



I Am a Refugee

D3

or Asylee...



How Do I...Become a Permanent Resident of the United States?



U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

M-559 (12/05)

A refugee or asylee may apply for permanent resident status in the United States (U.S) one year after being granted asylum or refugee status. If you are a refugee, you are required by law to apply for permanent resident status one year after being granted/entering the U.S. in refugee status.

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

What are the basic requirements to apply for permanent resident status as an asylee or refugee?

If you are a refugee, you may be able to apply for permanent resident status one year after you are admitted to the U.S. as a refugee and you:

- Have been physically present in the U.S. for at least one year after being admitted as a refugee;
- Or to be the spouse or child of a refugee;
- Have not abandoned your refugee status; and
- Have not had your refugee admission terminated.

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

- Have been physically present in the U.S. for at least one year after being granted asylum;
- Continue to meet the definition of a refugee;
- Have not abandoned your status; and
- Are not firmly resettled in any foreign country.

How do I apply?

To apply for permanent resident status, file the **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 get the 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?

All applicants will need biometrics taken. 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 in refugee status when you apply, you must submit a completed Vaccination Supplement Form only (Supplement to **Form I-693, Medical Examination of Aliens Seeking Adjustment of Status**).

If you are an asylee when you apply, you must submit a completed I-693 in addition to the Vaccination Supplement Form.

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

Even though you can apply for employment authorization when you apply for permanent resident status, 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 and can apply for an Employment Authorization Document (EAD). For more information about employment authorization and what to show an employer as proof of your eligibility to be employed, see **Fact Sheet D-2, How Do I...Show My Employer I Am Authorized to Work in the U.S.**

What happens after I file the Form I-485?

After you file the 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 you forgot something when you filed the Form I-485 and we need more information from you, we will send you a request for evidence. You should then send us the requested evidence in order for us to 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. Once you file an application, we will post an updated estimate of the processing time on the USCIS website.

What if I need to travel outside the U.S. while my adjustment application is pending?

As an asylee or refugee, if you wish to travel outside the U.S. for a brief period of time but return to your asylee/refugee 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 get the Form I-131, please visit our website or call our customer service number. For more information about getting a refugee travel document, see **Fact Sheet D-4, How Do I...Get a Refugee Travel Document**.

Key Information

| Key forms referenced in this Fact Sheet | Form # |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| Application to Register Permanent Residence or to 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: uscis.gov**

For more copies of this Fact Sheet, or information about other citizenship and immigration services, 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 library. If you can't find what you need, call customer service.

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

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

Disclaimer: This Fact Sheet is a basic guide to help you become generally familiar with our rules and procedures. For more information, or the law and regulations, see 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.

Other U.S. Government Services—click or call

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|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| In general | www.firstgov.gov | 1-800-333-4636 |
| U.S. Department of State | www.state.gov | 1-202-647-6575 |

