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10 Steps to Naturalization

Understanding the Process of Becoming a U.S. Citizen

In this section, you will find a general description of the naturalization application process. Before you apply, be sure that you meet all [eligibility requirements](#) and check if you qualify for any [exceptions and accommodations](#). USCIS has also developed responses to [commonly asked questions](#) about citizenship and the naturalization process.

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Step 1. Determine if you are already a U.S. citizen

What to do: If you are not a U.S. citizen by birth, or you did not acquire or derive U.S. citizenship from your parent(s) automatically after birth, go to the next step.

Step 2. Determine if you are eligible to become a U.S. citizen

What to do: Review the [naturalization eligibility worksheet \(PDF, 300.55 KB\)](#) to help you decide if you are eligible to apply for naturalization.

Step 3. Prepare your Form N-400, Application for Naturalization

This form is available to file online. Start by [creating your free online account](#).

What to do: Read the instructions to complete [Form N-400](#). Collect the necessary documents to demonstrate your eligibility for naturalization. If you reside outside the United States, get 2 passport-style photos taken. Use the [document checklist \(PDF, 178.19 KB\)](#) to make sure you collect all the required documents.

Step 4. Submit your Form N-400 and pay your fees

This form is available to file online. You may also pay your fees online.

Once you submit Form N-400, USCIS will send you a receipt notice. You can [check case processing times](#) and your [case status online](#).

Step 5. Go to your biometrics appointment, if applicable

What to do: If you need to take biometrics, USCIS will send you an appointment notice that includes your biometrics appointment date, time, and location. Arrive at the designated location at the scheduled time. Have your biometrics taken.

Step 6. Complete the interview

Once all the preliminary processes on your case are complete, USCIS will schedule an interview with you to complete the naturalization process. You must report to the USCIS office at the date and time on your appointment notice. Please bring the appointment notice with you.

Step 7. Receive a decision from USCIS on your Form N-400

USCIS will mail a notice of decision to you. If you filed your N-400 online, you can also access the electronic notice in your account.

- **Granted** - USCIS may approve your Form N-400 if the evidence in your record establishes that you are eligible for naturalization.
- **Continued** - USCIS may continue your application if you need to provide additional evidence/documentation, fail to provide USCIS the correct documents, or fail the English and/or civics test the first time.
- **Denied** - USCIS will deny your Form N-400 if the evidence in your record establishes you are not eligible for naturalization.

Step 8. Receive a notice to take the Oath of Allegiance

What to expect: If USCIS approved your Form N-400 in step 7, you may be able to participate in a [naturalization ceremony](#) on the same day as your interview. If a same day naturalization ceremony is unavailable, USCIS will mail you a notification with the date, time, and location of your scheduled ceremony. If you filed your N-400 online, you can also access the electronic notice in your application.

Step 9. Take the Oath of Allegiance to the United States

You are not a U.S. citizen until you take the [Oath of Allegiance](#) at a naturalization ceremony.

What to do:

- Complete the questionnaire on Form N-445, Notice of Naturalization Oath Ceremony.
- Report for your naturalization ceremony and check in with USCIS. A USCIS officer will review your responses to Form N-445.
- Turn in your Permanent Resident Card (Green Card).
- Take the Oath of Allegiance to become a U.S. citizen.
- Receive your Certificate of Naturalization, review it, and notify USCIS of any errors you see on your certificate before leaving the ceremony site.

Step 10. Understanding U.S. citizenship

Citizenship is the common thread that connects all Americans. Check out this list of some of the most important [rights and responsibilities](#) that all citizens—both Americans by birth and by choice—should exercise, honor, and respect.

Additional Resources

- [USCIS Policy Manual: Citizenship and Naturalization](#)
- [10 Steps to Naturalization brochure \(PDF, 790.4 KB\)](#)
- [2008 Civics Test and English Test Study Materials](#)
- [2020 Civics Test and English Test Study Materials](#)
- [Find Help in Your Community](#)
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Green Card Processes and Procedures

ALERT: There are an exceptionally high number of employment-based visas available this fiscal year (October 2021 through September 2022).

[See more](#)

Each Green Card category have specific steps and procedures to follow. Listed below are some general processes and procedures to help you apply either while in the United States (known as "adjustment of status") or while outside the United States (known as "consular processing").

Page Title	Summary
Green Card Eligibility Categories	Determine if you are eligible for permanent resident status. Review the eligibility requirements needed before applying for your Green Card.
Adjustment of Status	Adjusting your status to a permanent resident is the process immigrants use to get a Green Card while in the United States.
Consular Processing	Consular processing is the method immigrants use to get their Green Card when outside the United States or when ineligible to adjust status in the United States.
Concurrent Filing	When getting a Green Card through employment, family, or as a special immigrant, someone may need to file a petition for you. Concurrent filing is generally when the immigrant petition is filed at the same time you file your application to get a Green Card. Learn what concurrent filing is and what categories are eligible to concurrently file.
Visa Availability and Priority Dates	In general, a visa must be available for you before you can apply for a Green Card. In some categories, visas are always available, while in others, there are a limited number. Priority dates are given to immigrants waiting in line to get an immigrant visa and determine when a visa becomes available. Learn how to tell if a visa is available to you.
Travel Documents	Learn more about if and when you can travel outside the United States after applying for a Green Card or once you have a Green Card. You can also learn how to apply for advance parole, a Refugee Travel Document, and a re-entry permit.
Employment Authorization Document	Learn more about if you are eligible for work authorization in the United States and how to apply for an Employment Authorization Document (EAD).
Immigration Medical Examinations	Most applications for a Green Card require a medical exam. Learn about who must complete a medical exam and the specific forms and procedures that you must follow.
Affidavit of Support	An affidavit of support is a form that a sponsor files on your behalf when you are applying for a Green Card or immigrant visa. It is required for some (but not all) categories of immigrants before they can become a permanent resident of the United States. The purpose of the form is to show you have the financial means to live in the United States without needing welfare or financial benefits from the U.S. government.
Public Charge	To get a Green Card, most immigrants must show that they will not become a public charge. Learn more about public charge .
Child Status Protection Act	Your age can determine whether you are eligible for a Green Card as a "child." The Child Status Protection Act, often referred to as CSPA, allows certain children who have aged out (become 21 years or older) after an immigrant petition has been filed to still be eligible for a Green Card through their parents.
Transfer of Underlying Basis	An adjustment of status applicant occasionally prefers to have their pending application considered under a different immigrant category. For more information about transferring, see the USCIS Policy Manual . To transfer the basis of your pending adjustment of status application to a different eligibility category, you generally must submit a written request to the USCIS office with jurisdiction over the application. Through September 30, 2022, USCIS has established a new location that should be used for submitting transfer requests between employment-based categories. See Green Card for Employment-Based Immigrants: Transfer of Underlying Basis .

Last Reviewed/Updated: 01/21/2022

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Process for Seeking Asylum [L] (USCIS)



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Obtaining Asylum in the United States

1

To continue to keep our workforce and applicants safe during the COVID-19 pandemic while maintaining efficiency and access to the asylum process, USCIS announced another extension to the [temporary final rule](#) (TFR) that requires certain asylum applicants to use our contract telephonic interpreters instead of bringing their own interpreters to their affirmative asylum interviews. This rule is in effect through March 16, 2023. For more information, please visit our [TFR webpage](#).

The two ways of obtaining asylum in the United States are through the affirmative process and defensive process.

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Affirmative Asylum Processing with USCIS

To obtain asylum through the affirmative asylum process you must be physically present in the United States. You may apply for asylum regardless of how you arrived in the United States or your current immigration status.

You must apply for asylum within one year of the date of your last arrival in the United States, unless you can show:

- Changed circumstances that materially affect your eligibility for asylum or extraordinary circumstances relating to the delay in filing; and
- You filed within a reasonable amount of time given those circumstances.

You may apply for affirmative asylum by submitting Form I-589, Application for Asylum and for Withholding of Removal, to USCIS.

If your case is not approved and you do not have a legal immigration status, we will issue a Form I-862, Notice to Appear (NTA), and refer your case to an immigration judge at the Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR). The immigration judge conducts a "de novo" hearing of the case. This means that the judge conducts a new hearing and issues a decision that is independent of the decision made by USCIS. In certain circumstances, if USCIS does not have jurisdiction over your case, the asylum office will issue a Form I-863, Notice of Referral to Immigration Judge, for an asylum-only hearing. See the section "Defensive Asylum Processing With EOIR" below if this situation applies to you.

If you were previously issued an NTA that was not filed and docketed with the EOIR immigration court, or you previously issued NTA was filed and docketed with EOIR either shortly before (within 21 days) or after you filed your Form I-589 with USCIS, USCIS will refile your NTA (if necessary) and send your Form I-589 to the immigration court for adjudication.

To determine where to file your Form I-589, follow the instructions under the "Where to File" section on our [Form I-589](#) page. For more information, please see [What Happens After You File Your Form I-589 With USCIS](#).

You may live in the United States while your Form I-589 is pending before USCIS. If you are found ineligible, you can remain in the United States while your Form I-589 is pending with the immigration judge. Asylum applicants are not authorized to work unless you meet certain requirements. For more information, please see [Permission to Work in the United States](#). Affirmative asylum applicants are rarely detained by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

Please see the [Affirmative Asylum Process](#) for step-by-step information on applying for asylum through the affirmative asylum process.

Defensive Asylum Processing with EOIR

A defensive application for asylum occurs when you request asylum as a defense against removal from the United States. For asylum processing to be defensive, you must be in removal proceedings in immigration court with the Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR).

Individuals are generally placed into defensive asylum processing in one of two ways:

- They are referred to an immigration judge by USCIS after they have been determined to be ineligible for asylum at the end of the affirmative asylum process, or
- They are placed in removal proceedings because they:
 - Were apprehended in the United States or at a U.S. port of entry without proper legal documents or in violation of their immigration status; or
 - Were apprehended by U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) trying to enter the United States without proper documentation, were placed in the expedited removal process, and were found to have a credible fear of persecution or torture by an asylum officer. See [Questions & Answers: Credible Fear Screenings](#) for more information on the credible fear process.

Immigration judges hear defensive asylum cases in adversarial (courtroom-like) proceedings. The judge will hear arguments from both of the following parties:

- You (and your attorney, if represented)
- The U.S. government, which is represented by an attorney from U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)

The immigration judge then decides whether you are eligible for asylum. If the immigration judge finds you eligible, they will grant asylum. If the immigration judge finds you ineligible for asylum, they will determine whether you are eligible for any other forms of relief from removal. If the immigration judge finds you ineligible for other forms of relief, they will order you to be removed from the United States. Either party can appeal the immigration judge's decision.

See the [Granted a Green Card by an Immigration Judge or Board of Immigration Appeals](#) page for information about the grant of asylum by an immigration judge.

For information about the Executive Office for Immigration Review, including the Immigration Courts and the Board of Immigration Appeals, see [Executive Office for Immigration Review](#). To determine where to file your Form I-589, follow the instructions under the "Where to File" section on our [Form I-589](#) page.

Key Differences Between "Affirmative" and "Defensive" Asylum Process

Key Differences Between "Affirmative" and "Defensive" Asylum Process	
Affirmative	Defensive
Individual has not been placed in removal proceedings before an immigration judge.	Individual has been placed in removal proceedings before an immigration judge.
Individual affirmatively submits Form I-589 to USCIS.	Individual: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Is placed in removal proceedings by an asylum officer;Is placed in removal proceedings for immigration violations; orTried to enter the United States without proper documents and was found to have a credible fear of persecution or torture. If the individual was referred by USCIS, the asylum application already filed will carry over to the immigration judge. If the individual did not yet submit an asylum application, they will submit it to the immigration judge.
Individual appears before a USCIS asylum officer for a non-adversarial interview	Individual appears before an immigration judge with the Executive Office for Immigration Review for an adversarial, court-like hearing.
Individual must provide a qualified interpreter for the interview.	The immigration court provides a qualified interpreter for the hearing.

<https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/refugees-and-asylum/asylum/obtaining-asylum-in-the-united-states>

Seeking Asylum - General Info [L] (WIKI)

Asylum in the United States

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

The **United States** recognizes the **right of asylum** for **refugees** as specified by international and federal law. A specified number of legally defined **refugees** who are granted ***refugee status*** outside the United States are annually admitted under 8 U.S.C. § 1157 for **firm resettlement**.^{[1][2]} Other people enter the United States as **aliens** either lawfully or unlawfully and apply for asylum under section 1158.^{[3][4]}

Asylum in the United States has three basic requirements. First, asylum applicants must not be **convicted of a particularly serious crime** or an **aggravated felony**.^[5] Second, they must show a well-founded fear of **persecution** in their country of nationality and **permanent residency**.^{[6][7]} Third, asylum applicants must prove that they would be persecuted on account of at least one of five protected grounds: race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or particular social group.^{[3][8][9]}

Majority of asylum claims in the United States fail or are rejected. One third of asylum seekers go to courts unrepresented although those with legal representation have higher chances of winning.^[10] In 2015, the world saw the greatest displacement of people since World War II, with 65.3 million people having to flee their homes.^[11] The Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM), among other things, collects large amount of funds and then distribute it to refugee admission programs involved in relocating refugees into communities across the country.^[12]

More than three million refugees from various countries around the world have been admitted to the United States since 1980.^{[13][2]} From 2005 to 2007, approximately 40,000 refugees were accepted per year, comprising about one-tenth of total **immigration**. In terms of **per capita** refugee admissions, it ranked 28 of 43 industrialized countries reviewed by UNHCR from 2010 to 2014.^[14] Comprising about 25% of the OECD's population, the U.S. accounted for about 10% of all refugee acceptances in the OECD from 1998 to 2007.^{[15][16]}

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History

Character of refugee inflows and resettlement

Further information: Third country resettlement

During the **Cold War**, and up until the mid-1990s, the majority of refugees **resettled** in the U.S. were people from the former-Soviet Union and Southeast Asia.^[17] The most conspicuous of the latter were the refugees from Vietnam following the Vietnam War, sometimes known as "boat people". Following the end of the Cold War, the largest resettled European group were refugees from the Balkans, primarily Serbs, from Kosovo, Bosnia and Croatia.^[17] In the 1990s and 2000s, the proportion of **Africans** rose in the annual resettled population, as many people fled **various ongoing conflicts**.^[17]

Large metropolitan areas have been the destination of most resettlements, with 72% of all resettlements between 1983 and 2004 going to 30 locations.^[18] The historical gateways for resettled refugees have been **California** (specifically **Los Angeles**, **Orange County**, **San Jose**, and **Sacramento**), the Mid-Atlantic region (**New York** in particular), the Midwest (specifically **Chicago**, **St. Louis**, **Minneapolis–Saint Paul**), and Northeast (**Providence**, **Rhode Island**).^[18] In the last decades of the twentieth century, **Northern Virginia**; **Seattle**, **Washington**; **Portland**, **Oregon**; and **Atlanta**, **Georgia** provided new gateways for resettled refugees. Particular cities are also identified with some national groups: metropolitan **Los Angeles** received almost half of the resettled refugees from **Iran**, 20% of **Iraqi** refugees went to **Detroit**, and nearly one-third of refugees from the former Soviet Union were resettled in and around **New York City**.^[18]

Between 2004 and 2007, nearly 4,000 Venezuelans claimed political asylum in the United States and almost 50% of them were granted. In comparison, in 1996, 328 Venezuelans claimed asylum and 20% of them were granted.^[19] According to *USA Today*, the number of asylums being granted to Venezuelan claimants has risen from 393 in 2009 to 969 in 2012.^[20] Other sources confirmed that between 2000 and 2010 the United States granted asylum to 4,500 immigrants from Venezuela.^[21]

Sanctuary Movement

See also: Sanctuary movement

As a pushback to hostile migration policies, many religious groups came together in the 1980s to provide safety for Central American migrants seeking refuge from civil wars in **El Salvador** and **Guatemala**. The movement, tied to the **right of asylum** that has been built into Western law since Ancient Greece and was built into the Christian faith. While this started as a religious movement meant mainly to protect refugees in need, it became quickly politicized, with many sanctuary movement leaders facing trial for going against the law.^[22] Sanctuaries have since played an important role in providing legal access and preventing deportation for asylum seekers, especially under the Trump administration.^[23]

Relevant law and procedures



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Main article: Refugee Act

"Under the [INA], the Attorney General may grant asylum to individuals who meet several statutory requirements, including that they have suffered or fear (1) 'persecution,' (2) 'on account of,' (3) their 'race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion.'"^{[8][3]} The United States framework on migration is securitization, focusing on the safety of citizens.^[24] This results in strict U.S. policies and laws surrounding immigration and asylum.

The United States is obliged to recognize valid claims for asylum under the 1951 **Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees** and its 1967 Protocol. As defined by these agreements, a refugee is a person who is outside their country of nationality (or place of **habitual residence** if **stateless**) who, owing to a fear of **persecution** on account of a protected ground, is unable or unwilling to avail himself of the protection of the state. Protected grounds include race, nationality, religion, political opinion and membership of a **particular social group**. The signatories to these agreements are further obliged not to return or "refoul" refugees to countries or places where they would face persecution.

This commitment was codified and expanded by the United States Congress with the passing of the **Refugee Act of 1980**. Besides reiterating the definitions of the 1951 Convention and its Protocol, the Refugee Act provided for the establishment of an **Office of Refugee Resettlement** (ORR) within the U.S. **Department of Health and Human Services** (HHS) to help refugees begin their lives in the U.S. The structure and procedures evolved and by 2004, federal handling of refugee affairs was led by PRM,^[12] working with the ORR at HHS. Asylum claims are mainly the responsibility of the U.S. **Department of Homeland Security** (DHS).

Refugee quotas

Each year, the **President of the United States** sends a proposal to the Congress for the maximum number of refugees to be admitted for the upcoming fiscal year, as specified under INA section 207(e).^{[1][22]} This number, known as the "refugee ceiling", is the target of annual lobbying by both refugee advocates seeking to raise it and anti-immigration groups seeking to lower it. However, once proposed, the ceiling is normally accepted without substantial Congressional debate and does not require Congressional approval. The **September 11, 2001 attacks** resulted in a substantial disruption to the processing of **resettlement** claims with actual admissions falling to about 26,000 in **fiscal year** 2002. Claims were double-checked for any suspicious activity and procedures were put in place to detect any possible terrorist infiltration.

United States citizenship and immigration



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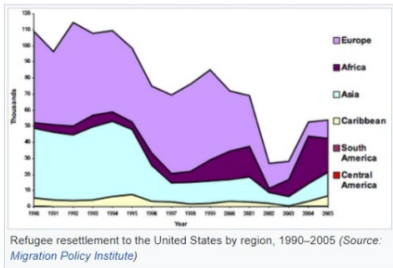
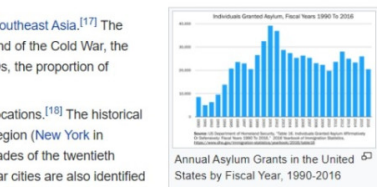
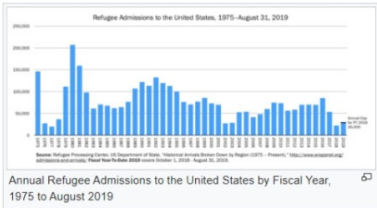
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