

Introduction

Hello, I'm Byron Mason, the Deputy Director of the Office of Human Services Emergency Preparedness and Response (or OHSEPR), the emergency management lead for the Administration for Children and Families, a division of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

I am pleased to welcome you to the Emergency Repatriation Eligible Cost and Reimbursement Orientation. This training is intended to provide state finance units and their financial specialists with an overview of the costs that states may incur when supporting an OHSEPR-led emergency repatriation operation conducted under the U.S. Repatriation Program's statutory authorities.

We will discuss OHSEPR's role as the federal lead for the U.S. Repatriation Program, the temporary assistance that the program provides to eligible repatriates, eligible operational costs, and the process and forms that states should use to receive pre-approval and reimbursement of eligible operational costs.

U.S. Repatriation Program

Let's begin with an overview of the program.

OHSEPR is the federal lead for the U.S. Repatriation Program. OHSEPR leads the non-emergency or routine repatriation operations of the program, where we coordinate daily with the U.S. Department of State to support eligible repatriates who are returned individually or as family units. OHSEPR also leads the emergency repatriation operations of the program. OHSEPR leads all federal planning, training and exercises, and response operations conducted under the U.S. Repatriation Program's authorities.

The statutory authority for the Program comes from the Social Security Act which established the program to provide temporary assistance to U.S. citizens and their dependents after they have been returned to the United States by the U.S. Department of State because of destitution, illness, war, threat of war, or a similar crisis.

OHSEPR makes all eligibility determinations for the U.S. Repatriation Program.

Temporary Assistance

The U.S. Repatriation Program provides temporary assistance to individuals that OHSEPR has determined are eligible repatriates.

Temporary assistance may include cash, medical care, temporary shelter or lodging, transportation, child care, counseling, and other services.

Eligible repatriates may receive temporary assistance for up to 90 days at their final destination in the United States. Temporary assistance is provided to eligible repatriates as a service loan. They must agree to repay the federal government.

Temporary assistance costs that repatriates incur are distinct from the operational costs that our state partners may incur in support of an OHSEPR-led emergency repatriation operation.

State Roles and Responsibilities

State and territorial partners hold key responsibilities in the emergency repatriation lifecycle.

During steady-state, or the preparedness phase of the emergency repatriation lifecycle, states designate a lead state agency for emergency repatriation. States also designate a State Emergency Repatriation Coordinator as well as leads and backups for planning, training, and exercises, case management, and activations and operations. Our state partners also engage in planning efforts to develop state emergency repatriation plans.

OHSEPR determines the necessity for an emergency repatriation response based on incident complexity.

When OHSEPR initiates an emergency repatriation operation and requests state support, states may activate their plans and mobilize state resources to establish an Emergency Repatriation Center or ERC to support eligible repatriates.

OHSEPR has developed state planning guidance to help states build their capability to support emergency repatriation operations.

Emergency Repatriation State Capabilities Framework

The Emergency Repatriation State Capabilities Framework provides strategic-level guidance and recommended actions for states and U.S. territories by outlining eight capabilities that are critical to successfully implementing state emergency repatriation response operations. We encourage you to visit our website to learn more about the Emergency Repatriation State Capabilities Framework and other OHSEPR planning guidance for state partners.

OHSEPR developed the state capabilities framework by engaging 8 state human services departments in planning meetings, state Port of Entry visits, and many ad hoc discussions over the course of many months. These discussions helped up clarify the core capabilities specific to emergency repatriation planning and operations.

The emergency repatriation capabilities enable states to meet the immediate health and welfare needs of repatriates as they return to the United States.

States may incur operational costs when a state accepts OHSEPR's requests to activate their State Emergency Repatriation Plan to mobilize and support an emergency repatriation operation.

Emergency Repatriation State Capabilities

OHSEPR has identified 8 emergency repatriation state capabilities that are critically important for states to define, develop, validate, and maintain in order to support OHSEPR-led emergency repatriation operations. These capabilities include:

Authority, Policy, and Governance

Staffing and Human Resources

Space, Supplies, and Equipment,

Planning, Training, and Exercises,

Information and Communications

Reception Services

Case Management and Temporary Assistance

Evaluation and Continuous Improvement

States are encouraged to include these emergency repatriation capabilities in their State Emergency Repatriation Plans (or SERPs) and we encourage states to validate these capabilities in training and exercises conducted during the preparedness phase.

Please visit OHSEPR's website and our Repatriation Training and Technical Assistance Center for a deeper dive into the state capabilities!

Now, let's briefly discuss the emergency repatriation process from the state level to help connect the state capabilities to a state operation.

State Emergency Repatriation Process

You will find specific detail about your state's approach to emergency repatriation operations in your state's emergency repatriation plan.

At a macro-level, states begin their support of OHSEPR-led emergency repatriation operations following receipt of a written activation request from OHSEPR.

Please note that costs incurred before receipt of a written activation notice from OHSEPR are not eligible for reimbursement.

As the federal lead for the U.S. Repatriation Program, OHSEPR is the only organization that can request state support for operations conducted under the statutory authority of the U.S. Repatriation Program.

If your state accepts OHSEPR's activation request, the lead state agency for emergency repatriation will mobilize your state, local, and nongovernmental partners to establish an Emergency Repatriation Center where U.S. citizens and their dependents may receive assistance for their immediate unmet needs and eligible repatriates may choose to apply for temporary assistance from the U.S. Repatriation Program.

Your state colleagues provide operational support until OHSEPR provides a written deactivation notice indicating that the state may demobilize its components of the operation.

Tactical Emergency Repatriation State Capabilities with Cost Implications

States will incur costs throughout the operation. These costs should align with the emergency repatriation state capabilities and they must meet OHSEPR's eligibility criteria in order to be reimbursed.

After receipt of an activation request, the lead state agency may need to rely on staffing resources across your state's human services department, your state's emergency management agency, law enforcement, fire and EMS, county or parish resources, state contracting resources, and volunteer organizations.

Your state colleagues may leverage systems, tools, and technology to track, share, and communicate essential elements of information with response partners.

Some states may be able to use government-owned sites for an Emergency Repatriation Center. Others may need to temporarily use partner or commercial sites for the duration of the operation.

Supporting the reception of potential repatriates may require activating partners to ensure that operations and facilities are accessible to all.

States may rely on their staff, or staff from counties or parishes, or other sources to serve as case managers.

The tactical implementation of these emergency repatriation state capabilities will likely result in costs that states will need to track across the operation to seek reimbursement from OHSEPR.

Now, it is important to note that OHSEPR must determine that the cost is eligible. And OHSEPR makes all eligibility determinations for the U.S. Repatriation Program.

Emergency Repatriation Cost Eligibility 45 CFR 75.403

A cost must be reasonable, allowable, and allocable in order to be eligible.

A cost is reasonable if the cost does not exceed that which would be incurred by a prudent person under the circumstances prevailing at the time the decision was made to incur the cost

A cost is allowable if the cost is allocable to the Program; necessary and reasonable for the proper and efficient provision of temporary assistance under the Program; and consistent with federal regulations and statutes that apply to the U.S. Repatriation Program

A cost is allocable if the goods or services involved are chargeable or assignable to that federal award or cost objective in accordance with relative benefits received

OHSEPR determines which costs are reasonable, allowable, and allocable and we reimburse states contingent upon the availability of funds.

Please note that costs incurred prior to the written activation request from OHSEPR are not eligible.

Operational Costs

States will likely incur costs related to securing, staffing, working in the Port of Entry, operating an Emergency Repatriation Center, providing congregate medical services and counseling services, using Equipment and Supplies, Providing Security, and Providing Transportation from the Port of Entry to the Emergency Repatriation Center.

OHSEPR's Emergency Repatriation Information Memorandum provides detailed guidance on each of these categories.

OHSEPR Pre-Approval is Required

It is important to note that OHSEPR must pre-approve these costs before a state incurs them during an operation.

This enables us to ensure that the costs are reasonable, allowable, an allocable.

It also protects states from incurring costs that are ineligible for reimbursement.

RR-08 Emergency Repatriation Request for Cost Approval and Federal Support

The lead state agency for emergency repatriation should use OHSEPR's RR-08 Emergency Repatriation Request for Cost Approval and Federal Support form to request and obtain pre-approval from OHSEPR for emergency repatriation operational costs.

An emergency repatriation operation may span many operational periods. Additional resource requirements may be identified during the operation. States should submit additional RR-08 forms to OHSEPR as soon as the resource requirement is identified and validated.

Once the need is validated, please submit RR-08 to OHSEPR staff on site and via email to OHSEPR-AF@acf.hhs.gov. Please remember to submit this form to OHSEPR prior to incurring the cost.

Eligible Cost Reimbursement

Here are a few items to remember about cost reimbursement:

First, all reimbursements are contingent on the availability of Program funds.

It is also important to note that services and goods that are provided to the state at no cost cannot be billed to OHSEPR

States must maintain fiscal records for three years

And finally, any item that is paid for and later canceled, voided, or refunded should be reported immediately and the state must issue an authorized form of payment to the U.S. Government for that expense

RR-02 Emergency Repatriation Reimbursement Request

The lead state agency for emergency repatriation should use the RR-02 Emergency Repatriation Reimbursement Request form – along with invoices and other applicable documentation – to request reimbursement for costs that OHSEPR determines are reasonable, allowable, and allocable.

States should identify total costs related to the Port of Entry, ERC space, Security, Equipment and Supplies, Staffing costs, food, transportation, lodging, and other costs in Section II of the form.

Submitting Reimbursement Requests to OHSEPR

Remember, all reimbursements are contingent on the availability of Program funds.

There are usually many state and local human services and emergency management departments and agencies involved in the state's response and incident management teams.

States should select one entity to collect, compile, validate costs and submit reimbursement requests for all state-activated partners and assets.

States generally select the lead agency for emergency repatriation to submit the reimbursement package to OHSEPR.

Please note that states may submit claims on an ongoing basis during an operation. That said, OHSEPR will only reimburse states up to one year after the date on the written deactivation notice.

U.S. Repatriation – Emergency Repatriation Information Memorandum

Please visit OHSEPR's website to download our Emergency Repatriation Information memorandum where you will find policy and guidance specific to eligible emergency repatriation cost and the reimbursement process.

You may also visit our website to view videos that provide additional details on completing the RR-02 and RR-08 forms.

Recommendations for State Financial Units and Specialists

Each emergency repatriation is different. States have different strengths and approaches to the emergency repatriation state capabilities.

Some state human services agencies may rely on their emergency management colleagues to provide tactical and logistical incident management support. Some states may rely on county human services partners to provide case managers. Many states may rely on nongovernmental partners to assist with reception.

As you get started, we recommend identifying the state agency that will be responsible for tracking costs and seeking preapproval from OHSEPR.

That state agency should reach to your State Emergency Repatriation Coordinator to request a copy of your State's Emergency Repatriation Plan.

Then identify and document the listed partner agencies and organizations that are active in your state's response.

The State Emergency Repatriation Coordinator should also provide you with a copy of OHSEPR's written activation notice. You will want to note the date that your state may begin incurring costs related to the federally-led emergency repatriation operation.

Provide guidance to all activated state and local response assets related to documenting time and attendance.

You will also want to document the purchase, rental, and use of equipment and supplies

Complete and submit the RR-08 Emergency Repatriation Request for Cost Approval and Federal Support form to OHSEPR before incurring costs.

Submit the RR-02 Emergency Repatriation Reimbursement Request form – along with invoices and other applicable documentation – to request reimbursement for costs that OHSEPR determines are reasonable, allowable, and allocable.

Ask OHSEPR for guidance!

Outro

OHSEPR is indebted to our state partners for their ongoing support of the U.S. Repatriation Program during steady-state, routine operations when we support U.S. citizens and their dependents who are returned to the United States each day either individually or as family units.

We are equally appreciative of states' willingness to support OHSEPR-led emergency repatriation operations. OHSEPR will work with your state financial units and financial specialists to reimburse states for costs that their state response partners incur during these operations provided that the costs are reasonable, allowable, and allocable.