



# I Am a Refugee or Asylee

## How Do I... Become a U.S. Permanent Resident?



U.S. Citizenship  
and Immigration  
Services

M-559 (August 2008)

### D3 Customer Guide

A refugee or asylee may apply for permanent resident status in the United States 1 year after being admitted as a refugee or being granted asylum status. If you are a refugee, you are required by law to apply for permanent resident status 1 year after being admitted to the United States in refugee status.

If you are an asylee, you are not required to apply for permanent resident status after being granted asylum for 1 year. However, it may be in your best interest to do so.

#### What are the basic requirements to obtain permanent resident status as a refugee or asylee ?

If you are a refugee, you may be able to apply for and obtain permanent resident status 1 year after you are admitted to the United States as a refugee and you:

- Have been physically present in the United States for at least 1 year after being admitted as a refugee;
- Are admissible to the United States as an immigrant; and
- Have not had your refugee admission terminated.

If you are an asylee, you may be able to apply for and obtain permanent resident status 1 year after you are granted asylum and you:

- Have been physically present in the United States for at least 1 year after being granted asylum;
- Continue to be a refugee (as defined in immigration law) or the spouse or child of a refugee;
- Are not firmly resettled in any foreign country; and
- Are admissible to the United States as an immigrant.

#### How do I apply?

To apply for permanent resident status, file **Form I-485, Application to Register Permanent Residence or to Adjust Status**. Please read the instructions on the form and follow them carefully.

For more information, or to obtain Form I-485, please visit our website or call Customer Service at **1-800-375-5283**.

#### What evidence or documents do I need to send in with my application for permanent resident status?

For information on the evidence and documents you need to send in with the application, please follow the instructions on the I-485 application. For more information, please visit our website or call Customer Service.

#### Will I need to be fingerprinted and photographed?

Yes. After filing the Form I-485 application, USCIS will notify you in writing of the time and location where you must go to be fingerprinted and photographed.

#### Will I need to obtain a medical examination report?

If you are an asylee when you apply, you must submit a completed **I-693, Medical Examination of Aliens Seeking Adjustment of Status**. If you are in refugee status when you apply, you need only submit a completed Vaccination Supplement Form (see supplement to Form I-693) unless there were medical grounds of inadmissibility that arose during the initial medical examination you had abroad.

#### Should I apply for employment authorization with the application for permanent resident status?

Even though you can apply for an Employment Authorization Document (EAD), it may not be necessary to do so. Refugees and asylees are authorized to work as soon as they are admitted or granted such status. For more information about employment authorization and what to show an employer as proof of your eligibility to be employed, see customer guide **D2, I Am a Refugee or Asylee...How Do I...Show My Employer I Am Authorized to Work in the United States?**

#### What happens after I file Form I-485?

After you file Form I-485, you will receive a receipt notice from us. The receipt notice will give you a projected processing time and other valuable information about what to expect and what you may need to do. Once you get your receipt notice, it is important that

you keep it in a safe place so you can refer back to the receipt number if you ever need to contact us about your case.

If we need more information from you regarding your case, we will send you a Request for Evidence. It is important to send us the requested evidence so we can complete the processing of your application.

### How long will it take to get a decision?

Processing time depends on a number of factors. You can check our current processing times on our website.

### What if I need to travel outside the United States while my adjustment application is pending?

As a refugee or asylee, if you wish to travel outside the United States for a brief period of time but return to your refugee or asylee status and continue to pursue your application for adjustment of status, you must apply for a refugee travel document. To apply for a travel document, you would file a **Form I-131, Application for Travel Document**. If you decide to apply for a travel document, please read the instructions on the form and follow them carefully. To obtain Form I-131, please visit our website or call our Customer Service number. For more information about getting a refugee travel document, see customer guide **D4, I Am a Refugee or Asylee...How Do I...Get a Refugee Travel Document?**

## Key Information

Key USCIS forms referenced in this guide	Form #
Application to Register Permanent Residence or Adjust Status	I-485
Medical Examination of Aliens Seeking Adjustment of Status	I-693
Application for Travel Document	I-131

### USCIS

- **On the Internet at: [www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov)**

For more copies of this guide, or information about other citizenship and immigration services, please visit our website. You can also download forms, e-file some applications, check the status of an application, and more. It's a great place to start!

If you don't have Internet access at home or work, try your local library. If you cannot find what you need, please call Customer Service.

- **Customer Service: 1-800-375-5283**

- Hearing Impaired TDD Customer Service: 1-800-767-1833

### Other U.S. Government Services—Click or Call

General Information	<a href="http://www.usagov.gov">www.usagov.gov</a>	1-800-333-4636
New Immigrants	<a href="http://www.welcometoUSA.gov">www.welcometoUSA.gov</a>	
U.S. Dept. of State	<a href="http://www.state.gov">www.state.gov</a>	1-202-647-6575

**Disclaimer:** This guide provides basic information to help you become generally familiar with our rules and procedures. For more information, or the law and regulations, please visit our website. Immigration law can be complex, and it is impossible to describe every aspect of every process. You may wish to be represented by a licensed attorney or by a nonprofit agency accredited by the Board of Immigration Appeals.