to provide interpretation services and accommodations for religious and cultural requirements. ORR is committed to partnering with UC care providers to meet the needs of UAM.

Q: Should I submit an LTFC and/or URM application for a UAM without imminent sponsorship options?
A: Yes. UC care providers may submit a LTFC application for UAM in their care. Guidance for LTFC applications is located in ORR Policy Guide § 1.2.6 ORR Long Term Foster Care, ORR Policy Guide § 1.4.3 Long Term Care, Field Guidance #18: Expansion of LTFC Eligibility and Field Guidance #19: UAM Processing. Considerations for determining long term foster care placements for UAM may include status of international reunification options, as well as proximity to their 18th birthday. UC care providers, in consultation with their ORR/FFS, may also submit URM applications for children without identified reunification options to enter traditional URM funded placements. It may be advisable to concurrently refer to LTFC and URM for placement for UAM without imminent sponsorship options.

Unaccompanied Refugee Minors (URM) Program

Q: What are the benefits available to UAM in ORR's URM Program?
A: As of October 1, 2021, UAM who were paroled into the United States between July 31, 2021, and September 30, 2022 are eligible for the URM program if they otherwise qualify. The URM program is for children who do not have a sponsor to provide them care and custody in the

United States. You can find the description of services available to UAM on the ORR URM webpage: https://www.acf.hhs.gov/orr/programs/refugees/urm.

Q: Are all UAM eligible to apply for the URM Program?
A: Children must apply for placement in the URM program and must meet all statutory and ORR policy requirements related to URM eligibility in order to be considered for placement. If an appropriate URM placement is found and there is enough time for a local entity to establish legal custody before the youth's 18th birthday, ORR then approves the youth to enter the URM program, if they are eligible.

Q: Who can I contact with questions about the UAM URM applications?
A: Please email the ORR/URM team (ACFURMprogram2@acf.hhs.gov).

Q: What eligibility category do I select in the Refugee Arrivals Data System (RADS) for UAM?
A: Select 'Afghan Humanitarian Parolee' in Section 3 of the URM application form in the RADS module. As with applications for other UC populations, the ORR URM team will have to put on hold applications without required eligibility and age/identity documentation until they are obtained or close out the applications if the documents are not available.

Q: What are some examples of UAM age or identity documentation?
A: The most common examples are:

1) National identification document called a Tazkira (which can be in two forms, either a paper document or an ID card). The Tazkira includes information such as: name; father's name; grandfather's name; date of birth; place of birth; and residence and,
2) Birth certificate with translation.

Q: In RADS Section 3 of the URM application form (e.g., Minor's Biographical Information), what would I click if the UAM has a passport or an I-94?
A: Select I-94 if the child has an I-94 with a parole stamp. If the child has a passport with the parole stamp, then select 'Foreign passport with required stamp' under verification of eligibility document. If you want to submit a URM application for a UAM but do not have the child's I-94 card or foreign passport, please reach out to your assigned ORR/FFS for assistance in obtaining these required documents, before submitting the application in RADS. The UC care provider should not submit a URM application until these documents are available since they are required for application submission.

Q: Where are UAM being placed in the URM Network?
A: The URM network has identified a number of Afghan American families who are interested in fostering UAM but are awaiting licensure from the state in which they live. Decisions to place UAM in the URM program are based on a variety of factors, including the preferences of the UAM and their parent or other relative if they can be contacted. ORR is working to move some of the most vulnerable cases into the URM program quickly.

In section 4.0 Placement Information of the URM application form in RADS, please provide important details that will assist the ORR/URM team in finding an appropriate placement for the specific youth. Helpful comments here will include any necessary prioritization in locating an Afghan-specific home, other cultural/linguistic/religious home, and/or a home with specific mental health or medical supports.

More information about the URM program, including site locations, can be found here: https://www.acf.hhs.gov/orr/programs/urm/about

Q: What needs to be included in the 4.2 Family Reunification/Sponsor Information section of RADS?
A: Please include as much information as is known about location of the youth's biological parents. Additionally, provide a summary with the location and reunification efforts for all non-parental relatives and any other potential sponsors considered. This is helpful for eligibility determination and placement consideration.

Q: What should I enter in section 4.4 for Physical and Mental Health Information?
A: For the question, "Does the application include a copy of the minor's most recent clinical assessment?" you can select 'yes' and upload the *Assessment for Risk* if a clinical assessment or clinical notes are not available for this youth.

Q: In section 4.6 Immigration Information, I don't seem to have what RADS is asking for:
A: ORR understands that there may be minimal information in this section. Also, you can select 'Not applicable' to the question requesting a UNHCR Best Interest Determination (BID) report or Bio Data Form, unless a BID is available.

Q: Additionally, what supporting documents should be uploaded into the RADS module?
A: The following supporting documents should be uploaded to RADS:

- Signature page – be sure that the person assisting and the child both sign
- Eligibility documentation
- A- number verification document
    - Upload the DHS-issued I-216 Form which lists the youth's A number, if possible. The Placement Authorization is not the preferred document.
    - However, in the case of youth with Form 216 that includes a 998-placeholder number, ORR will accept a combination of the Form 216 AND the Placement Authorization as the A number verification document.
- UC Assessment/UC Case Review (see ORR Policy Guide § 3.3.1 UC Assessment and Case Review)
- Assessment for Risk in lieu of clinical assessment (see ORR Policy Guide § 4.8 Assessment for Risk)

For any additional questions, please email the ORR UC Policy Inbox at UCPolicy@acf.hhs.gov.