

# OFFICE OF REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT

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## In-Country Refugee/Parole Processing for Minors in Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala (Central American Minors – CAM)

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### In-Country Refugee/Parole Processing for Minors in Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala (Central American Minors – CAM)

The **Department of State** (<http://www.state.gov/j/prm/>) is pleased to announce a new in-country refugee and parole program for certain qualified minors in El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras. The program will allow certain parents who are lawfully present in the U.S. to request access to the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program for their children still in one of these three countries.

This **Central American Minors (CAM) Refugee/Parole Program** was established to provide a safe, legal, and orderly alternative to the dangerous journey that some children are currently undertaking to the United States.

The CAM program began accepting applications from parents in the U.S. for their children on December 1, 2014. Only certain parents are eligible to file for their children. Minors must be in El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras and be unmarried and under the age of 21. In certain cases, the parent of the Qualifying Child who is also the spouse of the Qualifying Parent may also qualify. See below for eligibility details.

#### Eligibility

The Qualifying Child in El Salvador, Guatemala or Honduras must be:

- The child of the Qualifying Parent per the Immigration and Nationality Act (biological, step, or legally adopted), and
- Unmarried and under the age of 21, and
- A national of El Salvador, Guatemala, or Honduras, and
- Residing in his or her country of nationality.

In some cases other eligible family members would also have access:

- Unmarried children of the Qualifying Child who are under the age of 21 can be included as derivatives.

This program is primarily aimed at minors, but a parent of the Qualifying Child can be included if:

- He/she is part of the same household and economic unit as the Qualifying Child, and
- He/she is legally married to the Qualifying Parent at the time the Qualifying Parent filed the CAM-AOR, and
- He/she continues to be legally married to the Qualifying Parent.

The Qualifying Parent can be any individual who is at least 18 years old and lawfully present in the United States in one of the following seven categories:

- Permanent Resident Status, or
- Temporary Protected Status, or
- Parolee, or
- Deferred Action, or
- Deferred Enforced Departure, or
- Withholding of Removal

Parolees and persons granted deferred action must have been issued parole or deferred action for a minimum of one year. For all other categories listed above, individuals who are lawfully present and in a valid status at the time of application (date of CAM-Affidavit of Relationship filing) are eligible.

### **Application Process**

There is no filing deadline for this program, but the Qualifying Parent must be in one of the current statuses listed above at the time of applying under this program, as well as at the time of admission or parole of the beneficiary of this program.

The Qualifying Parent in the U.S. files Form DS-7699 Affidavit of Relationship (AOR) for Minors Who Are Nationals of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras (CAM-AOR). This form can only be accessed and completed with the assistance of a designated Resettlement Agency (RA).

There is no fee to participate in this program and it is prohibited for anyone to charge a fee for completion of the form. Additionally, no fee must be paid for consideration for parole under this program, if refugee status is denied.

### **DNA Testing**

DNA relationship testing will occur between the Qualifying Parent in the U.S. and his/her biological children. The parent in the U.S. will bear the initial costs of DNA testing and will be reimbursed for testing costs ONLY if ALL claimed and tested biological relationships are confirmed by DNA test results.

### **Refugee Status**

Refugee status is a form of protection that may be granted to people who meet the definition of refugee and who are of special humanitarian concern to the United States. For a legal definition of refugee, see section 101(a)(42) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA).

Both the Qualifying Child and the in-country parent of the Qualifying Child would have to establish an independent refugee claim to be granted refugee status.

Eligibility for refugee status is determined on a case-by-case basis through an interview with a specially-trained USCIS officer.

Applicants who receive access to the program, but are found ineligible for refugee status will be considered on a case-by-case basis for parole into the United States.

### **Parole**

If an applicant is found by USCIS to be ineligible for refugee status, they may be considered for parole. Parole is a mechanism to allow someone who is otherwise admissible to come to the U.S. for urgent humanitarian reasons or significant public benefit. All applicants for parole will be required to obtain and pay for a medical clearance. An individual authorized parole must book his or her travel through an approved USCIS process and pay for the flight to the United States.

For additional information and a listing of Resettlement Agencies where the CAM-AOR can be filed, please visit the Department of State, Refugee Processing Center's **website** (<http://www.wrapsnet.org/CAMProgram/tabid/420/Default.aspx>).