

Executive Order on Foreign Aid and PRM Refugee Stop-Work Order January 2025

What is an executive order (EO)?

An [executive order](#) is a written directive that assigns actions on specific issues to various federal departments. It utilizes the President's [executive authority](#) and is outside of legislation approved by Congress. Executive orders must be published in the Federal Register with certain exceptions.

What is foreign aid?

Foreign aid, or foreign assistance, is any type of assistance that flows to foreign governments or non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to carry out programs that advance U.S. foreign policy. Foreign aid can include money, technical support, training, property, or other material assistance. [Foreign aid flows through federal agencies to numerous organizations and can support on a range of policy areas](#), such as economic growth, poverty, governance, human rights, humanitarian aid, security, and more.

What is the EO on foreign aid? What does it do?

[“Reevaluating and Realigning United States Foreign Aid”](#) is an executive order signed by President Trump on Jan. 20, 2025. The EO includes a 90-day pause in U.S. foreign development assistance. Foreign assistance programs will be reviewed by federal departments under guidelines provided by the Secretary of State in consultation with the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).

How long will foreign aid be suspended under this EO?

Within 90 days of the January 20 executive order, federal department and agency heads, in consultation with OMB and the Secretary of State, will make determinations on whether to continue, modify, or end each foreign assistance program based upon their review of programs.

Has the EO gone into effect? How?

Yes. On Jan. 24, 2025, a stop-work order was issued to those who have agreements with the State Department and other agencies on foreign assistance programming. This stop-work order mandated an immediate stop on programs or services funded by the U.S. government at this time, subject to a review.

Is there any way to change or alter the pause of programs?

The Secretary of State may waive the pause for specific foreign aid programs through section 3(e) of the EO. There are no instructions as to how to apply for a waiver, nor any waiver qualifications listed. On Jan. 28, Secretary Rubio issued a [waiver](#) to allow certain life-saving humanitarian aid to continue.

Did the EO on international aid impact U.S. refugee programming? How so?

Yes. On Jan. 24, 2025, NGOs and international organizations that manage overseas assistance to refugees had been ordered to stop operations funded by the U.S. government. UN organizations like the International Organization for Migration have been ordered to cease operations that are vital to overseas refugee processing—such as flights. Organizations are now analyzing the Jan. 28 waiver.

In the United States, refugee resettlement agencies, including Global Refuge, were issued stop-work orders for Reception & Placement services for newly arrived refugees.

What is Reception and Placement?

Reception & Placement (R&P) is a program that provides initial (90-day) resettlement to refugees and Afghan Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) recipients. R&P provides funds for initial resettlement costs, such as food, rent, utilities, and furnishings.

If R&P funds stay in the United States, why are they affected by a foreign aid pause?

R&P funding is routed through the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) in the State Department. Per the EO, stop-work orders were issued to contracts and operations that include both the domestic and overseas components of the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program, including R&P.

What's the difference between the [refugee program EO](#) and [this EO on foreign aid](#)?

The "Realigning the United States Refugee Admissions Program" EO indefinitely suspended the program from accepting newly arriving refugees. The "Reevaluating and Realigning United States Foreign Aid" EO and the stop-work order threaten to pull support for R&P, cutting off funds for food, rent, and other essentials. They both caused [immediate damage](#) to refugees rebuilding their lives and the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program, negatively affecting the communities that welcome refugees.

What are the impacts of a stop-work order on R&P services?

Without further guidance, the [sudden cessation of R&P services](#) immediately increases the risk of housing and food insecurity among recently arrived refugees and SIVs. It also risks shifting the responsibility onto local communities that may not be equipped to address these urgent needs.

Global Refuge has 5,870 clients nationally who are still in the initial resettlement period and eligible for R&P services who now face uncertainties about access to services.

What could be done about the stop-work order?

- The Administration Could Lift the Stop Work Order—Resettlement agencies and advocates believe [the stop-work order should be lifted immediately](#)
- The Administration Could Grant a Waiver—Under 3(e) of the Foreign Aid EO, a waiver can be granted by State Department
- Congress Could Request Oversight—Congress is closely monitoring the situation, as the refugee program is [codified in law](#) and funds have already been allocated by Congress toward the program through the Migration and Refugee Assistance (MRA) account under State, Foreign Operations, and Other Related Programs (SFOPS) appropriations
- Litigation Could Also Be Undertaken by an Impacted Person or Organization