



National Senior Citizens Law Center

PROTECTING THE RIGHTS OF LOW-INCOME OLDER ADULTS

INCOME NETWORK ALERT

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SSI Refugee Benefits Suspended

CAPI Program Can Fill the Gap

About 4,000 refugees, asylees and other humanitarian immigrants lost their SSI benefits on October 1, 2011. This came about because of the sunset of 2008 legislation which provided an additional two years of SSI eligibility beyond the basic seven year eligibility period for refugees.

Unless Congress takes action, more members of this vulnerable population in California and across the country will lose their SSI benefits in each month to come.

But, for those who live in California, there is a state-funded program, the Cash Assistance Program for Immigrants (CAPI) that can provide affected individuals with a roughly equivalent benefit. However, it is important that those who qualify apply as soon as possible.

The categorical eligibility requirements for CAPI are the same as for SSI and the financial eligibility rules are the same except that the countable income limit for an individual for CAPI eligibility is \$820 per month compared to \$830 for SSI. This means that any humanitarian immigrant whose SSI benefits have been suspended because they have exceeded the seven-year SSI eligibility limit should be eligible for CAPI unless their SSI benefit was less than \$10 per month.

For those who have already had their SSI benefit suspended, it is important to file a CAPI application before the end of October in order to receive benefits for the month of November. It is likely that they will now be eligible for CalFresh (food stamp) benefits as well, for which they will also need to file an application.

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