

# Upcoming Medicaid eligibility changes for Utah's refugee community

Starting October 1, 2026

## Overview

Starting October 1, 2026, a new federal law changes who can get Medicaid. Under this new rule, the following groups of people will lose their Medicaid eligibility (or won't be able to sign up for it): refugees, asylees, humanitarian parolees, and victims of human trafficking. They cannot get Medicaid again until they officially receive their green card (which means they become a legal permanent resident).

## Refugee Medical Assistance (RMA)

For new arrivals, refugees will be eligible for Refugee Medical Assistance (RMA) for eight months from the day they arrive. Benefits are very similar to traditional Medicaid and are provided by the Office of Refugee Resettlement and administered by the public benefits office.

- Note, RMA will assess household income/assets in eligibility determination.

## Other considerations

- Pregnant women and disabled adults will not be eligible for Medicaid until after they receive their green cards.
  - Delivery costs may be covered by emergency Medicaid.
- More people will need to consider employment-sponsored health plans and find low-cost/sliding scale health care options during a possible gap in health insurance.

### **Refugees, asylees, VOTs, and humanitarian parolees are exempt from the 5-year waiting period**

- They are eligible for Medicaid immediately after receiving a green card.

### **Children who are 18 and younger remain eligible after 10/1/2026**

If they meet other Medicaid eligibility requirements and:

- Documentation hasn't expired AND
- Are lawfully present

### **Cuban/Haitian entrants and SIVs remain eligible after 10/1/2026**

If they meet other Medicaid eligibility requirements and:

- Documentation hasn't expired AND
- Are lawfully present

### **Emergency Medicaid is available**

- Applies to life-threatening emergencies
- May be eligible prior to receiving a green card and after RMA ends



- Other immigration statuses may still require the 5-year waiting period after receiving a green card for Medicaid.
- Before October, encourage all those with refugee status to see the doctor and get medications to last for several months beyond the end of Medicaid eligibility.

## Response

Currently, the refugee health team is working with the DWS Refugee Services Office to develop a low-cost/free healthcare resource guide, conducting community outreach, and potentially convening a taskforce to support complex medical cases.

## Additional questions

If you believe an incorrect decision was made on your Medicaid case, please call Medicaid's eligibility team at 801-526-0950 with your case number. Additional information regarding these changes may be found on Medicaid's website: <https://medicaid.utah.gov/obbba/>

For any additional questions, reach out to the Refugee Health Program [rhprogram@utah.gov](mailto:rhprogram@utah.gov).

## Please note

Guidance related to these upcoming changes is rapidly changing. The information provided is only accurate based on the revision date listed below. We will do our best to update as new information is shared.

**The low-cost/free healthcare resource guide is now available. It may be found [here](#).**

