



Immigration 101

Migration & Refugee Services
Immigration Legal Services

A basic training of humanitarian-based immigration terms.
Updated August 2025

People

- **What is the difference between the following terms and when should we use them?**
 - Immigrant
 - Migrant
 - Refugee
 - Asylum Seeker
 - Humanitarian Parolee
 - Temporary Protected Status (TPS)
 - Undocumented
 - Illegal Alien
 - Permanent Resident
 - Citizen

Immigrant

- A person who comes to live permanently in a foreign country.
- You can use this term for people that have permission to be in the United States and for people that have entered the United States without permission.
- There are different kinds of Visas for entry to the United States:
 - Immigrant Visa – for people who plan to stay here permanently (e.g.: I-130 Petitions for Relatives)
 - Non-Immigrant Visa – for people who plan to stay here temporarily (e.g.: Visitor visas and some work visas)

Migrant

- **Someone who leaves their home country freely, by their own choice.**
- **Generally, any immigrant who is not a refugee or an asylum seeker is a migrant.**

Refugee

- **Someone who leaves their home country because they were forced or compelled.**
- **There is a legal definition of refugee that is used under immigration law:**
 - 1. There must be a form of harm rising to the level of persecution, inflicted by a government or by individuals or a group that the government cannot or will not control.
 - 2. The person's fear of such harm must be well-founded – e.g. The Supreme Court has ruled that a fear can be well-founded if there is a one-in-ten likelihood of it occurring.
 - 3. The harm or persecution must be inflicted upon the person for reasons related to the person's:
 - Race
 - Religion
 - Nationality
 - Political Opinion
 - Membership in a particular social group
- **The only people who are considered refugees in the United States are people who have been screened by the United States and granted refugee status BEFORE they enter the United States.**

Asylum Seeker

- A person is called an Asylum Seeker while they are waiting for a decision on their asylum application.
- A person is called an Asylee after their case has been approved.
- Asylees must meet the same legal definition of 'refugee'. The only difference is when they apply.
 - Asylum Seekers enter the United States and then ask the government for asylum.
 - Refugees make their request to the United States government and are approved for refugee status before entering the country.
- **A practical difference between a refugee and an asylum seeker is the length of time they are in the United States without access to public benefits.**
 - Refugees are eligible for public benefits as soon as they enter because their case has already been approved.
 - Asylum Seekers are not eligible for any public benefits until their case is approved. They may wait several years for a decision.

Humanitarian Parolee

- **A temporary authorization that allows foreign nationals, who are otherwise ineligible to enter the United States, to be paroled into the country for urgent humanitarian reasons or significant public benefit.**
- It's a discretionary tool used by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) when there are compelling circumstances.
e.g.: Afghans and Ukrainians

Temporary Protected Status (TPS)

- **A temporary immigration benefit that allows eligible foreign nationals from designated countries experiencing unsafe conditions to remain in the United States. These conditions can include armed conflict, natural disasters, and other extraordinary and temporary conditions.**
- TPS holders may be authorized to work and travel, but it does not provide a pathway to lawful permanent residence or citizenship.

Undocumented

- A person who does not have a Visa or other document granting permission to be in the United States. This could mean they entered without inspection or they had a Visa that expired but they stayed past the expiration date.
- This is the preferred term for people who do not have status in the United States.

Illegal Alien

- Normally, this refers to the same group of people as the term ‘Undocumented’.
- We do not use the term ‘Illegal Alien’ because it has a negative connotation and is considered derogatory.
- United States immigration law often uses the term ‘alien’. There is a movement to try to end the use of this term entirely.

Permanent Resident

- **Someone who has permission to reside in the United States permanently, but is not a United States Citizen.**
 - Permanent Residence = 'Green Card'
 - Permanent Residence – LPR (Lawful Permanent Resident)
- **Most 'Green Cards' expire after 10 years – BUT it is only the card that expires; the status of the person does not expire. Ther person will just have a problem proving their status after the card expires.**
- **Most immigrants must have another immigration status before they can apply for permanent resident status. In order to apply for permanent status, they must file an I-485 Application to Adjust Status.**
 - Refugees must be in the United States for 1 year before they can file an I-485.

Citizen

- **A person can become a United States Citizen by:**
 - Birth in the United States
 - Birth in another country to United States citizen parents
 - Naturalization (application for citizenship: form N-400)
- **To apply for naturalization, you must first be a permanent resident for a specified number of years:**
 - 3 years if you become a permanent resident through marriage
 - 5 years for other applicants
- **We often abbreviate United States Citizen as 'USC'.**

Common Immigration Documents

- I-94 and I-94A
- Refugee Admission Document
- Employment Authorization Document (work permit)
- Lawful Permanent Residence (LPR card)/Green Card
- Citizenship certificate
- Foods stamps (SNAP) approval letter
- Medicaid approval letter
- SSI (Supplemental Security Income) approval letter

I-94 and I94A

- Given to various immigrants as they enter the United States.
- Very important document for refugees.

I-94 Online

I-94 Official Website - Get Most Recent I-94 Response

U.S. Customs and Border Protection
Department of Homeland Security

Most Recent I-94

Note to employers, local, state or federal agency granting benefits:
Please visit the CBP I-94 Public Website and click on the tab for "Get Most Recent I-94" to perform a search for the applicant to confirm that the biographic and travel information displayed on this I-94 printout matches the "Get Most Recent I-94" returned results for this applicant. I-94 FAQs: (<https://94.cbp.dhs.gov/94/#/faq>)

Admission I-94 Record Number: [REDACTED]
Arrival/Issued Date: [REDACTED] February 09
Class of Admission: B1
Admit Until Date: [REDACTED] August 08
Details provided on the I-94 information form:

Last/Surname: [REDACTED]
First (Given) Name: [REDACTED]
Birth Date: [REDACTED]
Document Number: [REDACTED]
Country of Citizenship: India

www.RedBus2US.com

► Effective April 26, 2013, DHS began automating the admission process. An alien lawfully admitted or paroled into the U.S. is no longer required to be in possession of a preprinted Form I-94. A record of admission printed from the CBP website constitutes a lawful record of admission. See 8 CFR § 1.4(d).

► If an employer, local, state or federal agency requests admission information, present your admission (I-94) number along with any additional required documents requested by that employer or agency.

► Note: For security reasons, we recommend that you close your browser after you have finished retrieving your I-94 number.

CBP Form 1483-011
Expiration Date 11/30/2014

I-94A

Departure Number
813106636 11

Department of Homeland Security
CBP I-94A (11/04)
Departure Record

L1
12345
09/17/2007

Family Name: SAMPLE
First (Given) Name: AHMET
Country of Citizenship: PAKISTAN
20041122 US-VISIT 20050207 MULTIPLE

See Other Side

STAPLE HERE

Refugee Admission Document

- Letter from the Department of State given to the primary refugee containing pictures of the entire family.

VALID FOR ONE YEAR

United States Department of State
Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration
Washington, D.C. 20520-5824

Date Issued: 08 Oct 2023

The Transportation Company And Transportation Security Administration

Document ID: [REDACTED]

RE: [REDACTED] UNHCR Case Number [REDACTED]

US Address: 7800 Detroit Ave St Augustine Tower Cleveland, Ohio 44102-2814 United States of America

Sir/Madam:

Pursuant to the accompanying travel packet (for international flights) or the form I-94 (for U.S. domestic flights), the Department of Homeland Security/U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services has approved the application to apply for admission to the United States of the below-named alien(s) under section 207(a)(1).

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

01/08/24 NYL 31335

As defined, or airport security agency, may accept this letter as assurance that the above-named alien(s) may be transported to and within the United States without liability under section 273(b) of the Immigration and Nationality Act. This letter also serves to confirm that the above-named alien(s) is/are eligible for a Social Security number(s) via form I-765, as of their date of entry to the United States. Refugees are exempt from the October 28, 2001 Presidential Proclamation on Advancing the Safe Resumption of Global Travel During the COVID-19 Pandemic COVID vaccination requirement to enter the United States.

Sincerely,

Lawrence Bartlett
Lawrence Bartlett
Office of Refugee Admissions
Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration
U.S. Department of State

Not valid unless this document contains a Document ID.

Expiration Date: 08 Oct 2024 Page: 1 of 1 Case ID: 100000021 (1 identifier)

Employment Authorization Document (EAD)

- Given to immigrants who have permission to work in the United States.
- Once you have an LPR/Green Card, you no longer need an EAD.
- EAD looks very similar to a Green Card.



Lawful Permanent Residence (LPR) Card/Green Card

- **Proof of Permanent Residence Status.**



Citizenship Certificate

- Given to naturalized citizens.



Food Stamps (SNAP) Approval Letter (Ohio)

CUYAHOGA JOB AND FAMILY SERVICES
1641 PAYNE AVE
CLEVELAND, OH 44114

Ohio Department of
Job and Family Services

Mailing Date: 12/11/2023

Your Case Number: [REDACTED]

Your Case Name: [REDACTED]

Need Help?

County: (844) 640-6446, Mon-Fri 9:00am-4:00pm
¿Hablas español? More Languages: (844) 640-6446
Hearing Impaired: 7-1-1

Important



#202302100000000000

We **APPROVED** your Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Application for **11/30/2023**.

[REDACTED]

More Information About Your Benefits*

Your First Month's Payment:
\$58.00 added to your Ohio Direction Card for the month of November 2023
Ongoing Monthly Amount (for as long as you are eligible):
\$1,781.00 added to your Ohio Direction Card on the 14th of every month.

If you have never received an Ohio Direction Card before, look for one in the mail soon.
If you no longer have your Ohio Direction Card, refer to the next page for instructions.

Reminder: You must turn in the **Request to Recertify Application** (JFS Form 07204) by **12/31/2023**, to receive benefits for the next year. Your county JFS office will send this to you.

Note: If you see any incorrect personal information on this notice, please contact your county JFS office within 10 days of the date of this notice and provide corrections. Your benefits may be changed as a result.
*Refer to the last page for more information about SNAP policy.

Medicaid Approval Letter (Ohio)

CUYAHOGA JOB AND FAMILY SERVICES
1641 PAYNE AVE
CLEVELAND, OH 44114

Ohio

Notice Date: 02/06/2024
Case Number: [REDACTED]
Case Name: [REDACTED]

Questions? Ask your worker.

TDD - For the

Hearing Impaired: 7-1-1

County Phone: (844) 640-6446

Office Hours: Mon-Fri 9:00am-4:00pm



NOTICE OF ACTION

This information is about your benefits. Please read all pages.

Note: If you see any incorrect personal information on this notice, please contact your county JFS office within 10 days of the date of this notice and provide corrections. Your benefits may be changed as a result.

Please contact your county JFS office if you have any questions or if you need to give us more information.

If you do not agree with our actions, you can ask for a State Hearing and/or a County Conference. Go to the "How to Request a State Hearing or County Conference" section of this notice to learn how to ask for a State Hearing and/or a County Conference.

You may reapply for Medicaid at any time.

If you are unable to read English and need this notice translated into your preferred language, contact your case worker. Please call the number listed above for assistance.

If you believe you have been discriminated against or if your county agency has not provided you with an interpreter or a translation of this notice, and you wish to file a complaint, contact OQJFS Bureau of Civil Rights at 1-866-227-6353; the hearing-impaired may call TDD 7-1-1.



SSI (Supplemental Security Income) Approval Letter

Social Security Administration
Supplemental Security Income
Important Information

SOCIAL SECURITY
2204 SUMMERLON CIR
DODGE CITY KS 67801

Date: August 9, 2017
Claim Number: [REDACTED]

Վերջին 10 րոպեի ընթացքում:



COPY OF OUR LETTER TO [REDACTED]

The following is an exact copy of a letter sent to [REDACTED] today. His address and telephone number are shown below. If you no longer wish to receive copies of letters that we send to him, please let us know.

Your current monthly Supplemental Security Income (SSI) payment is \$735.00 for September 2017. You will continue to get this amount each month unless there is a change in the information we use to figure your payment.

When You Will Receive Your Payments

Your bank or other financial institution will receive your monthly payment of \$735.00 around September 1, 2017, and on the first of each month after that.

Your Request For Direct Deposit

Because you have requested direct deposit of your Supplemental Security Income payments, your checks will be deposited directly in the bank or other financial institution you have selected. Even though you have direct deposit, any move or change of address still must be promptly reported to the local Social Security office, as it may affect your check.

SSA LHM

See Next Page



Agencies We Work With

US Department of Homeland Security	Department of Justice	Department of State
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)• Customs and Border Patrol (CBP)• Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Executive Office for Immigration Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• US Embassies and Consulates• Refugee Resettlement and Affidavits of Relationship

Common Applications – Part 1

- N-400 – Application for Naturalization (Citizenship)
- N-600 – Application for Certificate of Citizenship
- I-485 – Application to Adjust Status (Green Card)
- I-90 – Application for Replacement Green Card
- I-130 – Petition for Alien Relative
- I-864 – Affidavit of Support
- DS-260 – Immigration Visa Application

Common Applications – Part 2

- I-730 – Petition for Refugee or Asylee Relative
- I-131 – Application for Refugee Travel Document
- I-821D – Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)
- I-765 – Application for Employment Authorization (EAD)
- I-589 – Application for Asylum
- I-360 – Application for Special Immigrant (Juvenile, VAWA, Religious, Afghanistan)
- I-912 – Application for Fee Waiver