

IMMIGRATION JUSTICE CAMPAIGN

Asylee Rights & Responsibilities

Congratulations on winning asylum! We are very happy for you and wish you the best as you begin your new life in the United States. This guide contains information on your rights and responsibilities as an asylee in the U.S.

(1) Evidence of Status

The Immigration Judge's decision or your approval notice from the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) Asylum Office is evidence of your asylee status. However, we recommend also obtaining an I-94, Arrival/Departure Record, indicating you have been granted asylum. If you were granted asylum through USCIS, you should have received your I-94 record with your approval notice. If you were granted asylum by an Immigration Judge, you may have been automatically mailed an I-94 Record about 45 days after your grant of asylum became final. If you do not receive an I-94 record by mail within that time frame, you may obtain by making an appointment at your local U. S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) Field Office. To do so, please call USCIS's customer service line at 1-800-375-5283. You should bring the Immigration Judge's final order granting asylum with you to the appointment.

(2) Registration for Refugee Benefits

As an asylee, you may be eligible to receive assistance and services through the Office of Refugee Resettlement ("ORR") including cash and medical assistance, employment preparation and job placement, and English language training. Many of these programs have time-limited eligibility periods that begin from the date you were granted asylum. Because you are required to apply for some benefits within as few as 30 days of receiving asylum, **we recommend that you contact ORR as soon as possible** by visiting the ORR website at: <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/orr/state-programs-annual-overview>.

(3) Work Permit

As an asylee, you are permitted to legally work in the United States, and you are not required to have an employment authorization card in order to work legally. However, many asylees choose to obtain a free Employment Authorization Document ("EAD" or "work permit") so that they have an official government identity document. You can apply for a free work permit by submitting an I-765 application to USCIS. Here is a link to the application: <https://www.uscis.gov/i-765>.

(4) Social Security Card

You should obtain an unrestricted Social Security card. For more information on applying for this card, visit the Social Security Administration's website at www.ssa.gov, call 1-800-772-1213, or visit a local Social Security office. When you go to the Social Security office to apply for your card, you must bring with you the following documents: the final order of the Immigration Judge granting you asylum (or Form I-94, if you have already obtained it) and photo identification such

as your EAD or passport. If you already have a social security card that says, “for work authorization purposes only,” you can get this language removed from the card now that you have asylum.

(5) Ability to Bring Spouse and/or Children to the United States

As an asylee, you can bring your spouse and/or minor (under age 21 and unmarried at the time you filed your asylum application) children to the United States. You can do so by submitting an I-730 application with supporting documentation to USCIS. The I-730 application can be found here: <https://www.uscis.gov/i-730> Please note that you must submit the I-730 within 2 years from the date you were granted asylum.

(6) Eligibility for Lawful Permanent Resident Status (“Green Card”)

You are eligible to receive lawful permanent residence (“green card”) status once you have been physically present in the United States for a period of one year after the approval of your asylum application. This is called an “adjustment of status.” While you can file this application any time after you are granted asylum, USCIS cannot adjudicate your application until you have met the one-year physical presence requirement. To file for residency, you must submit the I-485 application and required supporting materials, which can be found here: <https://www.uscis.gov/i-485>.

You must become a lawful permanent resident in order to be eligible to apply for U.S. citizenship.

(7) Traveling Abroad

If you travel outside of the United States, you must first apply for and be granted a refugee travel document. To apply, file Form I-131, Application for Travel Document, with USCIS. Here is information on the form: <https://www.uscis.gov/i-131>. You may not travel outside the U.S. until you receive your refugee travel document from USCIS. Additionally, you must *not* use your passport from your home country to travel, as that may be viewed as availing yourself of that country’s protection and may place your status at risk. Moreover, you must not travel to your home country until you become a U.S. citizen. Traveling to your home country before then may be grounds for termination of your asylee status.

(8) Duty to Inform USCIS of Your Current Address

Unless and until you become a U.S. citizen, you are required by law to notify USCIS of any changes of address within 10 days of your move. This can be done online by visiting www.uscis.gov and clicking “Change of Address” under the “Tools” menu at the top of the screen. It is very important that you print a confirmation of your change of address for your records.

(9) Duty to Register with Selective Service

If you are a male asylee between the ages of 18 and 26, you are required to register with the Selective Service, which you can do here: <https://www.sss.gov/>. Select the red “Register” button. Once you complete your online registration, the system will give you a confirmation “Selective Service Number,” which you should keep for your records. If you decide to apply for U.S. citizenship in the future, the application form will require this number.

(10) Need Legal Assistance?

You may need help with some of the forms and processes above. If you have finances to hire a private immigration attorney, you can find one in your local area by visiting <https://www.aialawyer.com/>. If you are seeking free assistance, you can visit <https://www.immigrationadvocates.org/nonprofit/legaldirectory/> and enter your zip code to find a local legal services organization that may be able to help you.

Congratulations on your asylum grant and best of luck!