



What is BRIA?

BRIA is the Bureau of Refugee and Immigration Affairs, located within the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA).

The Bureau was established when the federal Refugee Act of 1980 incorporated an existing network of private settlement agencies and public agencies into the national Refugee Resettlement Program.

An appointed State Refugee Coordinator represents each participating state. The New York State Refugee Coordinator, supported by BRIA, promotes an integrated approach to policy and program development, to assure an efficient use of services and benefits for refugees and immigrants.

BRIA Programs

The Bureau's programs for REFUGEES provide:

- Job preparation, training, and placement, and other employment services
- Mental health, English as a Second Language, case management, resettlement assistance, and other services
- Case management services to elderly refugees, ensuring access to mainstream aging services
- Foster care to refugee children in the US without a parent or guardian

- Health screening within the first 90 days of eligible immigration status to assure appropriate medical care, and access to the US health care delivery system
- Health and mental health care through case-management and outreach
- Temporary assistance for refugees who are *not* eligible for other cash or medical assistance programs within eight months of being granted an eligible status

For ALL IMMIGRANTS, the Bureau provides:

- Citizenship Hotline: 1-800-566-7636, or (212) 419-3737.
Hours: 9 am to 6 pm, Monday-Friday. Operators speak seventeen languages, including Spanish, Russian, Arabic, Chinese and Korean. Assists callers with immigration issues related to status
- Application assistance and other supportive services to immigrants eligible for citizenship

For HUMAN TRAFFICKING VICTIMS, the Bureau provides:

- Health screening, health care and follow-up medical assistance
- Job training and placement
- Basic food, clothing and shelter, and protection from alleged perpetrators
- Hotline 1-888-428-7581

For US CITIZENS, the Bureau provides:

- Repatriation services to make arrangements for providing temporary assistance to US citizens and their dependents who have returned from a foreign country to the US because of destitution, illness, threat of war or similar crisis and are without available resources

Who does BRIA serve?

Refugees are immigrants who have fled their homeland and are granted refugee status by the federal government based on persecution, or a fear of persecution, because of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion. Most refugees enter the US with few resources and face many obstacles to self-sufficiency. Approximately 21,000 refugees entered New York State from October 1999 through September 2004.

Other persons that are eligible for refugee benefits and services enter New York each year, including asylees, Cuban and Haitian entrants, certain Amerasian immigrants, and victims of human trafficking.

Immigrants are an important part of New York State's population and economy. One out of every five New Yorkers (nearly four million people) is foreign-born; one in ten New Yorkers (two million people) is a non-citizen eligible for help in attaining US citizenship. Over 500,000 legal immigrants (including refugees) entered New York State from October 1999 through September 2004.

How is BRIA funded?

Funding for BRIA programs is made possible through the New York State budget and federal grants from US Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Refugee Resettlement, and the US Department of Justice, Office of Crime Victims.

The Bureau's mission is to direct resources to local agencies that:

- Help refugees and other persons eligible for refugee services achieve early economic and social self-sufficiency
- Help other legal immigrants in their transition to life in the US
- Provide assistance to victims of human trafficking
- Assure proper foster care for unaccompanied refugee and entrant minors
- Help repatriated US citizens return home safely



New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance

What services do BRIA contractors provide?

BRIA provides services through local contractors who have linguistically and culturally appropriate staff and services. BRIA providers help participants:

- Reduce or eliminate dependency on public benefits
- Find, upgrade and retain employment
- Learn English
- Develop and refine job skills
- Understand the benefits of US citizenship, and assist them in becoming citizens
- Understand their immigration status
- Acculturate to their new land while preserving their cultural identity
- Access public transportation
- Access mental health services
- Access routine and emergency health care services
- Effectively deal with discrimination
- Develop independent living skills for unaccompanied minors
- Repatriate from a foreign land
- Access emergency protection (for trafficking victims)

George E. Pataki, Governor



Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance
"providing temporary assistance for permanent change"

Robert Doar
Commissioner

Charlotte A. Watson
State Refugee Coordinator
BRIA Director

For more information: (518) 402-3096

www.otda.state.ny.us

(link to "Bureau of Refugee and Immigration Affairs")

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