

فراگومن

Legal Orientation

Understanding Your Rights and
Obligations in the United States



FRAGOMEN

Home



Status Basics



Travel



Documents



Legal Rights and Responsibilities



U.S. Citizenship



Employment



Family Matters



Insurance



Reuniting with Relatives



Who Can Help You?





Basics of Permanent Residence



Arriving in the United States as an LPR



- The embassy will give you a Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) foil in your passport.
 - That foil will be evidence of your permanent residence for the first year.
- When you arrive, you will give the U.S. embassy-issued visa packet to the Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) officer who will admit you.
- The visa packet will be sent to U. S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) for processing.




USCIS will mail your green card to the U.S. address you provided within a few weeks.



IMPORTANT: Changing Your Address

You **MUST** update your address with USCIS any time you move.

- Registering your change of address is a **legal requirement** until you become a U.S. citizen.

 Failure to notify the U.S. government of your address change could mean you do not receive your green card or other important papers.

- The address should be updated within 10 days of moving.
- You can register your change of address online at: <https://egov.uscis.gov/coa>.



Your Immigration Status in the United States



- Your Lawful Permanent Resident (LPR) status **does NOT expire**: it allows you to live and work in the United States for life.
- You will be issued a U.S. green card that is valid for ten years, but even that card's expiration does not affect your status.
- You may choose to become a U.S. citizen later if you want, but that is not required.

Sometimes people refer to permanent residents as “green card holders” or “immigrants.”



Rights and Responsibilities Overview

LPR Rights

- **Live and work permanently** in the United States.
- **Be protected by all U.S. laws.**

Responsibilities

- Follow all laws in the United States, including:
 - Filing and paying your taxes
 - Registering for the selective service (if required).
- Support the **democratic form of government**, keeping in mind that LPRs cannot vote in federal, state, or local elections.





Government Benefits



- SIV holders are **eligible for various benefits** upon arrival in the United States.
- These include things like **cash, medical, and food assistance** while you are getting settled into your new home.
- You may also receive help learning English or finding a job.



Your **local resettlement agency** can assist with accessing benefits that are available to you in your destination city.





Losing Permanent Residence

If you obey the law and demonstrate an intent to remain in the United States, you can remain a permanent resident forever if desired.

In rare circumstances, permanent residence can be lost if a person:



**Commits
serious crimes**



**Travels for too
long outside the
United States**



**Gives the U.S.
government reason
to think fraud has
been committed**



Documents



Social Security Numbers and Cards



- A Social Security Number (SSN) is a unique, 9-digit identifier issued to every person residing legally in the United States.
- SSNs are used for employment, taxes, school enrollment, benefits, and many other places that require registration.
- If you requested an SSN when applying for SIV, your card will be automatically mailed to the address you provided within 3 weeks of your arrival.
- If not, you will need to visit your [local Social Security Administration \(SSA\) office](#) with proof of your LPR status and request a social security card

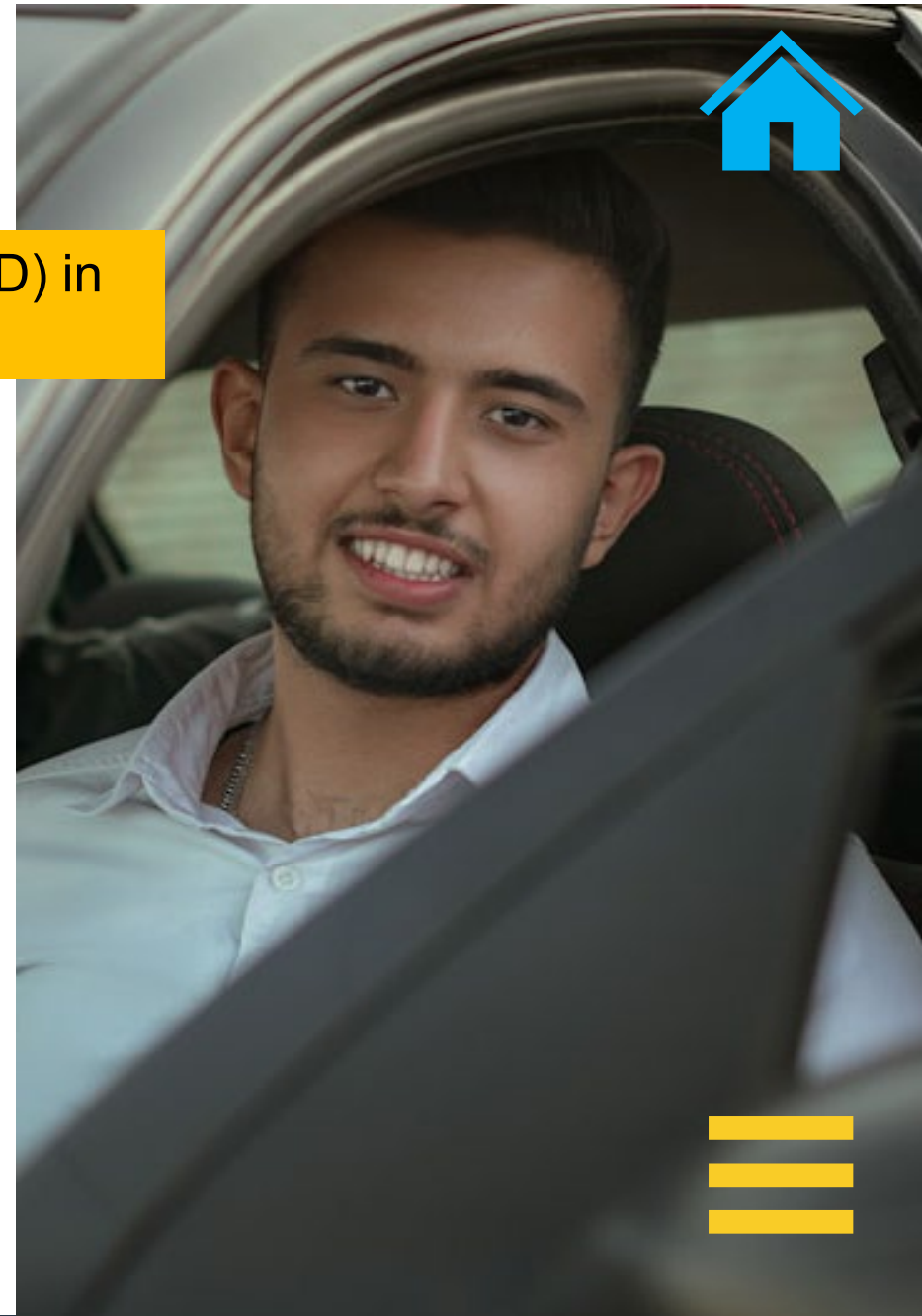
The social security number is given as a paper card and should be kept in a safe place.



Driver's Licenses and IDs

LPRs are eligible to obtain a license or state photo identification (ID) in all 50 states and Washington, DC.

- Adults who can pass a driving test can get a driver's license.
- You may need to take a course to learn the rules.
- Children and adults who do not drive can apply for a state-issued ID card.
- Regulations for driver's licenses vary by state. Consult [your state's Department of Motor Vehicles \(DMV\)](#) to learn how obtain a license, apply for ID card, or register a car.
- You may soon need a more secure "[REAL ID](#)" to board a domestic flight or enter government buildings.





Resolving Common Problems

What if I do not receive my green card in the mail?

If your green card was issued but not ever received, your resettlement agency can help you request a replacement card at no charge.

What if I lose or damage my green card?

You can complete a Form I-90, Application to Replace Permanent Resident Card along with the required documentation and fees.

How can I correct my name or another error in my information?

You can learn more about how to correct errors or change your name [at this link](#). In most cases, you will need to submit additional documents to prove your correct biographical data.



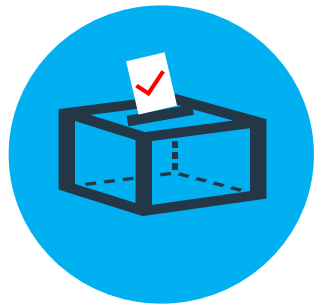


U.S. Citizenship

U.S. Citizenship



- If you want to become a U.S. citizen, you can apply for naturalization five years after receiving your green card.
- U.S. citizens can:



**Vote and even run
for elected office**



Get a U.S. passport



**Sponsor family for
green cards and give
U.S. citizenship to
children**



**Access certain
benefit programs
and jobs**



**Save money and time
by NOT filing
immigration
paperwork**

- Becoming a U.S. citizen offers many benefits but is optional.



U.S. Citizenship – Requirements

At least

18 years of age

5 years of continuous residence in the United States

30 months of physical presence in the United States out of the previous 5 years



Good moral character



Passing a history and civics test



Passing a basic English test to show you can read, write, and speak



U.S. Citizenship – Practical Steps

- Use and improve your English and, eventually, study for the citizenship test. Many places offer free or low-cost classes to help you practice and prepare.
- To make your citizenship application easier to complete, track important dates once you enter the United States, including dates when you:



Lived at a particular address.



Worked for an employer.



Traveled outside of the United States.

- Follow U.S. laws to avoid actions that could jeopardize your ability to naturalize.
- Save money for the required fees and legal assistance.
- Most people hire a lawyer to help with the forms and naturalization process.





Family Matters



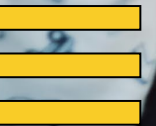
Your Dependents' Immigration Status



- Your spouse and dependent children traveling with you will also enter the United States as permanent residents.
- They will have the same rights and responsibilities as the principal SIV holder.
- For example, your spouse can choose to work for any employer.
- Your male children will be required to register for the selective service within 30 days of their 18th birthday.

Citizenship for Children

- Any children born in the United States are automatically U.S. citizens.
- If you or your spouse becomes a U.S. citizen, your underage LPR children residing in your physical and legal custody automatically become U.S. citizens as well.
- You can (but do not have to) request a proof of citizenship for a child who becomes a citizen through you:
 - Can file Form N-600 to obtain a citizenship certificate (\$1,700 fee)
 - Can obtain proof of citizenship by applying for a U.S. passport (\$135 - \$165)





Marriage



As an LPR or U.S. Citizen, getting married will not impact your immigration status.



If you marry someone from Afghanistan or another country, you can petition to bring your spouse to the United States on a green card.



Some kinds of marriages are NOT recognized in the United States, including:

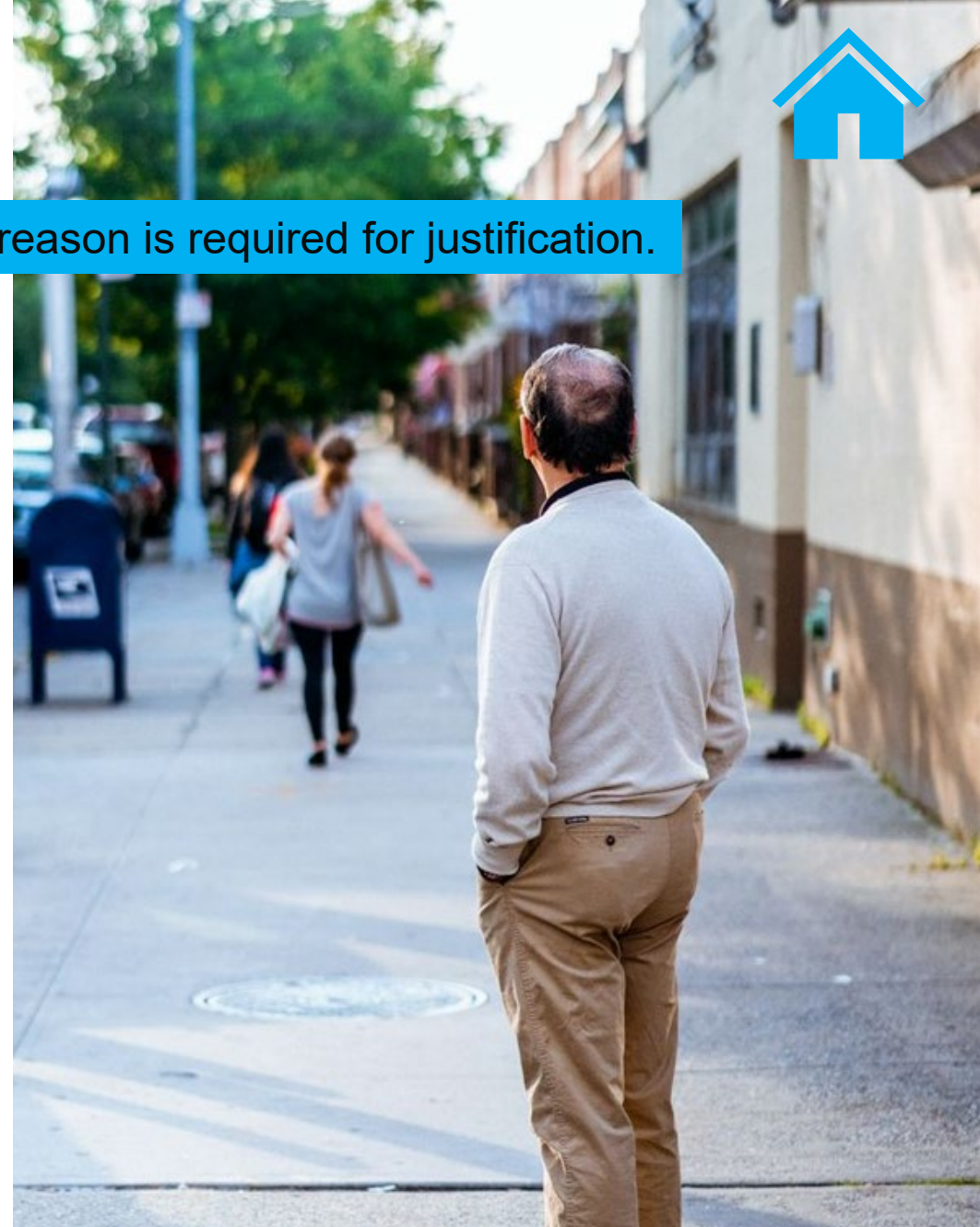
- Proxy marriages – physical presence is required at the wedding ceremony
- Polygamous marriages between a man and multiple wives



Divorce

In the United States, either spouse can file for divorce. No specific reason is required for justification.

- Getting a divorce will not usually impact either spouse's green card or ability to seek U.S. citizenship.
- Divorce matters are handled on a state-by-state level.
- Divorce in the United States generally requires the help of a family lawyer.
- If the divorcing couple has minor children, a family court will usually help set requirements for sharing custody and financial support.
- Keep divorce records for immigration filings or future marriage.





Reuniting with Relatives



Family Reunification Options



- You may want to explore bringing other family members to live with you in the United States.
- You can sponsor a limited set of people for green cards while you are an LPR.
- Sponsoring parents, married children, or siblings for a green card require that you become a citizen first.
- You may want to explore humanitarian parole as a potential pathway, but that can be subject to long processing times and uncertainty.

Family-based Green Cards (I-130)

Eligible Relatives and Corresponding Wait Times



LPRs may petition for:

- Spouses and under 21 unmarried children (~4 years wait)
- Over 21 unmarried children (~8.5 years wait)



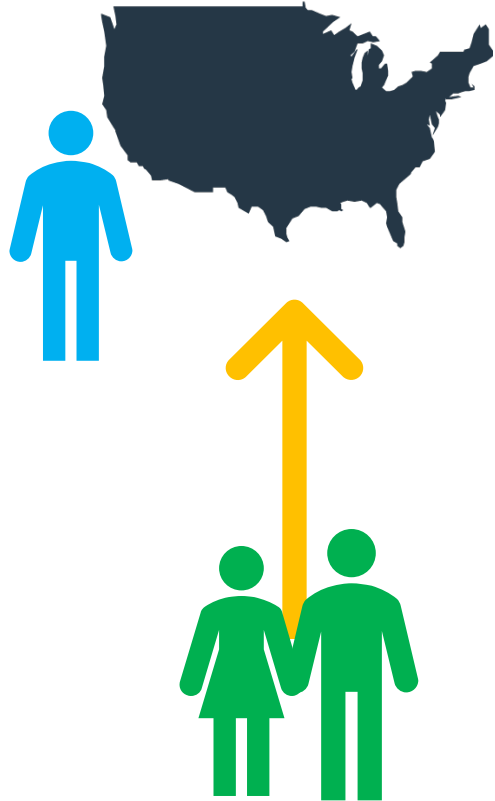
U.S. Citizens may petition for:

- Parents, spouses and under 21 unmarried children (current)
- Over 21 unmarried children (~9 years wait)
- Married children (~15 years wait)
- Sibling of an over 21 adult (~16.5 years)





Family-Based Process



1. **LPR or U.S. citizen status** for person filing petition
2. **Prepare Form I-130** Petition for Alien Relative and **submit Form I-130 and required documentary proof** of qualifying family relationship
3. **U.S. government takes action to approve.** In some cases, the government may instead ask questions or deny.
4. **Relatives with approved petitions must wait for a visa** to become available in their category.
5. **Family member completes process** at U.S. consulate abroad or in the United States.

Successfully completing this process **allows eligible relatives to come to or stay in the United States as LPRs.** Like all green card holders, these family members can stay and later apply for and obtain U.S. citizenship.





Humanitarian Parole

- Parole allows temporary lawful entry without a visa based on urgent humanitarian or significant public benefit reasons.
- Parole requires significant documentation and does not provide a pathway to permanent status.

Applying for Humanitarian Parole



Filing fee and supporting financial documents, including tax documents



Form I-131, Application for Travel Document, to request parole

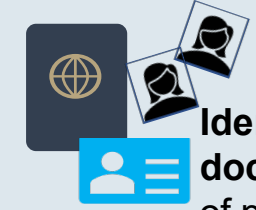


Form I-134, Declaration of Financial Support showing ability to financially support your family member/s



Evidence of:

- Harm or risk of harm, including statements
- Proof of family relationships



Identity documents of petitioner and beneficiary

- Final approval requires being in a country with a U.S. consulate, a health screening, a consular interview, and passing all national security vetting prior to coming to the United States.

USCIS considers LPR and SIV family members as strong positive factors for humanitarian parole, but **processing times can take over 2 years.**





Travel

International Travel as an LPR



You must have a valid passport to enter most other countries.



Green card holders cannot get a U.S. passport – only U.S. citizens can.



You are responsible for getting appropriate visas to travel to other countries.



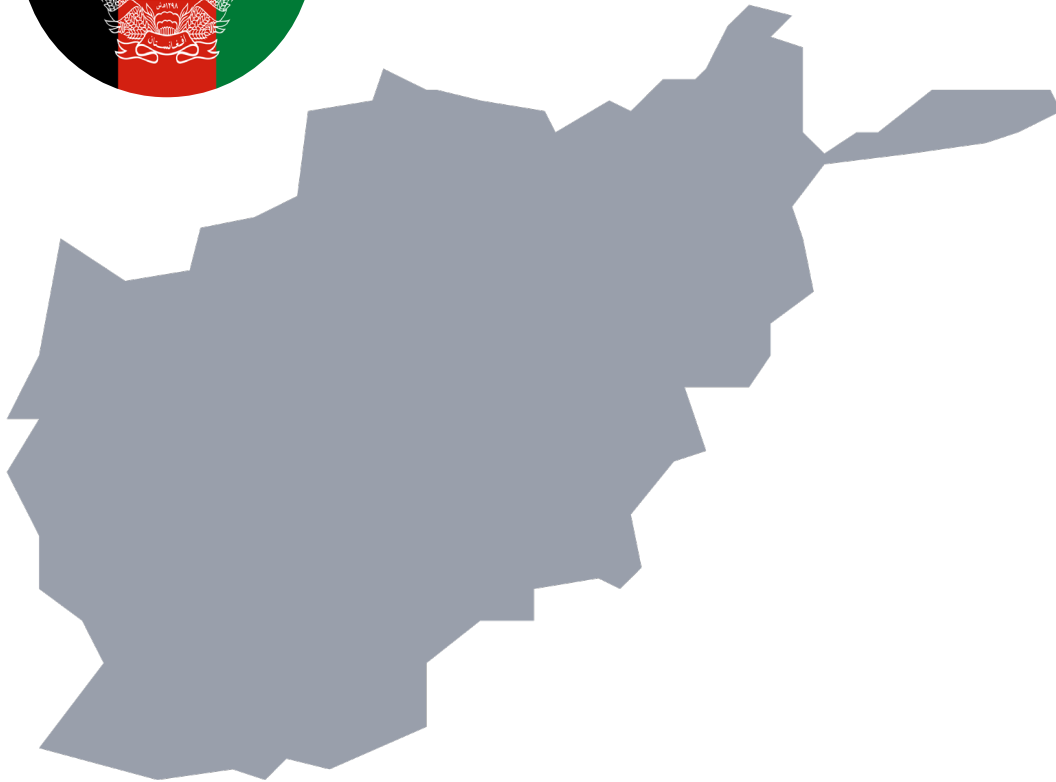
You can travel back to the United States using your green card.



Keep track of trips you take and avoid being outside of the United States for more than six months at a time.



Travel to Afghanistan



- **Travel to Afghanistan is a high-risk activity** but is not directly prohibited.
- Be aware of the travel risks and consult the U.S. Department of State's [Travel Advisory](#).
- Contact an immigration lawyer if you are considering this kind of travel.
- The United States has limited resources to help you if you return to Afghanistan and have problems.
- If you choose to travel to Afghanistan, please exercise caution to stay safe.





Legal Rights and Responsibilities

You Have Rights in the United States



Work at whatever job you are qualified and hired for with just your green card



Rent a place to live and eventually buy your own home if you want



Drive once you get a driver's license from the U.S. state where you live



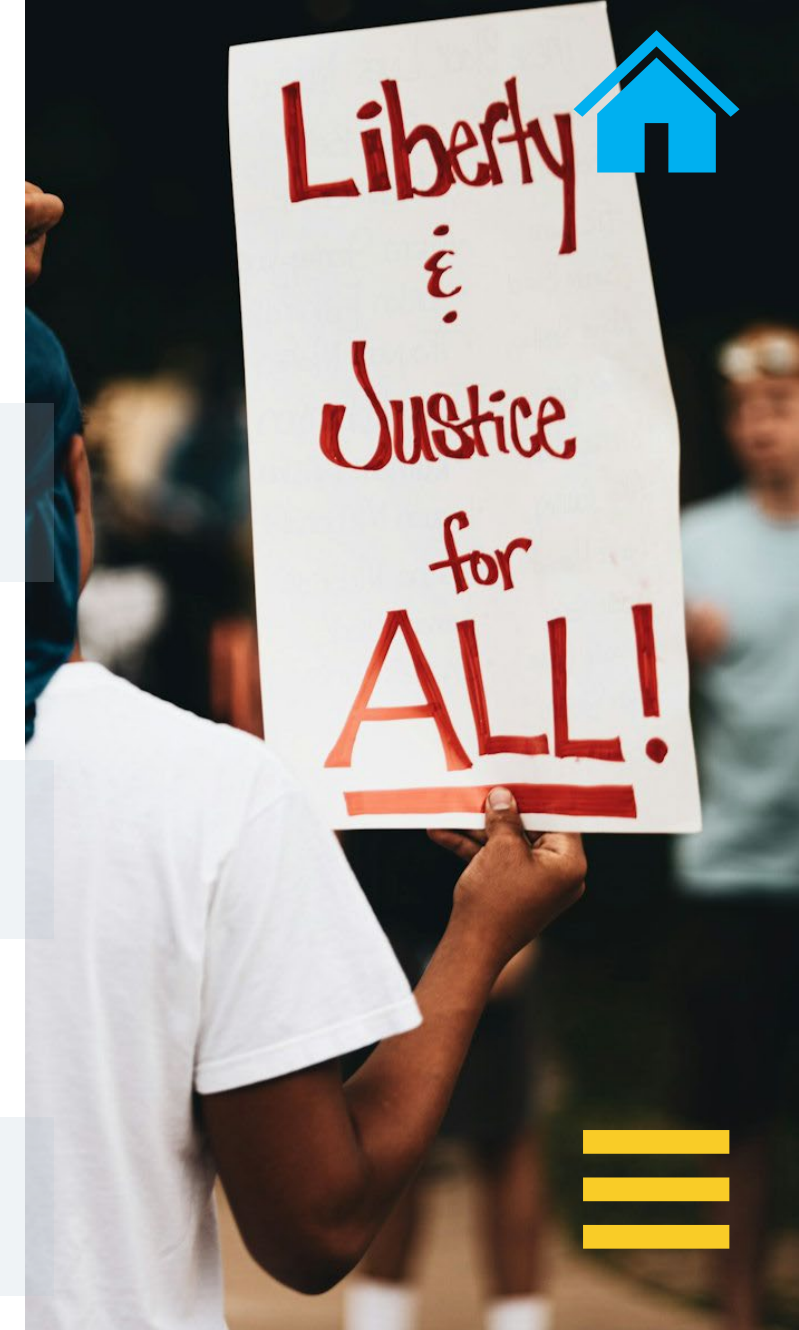
Access benefits to help you to resettle into your new home



Access community resources like public schools and libraries



Be protected by all of laws of the United States





Dos and Don'ts



Things To Do

- **Follow all the laws.**
- **Drive carefully** at the speed limit.
- **Use seatbelts and child car seats** for small children based on state safety guidance.
- **Keep your address updated** with USCIS.
- **Pay your taxes.**



Things NOT To Do

- X **Do not break U.S. law.** You can face deportation for some crimes!
- X **Do not drive without a license or under the influence** of drugs or alcohol.
- X **Do not use drugs** or controlled substances of any kind.
- X **Do not commit domestic violence** or assault.
- X **Do not vote in the United States**, use false identification, or present yourself as a U.S. citizen for any purpose.





Following the Law



- Federal laws apply to everyone in the country.
- State laws can vary a lot.
- You should plan to follow state *and* federal law, or you might face serious consequences.



Arrests and Violations:

- Getting arrested may negatively impact your ability to renew your Green Card or to obtain Citizenship
- Some offenses have waivers available, but don't take that chance!
- Even certain traffic violations can create problems in immigration (e.g., driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol, reckless driving that results in injury to others, hit and run, etc.)
- If you have law violations on your record, speak with an attorney before applying for immigration benefits



Responsibility: Selective Service



If you are male aged 18-25, you must register with the Selective Service system.

- Selective Service is a list that the U.S. government keeps of men of military age in case of a war or emergency.
- Selective Service does not mean the registrant will automatically be part of the military. It only adds a person to the list in case of a future military draft.
- Registering maintains eligibility for federal jobs, college loans and grants, security clearances, and **U.S. citizenship**, among others.
- Failure to register is a felony punishable by a fine of up to \$250,000 and/or 5 years imprisonment.
- Registering for Selective Service is easy to do online at: <https://www.sss.gov/register/>.



LPRs who are fluent in English can [choose to enlist](#) in the U.S. military voluntarily.





Right and Responsibility: Education



- Public education is free and available to all children in the United States from kindergarten (age 5) to 12th grade.
 - [Head Start or preschool classes](#) for children under 5 years old are also available in some communities.
- School attendance is **mandatory** for children.
- Adults can continue their education through formal and informal classes and educational programs.
- Attending a college, community college, or university may be an option. College education can be expensive in the United States, but student aid may be available.
- Free or low-cost literacy and English classes may be available through a local library or community group.





Employment



Ready to Work

- LPRs can work in the United States based on their status.
- You do **not** need any separate document, like an employment authorization document (EAD): **your green card or foil is enough.**
- An employer can hire you from your first day in the United States.

You can work without additional filings.

Filling out an I-9

- The I-9 form is used to verify the identity and work authorization of workers hired in the United States.
- When you get a job, you will have to **fill out an I-9 Form to show that you can lawfully work** in the United States.
- The employer and employee work together to complete the form.
- Before you get your green card, your entry stamp/foil will be enough to show you can legally work in the United States.
- Presenting your green card will be enough to show you can work.





Other Work Considerations



- You can change jobs whenever you choose and can generally work for whoever you want.
- Some professions require a professional license in the United States that may require more training or education, even if you worked in that profession in Afghanistan.



- Professions requiring a license can include doctors, midwives, nurses, lawyers, electricians, childcare workers, cosmetologists, building contractors, and more.



- There are also many jobs available that do not have any special requirements.
- You can start working in a job that does not require special skills while you are working on becoming licensed in a field.





Employment Protections



- Employers are not usually allowed to refuse to hire you based on your immigration status alone.
 - Rarely, certain jobs—usually government or government contractors—are only open to U.S. Citizens.
- You are also protected from discrimination based on other characteristics like age, disability, marital status, ethnic or national origin, race, religion, gender, sex, or sexual orientation.
- You also have the right to a safe workplace and healthy working conditions.





Getting Paid

You have the right to be paid for the work that you do for employers.

- The U.S. government sets a [minimum wage](#) that you must be paid.
- You will usually receive a written contract or letter outlining how your will be paid and benefits like insurance or retirement.
- Discuss how taxes will be paid when you begin a new job. Sometimes your employer will pay your federal and state taxes for you (W-2).
- If you are an independent contractor, you will you be responsible for paying your own taxes separately (1099).



Paying Taxes

Everyone in the United States must pay taxes on what they earn.

- Income taxes for the prior year must be filed by April 15th.
- Most people have to file a state and federal tax return document.
- You will get documents regarding your wages from your employer when it is time to file taxes.
- You can often find free or low-cost help or use an online tool with making tax filings.



Failing to pay taxes can lead to fines and even criminal charges.





Insurance



Responsibilities: Insurance



- Insurance is important in the United States.
- You pay for insurance to protect yourself from risks and financial losses.
- **Types of insurance:**



Health



Vehicle



**Homeowners or
Renters**

Health Insurance

Health insurance protects you from costly medical expenses since healthcare is not free.

- In the United States, **health insurance is critical because of high medical costs.**
- You and your family may be eligible for initial free health coverage as part of your resettlement benefits. Your resettlement agency can help you navigate that.
- Your job may offer medical insurance as a benefit of your employment and deduct the cost from your paycheck.
- If your employer does not offer medical insurance, you may be able to purchase a plan that works for you on the [U.S. Marketplace](#) or through other programs.
- You also usually have to purchase vision and dental plans separately from your main health insurance.





Auto Insurance

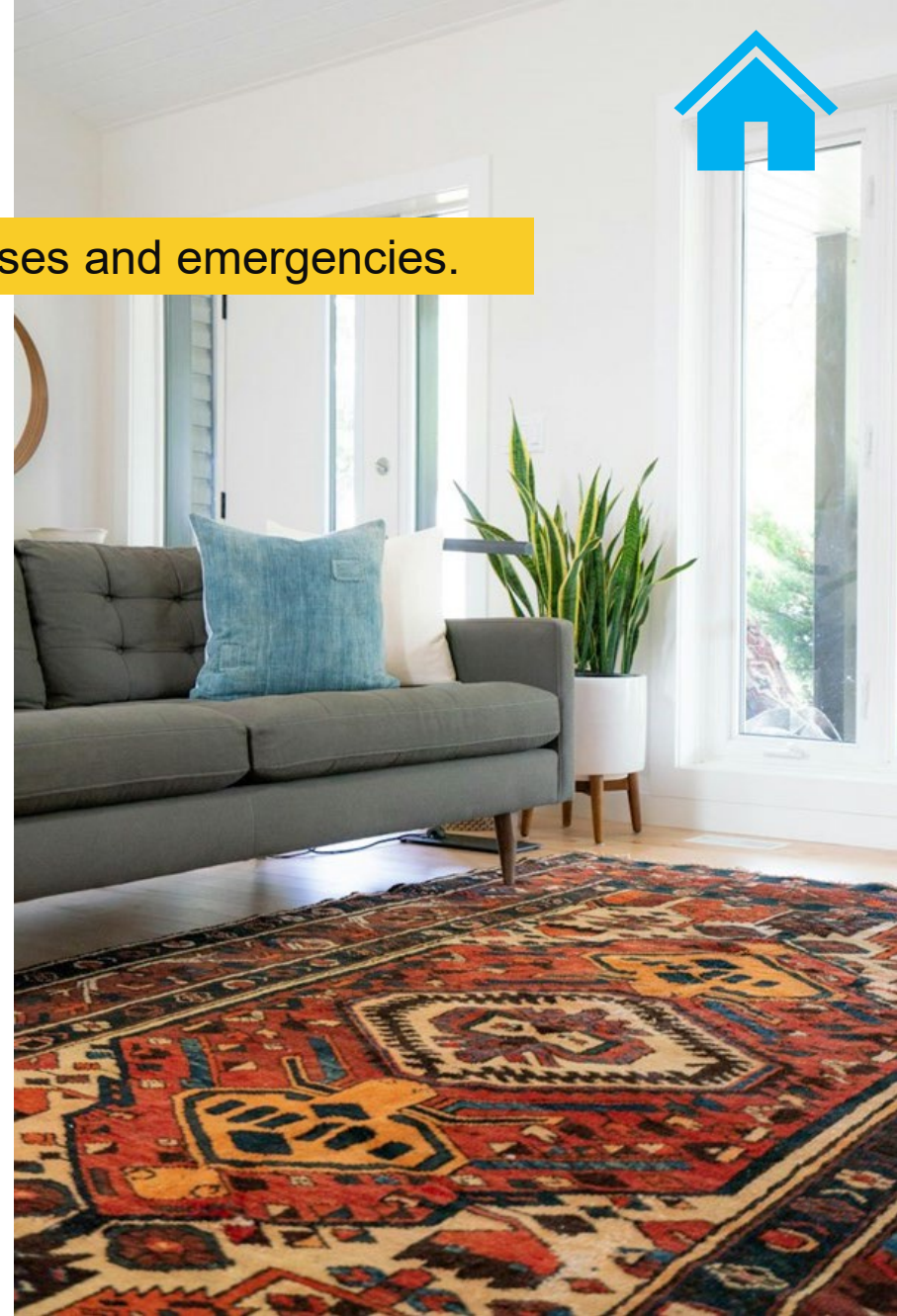
- If you own or drive a vehicle in the United States, you are required to be insured.
- All drivers must be insured if they plan to drive a car, even if that car belongs to another person.
- In case of an accident, an uninsured driver is personally responsible for all costs associated with that accident, including medical costs.
- Driving without insurance may carry penalties, depending on your state.



Home/Rental Insurance

Insuring your home and possessions helps protect from unexpected expenses and emergencies.

- If you are renting your residence, renters' insurance can help protect your belongings and mitigate payment for damage that is your fault.
- Renters' insurance is inexpensive and worth the peace of mind it offers.
- If you buy a home someday, your bank will likely require you to keep homeowners' insurance to lend you money.
- Even once you own property in full, homeowners' insurance is still a good idea





Who Can Help You?



U.S. Government Agencies to Know



Department of State

- [Bureau of Consular Affairs](#):
 - Manages embassies and consulates
 - Helps U.S. citizens and LPRs traveling abroad
 - Issues travel advisories, U.S. passports, and visas
- [Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration \(PRM\)](#) coordinates the U.S. refugee program and humanitarian policy and diplomacy



Department of Homeland Security

- [U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services \(USCIS\)](#) administers immigration benefits
- [Customs and Border Protection \(CBP\)](#) inspects/admits people at airports and borders
- [Immigration and Customs Enforcement \(ICE\)](#) enforces immigration laws throughout the country



Department of Health and Human Services

- [Social Security Administration \(SSA\)](#) issues social security cards and administers various benefits
- [Office of Refugee Resettlement \(ORR\)](#) administers SIV resettlement benefits in partnership with resettlement agencies



Internal Revenue Service

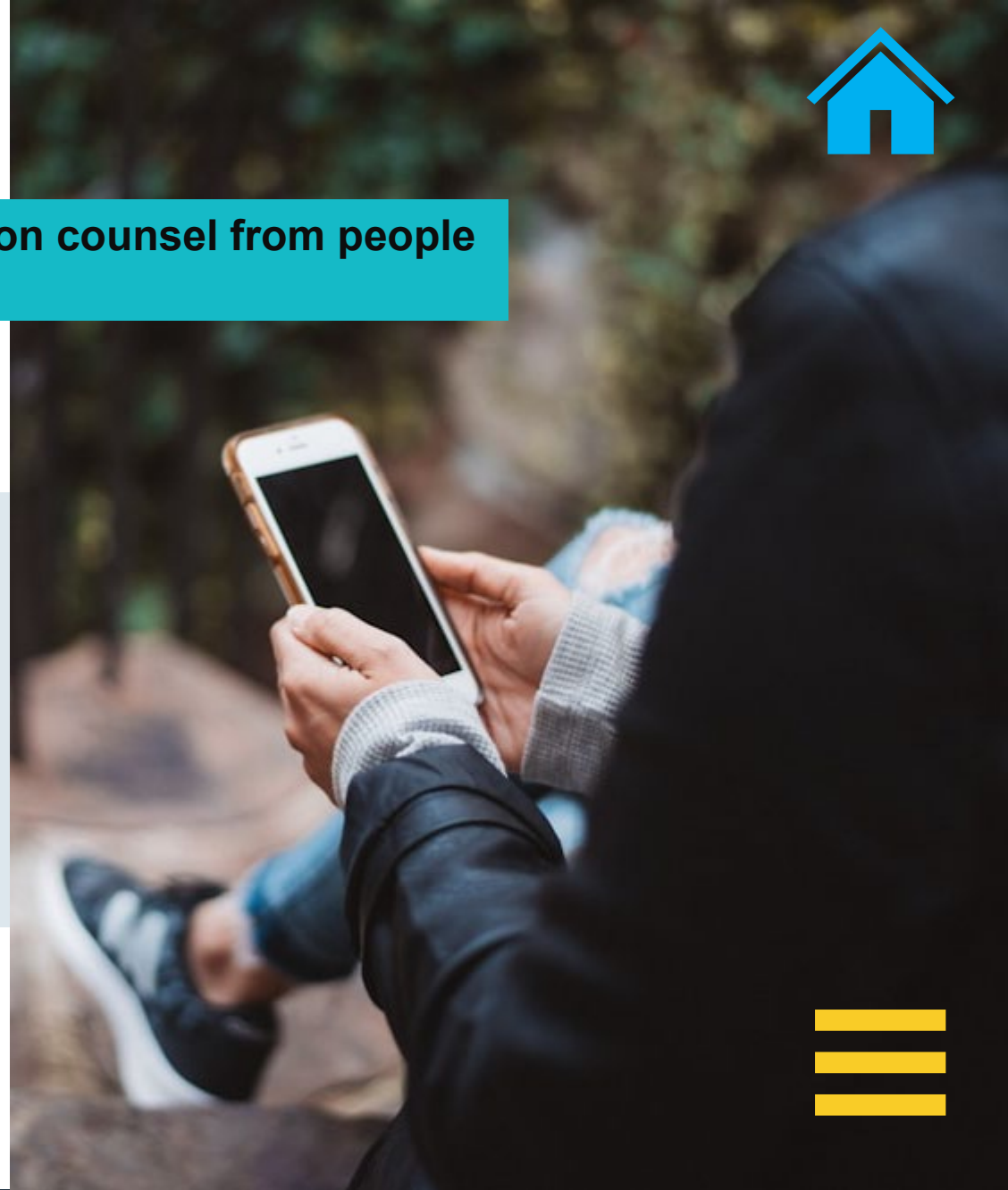
- Collects taxes
- Enforces tax laws
- Offers access to [personal tax records](#)
- Part of the Department of the Treasury



Avoiding Misinformation

Immigration law is complex. **You should not accept immigration counsel from people who are not qualified to provide it.**

- Unfortunately, there is a lot of wrong information and rumors about U.S. immigration that can create confusion.
- To avoid confusion and complication, you should generally **NOT** accept immigration advice from:
 - Reports in the Dari or Pashto language press
 - Friends and family
 - Online groups or communities such as Facebook
- **Before taking any immigration action, it is best to consult with a qualified legal professional** if you have questions about whether a piece of information is valid and applies to you.



Who to Trust for Legal Advice

- If you need immigration assistance or advice, please ask:
 - Your local resettlement agency,
 - An immigration attorney, and/or
 - Legal non-profit organization providing immigration services.
- You may need to consult other kinds of attorneys for different legal matters.



Cost considerations:

- Ask about the fees and any payment options in advance and agree to the price of legal services in writing.
- Some lawyers and organizations offer immigration legal services **pro bono**, meaning for free, or at a low cost based on your income.



Finding Immigration Lawyers



The following links are good starting points if you need to seek qualified immigration help:



- Our team may be able to help: AfghanHelp@fragomen.com.
- The American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA) allows you to search for individual lawyers using [AILA's Lawyer Search](#). All lawyers listed are AILA members with a currently valid state bar license.
- The Executive Office of Immigration Review has a [list of free and low-cost legal service providers](#) that you can search by state. These include trusted non-profit legal service providers and charities, including the [Immigration Law and Justice Network](#).
- Immigration Advocates Network has a [directory of free or low-cost immigration legal services](#).

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مننه او بنه
راغلاست

Thank you
and welcome

تشکرو
خوش آمدید

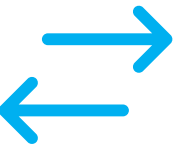
Slide 1



Welcome to the legal orientation presentation.

Immigration law can be confusing, and there can be misinformation floating around. This presentation will go through some topics that will help you understand your status in the United States and, if need be, to get more legal help in the future.

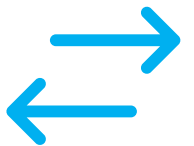
You do ***NOT*** have to become an immigration expert as a result of this session. You'll have people to help you initially when you resettle, and you can reach out for legal help from lawyers or specialists later. But we want you to have the vocabulary and framework necessary for orienting yourself.



Slide 2



This is the home page. It is arranged by topic sections and will help you navigate your electronic copy of the presentation later. You can use it to go to the section where you want to find more information. Clicking on the house on the top right of other pages will bring you back to this homepage for easy navigation.



Slide 4



The U.S. embassy has issued you a machine-readable immigrant visa (MRIV) in your passport. It is also called a “foil”. This visa foil serves as proof of your permanent resident status for up to a year or until you receive your green card by mail.

This visa foil bears the statement: “SERVES AS TEMPORARY I-551 EVIDENCING PERMANENT RESIDENCE FOR 1 YEAR.” That year begins on the day that you enter the United States.

Once you receive your green card, you can use that instead of the foil. The green card will be valid for ten years from your date of entry, but you can get a new one when it expires.

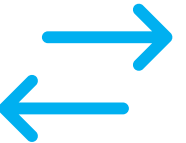
Processing time to get a green card: 3-4 weeks (recent delays have been 90 days or more)

In case of prolonged delays of 6 months or more, contact USCIS using this link: <https://egov.uscis.gov/e-request/>

You can request an I-551 Stamp in your passport in lieu of green card if you do not receive your green card in time. Request an appointment here: <https://my.uscis.gov/en/appointment/v2>

You may occasionally hear someone talk about an I-94 record. An I-94 is a record of admission to the United States. An I-94 is not usually generated for permanent residents, so you won't have one, but you also won't need it. If someone asks to see your I-94, you can show them your passport with the stamped visa foil and tell them that you do not need an I-94 because you are a permanent resident.

What you do need, and what is critically important, is to ensure that USCIS has your correct and complete address. If you know that your address will be different from the one you gave the U.S. Embassy, provide the new address to the CBP officer when you enter. This address is where your green card will be mailed, so it's extremely important that it is correct.



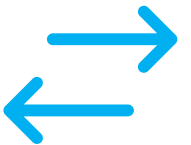
Slide 5



Registering an address change is easiest and fastest using the online method. You also have the option to print the [online Form AR-11](#) and submit the completed paper form by mail to the following address:

**U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Citizenship and Immigration Services
Attn: Change of Address
1344 Pleasants Drive
Harrisonburg, VA 22801**

You can also change your address through your USCIS online account. You can create an account at <https://my.uscis.gov/>.



Slide 6



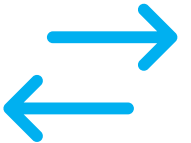
You and your family members will enter the United States as permanent residents. This means you will be able to live and work forever in the United States.

Though you got your green card through SIV, you have the same status (permanent resident) as someone who got their green card through family or employment. The category on your green card will have a code starting with SQ or SI, which indicates you came through SIV.

Many Afghans in the United States must keep their status up to date by making various immigration filings. You will not. Other Afghans may already have or be seeking statuses like parole or asylum. These statuses also do not apply to you.

You don't need to make additional filings to "perfect" your status in the U.S., though you can seek to become a U.S. citizen eventually if you would like. You are not required to become a citizen.

You will receive a green card with an expiration date on it. But even that expiration date does not mean your status expires. You'll need to renew the card for practical purposes (like showing you can work or travel), but your status as a permanent resident will remain in place even if your card is expired.



Slide 7

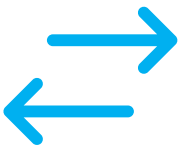


We're going to talk about some very basic high-level rights and responsibilities.

We'll talk in more detail about each of these, but the key rights are (1) living in the U.S. for as long as you want, (2) working in the field of your choosing (provided you have the necessary credentials), and (3) receive legal protections according to the laws where you live in the United States.

On the flip side, the government identifies four main responsibilities:

- (1) Obeying the law. Do NOT commit crimes in the United States.
- (2) Filing your taxes and paying the government what it is owed (to both the State and Federal governments).
- (1) Registering for the “selective service” (i.e. the draft), which only applies to males 18-25 years of age.
- (2) Supporting democracy. You cannot vote yet. Only U.S. citizens can vote.



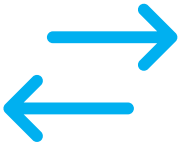
Slide 8



We encourage you and your family members to use all of the benefits available to you to help you get a good start.

Remember that government benefits and the resettlement agency assistance are only available in the beginning and are time limited.

Your resettlement agency is an important resource to help you start your life in the United States and will know what applies in your area. Different states and sometimes even different cities in the same state may offer different benefits and options. Differences like this are common from state to state in the United States. That means SIVs settled in Arizona, Texas, and Virginia may have different experiences.



Slide 9



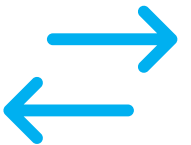
We have said LPR status is permanent, for life, and that it does not expire. But can you ever lose your permanent residence?

Yes, but it is very rare. The ways to lose permanent residences are narrow and require you to make a bad action on your part. If you commit a serious crime or the government suspects you committed fraud, you could be stripped of permanent residence.

We'll talk about travel later, but if you started spending significant time outside of the United States, the government might question if you really want to live in the U.S. or if instead you have changed your mind.

The reasons for losing your LPR status are avoidable. If the U.S. government tries to remove an LPR from the United States, the LPR could have the ability to challenge that in court.

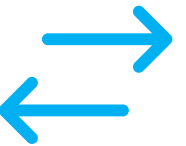
Bottom line: if you follow the laws, your permanent resident status will NEVER expire. You can be an LPR forever or until you naturalize as a U.S. citizen. This presentation will help you understand these rules, avoid unnecessary risks, and preserve your status.



Slide 10



For most of the documents or processes, your resettlement agency will assist you once you arrive in the United States. Now we will talk about some other important documents in the United States and their purpose.



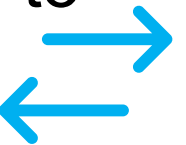
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LPR social security cards look exactly like the social security cards issued to U.S. citizens. (SSNs are one of the first official documents issued to babies born in the United States.)

Since this number is unique to each person, it is used to identify people for various purposes and by different U.S. government agencies. For example, you will use your social security number when you file taxes in the United States.

The card is made of paper and cannot be laminated, so it can be easily damaged or destroyed. You should keep this card in a safe place and not carry it with you unless you are doing something official. It is advisable to memorize your number since it is used frequently.



Slide 12



Some U.S. communities have good public transportation options like buses or trains or are easy to walk. But many people in the United States depend on driving cars, which requires a valid driver's license.

It is illegal to drive without a license.

- You cannot drive legally in any state without a driver's license.
- Driving without a license and other traffic violations can have serious immigration consequences that are not worth the risk.
- Take care to learn and obey the traffic laws.

You may need to first acquire a Learner's Permit so you can practice driving before taking the driving test. It is also likely that you will have to take a written test about your state's driving rules and regulations. These tests are typically only in English and can often be taken electronically at your local Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV).

A driver's license works a little like a tazkera. It's the closest thing that we have to a national picture identity document. Most of the time this kind of ID is what people in the US present to identify themselves. ID cards may look similar to a driver's license and contain similar information but will not permit a person to drive. The driver's license or state-issued ID card can be carried with you wherever you go and is used for most common situations where you need to show identification.

In general, you will not need both a driver's license and an ID card. ID cards may be helpful for adults who do not drive and for minor children.

Driving is one of the many areas where there are differences among the 50 states and Washington, DC. The link on this page will help you navigate to the DMV in the state where you are resettling. (Note that some states also call this department something else, but DMV is the most common term and is understood throughout the country.)

Check your state's DMV website for what documentation you must present for what you wish to do and for options to schedule an appointment to save time.

Currently, the U.S. government plans to require REAL ID in May 2025, so it is a good idea to get this kind of license if possible. You can see what the requirements are in your state and learn more about REAL ID at <https://www.dhs.gov/real-id>.

In most cases, a standard driver's license is all that you need. But if you decide to become a truck driver or operate special vehicles, you may need a special driver's license to do this job.

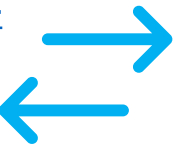


Slide 13



You should keep important documents like your green card and social security card in a safe place once you receive them. You can take photos of these documents to have on your phone in case you need them unexpectedly. You can also carry paper photocopies, if you prefer, but do not laminate them or try to make them look like real documents so that you are not suspected of committing document fraud.

- Some basic corrections and problems with immigration documents can be resolved if you have a USCIS account. You can sign up for a USCIS account here: <https://my.uscis.gov/>. You can use this account to file certain applications, to request corrections, or to update something online.
- If you do not receive a notice or document, it is possible to make a service request at this USCIS link: <https://egov.uscis.gov/e-request/Intro.do>.
- For major corrections or replacement, you will use the Form I-90. You can find more information about replacing a green card at <https://www.uscis.gov/green-card/after-we-grant-your-green-card/replace-your-green-card>.
- Currently, it costs \$540 for most people to replace their green card. The USCIS fee calculator (<https://www.uscis.gov/feecalculator>) can help you figure out the cost of the replacement depending on the reason for the request.
- If your green card has an error on it or you need to change your information for some reason, review the Form I-90 instructions for what kind of documents you should submit at <https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/document/forms/i-90instr.pdf>.



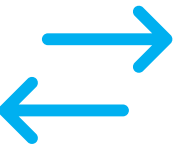
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Continuous residence involves the applicant maintaining a permanent dwelling place in the United States over the period of time required by the statute. The applicant's residence is generally the applicant's actual physical location.

Physical presence refers to the number of days the applicant must physically be present in the United States during the statutory period up to the date of filing for naturalization. USCIS will count the day that an applicant departs from the United States and the day he or she returns as days of physical presence within the United States for naturalization purposes.

We count 5 years from the date of entering the United States as the earliest date at which you could seek citizenship.



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What can you do now to prepare for citizenship? If you want to become a U.S. citizen, you can follow these practical steps.

- You and your family members can work to improve and practice your English skills. Speaking English now will help with getting a job, becoming a part of your new community, and will make sure you are prepared for the citizenship questions in 5 years. There are many ways to study English, from classes at local community organizations to free phone apps.
- To apply for citizenship, you must prove that you meet the requirements for continuous residence and physical presence. To do that, you will need to provide information about travel, where you have lived in the United States, and more. Keeping track of travel history, address history, employment history, and legal concerns/documentation will save time later. Make sure to record all exact dates when a trip abroad, a job, or a place of residence began and ended.
- Criminal activities can have immigration consequences. If you have a criminal record or any law violations in your past, make sure you speak with an immigration attorney.
- Be prepared to pay filing fees. Current filing fees are \$725 + \$85 for biometrics (The price changes over time. You can check the applicable fees at the time of filing using the [USCIS fee calculator](https://www.uscis.gov/feecalculator) (<https://www.uscis.gov/feecalculator>). The costs can be significant, especially for larger families with children 18 and older, so it is wise to save for these expenses.

Current processing times: 6-13 months, depending on jurisdiction (VA is 8.5 months). Processing times can and likely will change over time. Just keep in mind that there will be a waiting period between application and becoming a citizen.

It is helpful to consult with an immigration lawyer when you are ready to naturalize. We will provide some tips on how to identify qualified lawyers to help you in another section. You may consider hiring private immigration counsel or seeking legal help from a non-profit or other organization that helps people to apply for their U.S. citizenship.



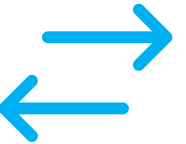
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USCIS does not automatically issue a citizenship certificate to children younger than 18 who derive citizenship from their parents. However, children are not required to have a citizenship certificate. If you're interested in obtaining one, you can do so by filing form N-600 (<https://www.uscis.gov/n-600>).

A passport provides reliable proof of citizenship and is much cheaper to obtain. You can find more information about how to obtain a passport for yourself and your children here:

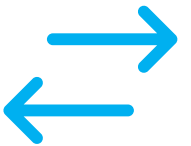
<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/passports/how-apply.html>.



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Polygamous marriages: If you have more than one spouse, only your first wife can be considered a legal spouse for immigration purposes. You must divorce and re-marry if you want a different person to be legally recognized as your spouse.



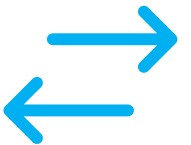
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When the wait time says “Current”, this means that visa numbers are always available, but processing time may be 6 months – 1.5 years.

For all wait times, always add 6-12 months for processing time to each estimate.

Wait times change over time – the estimates listed here are applicable today. The Visa Bulletin (<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/legal/visa-law0/visa-bulletin.html>) is the best place to locate updated wait times for each category.



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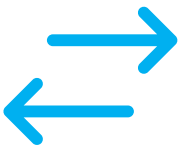


Family members abroad must process through a U.S. Consulate:

- Afghans in Afghanistan who are unable to leave may be able to get assistance from the U.S. Department of State Coordinator for Afghan Relocation Efforts (CARE).
- Family members will arrive in the U.S. in LPR status.

Family members you apply for who are already in the U.S. can file Form I-485 to apply for a Green Card. I-130 filing fee: \$535 (**Free if filing for an Afghan national before Sept. 30, 2024**). If you need to file for a family member, do so as soon as you arrive to minimize future costs.

Filing fees are subject to change.



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Parole is not intended to circumvent normal visa processing timelines and procedures.

- If a different visa or pathway is available, you must show why your relative cannot wait for that process to complete.

Applying for parole requires a lot of work and documentation. You must have the ability to financially support anyone you want to welcome on humanitarian parole. Each family member for whom you are seeking parole will require their own set of documents and evidence. Because it is complex and the requirements sometimes change, a lawyer can be helpful when filing humanitarian parole applications.

Parole does not provide permanent status or automatic pathway to a green card or citizenship.

- Your family member will have to request asylum or apply for another benefit to be able to remain permanently.

Final approval requires passing a consular interview, national security vetting, and a health screening prior to entry.

- Family member must be in a location where they can access a U.S. Consulate.
- Petitions for individuals outside of Afghanistan are prioritized.

Application Process:

- File Form I-131, Application for Travel Document, to request parole
- Filing fee is \$575, though need-based fee waivers may be available
- Petitioner must file Form I-134 and show ability to financially support beneficiary, alone or with another sponsor
- Submit evidence in support of your request:
 - Relationship documents
 - Evidence of harm or risk of harm
 - Witness statements
 - Proof of family relationships

USCIS considers the following to be strong positive factors for eligibility for parole:

- Immediate family of a U.S. citizen or LPR
- Locally employed staff of the U.S. Embassy Kabul
- Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) applicants with Chief of Mission (COM) approval
- Immediate relatives of Afghan nationals previously paroled via Operation Allies Welcome
- Individuals with P-1 or P-2 refugee referrals
- **Extended family members of Afghan nationals who entered the U.S. with an SIV**
- Individuals who assisted the U.S. mission and assert risk of harm

Things to Know:

Petitioner = You, the person filing the petition

Beneficiary = The person you are filing for to be paroled into the U.S.

Sponsor = Either you or another individual who can show sufficient financial resources to support the beneficiary.

Petitioner must file a separate Form I-131 for each individual beneficiary.

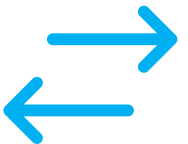
Petitioner must file Form I-134 and show ability to financially support beneficiary:

- Submit Form I-134, Declaration of Financial Support with Form I-131, with evidence of sufficient finances
- If unable to support, can petition with a co-sponsor
- Co-sponsors may be individuals, businesses, or organizations

A good baseline for determining sufficient resources is the **U.S. Poverty Guidelines** available here: <https://www.uscis.gov/i-864p>.

- For example, if you are a family of 4 and you would like to bring 2 additional people to the U.S., you will have to show an income of at least \$52,450 for your household.

Processing times and requirements are subject to change. Up-to-date guidance can be found at <https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/humanitarian-parole/information-for-afghan-nationals-on-requests-to-uscis-for-parole>.



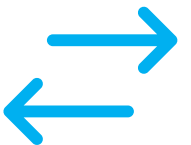
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One brief note on domestic travel within the United States: you can fly and travel anywhere in the United States (all states and territories) using your green card or your valid state driver's license as identification.

Traveling outside the United States requires a valid passport. You cannot obtain a U.S. passport unless and until you become a U.S. citizen. There is no additional travel document available to LPRs who are not refugees or asylees. In practice, this means you will need an unexpired Afghan passport for international travel and your U.S. green card to return to the United States.

The last point is important. If you decide to become a citizen, you will need to show that you have been in the United States for the required amount of time and will need to list your international trips. It is generally best to avoid trips that are longer than six months. If you, as an LPR, remain outside of the United States for too long, the U.S. government may think you do not intend to live in the United States as a resident and consider your permanent resident status abandoned.



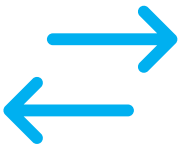
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Your SIV status does not forbid you from traveling to Afghanistan, but it is not recommended.

You should be aware of the risks of returning to Afghanistan. These risks may change over time.

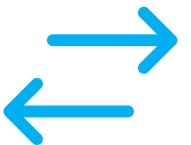
If you choose to travel back to Afghanistan, you should consult an immigration attorney first and be very careful. Although the U.S. government prioritizes helping U.S. citizens and LPRs who have problems abroad, the U.S. government does not have an embassy or other resources in Afghanistan to assist with departure or evacuation in case of detention, harm, or other unforeseen circumstances.



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- **U.S. fair housing laws** prevent landlords from discriminating against anyone based on national origin or even immigration status.
- Your resettlement agency will assist you with your first place to live in the United States.
- **When you move, update your address with USCIS** within **10 days** using the [online Form AR-11](#) to ensure you receive all receipts, notices, and documents.



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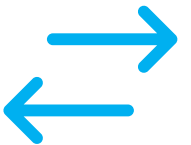
When you come to the United States, it is critical that you follow the law. You certainly don't want to end up in jail, and committing certain crimes might have serious immigration consequences for you and your family.

Not knowing the law is not an excuse to break the law!

The most frequent crimes that prevent individuals from maintaining their permanent residence or acquiring citizenship are:

- Driving under the influence of drugs and alcohol
- Driving without a license
- Drug use and drug-related crimes
- Domestic violence – harming your spouse or children is a serious crime in the U.S.

These laws also apply to your children. Make sure your children—especially older children who will turn 18 soon—understand the importance of following all laws and avoiding a criminal record.



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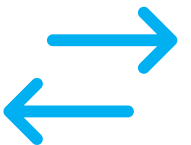


It's critical to keep in mind that we have two sets of laws to follow. Federal laws (like the immigration laws) apply across the whole country. States have a lot of power to set their own rules without certain boundaries.

For example, the federal law requires that everyone be paid at least \$7.50 per hour. This is the federal minimum wage.

No state can set their minimum wage lower than this amount. However, many states have set their own minimum wage **higher** than the federal one. In California, the state minimum wage is \$16.00 per hour. That means that employers in California must pay \$16 to follow the law.

Violating either federal or state law can cause major problems in your life on immigration, employment, and other areas.



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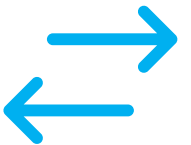


Selective Service is a preemptive data collection in case of a future military draft. The last U.S. draft was in 1972 and not likely to be reinstated anytime soon.

Registering for Selective Service does not obligate you to join the military or similar.

If this applies to you, you will have signed a form regarding Selective Service registration during your consular interview or when completing your immigration forms. This is NOT a registration. You cannot register until you're in the U.S. and have been issued a Social Security number.

If you turn 18 in the U.S., you must register within 30 days of your 18th birthday.



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Mandatory ages for school attendance vary by state, but children 5-17 must generally attend school.

To enroll a child in school, you will usually need to show proof of identity, age, where you live, and vaccination.

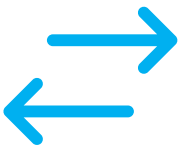
- You can ask your resettlement agency to assist you and/or check your local school district website for more details.
- Typically, the new school year begins in August or September, and children are out of school during the summer.

There are opportunities for adults to continue their education as well through formal and informal classes and educational programs.

- Vocational and technical schools or adult continuing education programs may be a good choice for many:
 - People who have not completed high school may study for their General Education Development (GED) tests. Completing these tests gives adult learners the equivalent of a high school diploma.
 - People can acquire a professional license or additional training in their field in the United States, including those who worked in a skilled trade in Afghanistan or would like to gain credentials. Scholarships may be available to keep costs affordable.
 - English classes are a great way to enhance your language skills and connect with other people in the community. Ask your resettlement agency about local English classes that they recommend. Women-only English classes are available in some areas.

Local public libraries can be a great source of information and resources in your new community.

- Some libraries offer English as a second language (ESL) classes, discussion groups, and conversation partners. Many public libraries even offer access to free English apps and audio books. Some libraries even provide immigration help like citizenship classes.
- Most libraries offer computer and printer access and publicize local events.
- You can get a library card to check out books for you and your children.



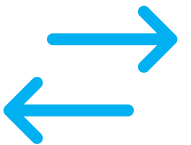
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Your status in the United States is not tied to any particular employer. You have the right to work for whoever you want, or even eventually to run your own company or similar.

Others in the Afghan community may have to periodically seek a special document called an EAD. That will not be required for you – your green card shows that you can work. And you're free to work on day one without the need to wait.

It's possible that you will automatically receive an EAD from the U.S. Government. You do not need one, but it's ok to have one and you can present it in case anyone asks.



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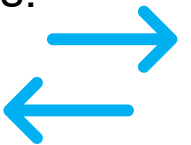


You can present your green card or stamp/foil showing LPR status as proof that you are authorized to work.

Employers cannot tell you what documents you can present, and they can get in a lot of trouble if they ask to see more or other documents as proof of work status eligibility. For purposes of U.S. law, LPRs are considered U.S. persons and can work at almost all jobs with a few exceptions (like sensitive jobs that require U.S. citizenship).

If someone says they won't hire you because you're a green card holder or discriminates based on your status, there is a government office that can help. The Immigrant and Employee Rights Section (IER) in the Department of Justice handles complaints based on immigration status discrimination and has guidance for workers and employers. Visit the IER page for more information and for the worker support hotline: <https://www.justice.gov/crt/immigrant-and-employee-rights-section>.

You will also need to complete some additional paperwork when you are hired, including tax documents.



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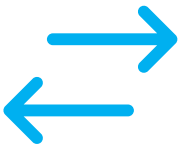
From an immigration perspective, you can work and support yourself and your family however you like. In the United States, some professions require a license or some kind of other permission from the government. Check whether the job you want requires a license in the state where you will live. A good resource for doing this can be found here: <https://www.careeronestop.org/toolkit/training/find-licenses.aspx>. Each state has different bodies that license professions, so you will need to check into the rules regarding your state and job.

Your credentials from Afghanistan might or might not transfer over. In many cases, you may need to complete some additional training to be able to work in your field in the United States if the profession is licensed. There are organizations like Upwardly Global that help immigrants to restart their careers in the United States. <https://www.upwardlyglobal.org/>

You should be sure to get any required licenses before working in regulated or licensed field to avoid serious penalties.

English language proficiency can be important in many jobs.

You can also gain new professional skills and seek a new kind of job in the United States. Your resettlement agency can connect you to resources for professional development, continuing your education, and finding a job.



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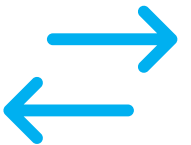
In the United States, we also take employment discrimination seriously. That means that employers can't refuse to hire you because you're an immigrant rather than a US citizen. There's a hotline that you can call if you think that is happening to you (1-800-255-7688).

You also can't be discriminated against because of numerous other factors like sex, religion, or age. If you experience other kinds of discrimination, you should usually contact the HR department of your employer first.

There are often state or other federal agencies that can investigate if you experience and report this kind of problem, and you can consider hiring an employment lawyer if you need help.

This also means that you can't discriminate against others in the workplace.

Similarly, you have the right to safety in the workplace (<https://www.osha.gov/workers>), and you should always be paid for your work (<https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/wow>).



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Employers must pay you for your work.

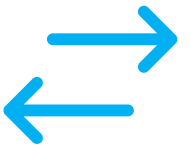
There are different kinds of employment and ways to be paid. Sometimes you'll get a set salary (for example, \$50,000 per year). Other times you'll be paid by the hour (for example, at a rate of \$20 per hour that you work). If you work in a restaurant, you may be paid mostly in tips for your service. The structure of your employment should be outlined in a letter or contract when you start a job. If you do not understand something, ask your employer to clarify.

It is helpful to know how often you will be paid (weekly or once per month?), so you can plan your financial obligations accordingly.

The type of job you have can affect how you pay taxes on your work, which can be confusing. Sometimes you may be an "independent contractor" like if you drive for Lyft, deliver food for Uber Eats, or become a hair stylist. In this case, you'll have to pay your taxes quarterly, and they won't automatically get withheld from your pay.

If you become a regular full-time employee, your employer will automatically take out what it estimates you will owe the government.

If an employer does not pay you the wages you are owed, you can seek help. Wage theft is a serious issue. [This article is a good starting point](#) to understand what you can do if you are not paid properly.



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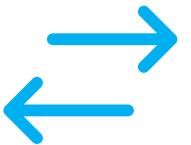


Taxes can be very complicated in the United States, but you have to pay taxes to comply with the law. Paying taxes is required by law.

You won't really have to worry about some kinds of taxes, like a "sales tax" when you purchase something at a store. This kind of tax is paid automatically.

The main thing to worry about is your annual "tax return" based on what you have earned. You'll have to make a filing with the federal government (and probably your state too). You will also need to provide information about your spouse and children in most cases. Luckily there is often free or low-cost software, or you can hire an accountant to help you prepare your taxes.

Failing to pay your taxes can be serious. You could get fined, have your property taken, have your wages automatically "garnished," or even see criminal charges. Failure to pay taxes can also prevent you from becoming a U.S. citizen.

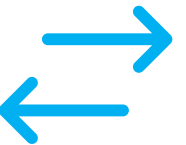


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Some types of insurance are required by U.S. law.

Other types are a good idea to avoid financial problems in case something bad happens.



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Depending on your income, age, and other factors, discounted or free health insurance might remain available through U.S. programs like Medicare or Medicaid.

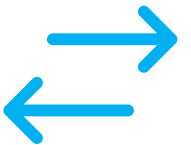
Many people receive health insurance through their employer.

Most employers require that you select a plan, and some of the cost comes from your salary.

Family members can usually join you on your insurance plan as dependents for an additional cost.

Insurance does not mean all medical care is free – you will have to understand your health plan and know when co-pays or payments to meet a deductible are required.

If an employer does not offer health or other insurance, you can purchase a plan through insurance “exchanges.”



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Who Can Help You?

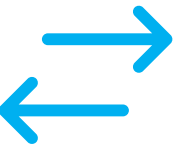
ما چگونه ميتوانيم كه به شما كمك كنيم؟

څوك كولاى شي له تاسو سره مرسته وكړي؟

Beware of scams where someone impersonates an official government agency. All U.S. government email addresses end in .gov.

Most common scams involve emails and calls from the Social Security Administration. Be careful when responding to any communications claiming to be official. And never provide your Social Security number over the phone to someone you did not contact yourself through verified means.

Familiarize yourself with the relevant agencies and what they do, so that you don't fall prey to a scam.



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Who Can Help You?

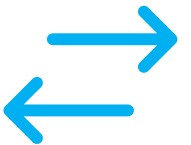
ما چگونه ميتوانيم كه به شما كمك كنيم؟

څوك كولاى شي له تاسو سره مرسته وكړي؟

To avoid false information, bad advice, and unnecessary worry, do not rely on information that you cannot corroborate on a U.S. government website and/or with a qualified immigration professional.

Friends and family may mean well but often do not understand immigration law or may be in different statuses that involve different requirements from your own LPR status. Our team regularly answers questions from people who have been exposed to misinformation about their status.

Do not provide immigration advice to others, even if you believe you are correct. Their status may be different from yours and that advice may not apply to them.



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Who Can Help You?

ما چگونه ميتوانيم كه به شما كمك كنيم؟

څوك كولاى شي له تاسو سره مرسته وكړي؟

The words lawyer and attorney refer to the same job. Only lawyers who have a **valid bar license from a U.S. state** should practice law.

For immigration questions, you will most likely want an **immigration attorney**, a person who specializes in U.S. immigration law. Immigration lawyers may be in private practice at their own office, work at a law firm like Fragomen, or at another organization like a legal non-profit or charity. Some non-profit organizations may have income limits on who they can assist and may have **accredited representatives** on staff to assist with immigration issues. Accredited representatives are not attorneys but are qualified to represent immigrants. You can find a list of all active recognized organizations and their accredited representatives at this link: <https://www.justice.gov/eoir/recognized-organizations-and-accredited-representatives-roster-state-and-city>.

The Department of Justice keeps a list of immigration attorneys who have been disciplined and should not practice law. Your immigration attorney should NOT appear on this list: <https://www.justice.gov/eoir/list-of-currently-disciplined-practitioners>.

In addition, there are many different kinds of lawyers that you may need to consult in the United States for other legal issues or if you have a dispute. For example, you may need a lawyer who specializes in family or labor law under certain circumstances. Because areas of U.S. law are often highly specialized, an attorney specializing in one sort of law may not be able to provide good advice on another kind of legal topic.

Some larger U.S. employers offer access to legal assistance as a benefit of employment, so it is worth checking with your employer for help.

